

]THE JOURNAL, 1/1/2016 — 12/31/2016

[January 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. One slash one. Man, that looks barren and bleak. (grin) Oh well, Happy New Year. Well, here we go. I hope you all set realistic writing goals and are ready to start watching your numbers grow. The Topic for today is Numbers.

A perfect example why I set goals and depend on numbers— There are nonfiction books I've been meaning to write and audio lectures I've been meaning to record for awhile now. Like all of last year. Yet NONE of them got done.

Know why? Because I've "been meaning to" instead of making them specific goals. So in addition to my fiction goals for 2016, every two months (or sooner) I will write one new nonfiction book and/or audio course. Specifically, my nonfiction goal is to

- Write "Writing the Character Driven Story" (book, audio)
- Write "Creating and Employing the Persona" (book, audio)
- Write "Smart Self-Publishing" (book, audio)
- Write "Writing and Selling Short Fiction" (book, audio)
- Write (maybe) "How to Create a Stunning Ebook Cover in an Hour" (book, seminar?)
- Continue the daily journal and the every 10 day blog while considering ways to combine them

Of Interest

[Heinlein's Rules Chapter Eight and Epilogue](#) is up. Again, be sure to read back over the comments from the previous ones. Great stuff.

[The Smashwords Year in Review and Plans for 2016](#) is up. (This is not a recommendation. I haven't read it yet.)

Topic of the Day: Numbers

Awhile back I mentioned that you don't necessarily have to watch numbers or make numbers important in order to set goals. Uh, sorry. That was a stupid thing to say.

Knowing that I have a specific number-of-words goal to reach forces me to the computer on days (like today) when I might rather take a day off.

The desire to take a day off is critical mind, folks, pure and simple. Of course, there is a

difference between desire and necessity. I'll explain necessary days off later in this topic.

If my only goal were the vague "write one story this week and one novel this month," well, that's really easy to let slide, isn't it? The reasoning goes like this:

Even if I take today off, I still have six days left in the week, and writing a short story takes only 3 hours or so. And I still have 30 days left in the month, and a novel takes me only 20 days or thereabouts. So see? There's plenty of time. Taking one day off won't keep me from getting my short story done this week, and it won't keep me from getting my novel (at least 40,000 words) written this month either. And thinking it will is just silly.

If the stuff in the previous paragraph sounds familiar, guess what? Your conscious mind is the boss of you. (grin) 'Cause that's ALL conscious-mind stuff. And it's easy to buy into because it's true. Taking one day off WOULDN'T stop you from reaching your goals.

But chances are, you won't reach them. When you take one day off that isn't necessary, it becomes just that much easier to take another, and another, and another.

That's why I have a daily goal to write a specific number of words of publishable fiction per day. If I strive to reach that goal every day, I WILL be much more likely to write that short story every week and I WILL be much more likely to write that novel every month.

So I only take "necessary" days off. For me, those come in one of two categories:

1. Days when I'm so ill that the symptoms shove everything else out of the realm of possibility. This also includes emergencies and other things that are outside of my control. (Note that these are the same reasons I wouldn't go into work at a "regular" job.)
2. Days when I have chosen to make other people or things a priority. This might include a rare trip (for example, my upcoming camping trip) that I know will take up most of the day, etc. (Note that these are the same reasons I would take paid or unpaid vacation days from a "regular" job.)

That's it.

So I guess my purpose here is to spur you to set specific goals. If you're a writer and if you "just don't want to," check in with yourself to see whether that's your conscious mind protecting you from failing. And if it is, relegate his ornery, controlling self to a corner somewhere, set a good goal that will drive you to the computer every day, and write.

And one other thing— if you choose to set specific goals, make sure they're realistic, then tell others about them. Trust me, that helps.

I wish for you, my friends, a great year of writing. And I hope for you that you will not look back at day's or week's or month's or year's end and say "Well, I meant to."

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning. Got a good night's sleep despite the sound of fireworks

waking me up a couple times.

Despite this being the first day of the rest of my life and all that nonsense, it almost feels like a day off. I've done nothing in the first two hours but housecleaning on my computer.

I filed or deleted several documents that were cluttering my computer desktop. I've written all the stuff above (except the topic of the day, at this point). I added my specific nonfiction goals, both above and to the document titled 2016 Goals. I even opened Hal about a half-hour ago.

So in short, I've done everything but actually write fiction. (grin) But I'm going there now.

Uh, no. After I wrote the short paragraph above, I went up to the Topic section and wrote the topic. NOW (with almost 3 hours of the day behind me) I'm going to Hal and the novel.

Okay, a little over a thousand words in the first session. The novel's moving right along. The ending is nearer than the horizon now, I think, but it's still over a hill so I can't quite see it yet.

Three more sessions, a good strong ending, and a new novel was born. The title is Body Language. (grin) Suspense > Psychological Suspense

Dang. Imagine how I would have felt tomorrow if I had just taken this day off.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3599

Nonfiction Words: 1100

Writing of Body Language (formerly Norval Babineaux)

(Words brought forward 5231)

Day 1..... 3059 words. Total words to date..... 8290 words
Day 2..... 3436 words. Total words to date..... 11726 words
Day 3..... 3056 words. Total words to date..... 14782 words
Day 4..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 15965 words
Day 5..... 4248 words. Total words to date..... 20213 words
Day 6..... 2969 words. Total words to date..... 23182 words
Day 7..... 1128 words. Total words to date..... 24310 words
Day 8..... 2097 words. Total words to date..... 26407 words
Day 9..... 3414 words. Total words to date..... 29821 words
Day 10... 4072 words. Total words to date..... 33893 words
Day 11... 3206 words. Total words to date..... 37099 words
Day 12... 1614 words. Total words to date..... 38713 words
Day 13... 3166 words. Total words to date..... 41879 words
Day 14... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 45197 words
Day 15... 3807 words. Total words to date..... 49004 words
Day 16... 1623 words. Total words to date..... 50627 words

Day 17... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 53719 words
Day 18... 3673 words. Total words to date..... 57392 words
Day 19... 3599 words. Total words to date..... 60991 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 3599
Total fiction words for the year..... 3599

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 1100

Categories [Uncategorized](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 1/2](#)

[January 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Hope you all had a great January 1, or as we used to call it, Hangover Day. The Topic for today is The Power of Ideas.

Of Interest

[Dusky's Wondersite](#) has photographs of Australia and a whole lot more. Excellent site for finding story ideas.

[Dean Wesley Smith](#) posted his new goals for 2016 today. Personally I think he's nuts. But then, some of you think the same about me. His goals made mine feel much more attainable. (grin)

Topic of the Day: The Power of Ideas

I just remembered this morning, way back on September 15, I started writing a short story tentatively titled for the then-main character, Norval Babineaux. Vaguely, the idea was a 6'2", rotund, rich, stereotypical Southern good ol' boy was chasing around town looking for his 5'2", trim, fiery and extremely opinionated Cajun wife, who was roughly half his age. That's it.

As we do when writing off into the dark, I let the characters tell the story. I basically followed them around each day. Then I wrote down what they said and did, and added a few notes about the setting so the reader could see it as clearly as I could.

After three days of writing and 5231 words, the story wandered off in an entirely new direction, and even into a different genre.

I followed the new main character, whose name was Simon Stark, and wrote a 57,000 word sociological SF novel called [The Advent of Simon Stark](#). (That one took 23 writing days in 26 calendar days.)

I let the Norval Babineaux story languish until I picked it up again on December 14. (In the interim, I wrote eight short stories and the ninth novel in the Wes Crowley series, [The Scent of Acacias](#).)

But Norval was waiting patiently in the wings.

I had no idea where the story should go, etc. Then I remembered not to worry about it. I wouldn't worry about where it was going or what it was going to be (long short story, novella or novel). I just opened it on December 14, read back over what I had written, then put my fingers on the keyboard and wrote the next sentence.

And yesterday, after 22 writing days in 108 calendar days (9/15 – 1/1, inclusive), I finished Body Language, my first-ever suspense novel. (The count of writing days includes the original three days way back in September.)

That's what I mean about the power of ideas. That one simple little idea, which sprang mostly from my love of the Cajun culture and dialect and attitude, led to two novels totalling over 100,000 words. I'll also get a few short stories out of it, although in a different genre (erotica) and under a pen name.

As an aside, fiction is fiction. My erotic stories will count toward my fiction goals, but they'll be published under a pen name. So that I can account for them here, for purposes of this journal they will be titled simply Erotica 1, Erotica 2 and so on. That way I can display the word count without divulging other information. If any of you have input regarding this, I'd be pleased to hear it.

So the Power of Ideas is the power to drive you to the keyboard. That's all.

Ideas aren't gold unless you let them be. But if an idea drives you to the keyboard and then you get two novels (at least) and several short stories out of it, yeah, that idea is gold. (grin) After that it's all just writing the next sentence. It really is that simple.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 2 this morning. I feel great although right now (two hours later) I have zero idea what I'm going to write today other than this. But while I was sleeping, my daily goal reset so I'll be looking for at least 3200 words.

I had to deal with some email this morning. One was a request for help with writing and hope that I'll get a couple of my nonfiction books / audio courses up soon. The timing of that email was eerie, because the writer takes my main (every 10 day) blog, but not this one. And I addressed that topic yesterday on this one (grin). Some cosmic stuff going on there I think.

Also had to write a fairly long response regarding some website issues for a person for whom I built a website awhile back. And then a couple of smaller things to take care of.

I also received an email chock full of interesting pictures from my uncle. I followed the link and immediately added it to my main website under both Readers' Resources and Writers' Resources. Then I came here and added it under the Of Interest section above. I hope you'll check it out and maybe save it for future reference. Of course, you can't use any of the photos without the man's permission, but you can look at them and get some great story ideas. (grin)

Speaking of the Of Interest section, I still haven't read the Smashwords look back and forward that I posted yesterday. Anyone else? Anything good/useful there?

Okay, so today I'm going to write the short story for the week and then start on one of my nonfiction projects. The sooner I get the former knocked out and the latter started, the less I'll have to worry about them. (grin) In case you're wondering, the fiction takes precedence.

Now to get ol' Hal to help me come up with an idea. Back in a bit. (It's 4:25 a.m.)

Got a good session, about 1200 words, and came here for a break. I've been checking on Dean's site every several minutes and he finally posted for today. So I added it up in the Of Interest section and went back to the story.

Had a couple more good sessions and ended up with "Of the Mist."

Okay, the story for today popped off a cover photo. I bought a subscription awhile back to Bigstock Photos. (<http://www.bigstockphoto.com>) The deal was, I could download up to 10 pictures a day for 30 days, and the cost was only \$70 (30% off). So those 300 pics cost me not quite 24 cents each. That's a hell of a bargain when you know what you're looking for. It isn't unusual to pay between \$5 and \$10 for a cover pic.

One paragraph (I thought it was gonna be the first paragraph) of the story for this week sprang from the cover pic:

"Look, the last time I saw the guy he was standin' there in the mist. He had a pistol in his right hand, a suitcase in his left. An' I don't think he was goin' on vacation."

The paragraph ended up later in the story and a little different, but that happens. And the rest of the story flowed out of that. Pretty cool, and a blast to write. It'll show up as the free story of the week over at HarveyStanbrough.com on Monday, February 29. (grin)

Today's Writing

Trust me, it isn't lost on me that although I had a GREAT writing day overall, I fell short of my daily fiction goal. I'll get back on the hoss tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2979 (-221)

Nonfiction Words: 1170 + 2900 = 4070

Writing of "Of the Mist" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... 2979 words. Total words to date..... 2979 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 6578

Total fiction words for the year..... 6578

Writing the Character Driven Story (nonfiction book and maybe audio lecture)

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5170

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 5170

Categories [Uncategorized](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)[Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 1/3

[January 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I can't seem to make the font larger in the email version of this, so I'm trying something different. For the time being, click Read On below to read the full post on the website. The Topic for today is Character Names.

By the way, if you have a strong preference for or against reading this in your email or on the site, please let me know in the comments below. If enough of you say you're okay with the print in the email being minuscule, I'll revert back to that.

Of Interest

Some great [comments over on Dean's blog](#) from yesterday today. From Joseph Bradshire, one of the commenters:

-1000 words an hour is 17 words a minute typing speed.

-1200 words an hour is 20 WPM typing.

Most people can hand write faster than that.

I toss those numbers out to people who equate typing speed and writing speed.

And regarding his own mega-challenge, Dean posted this nugget in the comments:

This entire challenge will play out like writing a novel. I'll be excited early on this spring, I'll be annoyed by the summer, and hating it by next fall, and then happy again when I see the end in sight. (grin)

He's right. That's exactly the process of writing a novel, even when just writing off into the dark.

Topic of the Day: Character Names

I used to get really wrapped around the driveline on character names. The driveline being what keeps me moving forward in my writing and the “wrapped around” being the snarled bit of baling wire that drags me to a dead halt.

I used to worry pretty much endlessly over things like What does a particular character name mean? What’s the origin? What’s the popularity? Is it unigender? And on and on. Blah blah blah.

(Oh, and about that “unigender” thing. Sorry. I don’t care for the term “sex” when what the speaker or writer means is “gender.” “Gender” is an identifying trait. “Sex” is carnal physical intimacy.)

Since I’ve been writing into the dark and have learned to trust my subconscious, I now extend that trust to selecting character names.

Not that I don’t still rely on references outside my brain housing. I do. If I didn’t, all my female characters probably would be named Marie. Yeah, I’m just that imaginative.

So I do depend on my Writers’ Digest Books **Character Naming Sourcebook** and I do depend on lists I find on the Internet. But I no longer get so wrapped up in Stuff That Just Doesn’t Matter that it drags my work ethic into the dirt like a cheetah on a baby wildebeast.

So I keyed “girls names” into my search engine, and from the URLs that popped up I went to Nameberry.com. I liked what I saw, so I stole it. I copy/pasted their offerings, A through Z, into a spreadsheet. I had to do that one column at a time through 26 columns, so that took awhile.

It was a voluminous offering. There are 2768 names that begin with the letter A alone.

And now I have it. I doubt I’ll ever need another name source, even, as it turns out, if I want to name people on another planet or something.

What I like about this particular site is that the names are not separated out into various nationalities, cultures, etc. They’re all mixed in, alphabetically. This is great for a writer because you can scroll through them and select a name based on nothing other than simply “knowing” it’s the right name for the person in your story. I like that.

And yes, I’ll go back later and purloin all the men’s names and add them to a spreadsheet as well. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning. Went to bed a little early last night too, so that was the longest I’ve slept in awhile. A little over 8 hours.

After my commute past the coffee maker, I checked email. Very little there other than Dr.

Mardy's newsletter, for which the topic was Aspirations. The quotes he used did nothing for me, but the topic spurred a quotation of my own: "For the successful person, aspiration is basic to respiration." Yeah, I know. It's one of those "well, duh" things. (grin)

I turned to the writing 'puter a little early at about 3:15 and put down the first 1100 words of an erotic short story. I plan to finish that today.

UPDATE: Yeah, that isn't gonna get finished today. I thought it was a short story, but it thinks it's a long story (novelette) at the least and maybe a novella. So we'll see.

Then I made a second mug'a coffee and changed the guard (one cat out, one cat in).

A novel idea kept prodding me, so I wrote the beginning of the opening of that one. It's an idea I've had since I was about halfway through writing my previous novel. I just wanted to get the idea down on the page more than anything, and I did that in around 60 words. (You won't see the novel mentioned in today's totals. I won't count these words until I begin in earnest on the novel.)

As I said, I only wanted to get the idea down, but I could have kept writing. Problem was, a female character (who probably will be the female lead for the whole novel) popped into the budding scene and asked her girlfriend, with whom she was having lunch, "Did you see this crazy ad?" And she passed a newspaper over to her friend.

And right there I stalled. I wanted to know her name. I NEEDED to know her name. And her friend's name. And that is what brought about the Topic of the Day.

(Note: I might not go back to the novel until sometime after I finish this short story or whatever it's going to be. I have all the names, but I haven't glanced over them yet to get the ones I need for the novel. The beginning chapter or two will take probably 30 names, maybe fewer. After that, I suspect it will settle into the one lead female and the one lead male.)

The problem is, as I mentioned in the Topic, female character names have NEVER been easy for me if they aren't Marie or something similar. Any other name that pops into my head either sounds cliché or is someone I know, and I don't need that kind of grief. (grin)

Okay, so I went looking for names. I found what I needed, then went up there and wrote the Topic of the Day.

Took another brief break to make my third mug'a coffee (Kava, so no acid, but still caffeine), then finally came back to the story and put down another 1200 words.

I kind'a lost track of time in all of that, but all in all, I've been up for almost 4 hours. So that's not too shabby. Certainly no wasted time, though not all of it has been writing time.

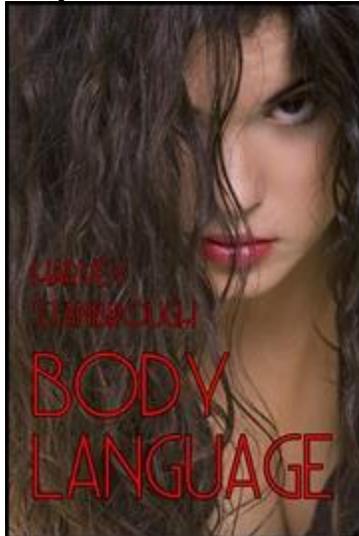
While I'm doing this conscious mind stuff I think I'll go ahead and get the boys' names too, and maybe look at the unigender (they say "unisex") names too. Then all of that will be behind me.

Back in a bit.

It's now about 7:20 and I'm headed back to the erotic story.

As I write this it's almost 12:30. I've had three more good sessions on the short story with a few breaks interspersed here and there during which nothing in particular happened. For example, I baked a tin of biscuits during one. I cooked a couple of chicken breasts during another.

Okay, as I wrote above, the way this short story's going, it's probably going to be a



novellette or a novella. (grin) The main character had more— umm ideas— than I was aware of. Not sure how that's possible, but there you go. At a little over 5200 words, I'm gonna let it go for today.

I was thinking I might add some to my nonfiction book before my Cardinals host the Seahawks about two hours from now. But that's about enough time to format and create a cover and promo doc for Body Language, so I think I'll do that instead.

UPDATE: Got the cover done for my first-ever suspense novel. That's it over there on the right. If any of you would like it, email me and tell me Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF and I'll send it to you. Only for my Journal subscribers.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 5248

Nonfiction Words: 1340 (journal)

Writing of "Erotica 1" (short story, novelette or novella)

Day 1..... 5248 words. Total words to date..... 5248 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 11826

Total fiction words for the year..... 11826

Writing the Character Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6510

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6510

Categories [Uncategorized](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) 9 Comments

The Journal, Monday, 1/4

[January 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic today is New Format. One note on my giveaway of my first-ever suspense novel, [Body Language](#): It contains a few scenes that border on erotica. They are not graphic, but very suggestive. They also are integral to the storyline. So with that warning in mind, if you would like a copy, let me know by email. (This offer is only for my Journal subscribers.) I have it for Nook/Apple, Kindle, or in PDF.

Of Interest

Over at [Dean's website](#), he now offers a newsletter. To get it, you have to subscribe. It's free. The form is at the top of the right sidebar.

He promises not to make the newsletter too often or too wordy. He says he's gonna give away free stuff to his newsletter subscribers from time to time. The first giveaway is supposed to be around the beginning of next week.

Topic of the Day: New Format

One more time, Dean Wesley Smith taught me something by osmosis. When he promised not to make his newsletter "too wordy," a light flashed in my brain. And it wasn't a retina tear.

Maybe that "too wordy" thing is why of only 31 faithful subscribers, only about 10 or 11 of them open any given Journal. It's too wordy.

It might also be "too often," but I can't really do anything about that. It's a daily journal so it has to go out daily. Of course, that part's more for me than you.

But I want to reward you for being loyal subscribers, so I also devise goodies. Like the "Of Interest" section, or the "Topic of the Day" section or the occasional free giveaway.

Problem is, if you're one of the 20 or so who DON'T open the journal on a particular day, you

won't see a particular topic or the giveaway.

Okay, so this is my last "wordy" newsletter. Only a week or so ago, I streamlined the format. (Probably a lot of subscribers don't even know that.) Beginning tomorrow, I will trim the fat. Here's the new format:

- ◆ The opening paragraph will remain a brief, informative introduction.
- ◆ The "Of Interest" section will remain when there's something to share.
- ◆ The "Topic of the Day" is gone as a regular feature. Now, I do enjoy sharing what I know, so I'll still post one occasionally. When I do, that will be reflected in the opening paragraph of the email.
- ◆ "The Day" will be streamlined further beginning today, maybe. It will continue to serve as the core of my personal writing journal, so it's predominantly for me anyway. But it will remain in case you want a glimpse at my writing process. And The Day and the numbers are at the end anyway, so you don't have to read 'em if you don't want to. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 again this morning. Email (mostly from D2D with buy links for Body Language in the various major venues) then updating the publisher website with a page for the new book, then screwing around with a game for a little while, then here to write this.

I have an appointment in Sierra Vista (about 45 miles from here) at 9:15 so I'll leave around 8. Smack in the middle of my writing day.

It's a little after 5 now and I'm turning to Hal.

Got two good sessions on Erotica 1. Honestly, writing this stuff isn't nearly as much fun as writing the other. I mean, no matter where you shoot the basketball from on the court, it still has to hit the basket or it isn't a score, right? (Sorry, SamIAm.) So I want to get at least a few of these behind me and get onto my next novel.

Have to head out to the doc in about a half-hour so I'm gonna stop here for now.

Just back. It's almost 11. All is well. I'm healthy as a 94 year old man. *badumpbump tshh*

Decided to extend a different story too, one that hinted at erotica but didn't slip fully into it. You know, so to speak. That's Erotica 2 below. So I didn't finish Erotica 1 yet, but I did finish Erotica 2. I hope to finish Erotica 1 tomorrow so I can put it behind me. (I wouldn't be worried about it but it's close to the end, I think.)

Believe it or not, again I almost took the rest of the day off when I got back from SV. Just like I almost did a few days ago. But I persevered and got FOUR more good sessions. This might be

my best fiction writing day ever. But I'm not quite anal enough to search back and see. (grin)

Nothing again on nonfiction other than this post.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 6628

Nonfiction Words: 700 (journal)

Writing of "Erotica 1" (short story, novelette or novella)

Day 1..... 5248 words. Total words to date..... 5248 words

Day 2..... 2268 words. Total words to date..... 7516 words

Writing of "Erotica 2" (long short story/novelette)

(words brought forward..... 3519)

Day 1..... 4360 words. Total words to date..... 7879 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 18454

Total fiction words for the year..... 18454

Writing the Character Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7210

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 7210

Categories [Uncategorized](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [fiction](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)[Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 1/5](#)

[January 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Thinking about changing this Journal from a MailChimp subscription to a WordPress subscription. I saw an example yesterday and liked how it looks in the email. If I do that, I'll try to subscribe each of you again through WordPress. You'll still have to opt-in if you want to subscribe.

Of Interest

Check [Dean's website](#) for information on a new Lawrence Block book on writing. I just bought a

paperback copy myself. As Dean says, “When learning, always learn from those a long ways ahead of you on the road you want to walk. Simple rule.”

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Checked email and Facebook stuff (all of ten minutes for both), then spent a little over an hour investigating whether I can switch-over subscribers to the WP subscription form myself. I think I can do the initial switch, but each subscriber will still have to opt-in. Which is fine. It's one click.

Emailed my buddy Dan last night to cancel at least my part of the upcoming camping trip. I don't do well in bitter cold, and especially rainy, windy, icy bitter cold, which is the forecast for the Lower Gila Box for this weekend.

Hoping to knock out Erotica 1 this morning, then see what else is in store. It's now 4:30.

Two decent sessions on Erotica 1 and finished it. Now I'm gonna create a new front and back matter for the author of these stories, a new bio, a new disclaimer, and two new covers and then publish them. Then I can get back to writing real stories. (grin) It's almost 6 a.m.

I created all the stuff I talked about in the paragraph above, and was in the middle of publishing them (still to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon) and my Internet crashed. Leaving me only part way through the publishing process. And of course everything I had put in the sites went away. Very frustrating.

What's worst, all I had to do to “fix” the situation was shut down my computer and restart it. In other words, there WAS no actual problem. If you have tender ears, you should be very glad you were not within a half-mile of my house. Things and people that/who simply don't do their job make me angrier than anything else. Seriously. I could'a chewed wheels and spit nails.

In the midst of all this, I also emailed the fine folks at All Romance Ebooks (also OmniLit) and asked them to please delete/cancel/terminate/dispose of/ or whatever else my account. I don't wanna play with them anymore. WAY too much hassle.

Anyway, I eventually got the stuff published. And it's a little after 2 p.m. and I have only a little over 2000 fiction words on the day. And I'm still really REALLY annoyed. So I'm gonna break for a half-hour or so and if I don't calm enough to put this junk out of my head and Just Write, then I'll just toss the rest of the day and start fresh tomorrow.

What I HOPE will happen is my BP will drop again and I'll be able to knock out some more words before about 4 or 4:30 when I'll need to post this. We'll see.

Yeah, well, no more fiction today. So tomorrow it is. I did get some reading done on a GREAT new about-writing book I bought a few days ago. If you're interested in writing thrillers or suspense, I'll share the name of it with you.

Nothing again on nonfiction other than this post. I don't really feel all that "driven" to get the nonfiction stuff out. That's mostly for two reasons: I can write it while standing on my head spitting BBs, and I don't really have a solid goal. One new nonfiction book and/or audio lecture every two months. Yawn.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2034

Nonfiction Words: 600 (journal)

Writing of "Erotica 1" (long short story/novelette)

Day 1..... 5248 words. Total words to date..... 5248 words

Day 2..... 2268 words. Total words to date..... 7516 words

Day 3..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 9550 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 20488

Total fiction words for the year..... 20488

Writing the Character Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7810

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 7810

Categories [Uncategorized](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [fiction](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)[Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 1/6](#)

[January 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Long one today. My apologies. But I do suggest you at least glance at each section before you dismiss it. I added a Topic today, On Health, below. No preaching. I'll just tell you my story and you'll take something from it for yourself or not.

Looking very forward to getting back to writing this morning. I also have to add walking back into my routine. Actual, real walking, not screwing-around-in-arroyos-with-my-camera walking.

Of Interest

If you haven't yet downloaded Dean's posts on [Heinlein's Rules](#), here's one more reminder. If

you want to wait until the book comes out so he makes a little money on it, that's admirable and I applaud you.

But he might or might not include the comments, so again, I strongly recommend downloading (copy/paste) them in their current form too. That's why he puts them up there, and that's why he leaves them up there under the Heinlein's Rules tab. But they won't be there much longer.

Hmmm. Another insight from Dean. Maybe to get my own nonfiction out I should announce it on my big blog and then post it there one chapter at a time. Seems to work for him. (grin) Then after it's all done and I publish it, I'll take down the category. I think maybe I'll do that.

Topic: On Health

I spend most of my day sitting, comfortably, making stuff up. I wouldn't have it any other way. It's great fun for my 2 year old subconscious, but it isn't the best physical workout.

In the spring of 2014, I weighed 210 pounds. I'm pretty stout with a good frame, "big bones," etc. but 210 pounds on a 5'7" frame is too much.

So I started walking. I enjoyed it, and that was the key. I made it a priority. I walked not for a workout, but just to slow down and actually see the world around me.

When I started, I walked a half-mile round trip and was winded. I decided to walk every day and not worry about distance. At the end of that summer/fall period (before it got too cold to walk) I was walking 6 miles on a "normal" day, and my longest was almost double that. And I weighed 176 pounds. Can't begin to tell you how great that felt. Or how I miss it.

I gained a little back, but then spring 2015 came and I started walking again. Ahh, but I lost my focus. Instead of Just Walking I started exploring arroyos. I started carrying my camera everywhere. Instead of simply enjoying the walk, I was recording it. What a bunch of nonsense.

Toward the end of the summer/fall period, I was walking only a mile or so, sometimes two miles, and of course, gaining weight. That was at a time when I should have been losing it, or at least maintaining. Ridiculous. I am what we call in the fiction business "A Moron."

I knew, of course. I avoided looking in mirrors, and I slid my home scale into hiding so I wouldn't step on it accidentally. I didn't wanna hurt it. I think they call that Denial.

But yesterday at the doc appointment they weighed me. I'm convinced they do that only out of a cruel sense of curiosity and because they have the power. And of course I weighed FAR more than I should. Can't deny it anymore.

So sometime today I'm gonna step on the stoopid treadmill and start stoopid plodding along and see how stoopid far I can get before I have a stoopid heart attack.

Why? Because I like writing fiction. No, I LOVE writing fiction. And I can't do that from six

feet under.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3. And I woke in a semi-panic, wondering what day it is and thinking *Don't I have a short story due in my challenge?*

Uhh, no. I had to have one written and published before Friday, January 8. The 1st was the start date. The 8th was the first deadline. Anything else I write before January 8 will count in my overall year for short fiction, but it won't count toward my next weekly goal. The goal resets every Friday morning.

Anyway, I've finished three short stories this week, and two of those were long short stories (novelettes). I won't queue them on my free story of the week, but they do count in the overall year. So if I write only one short story per week for the rest of the year, I will have written 54 short stories. But I have a feeling there are gonna be a lot more than that. (grin)

Checked email and Facebook stuff (all of ten minutes for both), then spent too long (a half-hour or so) reading a news magazine. I decided to unsubscribe. I won't miss it. It just gets me upset about stuff I can do nothing about until election day and/or the beginning of the shooting war.

Then I went back to Dean's site and checked for additional comments. There were several so I added them to my copy of his Heinlein's Rules book.

Then I went up there and wrote the Topic. Now, finally, I'm turning to Hal. It's almost 5 a.m.

After some hemming and hawing, I finally started writing about 5:30. After one good session and two other interrupted, very short sessions I had the first 1600 words of my next novel. The genre will be Something > psychological suspense. (Looking like Crime > Detective > PsychSuspense.) Probably.

I don't know yet what the story will be, but it features a hard-nosed detective who works for a west-coast police department and occasionally moonlights for a guy names Giuliatti. Now a break for my first walk on the treadmill. It's almost 7:30.

Well, that was interesting. Treadmilling is much more difficult than regular walking, at least for me. I did a mile, 21 minutes, yawn. When I was walking a lot I could maintain a 17 minute mile over distance. Good workout though. And it'll get better.

I took a break to cook and eat breakfast— 'cause seriously, what I need is more food— then came back to the office.

Interesting, maybe. I glanced at the new novel, but chose not to write more on it right now. That's one of the things I enjoy most about writing novels. I know it's going to last awhile. So as long as I remember to just write the next sentence, I can leave it and come back to it without worrying about what's gonna happen next or being afraid I'm going to "lose" something.

So I moved over to the other computer (turned left) to write the Introduction and Chapter 1 for Writing the Character-Driven Story. (In full disclosure, I'm writing the book partially from a student handout I used to teach a short seminar on the subject. But it was only a one-hour talk so nothing real thorough there.)

I also created a new front matter and back matter for my forthcoming series of nonfiction books and thought a bit about how I'll brand the covers.

Now it's almost 10 a.m. and I'm moving back over to the novel. (It feels very good to say that. More room to just go play.)

Got another session done, then a break for a shower. Also drove down to the PO to pick up another of the writing books I ordered recently. You guys realize I'm in heaven here, right? The difficulties of an extremely frustrating yesterday notwithstanding.

- I've realized a way to spur myself to write the nonfiction books.
- I've written three short stories during the first week of my new challenge to write at least one a week.
- I have two fists full of books to read through at my leisure. And they're chock full of advice from masters of my craft.
- And to top it all off, I've started a new novel.

Folks, it doesn't get any better than that. (grin)

Anyway, enough playing here. Back to the novel. It's almost noon.

Got another good session on it and met my daily goal so I'm gonna stop there for a break. After that I'll shift over to the nonfiction book and see what other damage I can do to it.

Got a good session on the nonfiction book too, so I'm calling it a day. And a good one.

Oh, and I added a line below for my total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction combined).

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3631

Nonfiction Words: 2347 (1300 on the journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 24119

Total fiction words for the year..... 24119

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10157
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 10157

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 34276

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [fiction](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Learning](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) 4 Comments

[January 7, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I was going to add a brief Topic again today on the importance of Routine. Then I remembered Kris Rusch said it much better than I ever could awhile back on her blog. So instead of offering my thoughts in a topic, I added Kris' information below.

There is kind of a topic in The Day. Some pretty cool things happened today with critical vs. creative voice.

Of Interest

(Parts of this entry are repeated from a journal post back in March, 2015.)

Check out Kristine Kathryn Rusch's website. There's an excellent post on [The Importance of Routine and Scheduling](#).

Also, you can get Kris' entire [Freelancer's Survival Guide](#). Finally, especially for indie publishers, I recommend her series on [Discoverability](#). I actually own this one but have not read it yet. It's why I occasionally refer to myself as a Mo-Ron.

Both the Survival Guide and Discoverability also are available in ebook and (I believe) in paperback.

While you're on her site, scroll down on the main page a bit and you'll see Free Fiction Monday. If you haven't read any of Kris's short fiction yet, you're missing a SA-HA-HA-HERIOUSLY great bet at both being entertained and learning.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2 this morning. Checked email and then played around on Facebook for a little while.

Wrote the stuff above this, then spent some time copy/pasting my journal entries to a Word document. If something happens to the Internet, I want to have them handy. I already had them from October 19, 2014 through October 1, 2015. I moved all the others over one at a time this morning.

In posts for The Daily Journal alone, since October 19, 2014, I've written over 255,000 words of nonfiction. Just an interesting factoid. (But that includes the little categories at the end of each post, the repeated number counts, etc.)

Almost three hours of the day gone already. That's okay. Now to Hal and the novel.

CONSCIOUS, CRITICAL MIND— Just as I wrote “Now to Hal and the novel” above, a cold electric sensation shot through me: But I don't know where it's going!

It truly is incredible how tightly the conscious mind clings to control and keeps trying to edge its way in. This time I caught it immediately. I laughed and said aloud, “Yes, and if I DID know where it was going, how boring would that be?” Then I came here to add this stuff. Now I'm going to Hal and the novel. To let my subconscious play. (grin)

One session, almost exactly 1000 words. Off to the treadmill.

CONSCIOUS, CRITICAL MIND— Conscious mind popped in again while I was on the treadmill. This time it was *Hey, maybe this 'novel' is really just a short story. You could finish it today and move on to something else.*

How do I know this was my conscious, critical mind? Because

1. it makes a distinction between short story and novel and
2. it's trying to bargain with me (finish it today and move on)

The subconscious doesn't make distinctions like that. The subconscious just wants to tell a story.

And the subconscious doesn't want to finish. Again, it just wants to tell a story.

Just sayin'.

Okay, churned out a mile on the treadmill at 2.9 mph, or as I like to call it, 4.6661 kph. Tomorrow I'm gonna bring my kindle to the treadmill. I don't think I can handle staring at a wall for more than the 20 minutes it takes me to walk a mile.

Or maybe I'll bring my voice recorder. (Do I still have a voice recorder? I think so.) Maybe I'll bring it and write (speak) a short story while I'm walking. That would be fun. But then I'd have to transcribe it. That would be NOT fun. In fact, it would be boring. So maybe not. Okay, end of crazythought time.

Ate breakfast, did some other inconsequential stuff and now it's a little after 9:30 a.m. I'm frittering away a lot of time today for some reason. Back to the novel.

Wrote another good session. Still being kind of lazy today for some reason.

SUBCONSCIOUS, CREATIVE MIND— Something was dragging on me the whole time I was writing this fiction session. Something about it just wasn't right.

This wasn't my critical mind saying the scene was bad or anything like that. It was just that sense of *Hey, something's not right*.

I've been at this long enough now to know that's a subconscious, creative mind reaction. So I took a break, then came back to the novel and cycled back. And there it was. Much of what I had just written was unnecessary description.

I like to ground the reader in the setting, and that's a good practice. But you have to ground the reader in a setting that matters. This particular setting will matter later in the book, probably. If it does, I can use this description then. But for now, the story took a jog to the left so that part of that scene is cut.

Okay, had another good session on the novel. Didn't quite meet my daily goal (52 words short), but I'm happy with it.

Nothing more on the nonfiction book today

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3148

Nonfiction Words: 850 (journal) XXXX (Book)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 27267

Total fiction words for the year..... 27267

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11007

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 11007

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 38274

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 8, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

It snowed here. Heavily. But it was all gone when I got up this morning.

Anyone who happened to see an earlier version of this post (Friday, 1/8) that said I was on hiatus, my apologies. That was one I pre-posted to hold my spot while I was camping in the Lower Gila Box wilderness. However, I canceled that trip a few days ago. Too cold. So this is the actual post.

Of Interest

Visit [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) and take a look at the blog post there (it will go out on MailChimp in the morning). Then click the tabs for MS Word for Writers and Writing the Character-Driven Story if you want to see some of the non-writing stuff I was doing today.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 1. Zero email. Played a few games on the computer to wake up, then came here.

Worked on the publisher website a bit, but I didn't get a lot done. Stalled on photo selection. Back to that later in the day, maybe. I also plan to add to the Character-Driven Story nonfiction book.

But for now (finally, at 4 a.m.), to Hal and the novel.

Didn't do much on the novel through a full session. I barely wrote enough to keep the fiction writing streak alive. (At least 500 words per day, every day.) Maybe that will change later. I hope.

The world feels "off" today somehow. Ever have one of those days when the annoyance level of pretty much everything is cranked up to 100? And that's on a scale of 1 to 10? This is one of those days.

We'll see how the rest of the day goes, but I might concentrate on writing the nonfiction book, working on the websites, and maybe some reading.

Well, of course on a day like this, the heater for the house went out. Landlord's fixing it, off and on, but that means I'm assisting, off and on. Probably that will be the day. You know. Off and on.

Worked on the publisher site a little, got a few things done there, updated some bio stuff on Smashwords and D2D. I did select a photo to use on that site for a new author. And in the deal, I found another new pic I'll use for another new author a bit later.

Just finished with getting the heater running again. It's noon.

Still working on the author website. Oh, if you ever want to see the Journal archives, I have them separated into two PDF documents now. I did that today too, but nothing pretty. It's just the raw journals. You can find them in the menu bar at HESTanbrough.com or in the left sidebar at HarveyStanbrough.com. Had to make some room over there for the other thing I did today. (grin)

Some time or other while I was creating new stuff over on the author website, I slid over and started working on the nonfiction book. I usually glance at the clock and make a mental note, but I didn't this time. All part of the very weird day. Anyway, probably that was somewhere around 2:15 to 2:30. Might've been a little earlier.

Okay, it's almost 4 so I'm gonna go ahead and post this and just be glad this day's behind me. I'll take it as a pretty good day, considering I felt like a stationary target on a bombing range today.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 0989 (yes, really)

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal) 460 (other blog) 1372 (Book) = 2332 (they do build up)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 28256

Total fiction words for the year..... 28256

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13339

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 13339

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 41595

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer](#)

[Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 9, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I've included a very brief sort of Topic today on "Why Ebooks." Only because what caused it sounded so incredulous.

I make part of my living as a professional fiction writer and part as a nonfiction writer. In this blog and the Pro Writers blog over on [HarveyStanbrough.com](#), I do my best to pass along what I know and what I learn as I go along about writing.

I enjoy sharing that knowledge, and both blogs will be forever free of charge for as long as I keep doing them.

However, for those who want more, soon I'm going to announce some pretty nifty rewards.

Stay tuned. (grin)

Of Interest

Watch for chapters of *Writing the Character-Driven Story* to start appearing soon over on [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

If you're interested in the Spanish language or New Mexico or both, there's a great article at [I Am NM](#).

Topic: Why Ebooks

This morning again I heard from a lady who said she would never publish her books as ebooks because she doesn't like "reading online." I'm sure nobody who reads this is in that particular camp. But you might know people who are.

Just in case, here are a few quick facts you can toss at them:

- Saying you won't publish your work as an ebook because you don't like READING ebooks is a category mistake. It's like owning a hamburger stand, but deciding you won't make and sell burgers with catsup, mustard, mayo, tomatoes or green stuff because you like yours dry and free of anything but decomposing bovine flesh. You have to separate your self as a reader from your self as a writer.
- I didn't know there were still people out there who thought to read an ebook you have to read "online."
- I still have a few traditionally published books out there earning a whopping 10% royalty. When I sell a trad-published paper book for \$15.00, I make \$1.50 on the sale. When I sell a .mobi or .epub or .pdf version of the same book for only \$5.00, I make \$3.50. You do the math.

Of course, sometimes you will say those things to the person and they still say “Oh, I’ll never do it. I just don’t like ebooks.” At that point I recommend you look them squarely in the eye, try not to laugh, and say, “Y’know, when you’re right, you are definitely right.”

I’ll definitely turn this into a topic, but not to post here. That would just be silly.

The Day

I didn’t get up until almost 4 this morning. Wow. I needed the sleep though. Checked email very briefly (that’s where I found the topic above) and came here.

I took care of some more small but necessary stuff this morning, including devising the donation/reward structure for the new thing I mentioned above.

Also updated plugins on several websites. Fortunately I use a plugin called WPRemote to do that. I can update WordPress, themes and plugins across several sites (as many as I install the WPRemote plugin on) with a click. Sure beats the “old days” of updating the sites one at a time.

Then I went to MailChimp and updated the header on both this and the Pro Writers template. Then I opened those templates on separate screens. The Pro Writers comes in excerpt form too, but the font in the email is regular sized whereas in this one it’s minuscule.

So I opened them on separate screens so I could compare them and make the template for this journal maybe mimic the other one. I think I got it done. Guess we’ll see when I post this tonight.

Re the novel, I find myself almost wondering whether planning to go camping (and not write) on 8, 9 and maybe 10 January had some sort of subliminal effect on my productivity. I hadn’t planned to write on those days, so now that they’re here, even though I didn’t go camping, I still am not writing much. Very strange, but at least possible. I know from my days as an amateur hypnotist, the subconscious is a powerful little dude.

I also know the only way to convince the subconscious you’re serious about something is repetition. I suspect all subconsciences (subconsciousi?) are from Missouri. I know for a fact they all want you to “show me.”

So although I’d like to write a bit more on the nonfiction right now, I’m gonna turn to the novel instead and Just Write the Next Sentence. I’m almost ashamed to say, this is with five hours of the day gone. But there are days like that.

Well, off and on while I was writing, I also updated my main computer (not Hal) to Windows 10. A new, bright and shiny object. I actually upgraded it awhile back, but I didn’t like it so I used their Get This Crap Off My Computer feature to revert to Windows 7. But now I’m ready, for some reason, so I did it.

But at first it wouldn’t upgrade. I thought maybe I had hurt its feelings or something. So after a wasted hour with a Microsoft TechRep in Bangladamndesh or somewhere, I did what I always

do. I went online and poked around until I hit the right combination of keystrokes to lull Microsoft into a false sense of security. Then I pounced.

So anyway, it's upgraded and everything appears to be where I left it. Weird. The one file I was fearful of losing was this one. Go figure.

Back to writing for another session. By the way, the novel is coming out very smoothly, but still in spurts and starts. When I'm writing it's flowing very well, but I keep letting little things interrupt me. I'm pretty sure this is me struggling with my subconscious.

SubC: You aren't gonna write today. You're on hiatus.

HES: No, I'm not. I'm very plainly sitting right here in front of you, my fingers on the keyboard, ready to do your will.

SubC: You sure?

HES: YES I'm sure. Look around. Do you SEE a 500 foot drop into the Gila River or Dan Dan the TightRope Man teetering on the edge of it with a cigar in his mouth and his camera up to his face? Do you see any ice crystals in my beard?

SubC: Sorry. I just don't believe you.

HES: Okay. Well, I'm gonna type. You can make it be what it's supposed to be or not. Doesn't matter to me. My fingers need the exercise anyway.

SubC: Okay, I'm convinced.

HES: Really? Why?

