Newsletter

The Writer's Block

By Sandra D. Simmer

Spring 2026

Dear Readers, despite the late season rainstorms, I hope everyone has gotten outside to enjoy nature. I've included a poem I wrote about spring on page four. And page two has another Ekphrastic poem to amazing local artwork.

Spring is always full of creative opportunities. I attended several Bay Area poetry meetings, an Author's Book Fair at Benicia Library, the Mt Diablo chapter of California Writer's Club monthly meetings, and Benicia Literary Arts *Table Talk* gatherings. Pt. Richmond Library hosted wonderful community workshops and my ongoing critique group. Check out their websites for a wealth of information and activities.

The local art museums hosted some terrific exhibits. I saw the Manet and Morisot exhibit at the Legion of Honor in February. The Monet and Venice exhibit at the DeYoung is currently showing through July 26th. See fun photos on page three.

Lastly, I have attached a short memoir written in my version of a prose poem in memory of my sister. See pages five and six.

Keep creating! I'll connect with you again in the summer.

Sandra D. Simmer

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Please visit my website for more information on my creative work

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What A Peach!

Muted tones of a summer sunset layered

Colors over the soft and sensual skin

Of the juicy, luscious, fragrant peach.

A vivid liquid expression of flavor

Exploded onto my tongue sending

My taste buds into a frenzy of ecstasy.

Delicious dribbles flowed down my chin

To be wiped away by sticky fingers

Eager to slip another slice of precious fruit

Into my mouth. A total gustatory event

Never encountered before or since.

Decades ago, a road trip from Savannah to Tampa

Introduced me to an unexpected pleasure

Purchased from a roadside stand off the interstate.

Memories of the trip have long faded but

The experience of enjoying a fresh Georgia peach

Has lingered on my mind.

Ekphrastic Poetry to Art Event

December 2025

Solano Town Center Gallery

Sponsored by

www.fvaa-arts.org

and Suzanne Bruce

Fairfield Poet Laureate Emerita

fairfieldpoetlaureate.emerita@gmail.com

Art: Delta Delicious

Artist: Rachel Warren

Poem: What a Peach!

Poet: Sandra D. Simmer

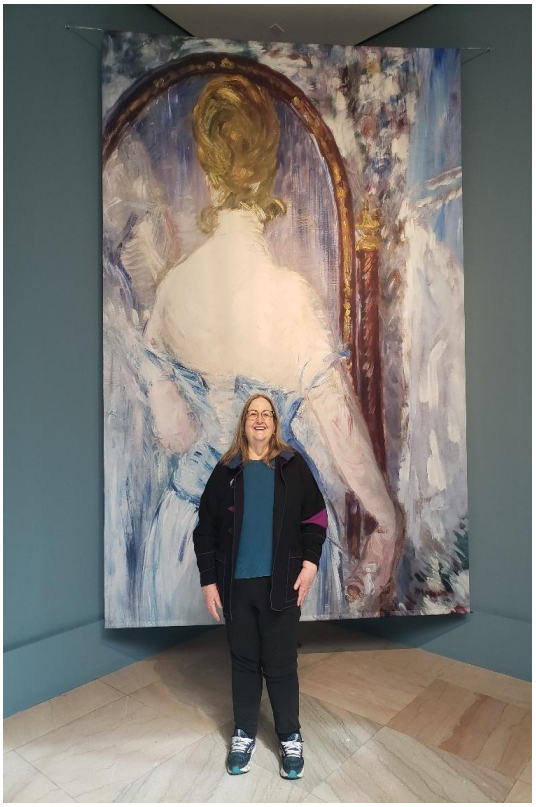
Check with Suzanne Bruce for information on coming events

Correction: Kaitlyn Elam is the artist who created the *Change of Season* artwork featured in my Winter 2026 Newsletter. My apologies!

Ekphrastic Poetry

Viewing the amazing artwork of the many local artists on exhibit at galleries around the east bay area has been a major source of joy. Having the opportunity to write poetry inspired by a work of art makes it really special.