SubC: You're far too lazy to do all that work for nothing but exercise. So go ahead. Type. We'll see.

HES: Ha. Good one. "We'll see." That's what I tell 'em all the time in the Journal.

SubC: I know. Duh.

Okay, back for one abbreviated session on the novel. Good enough for today, all things considered. I'm gonna stop now and go watch football or something. Maybe tomorrow the subconscious will be fully back on board.

Nothing more on the nonfiction book today either, at least in the form of reportable words. I did layout a tentative table of contents so I won't miss putting in something that needs to be there. It's gonna be a good one, I think.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1689 (sigh)

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29945
Total fiction words for the year..... 29945

(At 3200 per day, I'd have 28,800 so I'm still slightly ahead. Wooahoo!)

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14459
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 14459

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 44404

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 10, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, I've been making noise lately about setting up some sort of reward system. What I settled on was a subscription service. For a certain recurring monthly donation, the subscriber will receive my work, directly from me, hot off the press.

(A few of you are already sending a recurring donation. That counts. Let me get my head together and I'll be emailing you some stuff in the next few days. And Thank You.)

At various levels, the subscription will include short stories, novels, short story collections, future nonfiction books, past and future nonfiction books, and audio lectures. Each succeeding level includes everything at the lower levels.

To see the various subscription levels, please [Click Here](#). This will open a PDF document. Please feel free to share it with your friends. (grin) They can also come to [HEStanbrough.com](#) and click **Subscription Service** in the menu, or click **To Harvey's Work** at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) under **Subscribe** in the header.

In other news, the adjustments I made yesterday on the template for this blog on MailChimp didn't work. I went back and tweaked it some more. We'll see how this post comes out. Remember you can always just go to the site to read it if it doesn't come out right in your email.

Of Interest

I think you probably would enjoy the small blog over at Sarandipity Travels. Just visit <http://sarandipitytravels.com> and sign up. Sara is an excellent photographer, and was just about to begin traveling around the country in her “Egg” when cancer snuck up on her.

Now Sara isn't the “poor me” type. She's funny, ornery, and good for your soul. Please visit and look around her site. Only one of seven tabs is about the cancer. And the whole site is interesting. She posts about once a week, and she's a great writer on top of everything else.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2:30 after a very short night. Went to bed at 10 after the most poorly officiated NFL game I've ever seen. And the second worst was the same crew when they officiated the previous game between the same two teams. I don't care personally for either team (I like Arizona, Denver and Green Bay) but blatant bias really rankles me among those who are supposed to be unbiased.

I spent the first almost seven hours of the day designing stuff. The first was a new book cover for a recent short story I published to more adequately brand it with the other stories in the series. Then I created a cover for the upcoming third story in the series, a flyer for a tarot card reading, and finally all the stuff for the subscription service (plus upload and posting it to the website, etc.).

Very strange. I have the cover, the promo doc and everything else ready to publish the next story. Now all I have to do is write it. (grin) Sometime or other. Right now, finally, I'm gonna go put some words in the novel. (grin)

Wow. This is ridiculous. Even as tired as I am, I'm amazed I let so much “stuff” get to me and get in my way today. I suppose I should feel “blessed” to “have time” to write, but I just don't look at it like that. To me it's just what I do. I just can't seem to bring myself to take a day off. Maybe soon.

Boy, when you follow this blog, you get the bad with the good, eh? TMI maybe? Ah well....

It's noon. So far at least I've kept my writing streak alive, though it's on life support, with a meager 502 words. (I wasn't counting. That's just where I finally got disgusted with myself and stopped.)

I'm gonna go watch football for awhile. Then I'll either come back to write more or call it a day and start my life over tomorrow. So even if it ends right now, I have 502 words of fiction and about 500 nonfiction.

Tell you what. Today should have been a huge day for me for fiction. I think that's why I was a little more disappointed in myself than usual. I added a little more, but I allowed too much to distract me today. I hope I can make up for it tomorrow. As of today, I'm a little (almost 1000 words) behind my average for the month. That's not good.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1083

Nonfiction Words: 730 (journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Day 5..... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words

Writing of "Erotica 3" (short story)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 31028

Total fiction words for the year..... 31028

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15189

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 15189

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 46217

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Announcements](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Subscription](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 11, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Hoping for a really good fiction day today. I need it.

Of Interest

Absolute must read topic of the night [over at Dean's place](#). Seriously, he knocks it out of the park with this one.

For anyone who missed yesterday's post, I think you probably would enjoy the blog at Sarandipity Travels. Just visit <http://sarandipitytravels.com> and sign up. Very interesting blog from a great writer and photographer. She posts about once a week.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2. Another short night, but that's all right.

I spent the first two and a half hours answering email, reading a little in a news service (then unsubscribed) and putting up a very short blog post over on the other site. I tell you, it's enough to make a grown man wanna throw things.

I plan to write two short stories today. One probably will be a blue version of the other (so I'm publishing to two separate genres with essentially the same words). If so, I'll count the words only of the longer one. Of course if the stories are completely separate, I'll count the words of both.

UPDATE: Wrote one story, not blue (erotic). Much.

I will also advance the novel. And I hope to write a chapter on the nonfiction book, but that's definitely the lower priority.

UPDATE: Nada on the novel. Definitely nada on the nonfiction.

Wasted a LOT of time this morning. At this point it's almost 5 a.m. Turning to Hal and the first blank page to write a short story.

In the first two sessions, I wrote just over 1900 words. Writing off into the dark. So back on track, at least so far.

During the second break, I finally found the Snipping Tool in Windows10. You have to type Snipping Tool into the search box (Cortana) on the task bar, then select it from the top of the pop-up menu. Fortunately, you can then pin it to the task bar.

Another 800 words by 8:30. The writing is really flowing today so far. I'm alone today, tomorrow and Wednesday though, except for my kitten. So I hope to knock writing out of the park for these three days.

Just as a point of interest, had I gone camping this past weekend, I would have written little or nothing on the 8th and 9th, and even if I was back on the morning of the 10th I probably would have written very little. Today would have been the first day when I really nailed the writing again.

I DIDN'T go camping, but it's turning out that way anyway. As I said the other day, the power of the subconscious mind is very strange.

I used my 9:30-ish break to visit Dean's site and add it to the Of Interest section. Great stuff. Now back to the short story. The writing's going so well I'm gonna cease anymore play by play. I'm hitting right at 1000 words per hour, so now I just need to put the hours in the chair. With a break every hour or so to keep my head from fogging up.

Took a walk during the extended break above. Got a couple miles outside through mesquite and acacia with my camera, so not really a walk so much as a hunt. Anyway, I'm back. Back to the story. It's 11:30-ish.

Man, this story is like the Energizer Bunny. Anyway, I think it might wrap up in the next thousand or two. (grin)

Today's Writing

Well, woe is me and stuff. I did NOTHING on the novel, and I didn't even finish the short story, although I know where the ending is now. Just didn't quite get there. Good day though. I'll plan to finish it quickly in the morning. Then I'll get it "out there" and write another one, then back to the novel.

Fiction Words: 4955

Nonfiction Words: 660 (journal) 270 (other blog) = 940

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Day 5..... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words

Writing of "The Night Before the Wedding" (working title, might change) (short story)

Day 1..... 4955 words. Total words to date..... 4955 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 35983

Total fiction words for the year..... 35983

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16129

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 16129

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 52112

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [fiction](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing4 Comments](#)

[January 12, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Woohoo! I think all my fiddling around over at MailChimp finally worked. Yesterday's post looked great in my email. I hope it did in yours too.

Of Interest

Another good topic of the night over at Dean's today. But today it isn't separate. So just [Go Here](#) and then scroll down to Topic of the Night.

In case you missed yesterday's post, if you've ever doubted whether you should start something due to your age, I hope you'll visit [Dean's post on the topic](#) and be sure to read the comments. A lot of good stuff there, especially this quote from a woman there: "Time passes whether we do anything with it or not."

The Day

Rolled out around 2:30. Actually got a little sleep. Squandered the first two hours of the morning again, but on something important this time. I revised the Journal website and the big website, adding a page titled Subscribe to My Work to both pages. If you ever wonder what it's all about, just click that tab on either site. Vastly simplified the whole thing.

I'm turning to Hal to finish the short story from yesterday, then onward to whatever.

Finished the short story with 1100 words in one session. Then I ran a spell check, hunted up a cover pic, created a cover and published it to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. Also scheduled it to post as the Short Story of the Week on March 7. Feels good to be ahead over there.

(You might remember that awhile back I was looking forward to using Pronoun, a new distributor that would distribute to Amazon and to GoogleBooks. They're finally ready, but they don't allow me to choose to which vendors I want them to distribute, so I'll pass. With both Smashwords and D2D I can opt in or out of each venue.)

Now for a brief break (it's just after 8 a.m.) and then back to writing. Not sure whether I'll fill out the other short story or go back to the novel. Probably the novel since I'm behind the curve on it, but it's nice to have choices. (grin)

Oof. Had a quick walk on the treadmill, then a cool down, then a shower. Then I put on a load of laundry. At about 9:30 I came back to Hal to write. That's when I realized a third of the month is GONE.

I post to a daily journal, so you would think I'd have noticed before now. It isn't like there weren't warning signs. Like the 8th and the 9th. (grin)

I mentioned that I'm behind on the curve. I have only 5 days of writing on the novel and a couple of those were really low days. So in that five days I have only three days' worth of words. I have to get hot if I'm gonna finish it by the end of the month. (grin) MAN I love a good challenge.

At the end of the day today, to be on par I'd have to have close to twice what I have right now, and that ain't gonna happen. But maybe I can close the gap a little.

Today, right toward the end of my day, I got "the question": How do you write so fast?

I told the writer that I don't write fast. I hit about 1,000 words per hour, which is 17 words per minute. But I produce a lot of words because I put the hours in the chair. (grin)

"Wull, how you spend that much time a'writin'?" Huh? Tell me that?"

I'm a writer. What else am I gonna do?

Today's Writing

Well, it didn't go nearly as well today as I had hoped. Life happens. Maybe tomorrow I'll knock it out of the park. Despite how it might have sounded earlier, I'm not worried that I won't finish this novel on time. When I'm writing on it, the writing flows smoothly, so no real sweat.

Fiction Words: $1957 + 1100 = 3057$

Nonfiction Words: 670 (journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words

Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words

Writing of "A Curious Warmth" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... 4955 words. Total words to date..... 4955 words

Day 2..... 1100 words. Total words to date..... 6055 words (done)

Writing of “Erotic 3” (short story)
(brought forward 6055 words)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 39040

Total fiction words for the year..... 39040

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16799

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 16799

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 55839

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [fiction](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 13, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

During my early childhood (much of which is detailed in Confessions of a Professional Psychopath), I learned a great deal very quickly about what NOT to do and how NOT to treat people (negatives). That established a pattern.

As a result, I have learned as much or more through observing negative actions as positive. I was reminded of that this morning when I revisited [Dean’s post on the topic of starting something late in life](#). One correspondent shared this:

My Dad was the most inventive, creative, person I ever knew. At age 60 he sat down and waited to die. He would say things like, “There’s no point buying a new truck, I’ll be dead any day now.” “There’s no point getting a new table saw, I’ll be dead any day now.”

I tried to get him to start painting again, being creative, doing new things, but he was stubborn as hell. “Why try, I’ll be dead any day now.”

And he was right. Twenty-six years later he died.

My Dad taught me many things, both what to do and what not to do. I turn 60 in April, and I will

not sit around waiting to die.

Pretty heady stuff, eh?

Of Interest

If any of you have anything of interest to writers and would like to share, please include it in a comment below.

The Day

I awoke at 2:05, and I felt all right. I should have gotten up then. (Apologies to my psych instructor, who said to “Never should on yourself.” Then he’d laugh. Guy had a great laugh.)

Anyway, I didn’t get up. I rolled over and sacked out for two more hours. Rocky start to the day.

So up at 4 a.m. Then email, thank you notes and short stories out to a few new subscribers (Thank You).

Then I thought the way this thing is growing I’d best start a subscriber list, so I did that. Now it’s already almost 5. Gonna release the hounds (two pets who sleep in their kennels at night) and then write on the novel.

Visited Dean’s site, then came back here and wrote the bit in the first segment above. Now (5:30-ish) turning to Hal and the novel.

Got a good solid half-session of about 400 words. Then the rocky start continued when I was interrupted by Life with a semi-emergency. When faced with such things, I prefer to solve them now so they don’t slip through the crack and come back hungry tomorrow.

Now, at almost 9 a.m., the problem is solved and I’m back to the novel. From here on out for today, no walking, y no nada pero la escritura (and no nothing but the writing). Not sure why I do that. Sometimes it just feels good to lapse into Spanish. (grin) Which is really weird ’cause I’m about 50,000,000 miles

Back to the novel now. And Hal.

Today’s Writing

A few pretty good sessions today after the first slouchy attempt. I’m still behind with an average (on the novel) of only 2320 words per day. That’s not good.

For overall fiction for the month, though, I’m a little ahead of my daily goal with an average of 3291 words per day. That feels good because that also means I’m on track to hit my annual goal of well over one million words of fiction. Of course, that would be roughly 11 1/2 months away. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3747

Nonfiction Words: 550 (journal) 660 (book below) = 1210

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words

Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words

Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words

Writing of “Erotic 3” (short story)

(brought forward 6055 words)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 42787

Total fiction words for the year..... 42787

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18009

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 18009

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 60796

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 14, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I've included a brief topic today: Reading Your Work Aloud.

This is a technique that comes in especially handy if you want to be your own first reader (or proofreader) or if your first reader is occupied with other matters.

Of Interest

My friend and student Debrah Strait won honorable mention in the Saturday Evening Post Great American Fiction contest. Her story, “The Wheelchair Caper,” was included in their [2016 anthology](#). So sincere congrats to Debrah. Visit her website at <http://debrahstrait.com/>.

Topic of the Day: Reading Your Work Aloud

On the surface, this seems almost counterintuitive to writing off into the dark. But it isn't. Not really.

When you're writing off into the dark, you're still trying to put forth your best possible effort. You're just doing it in one draft instead of six or ten or twenty.

To that end, those of us who write off into the dark employ a technique called “cycling.”

Cycling means reading back over what you've written, but doing so with your subconscious, creative mind. This both enables you to get back into the rhythm of the story and to make sure that what happened in the present scene was foreshadowed a few scenes or chapters earlier.

Note: Cycling is not rewriting. Rewriting is done with the conscious, critical mind. Rewriting is you being critical of your own work. That isn't your place. That's the reader's place. Most often rewriting makes the sentence/ paragraph/ chapter/ story worse, not better.

I recommend you read your work aloud, once, after you've finished it. Why? Because it's the best way I know to catch mistakes and errors. Things like writing “He decide to cross the street” instead of “He decideD to cross the street.” I do that a lot.

When you read your work aloud

- Just read, as if you were reading anything else. The only difference is, you can make changes.
- As you're reading, if an error pops out at you (decide vs. decided, waste vs. waist), fix it.
- As you're reading, if you realize you need to insert another sentence, insert it.
- As you're reading, if you realize there's some unnecessary, nagging repetition, delete it.
- As you're reading, if you realize you need to hit the Enter key to separate a paragraph into two shorter paragraphs, do it.
- Do NOT “look” for anything. Looking for problems is a function of the conscious mind.
- Just read, and give your subconscious creative mind free rein.

Okay, that's my schpiel. Do it, don't do it — it's all good.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:30. Checked email, found very little, but still managed to waste almost two hours doing absolutely nothing that matters in the slightest. I have to get a handle on my time.

Finally turned to Hal shortly after 4, and an hour and a half later between herding cats, releasing chihuahuas and getting another cup of coffee, I managed one short session of 400 words. Same as yesterday. Hope the writing day goes better than yesterday's did.

Back to it at 5:30. Going a little slow this morning, even after I finally got started. My detective, who turns out not to be even the main character, keeps finding new stuff so I have to cycle back to set it up earlier. So over the past hour, only another 600 words.

Ah well, every book writes differently. In this one, really, most of the scenes write very quickly. But then on a few, like the current one, I tend to do a lot more staring off into space, waiting for the words to come. That's all right too.

Today's Writing

Got a few herky-jerky sessions done today and a few good ones, all on the novel.

Nothing on the nonfiction today, and nothing on the short story.

Fiction Words: 3353

Nonfiction Words: 600 (journal) XXXX (book below) =

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words

Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words

Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words

Day 8..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 19597 words

Writing of "Erotica 3" (short story)

(brought forward 6055 words)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 46140

Total fiction words for the year..... 46140

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18609

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 18609

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 64749

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 15, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Middle of the month. Sure going fast.

Of Interest

Kind of a good Topic of the Night over at [Dean's place](#) on how lucky fiction writers are. Click through and scroll down. He's still on vacation this week. I kind'a don't get that. It drives me nuts when I don't get ANY fiction words down.

The Day

Rolled out right at 1:20. Checked email, answered some. Again, I have to get a handle on my time. Came here, cleaned up from yesterday, wrote a little.

I actually moved over to the nonfiction this morning. I revised the Introduction for Writing the Character-Driven Story and published it to the Pro Writers blog over on the other site. (Of course, if you get that blog, you already know that.)

I also updated the Writing the Character-Driven Story page (tab) on that website to give readers an indication of where the book is going. I would welcome your comments. As I post new chapters, too, I would very much appreciate your comments.

In case you've wondered, writing this kind of nonfiction is sort of writing into the dark because all the information I'm putting in the book is already in my subconscious. BUT I don't mind revising it with my conscious, critical mind since its end purpose is to educate someone else. It's sometimes easy for me to miss something the reader needs to know because I take it for granted.

Moving over to the novel now. It's just after 4 a.m.

Cycling a bit. By 5 I had only 500 new words. Let the pets out and called it a break. Back to the novel.

A little over a thousand words over the next hour and a half. Off for a session on the treadmill, then a shower and back to the novel.

Somehow I allowed TWO AND A HALF HOURS to slip away! Breakfast was in there somewhere. Nine a.m. Back to the novel.

Knocked out a good session, then decided to play with the nonfiction book a bit. I have to get that thing up. I finished writing and posted Chapter 1. It will go live on January 20. Now a brief break, then back to the novel.

In Case You're Wondering #2, the word count appears slow on Writing the Character-Driven Story because I started with a handout for a one-hour presentation that I presented to a writers' group one time. So in the early going, I'm more adding to the handout than writing new stuff. That will change very shortly.

Even with the rough start this morning, I just met my daily fiction goal. Now that's a good feeling. This is what happens if you just keep coming back to the chair, back to the novel.

Today's Writing

I wanted more, but I got sidetracked. That's all right. It was still a good day. And check out the nice round number. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3700

Nonfiction Words: 450 (journal) 524 (book below) = 974

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words
Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words
Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words
Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words
Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words
Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words
Day 8..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 19597 words
Day 9..... 3700 words. Total words to date..... 23297 words

In Case You're Wondering #3, this is 9 writing days in 10 calendar days.

Writing of "Erotica 3" (short story) (Maybe I'll get this done tomorrow around football games.) (brought forward 6055 words)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 49840

Total fiction words for the year..... 49840

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19583
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 19583

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 69423

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 16, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I've included a Topic is today's post: Practicing. It's far more important than it sounds. I hope you will read it. I also submitted it to The Write Word, the newsletter of the Society of Southwestern Authors. Mike Rom decided to carry it, and I guess I'll be writing a monthly column for them.

Middle of the month (again). Still going fast. Up early to get some writing done before the ball games today. Then I hope to take the rest of the day off.

I made a major decision yesterday. I ordered a desktop (tower) PC. I haven't had a desktop PC for probably ten or twelve years. Hal has been on shaky legs for awhile now, inexplicably crashing, etc. So the desktop PC will replace my current business laptop and it will move over to become Hal II. (grin)

I use the business PC mostly for my photography and for cover design, layout, and all that. I already have a 22" monitor (great for designing covers). This tower will add 8GBs of memory and a 1TB hard drive. And it's refurbished, so it didn't cost much. (grin)

Of Interest

Nada that I could find.

Topic of the Day: Practicing

Awhile back a friend mentioned almost in passing that he doesn't watch his numbers, meaning word counts, etc. like I do. I enjoy his writing a great deal, so that interested me.

It also made me think about why number-oriented goals are so important to me in this writing game. And I think I've found the answer.

Now this is going to sound like a simple concept, and really, it is. Yet so many people get it

completely wrong or just miss it altogether.

Probably it's safe for me to say that no artist can improve his or her art without practice.

What I mean is this: To paint better portraits, a painter must paint more portraits. Simply studying the masters will make him feel better, maybe, but it won't improve his craft.

The same thing goes for singers, sculptors, whittlers and anyone else who uses his or her hands and mind to create something that never existed before.

I read the posts on Dean Wesley Smith's website in order to expand my knowledge base. I read fiction for entertainment, but when I find a story that really nails me, I study it, also to expand my knowledge base. And I read how-to books (by those masters whose work I admire) for the same reason.

Now, I DO take everything I read with a grain of salt. I don't just automatically apply it to my work. I consider it. Then I keep what I find valuable and discard what I find ludicrous.

But no matter what I read or study, keep or toss aside, none of that will improve my fiction or my storytelling ability. Only practice will do that.

Got that? Your new knowledge will INFORM your fiction as you practice, but the practice is what actually makes you improve.

And by practice, I mean writing. Not hovering in place, rewriting and "polishing."

Ahem. Rewriting is not writing, folks. Rewriting is DELAYING writing. But that's a whole other topic.

Attending conferences and seminars and conventions can be valuable pursuits in that you might expand your base of knowledge.

Attending meetings of writers' groups or critique groups can be valuable pursuits in that, again, you might expand your base of knowledge.

Psst! As an aside, personally, if I hear one more person say "Write what you know" as if nobody has ever said it before, I think my head will explode. "Write what you know" is not knowledge. If anything, it is anti-knowledge. At best, it is the decaying excretion of a large male bovine.

And frankly, every time I hear that bit of trite claptrap, I think, "Wait. You DO know we're talking about writing FICTION, right? I'm pretty sure it's okay to make up some things you don't know." (grin)

So read whatever you want. Attend whatever functions or gatherings you want. But again, the only thing that will actually improve your craft is practice.

And for me, that's where numbers come into writing.

- Practice is why I set a daily word count goal.
- Practice is why I set a weekly short story goal.
- Practice is why I set a goal of writing one novel every month for a year.

It isn't just to watch the numbers grow, although I personally find that pleasant and energizing.

It's to make sure I practice.

The Day

Rolled out right at 1. Checked email, answered some, then came here. Kitten needed some extra holding this morning. She's a real trooper, keeping my hours and all that, so I don't mind petting her a little longer when she needs it.

I spent a little time finding old documents that contain some info I want to include in the nonfiction Character-Driven Story book and moving those to the folder. It's slowly coming together.

This is an extremely erratic morning. It's like the engine's turning over a little but it isn't quite catching. It's not quite 3, and I was going to work on an erotic short story.

Instead I deleted it from the lineup for now. I had a short story I was going to expand, but I decided against it. I'm too invested personally in that particular story to turn it into erotica. And no, I won't tell you which story it was. (grin)

While looking over the basic story, I also found a typo (both hand vs. both handS), corrected it, and published the corrected files to Smashwords, Amazon, and D2D.

Now it's after 4:30 and I'm turning to the novel for the first time today. Sigh. I'm running on only a few hours' sleep and this is feeling more and more like a day off. But the last time I felt that way I had a great fiction day. So we'll see.

First ballgame starts a little less than 8 hours from now. I ought'a be able to write 3200 words in eight hours, shouldn't I?

I didn't go to the novel. For some reason, I was still piddling. Finally I settled in around 6:30 and got one good session in by 7:30. Then I took an extended break, including breakfast. Now it's almost 8 and I'm back to the novel.

Well, after the slow start, I had a few more good sessions. In fact, the story officially crossed over into novel territory at 25,000 words. Woohoo! And I'm posting this early at 1:15. (I usually post it around 4 and it goes live on MailChimp at 5.)

Today's Writing

So just like the last time I thought I was gonna have to weenie out and take a day off, I just kept coming back to the computer, kept putting my fingers on the keyboard and writing the next sentence, and now the novel is over 3500 words farther along than it was yesterday. (grin) I love my job!

Fiction Words: 3591

Nonfiction Words: 1000 (journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words

Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words

Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words

Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words

Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words

Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words

Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words

Day 8..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 19597 words

Day 9..... 3700 words. Total words to date..... 23297 words

Day 10... 3591 words. Total words to date..... 26888 words

(That's Writing Day 10 out of 11 calendar days.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 53431

Total fiction words for the year..... 53431

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20583

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20583

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 74014

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Setting Goals](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 17, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

If there's going to be a day with very little writing while I'm able physically to be at my desk, it probably will be today. Today if I had a regular job I'd probably take a sick day.

I was thinking about leaving up the Topic from yesterday, but those who didn't read it can always scroll down if they want to, so moving on. At some point in the future I might do a book on all of those topics.

Of Interest

If you aren't already a subscriber of Dr. Mardy's Quotes of the Week, I recommend it. Last night's issue featured George Orwell and Alexander Woollcott.

If you'd like to subscribe, send a blank email to drmardy-on@mail-list.com.

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30 after being ill much of the night and very little sleep. I watched the thrilling Cardinals game though. Not the best officiating but at least it was even-handed, unlike the game between the Chiefs and the Cheatriots earlier in the day. I'm not sure how some people live with themselves, but I imagine the b'jillion-dollar salaries make it easier.

Strange — when I was a kid, cheating was considered dishonorable. Of course, that's when people still gave credence to the notions of honor and dishonor. Today, people and groups and teams who cheat to get what they want and are successful are considered innovative. In the meantime, those who follow the rules are considered naive and foolish.

The whole thing makes me want to load my verbal magazine with alpha characters and spin in a circle, spewing literary death in the form of hefty, spittle-laced four-letter words.

Checked email, read Dr. Mardy's newsletter, then came here. Then I backtracked and wrote an email to a former buddy, a guy I was in the Marine Corps with for a few years. Had some crazy times with that guy. Even lived a few bad jokes with him. For example, I actually did pull out in front of a Greyhound bus one day when I asked Ed if anything was coming and he said, "Nothin' but a big dawg." (That's actually what he said. He's a Texan by birth.)

Off and on, I searched for Ed for over twenty years. I finally found him in late 2014, but other than a few sparse Facebook notes, we're mostly out of touch again. It's odd how once beloved interests and people fade in and out of a life.

It's just after 4:30 already. I'm gonna release the pets a little early and then turn to the novel. And frankly, I'm not worried about how much progress I make. This is basically a day off during which I'm gonna write a bit. That's the mindset.

Well, the two ladies (cats) came bustling in with their tails fluffed. They saw or smelled something that freaked them out. Calmed the little one so she won't climb to the top of the cabinets and attempt suicide. The other one can't climb that high. And now it's 5 a.m. and this

time I'm really turning to the novel.

Had a good short session for over 700 words. So whatever happens, at least the streak remains alive. Back to the novel now for a bit.

One fairly good session. I'm gonna take off the rest of the day. I'll come back at it fresh tomorrow with a good night's rest behind me.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1377

Nonfiction Words: 560 (journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words
Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words
Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words
Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words
Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words
Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words
Day 8..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 19597 words
Day 9..... 3700 words. Total words to date..... 23297 words
Day 10... 3591 words. Total words to date..... 26888 words
Day 11... 1377 words. Total words to date..... 28265 words
(That's Writing Day 11 out of twelve calendar days.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 54808

Total fiction words for the year..... 54808

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21143

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 21143

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 75951

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional](#)

[Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 18, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No topic today.

Yesterday was a very slow writing day. Yet as I was writing, a sense came over me that the novel was going to wrap up very soon.

Now, I have zero idea where it's going or even how it CAN wrap up soon. If I give it any thought at all I can easily find at least three major threads in the novel that are currently unresolved. But that was an interesting sensation.

If it does end soon, it will be a short novel (25,000 to 39,999). But I don't predetermine the lengths of my stories. I just write them and let them be what they're going to be.

So I will put my fingers on the keyboard, write off into the dark and see what happens.

Of Interest

I don't know whether I mentioned Creative Market (<https://creativemarket.com/>) here before. If so, please forgive the repeat. If you sign up for their newsletter, you get selected freebies every Monday. Sometimes they're good, and sometimes they suck canal water out of all 50 states. I've found many great free fonts and photos there.

After a hiatus of about a week to visit with old friends, Dean Wesley Smith alleges he will be back at the helm tomorrow (1/19) so if you follow him, there you go.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Checked email, little to nothing there.

Slow start today. Still getting over some stuff from the past couple of days. And that's all right. I won't force it. Never hurts to relax your way through your writing, as long as you get to the keyboard in the first place and keep coming back.

Hit a little over 2000 words, then decided to get out of this winterized, closed-up house and walk. When the temp approached 50 degrees, I drove out to one of my favorite walking places and ended up doing 4 miles. I was surprised. On my treadmill, I can barely make 1, and that's flat and level.

Put some stuff I've been thinking about through the brain wringer, then put on a load of laundry. It's almost 3 and I'm going back to the novel for awhile.

Another short session, and then another good normal session. Good day.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3550

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal)

Writing of Detective Sean McManus (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words
Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words
Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words
Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words
Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words
Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words
Day 8..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 19597 words
Day 9..... 3700 words. Total words to date..... 23297 words
Day 10... 3591 words. Total words to date..... 26888 words
Day 11... 1377 words. Total words to date..... 28265 words
Day 12... 3550 words. Total words to date..... 31815 words
(That's Writing Day 12 out of 13 calendar days.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 58358

Total fiction words for the year..... 58358

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21543

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 21543

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 79901

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 19, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today I'll talk about Novel Length and Freedom in the Topic of the Day.

I expect the novel to wrap up today. We'll see. I had hoped it would come through in the 40,000 to 60,000 word range. That gave rise to the Topic below.

If I do finish the novel today, I'm also going to change one goal. Instead of writing one novel every month (meaning I have to begin on or after the first of the month) I'm going to write fifteen novels during the year, FINISHING at least one each month.

First I will decide which technique I want to practice (see the topic below). I'll get that firmly set in my subconscious. Then I'll put my fingers on the keyboard and write off into the dark.

Of Interest

From a commenter named Julie on Dean's site:

This excellent rant by Harlan Ellison about writers not demanding payment for their writing-related work was linked to from Passive Guy today and I thought you might agree with the sentiment, Dean!

I suspect Dean would agree with the sentiment. I personally agree with it wholeheartedly. In fact, I got a little carried away and watched a few more of Harlan's videos before I came back here to finish posting this.

Here's the link: [Harlan Ellison Rant](#)

Topic of the Day: Novel Length and Freedom

As I mentioned above, I had hoped this novel would finish in the 40,000 to 60,000 word range. It still might. But frankly, it doesn't matter. My "hope" for that is silly.

In this new world of publishing, the chains are unshackled. We are no longer tied to traditional publishing's price points and the artificial word count required to reach them. That means a story can be whatever length it needs to be in order to tell the story.

A lot of us have trouble wrapping our mind around that concept.

After doing a lot of research, I set my own fiction lengths. I call 25,000 to 39,999 words a "short novel." From 40,000 to 69,999 words is a novel, and from 70,000 words up is a "long novel." (For comparison, a "novella" is only 15,000 to 24,999 words.)

All of those from 25,000 words and up are novels. I distinguish among various lengths only to establish uniformity in my pricing. Short novels are \$4.99 to \$5.99. Novels are \$5.99 to \$6.99. Long novels are \$7.99 and up.

Here's a [List of Novels under 200 pages](#). There are many other similar lists out there. I was

surprised, honestly, to see some of the titles on this list when I found it awhile back.

It's nice to go into a story with no pre-conceived notions of length. That enables the writer to focus on other, much more important things, like practicing the craft.

For example, for the current novel I had one pre-conceived notion. I wanted to write a fast-paced suspense novel in which I also grounded the reader in the setting. So in this one I was practicing that balance.

The overall admonition remains to write a good story. If you do that, the reader won't care how long or short the book is. In fact, she won't even notice.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:30. Checked email, little to nothing there.

Another sort of slow start today. No particular reason.

Like yesterday, I feel as if I'll relax my way through my writing today. I believe (and hope) this will be an ongoing feeling. Like maybe I've cracked through another layer of eggshell in my hatching as a writer.

Maybe I'm more able to relax my way through the writing because I know it will be there.

Just after 4 a.m. I'm turning to the novel.

Nope. I wrote probably fewer than 100 words on the novel. Then the kitten needed some petting— she pretty much gets whatever she wants, and why not? And about the time she left again, I sidetracked myself with a new thought.

At the bottom of each Pro Writers "teaching" post over on the big site, I add a note about how readers can subscribe to my writing or leave a tip. A new thought popped into my head about that this morning, so I spent about a half-hour updating that note. You guys will see it tomorrow when Chapter 1 of Writing the Character-Driven Story goes live.

Now it's almost 5. Gonna release the pets, then get back to the novel.

Okay, briefly, I wrote for three good sessions, the novel flowing downhill. I learned the name of it during the second session this morning: the title is The Clearing.

I went for a walk, but aborted it at only a mile because I just didn't feel like walking. Came back to the novel, had another really great session, then another shorter session during which I cycled back to make some things match.

Overall a great day, and the novel is finished.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4434

Nonfiction Words: 800 (journal)

Writing of *The Clearing* (Novel #1 of 15 for 2016)

Day 1..... 3631 words. Total words to date..... 3631 words
Day 2..... 3148 words. Total words to date..... 6779 words
Day 3..... 0989 words. Total words to date..... 7768 words
Day 4..... 1689 words. Total words to date..... 9457 words
Day 5..... 1099 words. Total words to date..... 10540 words
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 12497 words
Day 7..... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 16244 words
Day 8..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 19597 words
Day 9..... 3700 words. Total words to date..... 23297 words
Day 10... 3591 words. Total words to date..... 26888 words
Day 11... 1377 words. Total words to date..... 28265 words
Day 12... 3550 words. Total words to date..... 31815 words
Day 13... 4434 words. Total words to date..... 36249 words (done)
(That's Writing Day 13 out of 14 calendar days.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 62792

Total fiction words for the year..... 62792

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22343

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 22343

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 85135

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [fiction](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 20, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No Topic for today, but I'll talk a little right here about Revised Goals. I know this is all about me, but my sincere hope is that you can take something away from it that helps you in your own writing endeavors.

With my thirteenth novel just finished, I mentioned yesterday I'm going to revise my goals. I was going to write one novel each month. But that means I could begin no sooner than the first day of that month.

Now I'm going to write 15 novels over the course of the year. The secondary goal is to finish at least one novel every month.

I set that secondary goal as a way to keep myself from being lax. If I decide it's all right to blow off one month because, after all, it's only an annual goal and I can play catch-up later, that's a sure recipe for failure.

So my revised goals for 2016 are as follows:

- Write 15 novels before January 1, 2017 and finish at least one every month.
- Write and publish at least one new short story every week.
- Write 3200 new words of publishable fiction every day.
- Write at least 1,000,000 publishable words of fiction.
- Write at least six new nonfiction books and/or audio courses this year.
- Continue the daily journal.

Of Interest

I suspect Dean's blog will be interesting today. But it isn't there yet as I write this.

There wasn't a lot to it. But if you wanna see a couple of pix of an old guy having stupid fun in Vegas, check it out. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 1:20. Checked email, then wrote a long note to a friend and incredibly gifted writer in Georgia. The guy's so stinkin' good I quote from his work. John Williams. Woof!

That, some admin stuff from yesterday and writing today's journal to this point consumed the first two hours of the day.

Probably today will be an easy day. My first priority is to write the story of the week. It's due by Friday. Then if I can write a second one before Monday, I'll switch my due date (for the weekly goal) back to Monday every week. That's just easier because the Free Story of the Week over on the big site goes out on Monday.

I think my next novel will be Science Fantasy, albeit no doubt with an unhealthy dose of psychological suspense. Much as I'm enjoying writing the crime/suspense/psychological suspense genre, I want to develop an idea that occurred to me several years ago.

In fact, I published the idea as a short story way back before I became a real writer. I know SO much more now than I knew then. I'm excited to see what I can do with such a warped idea. Anyway, if I do write it, I won't use anything from the original story other than the idea and probably the characters' names.

For now, it's almost 4 a.m. and I'm going to write a chapter or two for the nonfiction book below. I'll do fiction later today.

Well, had a phantom mouse episode, let babies in and out and in, and through all of that managed another chapter (1430) words on the nonfiction book. Also updated my outline (yes, for a nonfiction book I use an outline) to include another chapter, one on story starters and getting ideas. Good day so far.

It's a little after 6. Now for a brief break.

After that break I was going to write the story of the week, but that other chapter I outlined up there? I wrote it too (1530 words). So NOW another brief break, and THEN the short story of the week. And of course, at this moment (right at 9:30), I have nary the foggiest notion what it might be. Isn't this fun? (grin)

Okay, it's the end of my day now at a little after 3:30 p.m. No walk today, but a pretty good day of writing. I fell short of my daily fiction goal but I outdid myself on total word count, so I'll take it. This is what we call failing to success. (grin) It feels really good to share this with friends.

Got two chapters for Writing the Character-Driven Story written and pre-posted to the big blog, and I actually wrote the story of the week today. I kept threatening to, but I didn't really think I would. And this one is el nutso di mucho. Well, you know. That's the medical term.

Subscribers, watch your email in the morning. Everyone else, it will be on Smashwords and D2D by the time you read this. It will be on Amazon sometime tomorrow, and you can read it free on Monday, March 14th.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2410

Nonfiction Words: 750 (journal) 2960 (2 chapters, book below) = 3710

So total words for the day: 6120. See why I said I'll take it? (grin)

Writing of "Coffee? Perhaps Tea?" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... 2410 words. Total words to date..... 2410 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 65202

Total fiction words for the year..... 65202

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 26053
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 26053

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 91255

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 21, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Yesterday was a busy day. (grin) After I finished the writing and this journal, I created a cover for “Coffee? Perhaps Tea?” and a promo doc and published the thing to the website queue for March 14. Then I distributed it through D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. I’d been wanting to use that cover pic for awhile, and this story seemed perfect for it. Very strange, very twisted short story that seems several times longer than it acutally is.

This morning I remembered to add the cover to the short stories page <http://harveystanbrough.com/short-stories/> on my website. The guy on the cover pic even looks a little like a fly in that photo. (grin) Perfect.

Today will be a planned day of no writing unless a story idea smacks me upside the head. I definitely won’t begin the next novel today. I’ll select a cover pic for The Clearing and design a cover. I’ll also read it aloud to catch any inconsistencies, wrong words, and so on. Then I’ll publish the blasted thing and get back to doing what I love.

Of Interest

Pretty interesting topic over at Dean’s about trips for research.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:20. Checked email, sipped coffee, remembered I hadn’t put the cover from yesterday’s short story on my site, so I did that.

Okay, it’s 7:30 and I’ve finished the cover for The Clearing. I also sent an email to an old friend

to see whether he would like to play First Reader for The Clearing. He was unable to do that, though, so I'm reading through it aloud to catch what I can.

It's almost 1 p.m. and I caught a major problem that I have to rectify. On the good side, at least I know exactly where I took the wrong turn, and even why. So it won't be that difficult to fix. But the thread weaves in and out of the book so it will take some time. And it will change the word count for the book.

Also, this experience has caused me to revise my method a bit. I've decided to be my own first reader from here on out. I'll take a couple days admin time after every novel to read it aloud. Then if I do happen across anything big I'll be able to repair it. If you choose to do this with your own work, just be sure to remain in creative voice as you read through. Don't let the conscious critical mind sidetrack you. Back to it now.

CRAP. It's 6:42p.m. and I forgot about posting the journal. So it's a little late tonight. I'll post numbers tomorrow. Sorry folks.

Today's Writing

I wrote more words today in the novel as I went over it but I won't know how many until later, so I'll figure those in tomorrow. I don't want to miss a day posting this, so it will go out late to at least keep that alive.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: XXX (journal) XXXX (book below) = XXXX

So total words for the day: XXXX.

Writing of "" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 65202

Total fiction words for the year..... 65202

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 26053

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 26053

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 91255

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#)

[January 22, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The topic today will be Trusting Your Characters. Okay, first, my apologies for the late post last night. Thanks for bearing with me, those of you who opened it.

My final numbers (at 7:09, so 9 minutes after the blog went out) were

- Fiction: Exactly 1100 new words on the novel, The Clearing. It's all squeaky tight now. (grin) So the total word count for the novel now is 37349 words.
- Nonfiction (the journal): 500 words
- Total words for the day: 1600 words

Otherwise all I did for the day yesterday was cycle through the entire novel, create a cover for it and distribute it. I posted it to the StoneThread site this morning. [Here's the new page.](#)

Today I'm going to write another story of the week. That will effectively switch my deadline from Friday to Monday each week to match the day the story goes live on the website. Why? I don't know. Cut out one more thing to have to think about I guess.

If I'm in the mood after that, I'll write more on the nonfiction book.

Of Interest

Here are a few great articles. I gleaned all of them (directly or indirectly) from a subscription to the daily newsletter from [Publishing Perspectives](#).

[How Independent Bookstores Are Thriving in the Digital Age](#)

[People are starting to read more ebooks in Europe and Russia](#)

[When Social Media Isn't Organic: Pay to Play on Facebook](#)

And finally (truly saving the best for last) a post for all those writers who believe someone out there in the publishing world is going to take care of them (covers, promo, etc). It's Kris Rusch's blog on [Business Musings: Poor Poor Pitiful Me Is Not A Business Model](#). I loved this. (grin)

Topic of the Night: Trusting Your Characters

It's been an extremely interesting and emotional and exhausting couple of days. I mentioned

yesterday I was going to be my own first reader from now on. I'll take a day or two to read aloud, cycling through the novel while in creative mind.

But really what I'll be doing is running back through the story with my characters.

Remember the scene near the end of Close Encounters of the Third Kind? The one where the two little aliens took the hero's hands and led him aboard the spaceship?

Yesterday I felt like that. I was in a state of wonder as my characters yelled, "C'mon, man!" and we all raced through the story.

Every now and then they stopped and pointed at a problem. "See? Right there. That's where you tried to intervene in the story."

And they were right. They pointed out one major problem where one major factor of the villain's psyche didn't fit with what his psyche made him do. I stepped aside, put my fingers on the keyboard and let them fix it. Now the whole story is far better than it was before.

They also pointed out that one minor character, the bad guy's mother, played a much more significant role than I thought.

And finally they pointed out a major place where in one chapter Characters A and B were working together and Character C was off to the side. But when the novel rejoined that scene a few chapters later, Characters A and C had miraculously switched places.

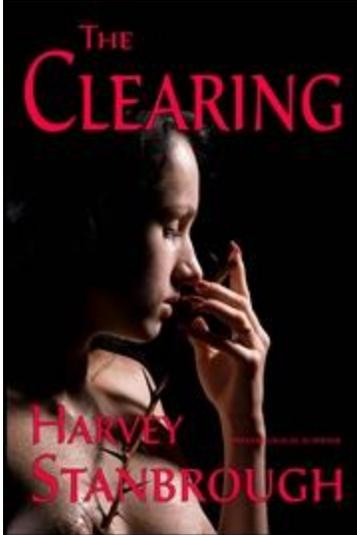
MAN am I glad my detective and my serial killer allowed me to run through the story with them. Both times.

Trust your characters, folks. You can't beat it.

The Day

Rolled out at 2:40. Sipped coffee and checked email, including browsing Publishing Perspectives. That and visiting Dean's site every day are my attempt to keep up with things. Lot of reading and learning in the first hour this morning.

I was too brain dead last night to build a new page and add The Clearing to the publisher site, so now, at 3:45, I'm heading to do that.



Okay, it's a little after 5:30. Everything's up to date on the publisher website, and while I was at it I also designed and uploaded a new cover for The Clearing. Still something not quite right, but I'm letting it go, at least for now.

That's the cover over there on the left, in case anyone wants to throw stones.

So then I wrote the Topic above, then decided to fix breakfast. Comfort food. Hashbrowns, scrambled eggs, biscuits and country gravy. No bacon. Sigh. Still good. It's 6:15. I'm gonna eat, then write a short story. And nope, no idea what it'll be.

At 6:30 I turned to Hal, but decided to create a folder there. I put everything on Hal in that folder and will move it to my Dropbox. Then when I get Hal2 set up, I'll move it all to him. Best transition I can think of.

Then I swapped the cover on my chair. Long story. Now it's after 8 and I'm turning to the second story of this week.

Well, that was mostly bust. Just a lot of nothing going on today. Probably an accumulation of the stress of the last few days. Hardly any writing to speak of, but enough to keep the streak alive. The way I feel today, I'll take it. I hope to be back to full strength tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1089 (+1100 from yesterday) = 2189

Nonfiction Words: 860 (journal) (+500 from yesterday) = 1360

So total words for the day: 1949

Writing of "Untitled" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1089 words. Total words to date..... 1089 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 67391
Total fiction words for the year..... 67391

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 27413
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 27413

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 94804

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[January 23, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No new topic today, but I left up the one from yesterday just in case anyone missed it. Today probably will be mostly a nonwriting day. By 'probably' I mean that's the plan.

I think the story for which I wrote an opening yesterday is a non-starter. Maybe after I do some other stuff, I'll look at it again, maybe switch the focus or something to shake it up. Maybe there's a story there and I just don't see it yet.

Or maybe I'll write a different story. I'd like to keep the at least 500 words per day streak alive, but it isn't really all that important.

If not, well I need a day to busy myself with nonwriting tasks anyway.

For one thing I'm replacing two computers with all the stuff that entails. I mentioned earlier I was replacing Hal. I'll replace him with by former business laptop, the one I'm on right now.

I replaced the business laptop with a refurbished Dell desktop. Since I use my business computer mostly for photo storage and for creating book files and covers, the 1 terrabyte hard drive and 8 gigabytes of ram (soon I will upgrade that to 16gb) will make my job easier. And if there's one thing I'm learning rapidly, it's that I need things to be a little easier.

I suppose the world won't end if I take a day off writing. We'll see.

Meanwhile, my inadvertent mentor, DWS, is talking on his site about taking one more day of rest from his vacation even though he “planned on getting back to the novel [he] started in late November.”

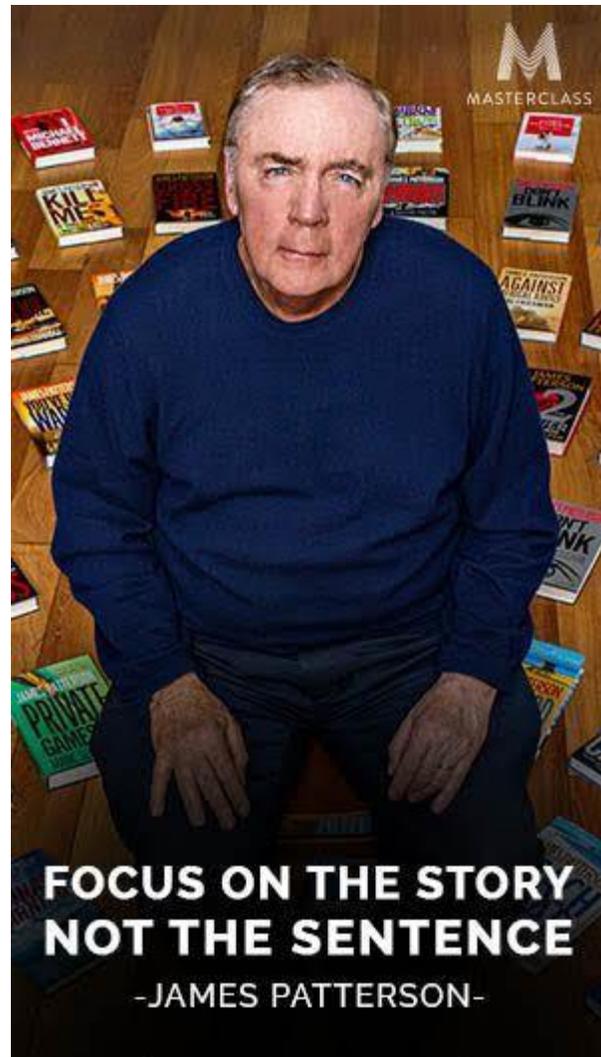
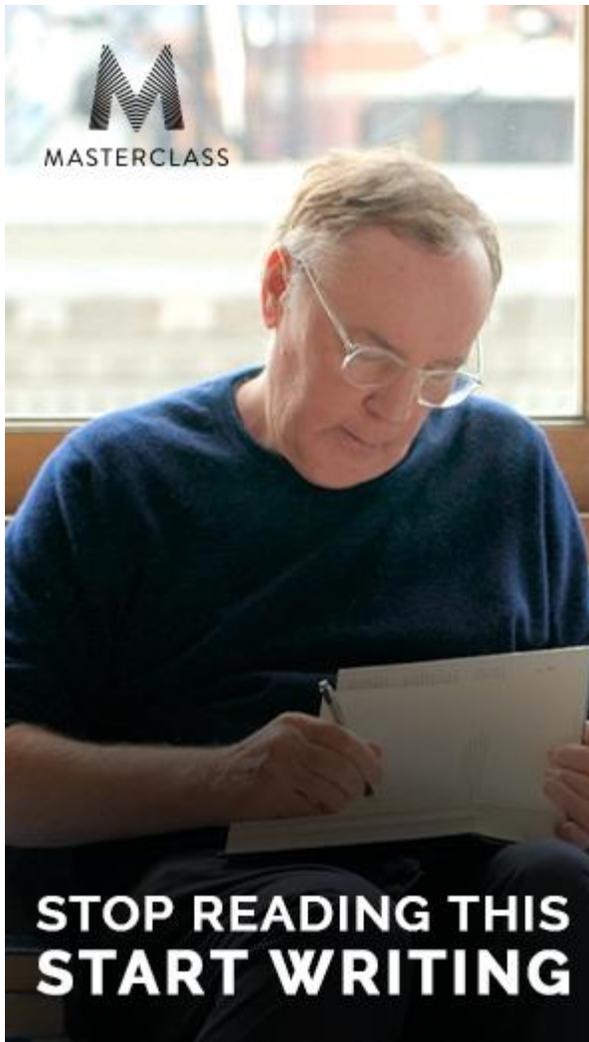
I’m just not at the point where I can do that. I can relax my way through a writing day, but I can’t just take a day off without it bothering me. I still have that fear that the words and stories will abandon me if I don’t give them the attention they deserve.

Of Interest

Kind of interesting, maybe. [This Site](#) explores and details personality types according to geographic location. This includes “personality portraits for 185 countries, 50 U.S. states, and all five regions.”

In case anyone missed it yesterday, here’s a post for all those writers who believe someone out there in the publishing world is going to take care of them (with covers, promo, etc). It’s Kris Rusch’s blog on [Business Musings: Poor Poor Pitiful Me Is Not A Business Model](#). I loved this. (grin)

And in case you (like I) sometimes need visual motivation, here are a couple of pics I stole from an online ad. The course they advertise is mostly BS, by the way. I investigated it thoroughly, even to having them send me a syllabus. Anyway, the ads are pretty good.



Topic of the Night (repeat): Trusting Your Characters

It's been an extremely interesting couple of days. I mentioned yesterday I was going to be my own first reader from now on. I'll take a day or two to read aloud, cycling through the novel while in creative mind.

But really what I'll be doing is running back through the story with my characters.

Remember the scene near the end of Close Encounters of the Third Kind? The one where the two little alien's took the hero's hands and led him aboard the spaceship? Yesterday I felt like that. I was in a state of wonder as my characters yelled, "C'mon, man" and we all raced through the story.

Every now and then they stopped and pointed at a problem. "See? Right there. That's where you tried to intervene in the story."

And they were right. They pointed out a major problem where one major factor of the villain's psyche didn't fit with what his psyche made him do. I stepped aside and let them fix it, and now the whole story is far better than it was before.

They also pointed out that one minor character, the bad guy's mother, played a much more significant role than I thought.

And finally they pointed out a major place where in one chapter Character A and B were working together and Character C was off to the side. But when the novel rejoined that scene a few chapters later, Characters A and C had miraculously switched places.

MAN am I glad my detective and my serial killer allowed me to run through the story with them. Both times.

Trust your characters, folks. You can't beat it.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Sipped coffee, checked email, wrote a couple.

Spent the first 3 hours doing basically nothing other than writing the top part of this post, a little reading of the personality type profiles and trying to shake off the last few days.

I'm gonna release the pup'ncat then see if I can put the desktop computer together. Huge changes.

With several normal problems and a few abnormal ones, got the desktop computer up and running. I'm writing this on Hal2, which used to be my business computer.

Probably no writing today, as I mentioned earlier. It's 1 p.m. now, and I'm going to fill the balance of the day fiddling with these computers to make them act right. So I'm posting this way early. If I write any fiction later in the day, I'll add it to the Journal tomorrow morning like I did yesterday for the numbers from Thursday.

I had upgraded this computer to Windows 10 before, but since I wanted to use the Windows Transfer Cable to shift everything to the other big computer, I backed this one off to Windows 7 again so it would match the other one. Now I'm upgrading both of them to Windows 10.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal) + XXXX (book below) = XXXX

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of "The Dead Maid" (working title, short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1089 words. Total words to date..... 1089 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 67391
Total fiction words for the year..... 67391

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 27913
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 27913

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 95304

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[January 24, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No new topic today. I was on the verge of saying this would be a nonwriting day too, but that's silly. I got most of two computers set up yesterday, and I'm up early as usual. There's no reason I shouldn't do my job.

The babies are ticked at me this morning because I won't let them outside. But the coyotes are out and about so they can just be mad if they want to. Ever seen a five-pound cat stomp? And on quiet little cat feet too? It's pretty funny. Not that I'd let her know I was laughing.

Of Interest

Dean's still out of it. Today he revealed he caught a flu bug from someone on the plane on the way back from Vegas. All this time I thought he was taking longer than usual to recover from his vacation.

The Day

Rolled out at 3. Sipped coffee, checked email, came straight here.

Not in a good mood this morning so probably this will be sketchy.

Fully intended to start writing fiction, but I can't seem to focus on a new task until an older one is as finished as possible. I did some more to my desktop computer. Then 5 a.m. was here so I let the pup'ncat out.

It's almost 5:30 so I'm gonna look around and see whether I can write some fiction today.

Took awhile longer. Still a bit disoriented moving computers etc. But I did finish the story I started the other day. So there's that. And my new due day for the story of the week is not Monday instead of Friday.

Now I'm off the rest of the day for football.

It's been a lax couple of days, but I'm doing well for the month and I hope to be back to full strength tomorrow. Maybe I'll start the next novel tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1986

Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2286

Writing of "The Maid's Pulse" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1089 words. Total words to date..... 1089 words

Day 2..... 1986 words. Total words to date..... 3075 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 69377

Total fiction words for the year..... 69377

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 28213

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 28213

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 97590

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 1/25

[January 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The Topic today is Nostalgia. Pretty good football day yesterday. One of my teams got in. One was spanked and sent home.

The focus today, I think, will be the nonfiction book.

I'm doing 99% of everything right now on my little laptop (Hal2) without the big screen attached. It's hooked up to the desktop computer. I didn't think things through. Yeah, big shock there. (grin)

The big computer won't really be fully operational until my new keyboard and my new edition of Microsoft Office Pro 2010 gets here. Then I can switch all the business stuff back over to the big screen and make Hal2 strictly for writing.

Spoiled, aren't I? Oh, here's a new definition for you:

spoiled, adj. Taking gravy for granted

Man, can I think of some applications for that definition.

Check out the topic today.

Of Interest

Nada really. Read some Hemingway. Don't like Hemingway? Read some Stanbrough. No?

Topic of the Night: Nostalgia

In the intro above I was grumbling because I've been doing everything on this little computer after I'd gotten used to doing things on a much easier to see 22" wide-screen monitor.

But I gotta tell you, I realize I'm spoiled.

This little 'puter sure beats the old Olivetti and Royal typewriters on which I first learned to type. Some people think of those as "romantic," but I'm not quite sure how that would work.

Although I DO have a software program that, when I'm using it, sounds like an old manual typewriter. Complete with the clacking keys and the ding! when I hit the Return (Enter) key. Maybe that's what they mean. But the problem is, I can't get that sound for the word processing

program I like to use.

I do miss those sounds, as well as the zipper-like sound some of the old manuals made. You know, when you hit the lever to rotate the platen and move the paper up to the next line. But I certainly do not miss the stiffness and long drop of the keys.

In fact, the desktop computer I ordered came with a keyboard. But the keys were so deep I couldn't use the thing. That's why I ordered another one. It's even advertised (on ebay) as having "Ultra-thin keys, comfortable to operate." Much of the seller's description reminded me of an ad for a robot. So probably a short story there at least. (grin)

Then came the electrics that looked like regular typewriters but plugged into the wall. I still haven't figured out what benefit anyone derived from electrifying those. The keystrokes still were stiff, and if I remember correctly the typist still had to manually manipulate the platen. Or maybe it was electric too, but the typist COULD manually manipulate it.

The first really good electric (to me) was the smaller Smith-Corona electric typewriter. The big selling point on that one was that it was portable. (grin) Mine was blue. Eventually I swapped it for a Smith-Corona Word Processor! Holy crapamundo! You could actually see the words on a teewincey screen. I think mine showed four lines. To be honest, I preferred the typewriter.

I do still have very fond memories of the IBM Selectric and Selectric II. To this day I can feel the way the keys moved under my fingers. Very smooth action. And watching that little ball spin and smack the paper was a unique experience.

Quick show of hands — anyone else used to stick gum up under that little ball to see what would happen?

Yeah, me either. But I still wonder.

So all in all, especially as a writer, I'm extremely glad to live in an age when computers are available, and specifically laptop computers. You can fold the entire world under one arm and take it with you.

It's like the cell phone of typewriters. What could be better than that?

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. Sipped coffee, checked email. Nothing much there.

Came here, wrote the topic and what's above it. Now it's just 5:30 and I'm turning to the nonfiction book.

Around 11 I got out to the PO and for a quick two mile walk along a country road out here. I want to get back to 4, 6, 8, but I'm just not into it again yet. Anyway, back by noon-fifteen and back to the nonfiction book.

Okay, zero fiction today. I did get two chapters done on the nonfiction book though. When I get a couple more behind me I'll start posting them a little more often over on the other site.

Tomorrow I'll get back in the saddle on my fiction. I'm falling behind. I'm just under 70,000 fiction words for the month, BUT I'm over 100,000 total words for the month. Woohoo!

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 750 (journal) + 2500 (Ch 4,5 book below) = 3250

So total words for the day: 3250

Writing of "XXXX" ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 69377

Total fiction words for the year..... 69377

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 31463

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 31463

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 100840

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [nonfiction](#), [nostalgie](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [writing](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 1/26](#)

[January 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic today, a short one, is Life Happens, Keep Coming Back.

Today I will write fiction. I don't know yet whether it will be a short story or (I hope) the

beginning of a novel, but I will write fiction.

Of Interest

GREAT small topic over at Dean's place. Scroll or read down to [Topic of the Night: Starting](#). Once again it's as if the guy is living in my closet. And I couldn't agree with him more.

Topic of the Day: Life Happens, Keep Coming Back

I've touched on this recently in one way or another, but I don't remember where. It might even have been in an email to someone.

Life happens. Sometimes tragedies or near tragedies happen to our loved ones. Or things happen that we know very easily could have become tragedies.

Sometimes we're under the weather with a cold or a pair of lungs threatening pneumonia (anyone else enjoy pronouncing the P in pneumonia?). And sometimes we're just emotionally or physically drained for whatever reason. Sometimes it's all of the above or more.

If you have a goal to attain, you can still attain it.

You take care of what you have to do or need to do or want to do or is necessary that you do, and then you remember this three-word mantra:

Keep. Coming. Back.

If you keep coming back, you will attain your goal or, at the worst, you will fail to amazing success.

If you don't keep coming back, you will fail. Period.

My maternal grandfather, Roy Britton, once came up behind me while I was sulking. I must have been ten, maybe eleven years old. I'd been trying to do something. I don't even remember now what it was. He stopped behind me there for a moment, then put one hand on my shoulder. He said, "Feelin' pretty bad, I guess."

And as I recall, I just nodded and maybe sniffled a bit. You know, the poor-poor-pitiful-me thing.

Grandpa patted my shoulder. Quietly — he always spoke quietly — he said, "Well, now aren't you the lucky one."

I looked at him, frowned. "What?"

He grinned. "This is one of those opportunities to show everybody what you're made of. You don't get many of those." Then he patted my shoulder again, turned and started for the house.

After a few steps, he said, “Oh, your mama said to tell you supper’ll be ready in about a half-hour.”

Even back then I knew exactly what he meant. Getting it right every time doesn’t matter. What matters is that you keep coming back.

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. Sipped coffee, checked email. Nothing much there. Thanks to those of you who commented here or on the Story of the Week. I appreciate it. Comments help spread the word about the blogs.

I read Dean’s stuff, then came here, wrote the stuff above.

I noticed the font on the email version of this blog is tiny again. Sigh. I went to Mail Chimp again this morning, watched a worthless video and read worthless instructions. There’s an hour I’ll never get back. Then I went back to the template and made a few tweaks.

We’ll see whether I hit the right buttons this time. Maybe I can only make the print large enough to be visible if I send an excerpt instead of the full content via email.

My baby kitten needed a little time on Dad’s chest, so I gave her that. I don’t know very much, but I do know intimately the value of Time. It’s the most precious commodity we have (trite, but true). And how we spend it and who we spend it on conveys tons about our priorities and what’s important to us.

It’s almost 5. I’m gonna write now.

Well, odd day. It’s already 11. Once again I find myself thinking Be Careful What You Wish For.

This morning I’ve started two short stories and a novel. I have a great opening on one story (it could become a novella or a novel too), only the hook on the other (but it’s an extremely good hook), and a good start on the novel. But everything is very erratic.

I was gonna take a quick walk and see whether maybe that would shake something loose or settle something in, but the wind’s blowing. I don’t walk in wind. I’ll figure out something else for a break.

Came back and wrote more on the story with the opening, then more on the novel. Good start on both. I’ll save the other story for another time. Not enough words on it to talk about, but a really great two-sentence hook that will not be denied. (grin)

Getting off here a little early today (2:40). It’s already been a very long day.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 3658
Nonfiction Words: 800 (journal)

So total words for the day: 4458

Writing of “Suicide Watch” (probably a short story of the week, maybe more)

Day 1..... 1223 words. Total words to date..... 1223 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of Kirski (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 2435 words. Total words to date..... 2435 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 73035
Total fiction words for the year..... 73035

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 32263
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 32263

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 105298

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 1/27

[January 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic of the day is Making Writing Important.

Today around here I'll finish at least one short story today. I'll look at the hook I wrote yesterday and write that one too if it strikes me. If not, I'll set it aside and look at it another time.

And then I'll also work on the novel. Maybe. This novel, as I think I mentioned before, is based on a short story I wrote a long time ago. Back before I really knew what I was doing with setting and the five senses and pacing. So I'm using the IDEA but not the actual story. So going in, I'm expecting a slow start for the first few days.

Of Interest

Another GREAT regular topic of the night over at Dean's place on [Perspective](#). Found out I have a lurker today. (grin) It pleased me to learn that person is a regular over at Dean's place as well as dropping in here now and then. You will find many similarities if you watch long enough. DWS is my unintentional mentor. There are (writing) topics on which we disagree, but I respect him enough not to mention those aloud.

Topic of the Day: Making Writing Important

In Dean's small topic yesterday, he talked about starting writing after being off for awhile. One of the biggest hindrances to writing, he said, was making what you want to write important. Absolutely spot on. And part of the reason it's such a large problem is because it's so easy to overlook.

That's a problem I often encounter. And the only way to overcome it is to tell your subconscious it isn't important. You just want to tell a story. That's all. But you have to notice it before you can tell it anything.

In my case, it's easy to start a new short story. I guess because I know it isn't that big a deal. I'm easily writing one a week, and some weeks I easily write more than one. This week, my subscribers are making out. I've written three short stories this week and about half of another one today.

This month so far, I finished one novel, wrote another one whole, and wrote seven short stories. And my goal is one a week. So that's what I mean when I say it's easy to start a new short story.,

But it's hard at first to start a new novel. Why? Because I've made it important. I really NEED to start a new novel now or I might not finish at least one every month and (cue panicked breathing) and I definitely won't finish fifteen in this calendar year. Oh no! (grin)

Oh no? *So what?* is more like it. What if I don't meet my goal to write 15 novels in a year? On the down side, what will happen? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. And on the up side, I still will have written 12 or 13 or 14 novels. I will have failed to success.

At the end of this year, if I reach my goal, I will have written and published 27 novels. (And each one will be better, craft-wise, than the previous one.) If I don't reach my goal, barring some debilitating injury, I still will have written and published 24, 25 or 26 novels.

All because I understand, when I sit down at the keyboard, no angelic chorus is going to gather around me and sing hymns. I'm not engaged in some "elevated" endeavor. Shrug. I'm just telling

a story.

The next novel is no more “important” to a writer than the next custom cabinet is to a carpenter. We both continue to learn our craft, and we’re both proud of what we do. But any importance is ascribed by the person who benefits: the consumer who puts canned goods in her new cabinet, then settles in on the couch with the latest Stanbrough novel.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3. Sipped coffee, checked email. My uncle, who was a professional photographer for Lockheed, occasionally sends me rare animal photos, stuff like that. The ones in the email he sent today were so remarkable I put the title into a search engine and found the live link. So if you like things like that, here are [Stunning Photos of Animals You’ve Probably Never Seen Before](#). Call it a bonus for those of you who read this far. (grin)

I wrote most of what’s above, then visited Dean’s site. Let the pup’n’cat out a moment ago (it’s almost 5) and now I’m gonna visit HarveyStanbrough.com to see whether I can create a quick page that points to my novels over on StoneThread Publishing.

Whew. Well, that became more involved than I thought it would. When the smoke cleared I had added a page for my collections, novels and nonfiction books. All of those point to the publisher site, but at least they’re on my site too. After all, I wrote them.

Then a little time on Facebook to wish my middle son a happy birthday. Then to check on a friend who is nearing the end of a journey with cancer, and then check on my eldest grandson, who was in the hospital a couple of days ago. So a distracting morning to say the least. And yes, I allowed the distractions. Life happens.

Now it’s 8 a.m. and I’m turning to the short story from yesterday.

Made some headway on one story, very erratically (like yesterday, ugh). It’s after 10:30 now. I’m gonna drive to the PO then get a walk in.

Back after a short two miles. It’s enough. Light breeze, but it was chilly. Back to the story.

It just dawned on me why I’m having so much trouble writing right now. I told you awhile back I switched over to using one computer only for writing. On the other one I did everything else: email, Facebook, nonfiction writing, cover design. All of that. I got used to having a dedicated writing computer. When I sat down at that one, it was strictly for writing fiction.

Since I have only this one again for the time being, I’ve been doing everything on it. And it really is amazing how much the other stuff intervenes.

Okay, so at least I think I know what’s going on. I was puzzled about that for the past few days. Now that I know, maybe I can suck it up, write what I can, and not worry about it so much. In a few days (I hope) my new keyboard and Office 2010 will be here and I can get back to normal.

Finished “The Suicide Watch,” then published it to Smashwords, D2D, Amazon and my website. It will go live as the free story of the week there on March 28. (Subscribers, you will get it later today, probably before you get this.) A short break now, then back for a bit of writing.

Okay, dealt with some stuff, then worked on another story for a bit. Tomorrow I hope to bury myself in fiction. The longer I live, the more sense it makes compared to the “real” world. Or as an old man sitting on a rock alongside a dirt road might have said, “Whatacrockacrap.” Kind’a rolls off the tongue, doesn’t it? I might start a club.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 3063

Nonfiction Words: 1100 (journal)

So total words for the day: 4163

Writing of “Suicide Watch” (a short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1223 words. Total words to date..... 1223 words

Day 2..... 1506 words. Total words to date..... 2729 words (done)

Writing of “The Old Man” (working title, a short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1557 words. Total words to date..... 1557 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of Kirski (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 2435 words. Total words to date..... 2435 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 76098

Total fiction words for the year..... 76098

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 33363

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 33363

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 109461

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Keep Coming Back](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 1/28

[January 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today.

Of Interest

Nada.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Seems to be my main time. Sipped coffee, checked email. Messed around on the web for awhile, did some work on a couple of websites for people who never even know I'm in there, and then cleared my calendar for anything but writing.

There's the one conference I'm teaching at for Missouri Writers' Guild over the April-May transition weekend in Kansas City if I don't cancel, but that's the last one. Reckon all the others will be able to get along without me? LOL

I finished one short story today, but it's a good one. It's the one I started yesterday, and the title is "No Better Day." It will be the free story of the week on April 4. Man, moving right along on the short stories, eh? Also knocked out a little more on the novel. Slow start, as I expected. No biggie.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2589

Nonfiction Words: 160 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2749

Writing of "No Better Day" (working title, a short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1557 words. Total words to date..... 1557 words

Day 2..... 1030 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words (done)

Writing of **Kirski** (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 2435 words. Total words to date..... 2435 words

Day 2..... 1559 words. Total words to date..... 3884 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 78687

Total fiction words for the year..... 78687

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 33523

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 33523

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 112210

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 1/29

[January 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today. But kind of talking through something that might help you guys too. Hope you stick around for this one. Sorry for how thin the journal was yesterday. Just not a good day.

The plan for today is to work on the novel. By the end of today I should know whether I will be able to turn the long short story I wrote so long ago into a novel.

A lot of people think this should be easy, but it's the hardest writing I've done in awhile.

Remember all the whining I did back when I was writing Book 3 of the Wes Crowley series? (It was difficult because I already knew how Book 4 would start because it was already written.) So that told me in advance what the ending would have to be for Book 3. And when I know the ending, it's just massively boring.

I don't like writing something when I already know the ending anymore than I like reading

something when I already know the ending.

Same thing here. I don't really know the ending of this NOVEL, if I can turn it into a novel, but the idea, the story, had an ending at one time as a short story. If I could just push that out of my mind it would be fine. But it's very difficult for me to do that.

For one thing—ask anyone who knows me well—I tend to obsess *a little* about some things. Which is like saying if you stand in the path of a tidal wave, you might experience *a little* moisture.

For another, if you don't believe me, just try it. Writing a novel from a short story I mean, not the tidal wave thing.

I really LIKE this idea, and I think it would make a great novel, but if I can't shove the earlier ending completely from my mind, I might have to start over (again) or just stick this one back in the can for another year or two and start something new.

So that's what I'm about today. That and hoping the stuff I ordered for my big computer will get here. I have GOT to get some sense of normalcy back in my life. And if it's warm enough and not windy later maybe I'll get out for a walk.

Hang in there. The real "talking through the problem" comes below in The Day.

Of Interest

I don't think I shared this before. Just in case you want to learn to design things (like book covers maybe), check out [12 Free Ways to Learn Design](#).

And visit Dean's site. After you click through to his site you'll have to scroll down to see his topic of the night: [Writing Beliefs](#). This is a list of his beliefs about writing and writers, from over 4 decades in the business. I agree with most of them.

The Day

Rolled out right at 1:30 this a.m. Coffee, checked email. Nada. Nothing to read to help me wake up (takes about an hour) so spider solitaire for awhile.

Oh, I also sent an email to my contact in Kansas City to cancel my appearance at the conference there in late April. I just don't have the heart for it. (A ticker joke, see? grin) I should never have accepted the invitation in the first place.

Well, solitaire for more than awhile, then a few emails and Facebook stuff, and then here to write everything above this. Now it's almost 4:30. I'm gonna screw off for another half-hour or so and then let the pup'ncat out. Save the interruption in case things break loose.

Part of all the delay this morning is that I think I'm a little scared of looking at the novel again.

I'm not afraid of writing it, but I'm considerably afraid I'll find out it refuses to be written as a novel. If that does happen, I'll just move on. But as I wrote earlier, I hope that DOESN'T happen because I really like this story idea.

I wrote a session on the novel—just over 1000 words—but it didn't feel right. I thought it was going fairly well. It looked like maybe I'd be writing part of it around the framework of the story. Maybe absorb part of the story into it as I went.

But as I said, that didn't feel right. I was writing, yes, but I was paying too much attention to the original story. I was clinging. Made it feel way too much like work.

So (big breath, hard decision) I think I'm going to shelve it for a day or two. I'll finish the nonfiction book over the next day or two, then revisit this story idea.

It finally warmed up enough to get out for a walk. First time in a while I've really needed it.

Back from the walk. Four point six miles. Not bad. I think my pedometer is off a bit. I think it should've been more like 4.1 or 4.2. I'll adjust it for my next walk. And I decided today I've worn out the road I used to enjoy walking on. It's a trudge-fest now, so I'm gonna find somewhere else.

Wrote a little more, picked around here and there, and **I found the problem in the novel** (cue angelic choir).

The opening of the original story, which I really like, leads directly to the conclusion of the original short story. Duh. But I've already WRITTEN that story, see. I don't WANT to write that same story, only longer.

I want to write a novel with the main situation and most of the same characters. The situation is monstrously good, and the characters aren't too shabby either.

So that's the key. It won't be the same opening, and it won't be the same story.

So I'm going to scrap the whole thing, especially that opening, and begin writing somewhere else in our hero's life. In a few days, I'll start with ZERO words and just go from there.

So not a lot of writing done today. But I did get a good (but very tiring) walk and I figured out what I need to do to write the novel. THAT is a major breakthrough. That's worth a 5,000 word day to me.

And thank you. Your presence here enabled me to talk it out with 32 hearty souls, and you'll never know how much that helps.

But first, a couple of days away from it while I finish the nonfiction book that I'm sharing on the big blog. I have a feeling when that's behind me, this other will flow much better.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1428

Nonfiction Words: 1030 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2458

Writing of Kirski (novel, working title)

Day 1..... 2435 words. Total words to date..... 2435 words

Day 2..... 1559 words. Total words to date..... 3884 words

Day 3..... 1428 words. Total words to date..... 5312 words

(Pausing the novel here – I'll begin anew in a few days.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 80115

Total fiction words for the year..... 80115

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 34553

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 34553

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 114668

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 1/30](#)

[January 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, only two days left in the month. I guess probably I won't write anymore fiction this month since I need a couple days away from the novel idea. But that's all right. I'll take the 80,000 words of fiction and feel good about it. I need to finish Writing the Character-Driven Story too. Then probably I'll increase the frequency of posts over at the big blog to get it all out there so I can publish it.

Then again, I guess I really don't have to wait. I had hoped, honestly, for a lot of comments. I was certain some of those might make it into the book too, but thus far there have been very few. So maybe when it's ready I'll go ahead and publish the thing. (grin)

So the plan for today is to work on the nonfiction book.

I do understand I should be able to work on fiction most of the day and then give the nonfiction a little time. I'm just not quite comfortable with leaving one writing project to work on another one yet. The back and forth makes me nervous.

Of Interest

This isn't specifically for writers but it's a great company if you're interested in Irish food, clothing and other items. Over the past few years I've shopped for specialty items at [Celtic Clothing](#). This past Christmas season I ordered two sets of Guinness pint pub glasses. When the order arrived, there was only one set.

I emailed them and they arranged to have the company ship them to me directly, which didn't happen. When I emailed them again, they apologized and then refunded the full price of my original order, almost \$50. They insisted I keep the first set of pub glasses as a gift and apologized for their inability to fill the full order.

In my experience, companies like that simply don't exist anymore, so I want to do what little I can to promote them. I hope you will visit their site.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 this a.m. Great night's sleep for the first time in awhile. Close to nine hours, almost unheard of for me. I'm not one who enjoys sleeping. To me it's a waste of time. I mean, the point of living is to be alive, right? And lying helpless and unconscious is not living. So if I could do without it completely, I would.

Coffee, checked email. Little there, but I didn't need much help waking up this morning. I did some prep on the nonfiction book. Mostly moving some things from some other files and making a few notes so that when I start I can move straight through the chapters. I'll work on that today. In the back of my mind, I'll be excited to know I get a fresh start on the novel in a couple days.

Had a good walk. Only two and a half miles but a lot of vertical, so challenging for an old fat man. Had a great idea for a humorous collection of faux song lyrics on the way back too, so I'll be working on that soon.

It's already almost one p.m. and I've done very little on the nonfiction book. Turning out to be a day off for me, and that really isn't what I wanted. (grin) So I'm gonna turn to now and get at least a couple of chapters finished. Working on 6 now. By the end of my day tomorrow, I want to be finished with Writing the Character-Driven Story so I can start fresh on the novel on 1 February. At the latest.

Feels strange not reporting any fiction writing at all today, but this is probably good for me. I did have a pretty good day of nonfiction, but I hope tomorrow is a lot better. I'd love to be finished with Writing the Character-Driven story tomorrow.

Today I got wrapped around the wheel of creating an example for Writing Setting. Insane how much I worry about some things. Anyway, tomorrow should go much better.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 700 (journal) + 2530 (book below) = 3230

So total words for the day: 3230

Total fiction words for the month..... 78687

Total fiction words for the year..... 78687

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 37783

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 377833

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 117898

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 1/31](#)

[January 31, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

One day left in the month. The (ambitious) plan for today is to work on the nonfiction book and finish it. We'll see.

Yeah, that didn't work out. But that's all right. See my voluminous explanation in The Day. (grin)

I'm looking forward to tomorrow. For the first time all year the annual figures won't be the same as the monthly figures. A BRAND NEW MONTH folks! A BRAND NEW OPPORTUNITY to kick some fiction! (grin)

Of Interest

Nothing today.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2:30 this a.m. Coffee, checked email. Dr. Mardy's Quotes of the Week helped me wake up. Great issue. Everyone who's ever tried and failed to stay in love should read this one. I found three new favorite quotes in this issue. Here's one:

"Love does not consist of gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction." Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Eh? Eh? Is that good, or what?

Okay, right at 3:30 I was off to work, but I sidetracked myself. I enjoy writing quotes, aphorisms and definitions. So I did that for an hour. Now to the nonfiction book.

It's almost funny. As I write examples for the nonfiction book, I'm actually writing fiction. (grin) I'm not counting it as fiction, of course, because it's in my nonfiction book as an example. But I'm enjoying writing the examples more than the text. Hope I finish this thing today.

Finished and posted Chapter 6, which has become Writing Setting and Notes on Writing the Scene. It was long (over 3100 words) so I posted it in two blog posts, Part I and Part II.

Off for a quick two-mile walk up a broad wash. Visited a gulch I like a lot and also a field of isenglass just to look around. Then back here to start Chapter 7, which was GONNA be Writing Off Into the Dark.

Then I slapped my forehead. Wait a minute. I can't post this on the website free. I'll be competing with my own audio lecture on the same topic. Besides, although WITD is a wonderfully freeing writing technique that makes writing much more fun for me personally, it isn't an integral part of the topic of Writing the Character-Driven Story. So out it goes.

And the next original chapter in line, Cycling, is another technique that accompanies WITD in both form and function. So it comes out of the book too. So here I am, down to a lean, trim seven chapters and three appendices.

For now, a quick shower so I can find all the corkscrew mesquite and acacia thorns in my belly.

See, there were these bushes blocking my way. And them bein' what they are and my belly bein' what it is and me bein' who I am, well, there y'are. I got a belly full of stickers. Oh well.

I thought I might finish this book today, but that isn't going to happen. I did start Chapter 7, which is now Writing the Ending and the Resolution, but I'm not gonna push it. I'll finish it and the few appendices over the next week.

Tomorrow, the focus goes back on fiction. And MAN am I ready for that! For now, I'm gonna post this and get my spreadsheet ready for February. Woohoo!

Monthly Roundup

80,115 new words of fiction (far below my goal of 99,200 – average of 2584 per day)

42,456 new words of nonfiction (only blog posts and books)

122,571 total new words for the month

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 450 (journal) + 4223 (book below) = 4673

So total words for the day: XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 80115

Total fiction words for the year..... 80115

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words

Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 42456

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 42456

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 122571

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 2/1](#)

[February 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The Topic of the Day today is Starting and Fear.

Got a great, really motivating comment on last night's post. (Thanks Christopher.) It's no secret that I'm doing all this journal stuff for myself, but I have to tell you, it feels really good to know it's helping someone else too.

And here we are. A BRAND NEW MONTH! Today I will write zero nonfiction other than this blog. I'm not gonna write so much as a grocery list until I get a good start on the Kirski novel. (grin)

Of Interest

As I often do, I recommend reading [Dean's latest post](#). It's on the new month, and in the topic he talks about the past few months. I'm not as busy as Dean is with anything except writing, and this post makes me doubly glad of that fact. I feel blessed.

Harvey's Daily Quote (yeah, this probably isn't gonna be daily): "I don't understand why those writers who 'suffer for their art' and all that crap get so angry at those of us who just tell stories. If I write a novel in 15 or 20 days, how does that adversely affect the guy who is on his fifteenth rewrite seven years into one novel? This is no different than any other religion. To those who spend all their time trying to convince 'fast' writers we're doing it wrong: We understand that you're going to heaven and we aren't 'cause you're doing everything right and we're not, okay? But we're cool with that. Good for you. Safe trip."

Topic of the Day: Starting and Fear

Odd. Even as long as I've been doing this now, and even as excited as I am to start writing fiction again, I'm finding it difficult to start this morning. Difficult to sit down at Hal2 and just start writing.

I know what it is. It's fear. But really, it's fear of nothing. Conscious mind stuff. If I don't start, I can't finish and publish, and my work won't be criticized, and blah blah blah. It's all so insanely ridiculous, I should be able even to train my conscious mind to reject it, shouldn't I?

But nope. The conscious mind exists for our protection, period. So like most people, I have to overcome it almost every time. And I will, no problem. It's just annoying.

I finally learned to overcome this nonsense quickly by replacing one fear with another. (This is another trick I picked up from Dean, I think, awhile back.) The reasoning goes like this:

1. What will happen if I start writing my story?

Nothing bad at all. In fact, I'll get to enjoy what I can only explain as "the writer's high." Racing through the story with my characters, finding and experiencing new situations around every

corner is just an amazing feeling. It easily rivals the endorphine-release-activated “writer’s high.”

2. Okay, so what will happen if I don’t write a story this week or if I don’t finish a novel this month? Or more importantly, if I don’t write?

Nothing bad, except I’ll feel like crap. I’ll break a streak, my numbers will dwindle, and I’ll know I failed to do something I could have done easily and that I enjoy a great deal.

So there’s my tip for the day. Find a way to make yourself fear Not writing more than you fear writing and you’ll have a lot more fun.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 1:30. The usual coffee and email to wake up.

For the first 3 hours of the day, I read other stuff, signed up for one of Dean’s lectures, played spider solitaire, and wrote this stuff. I even wrote a topic of the day (above) to delay starting writing fiction. (grin) Insane, yes?

Finally, a little after 4, I was about to turn to Hal2 to begin the new novel based on the situation and characters in a previous short story. Then the lecture came in from Dean. It’s directly relevant to what I’m about to do, so I decided to delay beginning the novel until I listen to the lecture.

It’s now slightly after 6 a.m. and I’ve finished listening to the lecture. These things are gold. In this particular one, I learned one new technique that will help immensely in my current project. The lecture also reminded me of a few things I already knew that will come in handy as well. Finally, it validated some thoughts I had, some of the reasons I decided to turn the situation and characters from this short story into a novel. Excellent.

The working title of the new novel is The Bone Fleshier. I have a feeling that will be the actual title as well. I think I’d like this to become a series, but I’m not sure how it could. Of course, if it can, that’s something the characters will reveal to me along the way.

I had one good session during which I wrote a new opening of just under 1,000 words. Then some other stuff. I researched names of two nationalities, both surnames and given names, male and female. I also searched for some of the big organizations I want to include to make sure nobody else is using them. Made a run to the PO, etc.

I had a second brief session, then a break and another brief session.

Not really the day I wanted for the first day of a new novel. Then again, I’m getting used to having slow starts, so it’s all right. I’m a little annoyed to have written so few words on the first day of a brand new shiny month though. But I’ll get over it. (grin)

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 2263 (almost 1,000 below my daily goal)
Nonfiction Words: 1000 (journal) + XXXX (book below) = XXXX

So total words for the day: 3263

Writing of The Bone Flesher (novel)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 2263
Total fiction words for the year..... 82378

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words
Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words
Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1000
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 43456

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 125834

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 2/2](#)

[February 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic today is on Writing “Fast” for a friend and writer who took exception to my Quote of the Day yesterday. (grin) Duck folks. This is a long post. Around 1850 words.

I spent a lot of time this morning doing things that, in the long run, probably won’t matter in the slightest. But continuing my personal learning process is worth the cost.

It occurs to me that when one person advises another, nothing will take unless the two people have the same sort of basic mindset and maybe thought process. That goes for politics (with conservative vs. socialist mindset) and it goes for writers (with professional vs. would-be

mindset).

Just for the record, the way the day turned out, I should mention here that the would-be I'm talking about here is not the same fellow who gift-wrapped and handed me the topic of the day for today.

Oh well. That was the first few hours of the day. I kid you not. But my fault. And now I'm here, basically using up some time until things are quiet again so I can begin writing for the day.

Beginning tomorrow, the writing comes ahead of all other matters. If people need something I'll get to them, but later in the day. I was about to say during breaks, but probably late afternoon would be better, after I post the Journal. That way what's supposed to be a few-minutes break won't stretch into something longer than the writing time.

Of Interest

I recommend Dean's post on [Topic of the Night: Same Topic \(Perspective\)](#). This is really good. Especially as it regards measuring success.

To go along with the topic below, I also urge anyone who's still stuck in "all work should be rewritten" land to read [The Pursuit of Perfection and How It Harms Writers](#) by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. Not kidding. Then go find Dean's Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing series.

Topic of the Day: Writing "Fast"

One writer who reads this blog took exception to my quote of the day last night. I assume that's what he took exception to. He said the "post sounded more than a little defensive."

First of all, the quote was tongue-in-cheek. Second of all, everyone who reads this post should know I'm an adherent to Heinlein's Rules and writing off into the dark. They should also know I'm semi-prolific. And finally, they should know that how "fast" one writes has absolutely NOTHING to do with quality.

What affects quality is how much knowledge the writer has gathered and how much has seeped into his subconscious. Some "fast" writers turn out crap. That's because they haven't practiced enough. Some "slow" writers turn out crap. That's also because they haven't practiced enough, OR MAYBE because they "polished" all the originality off the work.

I should say here too, what one person sees as "crap," a billion other people buy and turn into a best seller. What we like or don't like often has more to do with our personal taste than the writer's actual storytelling ability.

Anyway, I guess in my mind, the "fast" writers still win because at least they're practicing their art instead of hovering.

Can you make a sentence better if you rewrite it five times? Eh, maybe. But in the overall

scheme of the story, probably not enough so it matters. Okay, so what follows is what I was going to send to this very good writer (I've read his work and enjoyed it) but chose to post here as the topic instead.

The simple fact is, other writers' processes simply don't matter to me. Now I might enjoy hearing about them, and I might or might not privately agree with them. But at the base, they simply don't matter. Not because I don't care, but because they don't affect me directly.

If you've managed to write one novel every three years and that works for you, more power to you. If you've managed to write fifteen novels in one year and that works for you, again, more power to you. All writers are different.

On the other hand, I constantly hear from people who are so stymied by the myths of writing and so trapped down inside them that they will never break free. Shrug. So what? Again, doesn't affect me.

Will I offer that guy a hand and attempt to pull him out of the mire? Absolutely. But if he won't take my hand, hey, I'm going back to my novel. Because that's endlessly more important and interesting and fun than watching some poor double-jointed writer kicking his own butt.