***This page includes the inspiration painting by Rachel Warren and my response poem displayed at the* Ekphrastic Event held last winter at the Solano Town Center Gallery**



Legion of Honor

Museum Exhibit

Featuring

the artistic

connection

between

Edouard Manet

(left)

And

Berthe

Morisot

(right)

On the left is my interpretation of Monet's painting completed in an art class several years ago. It was so exciting to finally view the original (below) in person.

On the right is my photograph of Claude Monet's 1908 oil on canvas painting San Giorgio Maggiore at Dusk bequeathed by Gwendoline Davies to the National Museum of Wales. It is currently on loan to the De Young Museum for its Monet and Venice art exhibit .

Creative Writing

By Sandra D. Simmer

Samples include:

What's Happening Outside My Door?

A poem about the arrival of spring and respecting Mother Nature.

Touchpoint

A personal memoir poem about trust and sisterhood.

What's Happening Outside My Door?

Spring is knocking at my door.

A warm breeze encourages me

To breathe fresh air and walk in the sun,

To hear bird song and enjoy

Sweet green buds of leaves

About to open on barren branches.

"Come and see my beautiful designs,"

Calls Mother Nature from outside,

As if I'm a unique, special being to view

Her magical, mystical transformations.

She's like that, personal and inviting,

Eager to share her amazing creations.

How can the world ignore her primal plea?

"Care for me, child, and I will care for you."

How can mankind be so deaf and blind,

So oblivious to our delicate bond?

We are nothing without our Mother

And her cycle of life-giving seasons.

What will we become when she

No longer knocks at our doors,

And the world grows silent?

Thank you everyone for reading my newsletter. You are welcome to forward it to other interested readers. To subscribe visit www.sandradsimmer.com **Cheers!**

Touchpoint

A memoir prose poem by Sandra D. Simmer

Lake Narraquinnep never got warm. It was fed by the icy Dolores river created by
The frozen streams that flowed down the La Plata mountain tops in Southwest Colorado.
Even in mid-July the lake could curl toes and cause goose bumps on bare skin.

I was in fifth grade before my father taught me to swim in the lake. First I learned to float.
A few lessons later I could kick my feet and thrash my arms enough to keep my head
Above water in desperation not to slip into the frosty depths.

My sister, Dana, was ten years older and often my annoying childhood babysitter.
She left home after high school, but when she returned for a year before getting married,
I'd grown into an awkward middle-school girl eager for her attention.

We bonded over similar interests in fashion, pop music, and trips to the movies.
But a simple day spent swimming at the lake is the memory of Dana
I still cherish almost sixty years later. The day that sealed our sisterhood.

Though still not a strong swimmer, I joined my sister for a day at the lake.
We found a large tree log along the shore and pushed it far out into the water.
Then we pulled ourselves onto its slippery back for a ride.

Like two turtles floating on the calm surface to warm themselves in the summer sun,
We managed to keep our balance and enjoyed the relaxing rocking motion of the log,
Until a speed boat jetted across the lake and sent a ripple of large waves in our direction.

The waves hit our log with unexpected strength, pushed it over, and toppled us both
Into the frigid water. Not prepared to be dunked, I screamed and panicked.
We couldn't touch bottom. Too shocked to swim, I began to sink.

Dana swam close behind me and slid her strong arms beneath mine. "Lean your head
On my shoulder. I've got you. Kick your feet until we reach the log. You'll be all right."
Her calm voice helped me to relax and soon we were holding onto the log.

"You're doing great. Let's kick our feet and push the log toward the shore where
We can climb back on again," she whispered in my ear. I shook with cold and fear
But I chose to be brave in front of my confident older sister.

When our feet could touch ground again, I followed her back onto our precarious perch.
The rest of the day was uneventful. Though we fell off the wobbly log several times,
I wasn't afraid any longer. Dana was with me.

Although we lived one thousand miles apart throughout our adult lives, we remained close.
Dana was only a phone call away and always there to encourage me in tough times.
I miss her love and support. Rest in peace, dear sister.

In memory of Dana R. Baxstrom July 16, 1945 - April 25, 2025