Sometimes going back over what you've written IN CREATIVE MIND can help. Maybe you put it down so fast that you missed something a character said or did. I fully agree. But I will NEVER rewrite again. That's conscious mind crap, where you check for sentence structure and how many times you used "that" in a paragraph. And several other things the reader isn't concerned with unless the story itself sucks (and is not a vampire).

But I do use a process called "cycling." Every thousand words or so, I cycle back over what I've written while I'm still in creative mind and add or subtract where necessary. As a result, when I reach the end of the story or novel or series, I'm finished.

In other words, I don't "let it simmer." I don't put it away for a few days and then read the whole thing again. And I don't want to. I can't think of anything more boring. I want to write the next story. (Although in the interest of full disclosure, recently I've been my own first reader. In that role I read my work ALOUD and fix any typos, inconsistencies, etc.)

But the little quip from last night? I did that because I CONSTANTLY have to listen to blowhards bitch about writing being "such horrible Drudgery" and they "only do it because I simply Must" and on and on and on. I don't even know how they type with that one wrist draped across their forehead like that.

I asked one of them about a month ago how his latest novel was coming along. "Oh, very well, very well. I'm only on the third rewrite, you know. I'll have the thing finished in less than four years. Not bad, eh?"

Yeah. I just smiled.

And there is no end to the line of would-be writers queueing up to tell me and others like me that we can't possibly write anything well because we write "fast." Let me tell you. All of that is pure, unadulterated bull cookies, fresh and steamy.

Know why I appear to write "fast"? Because I spend the hours in the chair actually, you know, putting new words on the page instead of hangin' with my buds, talkin' about writin' an' thinkin' about writin' an' stuff.

The truth is, I don't write fast at all. I write about 1,000 words per hour. That's 17 words per minute. Fast? Seriously? That leaves a LOT of spare time for staring off into space. But if I spend just **THREE HOURS PER DAY** doing my job, people call me prolific. In any other profession, they'd call me lazy. Or fired.

My friend referred to himself as a "slowpoke."

I have to wonder, what would all the "slowpokes" say if they had to make their living on manual Royal typewriters when all the pulps were paying a penny a word?

I'll tell you one thing they would learn very quickly. Ready? Because we aren't forced to write on typewriters anymore, but the rest of this holds true today:

You Are Paid to Write.

If you're being paid five cents a word for a short story, they don't pay you five cents for writing the word, and then another five cents for rewriting it, and then another five cents for polishing it. So all of that you wasting time and money.

You are not paid extra to rewrite or polish or whatever else you want to call it. So if you want to make money at your writing,

1. you learn the craft, and
2. you learn to get the story on paper as quickly as you can so
3. you can move on to the next story and the next five cents per word.

And one day, if you're very, very lucky (by which I mean if you put your butt in a chair, your fingers on the keyboard, and practice your craft), you too can be Harlan Ellison-esque. You too can sit with a manual typewriter in a department store display window, writing stories one page at a time and posting them on the glass so passersby can read the story as you're writing it. (grin)

Any takers?

Seriously, write however you want. I didn't see my quote last night as being defensive at all. I meant what I said. In the first place, I was addressing a specific group (those in the elevated "calling" of "Writer" who get angry at those of use who Just Tell Stories).

For another, I asked a question. How does me writing "fast" adversely affect those folks? If

nothing else, I would think they'd be happy. As long as I'm writing "fast" and turning out garbage, my silly stories won't be any kind of competition for their Literary Works. (grin)

But seriously, for those "slowpokes" who have the gall to say Ray Bradbury and Harlan Ellison (and me) and others who wrote or write "fast" are doing it all wrong, hey, we're okay with that. Now, everyone hold hands. We're gonna sing Kumbaya.

(Thanks again for the topic, B. This is gonna radically increase my nonfiction word count. And now, I'm going back to my novel.)

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Had the usual coffee and email to wake up. This morning, though, I had some holdovers from yesterday and last night. So a lot of stuff to plow through.

I think I might have been able to help in a couple of instances. Then again, I've always said advice is like a five-dollar bill. If I hand you a fiver, that doesn't give me the right to tell you how to use it. Same for the advice.

So again for the first 3 hours of the day, I screwed around with other stuff, and probably nothing that will make any significant difference. That's okay. No biggie.

As I write this it's almost 6 a.m. Like yesterday, I "was about to" turn to Hal2 to play in the new novel for a bit. Then I got busy with other stuff. Mainly taking everything off the tower computer and shutting it down, getting it ready to sell. It just didn't work for me, so back to the robot factory it goes.

Now it's almost 10 a.m. Still messing around with computers. Being a quasi-tech guy. I don't know all the guts, but I can install and uninstall programs and do a few specialized things.

11 a.m. and finally I started a session on the novel. Wrote for about a half hour, then ran off to the PO to see whether MS Office 2010 was here yet. Nope.

Other stuff going on, back to the novel at noonish.

Another session, a fairly good one this time, and then B's email with that trigger in it (grin), and then the topic of the day above.

Now it's 1:30 and I'm back to the novel.

The rest of my day today is devoted to Coming Back. I'll write awhile, break, and come back to the novel. I'll write awhile, break, and come back to the novel. That's the pattern for the day.

Psst. That's also another secret of us "fast" writers. We keep coming back to work. Fifteen minutes here, a half-hour there. It all adds up.

Two more very good sessions, so I'm gonna call it for the day.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3318

Nonfiction Words: 1850 (journal)

So total words for the day: 5168

Writing of **The Bone Flesher** (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 5581

Total fiction words for the year..... 87238

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words

Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2850

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 45306

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 127684

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 2/3](#)

[February 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic today is a short one: Quick Online Learning. It will be kind of an extended "Of Interest" section.

Of Interest

Nothing, but I make up for it in the Topic of the Day.

Topic of the Day: Quick Online Learning

You know I read DWS's site pretty much religiously. I don't think a week has gone by that I didn't learn something from his website. Most often it was an aha moment wrapped up in one phrase or one clause.

Yesterday, because I wanted to point out Kris Rusch's book about Perfection, I also visited her site and glanced over her [Business Rusch Publishing Articles](#).

Seriously, folks, add the link above to your regularly visited places for entertaining and extremely worthwhile reading. Here are just a few of my personal favorites from the TOC on the page above:

- [The Brutal 2000 Word Day](#)
- [Professional Writers](#)
- [Popcorn Kittens](#)
- [Short Stories](#)

And there are many, many more.

When you've exhausted the Business Rusch Publishing Articles TOC, check out her [Business Musings](#) TOC.

You can also find her Discoverability Series, her Freelancer's Survival Guide, and a great deal more.

I hope you will visit.

The Day

Not much, unfortunately. Some days things just don't line up right. That's why they make tomorrows.

Awake at 2 but managed to stay in bed and keep my eyes closed until 3. It was a short night as I stayed up until 9 to watch the best 50 superbowl commercials or something like that. It wasn't bad.

I meant to put writing above all other matters beginning this morning, but I got wrapped around the wheel on some stuff. So well over 3 hours after I got up, I'm only now going to the novel. I'll read back to get back into the flow, then Just Write the Next Sentence.

I not only Want to write into the dark on this one, I Need to. I need the fun and the escape the characters bring me as I write off into the dark. It's been too long.

Well, just writing the next sentence never happened, at least not in a big way. I had a few good cycling sessions today with breaks for kitchen stuff and laundry stuff.

Then a trip to Walmart and the PO around 11. Back around 12:30 and more cycling. I put down some new words, but not enough to weed out and count so I'm going to report zilch today.

Sure be glad when this one hits a downhill-flow spot. I'm jonesing for it.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal)

So total words for the day: 400

Writing of **The Bone Flesher** (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 2615 words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the year..... 87238

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words

Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3250

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 45706

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 128084

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 2/4

[February 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic today is Another Note on Heinlein's Rules and WITD.

Just to pile more stuff on the heap, I found out today my website hosting will jump to an outrageous fee when it renews in early April. Sigh. So on top of everything else, now I probably am gonna have to transfer my websites to a new host. And so the search begins.

Anticipating a good day of writing today.

Of Interest

[Italy \[and other nations\] Lowers Ebook VAT](#)

And just for grins [Will Amazon Open Hundreds of Stores or Not?](#)

And Dean: [One Reader](#)

By the way, a day or two back, just popping off like I usually do, I wrote "Sometimes things just don't line up right. That's why they make tomorrows." A poet and one of my readers took off with that and wrote this poem (thanks, Margaret Ann):

TOMORROWS

"Sometimes things just don't line up right—
that's why they make tomorrows."

Another poem just handed to me by a friend,
a friend who looks on the bright side
of a disappointing day,
mañana, he suggests, things will fall into place
like pieces of a puzzle—
not a bad two lines to remember
as we make our way through days and nights
of unpredictable events—
two lines of words that beam a light
on watching for the good days
that follow the bad ones.

by [Margaret Ann Adams](#)

Topic of the Day: Another Note on Heinlein's Rules and WITD

I've heard from several folks via email the past few days about my comments on Heinlein's Rules and Writing Off Into the Dark. All but one email arrived with an exaggerated air of patience. Like if they spoke slowly enough, maybe I would understand. (grin)

- Three wrote that at least some outlining is necessary.

- Two of those and a few others wrote that some rewriting is necessary.
- One (an English teacher with three novels under her belt in only eight years) even wrote that some conscious-mind input is necessary. She cited sentence structure and the like.
- Finally, one even wrote that he HAS to control what his characters say and do because after all, he's the writer.

I'm tired, old and grumpy, not to mention the other seven dwarves. So I made it easy on myself. To the first, I replied, "Ah, of course. Now I understand. Thank you."

Then I copied that, hit Reply, then pasted it into each of the other emails.

I could have told them that when I first learned Heinlein's Rules and writing into the dark, I said all of those same things to Dean. But that wouldn't have made a difference.

I could have told them that I decided to try it for myself to prove or disprove it. I could have recommended they do the same. I might have written, you know, "Don't buy it just because I say so, but try it for yourself."

But again, that wouldn't have made any difference. If it would have, they already would have figured out that much on their own.

I could even have attempted to explain things, but then I experienced a one-word epiphany: Why?

Frankly, the whole thing puts me in mind of a petulant child refusing to try spinach because he KNOWS he won't like it even though he has never tasted it. Yawn. Stretch. Whatever.

Heinlein's Rules boil down to one rule: If you're a writer, write, publish, and write some more. Don't waste time doing stuff that has zero chance of paying you. Like rewriting.

And Writing Off Into the Dark boils down to one sentence: Trust your subconscious to tell the story.

That's all. But like Dean also says, Every Writer Is Different. And truthfully, just giving them that is SO much easier than arguing with them. Shrug.

But on the GOOD side, one respondent sent this (albeit in response to my Chapter 3 post on the other blog). Now this fellow and I, in our private conversationalisms, talk in a kind of code. So I have edited this ever so slightly:

Story Starter. I was in need of an idea for the next novel and one showed up [as I slept].

As I ran through the channels I stopped on an old Vincent Price horror movie. His character said, "This morning I was so frustrated I threw a cabbage at a cat!"

What a great line. Can I turn that into a novel?

Why, hell yes.

With nothing more than that I started pounding the keyboard. Within a page the thing was a Western. I'm now 20,000 words into a not-bad-not-bad-at-all novel. I've done by far the least amount of thinking ahead on this one of all my novels and so far it's the most fun to write.

Bottom line: Trust the old subconscious and start WITD.

Heh. Spoken like a freed writer. Take that, nay sayers. And people who say other things that generally equate with nay.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Coffee, must have coffee. Probably 3 mugs this morning.

Read email, found a couple things to put in Of Interest, then wrote the Topic above.

It's only 2:30. I'm gonna take another little while to wake up, then start on the novel.

3 a.m. to begin the first cycling session. I hope this will be the final one so I can move ahead. I have a feeling when this thing breaks loose, it's going to move very fast.

4 a.m. Still cycling. I'll keep tabs on the word count today. (grin) But this is when I checked email again and found out my web hosting fee is jumping astronomically. Or something. Like an overweight ballerina on hot coals. So I guess this Journal and all my other stuff will be interrupted soon for a day or two while I transfer everything to a new web host.

So I took a break while looking at various website hosting companies, then let pup'ncat out and back to the novel at 5. No need to do anything on the hosting situation until I at least hear back from the one that's trying to rob me. (I emailed them: Ahem. Do not do this or color me gone.)

One of those days. Got another email, this one from ebay, around 9 saying they had cancelled my order of MS Office 2010. Apparently some creep hacked another user's account and sold something the other user didn't have.

Sigh. So I've started the process to get my money back on that. Not a good day for web-based stuff in the Stanbrough camp. But it's been a weird, tired, sad, who-gives-a-shdarn kind of week anyway. In fact, if you know the opening line of "The Rodeo Song," you have my week pegged. (If you don't know it, don't ask.)

Oh well. Makes the good days look even better, doesn't it?

Had the equivalent of a couple of good sessions from bits and pieces scattered throughout the day. I think most of the cycling is finished now. I'm hoping tomorrow I'll be able to just lay my ears back and run with the story.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1887
Nonfiction Words: 1030 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2917

Writing of **The Bone Flesher** (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 7468
Total fiction words for the year..... 87583

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words
Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words
Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 46736

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 134319

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 2/5

[February 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today unless something occurs later.

Anticipating a good writing day.

Of Interest

[Business Musings: Serious Writer Voice](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. Coffee, not a lot of email. I'm once again considering submitting my short fiction to paying traditional markets before indie publishing it.

Most of the paying markets will take exclusive rights only for a limited time. Nothing wrong with sticking a few hundred dollars in my pocket first, and then indie publishing six months to a year down the line when rights revert.

So I spent some waking up time finding a string of markets that I will consider later. If any of you are interested in short story markets that pay at least 5 cents per word, let me know and I'll send along my (growing) list.

3:40 a.m. turning to the novel for the first time.

Eking my way through again this morning. Transferring the story and the info file (names, placenames, etc.) to a different writing computer to see whether I can get back to some form of normalcy with my process. Funny. I didn't even know I had a "process" until I swung it all out of whack.

Well, I wrote some, cycled some, wrote a little more, then went to lunch at a Wendy's. Square burgers. Had to come from the midwest. Like spaghetti in chili. Uhh, no. Anyway, 1:30 now and I'm going back to the novel.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2116

Nonfiction Words: 250 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2366

Writing of **The Bone Flesher** (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9584

Total fiction words for the year..... 89699

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words
Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words
Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 46986

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 136685

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal (Part 2), Saturday, 2/6

[February 6, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Sorry Folks. I posted the wrong entry. Here's the one that was supposed to go out last night.

Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today unless something occurs later. I was hoping for a good writing day, but it's also a planned partial day off. I have to spend part of the morning away from my desk.

I'll be back full strength tomorrow or the next day. I'll watch the ball game, but it doesn't start until 4:30 my time so shrug.

Of Interest

Not much new, but I still recommend visiting [Kris Rusch's site](#) and checking out the table of contents for her Business Musings and Business Rusch Publishing articles unless you've already gotten through all of them.

She also posts a free story there every Monday, I believe. If you want to learn how to write short fiction, or if you just want to read a great short story, I also recommend following that.

The Day

Rolled out late at a little after 3. Coffee, not a lot of email. I did send some market links to

Christopher and to Bonnie, who commented on yesterday's post. Since I promised a list if you want it, I suppose I should turn those into an actual list (grin).

4 a.m. turning to Hal2 for the first time. I made a stab at writing the story of the week. I was basing it on a line a friend gave me earlier this week, but the opening never got off the ground. Most openings take off for me, but now and then one doesn't. No biggie. (More on this in the upcoming Chapter 4 of Writing the Character-Driven Story, set to post next Wednesday.)

So it's 4:30 now and I'm going back to the novel to do whatever I can. I'll write the story of the week tomorrow. Maybe.

Got one sort of good session, then off to Sierra Vista (about 45 minutes from here) to take my wife to a sort of "kook convention" (her term, and she is one). Got her set up, stopped at a few places, came back to Saint David (so David must be the patron saint of junk piled high in front yards and untrimmed elm, cottonwood, and mesquite trees lining the roads). I hit the PO and then came back here to write. I'll go back to SV to get her after I post this Journal this afternoon.

By 11:40, I was headed back to the novel. I piddled around for a little while, and then I decided to call it. I'm just gonna take the day off. I'm not counting any fiction words today. I might take off tomorrow too. I'm tired. I'm exhausted, frankly.

I've always said what really matters is a writer's averages. I think maybe cumulative effect matters as well. I need to not think for awhile. So once I can get the ladies (cats) in, I'll head back to SV and just hang out there.

I'll try to drop at least a placeholder post here tomorrow too. And who knows. I might even write something tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 460 (journal)

So total words for the day: 460

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of “” (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9584

Total fiction words for the year..... 89699

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words

Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words

Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4990

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 47446

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 137145

[The Journal, Sunday, 2/7](#)

[February 7, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

If you're getting two Journals today, that's correct. I revised the one from yesterday, but it didn't send right, so probably you will get it today. No topic again today unless something occurs later. If the one titled "The Journal (Part 2), Saturday, 2/6" doesn't come in your email, you can read it on the site.

Kind of neat that I planned a full day off for today. After that, last night I thought maybe I'd use my "day off" to knock out the rest of Writing the Character-Driven Story. I used to enjoy writing nonfiction, but that's declined over the years. Now I almost detest it. Probably I'll write more nonfiction after this one, but I can't be sure at this point.

Anyway, this morning I tried to write on the final chapter of the nonfiction book below. Then a

story idea popped into my head, so off I went.

Of Interest

Nothing really, except to remind you to visit [Kris Rusch's site](#) and continue your education. Dean's still mired in the world of his new store so not a lot there for writers right now.

The Day

Despite my best efforts to sleep in, I rolled out at a little after 2. Coffee, not a lot of email. Yay.

I planned a day off today, but as I mentioned above, a story idea occurred to me. At 5 I started writing "Lessons Learned," a sort of philosophy story about romance. Sort of.

By 7 it was finished. By 7:30 I had the cover designed, and the whole thing was published to my website (it will go live on April 11) and distributed to Smashwords, Draft2Digital and Amazon. So not a bad two and a half hours' work. (If you subscribe to my work, you'll get it in your email before you get this. If you are not a subscriber, you may read it free on the website on April 11 or buy it at your favorite vendor.)

It's almost 8 a.m. now. I'm going to take a break, then see whether I can finish another short story or the nonfiction. I don't want to work on the novel today. Not sure why, but I don't, so I'm not going to.

Well, I wrote Chapter 7 of *Writing the Character-Driven Story*. The superbowl begins in about an hour so I'm gonna post this and get off here.

I'm hoping tomorrow I'll be back up to speed. It's been a rough month, generally.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2254

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal) + 1200 (nonfiction book below) = 1600

So total words for the day: 3854

Writing of "Lessons Learned" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 2254 words (done)

Writing of *The Bone Fleisher* (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 11838
Total fiction words for the year..... 91953

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words
Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words
Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words
Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words
Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words
Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words
Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words
Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words
Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words
Day 10... 1200 words. Total words to date..... 19933 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6590
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49046

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 140999

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Monday, 2/8

[February 8, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No topic today. I'll return to the novel today and hope today everything will break loose. I might also write one or more of the few appendices. Those will go in the back of the actual book, but I'll insert each appendix after the appropriate chapter in the blog posts.

Of Interest

Great [Topic of the Night over at Dean's place](#) on The Renewal of the Audience. Important and informative if you're an indie publisher.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4, having watched Denver's defense win the super bowl last night. Coffee, not a lot of email. Yay.

A few thoughts that handed me story ideas—

- Sorry to hear fans so petty that they felt a need to boo Tom Brady before the game as he took his place among past super bowl MVPs.
- Extremely glad to see Von Miller get MVP this year. The guy was like a machine, not to be denied.
- Very sorry to see Cam Newton's childish meltdown. Perhaps like another machine, one that malfunctions at a certain level of stress. (Guess I'm in a robot/android kind of mood.)

That meltdown also put me in mind of one possible result of giving children "participation" trophies to falsely inflate their self-esteem instead of allowing them to learn what winning and losing feel like. Not that it would apply in Newton's case. The guy has legitimately won some big awards.

Anyway, look at that. Three great near-future spec fic story ideas. Anything from SF to horror or a mixture of the two.

Oh, and I really hope Peyton Manning is smart enough to insist that Denver will have a new quarterback next year. And I really hope its Brock Osweiler. Guy's fun to watch. Like Peyton was back in the day.

It's almost 5:30 a.m. and I'm turning to the novel.

As before, I cycled a bit, messed around a bit. I think I'm trying to hard to get my head into it. And of course, that's exactly what I don't want to do. When I come back, I'm going to write a whole new scene, period.

About 8:30 my wife headed to work and I got into my pickup and headed for a smoke shop in Tombstone. I'm taking up smoking again, albeit small cigars. You couldn't pay me to smoke another cigarette.

Bought a few different products to try. Once I find the one or two I really like, I'll order online to save beaucoup \$\$\$.

It was wonderful being in Tombstone on the boardwalks without eighty-three tons of tourists packed into every square foot. (grin) They were still in hotel rooms, probably planning which parts of the “desolate desert” to leave trash in today.

Back in town I checked the PO, then back home to send an email to some folks who still depend on me for their websites about an impending change.

Okay, so it’s 10:30 a.m. and I’m going back to the novel.

Three good sessions and one short one interspersed with a few breaks, and the novel is moving along again. I hope it continues to do so.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 3364

Nonfiction Words: 360 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3724

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Writing of “” (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 15202

Total fiction words for the year..... 95317

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words
Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words
Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words
Day 10... 1200 words. Total words to date..... 19933 words

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6950
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49406

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 144723

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 2/9

[February 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today. Back to the novel today again. It hasn't broken loose yet, but there are chunks floating around now instead of one big solid mass. Another good day or two, I should be in open water. Then I can really get after it.

Today also I hope to write the appendices for the nonfiction book. That will polish it off.

Of Interest

The latest [Author Earnings Report](#) is out.

Also, to read an alternative take on it (from a representative of traditional publishing) [Please Click Here](#). Especially if you'd like to see a representative of traditional publishing tremble a bit.

Predictably, [Dean's Topic of the Night](#) also is on the latest AER. I urge you to read his take.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30. Coffee, not a lot of email. Spent time looking over the Author Earnings Report (see Of Interest above), then a couple of other takes on it.

The AER itself and Dean's take on it both were interesting for their content. The article in Publishing Perspectives was interesting for what the author (a representative of traditional publishing) omitted.

So I didn't get to the writing until a little after 6 this morning. I decided to work on the appendices from now until around 9. Then I'll go to the novel.

Got the first appendix mostly finished. Waiting for permission from two writers to include excerpts from their works and input from a third.

While I was waiting I got antsy and decided to hit Appendix B and C as well. Finished them. Now for a short break (it's almost noon) and then to the novel.

The best laid plans and all that. Came back and had more input waiting for the appendix, so added that, then finished the nonfiction book. Now it's just short of 1 p.m. Another break, maybe a sandwich, then to the novel at long last. Almost 4,000 words on the day thus far, and I'm jonesing to write because none of it was fiction.

Got very little done on the novel, so I'm not gonna count it today. For today I'm going to prepost the rest of the nonfiction book to the site so it's out of the way. Maybe design a cover for it. Take care of some other admin things and call it a day.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal) + 3994 (nonfiction book below) = 4394

So total words for the day: 4394

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of "" (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 15202

Total fiction words for the year..... 95317

Writing the Character-Driven Story

Day 1..... 2912 words. Total words to date..... 2912 words

Day 2..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 3959 words

Day 3..... 1372 words. Total words to date..... 5331 words

Day 4..... 0665 words. Total words to date..... 5996 words

Day 5..... 0524 words. Total words to date..... 6520 words

Day 6..... 2960 words. Total words to date..... 9480 words

Day 7..... 2500 words. Total words to date..... 11980 words
Day 8..... 2530 words. Total words to date..... 14510 words
Day 9..... 4223 words. Total words to date..... 18733 words
Day 10... 1200 words. Total words to date..... 19933 words
Day 11... 3994 words. Total words to date..... 23927 words (done)
(Not entirely sure why I kept this as if it were a fiction book. Probably I won't do this in the future.)

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11344
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 53800

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 149117

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 2/10

[February 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic again today. I usually come to this pretty much first thing, but this morning I created a cover, formatted and published Writing the Character-Driven Story. So that's done. I sent it to subscribers (Level 3 or higher) a few minutes ago.

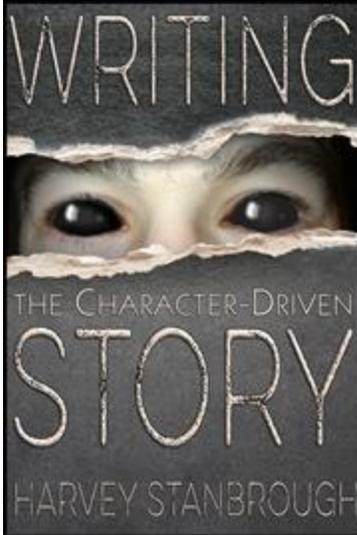
Of Interest

[Good post on Focus](#) over at Dean's place. Part of my problem recently is that I've been splitting my focus. Now that the nonfiction book is behind me I can get back to writing fiction. Well, some computer problems today but... you know.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3. Coffee, not a lot of email. Checked primary results for New Hampshire. Trump basically kicked everyone's fanny up there on the Republican side.

And Bernie the Socialist won well over 1/3 more votes on the Dem side than Clinton did. Granted the guy's a nutcase, but hey, at least he means what he says. More power to him.



I decided to create a cover for Writing the Character-Driven Story, then format it, then publish and distribute it. That's it over there.

Subscribers and a few contributors received ebook copies this morning. It's also available through all the usual e-outlets for \$9.99. Not sure when it will be available in paper, but I'll do that at some point. Probably.

Of course I will still continue to post it one chapter at a time on my website through March 30, so there's that.

In the interim, I got annoyed with Windows 10 again. I also read that Microsoft will continue to support Windows 7 through 2020, so I removed Windows 10 again. I like some things about it, but the forced updates (I don't get to pick what or when) are really annoying. Also I restarted it once this morning and it took over ten minutes. Seriously. Ten minutes is a very long time for me. I can't put up with that sort of nonsense.

So still experimenting here. I still have the tower computer, and it still has Windows 10 on it. It also has a huge hard drive and more memory, so maybe I'll try it again. I don't know. I wish I could just find one thing that actually works as advertised. That shack in the jungle in Ecuador is looking better every day. That and a stack of notebooks and a stack of pens.

So no writing today as yet other than this journal entry, but a LOT of work formatting and then putting together the cover.

Now it's a little after 11. I was thinking about taking a walk, but if I do that I almost certainly won't write today. So I'm going to take a break, then come back and start on the novel.

We'll see what I can get done on it today with this late start and my head half-fried.

Nope. Zero writing today beyond this journal. Got a lot of work done, but nothing to speak of on the novel. I did transfer some things from computer to computer and from an external hard drive. So a lot going on, but none of it was writing.

Tomorrow I will do that “focus” thing Dean’s been talking about.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 550 (journal)

So total words for the day: 550

Writing of *The Bone Flesher* (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 1415 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of “” (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 15202

Total fiction words for the year..... 95317

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11894

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 54350

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 149667

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 2/11](#)

[February 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Topic of the Day: Why I’m a Cat Guy. Pretty neat quote from Dean in the “Of Interest” section too. It made me realize one of my goals is to write 15 novels this year and finish at least one every month.

Right now there are 17 days left in February. Can I finish a novel this month? Yes. Will I? I don’t know. I have 6 writing days on my current WIP. It usually takes me 20 days or so to finish a novel. So plenty of time. But yeah, I have to focus on the writing. Starting right now? Maybe. I seem to be stuck in the “We’ll see” mode this year.

Of Interest

Not much at Dean's place. But one little gem. Talking about his own current work in progress, he mentions he still isn't focused on it for various reasons. Then he says this:

"For those wondering, I started *Dead Hand* in late November. The slowness has nothing at all to do with the book. Just my focus.

"But one good thing about this novel being slow. Now I can officially tell people it takes me about three or four months to write a novel. That always makes people happy. A lot happier than telling them I can write a novel in ten to fifteen days when I'm focused. (grin)"

Topic of the Day: Why I'm a Cat Guy

Imagine if you will a massive rottweiler creeping up behind you as you sit at your writing computer.

You are completely engaged with your characters, and your fingers are flying over the keyboard for the first time in at least three days. You're jonesing for words and loving it.

He, on the other hand, has saliva dripping from his jaws.

He gets closer. Closer. He positions his snout just behind your left ear and—

WHAM! He barks, only once, as loudly as possible.

Yeah, the effect you just imagined is EXACTLY the same effect I experienced when my idiot chihuahua barked from the back of the couch in the living room. Exactly. From thirty-some feet away, he hurt my ears.

I went from slouched in my chair to bolt upright.

I froze. My fingers stopped working.

I was unceremoniously snatched from the middle of a word in the middle of a phrase in the middle of a sentence in the middle of my novel.

I swiveled around, banged my knee on my desk and yelled the idiot's name plus an epithet, but the damage was done. That was almost a half-hour ago. So about 500 would-be words ago. Ever since, I've been quietly repeating my current mantra: "Good thing for you my 9mm wasn't in my hand when that happened."

Yeah, see, now that's why I'm a cat guy.

- Cats never sneak up and split your nerve endings with a bark. (On the good side, they will attack anything that does.)
- Cats almost never bite, and when they do they don't rip a chunk out of your calf.

- They don't beg.
- They will curl up next to you and work hard to make a pleasant sound to help you fall asleep.
- The worst thing I've heard anti-cat people say is that cats use the bathroom in a box inside the house.

Dogs, on the other hand,

- DO sneak up and split your nerve endings with a bark.
- They WILL bite for absolutely no reason, and they WILL do their level best to rip a chunk out of your calf.
- They beg as if nobody has ever fed them or ever intends to (which currently would be my vote).
- They will curl up next to you and lick themselves.
- The one good thing about them, if it weren't so gross, is at least they keep the cat box cleaned out.

Oh, and sometimes they help a guy along with a topic of the night.

Okay, now for a brief (I hope) break and back to the novel.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Coffee, not a lot of email.

For some reason, Chapter 4 didn't post over on the other site yesterday morning. It posted to the site but it didn't go out via MailChimp. So I added a notice about having finished the book, then set it to go out this morning. We'll see.

If you're following along over there, the chapters are supposed to post every Wednesday from now through March 30. So if you don't get one in your email, you might want to drop by the site and check it out.

Checked out Dean's site and did the other stuff above. It's 6:30 and now I'm turning to the novel, I hope for the rest of the day.

Ah, no such luck. My idiot chihuahua was sitting on the back of the couch in the next room over. He glanced out the window and saw something he sees EVERY MORNING. Only this time he barked. Like a rottweiler. And the topic of the night ensued.

Well, at 7:20 I went to the back room, got on the treadmill and walked a quick half-mile. That helped drain some tension. Then I read some BookBub stuff about author websites (already doing all of it) and then back in here.

A few hours have gone by and Wow. The day went nuts. At 8 it was back to the novel for another short session. Then a stroll outside to relax, then a shower and breakfast, then to look over web hosts. I think I mentioned awhile back I have to move my website and all those attached to mine.

So I'm scattered again today. Still, from about noon on I was able to get a couple of partial sessions. One section has me really mired. I think I'll let it go and skip to somewhere else in the

book. I don't like being mired. Mired is not good.

Back in the morning.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2287

Nonfiction Words: 950 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3237

Writing of *The Bone Flesher* (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Writing of "" (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 17489

Total fiction words for the year..... 97604

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12844

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 55300

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 152904

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 2/12

[February 12, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day and very little else, at least early. I'm prepping to move my websites. With the right preparation (a new technique I just learned this morning) I should be able to move the sites seamlessly on Monday with zero downtime. At least that's the hope. But probably it will take most of the day today to prep everything.

Of Interest

Good topic of the night over a Dean's on dividing your time between writing, production and promotion. [Check it out.](#)

At Publishing Perspectives, an informative article on [the difference between Europe's VAT tax](#) on ebooks and print books (this can affect your pricing decisions) and how they will resolve it.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Coffee, not a lot of email.

Started right in working on setting up my new website hosting service. MUCH less expensive than the guys I'm leaving.

Now it's 6:30. While my public_html files are copying from the server to my hard drive, I'm gonna see what I can get done on the novel if anything.

Wow. Another day of very little. I won't record any words today. Between downloading files from my FTP client and helping my wife transfer files from a Windows 7 computer to a Windows 10 computer with something called PCmover I got almost nothing done.

The Bone Flesher (by another name) was a pretty good long short story. I might have to kick this novel idea to the curb and let it die a natural death. Which means I'll have to start another one soon enough to finish it this month, or so I can at least finish two in March. We'll see.

Was a goal of 15 novels too much for this 12-month period? Maybe. I guess I'll find out. One thing's for sure, though. If I fail, I'll fail to success.

Anyway I might just move this novel to a "back burner," as another writer friend of mine said earlier today. But I'm not so good at picking things up where they left off earlier. Guess I might fall off Heinlein's Rule 2 on this one. I'm almost certain the world won't come to an end.

Anyway, for now I'm getting off here about an hour earlier than usual.

Back in the morning.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 350 (journal)

So total words for the day: 350

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of "" (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 17489
Total fiction words for the year..... 97604

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13194
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 55650

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 153254

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[HERE MISSING 2/13, 2/14 DUE TO SWITCHING WEB HOSTING SERVICES]

[The Journal, Monday, 2/15](#)

[February 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Topic of the Day (from a couple days ago): Inspiration. Okay, FINALLY all my websites are back up. I did that from 8 a.m. this morning until 1 p.m., then went for a burger and fries to celebrate.

Anyway, I lost a few posts on this site (Feb 11, 12, and 13 are missing) but you had a chance to read those so I probably won't put them up again. Actually, I think I wrote one for the 13th but wasn't able to get it posted in time. Anyway... I wrote some stuff on St. V's Day too but wasn't able to post anything. It wasn't much. We'll just call that day lost.

Nothing new on The Bone Fleisher, but I did start a new story tentatively titled No Coincidence. I had a few off-and-on very short writing spurts on it over the past two days. I'll put numbers up on it starting with tomorrow's post.

Of Interest

Some great [comments and responses on the "Balancing Your Time" post](#) from a day or two ago

over at Dean's site.

And more (from today) on [About Time and Sales](#), also at Dean's site.

Topic of the Day: Inspiration

Okay, I don't really believe in inspiration. But I don't want to argue, so let me put it this way:

I believe what many call inspiration strikes more often in those who are used to inspiration striking.

In other words, those who regularly exercise the "story starter" muscle or the "idea" muscle may fully expect new story starters or new story ideas to come upon them at any moment as if out of the blue.

That's what happened to me this morning [a couple days back].

I'm used to coming up with a character name or a line of dialogue or narrative that points to a situation or problem in a particular setting. I'm used to doing that. I can pick a name or two, a setting and a problem from three lists and write a story on the spot.

When I go anywhere and see anyone it's liable to spark a story idea.

I don't wonder what those folks are doing. I make up what they're doing. If it sticks or hits me strongly, I write it.

Why's that guy limping? What caused that? Two women just came out of the store: one is grossly overweight and the other looks bulimic. From their faces, I can assume they're sisters. What in that house or in their experience caused the disparity in physical appearance?

That's what I mean about exercising the idea muscle. Everything and everyone is a story waiting to happen. I EXPECT inspiration at every turn, so it's there.

And it also appears, at times, all of its own accord. Maybe that's actual inspiration. Doesn't matter to me. What matters is that a story idea has arrived.

So this morning, even as I was planning a second day off to do administrative stuff, an idea arrived. No begging or conjuring on my part. No nonsense and definitely no work.

One of my static websites, nicolaszporter.com, had propagated. But I had inadvertently deleted the files from the earlier web host, so I had to rebuild it. Because all of my static websites are the same, I decided to use a backup from one of the other static sites to help me rebuild Nick's site. That way I would have to replace only his personal information. Rebuilding the whole thing took about ten minutes.

But as part of that process, I had to add his bio and a story. (One of my better stories, really: "Old

Suits.” If you haven’t read it, you can see it at <http://nicolaszporter.com/a-story>. It’s only around 2500 words.)

And as I was reading over Nick’s bio and updating it slightly, *BAM!* I saw him and a few others on a beach. It was just after a battle, and a few men were lying at the edge of sea, the lapping waves slowly siphoning blood from their head wounds.

Couldn’t pass that up. So I interrupted my administrative day to write the opening. Wonderful fun to be just writing off into the dark again. And then I came here to do this, and now I’m going back to the story or novel or both or whatever.

UPDATE: I hoped to use the first chapter of that for the story of the week this week. But I didn’t. I didn’t finish it, so my story-a-week streak ended prematurely. Yes, there were reasons, but reasons or not, a streak is only a streak until you break it. Shrug. So today I start a new story-a-week goal.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:30 this morning. Coffee, not a lot of email. Continued everything I could think of to “make” my sites move.

Finally they all rolled in about 8 a.m. (or that’s when I realized they had rolled in) so I started putting things back together. I was finished at about 1 p.m. so we went for a burger and fries. Then back here to write this, and then off to write a bit of fun stuff. I won’t bother reporting on my new project until tomorrow.

I’ll leave The Bone Flesher up for another day or two. When I feel pretty certain it’s dead in the water, I’ll take it down.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 820 (journal)

So total words for the day: 820

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of "" (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 17489

Total fiction words for the year..... 97604

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14014

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 56470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 154074

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 2/16

[February 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No Topic of the Day today. Remember I thought yesterday all my sites were up at around 1? Nope. My MAIN sites were up. Then I got distracted and forgot about several smaller sites.

Anyway, I was rudely reminded when I tried to sign into one. So I set to work on them again. Everything was up and running by about 6. So not too rough a day.

I had planned (last night) to jump directly into writing this morning. But it's almost 8 a.m. as I write this, and this is the last non-website related stuff I'll do before taking a break and then more website-related stuff.

What I really need to do is set everyone and everything else aside and Just Write, but of course that's all but impossible. Shrug. So Life Happens and we deal with it as best we can.

On the good side, tomorrow over on the big site another chapter of Writing the Character-Driven Story will post.

Of Interest

Some great [comments and responses on the "About Time and Sales"](#) post over at Dean's site.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 this morning. Coffee, a little email.

Did some clean-up chores from all the website stuff yesterday. I also backed up some stuff that I wasn't sure was backed up.

Soon again I will write some fiction. I'm so far off all my goals at this point that I'll need to sit down and look realistically at those soon too, and maybe make some adjustments. Ugh. What an ugly month February has been for me so far.

No writing to speak of today, so I won't. I'll be back on track tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 300

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of "" (story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 17489
Total fiction words for the year..... 97604

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14314
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 56770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 154374

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life2 Comments](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 2/17](#)

[February 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No Topic of the Day today. But check out "Of Interest" below before you go.

Of Interest

Oh good lord. If you're a writer and you want to read something great, do yourself a major favor and read [Dean's post on Day-Job Thinking vs. Long-Term Thinking](#). You will not be sorry. Absolutely excellent.

The Day

Rolled out late this morning. Almost 4. Coffee, a little email. Messed around awhile with nothing important.

It's almost 10 a.m. Over at the big site, Chapter 5 didn't post at 8 a.m. like it was supposed to, so I fixed that (I think). I'll hang around to be sure it goes out at 10 a.m.

Well, it didn't send. So I changed it again to go out at noon. Now for a side-trip to Tombstone (about 15 miles to the south) to buy some CeeGars, then back here to write for the balance of the day.

Back in town, to snail mail (nothing) and then back here. Hope my post on the other site goes out at noon. If not, I guess it'll be tomorrow.

Today's Writing

I've decided to continue with The Bone Flesher and see where it goes. I really don't want to break Heinlein's Rule 2. I allowed myself to get mired there for awhile. I got a few sessions of cycling done on it today to get myself back into the story.

I also worked a bit on the other one, tentatively titled No Coincidence. It's convoluted as hell so far, but maybe that's a good thing. I can't possibly know where it's going so no chance of getting mired down. And I love the characters, almost as much as those in the Wes Crowley saga.

Probably for the next several days I'll work on whichever one summons me at the time. I'm not worried about when I'll finish them or how long they'll be. I'm just writing. That's what I need right now. To be immersed in fiction.

I'm also not worried about short stories right now. If it happens, good. If not, I have stories of the week pre-posted out through April 11 anyway. I blew my streak, but that's okay. I can start another one. Right now I just need to get started writing again and get back to 3200 words per day.

Good start today, sort of.

Fiction Words: 2733

Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3033

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20222
Total fiction words for the year..... 100337

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14614
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 57070

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 157407

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 2/18

[February 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The Topic of the Day today is The Magic Mantra.

MailChimp didn't send Chapter 5 from the other site because I forgot to put it in the right category. My bad. If you're following it, you will receive it in your mail in the morning or you can drop by the big site. It's up there. Good chapter if I do say so myself.

Of Interest

From yesterday, in case you didn't see it, because this is an important one: If you're a writer and you want to read something great, do yourself a major favor and read Dean's post on [Day-Job Thinking vs. Long-Term Thinking](#). Absolutely excellent.

And even if you did see it, I encourage you to go back and [read the comments](#).

Topic of the Day: The Magic Mantra

What do I mean by that?

To me the magic mantra is whatever gets a story moving again. My magic mantra is "I don't care

how long or short the story is, and I don't care where it's going. I just want to tell the story." When I remember that and when I get stuck and remember to repeat it, I get unstuck almost immediately.

That last part of my mantra means I want to run through the story with the characters and record on the page what they say and do. In other words, I want the fun of writing.

If you use and strictly adhere to an outline or pre-defined plotline or something similar to write your stories and novels, you don't need a magic mantra. You already know where the story's going, every major turning point, and how it's going to end. So you just have to trudge through putting it on the page.

I couldn't do that, seriously. I'd go find something fun to do. Like poking myself in the eye with a stick.

If you're still mired in all those myths about writing, there is no magic mantra required. For that matter, there is no magic at all. It's all a matter of mechanics. But hey, if that's how you want to do it, knock yourself out.

But if you're very lucky, you are able to sit down at the keyboard and allow your subconscious to Just Make Stuff Up. And when you do that, unless you're extremely lucky, occasionally those old myths will still creep back in and stop you from writing.

When that happens, you have to utter your magic mantra. Whatever group of words will remind you the current story is no big deal. It's just a story. It's supposed to be fun.

It's like when you were a child and you were playing with a small group of neighborhood friends. You weren't worried about where the group was going or what you and they were going to do along the way.

Sometimes along the way, some of them said or did things that came as a complete, delicious surprise to you. You didn't even think about controlling what they said or did. You just ran along with them, enjoying the freedom of having fun.

Same thing now. You're a writer.

When you begin a new project, you're surrounded by a group of friends. You just happen to be the Friend with a Pen. You run along with them, enjoying the freedom of having fun. You write down what they say and do, the normal things as well as the surprises. And you keep doing that until all of you arrive at your destination and the story ends.

But you can't do that if you slip into the Almighty Writer On High role. When you begin to worry about (and control) where the story's going next, what the characters will say or do in their reaction to various stimuli, you're bogged down.

And you long to be NOT bogged down, because you have tasted the freedom before and it was

very good.

So you whine and pout (if you're me). Sometimes you even think it's all come to a horrible, screeching end. The words have left you. The stories have deserted for truly talented writers. What in the world was I thinking? I can't be a writer!

And just before the full panic mode sets in, you finally remember you have a magic mantra. And you remember to repeat it.

And a load lifts off your shoulders as you discard the responsibility for what the characters do and say and what happens next and how the story turns out.

Because NONE of that is Your Business. The story belongs to the characters.

So you Just Write. And you realize how very lucky you are.

And you grin. A lot.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Sort of back on schedule maybe. Coffee, a little email. Took nearly an hour of wake-up time this morning, then straight to work on The Bone Flesher. Feels good to be writing again. Well, writing more or less.

So about 4 a.m. I started. Still cycling through it, and even though I'm cycling through, new ideas are popping in and the story seems to be breaking loose. Again it took me thinking "I don't care where it goes and I don't care how long it is; I just want to write the story." My magic mantra. See the topic above.

Spent from roughly 4 a.m. to 5 a.m. on The Bone Flesher.

Then from 5 to 6:30-ish I was moving and recreating one more website for a client, then resetting the menus on a few other websites. I also sent out a notice to four or five folks offering to upgrade their sites for them.

Now I'm finished with website stuff until I put together a couple of fan websites later. I have one for Wes Crowley (complete with a photo of Wes in his later years [grin]) and Charlie Task. And a little later I have to create a static author site for a female author I know. But all of that can wait until I'm in the mood.

Another fifteen or twenty minutes tending to early morning things for the other people who live here. Now it's almost 7 and I'm going back to The Bone Flesher.

Didn't get much done before about 9. A lot of distractions. Then a fairly good session, though still cycling. I think I will never write a novel from a short story again.

At 10 a.m. I went out for a walk. Shed a little stress maybe. Planned to do 4 miles with a pretty good hill in the middle of it. I cut out the hill and did 3 instead. Then back here at noon. Fixed a quick lunch and back to the novel at 12:30.

Today's Writing

Only around 1600 words of new fiction, but I'll take it, especially since that was all during cycling sessions. Working this into that and that into this. Ugh. The few times I broke loose to write the new words were pure heaven.

I expect more of that "breaking loose" every day now to the end of this one. But very, very often when I expect too much I'm completely blindsided, so we'll see.

Fiction Words: 1642

Nonfiction Words: 1000 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2642

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words

Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21864

Total fiction words for the year..... 101979

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15614

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 58070

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 160049

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark4 Comments](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 2/19](#)

[February 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No new Topic of the Day today but I'll leave up yesterday's topic just in case it will resonate with anyone. (It won't count in today's nonfiction numbers.) I did glean one good comment. (Thanks, Duke.)

Of Interest

Dean Wesley Smith hit another home run as far as I'm concerned with [Time Goes By](#). This stuff is pure gold. It's all about copyright, and how rights will revert to you (or your heirs) even if you signed away all rights. Seriously. Check it out.

Topic of the Day (from yesterday): The Magic Mantra

What do I mean by that?

To me the magic mantra is whatever gets a story moving again. My magic mantra is "I don't care how long or short the story is and I don't care where it's going. I just want to tell the story."

That last part means I want to run through the story with the characters and record on the page what they say and do. In other words, I want the fun of writing.

If you use and strictly adhere to an outline or pre-defined plotline so something similar to write your stories and novels, you don't need a magic mantra. You already know where the story's going, every major turning point, and how it's going to end. So you just have to trudge through putting it on the page.

If you're still mired in all those myths about writing, there is no magic mantra required. For that matter, there is no magic at all. It's all a matter of mechanics.

But if you're very lucky, you sit down at the keyboard and allow your subconscious to Just Make Stuff Up. And when you do that, unless you're extremely lucky, occasionally those old myths will still creep back in and stop you from writing.

And when that happens, you have to utter your magic mantra. Whatever group of words will remind you the current story is no big deal. It's just a story. It's supposed to be fun.

It's like when you were a child and you were playing with a small group of neighborhood friends. You weren't worried about where they were going or what they were going to do along the way. Sometimes along the way, some of them said or did things that came as a complete, delicious surprise to you. You didn't even think about controlling what they said or did. You just ran along with them, enjoying the freedom of having fun.

Same thing now. You're a writer. When you begin a new project, you're surrounded by a group

of friends. You just happen to be the Friend with a Pen. You run along with them, enjoying the freedom of having fun. You write down what they say and do, the normal things as well as the surprises. And you keep doing that until you all arrive at your destination and the story ends.

But you can't do that if you slip into the Almighty Writer On High role. When you begin to worry about (and control) where the story's going next, what the characters will say or do in their reaction to various stimuli, you're bogged down.

And you long to be NOT bogged down, because you have tasted the freedom before and it was very good.

So you whine and pout (if you're me) and think it's all come to a horrible end. And then finally you remember you have a magic mantra. And you remember to repeat it.

And a load lifts off your shoulders as you discard the responsibility for what the characters do and say and what happens next and how the story turns out.

And you Just Write.

And you smile. A lot.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4. Very late for me. In fact, it was 4:09. Those of you of a certain age will remember a Beach Boys' song of the same name. That's why I remember what time it was.
(grin)

The moment my coffee was ready, I went to The Bone Flesher and began. Cycling through again, but with even more new stuff popping up today than yesterday. Every time new stuff pops up, that opens a door to just writing off into the dark.

Around 6 I took a slightly extended break to research and buy a new camera. It'll be here in a week or so. I'll be selling my Sony Alpha 65 plus some lenses. It's in excellent condition. If any of you are interested, let me know.

Look it up online first so you know what you'll be getting. It's a digital single lens reflex camera (DSLR). I've taken many a cover pic with that camera. And it's in great shape, but I don't need to shoot covers anymore and I wanted something different.

Made another mug of coffee and back to the novel for only a short session.

Then other things were happening in the house and I was distracted for awhile. Around 9 I was back to the novel, then another break to check Dean's site, add to the "Of Interest" section, and then write this stuff.

A little after 10, I remembered I had a package coming in. I checked tracking online and found it

had been delivered to my PO yesterday after I checked the mail. So I went to the PO and picked up my package, opened it, and extended my break with a cigar. (grin)

Ever the multi-tasker, while I did that I also swept (with a 3-foot magnet on wheels) the driveway area between the carport and the shed out back and the corral to one side. Picked up roughly 100 potential flat tires and deposited them near the fence on the back side of the property.

Also learned one more benefit of getting older. During that operation, at some point when I worked the lever to release the nails, screws, etc. I pinched the thumb side of my right index finger. Pinched it hard enough to break the skin and raise two ugly red welts, one on either side.

And it didn't hurt. I didn't even notice it until I noticed the blood. Score! (grin)

Now it's 11 a.m. I put in a large load of laundry and made sure everything was set to Super, to the right side of Large ('cause I'm a guy and that's how I roll). Now I'm headed back to the novel. I hope you're having a great writing day too.

Around noon I was interrupted by a long-time friend from Shreveport. Over the years she has gone from being a friend and fellow poet to a supporter and reader of my fiction. She subscribed for a year to my short fiction and ordered two collections. Thanks, Nan!

She also mentioned that her son-in-law enjoyed the Wes Crowley saga. Possibly it helped that his name is Wes, he was born in Austin, and his grandfather was a Texas Ranger. (grin)

Around 1 p.m. I realized I had to update some plugins on some of my websites. So I did that. Then that laundry I put in earlier was close to dry, so I put the dry stuff away while the damp stuff was drying, then put it away.

I'm probably not going to get a lot of new words on the page today, but it's still a good day of writing because I'm able to keep going back to the novel. I'm still cycling through, breaking and expanding scenes in the short story into several scenes in the novel and so on.

The key is, the writing isn't dragging today. Every time I go back, it's moving along smoothly, so every time, it's fun. And I got a ton of other stuff done today as well.

Now back to cycling through the novel again. It's almost 2 p.m. There should be no further interruptions.

Today's Writing

A little better day today than yesterday. If this were a brand new story, I wouldn't call this a good day at all. But surfing an old breakwater and catching new waves to the tune of over 1800 words ain't bad. I'll take it. (grin) Should be better tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1845

Nonfiction Words: 760 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2605

Writing of *The Bone Flesher* (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words

Writing of *No Coincidence* (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23709
Total fiction words for the year..... 103824

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16374
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 58830

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 162654

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark2 Comments](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 2/20](#)

[February 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today, but just a bit right here about copyright.

Dean mentioned that it's a really good idea to own a copy of *The Copyright Handbook* (NOLO Press). The author's last name is Fishman. The latest edition is expensive at around \$35, but I found several earlier editions on eBay for \$5 and under.

One caution—if you follow my lead, be sure to scroll down in the listing and find the year of publication. One that was published in 1978 won't do you much good.

I ordered the 2011 edition. It covers e-rights, even to blogs and so on, so I figure that's good enough.

Because I started so late in life (relatively speaking), I've never worried about how much income I can make off my books and stories. I'm having a ball writing them, and for me that's the most important thing. If I had gotten started with Heinlein's Rules back in my 20s or 30s it would be different. But I didn't.

So today my main consideration is setting up copyright ownership of my work for my heirs. Most people know copyright is good for 70 years after the death of the copyright owner, but that can be extended if you know what you're doing. And that's why I bought The Copyright Handbook today.

I hope my heirs will still be raking in cash from all these different revenue streams a couple of hundred years from now. So something to think about if you haven't already thought about it.

Of Interest

Not a lot out there today.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Around 3:30 I started looking for a copy of The Copyright Handbook. Got it ordered, then came here and wrote everything down to this point.

Now it's time to let the pup'n'cat out. Then to the novel.

Well, I might just as well have called this one a day off and skipped it. WAY too much going on all day to get much done, but I did work on it in 5 and 10 and 15 minute bits and pieces here and there.

Today's Writing

A worse day today than yesterday, but with reasons. I could easily have just set this day aside and written nothing. As it is, the story is 1300 words further along. (grin) "Should be better tomorrow," he said, from a seemingly endless well of childlike naivete. At least it's in novella range and heading for short novel.

Fiction Words: 1384

Nonfiction Words: 450 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1834

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 25093
Total fiction words for the year..... 105208

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16824
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 59280

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 164488

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 2/21

[February 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today but a really great “Of Interest” section (I think), thanks in part to my new friend Gnondpom. (Do the last three letters stand for Pomeranian? I don’t know, but I like Pomeranians, so either way is good.)

Gnondpom read a comment I left on Dean’s site on Friday, then stepped over here to mention Neil Gaiman’s website. I can’t recommend it enough. See below. Thanks Gnondpom, so very much.

If anyone else out knows of an informative journal or other material I can share, send me an email.

While I’m thinking about it, I’ll be out of town February 26, 27, 28 and 29. I should get some writing done on those days since I’ll be in a hotel room when I’m not out taking care of business. I should also be able to post to this journal on those days, though the posts might be very short.

Of Interest

Neil Gaiman's post (including a nifty, downloadable, printable short will) on giving your heirs your copyright when you die (or in my preferable alternative, DENYING your copyright to all the people who so very richly do NOT deserve it). [Click This](#).

Neil Gaiman's wonderful essay on another topic that's near and dear to my heart: [Where Do You Get Your Ideas](#).

[The Neil Gaiman website](#) in general. He even has a new baby to show off. When I saw that he has a Journal, I nearly wet myself, but then I realized it is not a daily journal. Since the arrival of the baby, it's more like a very occasional journal. Darn it.

Just for fun, too, I'll point you to [Neil Gaiman's FAQs](#).

Some good comments on Dean's previous post. Otherwise not much over there today.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Around 2:15 I started looking at Neil Gaiman's website, downloading and reading things and so on, then reporting here and writing everything above this.

It's 3:20 and I'm turning to the novel. By 5 a.m. (while letting cats in and out, etc.) I managed 800 new words in one fragmented session. I'm hoping today doesn't turn out like yesterday, but some days just do that. Either way, I think I'll have four uninterrupted days of writing beginning tomorrow morning. So anything I can get today will almost be a bonus.

Delays, delays, and finally I slipped over to the other blog to write a quickie (480 words) giving the masses over there a taste of this blog in an effort to get more of them to subscribe over here. Why any writer would subscribe over there but not over here is frankly beyond my comprehension. Then again, I suppose my comprehension is not required.

About another 800 words over the next few hours in intermittent bits. Ten minutes here, fifteen minutes there. Weird how it continues to build up. It's almost like magic.

At 10:50, I'm out for a short walk on state land out behind my house. Probably no more than a couple miles, maybe less.

At 11:40, I'm back. Just a little under 2 miles. Not a bad walk. Leisurely pace (albeit on a slight incline) of about a 20-minute mile. So 3 miles per hour.

Got distracted changing the header over on the big site. It's 12:40 now and I'm going back to the novel.

Turned out I didn't write anymore. My wife came in and asked whether I would read her what I have so far.

Since I knew I would have to read the whole thing aloud anyway as my own first reader, I assented. I read the first four chapters (about 15,000 words) aloud. It actually read much better (and had a much stronger emotional effect) than I expected.

About halfway through Chapter 3 I realized (and even stopped and said aloud) “Hey, this thing would make a good play.”

She agreed.

So maybe I’ll pursue that after I finish the novel. It would make a really good script too.

Anyway, no more writing today. I’m emotionally drained.

Today’s Writing

A good-enough day of cycling. And tomorrow should be an uninterrupted writing day, so I’ll hope for a big surge forward.

Fiction Words: 1681

Nonfiction Words: 680 (journal) + 480 (main blog) = 1160

So total words for the day: 2841

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 25093

Total fiction words for the year..... 105208

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17984
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 60440

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 167329

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 2/22

[February 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today. Hoping for a really good writing day. I need a really good day. I think that one's a few days off though.

Of Interest

Dean's [post on reading](#) is pretty good.

The Day

Rolled out late at 3:45.

Wow. What a morning. It's just after noon. Zero writing so far today.

From 3:45 to about 4:30 I was in wake-up mode. Checked email during that time, solitaire, not much else.

Also got an email from a client who accepted my offer to upgrade her website, so I did that. Upgraded her website to a responsive WordPress theme (Freelancer, along with its parent theme, Generate Press, and the premium add-on, the gp-premium plugin) and invoiced the client. While I was in PayPal I created a new invoice template to include a header from HarveyStanbrough.com.

Then as long as I was doing web stuff I upgraded the header for this website (hestanbrough.com). If you look at the header, it appears to contain three elements, a photo and two text elements. Actually it contains seven.

Then I was about to go to the PO but realized it's noon. The window is closed right now for the employees' lunch hour, so if I had a package I'd have to go back.

So I'll walk now and go to the PO afterward. Then I'll come back and see whether I can add anything to the novel or whether I'll just declare this a day off and be done with it. Sure will be glad when February is over.

Walked, did a quick two miles out back. The wind was at my back on the incline and in my face on the decline, so that worked out. About the only part of the day that did, really.

Got back and allowed myself to be distracted doing other things, so officially declaring this a no-writing day. Nothing changed below. This is pathetic. My spreadsheet is going to be terribly upset with me.

But there's always tomorrow. You know, probably.

Today's Writing

Nada.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 300

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 25093

Total fiction words for the year..... 105208

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18284

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 60740

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 167629

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 2/23

[February 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today. Hoping for a really good writing day. I need a really good day.

Of Interest

Good post on [The Math of an Old Book](#) in which Dean answers some critics' claims that hoping for an audience in the future for what we're publishing now is a hopeless cause.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Screwed around with spider solitaire and email for close to an hour.

The sense that today was in jeopardy of slipping away like yesterday did was almost palpable. It would be so easy to just let it go. As much fun as I have when I'm just writing, it never ceases to amaze me how easy it is to KNOWINGLY just let it all drift away into a lost day.

So I got up and fixed a second mug of coffee (a different action to break the current string of inaction) and set myself mentally to not even look at email, spider, or any of that when I came back. Instead I would go straight to the writing computer (Hal).

When I got back, I turned to the novel, found my place and started writing.

About two hundred words in, the cursor kept moving when I accidentally touched the touchpad. Wish there were a way to permanently disable these things. I tried.

I deleted the touchpad driver. That didn't work. All that did was keep me from being able to disable the touchpad even temporarily. So I had to go online, find the driver, download it and reinstall it. After all that, I was able to disable it temporarily again. That will have to be good enough.

Back to the novel. Wrote about another 500 words, then took a break to swivel around here. I wrote some of this, went to Dean's place and read his post (see above) and then wrote this. Then an email from Canon popped up asking for feedback on a recent transaction, so I did that.

Now at 6:50, back to the novel.

My efforts probably will be intermittent at best for the next hour and a half, but that's just life. Regardless, I will keep coming back to the novel during this time, and then for the rest of the day.

Today's Writing

Well, I did keep coming back. I got a lot more done than the word count indicates. This thing should break loose soon.

Fiction Words: 2185

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2585

Writing of **The Bone Flesher** (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words

Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words

Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words

Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words

Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words

Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words

Writing of **No Coincidence** (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 27278

Total fiction words for the year..... 107393

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18684

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 61140

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 170214

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 2/24](#)

[February 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic today. Hoping for a really good writing day. Again. I know it's coming soon, and I need a really good day. Maybe this coming weekend. I'll be visiting relatives, briefly, and holed up in a hotel room writing the rest of the time. Woohoo! No distractions, chillax and write.

Of Interest

[Some Old/New Information](#) should be required reading for anyone who considers him/herself a writer. Period.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:30. Screwed around with spider solitaire and email for about a half-hour. Then for some reason (I forget, actually) I needed to access my saved passwords in my browser. That led to me noticing a glut of old passwords, and that led me to spend an hour and a half deleting them.

Now it's 6 a.m. already, so I'm eating breakfast and playing with this. The novel is up on Hal. I might get to it before around 8:30 but maybe not.

Got to it around 9, wrote some off and on, but just not in a good mood today.

Spent most of the day, frankly, watering trees and shrubs out front, walking out back, doing a few chores around the house, and sitting. Worked on my private "static" author websites a bit. I have three for authors (pseudonyms), another one to put up for another pseudonym, and two for strong characters.

So very little actual writing today. Back to it tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Not much.

Fiction Words: 1113

Nonfiction Words: 200 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1313

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words

Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 28391
Total fiction words for the year..... 108506

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18884
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 61340

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 171527

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#),

The Journal, Thursday, 2/25

[February 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The topic today is about WordPress Glitches and Reading Your Work Aloud. Probably not a writing day today at all. I was hoping, but I have a lot to do to get ready for my trip.

I'm feeling a little insane right now. I think what I should have done is save the cost (in time) of the drive and the cost in money of the hotel and just closed and locked my office door for the next four days. But it is what it is, so I reckon I'll deal with it.

Of Interest

Not much out there really.

Topic of the Day: WordPress Glitches and Reading Your Work Aloud

Kind of cheating here. Two mini-topics in one. They might help you, might not.

First, about WordPress.

I've long employed WordPress' "schedule" feature to schedule posts to go out on certain days. For example, posts in the Pro Writers series (while I'm posting chapters of the nonfiction book) are scheduled to release every Wednesday. (Before that, they were scheduled to post every ten days on the 1st, 11th and 21st every month.) My free short story of the week is scheduled to release every Monday.

But for some reason, lately the scheduler hasn't been working. The last three stories were marked "missed schedule." And the last two entries from Writing the Character-Driven Story have missed as well.

Now you can't go to one of those and just press Publish, as if it were a new post. To fix it, you have to change the status from Scheduled to Draft, then update, THEN press Publish. When you do all that, it finally goes live. Then (in my case) MailChimp picks it up and sends it out. This new glitch in WordPress is what we in the writing profession call a PITA or a SNAFU or FUBAR.

Well, okay. I guess folks in other professions recognize those terms too.

Anyway, I'm gonna wait to see whether the next whatever posts. If it doesn't, I guess I'll go back in and change all of the pending ones (well into April) to Draft. Then I'll have to remember to post each one on its correct day.

And about the importance of reading your work aloud.

As I mentioned not too long ago in a topic, if you have a good first reader, good for you. If you don't, you can be your own first reader by reading your work aloud.

I lost my own first reader a couple months ago. I was still writing a story a week, and a few of those are gap stories. By that I mean they fell into the gap between the time I lost my first reader and the time I remembered to read my work aloud.

So in my email this morning was my most recent posted story. I subscribe to all my own blogs only so I know they actually went out. If this world has taught me anything, it's that you get what you INspect, not what you EXpect. (grin)

But even though the stories come to my email, I usually don't read them. I know they posted, so I usually just delete them. I mean, I wrote them, so I don't need to read them. But I read this one and I'm glad I did. I found three errors, one really big.

Turns out this was one of those gap stories.

So as I said, I found three mistakes. I fixed them in the post, then fixed them in the two versions I send distributors, then republished them with those distributors plus Amazon.

I'm very glad we can do things like that in this new world, but I'm annoyed with myself that I had to do it at all.

Seriously, if you don't have a first reader, read your work aloud.

And I guess I'm taking applications if anyone out there enjoys my work enough to see all of it. The only job is to read fairly quickly, note any wrong words (that for than), inconsistencies (guy's wearing a grey jacket when he goes into the bank, a blue one when he comes out) and anyplace the story stops you As A Reader.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:30. No spider solitaire this morning. Just email, where I found the short story I posted to the site late yesterday. It should have gone out on Monday. I wrote about that in the first part of the topic above.

I read it as part of my wake-up process and found three errors. So I corrected them, then redistributed them, then wrote about that in the second part of the topic above.

Now it's 4 a.m. I was going to turn to the novel now, but I'm awaiting some input so I'll read more of those gap stories while I'm waiting.

9:10 "And ain't it funny, how time slips away." Got the input I needed, went out for a smoke, came back in and got busy making breakfast.

Then I remembered I had thawed some hamburger meat yesterday, so I turned that into patties and cooked it so it wouldn't spoil. Reckon I'll be eating hamburgers while I'm on the road this weekend. (Score!)

All of that reminded me I have to pack today. Leaving early tomorrow morning. I thought packing would take me all of maybe a half-hour. But I forgot I don't have the right size bag anymore (about a 24" duffel would be good) and I had to do laundry, pick up a few groceries, etc.

Came back here off and on to write this stuff, and now it's already after 2 p.m. I wrote for about 15 minutes this morning. I'll write a little more today, but officially I'm calling this a nonwriting day unless lightning strikes.

Today's Writing

Got a little bit done. Calling it a day with just over 1200 words.

Fiction Words: 1271

Nonfiction Words: 920 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2191

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29662
Total fiction words for the year..... 109777

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19804
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 62260

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 173718

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 2/26

[February 26, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The topic for today is I'm a Linear Guy. This will be a travel day first and then a writing day. I'm going to relax my way to my destination. Check-in times get later all the time it seems, so no real rush and a LOT to see between here and there anyway.

Hmmm. A lot to see. I was going to leave around 4, but I decided (since realizing there's no rush) to take the scenic route. Instead of going north to Benson and then east, I'll go south through Bisbee and Douglas, then northeast. It isn't a lot longer, and it's a LOT less hectic and more scenic than doing the 75 mph thing on the freeway.

Of course, no reason to leave before sunup if I'm taking the scenic route. Duh. So I'll leave a little later.

Of Interest

Good comments on yesterday's [Puzzled post](#).

Also he posted [Old/New Information Continued](#).

Finally, tell you what. If you haven't read his [Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing](#) entries and series, I strongly encourage you to do so. Over time. There's a lot of eye-opening stuff there.

Topic of the Day: I'm a Linear Guy

Okay, first, let me just say there is little that is more boring to me than anything that's strictly linear. Ugh.

I have been a multitasker. Sometimes I've set in motion as many as seven different operations that would run simultaneously. And I got back to each one just in time to keep the plate spinning.

Not so much anymore. I mean, I can still write after I put in a load of laundry, doing my job while the washing machine does its job. But apparently that's about my limit.

The other day I tried a three-fer. I put in a load of laundry. Then I put a little water in the bottom of a skillet and set three split chicken breasts to slow-boil. Then I came in here to write.

The sudden smell of singed (seared, charred, burnt) chicken aroused me from my fictional world. I WAS able to still use the chicken, although on one side it was pretty much chicken jerky, suitable for consumption only by the moron who let it burn. Whatever. By then it was lunch time anyway.

And I was able to save the rest of the chicken in one of those little plastic containers we all love. Later it went into various rice or pasta mixes to fill them out. That's because it was thoroughly cooked but NOT to the point I could use it to reshingle my roof.

And then yesterday. Yesterday I should have been able to think, "Hmmm, I have to pack sometime today" and then go on writing.

But no.

I had to "pack," the various mechanics of which literally took all day. Then I sat down and wrote, frantically, for one session after I was packed.

Then I got up this morning and realized I wasn't packed after all. I had omitted a few things. Just inconsequential incidentals like my heart meds (grin), my tooth brush, my shaving stuff.... You know the drill.

Oh well.

The Day

Up per usual at 3. Did very little writing, out the door at about 6, took a very scenic, very roundabout trip to my destination. Not in the hotel until 5:30, so this is going out late at 6.

Today's Writing

None

Fiction Words: xxxx

Nonfiction Words: 600 (journal)

So total words for the day: 600

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29662

Total fiction words for the year..... 109777

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12404

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 62860

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 174318

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 2/27

[February 27, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No topic for today. Probably not a lot of journal either, and probably very little fiction writing. I have a full slate of non-writing stuff to do today. Some reading, a lot of local travel, some other stuff.

I should have a full writing day tomorrow, or mostly a full writing day. Then Monday will be a partial writing day and a day of travel.

Of Interest

Read [Kris Rusch's post](#). Seriously. But you might want to read parts 1 and 4, and skip over parts 2 & 3. Oh, and when she mentions "traditionally published authors," please realize that includes authors who WANT their books to be traditionally published.

The Day

Up at 4:45, but that ain't bad considering I didn't sack out until after 10:30. I spent the first 45 minutes reading Kris' blog, then came here to do this.

Actually did some limited writing (cycling) from about 5:30, then showered and went to the front desk. The cleaning folks who set up my room had left zero bathtowels and several bath mats, which are about the size of hand towels.

We all had a good laugh and I got some bath towels and extra coffee. Stashed that in my room, then out for a smoke. After the smoke I went back to maybe get some breakfast, but they didn't have bacon in the buffet, so that was a no-go.

Back in the room, answered a few emails, wrote a couple more and made a phone call or two to try to contact a guy I want to see. Then I started writing again about 7:30. Wrote (still cycling, sigh) for about another hour, then here to record the last few hours.

Now to some stuff I need to read for a local thing, then out probably for most of the day.

Wrapped up a day of visiting and am just back in the room. Despite me leaving the Do Not Disturb sign in the lock, the cleaning people came in. They actually TOOK the towels and coffee that I went and got this morning. So I went to the office to complain and retrieve more coffee. Hard to believe how "Leave This Room the Hell Alone" is so difficult to understand.

Today's Writing

Nothing that I'm counting.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal)

So total words for the day: 400

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... 29040 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29662
Total fiction words for the year..... 109777

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12804
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63260

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 174718

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 2/28

[February 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic for today.

Of Interest

Nada

The Day

Up right at 3 after a very restless night. Seems there was a party going on right outside my window on the balcony. That or in both rooms next to mine on either side. Finally to sleep around 10. Ugh.

I read Dr. Mardy's newsletter of the week and then skipped over to Dean's blog. Nothing there.

Today again I'm not reporting any fiction writing. I did three sessions of cycling, but the day simply turned out much different than I expected. Did some visiting locally, then some local travel.

Tomorrow will be mostly a day of travel. I might get some writing done in the early morning, but I'm not counting on it. Either way, on Tuesday I'll be back into my normal routine.

It will also be March and this (particularly horrible for me) February will be over. Yay.

Today's Writing

None.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 120 (journal)

So total words for the day: 120

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words

Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29662
Total fiction words for the year..... 109777

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12924
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63380

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 174838

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, 2/29

[February 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic for today. No writing either. I'm officially calling this month over at 6 a.m. today. And thank goodness it's gone. Still have some traveling to do, and tomorrow I'll be back on my normal schedule.

I'm more than a little annoyed with myself that I didn't have the mental discipline to Just Sit Down and Write during most of February and, frankly, even much of January. I intend never to let that happen again.

Of course, I've already failed in my goal to finish at least one novel per month because I missed February. There is zero excuse for that. I still plan, before January 1, 2017, to have completed 15 new novels this year. Completing two in March would be an excellent step in the right direction.

Of Interest

Nada. No time to look this morning.

The Day

Woke up behind the steering wheel at about 5:30.

Again, very loud partying going on outside my room last night.

I was on the second floor. Around a dozen young guys with some sort of drilling company (oil or water, I couldn't tell from the trucks) had the room below mine plus three rooms to one side and two to the other. They were having a cookout, accompanied by all the normal young-guy BS. And that's fine.

I couldn't even think of asking them to quiet down, and I couldn't join them. So after awhile I packed up my stuff and left. I slept along the highway on a ranch road outside a small town. Now I'm parked outside the local high school to borrow their WiFi. Answered email and got this out. Now back on the road.

Today's Writing

None.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 200 (journal)

So total words for the day: 200

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29662

Total fiction words for the year..... 109777

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13124
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63580

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 175038

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 3/1

[March 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

It's March! February is over! I don't remember seeing an overcast sky the whole month, but it was a drizzly, dreary affair from Day 1 to Day 29. Ugh. No topic for today.

During breaks today I'll walk (probably only about two miles) and I'll study various aspects of my new camera, a Canon PowerShot SX530HS. Otherwise the plan is to write. Still grunting through some more cycling, making sure things fit, etc. but that's almost at an end.

Of Interest

Nada

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30 after sacking out at 6:30 last night. Ten hours sleep. Goodness. I think I'm caught up with sleep now. (grin)

Spent well over the first hour of the morning just getting used to being home again, getting back into my routine. I also poked around and found a Topic from an earlier Journal entry, retouched and formatted it, and sent it off to The Write Word, the online magazine of the Society of Southwestern Authors.

At a little after 6, I'm turning to Hal and the novel. It's March! Let the fun begin! Wrote 500 new words (cycling).

With the hustle and bustle of the typical morning, got nothing else significant done until around 8:45, when I went for a brief walk (two miles).

At 9:30 I'm back here and working to figure out how to delete some old files from my writing 'puter and thereby lighten the load on the hard drive a bit. Not quite 10 a.m. I found a resource that told me how to get rid of the previous Windows installation files (yay, it's huge). Started that process. Gonna get a shower while that's working, then back to writing.

I wrote off and on all day, mostly on, but still cycling. Ugh. A few times, though, I was able to just give the story its head and not worry where it was running to. That was wonderful.

Today's Writing

Doesn't look like much in the numbers, but actually a very decent day considering it was all cycling, stitching and knitting.

Fiction Words: 1915

Nonfiction Words: 340 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2255

Writing of **The Bone Flesher** (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words

Writing of **No Coincidence** (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 1915

Total fiction words for the year..... 113373

Total nonfiction words for the month... 340

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63920

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 177293

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 3/2

[March 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Probably no topic today. Another full day of writing. I expect a good day.

During breaks today (again) I'll walk (probably only about two miles) and I'll study various aspects of my new camera, a Canon PowerShot SX530HS. I was going to sell my DSLR, a Sony Alpha 65T. I'm thinking more now about hanging onto it too. The PowerShot seems very versatile, but it still seems like more of a snapshot camera than anything else. And I've created a lot of good cover shots with that Sony.

Oh, recently I shaved my beard and moustache. Why? I hadn't seen my upper lip for 40+ years and wondered what it looked like. It was as I suspected. A flap of skin that's entirely worthless when it comes to restraining things I shouldn't say. Anyway, just in case you'd like to see the denuded Harv (face only), there's a picture below.

I'm probably gonna grow the beard and moustache back. My kitten liked it. Oh, and I would have taken off the hat but I didn't want the hassle of combing what little hair I have left.

Of Interest

Nada



The Day

Rolled out just before 2 a.m. More like my old schedule.

Still, first couple hours of the day I spent removing more programs from Hal, playing Spider Solitaire, slowly waking up.

At 4 a.m. I'm turning to Hal and the novel.

Got around 1400 words in five cycling sessions over the next five hours. Slow going but it won't always be.

Around 9 a.m. I put a load in the washer, wrote awhile, put the clothes in the dryer. Around 10:30 a.m. made a necessary trip to the grocery.

Back around 11:30, folded clothes, put away groceries and answered a few emails.

At noon I'm back to writing. In a few sessions from noon to 3 p.m. with one longer break and two shorter ones, I put down another 1400 words. This is exceptional progress, given that much of it was still me cycling through, matching things up.

A bit more cycling tomorrow, and then (fingers crossed) it will be a two- or three-day sprint to the end of this one.

Taking another break now to write this. Then back to write enough fiction words to attain my daily goal (3200) for the first time since WAY back on February 8.

Today's Writing

Great writing day today. More tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3488

Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3888

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words

Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 5403
Total fiction words for the year..... 116861

Total nonfiction words for the month... 740
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 64320

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 181181

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 3/3

[March 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

A short topic of the day today. A note on Some Writers and Learning. Otherwise another full day of writing. I expect another good day.

I'm at a stage now where I should be able to Just Write, with one small caveat. Those of you who have been with me for the long haul will remember all the crying and wailing and gnashing of teeth back when I was writing the third book in the Wes Crowley series. I had already written what turned out to be books 4, 5, and 6. Then I wrote books 1 and 2 with little problem.

But as I wrote book 3, the closer I got to the end the more difficult it became because I had to mesh what was happening in book 3 with what I'd already written in book 4. That's kind of the situation I'm in at this stage of the novel. I can write freely, but I have to keep an eye on the character's future situation.

It isn't quite as problematic as it was in that novel series because I can alter this character's future to some degree, but I want to keep a lot about it. So there you go. Probably more wailing etc. to come. (grin)

Of Interest

Nada again today. Dean's posting very short 'placeholder' posts. I suspect he's traveling. I hope it nothing worse than that.

Topic of the Day: Some Writers and Learning

This came up only because I received notification of yet another unsubscribe from a reader over on the big list, HarveyStanbrough.com.

And really, this post is mis-titled. Most would-be writers and some writers don't want to learn. They just want other writers to validate what they've heard all their lives about writing, mostly from non-writers. And I don't do that. I always pass along the most up-to-date information I have on any given topic.

Normally, unsubscribes don't alarm me. Random unsubscribes are just part of life when you have a mailing list and run a blog. I typically get maybe one unsubscribe per month. But that particular list has endured a rash of fourteen unsubscribes since the middle of January. That's the day I posted the Introduction for Writing the Character-Driven Story.

The most recent occurred the day after I posted THE FIRST HALF of what is probably the most important chapter in the whole book, Writing Setting. Again, seriously?

Now, a few assumptions

I have to assume those who subscribed to that blog are writers.
If that's true, I have to assume those who unsubscribed are writers.
And if that's true, I have to assume they simply didn't like what they were seeing on the blog.

But who walks out in the middle of receiving a free book?

People who don't agree with what's being said.

The unsubscribes leave me with the same feeling I might get if I were delivering a free, one-man, in-depth presentation on emergency medical procedures. Say there were 500 people in an auditorium. And say every time I said something that didn't jibe with accepted but erroneous old myths (e.g., dangling tobacco leaves over a sick child's forehead to rid him of "the fevers") someone got up and walked out. Seriously?

I mean, I understand the tickets were free, and it's true that roughly fourteen other people walked in as the original fourteen were walking out, but still.

The sad thing is, if I were posting a series of clichés, reinforcing the same old nonsense most of us have heard all our lives, the stampede would be in the other direction. People would be signing up by the droves.

(By the way, according to Dictionary.com, the definition of a drove [n.] is 1. a number of oxen, sheep, or swine driven in a group; herd; flock. 2. Usually, droves. a large crowd of human beings, especially in motion.)

I'm almost tempted to start yet another blog called What Writers Want to Hear just to test my theory. But really, if I'm intentionally going to write lies, I'll stick to fiction.

You know. Probably.

The Day

Rolled out late at 4 a.m. That's all right.

I let out the little girl as my coffee was finishing up, and she was back in almost immediately, scared half to death. So I spent close to a half-hour calming her down. Then I made a first stab at writing a topic of the day called Some Writers and Learning. I let the other two out of their kennels and that was the first hour of the day. Interesting start.

At 5 a.m. I went back to finish the topic of the day. Now, almost an hour later, I'm turning to Hal and the novel.

From 6 to 6:30 I had a good half-hour of cycling. Then some getting-ready-for-the-day stuff until about 8.

Then shortly after 8 I was sidetracked by a question regarding licensing for my audio lectures. Well, that got me all excited. Seriously? Somebody actually wants this stuff? I had licensed one audio course only once before and I didn't take notes.

When there's grunt work to be done, I'm a head-down, butt-in-the-air type until I plow through it. So that I would never again have to reinvent the wheel on that, I decided to establish a firm fee schedule. Of course, as is always the case with something that is both necessary and that probably I will never need again, that took close to two hours. But at least it's finished.

If any of you have a group who would like to hear any of my audio lectures, let me know and I'll send you a licensing fee schedule. It's a lot less expensive than having each member of the group buy the course for himself once. Or just click [Licensing Options](#) to get the PDF information sheet.

Just as I finished that, my kitten needed some attention.

10:20 a.m. back to the novel.

At 1 p.m. it's been going slower than I expected. Wrote a few "fillers" to fill out a scene or bridge a gap. Serious cycling back as my main character changed his mind about a few things. (grin) Kept coming back, sitting down, a little here, a little there.

Today's Writing

Good writing day today, but not great. Again I got a lot more done than the actual new words below indicate. That's all right. More tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1724
Nonfiction Words: 1070 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2794

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
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Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 7127
Total fiction words for the year..... 118573

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 65390

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 183975

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 3/4

[March 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. Another full day of (mostly) writing. I expect a good day.

A friend left a comment on yesterday's post asking me about cycling. I think maybe he wanted to know the difference between cycling (the name of which I learned from DWS) and rewriting. Is it all right, he wanted to know, to go back and check up on his characters, make sure they aren't doing things that are not in accordance with their personalities from earlier books, etc.?

The short answer is Yes.

When you rewrite, you're doing so with your critical, conscious mind. If you're going back to add something (e.g., a character just got shot in a scene, so you cycle back to put a pistol in the bad guy's pocket somewhere earlier), take something out or adjust something AND YOU'RE DOING IT WITH YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS CREATIVE MIND you're fine. If you hear that critical voice starting to horn in, shut it down.

That's the difference. The conscious mind is ALWAYS critical. The subconscious mind is never critical. I had to do a little conscious mind stuff today on mine. You'll see me whining about it below.

Of Interest

No topic at Dean's today, but for what it's worth, he did write, "[M]y thoughts are with all the writers and editors getting hurt by all the layoffs at one traditional publisher and all their many imprints. Even Nora Robert's editor got fired. Have I said lately how happy I am to be out of that zoo? Wow."

Take heed, guys. If you're still chasing that particular golden ring, realize even a golden ring isn't worth grabbing while it's white hot.

The Day

Rolled out late again at quarter to 4 a.m. That's all right. Coffee, kitten out and in, then out again. Some days she gets in the mood to run in and out. Just like a human child. (grin)

By about 4:30 I was writing on the novel. Still cycling back a bit. (Here you go, Duke.) A minor character who only popped up yesterday was tugging at my sleeve, telling me I need to add an extra sub-scene. She was right, so I did. All in creative subconscious, of course. Just writing off into the dark. Letting the character tell the story.

Around 6 I was sidetracked again by that same person from yesterday with a question regarding licensing for my audio lectures. Yesterday I worked up a licensing fee schedule for all my courses individually. But I didn't work up fees for bundles, and today that's what she asked about.

So around 6:45 I came here to write this, and now I'm going to set up a fee schedule for bundles. Then I'll send off that information.

It's an hour and a half later at 8 a.m. I finished the licensing stuff a half-hour ago, but the house is bustling so I turned to my website (HarveyStanbrough.com/lecture-series) to update the table near the bottom of that page.

If you're interested at all, I posted the updated fee schedule there too. Now I'm out for my first actual break of the day and then back inside and back to the novel.

Well, I was inside by 8:20 or so, but got involved in roughly ten short conversations, a few with humans, all of which took a little time. Now it's 9 and I'm headed back to the novel at last. I got a lot done during the layoff from 6 to 9, but nothing as important as advancing the novel.

Another almost two hours on the novel (more cycling... sigh). About 11:15 I went to the PO. When I got back around 11:30, I decided while I was writing I could also be dumping all my stuff out of the desktop computer I bought so I can get it listed for sale.

Of course, first I had to poke around and find a keyboard I could use with it. There couldn't be one lying close by yelling "Pick me! Pick me!" It doesn't have Bluetooth, so the first two keyboards didn't work. Finally found one that did.

Finally got that done. It didn't take as long as I thought it might. On the other hand, it demanded my attention the entire time. If I stopped staring at it, it stopped working. Anyway, all done now. Came here to write all this stuff, and now I'm headed back to the novel at 1 p.m.

Okay, here's the conscious mind stuff. Ugh.

I spent almost two hours just working out some dates. For example, I had a first celebration happening in 2145 and the tenth celebration happening in 2154, which would be right. Problem was, the main character was born in 2131 and was at a moon colony during that tenth celebration, but he was only 19.

I also had him at 8 years old when he attended the first one in 2145 (um, bad math). In 2145 he would have been 14, and then in 2154 he would have been 23, not 19. Sigh. So adjustments on both ends and several places in the middle.

And yes, I'm precisely stupid enough to have dates (years) scattered throughout the 35000+ words, so it was a minor feat of engineering (or something) to figure it all out.

So now it's almost 3, and it's back to the novel again, albeit this time I'm going to the novel FROM the novel. Actually, back to the subconscious creative mind (Duke) from the conscious, critical mind, which was required to figure out all those dates.

Today's Writing

Good writing day today, but not great. Again I got a lot more done than the actual new words below indicate. That's all right. More tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1587
Nonfiction Words: 1000 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2587

Writing of *The Bone Flesher* (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
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Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words

Writing of *No Coincidence* (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 8714
Total fiction words for the year..... 120160

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 66390

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 186562

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [creative subconscious](#), [critical mind](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 3/5](#)

[March 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. I'm hoping for another full day of writing, but it's Saturday so I never know what the day will hold.

Today will be Writing Day 20 for this novel. If you had told me when I started that it would go this long, I would have said there's no way.

UPDATE: Tomorrow will be Day 20, as it turns out. Today was a non-writing day.

I'm just turning a short story into a novel, after all. How hard can it be? Expand some scenes, shift to a few different POV characters, develop those characters a bit, splice in a few more scenes. Piece of cake, right? Sigh.

But I'm still enjoying the characters and I'm still enjoying the unfolding story, so....

Of Interest

Nada. And I'm deleting this as a separate section. Most of the time it's a referral to Dean's or Kris' site anyway. And probably you're already following them. If I see anything of particular interest anywhere else, I'll add it to the introduction.

The Day

Rolled out late again at quarter to 4 a.m. Then I got a late start. Seems like it's always something.

Finally, around 5:30 I'm turning to the novel.

Ha. Yeah right. Worked for about a half-hour, then let the day take over.

Did some computer stuff, talked briefly about older relatives with one of my sons, read the manual for my new camera, and then got off my L(azy) O(ld) B and took a two-mile walk out back. I really need to force time for that every day, no matter what else.

This Canon SX530HS camera is a little snapshot camera basically, BUT its 50x magnification is the equivalent of a 1200mm lens. Which means I can get neat, clear pix of the craters on the moon once I learn to use it. That alone was worth the price.

A rest-from-the-walk period now, then to the novel. Nope. That was the intention. Rest, then shower, then work on laundry, then to the store. Now it's almost 3 and I'm back to the novel for the first time since a half-hour session this morning.

My goal of a novel a month is fading, but that's all right. I want this novel, and it's a good story. It's just slow right now. But I'm not gonna rush it just to meet an artificial deadline. When it's finished, I'll start the next one. Shrug.

Nah, I'm gonna just call it for today. I'm not counting any words. Not enough to count.

Today's Writing

Zip.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 430 (journal)

So total words for the day: 430

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 8714
Total fiction words for the year..... 120160

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3240
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 66820

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 186992

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 3/6

March 6, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. Just writing.

Today will be Writing Day 20 for this novel. It will also be calendar day 41. With most of my books, the number of calendar days and writing days varies only by a few days at most. This is very strange. Must be why it feels like it's going on forever.

The Day

Rolled out late again at quarter to 5 a.m. But I was up until 10:30 (very late for me) last night.

For wake-up time I sifted through emails to delete those that no longer matter. I also responded to a few, of course. But often, that gets me too involved. Then I look up and an hour or two are gone, and for nothing.

So I'm going to try something new. I'll check email and even scan over them, but I won't respond until later unless it's a friend or relative and the email seems very important. Then I'll start writing.

But for today, a lot of things enabled me to put off the novel.

At 9 I finally started writing. At my first break (after at least 1000 words) I'll walk two miles.

10 a.m., a little over 1000 words and out the door for a walk. Two miles today, whether easy or forced.

Back a little before 11 for a ham salad sandwich and Spider solitaire to cool down. Then I set up a sprinkler to water part of the yard where the babies like to play.

12 noon, back to the novel. From noon to 3:40 I had a couple more good sessions interspersed with breaks.

So I'm just sayin', folks, it really doesn't take much. Just sit down and write.

Today's Writing

Not the best day of writing I've ever had, but the novel is moving again and I'm a happy young'n. No end in sight yet for this one, and I'm actually happy about it. The novel's moving so well now that I don't want it to end. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2613

Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2913

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 11327
Total fiction words for the year..... 122785

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3540
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 67120

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 189905

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 3/7

[March 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today but an announcement. I'm restarting my business as a copyeditor, though I'll take on only a few clients. If any of you are interested, let me know. I'll also offer formatting and cover design for ebooks if you need help with that.

But yes, I'll keep up with my writing. Maybe better than I am now. Oh, some interesting stuff, sort of, over at Dean's place. He advocates hanging out or meeting regularly with other professional writers. Duh. I'd love that, but it's almost impossible to do in a place like Arizona unless you live in a big city.

I read a great quote by one of my favorite writers today: Gabriel Garcia Márquez wrote "Fiction was invented the day Jonah arrived home and told his wife that he was three days late because he had been swallowed by a whale." (grin)

A couple more of my favorites from him: "It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old; they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams." And "The secret of a good old age is simply an honorable pact with solitude."

Márquez was the featured writer on Dr. Mardy's Quotes of the Week newsletter this week. If you'd like a copy, email me and I'll forward the newsletter to you. Then you can subscribe if you want. It's free, and a wonderful resource.

The Day

Rolled out at 4 a.m. But again I was up until 10:30. I woke up checking and writing email. Maybe tomorrow I'll remember to put into practice my new policy regarding email. Or not. Whatever.

5:30 to the novel. Got a little work done, then more email, and out for a short break at 6:30.

Back inside at 6:45 and decided to take care of some admin stuff, deleting ugly, unnecessary fonts from my Fonts folder. Finished that at 7:30. Now a breakfast sandwich with a game of Spider, then back to the novel.

8 a.m. to read Dr. Mardy's Quotes of the Week newsletter (I received it a few days ago).

At 8:30, back to the novel.

I didn't keep good track of things after 8:30. I wrote a little while, a few short sessions. Around 9:30 or so I went for a 2 mile walk out back. Came back, showered, changed into sweats (comfort clothes). Emailed off and on, mostly monologues. Wrote off and on. Ten minutes here, fifteen minutes there. That was most of the day.

At 3:15 I realized I hadn't done nearly as much as I wanted to. I check the MailChimp post time and found I had set it at 6, so I left it alone. Now it's 3:30. I usually knock off around 4, but I'm going to try to close the day with a push to get more words on the page from now 'til around 5:30. We'll see what happens.

If I haven't said it lately, Thank You for being there. Even when I don't get much feedback, believe me, some days just knowing you guys are out there and roughly half of you are interested really keeps me going.

Today's Writing

I'll call it a great day. For a lot of reasons I got a very late start. So plenty good enough, for sure.

Fiction Words: 2744

Nonfiction Words: 560 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3304

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
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Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 14071
Total fiction words for the year..... 125529

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 67680

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 193209

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 3/8

[March 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. By the way, I'm supposed to go camping with my buddy on Friday morning. Friday, Saturday and maybe Sunday will be placeholder posts.

To re-announce from yesterday, I'm restarting my business as a copyeditor, ebook formatter and cover designer. I'll take on only a few clients. My fees will be rock bottom. Just trying to earn a little money to retire a debt. If you're interested in any of the above, even if not right at the moment, please let me know that via email.

Of possible interest today, on Facebook I found a prolific author named Stephen Hunt. I haven't explored his website yet, but I did find it and thought you might like the chance to explore it as well. I'll take any opportunity to learn from someone farther along the road than I. His website is <http://stephenhunt.net/>.

And I have to mention Dean's site, specifically the comments on [New Book Out](#) (his post from yesterday). Scroll to the second comment (Frank Powers).

The Day

Rolled out late at 4:30 a.m. Did nothing but email, Facebook, S. Hunt's site, Dean's site, then here to begin the journal entry for the day. It's a little rainy here today, a little weepie. Should be a good day for writing.

6:20 a break from the computer for a few minutes.

6:40 finally turning to the novel. Wrote some here, some there, fixed a few website issues, handled some email and Facebook things, then back to writing in bits and pieces. Looked for an elusive quotation, took a break. Over the last four hours, I wrote a total of about 600 words. (grin) It's okay. There's a lot of the day left.

10:45 Got a good session done. Got involved in other stuff. And somehow or other the day got away from me. Still, not too bad a day. Sorry for the sketchy diary.

Today's Writing

Like all things in life, it just is what it is. Good enough.

Fiction Words: 2565
Nonfiction Words: 340 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2905

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 16636
Total fiction words for the year..... 128094

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 68020

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 196114

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 3/9](#)

[March 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. But a question for you. I've had a few new subscribers to this Daily Journal recently, so I thought this would be a good time to ask.

Other than the occasional topic of the day, or maybe AS a topic of the day, what would you all like to see me discuss in this blog? I'd really like your input. I want this to be worthwhile for you, so please, fire away. I'd rather you'd speak out in the Comments section below (on the website), but you may also email me directly at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

A final note on my copyediting, eformatting and cover design stuff—I've worked in that capacity with some of you before. If you know of anyone who needs those services, please recommend me to them. Thanks in advance. I appreciate it.

I plan to write on the novel today, no interruptions other than short breaks. Probably still too muddy out back to walk, so maybe the treadmill for a half-hour or so. I don't walk roads anymore. Hard to get blindsided when you're walking in the open desert or on a treadmill.

I'll plan to write hard tomorrow too. The end of this one is not in sight yet, but endings sneak up on me sometimes, so you never know.

And then if I don't get my new page(s) up for Writer Services today or tomorrow, I'll do that either while I'm out at the Gila or on Sunday after I get back.

Check out Dean's site today if you didn't. All about [the myth that critiques are good for your writing](#).

The Day

Rolled out just before 2 a.m. Checked email and the web, then actually did a little writing on the novel.

Around 2:15 I posted a new short story (actually, one I wrote back in January) to go out as the story of the week in late April. While I was on the main website, I also updated the post that will go out today (Chapter 6, Part II of the nonfiction book) and did a few other things over there. Then I came here to begin the journal entry for the day.

Well, so much for plans, eh? Already almost 5 a.m. and I'm finally headed back to the novel. Almost three hours, basically wasted on insignificant crap.

Wrote for close to an hour, mostly cycling and knitting, and got around 600 words. Then a smoke break.

6:15, back to the novel. Finally put down a thousand words or so on the day so far.

By 10:45, around 1700 words on the day thus far. Most of that was while cycling. Another few hundred words, then a break. Lunch, shower, some website stuff, and some dropbox stuff.

1 p.m. Back to the novel. Around another 500 words or so, then antsy and to Walmart for food stuff for the camping trip.

3:40, back to the novel for a bit. I'm a little over 2000 on the day, and mostly cycling, so I'm happy. Anything else today is pure gravy.

Today's Writing

Not the best, very fragmented, but a good day.

Fiction Words: 2755

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3255

Writing of The Bone Flesher (working title)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
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Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 19391
Total fiction words for the year..... 130894

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4940
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 68520

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 199369

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 3/10

[March 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. Okay, the “Of Interest” section is back. Didn’t make much sense kicking it out. So it’s down there again.

I started out this morning by setting up the Pro Writer Services pages on my website. Below that tab are Copyediting, Eformatting & Ebook Conversion and Cover Design. Now it’s behind me so I don’t have to worry about it.

Tomorrow morning, if I haul out as early as I have the past couple of days, I plan to go straight to the writing ‘puter and knock out a couple thousand words or more before my buddy gets here to pick me up to go camping.

I’ll also post tomorrow’s edition of this journal in the morning before I leave, so maybe there will be only one placeholder post, on Saturday.

So with everything else figured out, I’ll write on the novel today. I’ll maybe walk today too, either out back or on the treadmill, though the latter bores me to tears. Yeah, well, that didn’t happen. Got a boatload of other stuff done, but no walk.

Of Interest

See Dean’s discussion of comments on the [New Sacred Cow book](#). Quotable from today’s post: “...going to a beginning writer workshop and listening to other beginners tell you what you did wrong is like going to a person who does your hair who never finished high school and ask them for legal advice.”

You might also find [Top 8 Book Marketing Takeaways from DBW](#) interesting. Maybe. Didn't do a lot for me but maybe it'll help you. Just remember, unless you put it into practice, no marketing technique will work.

The Day

Rolled out just after 2 a.m. Checked email very briefly, then decided to get the new pages up on my website. If you visit [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) and hover your cursor over Pro Writer Services (second row, left) you will see Copyediting, Eformatting & Ebook Conversion and Cover Design below it.

You might want to click on the Cover Design tab and read the first numbered list just for grins.

All of that took almost four hours. Then right at 6 I made breakfast and brought it in here so I could start this journal while I ate.

6:40, out for a break. 7 a.m. in from my break, put on a load of laundry.

7:10, turning to the novel. At last. (grin) Ugh. Just a couple hundred words over the next hour. Cycling (the story of this book), intermittently tending to other things, answering a couple emails, etc.

Around 8:30 I was headed back to the novel but I got sidetracked. Answered some more email and did some more laundry, then another break outside. Then back in here to fold clothes and check email. That prompted me to put the "Of Interest" section back in. Then I checked Dean's site, then did a little more on the Journal. All morning up to this point I've added about 300 new words to the novel.

11:03 (specific, eh?) back to the novel. No walk today. I put down a bunch more words, then out for a break. Intermittently packing my stuff for tomorrow too.

A flurry of writing into the dark with a new scene. Good session.

Today's Writing

Another pretty good day.

Fiction Words: 2485

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2985

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
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Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21876
Total fiction words for the year..... 133379

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 69020

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 202354

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 3/11

[March 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No topic of the day today. Heading for the wild country around 5 or 6.

Of Interest

I wasn't able to look before we left, but I recommend you check [Dean's site](#), as always.

Ah, this just in, perhaps of interest: [A Call to End the Cuban Book Embargo](#)

The Day

I woke up at 1:43, closed my eyes for just a second, pressed my face against the pillow, and woke up again at 2:40. That time I rolled out. Checked email very briefly and found that apparently Dan left around two to head this way instead of 3, so that'll put him here in a little over an hour as I write this. (grin)

Sipped coffee, played a couple games of spider to wake up. Showered and packed a few last-minute things.

Just realized, just this moment, my extended life battery won't work on my current writing 'puter, Hal 2. He doesn't have the right ports. (In the bigger picture, in an existential sense, do any of us have the right ports? Really?)

So Saturday and (probably) Sunday just became planned non-writing days. I got dressed, made a second mugga coffe, spent a little time with the baby and back in here.

At 4:10 I turned to the novel. Knocked out a few hundred words, then realized it takes a little time to post this thing. Okay, so I'm gonna call this a non-writing day too. I'll pick it up again on Sunday or Monday.

Today's Writing

Nada.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 250 (journal)

So total words for the day: 250

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words

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Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21876
Total fiction words for the year..... 133379

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 69270

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 202604

The Journal, Saturday, 3/12

March 12, 2016 by Harvey

Hi Folks,

This was going to be just a placeholder post. I guess it still is, in a way.

I'm back early from the camping trip. Too windy and too cold at night (and me grabbing the wrong sleeping bag) so we're back.

Still, we both got some great pics of the area. I won't do anything re writing today, so posting what's below just to keep the streak going.

Of Interest

I wasn't able to look today, but again I recommend you [check Dean's site](#), as always.

The Day

To bed last night around 8:30, despite slathering philosophy all over the desert. Great day taking pics yesterday, good day taking pics today until around 11 a.m.

I asked my buddy, “Are we planning to spend another night, then just get up in the morning and head for home?” (what we usually do). He said yes, so I said then maybe we ought to pack up and leave in the afternoon today. (I grabbed the wrong sleeping bag and froze all night. Didn’t want or need a repeat.)

He agreed, so that was the new plan.

Then The Wind picked up. It beat on us for a few hours while we were taking more pics, and finally we just headed for home.

Thanks for the trip, Dan, mi amigo. And the talk. Invaluable. And of course, the massively upgraded Stranger in a Strange Land by R.A. Heinlein.

I won’t do any writing today. Tomorrow I’ll be back full force.

Today’s Writing

Zero, zip, naga.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 250 (journal)

So total words for the day: 250

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
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Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21876
Total fiction words for the year..... 133379

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 69270

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 202604

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 3/13](#)

[March 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'm back. I know. I was gone so short of a time this time even my little cat didn't miss me. She thought maybe I had run out to the store and was delayed with a flat tire or some other strictly human inconvenience.

No separate topic today. In fact, I'm doing away with the topic of the day specifically and will include anything that might have been a topic in this introductory section. Beginning today. (grin) So I invite you to read this section and maybe the "Of Interest" section even if you aren't interested in following the day and/or the numbers.

Today I'm going to revive my goal to write at least one short story per week for however long I can keep it up. This novel is taking so long (relatively speaking, of course) that I used that as an excuse to set aside the one-per-week short story goal. Plus I was enough ahead to continue posting one well into next month. I'm grateful for that buffer, but laying off doesn't help me advance my craft.

So the novel will take as long as it takes and I'll write a short story every week. As before, the "week" will be Monday through Sunday, so the new story will be due each Monday. I'll report those below too, of course.

Author Website vs. Publisher Website

Interesting, too, that Dean Wesley Smith is pursuing with such fervor (if that's the right word) adding all his books, complete with purchase links, to his author website. Should he mention his novels and nonfiction books and so on? Of course. Should he display a cover image? Yes. Of course. The cover and title is what first attracts readers. But the more in-depth stuff (purchase links, synopsis, etc.) might not be necessary since all of those should be displayed on his publisher website at WMG Publishing.

In my own case, all of my novels, nonfiction titles, collections (both poetry and short fiction) and short stories are listed and shown on my author website over at HarveyStanbrough.com.

But clicking the cover of a novel, nonfiction book or collection on my author site delivers the reader directly to the dedicated page for that book on my publisher website over at StoneThread Publishing.

There, readers see a much larger cover and the synopsis, search tags (for booksellers), and purchase links for Amazon, Apple, Smashwords, B&N and Kobo. On each book page I also include a prominent link to the StoneThread Publishing discount schedule.

So readers have a choice. They may purchase directly from StoneThread Publishing at a significant discount OR they may purchase from any of several other sales venues. Why does STP provide a steep discount? Because even with the discount, the author makes more money on each sale than when a book is sold through any of the "big" sales venues.

Odd to think my process is more streamlined than Dean's is. But as he himself has pointed out on more than one occasion, he became an independent author in this new world of publishing at about the same time I did. (grin) I like being at least close to on-par with an author whose writing and business sense I admire.

Of Interest

Read about [Too Much to Do](#) (you'll have to scroll down after you get there).

See too [Keep Up As You Go](#) (again, you'll have to scroll down). This is great advice regarding promotion, and he's 100% right. I'm happy to say I've been doing this one for a good while now. Once you have things set up, it's much easier to simply keep up with it as you progress.

The Day

Rolled out just after 2:30. Checked email, Dr. Mardy's Quotes of the Week, and revised and updated my editing client list. Sipped coffee to wake up, and just glad to be back with my routine. Although it's going to be a slow restart, what with my sniffing, snorting, etc. (grin)

Turned to the novel right at 4. So not too slow of a start. Got a couple of good cycling sessions and a couple of shorter ones totaling around 1500 words, then breakfast, some business stuff and then writing this.



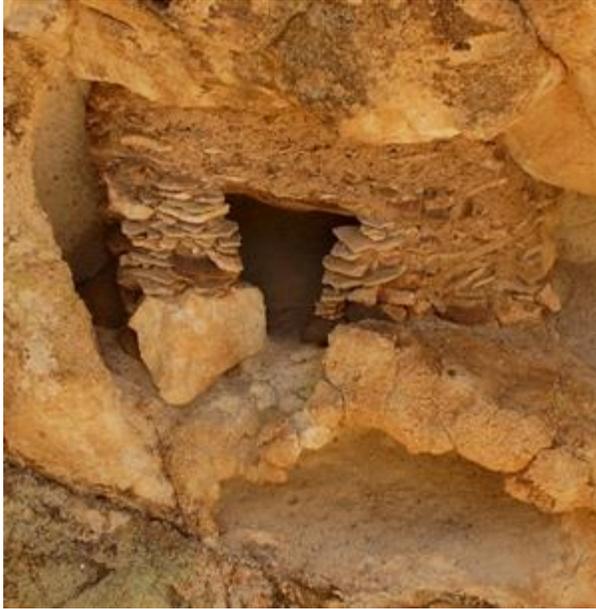
<<< I'll explain that in a minute.)

Back to the novel for a very short session, then out for a break. A short story occurred to me (a character, complete with a particular personality, with a problem in a setting) while I was outside. Back in, I was distracted with a few other things.

Then I remembered the story idea, except for the character's name (losing that was annoying). So I sat down and wrote the beginning of the opening, then took ALL CAPS QUICK NOTES for the rest of the opening.

It's almost 9:30 now and just over 50 degrees outside, so I'm heading out for a walk. Two miles, then back in here.

Just back. I decided to view all the pics I took during the trip. One of my favorites is the one on the left. It's a self-portrait with my shadow (ghost?) standing above the pueblcito, which is at



least several hundred years old. I took it not long after sunup yesterday.

For comparison, the photo on the right is the full front of the pueblcito, taken the day before around mid-morning. The opening is a little over 4 feet tall.

Okay, fun is fun, but I have to work. Noon, back to the novel.

Got some more done, but not a lot. Enough, given how tired I am. Back at it tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Pretty good day, considering. I'll take it.

Fiction Words: 2255

Nonfiction Words: 850 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3105

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

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Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... 2255 words. Total words to date..... 51508 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 24131
Total fiction words for the year..... 135634

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6540
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 70120

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 205709

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 3/14](#)

[March 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,



During the trip last weekend, I came across this happy little guy in an arroyo. As you can see by the look on his face, he was begging to come home with me. He now resides on my desk.

It's difficult to look at him without feeling good. And trust me, that's just a very Good Thing. (grin) So anyway, I wanted to share him with you.

Of Interest

At Dean's site today he writes "[W]riting full force in the next few days [to] finish the book I've been puttering along with and then do another novel by the end of the month. Stay tuned." When you get there, scroll down to see his topic, [Not Enough Time](#). Very good post.

Of course, this put me in mind of my own book-a-month challenge. I just start thinking all is lost, and then I read something like this and it motivates me. Can I finish another whole novel before the end of the month AFTER finishing the current one?

I don't know.

But I do know it's something I am capable of doing. So Dean's statement just serves to remind me that although I did not finish a book in February (and so, missed my novel-per-month goal), my other goal—to write 15 novels this calendar year—is still very much attainable. As Dean wrote, Stay tuned.

For that matter, is anyone out there doing any writing? Don't just stay tuned. Come along.

Finally, this is what I mean when I say I almost always learn something when I visit his website. It's very seldom that I find a "if you want to do this, do that" kind of lesson. It's more often a "hold my beer and watch this" kind of lesson.

The Day

Rolled out just after 4:30. I think I'm still catching up from the short weekend. But I was also up late (for me) last night. Checked email and sipped coffee to wake up.

I did the better part of nothing for the first hour. I spent the second hour cropping and resizing some photos I took over the weekend. If you visit [my Facebook page](#) you can see them there. So that took me up to 6:30 and my first break.

Got back in a little before 7 and tended to some website stuff. Then I checked Dean's site and wrote the "Of Interest" stuff and this. Then a quick breakfast.

8 a.m. finally to the novel. Cycling, got around 600 new words. Out for a break around 9 a.m.

I decided since my break was going to take about 20 minutes, I might as well walk. So I came in and changed clothes, then did a quick mile. And by quick I mean 16 minutes. (grin) I usually make a fairly casual 18 minute mile, so I was pleased. Most days I'll walk two miles, but for today one is enough. The big push today is on the novel.

I got away on the walk around 9:30, and I was back inside around 9:50. I put on a load of laundry, and around 10 a.m. I headed back to the novel for awhile. Around 10:40 I had another 500 new words or so. I took a brief break to put clothes in the dryer and another load in the washer.

10:50, back to the novel. By noon I was past 2000 new words on the day. There will still be a little cycling for this one, but maybe not a lot.

Around 1 p.m. I took a break and turned on the sprinkler in the front yard. Back to the novel. Did some more cycling, planting little things earlier in the story that the characters thought would be a good idea. (grin)

Around 2:30 I started on a final straight shot with a new scene that flowed very well. It never ceases to amaze me how smoothly the story flows when I remember it belongs to the characters, not me.

The only thing your characters don't have is fingers, folks. That's the only reason they need you. If you simply be thankful, put your fingers on the keyboard for their use, and then step back out of the way, they'll tell one hell of a story. After all, they're the ones who are living it.

Today's Writing

For only the fourth time during the writing of this novel, I hit my daily goal for fiction words (days 2, 5, 17 and 26). There will still be a little cycling and a little stitching together (maybe) from here on out, but the story has broken free for the next stretch. The end isn't in sight, but I think it's just over the horizon.

Fiction Words: 3284

Nonfiction Words: 780 (journal)

So total words for the day: 4064

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words
Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
Day 12... 1681 words. Total words to date..... 22808 words
Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words
Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
Day 18... 1724 words. Total words to date..... 34504 words
Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... 2255 words. Total words to date..... 51508 words
Day 26... 3284 words. Total words to date..... 54792 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 27415
Total fiction words for the year..... 138918

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7320
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 70900

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 209773

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 3/15

[March 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Ugh. Looks like I'm gonna have to buy a new computer. Dayum. This one keeps locking up for some reason. It took a full half-hour this morning just to get things going.

Of Interest

Not much around the Internet today. Dean did mention that he and Kris found out why Kris' site is so slow and will be fixing it in a day or two.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4:15. I think maybe my body is self-adjusting my internal clock back to a more "normal" range. Spent the next half-hour restarting this computer and getting it to act right. Then I spent the balance of the first two hours of the day looking at other computers online. Then outside for a break.

6:50 to the novel. Around 400 words, a break, another 600 or so words. Writing a particularly difficult scene. A wall of supine bodies, frozen together, about one hundred bodies wide by ten bodies deep. I love this kind of stuff, but it takes time to get all the detail in.

8:45 it's up to 54 degrees so out for a walk. Went two miles in 34 minutes. Not bad. Now back outside for a break (it's 9:26) and then back to the novel.

Another thousand words by 10:50 and a break for a shower. 'Cause even us writers gotta smell purty.

Afterward I made and ate lunch, then browsed some more laptops online. Then a smoke break and to water the trees out front. Then a Facebook break. Ugh. A lot of breaks today. Wow. Over an hour and a half gone.

Almost 1 p.m., back to the novel. Another 1000 words or so, another break, this time for pictures.

2:45, back to the novel. Another good session just writing into the dark. And I left a great starting place for tomorrow, so I'm gonna call it a day.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3426

Nonfiction Words: 320 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3746

Writing of The Bone Fleisher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
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Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... 2255 words. Total words to date..... 51508 words
Day 26... 3284 words. Total words to date..... 54792 words
Day 27... 3426 words. Total words to date..... 58218 words

Writing of No Coincidence (next novel, working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 30841
Total fiction words for the year..... 142344

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7640
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 71220

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 214519

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 3/16

[March 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, life is full of good and bad, isn't it? Of course, when you're a writer and when you write mostly every day, even the "bad" is good.

I was reflecting on goals during my wake-up time this morning. Well, not quite that lofty. I was actually thinking about how horrible the first part of this year has been for my writing.

At the beginning of the year I was going to write a new short story every week. As I recall, I wanted to surpass my previous record of 70 weeks in a row.

Also I was going to finish at least one novel every month.the current month and the current year as I was waking up this morning.

I wrote well in January, with nine short stories. I also finished one novel (Body Language), wrote another (The Clearing) and started a third (The Bone Stripper). Then February hit. I wrote one short story and finished zero novels.

Thus far in March, I've finished nothing. The novel will wrap up in the next few days, I'm sure. I've rededicated myself to writing a new short story every week (the first deadline is Monday), and I already have the opening for the next novel.

But I blew my goal of writing a short story every week. And I blew my goal of finishing at least one novel every month.

Then it dawned on me. With half of March gone, I'm on track to write around 70,000 new words of fiction this month. And with 16 days left in the first calendar quarter, I've already written over 142,000 new words of fiction this year. So all in all, not too bad.

Oh, and in case anyone out there thinks I write fast? I don't. I just keep coming back. And frankly, I've been slack even on doing that thus far in the year. If you do the math (142,000 divided by 75 days) you'll find that's fewer than 2000 words per day. Still, if y'gotta fail, failing to success is the way to go.

Of Interest

[Another Sacred Cow Treatment](#) over at Dean's place.

For anyone close enough who would like to attend, I'll deliver a presentation at the SSA Forum on July 17 on Dreams, Goals and Failing to Success. So there's that. Well, it might be something different. If the topic changes, I'll update you. Anyway, I'll talk about something that day. (grin)

If any of you are interested in hiring me to copyedit your work, be sure to let me know. I'm taking on only a limited number of clients and I already have four on the list.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. I spent my waking up time thinking about how bad the first part of this year has been for my writing. The result is the mini-topic in the introduction above. Then I came here and wrote all this stuff.

5 a.m. to the novel. By 6:15, another slow start of around 600 words. This is another chapter that will be easy to write but difficult to write because it will require a lot of description up front and then less (stepped down sequentially) as it goes along as the main character, as a defense mechanism, stops noticing as many details. Out for a break.

8 a.m. After too long a delay, back to the novel.

9 a.m. Okay, with about 1200 new words on the novel for the day, out for a walk and a smoke. Back at 9:40. A bit of lunch and sitting before going back to work.

9:55 back to the novel. Wrote for close to an hour. Mostly cycling and double checking numbers, hours, body descriptions, etc. Now I'm out for a break and a little yard work. (It isn't even how much you get done per session. It's that you keep coming back.)

12 noon, back to the novel. Cycled a little to clean up a scene, then out to do some watering in the yard. At 12:45 I came back to the novel, sat down and put about another thousand words on the page.

Lost track of time and time-keeping. I went back outside, dug out a trench around some vines and a couple trees, then watered. While that was going on, I put away stuff out of the dishwasher (finally) and came back to write some more. Another particularly difficult, emotional scene.

Now it's 3:37 and I'm out for a break before doing a little more writing and then calling it a day.

Today's Writing

I'll have to call today a really good day of writing for me.

Fiction Words: 4035

Nonfiction Words: 750 (journal)

So total words for the day: 4785

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words

Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words

Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words

Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words

Day 5..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words

Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words

Day 7..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 16256 words

Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
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Day 25... 2255 words. Total words to date..... 51508 words
Day 26... 3284 words. Total words to date..... 54792 words
Day 27... 3426 words. Total words to date..... 58218 words
Day 28... 4035 words. Total words to date..... 62253 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 34876
Total fiction words for the year..... 146379

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8390
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 71970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 219304

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 3/17

[March 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Okay, on Sunday, July 17, I'll present "Dreams, Goals and Failing: A Success Story" at the SSA Forum in Tucson. I think lunch starts at 11 a.m. I'll fill in details here probably in early July.

Wishing my friend Dan a safe journey into the hinterlands of north Texas. He'll be listening to Willie Nelson in a concert on his ranch in Luck. So for at least once, ol' Dan can say he's in Luck.

Of Interest

Kris Rusch, [Business Musings: Personal Paradigm Shift, Again](#)

Also, [Dean talks a little](#) about how he made the shift himself.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3, then basically wasted two hours dealing with pure, unadulterated bull cookies. No biggie. After that I spent a little time emailing Mike Rom (SSA) a revised description of my presentation for the SSA forum on Sunday, July 17th. It's going to be good. I hope those of you who are close can make it.

Now it's just after 5:30. Outside for a pick-me-up, then inside to the novel.

Sidetracked for awhile on personal matters, and then to build a new website. Quickly, though, with a migration of one site to another.

Well, today just doesn't seem to want to start. A lot of little life stuff going on so the writing is delayed.

8:25, I'm gonna go ahead and knock out my walk, then come back for the novel.

A half-hour later, I'm back from a good 1-mile walk and answering email and Facebook stuff.

9 a.m. at long last, to the novel. It'll be interesting to see what I can get done today, given the relatively late start.

Well, I put a few hundred words on the page, then stalled, playing with computers. Went out to water the yard, took a smoke break, spent some time sitting with my kitten.

While I was out, I was sorely tempted to call this a day off. I'm coming into a particularly difficult scene right now that deals with a combination of high-level, strong emotions and intensely horrible imagery. Good scene though. (grin)

12:15, back to the novel. A long session but a pretty good one. I finally stopped at 1:45 for a quick lunch.

2 p.m., back to the novel.

Today's Writing

Not the best day, but a good overall day, especially considering this series of scenes. I got a lot more done than I frankly expected to. If you enjoy the macabre, you're going to love this.

Fiction Words: 3108

Nonfiction Words: 360 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3468

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
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Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... 2255 words. Total words to date..... 51508 words
Day 26... 3284 words. Total words to date..... 54792 words
Day 27... 3426 words. Total words to date..... 58218 words
Day 28... 4035 words. Total words to date..... 62253 words
Day 29... 3108 words. Total words to date..... 65361 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 37984

Total fiction words for the year..... 149487

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 72330

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 222772

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 3/18

[March 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Day 30 of writing this novel. That's the longest it's ever taken me. Strange thing, though, I'm not tired of the characters yet, or the story.

I'm writing as much as I can over the next few days. Looks like Tuesday and Wednesday of next week will be days off as my youngest son and his family are visiting from Indiana. I won't know the exact dates pretty much until they get here, but I guess I can be that flexible. Maybe. I guess we'll see.

Oh, also I'll lose a few hours tomorrow for a trip to Sierra Vista. It's like a Town and stuff? And it has, like, fast food places and restaurants and stuff? And like, stores and stuff? GAWD I miss not being able to order a pizza. So SV in the morning for awhile, but I should still get a good writing day. And then I'll have Sunday and Monday and maybe part of Tuesday.

On the book, I feel like this one is winding down, though it's given me no specific indication of that. As I think I wrote a few days ago, I feel like the ending is just over the horizon.

Of Interest

Nada really. Check Dean's site. He wrote a good post, but it didn't seem as complete as his usually are.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Working to switch one computer to Windows 10 and put some other stuff on it. All that while I'm waking up.

Finally at 5 a.m., to the novel. Only 500 words in the first hour, punctuated with letting pets in and out, spending time with my little girl, making coffee, and keeping a download and upgrade going on a different computer.

So no need for a break. The first hour passed in fits and starts of five and ten minutes anyway.

6 a.m., back to the novel. Another hour, another 400 words. Slow going, but this extremely emotion- and mind-game laden scene is almost finished. Then I can put minuscule processes behind me and Just Write again for awhile. Should be a good day. For now (6:54) out for a break.

7:25, back to the novel. After a half-hour, another 300 words. I have to get some breakfast.

Breakfast turned into a break, with scrambled eggs and toast for two (anybody else like catsup on their scrambled eggs? or is that just an eastern NM west TX thing?), a little email and Facebook, then checking progress on the other computer.

8:30, back to the novel.

Got up to 1600 words on the day. Now diverted to uploading and installing Office 365 on another computer.

With all this other stuff going on, I was going to skip my walk for the day. Then I weighed-in and found I'd lost 8 pounds in the last two weeks. Livin' right, I guess. It's 11:20 now. Everything's done on the other 'puter, so I'm out for a short walk. I'll hit the novel again around 12. I still think it's gonna be a good day for the novel. Ah, sidetracked with setting up more stuff, plus some email.

1:30 back to the novel. Two hours later, I'm calling it a day. And not a bad day at that, especially given the erratic nature of this one.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3664

Nonfiction Words: 550 (journal)

So total words for the day: 4214

Writing of The Bone Flesher

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
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Day 8..... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 17898 words
Day 10... 1642 words. Total words to date..... 19743 words
Day 11... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 21127 words
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Day 13... 2185 words. Total words to date..... 24993 words

Day 14... 1113 words. Total words to date..... 26106 words
Day 15... 1271 words. Total words to date..... 27377 words
Day 16... 1951 words. Total words to date..... 29292 words
Day 17... 3488 words. Total words to date..... 32780 words
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Day 19... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 36091 words
Day 20... 2613 words. Total words to date..... 38704 words
Day 21... 2744 words. Total words to date..... 41448 words
Day 22... 2565 words. Total words to date..... 44013 words
Day 23... 2755 words. Total words to date..... 46768 words
Day 24... 2485 words. Total words to date..... 49253 words
Day 25... 2255 words. Total words to date..... 51508 words
Day 26... 3284 words. Total words to date..... 54792 words
Day 27... 3426 words. Total words to date..... 58218 words
Day 28... 4035 words. Total words to date..... 62253 words
Day 29... 3108 words. Total words to date..... 65361 words
Day 30... 3664 words. Total words to date..... 69025 words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 41558
Total fiction words for the year..... 153151

Total nonfiction words for the month... 930
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 72930

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 226986

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 3/19

[March 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, the book is called The Siberian Fields. It was called The Bone Flesher, but that both gave away too much information and focused the story on an important but not major theme. It's finished, except for reading it aloud, making notes of any incongruities, and then fixing them.

In case anyone is wondering, I started this one on January 26, so it took me 54 calendar days to write it. Of those 54 days, only 31 were writing days. In fact, I didn't write at all for 15 of the 29 days in February. It was an ugly month for me. Anyway, now when anyone asks how long it

takes me to write a novel, I can honestly say I started one in January and didn't finish it until March. (grin)

One of my goals was to finish one novel every month this year. I finished two in January (although the first by only one day) and none in February. Now I have finished one in March. So another example of failing to success.

I've decided I'll sell one of my three laptop computers. If you want a small writing computer (or a small computer for anything else), let me know. This is an HP EliteBook 6930p. It has a 145GB HDD hard drive, an Intel Core2 Duo CPU (P8700 @ 2.53 GHz), and 4GB of RAM. The operating system is Windows 10 Pro. It's a 14" laptop, so it doesn't have the dedicated number keypad.

Of Interest

Nada.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Very little email, played a game or two to wake up with coffee, then went to the writing computer around 4. Encountered a problem there, so I'm running a diagnostic on it. I let the pup'ncat out a little early.

4:45 a.m., to the writing. I had only looked at the novel for a few minutes when I realized that yesterday I had written right up to the end of it. It needed only a denouement, which I gave it with an additional bit of writing. Now for an extended break, during which I'm going to switch back over to a different writing computer. Then either to a short story or to begin the next novel. And sometime today, a trip to SV.

Well, the trip to SV turned out to be longer than I expected, and frankly I'm tired. So no more writing today. I'll take care of some administrative stuff instead, and plan to be back full force tomorrow morning.

Let's see. There are 11 days left in March beginning tomorrow. Could I maybe write another whole novel before 1 April? If I hit my daily goal all 11 days, that would be 35,200 words.

So maybe, but I'm already planning probably two days off. So that leaves only 9 days. Hitting my daily goal for all 9 days would still give me a short novel at 28,800. So again, maybe. Guess we'll see what happens. (From 24,999 down to 15,000 is a novella in my reckoning.)

Fun, isn't it?

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1334

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1834

Writing of The Siberian Fields (formerly The Bone Flesher)

Day 1..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 2263 words
Day 2..... 3318 words. Total words to date..... 5581 words
Day 3..... 1887 words. Total words to date..... 7468 words
Day 4..... 2116 words. Total words to date..... 9584 words
Day 5..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 12948 words
Day 6..... 2287 words. Total words to date..... 15235 words
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Day 26... 3284 words. Total words to date..... 54792 words
Day 27... 3426 words. Total words to date..... 58218 words
Day 28... 4035 words. Total words to date..... 62253 words
Day 29... 3108 words. Total words to date..... 65361 words
Day 30... 3664 words. Total words to date..... 69025 words
Day 31... 1334 words. Total words to date..... 70359 words (done)

Writing of "Incident at First and Fifth" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of No Coincidence (working title, next novel)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 42892
Total fiction words for the year..... 154485

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1430
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 73430

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 228820

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 3/20

[March 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Seems weird not having a listing for my previous WIP below in “Today’s Writing” after it was there for almost two months. But onward and upward. As I mentioned yesterday, I still have to read through it and correct any incongruities. When I have the final word count, I’ll report it in this section.

By the way, the final word count of the book will not be as high as the total I showed yesterday in “Today’s Writing.” That was the total number of new words of fiction I wrote to get to the end of the story. It includes scenes that I later cut.

Thanks to Gnonpom for his comment on yesterday’s post. He spurred an idea for my next nonfiction book. It will be titled (tentatively) The Top Ten Things Every Aspiring Writer Should Know.

Some are things I picked up from Dean Wesley Smith (and he picked up from others along the way). Some are thoughts I developed purely on my own. Some are a mixture of the two.

I won’t start it in earnest today, though. This is where priorities come into play. I’ll write a short story first. Then I’ll read the opening I wrote for my next novel. If it fires, I’ll keep going on it. If not, I’ll either work on a cover and formatting that came in a few days ago (paying job) or the nonfiction book. Then I’ll pick up the new novel again later today.

Man being a writer is hard. (grin) I’m not sure how I’m able to withstand the terrible drudgery, day after day.

Of Interest

I found Dean’s post [Finished Dead Hand](#) interesting for personal reasons. Sometimes my own “career” as a writer matches up with his so closely it’s almost scary. (grin) If you click through and read it, remember that I finished The Siberian Fields yesterday after a long, slower-than-usual process.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:30. Woke up with email and coffee.

Around 3:30 the comment from Gnonpom came in, so I responded to that. Then I wrote a little on my next nonfiction book, laying out the top ten list itself and then making a few notes.

4:40, started the short story. Hit right at a thousand words and out for a break at 5:45.

6:10, back to the short story. This is so much fun it ought to be illegal. Close to 800 more new words.

8:30, the outside temp is just right and the wind is minding its manners. So out for a power limp, a phrase I unabashedly swiped from my buddy, Dan. Twice around the 1 mile course. Then a small bottle of Gatorade, and back outside for a little 20-minute cigar.

While I was out there, I set two water hoses to take care of some vines and a couple of Mexican Bird of Paradise trees that I really like. Then I ran into the house for a moment for a measuring tape and measured an area around which I'll put up some fence soon to extend my yard a bit.

Gonna move some heavy tools (shovels, rakes, etc.) out of my in-yard shed. Then I'm going to set up a small desk where those were so I can carry my writing 'puter out there to write sometimes. Should be an interesting (anti)social experiment. After all that I set the sprinkler to water around one side of the house. Then back inside.

10:42, back to the short story. Another thousand words, give or take, and out for a break. Moving water hoses, sprinklers, etc. and a smoke. It dawned on me out there, probably all I'll write today is this short story, at least for fiction. I was so fired up about doing it and starting the novel, I forgot writing the story probably would be my limit for the day. (grin)

12:30, back to the story. Finished it up about 2 p.m.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4102

Nonfiction Words: 660 (journal)

So total words for the day: 4762

Writing of "An Incident at First and Fifth" (short story of the week)

Day 1..... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 4102 words (done)

Writing of No Coincidence (working title, next novel)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 46994
Total fiction words for the year..... 158587

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2090
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 74090

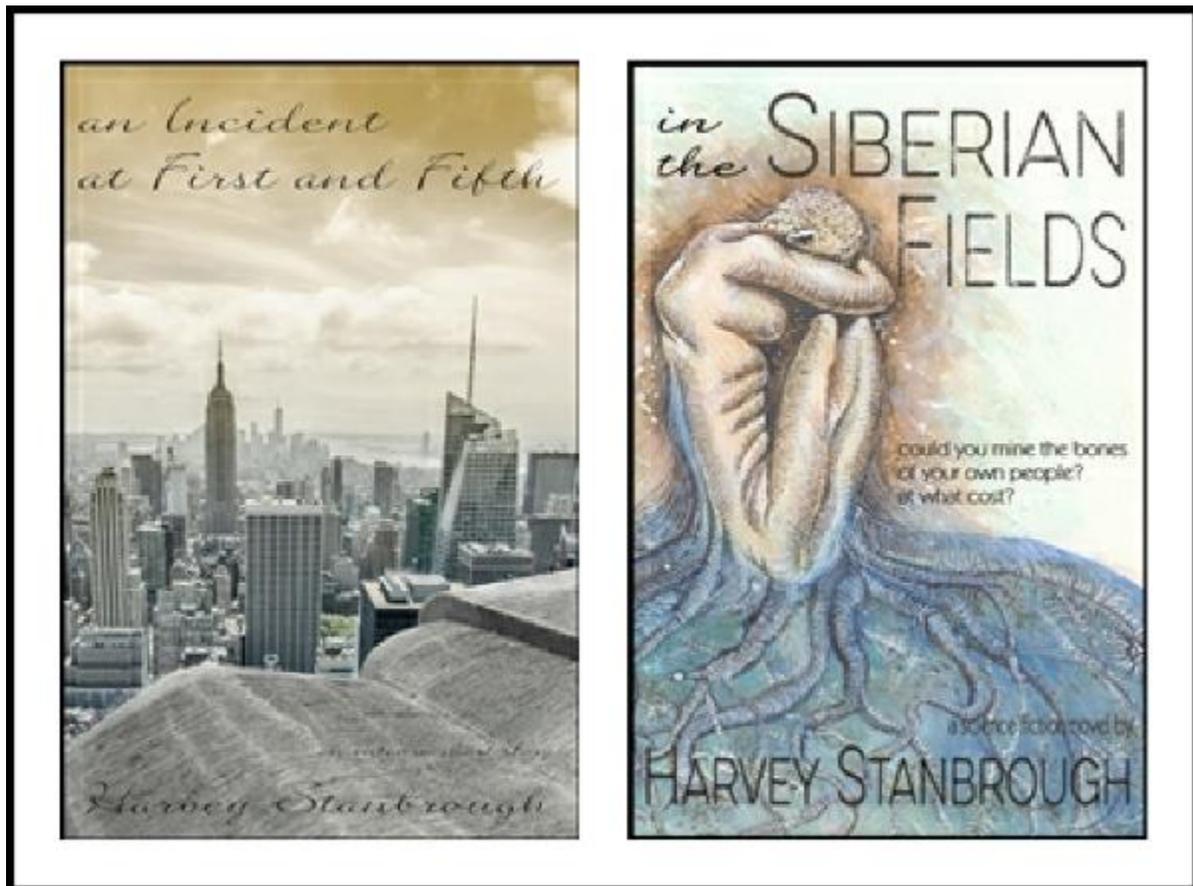
Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 233582

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 3/21](#)

[March 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,



First, here are the two cover pics I created this morning.

I really like the pic for the novel (on the right). It incorporates a literary feel with science fiction, emphasizing the human aspect.

Funny, I bought this photo probably five years ago. I knew someday I'd have the right story for it. I'm glad it was this novel.

By the way, some really good stuff down in "The Day." At least I think so. It's almost magic. (grin)

Of Interest

If you're interested in taking any of Dean's workshops, check his site for today's post. Otherwise no big deal.

The Day

Rolled out right at quarter to 3. After email, I spent my wake-up time formatting and creating a cover for "An Incident at First and Fifth." I created the three sizes of covers I use, then published the story to D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. I also posted it to the blog for release as the story of the week on April 25.

Then, since I was in that mode, I found a pic and started creating a cover for the novel, *In the Siberian Fields*.

5:25, out for a break. Back in, I kept working on the cover for the novel. Finally got it, and I think it's a good one. This won't be published for several days, but it's posted above in case you want to see it.

Around 8:30 I went back out for another smoke. Then I figured I might as well do something while I was out there, so I cleaned up a bunch of stuff, moved a fence, and shored up a rickety gate. It's all good. Now it's 11. I'm headed back outside for a bit, and might write something when I come in again. (grin)

12:15, spent a little over an hour getting the storage shed rebuilt and cleaned out a bit, then in for lunch. Ham salad on an english muffin, a glug-glug-glug of chocolate milk and I'm good. Gonna get a shower now and then see what I can do about writing a little fiction today.

1 p.m., to the PO. While I was driving to and from the PO (about a three mile round trip) I realized *In the Siberian Fields* is not the whole story. Turns out it's Book One of at least two.

Kind of exciting to know this could turn out to be another long series. Only SF instead of historical western. Also kind of tiring. (grin)

I also realized the other novel for which I wrote the opening awhile back probably is the beginning of the second book in this series.

That's weird because I wrote that opening (around 1700 words) when I had written only about 16000 words on *In the Siberian Fields*. That was back on February 17. And it was completely unrelated to anything in the *Siberian Fields* novel. (grin)

I'm glad it turned out this way, because I love writing in this new world. It's on Earth, about 120 years in the future.

How cool is that? See? I told you the subconscious is a better storyteller than you are. (grin)

As I'm writing this, it's already 3 p.m. So I'm gonna call today a day off. I got some outside work done, figured out some things about the novel that I didn't even know needed to be figured out, and I could really use some time to just do nothing. So that's what I'm gonna do, as soon as I post this.

Today's Writing

Hardly any, and no fiction, but still a really great day.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 580 (journal)

So total words for the day: 560

Writing of No Coincidence (working title, next novel)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 46994
Total fiction words for the year..... 158587

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 74670

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 234162

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 3/22

[March 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

As I started reading through the opening of my new novel this morning (remember, it's only 1700 words) it didn't seem to be set in the same world Jonathan Kirski is in. Hmm... so maybe it will be a sequel to the Jonathan Kirski story and maybe it won't. Do I care? Nope. I just want to write it.

Yesterday I was getting ahead of myself. I have to read through the previous novel before I can do anything else with it, period.

It might be fine as-is. If so, probably there will be a sequel. Or two or three, because I really like that world and there are several major themes going on there at one time. And each theme concerns a major event.

Shrug. I just have to wait and see until I can set aside time to read it aloud.

By the way, if you're interested, most of the older journal entries (from Oct 2014 forward) are now available under [The Daily Journal Archives](#) at HEStanbrough.com.

Of Interest

Nada.

Well, there was one writer who asked me via Facebook message whether I liked Draft2Digital. I do, and I told him so. I also told him if D2D had the number of venues Smashwords has, I would drop the latter altogether. But they don't, so I'm still using both.

I also pointed him to a couple of blog posts I wrote on the topic awhile back over at HarveyStanbrough.com. If you didn't see those and you'd like to, let me know and I'll post the URLs here for you tomorrow.

The Day

Rolled out at quarter to 3 again. Odd. No matter how wide-awake I feel when I first get up, it still takes awhile for me to become functional. Checked and responded to email, played games, read some things online. Also posted a question to the Microsoft Community, as if that will do any good.

At 5 a.m., I came here to write this stuff, then a break.

At 6 I'm turning to Hal for the first time. Just reading over the story, cycling, adding a bit here and there. Around 300 new words so far. Slow start, but I've come to expect that.

The Arizona primary is today, so I'm going down to vote at around 7.

I got that done, then back to the house where I watered trees, etc. for awhile. Then I got involved in a discussion or two on Facebook and let time slip away.

On looking over the story I was writing, I've decided it isn't going to be my next novel. Honestly, I don't think there's a novel there. It might be a short story, or maybe a novella, but it's a story wrapped around maybe two major events and one minor one. So not enough for a novel.

Around 9:30 I wrote more on this journal, then checked Dean's site. Nothing there, really. Went back to the story for a little while, but I haven't walked for two days and that's nagging me. Out for a walk now.

It's 12:25 as I come back in to make this diary entry. (grin) Let's see. I didn't walk because the wind lacks only knives to be horrific. I remembered I had a package coming in, so around 10:30 I went to the PO. It was there, and I got it, but I just now opened it.

Why? Because when I got back from the PO it was still cool outside, so I figured I'd work on my storage shed some more.

I got a lot done, but that was a little over two hours ago. Now I'm gonna rest up just a bit and shower, then decide whether to write anything today. I might just work on a format and ebook cover for Margaret Ann, a pretty friend of mine who lives in Green Valley, AZ. (grin)

It's almost 3 now. I did some more outside work and I'm officially calling this a non-writing day. Well, I wrote 300 more words on the story, so I guess I'll count them.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 300

Nonfiction Words: 600 (journal)

So total words for the day: 900

Writing of No Coincidence (working title)

Day 1..... 1712 words. Total words to date..... 1712 words

Day 2..... 300 words. Total words to date..... 2012 words

(I'm calling this off too unless I look at it in the morning and something changes my mind.)

Still, I'm happy:

Total fiction words for the month..... 47294

Total fiction words for the year..... 158887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 75270

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 235062

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 3/23](#)

[March 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, my son and his wife and three boys arrived for a visit this morning, so not sure what I'll get done for the next day or two. This morning I created the cover for a poetry collection, then formatted it and submitted it to Smashwords and D2D. My client and friend seemed happy with it.

I also updated the Eformatting & Ebook Conversion page on my main website. Nothing new on the new story I was going to write, so I'm removing it from this report until the characters decide to be more forthcoming.

Of Interest

Dean is back in a big way. Several months ago, I bought and read his *How to Write a Novel in Ten Days*. It was a major influence in my development as a writer because it showed me what was possible. I highly recommend it.

Now he's posting [Writing a Novel in Seven Days](#) on his website in blog posts as he also writes the novel. This really is going to be something to see. I'll definitely be following along. I recommend it.

The Day

To bed late last night, then rolled out this morning at 2. Staggered into my office and tried to squeeze myself into my mug of coffee because I thought that might be easier than drinking it. No luck.

Around 2:30 I started working on the cover for the poetry collection. Finished that in about an hour, then spent the next three hours formatting the text. Anyway, it's all done, so now I'm just back to my own writing and waiting for more work. Yay.

Went out back to shoot a pistol (9mm) and a revolver (.38) with my son and two of his boys. Then back at the house I fixed them something to eat, then back in here for a little while to do this. Not sure how the rest of the day is going to go. It's almost 11 now.

12 noon, they've headed off to Tombstone. Too cold and windy out there for me, so I opted to stay here and work. Also this will allow me to let the girls (my youngest daughter and another cat) to come out of hiding for a few hours. If they will.

Almost 1 p.m. I was going to sit down and just start writing something, but I didn't. I went back outside and worked a little more on the storage shed. It's almost finished.

Right now, and for the next while, I'm going to read my latest novel aloud and see what I can get done in that regard. I'm hoping there won't be a lot of catches, at least through the first 3/4 of the novel, given all the cycling I did while I was writing it.

In the meantime, since I'm not going to get any new fiction writing done today, I'll go ahead and post this to the blog.

For those of you who are pulling for me, thanks. And I'll be back soon. As Captain Call would say, You have my word on it.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal)

So total words for the day: 500

Writing of *yawn, stretch, nada*

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 47294
Total fiction words for the year..... 158887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 75770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 235562

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 3/24](#)

[March 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today will be another non-writing day for me.

I had planned to write no matter what, just off and on as I had time even though the kids are still visiting. Reading Dean's latest post (see below) gave me the idea for a mini-challenge. I was going to see how many new words of fiction I could put on the page today, even if intermittently. (grin)

But it isn't going to work out that way. Today is one of those Life Happens days. It's only another day or two and they don't visit often so I'll try to be Dad and Grandpa while they're here. Or at least today. (grin) I know. Being human. Who knew.

Of Interest

Dean's ramped up. Yesterday's post was the prologue for his forthcoming nonfiction book, Writing a Novel in Seven Days, and today's post is Chapter One <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/topic-of-the-night-writing-a-novel-in-seven-days-chapter-one/> of that book.

Folks, whether or not he finishes the novel in seven days, this is going to be an amazing series of posts. I recommend you copy/paste them to a Word doc so you can read them more than once. I always find a gem or two in his nonfiction stuff.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40. I was really tired from yesterday, so I guess I made up for some of it. It's an hour later as I write this. I spent the interim on email and checking Dean's site. Really great stuff there right now.

Went to the store around 8 or so to get groceries. Been back and working outside for a couple hours. In here to make a few notes on this and off to Bisbee soon to continue the vacation-visiting thing. I'm going to post this now in case we are gone longer than I'd like.

Again, those of you who keep hanging in there with me, thanks.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 300

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 47294
Total fiction words for the year..... 158887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 75770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 235562

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 3/25

[March 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Had a great day with the kids yesterday. A lot of fun, but wearing on an old guy. Bisbee, Arizona is a collection of slopes. Toward the end of the day, we walked from downtown (near Bisbee Coffe Company) pretty much the length of the main drag up to Contessa's Cantina, where we had lunch and they actually had Negra Modelo (my favorite beer) on tap. First beers I've had since I can remember.

Of Interest

At Dean's place today there's a short video of Frank Zappa talking about his guitar solos. Interesting, but basically the same thing as writing into the dark. Also, of course, Chapter Two <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/topic-of-the-night-writing-a-novel-in-seven-days-chapter-two/> of his nonfiction book.

The Day

Rolled out at 2:15, two hours ago as I write this. Checked and answered emails, then applied updates on several websites.

Around 5 I opened Hal and wrote not quite a thousand words. My allergies are taking up residence in my head. Makes it difficult to do anything.

And then my son and his family showed up. My little girl was still outside. She usually hides under the bed, but she was outside so she took off over the fence. Took us over two hours to find her. Now it's 10:30 and she's safe in the bedroom under the bed. Time very well spent. Now I'm just going to wind down for awhile and do nothing.

I wrote very little fiction today (an opening of around 500 words) and I know it isn't going to work so I'm not counting it.

Went to the zoo in Tucson with the kids, and I'm back at 20 'til 6 to post this thing. So no writing today.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 300

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 47294
Total fiction words for the year..... 158887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 75770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 235562

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 3/26

[March 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Okay, first, Happy Easter tomorrow.

This probably is going to sound strange, but when I started all this journal stuff, I vowed to put it all out there. If I'm not willing to show the bad or confused as well as the good, then this thing will do nobody any good.

Regarding my latest novel, *In the Siberian Fields*, which I declared finished a few days ago after 31 writing days... um, I'm not sure it's finished.

That quiet little voice deep inside—the one that I know is my creative subconscious—is fidgeting. It says there's more to write. If I have learned nothing else during the past two years, I did learn the difference between my subconscious, creative voice (it's always positive) and my conscious, critical voice (it's always negative).

So you can see the thought process, here's my reasoning (of course, this is from the conscious mind):

There is a ton of stuff going on in the world in which the novel is set, and I like that world very much. Not to live in, but as a writer. There are at least eight major events/storylines:

- the group that has established itself as the world government and all that derives from that,
- one particularly ruthless will-be member of that group and his tie-in with the main character,
- the attempted and mostly successful major purge of an entire race of people,
- the survivors of that purge and what they're doing and why,
- the chosen profession of the main character (who is one of the survivors),
- the leavings of a semi-world war,
- the reason for and fate of the first moon colony,
- and one individual woman on that colony and her tie-in to the main character.

And maybe more.

Now that doesn't mean there will be eight separate novels. All of that stuff will be mixed together in however many novels there are. It could be one novel (probably the size of Stephen King's *The Stand* or larger) or it might more likely be three or four novels in a series. Maybe more.

Anyway, I can't be sure of anything without reading aloud through the current novel one time. With the family visit and other things going on, I haven't had time to do that. So until I have time to do that, I'm withdrawing it as a finished novel.

After I read it aloud, I'll either

- publish it as-is and start writing sequels,
- discover where to expand it to include some of the above and then plan to write other stand-alone books in the series,
- or expand it to include all of the above.

And there might be another choice or two I'm not seeing right now.

So that's for the novel currently titled *In the Siberian Fields*.

I also revived my short story per week challenge last week, and the new one is due no later than Monday. So I'm going to write a short story today. That will get me back into writing mode. Probably some Easter stuff today and tomorrow too. All the more reason to get a story written today.

And again, thanks to you who are reading this. I hope it helps you in some way with your own writing. In case you're wondering, it helped me a ton just writing it out for this journal entry.

Of Interest

Even if you don't follow Dean's *Writing a Novel in Seven Days* posts all the time, read today's [Chapter Three](#). Best explanation I've ever heard of critical voice, its role, and why most often in the arts it's a bad thing.

I have a solid grip on creative vs. critical voice that works well for me. But it took listening to three or four different explanations of that difference before I finally "got it" in the way I needed to get it. So that's why I recommend the above post if you haven't gotten it yet.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:15, coffee and email to wake up. Played a few games of solitaire, helped my wife through a bad dream or two (I think) and came here to write the stuff above.

5:50, Out for my first break and to come up with an idea for a short story. (grin)

6:10, in and cleaned up from my break, and turning to Hal (my writing 'puter's name is Hal) for the first time today.

7:55. Ha! I wrote exactly four sentences, then got involved in small life stuff. Now I'm out for a combination break and walk, then back in to write.

8:45, back in to read over some stuff (find a story) and then write.

12:50, browsed through some older stuff I'd written, beginnings of stories and so on, wrote a little here and there but none struck me. Also ate lunch, worked on the shed outside (putting my larger tools back in it), then back inside to write again.

3:40 now and fixing supper, so the day's mostly over. I wrote on several small things and none flew. However, I started a new story called "The Angel," so I reported it below.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 843

Nonfiction Words: 850 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1693

Writing of "The Angel" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 843 words. Total words to date..... 843 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 48137

Total fiction words for the year..... 16730

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4620

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 76620

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 237255

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 3/27](#)

[March 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'm enjoying the kids' visit, but really anxious to get back to writing and some semblance of a routine. Today is the last full day of the visit, so this probably will be mostly a non-writing day for me.

UPDATE: Didn't turn out that way. (grin)

I'll try to power through and Just Finish the story I started yesterday, and if not then I'll restart my story-a-week challenge later. Again. I think I've never written a short story before that I just wanted to finish so I could get on to other things.

I'm also kind of stuck on my novel, the one I need to read through to see what's what. This definitely has been one of those Life Happens weeks. Everything seems skewed just enough that I recognize it but can't quite touch it.

I've also realized I'm looking forward to earlier sunrises as Spring advances. I hope to adjust my personal schedule slightly too, so that I can get back to walking first thing in the morning (with the early sun) and writing the rest of the day.

By the way, I just realized some of my number totals below were really off. I checked with my spreadsheet. All the totals there are done by formula instead of me with a calculator. From now on I'll read those before I post this. (grin) Today's totals are correct.

Of Interest

There's Dean's [Chapter 4](#) but don't forget to go back and read comments on earlier chapters. Some really good stuff there.

The Day

Rolled out at a little after 3 again. My allergies are really firing strongly today. Ugh. Anyway, an allergy pill and lots of Kleenex and then email and coffee to wake up.

Around 5 I wrote a little on the story, then let out the pup'n'cat. From there I visited Dean's place, then came here to write this. Back to the story, but it's annoying me more than anything else. Very strange.

A little after 6:30, back to the story to Just Type and see what happens. Actually, quite a bit happened, mostly good, and the story moved a bit. Then out to trim dead stuff off a couple of pet bird-of-paradise trees, then water, smoke a cigar, and visit a bit with the kids. At 9:50, back to writing for a bit.

And the story stalled. Just seemed to hit a dead end.

That's all right. I think I'll just call time of death on this one and on the story-a-week personal challenge. I'll start it again another time after I get back in the flow. In the meantime, I have to read my novel aloud and get myself back on track.

That was all a few hours ago. Had lunch with the kids, and they decided to head for Bisbee to tour one of the big mines up there. That's good. I don't do mines and other underground things.

2 p.m. So back to writing for awhile. "The Angel" is completely stalled, so I started a new story. Probably won't have time to finish it today before this posts, but maybe. If not, I'll finish it tomorrow. So at 2:50, I have a little over 900 words and I'm out for a break.

3:10, back to the story.

At 4:35 I'm gonna call it a day. I didn't finish the story today, but I'll finish it tomorrow, so that'll keep the story-a-week challenge going.

Today's Writing

Today was an absolute testament to the mantra "Keep coming back."

Fiction Words: $555 + 1866 = 2421$

Nonfiction Words: 560 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2981

Writing of "Wish Way" (short story)

Day 1..... 1866 words. Total words to date..... 1866 words

Writing of "The Angel" (short story)

Day 1..... 0843 words. Total words to date..... 0843 words

Day 2..... 0555 words. Total words to date..... 1398 words (stalled)

(I just checked with my spreadsheet and corrected all the numbers below.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 50648

Total fiction words for the year..... 162106

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 77760

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 239866

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 3/28](#)

[March 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, the kids head out sometime this morning and I'll get back into my routine.

A few days ago a friend commented on a brief passage in the first book of my nine-book Wes Crowley series. The subject of the email was “Damn Yer Eyes!” In the body of the email, he quoted my description of a natural spring and the cottonwood trees surrounding it. Then he wrote, “I may not be able to forgive you for that.”

I had told him earlier, when John Denver’s “Annie’s Song” came out, songwriters all over the world slapped down their pens on their desks and said, “Well, damn it.” Because no possible way could they ever top it.

The last time I attended a meeting of the large local writers’ group, the president passed out small slips of paper and asked everyone to write down their favorite bit of writing advice. Later in the program, he read them aloud. I was amazed at how many clichés appeared in those writings. Every one of them derived from a myth we’ve all been taught over the years. By nonwriters.

Among them was perhaps my least favorite: After you’ve written, go back and kill off (or cut out or delete) your “darlings,” those bits of writing that you absolutely love. Of course, when you do that, what you’re killing off or cutting out or deleting is your original voice. Duh.

Had I followed that horrible advice, the passage on which my friend and devoted reader commented wouldn’t have been in the story at all. And the whole series would have been a bland copy of everything everyone else writes. Just sayin’.

So when you hear a bit of writing advice, especially clichéd advice that you’ve heard over and over and over again, consider the source. Chances are, it’s coming from someone no farther along the writing trail than you are. Chances are, it originally came from a teacher or instructor or professor or literary agent or other non-writer. And chances are, it’s unmitigated, unadulterated bull cookies.

Of Interest

There’s Dean’s Chapter 5 <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/topic-of-the-night-writing-a-novel-in-seven-days-chapter-five/> but don’t forget to go back and read comments on earlier chapters. Some really good stuff there.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 or thereabouts at the urging of my kitten. While sipping my first mugga coffee, I checked and answered email, posted a thing to Facebook, and folded a small load of laundry for my son and his family. Also read Dean’s post for the day and then came here to write this.

Now it’s 5:30 and I’m out for a break.

5:45, back in and to the writing for awhile. Added a couple hundred words, then back outside with my little girl for a short while before the kids get here. Also put away dishes and did a few other normal things.

At about 7 the kids showed up about 6:45 so I helped them lash things down and took some pics of Roy and his mama (the twice-your-age picture) and then some pics of his family. They headed out about an hour later, headed for New Mexico to visit more family before returning to Indiana. And I came here to write more of this account.

8:30, back to the writing. I want to finish this story. Then if my wife will provide an audience I'll read through the novel aloud and see what's what there. Following that, I should be able to get back into some semblance of normalcy with my writing.

11:30. Just finished the short story "Wish Way," so for now I have a streak of two stories going. (grin) I'll do the cover and publish it later today or tomorrow. Then it'll go out to supporters and be added to the queue for publication on the website toward the end of April or in early May.

Now I'm going to take a short break, then start reading through the novel.

By 3:30 (so in four hours) I got through almost the first half of the novel, reading it aloud. I read 28,944 words of 62,910. Sure wish I could write that fast. (grin) And that was after the writing this morning. My eyes, voice and mind are spent. Back at it in the morning.

Tomorrow, unless some other writing takes me by the throat, I'll finish reading through the novel and then decide what to do with it.

Today's Writing

A good day, overall.

Fiction Words: 2090

Nonfiction Words: 750 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2840

Writing of "Wish Way" (short story)

Day 1..... 1866 words. Total words to date..... 1866 words

Day 2..... 2090 words. Total words to date..... 3956 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 52738

Total fiction words for the year..... 164196

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 78510

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 242706

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 3/29

[March 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. Not sure where the month went. I didn't get nearly as much done as I would have liked. I think a week or so ago I was even making noise about maybe writing another novel before the end of this month. Today I'll finish the read-through of the one I finished earlier. Then I'll decide what to do with it. I do already know the story will be expanded, and necessarily so. Anyway, a brand new month starts in three days, and with it, a brand new challenge.

Possibly no writing today. But if I do write, I'll probably revisit the idea of the second novel I started.

Another Conscious Mind Thing

For the first "big" time since I started all this back in October 2014, my conscious mind completely took over on that one. And it succeeded. It stopped the writing cold.

The men in the opening of that story set up an ambush at the site of an overturned RAIN cart. That's where my conscious mind began to whittle away at me.

Instead of simply trusting the process and continuing to type whatever came (trusting my subconscious), I "figured out" (conscious mind) what the anagram stood for. That was the beginning of the end.

I put that in the story and then began "figuring out" how to make it fit with what the characters themselves were telling me. What was the RAIN cart's real significance? What was the significance of the substance that had spilled out of it? If it were that important, why was it moved about in a cart? After all, I can't really move the story forward without knowing those things in advance, right?

Wrong, of course. And the story stalled.

If I had just trusted the process, eventually the characters would have shown me the significance of the cart and the substance and why it was in a cart instead of some other carrier. But I didn't.

I was no longer interested in just telling the story. I was trying to force the story.

And it was gag-a-maggot-off-a-gut-wagon awful.

Most often when my conscious mind asserts itself while I'm writing, I get up for a glass of water or something. When I come back, I read the past couple of sentences, put my fingers on the keyboard and just type.

But the story idea itself was really good. So pretty soon I'll sit down with the idea in mind, write a new opening, and then go from there.

Of Interest

There's Dean's [Chapter 6](#) but don't forget to go back and read comments on earlier chapters. Some really good stuff there.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:45, but I didn't want to. I think it's gonna take me a few nights to catch up on my sleep and recuperate from the visit. (grin) The energy of small boys is nothing short of amazing.

Started reading the novel again at 7:30. Read for an hour and got through 14 pages. Now for a brief break.

It's 10:34 and I've had two more reading sessions. An hour at a time seems about right, with a 10 minute break or so. I have only a couple more sessions to go and I'll be through the novel. (grin)

12:38, reached the end of the novel as it was.

As it turns out, my subconscious was right. As it always is. The novel wasn't complete.

I'm going to restore one chunk (about 452 words) that I cut from the story, and then continue writing from there. I'll report any new words below, but not those 452 words since they were in the initial count. For now, a break and a trip to the store. It's around 1 p.m.

2:30, I planned to begin adding to the novel when I got back, but it didn't turn out that way. Doing some other tiny tasks took up some time, and then I had an idea regarding a professional writers' group I'm trying to start out here. So I spent some time composing an email and then sent it out to the interested parties.

Just as well. I'm still recuperating from all the energy of the past week, plus I'm tired from reading the novel aloud for two days.

So I'll begin writing the extra for this novel tomorrow morning. You'll see it below, just like before, but with some differences. The "brought forward" total is the novel as I was going to publish it plus the 452-word section I'm adding back in. I'm beginning the count of writing days with Day 32.

See you tomorrow!

Today's Writing

Well, zero writing today. But beginning tomorrow, hold my beer and watch this. (grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 750 (journal)

So total words for the day: 750

Writing of In the Siberian Fields

(brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 52738

Total fiction words for the year..... 164196

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15680

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 79260

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 243456

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 3/30](#)

[March 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today will be a good writing day for me once I get the day jump-started. Well, maybe. I hesitate to say anything "will be" anything when it's only started. (grin)

For the few folks who commented on last night's post, and for everyone else too, really, I strongly recommend [Dean's lecture on Heinlein's Rules](#) (see Lecture 1). It IS on Heinlein's Rules, but it's SO much more. And frankly, that lecture is what started my journey 14 novels ago. It costs only \$75. I know that sounds like a lot, but as I said, it's much more than it seems.

And if you want the whole meal deal, I recommend buying that lecture plus his Heinlein's Rules book and his Writing Into the Dark book. Then, honestly, you'll have pretty much everything you need, IMHO.

I was trying to put together a group of professional writers who might meet once a month to talk about writing and publishing etc. But I think it isn't gonna work. Too many other commitments and/or obligations, too much physical distance, etc.

It's all right. I just get so envious when Dean talks about his monthly lunch with professional writers. (grin) MAN I'd like to be a fly on the wall for some of those. I guess I could move to Lincoln City. Yeah, but that ain't gonna happen.

Of course, I could also just join one of the many writers' organizations, right?

But I can't. Seriously, I can't handle it. There are plenty of writers' groups around, and I'm sure they all mean well. And there are SO many writers who are SO hungry to learn.

Yet most of them even in writers' groups waste their time repeating to each other the same tired, worn-out advice over and over and over. I just don't get the reasoning. It's never worked before, but maybe it'll work this time? Shrug. I don't know.

Maybe I take things too seriously. But if this is my profession, how should I take it?

Of Interest

Dean's [Chapter Seven](#) is up. (grin) This section is SO easy to fill out every day.

Oh, and the final installment of my own [Writing the Character-Driven Story](#) posted today. So there's that. Not sure what I'm going to do over there next. Yet. Probably something on Stupid Advice for Writers or something like that. Something that will tickle the boogers out of writers and annoy wannabes to no end. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 to my little girl (kitten) coughing harshly. After I picked her up and held her for awhile, she calmed down. She has a heart murmur so any little thing pretty much sends me into full Dad mode. And yes, I'm completely wrapped around one tiny little furry finger. How could I not be?

Email and coffee to wake up. Moving slowly this morning. Still playing catchup with my energy level. The energy that two of my three visiting grandsons expended (ages 5 and 8) in one day is more than I probably will expend the rest of my life. As it should be, I guess, but I don't have to like it. (grin)

Anyway, I managed to compose an email (around 4:30) to those writers whom I was trying to involve in a new group.

At 5:30 a.m. I finally turned to Hal and looked over what I want to do today. Made a few minor alterations and got things set up, then went out for a smoke.



The half-moon looked really enticing, so I came back in for my camera and got a few shots of it. Just me and a 300mm lens, no tripod. Strictly amateur stuff. That's it over there.

6:30, some Life Happens stuff came up. Couple hours to deal with ramifications, but all will be well, as an author friend of mine wrote in a title several years ago. (grin)

Bought a 27' camping trailer for a little under a dollar a foot from some VERY good friends. Also straightened up a little more stuff from the visit.

10 a.m. to the PO and then back here to write, or at least that's the plan.

Turned back to the story at 10:30, finally. Put down a couple hundred new words and was pulled away to do updates on websites. Then I went outside for another break.

12:27 Then I ate lunch. Weird day outside today. A cold front moved in last night. When the sun is out, it's shorts and tshirt weather. When it's behind a cloud, it's time for sweats. Back to the novel.

Another hour and a half gone somewhere. I have no idea. Messing around in the back yard.

Not quite 2 p.m., back to the novel. I'm not getting a lot done today. A lot of cycling and stitching together, but I expected that so it's all right. When a scene breaks loose and runs, it's sheer joy.

At 3:45, I'm out for a break and a little work in the back yard, then back inside to finish the day.

Closing down at 5 p.m. since this thing's supposed to post at 6. See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Got enough done today. Still recuperating. Should have a great jumping-off place in the morning. I'm very excited about the cycling and the new story that's emerging.

Fiction Words: 1161
Nonfiction Words: 830 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1991

Writing of In the Siberian Fields
(brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 54399
Total fiction words for the year..... 165857

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16510
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 80090

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 243456

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 3/31

[March 31, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

End of the month. Sigh. Beginning of a new month tomorrow. Yay! And you will get none of that nonsensical April Fool's stuff from me. At least not in this blog.

Well, sometime today during a break I have to create a cover for the last short story I wrote and get it published. All of that usually happens the same day, or the next day at the latest. Guess I can't say that anymore.

Weirdest thing, I couldn't remember the name of the story or what it was about. (grin) I had to look back in the journal to find the name so I'd know which folder to look for on my desktop.

And I have another short story due on Monday. Probably this one will be a take-off from the novel I'm currently writing, so no biggie.

If you haven't already, I hope you ALL find a world this wonderful to write in. It's chock full of situations and events and even characters that will never make it into the novel or even a series, and are therefore ripe for short stories and novellas.

Of Interest

Dean's [Chapter Eight](#) is up.

Also, do yourself a favor and read [More on the Time of Great Forgetting](#), also up today. Very good piece, and short.

Finally, just a reminder that Kris Rusch has [Free Fiction Mondays](#). If you want to study short fiction in any of several genres with an eye toward how to craft it, I can recommend no better source. I regularly read and study Kris' stories. It's like reading and studying Bradbury.

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. Late for me but still recuperating. I think I'm almost caught up on my sleep.

Email and coffee to wake up. Moving slowly again this morning. I did absolutely nothing productive for the first hour and a quarter. Then I finally woke up and checked out Dean's site, Kris's site, and came here to write all this.

6 a.m. Out for my first break of the morning. Back inside about 6:30. I did some work in the back yard while I was out with my cigar, and back in here I decided to find a cover pic, create a cover, and publish the short story "Wish Way."

9:20 a.m., cover done, story published to the blog (it will post on May 2), D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. Took a little longer than normal this morning because I've been out of practice for awhile.

9:30, Clouds are building in, so I'm gonna get out back for a quick walk before I do anything else.

9:55, to the novel. Went in and read a bit, then to the neighbor's to offer help with something he was doing.

10:43, where does the time go? Back to the novel. In an hour, cycling, adding a bit of description here and there, I added 300 words. Out for a break.

1:45, after cutting and splicing some fencing in the back yard and securing it so the babies can't get out, I'm back in to do more on the novel.

At 5:23 I'm closing down, later than usual once again. Several Life Happens things came up, including a phone call that was very important. I did get a good session of writing from 4:30 on though.

Today's Writing

An extremely fragmented day with a lot of cycling again, but overall a good day of writing. And tomorrow, a new month!

Fiction Words: 1008
Nonfiction Words: 600 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1608

Writing of In the Siberian Fields (brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words
Day 33..... 1008 words. Total words to date..... 65569 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 555407
Total fiction words for the year..... 166865

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17110
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 80690

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 4/1

[April 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No April Fool's jokes here today. Just letting you know up front.

I have to reset my 2016 Annual Production spreadsheet today sometime. I should have done that yesterday. Also I need to think about what I'm going to post over on the big site. Probably an interim post (or two or three) to give me time to start the next nonfiction book.

Really looking forward to the coming warmer sunrises. Today is not one. It's 31 degrees out there right now.

When the warmer sunrises begin (soon, out here), I'll start my day with about an hour of waking up, then hit the road for at least 4 miles, then back here to write for most of the balance of the day.

Creating a Reverse Outline

In the interest of full disclosure, I'll use this also as a blog entry over on the big website soon. (grin)

Now anyone who knows me or has talked writing with me for more than five minutes knows I don't outline. If I took the time to outline, I would already know where the story's going, what's going to happen, etc. If I already know what's gonna happen, why write it? That's like when

some moron tells you what happens in a movie you've been wanting to see. No reason to see it after that. No surprises. No entertainment. No fun.

If I outlined and then followed an outline, I, not the characters, would be telling the story. I would be "directing" everything from on high, the almighty all-powerful writer. Ugh. That would be bo-ho-ho-ho-horing. I much prefer to go in blind and write off into the dark.

Plus, it's only common sense to allow the characters to tell the story. After all, they're the ones who are actually living it. I'm just their recorder. I write down what they say and do. So I get to be down in the trenches, running through the story with them, and entertaining the snot out of myself. Or rather, allowing them to entertain me (just as they will entertain the reader).

However, most of the time I DO create what I call a "reverse outline" as I write. When I finish a section, a major scene or (in this book) a chapter, I take a moment to make a few notes on a Notepad document. This consists of only a few sentences per chapter.

Note: This is a technique I learned from Dean Wesley Smith. As I recall, Dean keeps a legal pad next to his computer and makes notes longhand. So if you'd rather do that, that's fine. For me, typing it into a Notepad document is easier than writing longhand.

In that reverse outline, I list the chapter number. Then I add significant items such as

- which characters were in the scene, what they were doing, and how they were dressed,
- any major events that occurred in the scene, with appropriate details
- any major descriptions in the scene, and so on.

Then later, when my characters surprise me with something and I need to cycle back to add a bit of description or a foreshadowing or something, I refer to the list. It beats scrolling through the document trying to remember where that scene was located that you now have to revise slightly.

But in this particular novel, for some reason I didn't create a reverse outline the first time through. Sure enough, I wish I had.

Since I have to find places now to splice in a few necessary new scenes, I took a couple of hours to do this today. That's time that would have been better spent writing the story, see? And that led me to want to pass along this really useful technique. In fact, if you write off into the dark, this technique is nothing short of invaluable.

Try it. You'll like it. (grin)

Of Interest

Dean's [Chapter Nine](#) is up. This is a very good, very inspiring chapter. Many of his sessions were short on both time and word count, but he still managed to make his goal. What's inspiring is how he did it.

The Day

I didn't get up until 4:20 this morning. I think maybe I'm adjusting my day for the coming warm sunrises. I finally feel like I'm caught up on my sleep too.

Email and coffee to wake up, then to Dean's post. Great stuff over there today. Then here to write this. And just like that, it's already 6:25.

6:45. At 6:25 I was going to take a break. But it's frigid out there (to me) and I really need to jumpstart my writing, so I turned to the novel instead. I paused for a moment to write this when I realized I had added a little over 400 words in 20 minutes. Then Life Things took over around here, so back in a bit.

Around 7:45 I was out for a break and found a couple of fence posts I'll need later today to hang the new section of fence in the back yard.

8:48, things have settled down, but the day is warm enough now so I'm gonna get my walk out of the way.

9:18, back from a short walk. I decided to get the fence finished in the back yard while it's cool out. Back in a bit. (See me not working on the novel? Life happens.)

1 p.m. I finished the fence, cleaned up out back, talked with my neighbor, ate lunch and had a cigar. Now, finally, back to the novel. (grin)

Nope. Actually, because I failed to create a reverse outline as I wrote this thing, I'm going through the novel chapter by chapter and creating one now. So all the writing I got done today was as I was cycling through. Big writing day coming soon.

3:40. Calling it a day with very few new fiction words written, but a lot of necessary prep work accomplished. For me, it's a good day.

Today's Writing

Very strange, but productive day.

Fiction Words: 1022

Nonfiction Words: 860 (journal) + 850 (reverse outline) = 1710

So total words for the day: 2132

Writing of In the Siberian Fields

(brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words

Day 33..... 1008 words. Total words to date..... 65569 words

Day 34..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 66591 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 1022
Total fiction words for the year..... 167887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 82400

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 250287

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 4/2

[April 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Once again, I let much of the day get away from me. I wrote one completely new scene and did a lot of cycling back to foreshadow some stuff that happened in the new scene. A good day overall. Plus I got the trees and brush trimmed off the back fence (about seventy feet) so I can tear it out and put up a new stretch in that place.

Nothing much else to put in the intro today. I'll try to do better tomorrow. (grin)

Of Interest

Dean's [Chapter Ten](#) is up.

I also recommend reading the comments on the previous post (Chapter Nine).

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:30. Email and coffee and spider solitaire to wake up. Then around 5 I started a new interim post over on the other website. When that was finished I posted a revised version of the topic I posted here last night.

So those two will go out on April 6 and 16th. Then on the 26th I'll either begin posting the next nonfiction book over there, or I'll write another interim post.

All of that took up until around 6:50. Then I went to read Dean's latest as well as the comments on his previous posts. Then I came here to write all this. That took a little over an hour.

A little after 8 a.m., to the novel. I did a little more cycling, then started the new scene. Added about 200 new words.

A little before 9, out for a walk out back with my wife. Did two miles, then back in here. Cooled down and had some Gatorade, answered some email, then back to the novel.

Came inside from a break and working in the back yard to find it was 4:45. So I need to get this posted.

Today's Writing

I'm not happy at all with my numbers. It would be easy to say I'm doing all right but I'm competing against myself. Remember, one goal was to write a million new words of fiction this year. I'm WAY off the curve on that at the moment. Right now I'm on track to make around 680,000. Not good.

Fiction Words: 1661

Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal) + 650 (other blog) = 950

So total words for the day: 2761

Writing of In the Siberian Fields
(brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words

Day 33..... 1008 words. Total words to date..... 65569 words

Day 34..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 66591 words

Day 35..... 1661 words. Total words to date..... 68252 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 2683

Total fiction words for the year..... 169548

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2010

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 82700

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 252248

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 4/3

[April 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Got a lot of work done outside today, and also a good writing day. Amazing how good things can be when you just keep coming back. First time I've hit my daily goal for awhile. Feels great.

Of Interest

Dean's [Chapter Ten comments](#) are up. Other than that, a break until tomorrow, when he'll do a wrap-up post on the experience of writing a novel in seven days. Should be a good one. That's where he probably will drop some nifty little tidbits without really realizing it.

You can still get all ten installments of [Writing the Character-Driven Story](#). If you want it and don't have it yet, get it. I'll be taking it down soon.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4:30. Email and coffee and Dr. Mardy's newsletter to wake up. [Click Here to subscribe](#). It's free and extremely good. A weekly newsletter of quotes.

At 5:30 I was out with my first cigar of the day. Before 6 I was back in and on the novel.

5:50, starting on the novel for the day. Started a new chapter and almost immediately had to cycle back to add two sentences so the information in the new chapter makes sense. Something else I learned from Dean: being "unstuck in time" in the novel.

Just over 400 words, still cycling back and forth. Out for a smoke at 7:50.

9:05. Last writing was an hour ago. Got involved in some yard work (it's SO nice out there this morning). But I'm determined this will be a good day of writing. Back inside and realized I hadn't checked Dean's site yet. Did that, then wrote this and the "Of Interest" stuff above. Now back to the novel.

9:50, another 600 words, another break. Just yard work this time. No cigar.

10:30, back to the novel. A good session of 1200 words

11:40, out for another break (and a little more yard work).

12:20, back to the novel. A short session of about 300 words, then called away for a bit. Worked in the yard some more. It's only 75 degrees but the sun's bearing down. More yard work later maybe, but first I fixed up a makeshift humidior for my little cigars. All of that took up almost an hour and a half.

1:50, back to the novel. Another bunch of words. I love it when I hit a scene where I don't have to cycle back and it just runs. (grin)

3:50, shutting down to post to the journal. Then a shower and some time doing nothing.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3330

Nonfiction Words: 370 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3700

Writing of In the Siberian Fields

(brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words

Day 33..... 1008 words. Total words to date..... 65569 words

Day 34..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 66591 words

Day 35..... 1661 words. Total words to date..... 68252 words

Day 36..... 3330 words. Total words to date..... 71582 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6013

Total fiction words for the year..... 172878

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2380

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 83070

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 255948

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 4/4

[April 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Another major epiphany today. I had started to write a new scene in the novel, but about 1000 words into it, I realized it didn't belong in this novel.

The scene was in the same fictional world, and it concerned a few of the lesser characters from the main story. But neither the scene nor the new characters were significant to the current story.

I also realized this new scene (unlike other new scenes I've written over the past few days) was taking me farther from the main character and the central theme of the novel. So I stopped.

I took a break just to clear my mind.

Remember a few days ago I reported here that the novel needed something more? That it wasn't complete?

That was true. But when I came back, I realized the last chapter I wrote in the original novel (back when I was about to publish it) WAS the end of the story. What I was missing was some information that had to come (in the storyline) BEFORE that ending.

And the chapters I've written over the past few days that simply took off and ran? Those fit and were necessary. But the one I was trying to write a couple hours ago neither fit nor was necessary.

So I rearranged a few chapters, moving two of the three I wrote from 27 and 28 to 16 and 17. The other one I moved from 29 to 21. Now I'll write forward to round out the new chapter 21. Then I'll write a new chapter 27. (That's the one I'll finish tomorrow.)

And even with all the minor headaches, and even on Writing Day 37, I'm still having fun writing this thing. (grin)

Of Interest

Dean's [Epilogue](#) is up.

You can still get all ten installments of [Writing the Character-Driven Story](#). I'll be taking it down soon.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:30. Email and coffee and Cigar 101 stuff online to wake up. (grin) Visited Dean's site just before 5 a.m. After that, out for a break. I'm a little groggy this morning, so slow getting to the writing.

5:40, finally to a short story. On TV last night I saw a very brief trailer for a new film called Containment. The title grabbed me. That will be the title of the new short story. (In case you're wondering, titles are not copyrighted.)

7 a.m., well, there went an hour and twenty minutes I'll never get back. The story stalled so I'm leaving the idea to maybe play with later. Good idea, bad opening. Outside with my wife to clean up from yesterday's yard work and have a cigar. I didn't count those words in my daily total. I won't count them unless I write the story later.

8 a.m. back in, but I'm gonna sit for a little while to let my 63 year old body catch up with my 32 year old proclivities. (grin) Cooked and shared a leisurely breakfast, played a couple games of spider while eating.

8:35, back to the novel. Cool. Six hundred quick words in a half-hour, then out for a walk around break during which I put up a few tools.

9:10, back to the novel. Whereupon again I listened to that small voice. Thank goodness. Details in the introduction above. This process, a combination of writing, cycling, and moving things around (with two breaks included), took close to three hours.

12:10, back to the novel, but mostly cycling through to make sure everything I moved works right. It does, and I added another 1000 words. It's 1:30, so I'm out for a break.

A long phone call and some other Life Happens stuff, then back to the novel. Another 1400 words and I'm done for now.

4:25 Calling it a day

Today's Writing

Well, it turns out I could have finished this one today. (grin) I have most of another chapter to write, but the novel is pretty much in the bag. With everything else going on today, I still made my daily word count (barely) but my eyes are shot. I don't want to push it so I'll finish it tomorrow. And I'll plan to start a new one.

Fiction Words: 3243

Nonfiction Words: 700 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3943

Writing of In the Siberian Fields

(brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words

Day 33..... 1008 words. Total words to date..... 65569 words

Day 34..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 66591 words

Day 35..... 1661 words. Total words to date..... 68252 words

Day 36..... 3330 words. Total words to date..... 71582 words

Day 37..... 3243 words. Total words to date..... 74825 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9256

Total fiction words for the year..... 176121

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3450

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 84140

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 260261

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 4/5](#)

[April 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Oof. Thirty-eight days to write a novel. Not that it was a speed competition. But my output really was in the can.

Think about it. I averaged just a little over 2000 words per day for the first 37 days.

That means I actually worked a whole two hours per day on this project, on average.

Still, whatever works I guess.

And tomorrow? I don't know. I'll start something. I know me. Starting something just sounds like me. (grin)

Of Interest

Some good comments on the [Epilogue of Writing A Novel In Seven Days](#). See why I feel like a slacker? (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:45. Checked email and took care of some stuff there, let out the pup'n'cat, and turned to the writing 'puter. Took a brief stroll outside to get my head on straight. Beautiful pre-dawn morning at 46 degrees, no wind.

5:25, to the novel. Much cycling, along with expanding two scenes and writing a third. That was around 800 words in roughly an hour and a half. Now for a break.

8:10, fixed the gate in the back yard. Just adjusted the latch. Visited a couple friends on Facebook to wish happy birthdays, then back to the novel. Another 800 words or so.

9:45, out for a break.

2 p.m. Well, the "out for a break" turned into a trip to Benson and a bunch of shopping for different stuff up there. I let time get away from me. Now to the novel.

4:10. Okay, diary time. Finished the novel at about 3 p.m., having written 78,183 words to get there. So yeah, just over 2000 words per day. Total slacker. (grin)

From about 3 to about 3:30 I read through (aloud) the new chapters and scenes I wrote or expanded. Smashwords didn't like it last time, so I still have to nuke it, then reset all the formatting. Fortunately, that will go quickly.

So then I took a cigar break that turned into more time away than I intended, and now (4:10) I'm rushing to get this posted.

Today's Writing

A truly good writing day.

Fiction Words: 3358
Nonfiction Words: 350 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3708

Writing of In the Siberian Fields (brought forward 63,400 words)

Day 32..... 1161 words. Total words to date..... 64561 words
Day 33..... 1008 words. Total words to date..... 65569 words
Day 34..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 66591 words
Day 35..... 1661 words. Total words to date..... 68252 words
Day 36..... 3330 words. Total words to date..... 71582 words
Day 37..... 3243 words. Total words to date..... 74825 words
Day 38..... 3358 words. Total words to date..... 78183 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 12614
Total fiction words for the year..... 179479

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3800
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 84490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 263969

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Keep Coming Back](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 4/6

[April 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Being a writer, like “being” anything else, is all about establishing habits.

If your day job is outside of your home, you have a time and place to report for work and your catalyst and main habit is provided for you. If you don’t show up, you don’t get paid. Maybe you even get fired. And other than occasional flareups, there’s no real temptation to quit.

All that’s left is to build small routines around all that. Your morning pre-work routine, for example, or the route you take to get to work. What you do when you first get there, and so on.

If your day job is in your home and part of your daily life, your catalyst is to have fun. I write, design book covers and publish. My wife does genealogical research for others. My oldest son provides unique or antique car parts for folks who are looking for them.

The point is this: I'm a writer and I also want to be a writer. So I have to establish habits. Because I work at home, I have to constantly adjust my schedule, but I also have to maintain my habits. For that, I refer back to Heinlein's Rules. Rule 1 is "You must write." Duh.

So even though I finished a novel (and an arduous process) yesterday, I need to write today too. Otherwise maybe I'll develop a bad habit. One of thinking it's all right not to write.

Of Interest

I kid you not: [The Blog That Destroyed An Art Form](#) is an absolute must read. (grin) And the comments. Read the comments. Seriously.

The Day

Rolled out late at 4:40. Used my waking up time for email, coffee, and to clear some of the clutter off my desktop and out of my Dropbox. Also started the sprinkler on the west side of the house and had a cigar.

8 a.m. to the writing 'puter. I started a story. Probably a short story, but I won't know until it runs awhile. Around 800 words in one session.

8:45 warm temps snuck up on me this morning. Out for a walk. Well, instead of just walking, I raked and graded a lot for the 27' trailer we just bought. Then I dragged a rolling magnet over it several times. Got a mile and a half just doing that. Then I worked to straighten up the shed out back for awhile before it gets too hot.

10:40, back to the writing. Another 800 words and out for a break at 11:20.

11:40, back to the story. That might be the shortest break I've taken in awhile. (grin) Another 800 words. Guess this is my 800 words per session day or something. Out for a break at 12:55. After the break, I took a shower. Who knew running water could feel so good? (grin)

1:55, back to the story.

2:56, I just finished the story. Other than creating a cover and promo doc and publishing to Smashwords, Amazon and D2D, I'm through for the day. (grin)

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3245

Nonfiction Words: 530 (journal)

So total words for the day: 3775

Writing of “We Feed Them”

Day 1..... 3245 words. Total words to date..... 3245 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 15859

Total fiction words for the year..... 182724

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4330

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 85020

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 267744

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 4/7

[April 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,



Well, yesterday after I signed off I got the cover finished for “We Feed Them.” Spooky looking, huh? Then I got it distributed to Smashwords, Amazon and D2D by about 4 p.m. So that was nice. Met my daily word-count goal and got a new short story up.

Yesterday also, I blathered on about habits, routines and all that. I shouldn’t have tackled the topic at all. I was tired. If anyone got anything from it, good, but frankly I’m surprised.

The most recent habit I’ve worked on developing is Keep Coming Back. When I’ve done that (and when I had something to write) I met my word count goal with no problem.

Okay, so I just finished a novel, and then yesterday I wrote the short story that would be due next Monday, so I’m about a week ahead. So I’m going to take today to work outside (it’s nice out there today) and think about what I want to write next. (UPDATE: Didn’t turn out quite that way.)

In the The Day section below, you'll see that I did some other things and even made a couple of starts at writing, but it just isn't time. So as I say, a day off today and hopefully I'll fire up the writing 'puter again tomorrow.

I do also have some Life Happens kind of days off coming up, so on days when I'm able to write (and when I have something to write), I'm going to write. And on those days, whatever else happens through the day, my mantra will be Keep Coming Back.

Today is a very strange day, as you will see as you read over this and the The Day section below.

Of Interest

Repeated from yesterday, just in case you didn't see it: [The Blog That Destroyed An Art Form](#) is an absolute must read. (grin) And the comments. Read the comments. Seriously.

Important: There's a new bundle out that contains several short novels and novellas. And it's from a brand new bundler where we writers can do it ourselves! This is excellent news!

So as Dean wrote, "Please support this first bundle on a brand new site and help this brand new business get launched to help all of us writers have a new way to get our work to readers."

To check out the bundle, [Click Here](#). And yes, I recommend it, and yes, I hope you'll buy this bundle. And yes, I did. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:45. Woke up with coffee, email and adding my new novel to my author website at HarveyStanbrough.com and the publisher site over at StoneThreadPublishing.com. The latter required creating a [new page for the novel](#). Still, I was done with all that by 4:20, then came here to write this stuff.

4:40, I visited the BundleRabbit site that I mentioned in the Of Interest section and signed up for an author account. By 5:20 I had my account and had added my first title. At 5:30 I was out for a break, and I decided to devote the first part of the day to uploading all of my novels to Bundle Rabbit. Later (probably another day) I'll upload all my short fiction collections too. Curators can't find them if they aren't there. (grin)

5:45, started uploading more titles to BundleRabbit. By 7:23, I had uploaded all 14 novels and a novella. The quickest time to upload the cover, sales info, three files (.mobi, .epub, and .pdf) was 3 minutes. So if you're thinking about putting your works up, go for it.

If a curator finds your work, he or she might include it in a bundle. If that happens, the readers of other authors in the bundle will become your readers as well. Just sayin'. And as I said, I'll be adding my collections of short fiction soon too.

I need to compile a few more short fiction collections too. I currently have 17 uncollected short stories. With three more, that's four 5-story collections and two 10-story collections. And I have another nonfiction book to write and post chapter by chapter over on the other site. I just have to get on the stick.

7:25, out for a break. And worked on the fence in the back yard again. Ugh. Anyway it's "good enough" so I can finish it later, so back in to rest, eat breakfast, then write. It's almost 9:45 right now.

11:25. Time flies, eh? Ate breakfast, then back outside for a brief break (cigar), then designed a cover for a friend, an excellent writer named John M. Williams, from Georgia.

11:40, I actually turned to the writing 'puter for the first time today. Put my fingers on the keyboard and—nothing. And it isn't as if I HAVE to write on days when I just don't have anything to write. That's when I went up to the intro and wrote that. So taking off the rest of the day. (Yeah, right.)

2 p.m., Well, the best-laid plans and all that. I was out back wrestling with the fence for awhile, but the wind got to be way too much so I came back inside. Tried to busy myself glancing over the local shopper paper, but something didn't feel right. So I turned to Hal, the writing 'puter.

3 p.m., after a good session of 1100 words, out for a break. I LOVE writing off into the dark. At the moment, I know the names of two characters, I know they're on what seems an alien planet, and I know they've endured 14 days straight of a storm. Not sure of anything else at this point. But it just keeps unfolding. (grin)

4:17 p.m., well, more stuff happened to distract me while I was out, so I'll work on the story again tomorrow. Actually, I might work on it more today, but I'll report more on it tomorrow. (grin)

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1152

Nonfiction Words: 900 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2052

Writing of "The Three-Year Turn" (short story, I think)

Day 1..... 1152 words. Total words to date..... 1152 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 17011

Total fiction words for the year..... 183876

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5230

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 85920

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 269796

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 4/8

[April 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Writers are weird. There, I said it. I know, great shock, eh?

Case in point, the first:

When a writer believes his work is actually Good, he immediately reminds himself that “A writer is the worst possible judge of his own work.”

But when he believes his work isn’t good enough, for some reason he forgets that bit of wisdom.

Please understand that your work—your unique, original, un-rewritten, un-“polished” voice—is deemed good by Some Readers. But you’ll never know who they are if you don’t put your work out there without polishing it until it looks like everything else.

“But my voice is boring.”

Yeah. ‘Cause it’s with you 24/7/366.

Case in point, the second:

I wrote a short blog post over on the big site this morning. I admit, I did it in part to promote this blog, but I also did it as a test.

In it, I recommended a couple of new or obscure things that a lot of other writers might not have known about before. Trying to help, see. Like the BundleRabbit thing (a new and unique service) and The Blog That Destroyed An Art Form and where to get a free copy of [The Fiction Factory](#) by John Milton Edwards (copyright 1912), which talks a LOT of what long-term professional writers did back then And Still Do.

And one moron would-be writer wannabe commenter on Google Books stuck his nose in the air and wrote, “Um, yeah, but Edwards omits anything about the true craft.” What a horse’s patoot that guy is. And that’s with apologies to horses.

So mostly the post over at the big site was informational, and mostly it was directed at writers. To help them.

The test? I want to see how many unsubscribes I'll have over there now. People often unsubscribe over there when I recommend things.

During the several weeks that I posted Writing the Character-Driven Story, the big blog endured a rash of unsubscribes. Eighteen, all told. And that was probably the most important series I've ever posted on the craft of writing. (grin)

But maybe that's the problem. That book erases a lot of excuses and reasons not to write. And if there's one thing writers want, it's excuses and reasons not to write.

Go figure.

Of Interest

Not much today.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:45 again. Thunderstorms and hard rain for a couple hours last night. Email and coffee to wake up, then wrote a new blog post over at the big site. During this initial almost three hours, I also tended to the critters, took a cigar break, started a load of laundry and came here to write all this.

6:30, I turned to the writing 'puter and the story. I cycled through from the start, added about two hundred words, then made another mug of coffee. Also tended to laundry stuff, put a load into the dryer, the second load into the washer. Now off for a bit until things settle down around here. (grin)

9:45 a.m., finished the laundry so to the story again.

10:12 a.m., I received an email from BundleRabbit. A curator saw Confessions of a Professional Psychopath (Eric Stringer) and wants to include it in an upcoming bundle! How cool is that! And because Eric (and I) are not well known, probably it will be included in the basic tier. So Eric's about to pick up a boatload of new readers. Sure glad I uploaded all my novels yesterday instead of putting it off a few days. (grin) I'll keep you posted as to when the new bundle is out.

It's 1:45 now. I've been pecking at the story now and then, but not really doing much. Between the request for my novel from the curator earlier and waiting for something to arrive in the mail, I haven't been able to force myself to just sit down and play today.

3:30 p.m. now, my package was finally at the PO, so I went to get that. Also revised an ebook cover and sent it to my friend. All of that plus the huge storm going on outside right now, I'm unplugging the computers and calling it a day.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1291

Nonfiction Words: 640 (journal) 470 (big blog) = 1110

So total words for the day: 2401

Writing of “The Three-Year Turn” (short story, I think)

Day 1..... 1152 words. Total words to date..... 1152 words

Day 2..... 1291 words. Total words to date..... 2443 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 18302

Total fiction words for the year..... 185167

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6340

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 87030

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 272197

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 4/9

[April 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

A lesson.

A couple days ago I received a “provisional” acceptance of a short story I submitted to a local college literary magazine. The short story was “The Breath Formed.” Some of you remember it as a powerful story.

The lit mag is a non-paying market, and typically I don’t submit my work to non-paying markets. Do plumbers work free? Do mechanics? Do lawyers? Actors? Musicians? Then why should I?

Anyway, I was trying to be a nice guy and help them out.

But their acceptance was “provisional” based on whether I would allow “the editorial staff” (no names, no personal responsibility, of course) to “remove the few anthropomorphic references to humans in the story.”

Really? But that would fundamentally change the story. No way am I gonna do that.

Then they actually had the gall to add, “Please contact us within two weeks *if you have comments or suggestions* (emphasis mine).”

Seriously? I should contact them if *I have* “comments or suggestions”? This is MY story, right?

Well, as it turns out, I did contact them.

I wrote, “the editorial changes you recommend would irretrievably change the essence of the story. Editorial changes of the kind you mention are nothing more than a matter of that particular editor’s taste as a reader. I prefer that any readers see the work as written so they may decide on their own. Please accept the story as I submitted it, or consider it withdrawn from consideration.”

They withdrew the story. (grin)

Folks, copyedits and good copyeditors can be gold. But CONTENT editing? NEVER, EVER assume someone else can possibly know your story better than you do. NEVER.

Of Interest

A couple days ago, Dean posted *Playing Around the New Store*. It doesn’t sound all that interesting, but take my advice: [Read It and the Comments](#). Great stuff.

And just in case you don’t, or don’t go as far as I did, there’s also an article called [The Man With No Plot](#) that I recommend.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 a.m. with some *Life Happens* stuff. Probably it’s going to dominate the day, but I still plan to write. We’ll see how that comes out. After that, coffee and Spider to wake up. Now it’s over an hour and a half later and I’m out for my first break of the day.

5:35, back in. I put away dishwasher stuff from last night (my turn) and visited Dean’s site, where I gleaned the stuff for “Of Interest” above.

Especially interesting to me was his response to a commenter regarding going at an idea multiple times. Puts me in mind of both the story idea and the title I’m working with currently.

6:30, I fixed and ate breakfast, then outside for another break during which I cleaned up the sidewalks. The heavy rains moved roughly half the yard over the concrete. Well, not quite that bad.

7:30, was about to turn to the writing ‘puter for the first time today. More *Life Happens* stuff, and then I decided to work in the back yard while it’s cool. Maybe get the fence strung today. Also easier to put in fence posts (T posts) when the ground is wet. (grin)

1:20, almost six hours later, still have to attach the fence to a few fence posts but stopping for the day. Back in the day this would’ve been a half-day’s work. (grin) Oh well. Rest up, get a shower, then maybe to the story for a little while. This story’s kind’a messing with me though. A lot of

ways it could go, and the different characters seem to want to take it different ways. So maybe it's three or four stories? Oh well. Still fun.

2:30, more Life Happens crap. I'm not going to write today, at least not enough to report anything.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 630 (journal)

So total words for the day: 630

Writing of "The Three-Year Turn" (short story, I think)

Day 1..... 1152 words. Total words to date..... 1152 words
Day 2..... 1291 words. Total words to date..... 2443 words
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 18302
Total fiction words for the year..... 185167

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6970
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 87660

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 272827

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 4/10

[April 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today I want to finish the fence. Supposed to rain again this afternoon, evening.

I also want to finish the short story, albeit maybe under a different title, and maybe write another one based on the same idea. Or maybe start something longer. I need to be writing, whatever it is.

Wasting Words: a very short topic.

Below in "The Day" you'll see that I'm thinking about scrapping something I've written.

I do this often, actually. But most of the time it's when I've written only an opening (400 – 600 words or so) that doesn't work well. You never hear about those. I scrap it and either start over if I like the idea or just move on to another idea.

Most writers I know save those words as if they're gold.

I don't. I scrap 'em. I can get more.

Why the cavalier attitude? Well, it isn't cavalier, really. I'm a writer. Words are just the tools of my trade. If I'm a professional carpenter and I bend a nail, I pitch it. Then I get a new nail and keep working.

Words are like nails. If they don't work right, I pitch 'em and get some new words.

It works out fine.

Of Interest

Nada.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 again, but this time after 8.5 hours of sleep, aided no doubt by a Negra Modelo, the finest beer in the world.

As I write this I've been up for two hours. Email, more Life Happens dregs from yesterday, checking Dean's place.

At 5, I took a little learning time and revisited Dean's lecture on Short Stories Into Novels. Something about it I wanted to check, Vids 5 and 6. (This is the great thing about Dean's lecture series and his classic workshop series: once you buy them, they're yours for life.) Then out for a cigar break.

6:15, to the back yard to finish the fence.

10 a.m., finished hanging the fence and tying it in, cleaning up, etc. Sat for awhile to rest, and going for early dinner. Back in awhile.

1:30, went to the store also, then cleaned up the back yard a bit more. Rain moving in now. To the writing 'puter.

3:45, made some headway. No idea where the story is going. The characters keep making twists and turns. Normally that would be wonderful but I think I superimposed a "short story" limit on this. Shouldn't have done that. Plus I'm too tired physically to deal with it right now. I might just scrap the whole thing and start over.

I really like the original idea, and I really like the title. So that might be two stories right there. If it doesn't take off tomorrow, I'll back off and regroup.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1917

Nonfiction Words: 450 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2367

Writing of "The Three-Year Turn" (short story, I think)

Day 1..... 1152 words. Total words to date..... 1152 words

Day 2..... 1291 words. Total words to date..... 2443 words

Day 3..... 1917 words. Total words to date..... 4360 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20219

Total fiction words for the year..... 187084

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7420

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 88110

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 275194

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 4/11

[April 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today I'll write, something.

And I did, but not much.

Of Interest

Dean's very short post today has to do with writing [Clean Copy](#). An interesting intro, then his version of The Day, then a little more on the actual topic. Very worthwhile.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:45. Slow start this morning, still tired. Haven't learned yet how to pace myself on physical stuff like building that fence. (grin)

Email and facebook and coffee to wake up. Around 5:30 I went out for a cigar. Only one small cloud in the sky, looked like an angel. Hurried in to get my camera but it had changed by the time I got back out there.

6:10, to the writing. Starting something brand new, away from the stuff I've been reporting below. It's back on Earth, for one thing.

7:30, a little over 900 words, outside for a break. Back inside, cooked and ate breakfast (international fare, juevos rancheros and English muffins, grin), email and a couple games while eating. Another break and into the back yard to install one more T post. Now the fence is done. (grin)

10 a.m., to DWS' site to check and report, then sidetracked with Life Happens stuff.

1:45, back to the writing. Knocked out a few hundred words, then wandered off outside to do other stuff. Lot of Life Happens stuff today, a little back yard cleanup work. Just a day. I'll get back into it before too long. I hope.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1427

Nonfiction Words: 260 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1687

Writing of Untitled Short Story

Day 1..... 1427 words. Total words to date..... 1427 words

Writing of "The Three-Year Turn" (short story, I think)

Day 1..... 1152 words. Total words to date..... 1152 words

Day 2..... 1291 words. Total words to date..... 2443 words

Day 3..... 1917 words. Total words to date..... 4360 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21646

Total fiction words for the year..... 188511

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7680

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 88370

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 276881

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 4/12

April 12, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I've started two short stories in the past three days, and I have more in my jumbled mind. It isn't that any of them are "important," but that there are so many I want to write. Ideas are springing at me from all over the place.

At times like this, I have to focus on remembering Heinlein's second business habit: Finish what you write.

The thing is, I don't want to write them as short stories so much as I want to write them to explore various worlds. In other words, even as I write these I hope I'll find a novel in one or more of them.

Odd how perceptions change over the years. One, two and three decades ago, when anyone asked whether I had written a novel, my stock answer was, "No. I haven't found a cast of characters yet that I want to live with that long."

But that isn't what it is at all. It's the world you create. Once you start writing (once you write an opening) the world in which you're writing either opens up or it doesn't. If the opening seems to restrict itself to one major event, that's going to be a short story.

But if it expands and opens up into a whole big world – if the opening seems much bigger than the one event – it can be a novella or a novel or a series if you just keep writing. The whole thing makes me wish I had at least three sets of arms.

At one time, like most beginning writers, I was afraid of that. And now, only a few days after I finished my 14th novel, I'm jonesing to write the 15th.

And it isn't about the numbers. Those are just a clean, quick way to keep tabs on myself. Instead it's about playing in a world and telling a story that I don't have to stop telling so soon. It's about leaving the house at 7 a.m. to go play with my friends and knowing Mom won't holler at me to come in until it's supper time. And I'll still be cranky and not want to come in.

In other words, it's the elation of having the freedom to run and play.

Crazy, right? But crazy fun.

Of Interest

Good follow-up comments today on yesterday's post about [writing Clean Copy](#).

Also, Dean and Kris are standing up a new online workshop on [The Business of Writing](#). Probably you can learn as much by reading Kris' Business Musings blog (and the archives), but it would be nice to have their expertise in one six-week intensive.

Honestly, this is not one I'll take, partly because of my age and partly because of my complete lack of interest in business stuff. (My loss, I know.) But it's also one I recommend based on my experience with some of his other online workshops.

Speaking of which, his How to Write Science Fiction workshop is now a Classic workshop, meaning you get everything except homework assignments for half price at \$150. Trust me, that's a great value. I still refer back to my notes, and if you buy the classic workshop, you can come back and listen to it as often as you want. Very worthwhile.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3, then screwed off for two hours with coffee and email before checking Dean's site, taking a cigar break, and writing the "Of Interest" stuff above. Complete heavy overcast this morning, and intermittent rain.

6 a.m., I shifted gears as my whining took over (grin) and went up to write the intro topic for this post.

6:30, finally to the writing. Watch for stories started and/or ended below. Turned 800 words and out for a break.

9 a.m. While I was out for a break I spread grass seed in a barren area, then raked it around to partially cover it, all under a light, misting rain. Then back inside and sidetracked with some Life Happens stuff (will be glad when it all subsides), and finally back to the writing.

9:45, out for a break. Also shoveled another thin layer of dirt on top of the grass seed and then raked and soaked it. A bunch of daily life stuff too.

12:50, back to the writing.

2:30, finished a story, out for a break and organizing my shed. (I'll create a cover for this one, publish it and distribute it to my patrons in the morning during my early hours.)

I set aside The Three-Year Turn and another story because I think they might be novels-in-waiting. I'll get back to them when I can.

3:20, was going back to the writing, but I'm tired. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1675

Nonfiction Words: 790 (journal)

So total words for the day: 2465

Writing of “Memory” (previously Untitled Short Story)

Day 1..... 1427 words. Total words to date..... 1427 words

Day 2..... 1675 words. Total words to date..... 3102 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321

Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8470

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 89160

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 279346

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 4/13](#)

[April 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Sorry, nothing for an intro today.

Of Interest

Great post about [Choices](#) (what to write).

The Day

Rolled out right at almost 4. Email, coffee, and out for a smoke around 4:30. Back inside, I checked out my Facebook account. (I don't pay much attention there very often.)

6:15, nothing hot on the writing 'puter. I was about to turn that way when I remembered I have to do a cover etc. for the story I wrote yesterday. So off to do that.

7:30, done with the cover, formatting, distributing to Smashwords, Amazon and D2D. Also published it to the website. It will post live on May 16th. Busied myself with life stuff until 8:30, when I turned a quick 1.2 miles out back.

Got back and worked out in the back yard for awhile, seeding some more barren ground. It's 11:30 now, and I'm back outside for a bit. Just not in the mood to write today I guess. Later maybe.

Inside to work on laundry a bit and check email. An old friend from 1971 contacted me via email today. We were in a barracks together at MCAS Yuma when that Air Station was still mostly sand.

I'm not going to write today. I'm gonna call it and take the rest of the day to work outside. See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 240 (journal)

So total words for the day: 240

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321
Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 89400

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 279586

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 4/14](#)

[April 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Another nonwriting day for me. A lot of personal stuff going on between my ears, mostly my own past and some current heart stuff with one of my children and his wife. But as life stuff does, it will all ebb soon and I'll be back to writing full steam.

In the meantime, ideas for stories (short and novel) are still springing at me from everywhere. Some are in worlds I've written in previously and some are in brand new worlds. Those idea that remain after a day or two will queue up, and I'll write them as I can. (See Dean's airplanes on the runway analogy below.)

I feel horrible when I miss a day of writing. HOWEVER, almost everyone I know and admire, including Dean Wesley Smith, usually take care of other things during a kind of "hiatus" between stories.

I published the novel on April 5, a short story (“We Feed Them”) on the 6th, and another short story (“Memory”) two days ago. Well, I finished it two days ago, on the 12th. I published it on the 13th.

And I’ve had only three days of no writing (9, 13, and now 14 April), so that’s not too bad I guess.

Anyway, back to it soon. In the meantime, I’m getting a lot done outside, some learning done, and some reading. I know those of you who actually read this are here for the writing ups and downs, so again I just want to say thanks for hanging around. You matter a great deal to me, and I consider you friends. I’ll never take you for granted.

Of Interest

If you like visual reminders of your workload as a way to keep track, check out [Dean’s post](#).

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 and spent the first 2+ hours of the day on email, Facebook, and checking some online news magazines. Generally blew the next couple hours with menial stuff. Clearing out the folders on my Favorites bar, etc. I wrote a little, then went for a walk.

Back at around 8:30 from the walk and was going to write, then got busy with some stuff outside. That plus more Life Happens stuff.

Spent much of the day outside, working on little things, cleaning up here, tearing out small trees there, etc.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 400 (journal)

So total words for the day: 400

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321
Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9110
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 89800

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 279986

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 4/15

[April 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Agghhh! The ides of April. Tax day. Except I guess it's put off officially until Monday for some holiday or other. Today probably will be another nonwriting day. Maybe I'll just take today, tomorrow and Sunday, and then start fresh on Monday.

Prioritizing Writing

Hey, there's a broad topic for you, eh?

In yesterday's journal, I mentioned that the life stuff will ebb soon and I'll be back to writing full steam again. That indicated, correctly, that I'm a little annoyed that I've allowed the writing to take a back seat to the stuff. (And that annoyance added a little more pressure, against which, naturally, I rebelled.)

Anyway, a few folks fretted a bit about my annoyance, albeit in a friendly way.

So let me 'splain. It's all about priorities.

Humans are very odd creatures. Practically every moment of every day, we choose one thing over another. One activity over another. One person over another. Whatever. In other words, we PRIORITIZE. And then roughly half of us mumble that we have no choice.

That is pure, unadulterated bull cookies. Usually when we say we "have no choice," what we actually mean is we don't want to risk suffering the consequences of making a particular choice.

So when Life Happens, we place the life-event on a scale somewhere between "of no consequence" and "extremely severe." Then we make our choice accordingly.

If we choose not to take a day off work because we "have no choice," what we really mean is we don't want coworkers to look down on us, or we don't want to develop a bad reputation, or we don't want to be fired.

In other words, we don't want to suffer the consequences. But we STILL make the choice.

Okay. Because my mind is running overtime right now and won't shut up, I can't concentrate on just letting go and allowing my creative mind to play. So I'm choosing to take time off rather than knuckling under to the pressure of watching my own numbers dwindle. I'm taking time off rather than trying to force it.

And I'm doing that because I don't want whatever story I might write to suffer the consequences of my currently scattered mind. So that's all it is. I know. Shrug, right?

In my life, other than my wife and my kitten, my job is my priority. When my wife and/or my kitten need my attention, they get it. Otherwise, my job is at the top of my list of priorities.

And no wonder. I mean, my job happens to be sitting alone at a computer making stuff up. I like me and I like my other characters, so I don't mind spending time in my own company. It's a really great job. I recommend it.

But it needs its own space too.

If I were a mechanic or a carpenter or a landscaper, I could go to work to give myself a break from my racing mind.

But my workspace (shop, garage) is my mind. So going to my job to escape doesn't work so well. (grin) That's probably why I've been doing landscape and construction things the past couple of days.

Writing fiction is important to me. Not because it's some ethereal "higher calling" or any of that inane nonsense. It's important to me because it's the most fun I've ever had and I can make money doing it.

So writing is not something I take lightly.

It isn't something I do as a hobby. It isn't something I just poke at with a stick and hope it doesn't wake up. Oh, and it isn't something I waited to do until I retired. (Consider that I retired the first time in 1991.)

The thing is, writing is something I wasn't really ABLE to do until I found [Heinlein's Rules](#).

Do I wish I had found them years earlier? Absolutely. Yes.

But I didn't, so here we are. And even though I have them now and adhere to them (mostly), sometimes still Life Happens.

It just is what it is, and it affects different people differently. And of course how it affects me collides head-on with my Daily Journal for all the world to see. (grin)

So thanks for the concern, but things are fine. After all, I'm still posting to the Journal, right? (grin)

By the way, for the next couple of days you might see only placeholder posts. I'll add to those or alter them if I have time, but I'll be traveling a bit. Strictly for fun.

Of Interest

[Dean's topic on Taxes](#) is a little late, but it's great for next year. Give it a read.

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. Email and coffee. Thanks for the kind thoughts, everyone. No biggie. Just life-happens stuff. Variations on things most humans go through at one time or another.

9 a.m. I did various things inside and out up to this point, cigars, facebook, checking out some other things online and so on. Headed to the store now to look around for stuff for another small project I have going.

11 a.m. Back from the store and did some stuff on my wife's computer, then in here to write this.

1 p.m. ate lunch, did some stuff outside, remembered an old wooden cigar box I have that I keep a few collectibles in. It's lined with Spanish cedar, one requirement for a good humidor. It also had a cedar divider. I took the linings and the divider out, soaked them, and reapplied them to a new-ish box I have that I want to use as a humidor. We'll see how it works.

And now I'm gonna post this since I'm not doing any writing today.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 950 (journal)

So total words for the day: 950

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321

Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 90750

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 280936

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 4/16

[April 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I planned to not be here today. Since I am, unless something comes up, I'll be writing.

Nope, didn't work out that way.

Of Interest

Dean continues the topic: [Taxes Are Boring](#). His mention of possibilities re Hollywood struck a chord with me. Worth the few minutes it takes to read.

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. again. Email and coffee to wake up, spider solitaire. Also played on FB for awhile, catching up. I can see how it could easily take up far too much time.

My wife noticed the lid was prying off of one corner of my makeshift humidior, so we emptied it, applied wood glue and set it aside to dry overnight. Outside for a bit to get my head ready for writing while the icy wind isn't blowing, then back in to write. It's now just after 9 a.m.

9:25 to the writing 'puter. Then to something else. I don't even really remember what just now. And around 11:30 we headed to Sierra Vista to just go look at various things in stores like second-hand shops, etc. Picked up some stuff, not a lot.

Back here at 4:40 and going to post this. So another non-writing day. I'll be back in form before too long.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 210 (journal)

So total words for the day: 210

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321

Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 90960

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 281146

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 4/17

[April 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, now two of my novels—Confessions of a Professional Psychopath and The Advent of Simon Stark—have been accepted now for bundles by curators in BundleRabbit. Both bundles are tentatively scheduled to begin on May 1. I'll keep you posted.

If you aren't familiar with bundles, they're a great, inexpensive way to explore the works of writers who are new to you. Usually the curator offers two tiers.

If you pay up to a certain amount, say \$5, you get five novels from various writers. If you pay more, usually around \$12, you "unlock" the upper tier and get several more books, again by various authors.

Usually the bundled books are all in one genre. For example, Confessions is included in a bundle called Chills, Thrills & Spills. Simon Stark is in an SF bundle called the SF May Day Bundle.

As I wrote above, I'll keep you posted. Please don't be shy about telling your friends. And if you haven't yet, sign up and offer your own novels and other works for inclusion in bundles. It's one more great discovery tool.

Of Interest

Nothing really over at Dean's place other than a clarification I thought was completely unnecessary.

The Day

Well, I didn't get up until a little after 4 this morning. Email and coffee, checked Dean's stuff. I did a little work on my website re the bundles I mentioned above, then came here.

In the middle of writing some of the stuff above, an opening line for a story popped into my head. They seem to be coming from all directions lately.

I quickly scribbled it into a Notepad document. Now I'm going to open that, transfer it to Word, and write it.

6:25, to the writing 'puter. In the first half-hour I wrote an opening of 400 words. It seems to want to be a story. Yay.

6:52 Off for a short break.

7:15, Got a lot of pics but I'll download and process those later. I worked on my makeshift humidifier a bit. It seems to be all right. I dampened the Spanish cedar and loaded it with cigars. Decided against walking today, so grabbed a shower instead, then breakfast.

8:25 Was headed back to the story, but sidetracked with more web stuff.

8:55, out for a break, water new grass seed, etc.

9:30 back to the story. Added about another 300 words, then a pop-up trip to the store. Back here, we cleaned out more of the big shed out back, mostly tearing down old empty cardboard boxes.

2:30, back to the story.

3:20 Well, so much for that one. At around 800 words, it fizzled. That's okay. They're new words of fiction, but I'm not even gonna count them. I know I won't go back to the story so I'll just toss 'em out and find some new words tomorrow.

Now I'm gonna post this, then download and process my new pics. I'll be back tomorrow.

By the way, this is a very long dry spell for me (5 days straight) but I'm not worried. Just clearing some stuff out of my head, a process of its own.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321

Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10770

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 91460

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 281646

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 4/18](#)

[April 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

This is an important post, if only for the “Of Interest” section below.

Dean’s post today is about what he calls The Time of Great Forgetting (link below).

I added a comment, that “I don’t have this particular problem, but I do occasionally have 3-, 4-, 5-day down times that make me feel like maybe the world is ending or something. Lot of sniveling going on when that happens. Then a story nags me to get back in the chair.”

Hey, truedat.

Of course, some you guys have been with me long enough to know that, even when I don’t know it myself. Thanks for being there.

Last night I told my wife I’ve written 14 novels and maybe that’s enough, maybe the words are all gone.

Seriously, the woman laughed at me. “You’re a writer,” she said. “What else are you gonna do?”

Heh.

But today is another non-writing day. Well, you know, a non-writing day for fiction. It’s the last one for awhile though, I think. If I added up emails, I’d probably have a few thousand words on just emails today. But I don’t. Too much hassle. (grin) Besides, that isn’t writing-writing. Women and married men will know what I mean. (grin)

Of Interest

First, the [2016 Smashwords Survey](#) is out. It’s good info.

And over at Dean’s place, read [Help Getting Through the Time of Great Forgetting](#). Extremely useful.

And I just had to share my new favorite quote, from a short story by my friend, Steven E. Wedel. “She wouldn’t give me the time of day if her middle finger was a watch.”

Heh.

Look up his work, folks. You’ll love it.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4. Checked email and sipped coffee. The email brought the Smashwords blog (above). That led me to check out Dean's place. Then I came here. So working to wake up. Then facebook, then out for a break.

9:20, to the store to return a defective jigsaw. Knowing the locking lever wasn't working right, I almost turned it on to "test" it. Are you kidding me? But the fact there is not currently a jigsaw blade projecting from my forehead illustrates I came to my senses in time. (grin)

2:30 p.m., after I got back from the store around 11:30, I got involved in a lo-ho-ho-ng phone call with my oldest son. We haven't talked like that for a while. Very enjoyable. Then I ate lunch, and now to my writing 'puter to look over some things.

A lot of life-happens stuff is calming down. Out into the yard to do stuff on this last non-writing day. I'll post this now so I don't change my mind.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 430 (journal)

So total words for the day: 430

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321

Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11200

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 91890

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 282076

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 4/19](#)

[April 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, the day's starting off slowly again. We'll see what happens.

I spent most of the day outside again. I looked at a few things in my writing, but that's about it. I'll get on track again soon.

Of Interest

Some good comments over at Dean's on his previous post about the [Time of Great Forgetting](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 4:45. Checked email for about a half-hour, then carried my coffee outside with my first cigar. After a few minutes I caught a thief in the act. There's a yellow bird (Mexican Canary, I think) who perches on the hummingbird feeder and drinks deeply. (grin)

I wondered why the feeder has been draining so quickly. Too early yet for bats. Now I know. So I filled that, then relit my cigar and finished it. Then inside for more email and a little Spider solitaire.

7 a.m. to the writing 'puter to look over some stuff.

8 a.m. Played with an earlier opening, then out for a smoke and a little yard work. No new words to speak of yet, but I think the writing will be back on track soon. We'll see.

10:30, Took a short walk (a mile), came back, answered some email and then back out into the yard to trim some trees back, do some watering, etc. All that followed by another walk (another once around the mile track).

3:14. Well, one more non-writing day. Took care of a lot of non-writing extraneous stuff though.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 230 (journal)

So total words for the day: 230

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23321

Total fiction words for the year..... 190186

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11430

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 92120

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 282306

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 4/20](#)

[April 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, one of those days that already (at 3:15 a.m.) has me shaking my head.

Yesterday I received an email from a great writer and a person I consider a friend. She had heard I reopened my copyediting/formatting business and she wanted me to do a copyedit for her.

I recognized the title of the manuscript she mentioned. So I told her it was already clean (I had edited it awhile back), that all it should need is formatting. Then I recommended she allow me to do the formatting (because I charge only \$50 for that) but that she shouldn't need to have it copyedited at all.

However, she insisted on the copyedit because she had been back through it and changed or added some things.

So I agreed.

This is probably gonna be the easiest money I've made in a very long time, and I already know I like the story, so it's a win-win for me.

This morning when I stumbled into my office and checked my email, there was an email from her with her manuscript attached. I looked up her old folder in my Edits file so I could add the new file to it.

And I noticed the date on the original edit: November, 2010.

That is not a typo.

Glad as I am to copyedit this new iteration of her novel, I also regret, on behalf of this excellent writer, that this book hasn't been on the shelves earning money for the past five and a half years instead of locked in a computer being picked at.

If this strikes a note with you, check out [Heinlein's Rules](#) again. Specifically 3 and 4.

Just sayin'.

Of Interest

Check out [Words from Stephen King](#) at Dean's site. Absolutely spot on and excellent. But only you can apply it.

I also really recommend you read [The Day on Jury Duty](#). You can learn more about observing your surroundings as a writer and even how to write a short-short story from that than from any pointed instruction.

The Day

Rolled out at 3. In email, I had a copyediting job come in. I wrote the client a long email detailing the process (i.e., what I could and could not do for her, and the fee) and sent it. That was at 4 a.m.

Because I hate being misunderstood, I typically take far too long and use far too many words, but at least the words are there. Then I forwarded a copy of the email I sent the client to the person who might do the print layout and the cover. Then I took a cigar break. That was around 4:30

4:50, back inside and came here to write all of this. Let out the critters around 5, then to check out Dean's site. Then I added the Of Interest section above.

5:30 Because I get very little done in my own writing before around 9 a.m. anyway, I'm going to begin reading and copyediting my friend's manuscript now. I'll slip any breaks and other significant events into this account. Otherwise, back later.

6:35, got most of the format done, out for a break and to set the sprinkler for the morning. I should have waited until I finished the copyedit before formatting, but I didn't. So I'll do the copyedit on the formatted version.

7:05, the spell check and replacement of substitutes (like an actual em dash — for double, triple and quadruple hyphens) and so on. Now to some Facebook stuff.

7:25, Back out to move the sprinkler, smog up the neighborhood, etc.

9 a.m., Beginning the actual read-through and copyedit.

10:10, Ten pages in, out for a break.

10:30, back to the copyedit.

11:45, a storyline occurred to me and I opened a new document and started writing. Wrote a good (meaning thorough) 600 word opening. A slow, interesting, dialogue-and-description-filled opening. (grin)

12:30, out to move the sprinkler, a bit of a break, and back to writing. Wrote for a little while, a few hundred more words, then to the copyedit again. Hard to put down the copyedit. A very good story.

3:30. I'm gonna call it a day officially. I'll do more on the copy edit, but no need to report it here. At least I wrote some fiction today.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1005

Nonfiction Words: 710 (journal)

So total words for the day: 1715

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story" (Yeah, those guys are back. Heh.)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 243261

Total fiction words for the year..... 191191

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12140

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 92830

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 282306

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 4/21

[April 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, trying to strike a balance between my old/new copyediting business and my own writing. I think I'll be doing the former (when I have one to do) during the morning and the latter during the afternoon.

Anyone who might be interested, I've revised what I'm doing a bit. I'm only taking on a limited number of copyedits and for a limited time. I'll finish the current one in about three days, and I have two solid clients lined up for the future.

You get free eformatting with any copyedit. However, I'm designing covers only for those for whom I do a copyedit and only for those who either

- are going to publish the work only as an ebook, or
- who already have a print layout and cover design person picked out.

I no longer make referrals. If you know a print layout and print cover-design person who does excellent work and with whom I can trust my front covers, let me know.

I might start doing print layout and cover design myself, but probably not if I keep writing. And I'd much rather write.

Of Interest

Great comments and responses on [Words from Stephen King](#) at Dean's site.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Got my coffee, checked email (37 new emails, so I have to revise my notifications thing on Facebook). Played on FB for a little while. Started the copyedit around 3:30.

10 a.m. I've had two breaks, copyedited a bunch of pages, checked Dean's stuff, and now I'm eating lunch.

1:15, had another break, took some shots with my camera, did a little more copyediting and now I'm turning to the writing 'puter.

3:20, actually I wrote very little (see below), and it wasn't even on the same story. Turns out I want to get the copyedit done first. Then I'll get back to my writing. Probably if I dedicate the rest of today and tomorrow to it, I'll finish.

Okay, so I'm gonna post this and get back to the copyedit.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 0649

Nonfiction Words: 340 (journal)

So total words for the day: 989

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of "Second Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 0649 words. Total words to date..... 0649 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 24975

Total fiction words for the year..... 191840

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12480

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 93170

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 285010

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 4/22

[April 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Okay, really this is more of a placeholder post than anything. Also the next two days will be placeholder posts.

I'll still add to the Of Interest segment, but that's about it.

Today i'll be working on the copyedit, no writing. I'm a little over halfway through so I'll be finished tonight or tomorrow. You guys don't need a minute by minute accounting of that and I don't need it for future reference either, so no need to bore you to death.

I'm planning (at this moment) to take off tomorrow and Sunday too, to just read, both fiction and nonfiction. I might also wander around this beautiful corner of the state and get some pics I can use for covers.

Of Interest

[Two Fun Things Today](#) over at Dean's place is very good. Recommended.

The first part might help you. The second, longer part, will hurt a bit. Seems compassion still lives in tiny doses here and there.

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. Last night I planned to sleep-in this morning, and I did. Very cool. And the little girl was curled up next to me, still asleep, when I awoke. Perfect.

Came here to check email and FB stuff (have to adjust more on my notifications), then to check Dean's site. Out for a small cigar, then to let out the pup 'n cat, and now to the edit. It's just after 5.

9:15, I've had a couple breaks, watered some dirt where there's supposed to be new grass, took a few pics and back to the copyedit.

3:40. Glad I dedicated myself to the copyedit and eformat. I just finished and turned it over to the author.

Tomorrow and the next day I probably will be on hiatus, so there will be only a placeholder post here.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 300 (journal)

So total words for the day: 300

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of "Second Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 0649 words. Total words to date..... 0649 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 24975
Total fiction words for the year..... 191840

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12780
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 93470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 285310

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 4/23](#)

[April 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Just a placeholder post today. Be sure to check Dean's site.

The Day

Up at 3, facebook and pics, etc. 'til 8 when I went to the PO. Got a paycheck. Yay. Then at 8:30 gone for at least the morning to explore an old ranch area (and take pictures) and hit a few stores in Sierra Vista.

3:20, back from Sierra Vista and a pretty good day. A lot of pics, and a few even came out.

While I was gone I figured out I was pressuring myself to write something new as soon as I finished the last novel. If I'd had something queued up, that would have been fine. Since I didn't,

the unnecessary pressure caused a kind of literary constipation. (Sure, you can use it if you want. grin)

Taking another day off tomorrow, and then we'll see. Hope you're all happy and productive.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 140 (journal)

So total words for the day: 140

Total fiction words for the month..... 24975

Total fiction words for the year..... 191840

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12920

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 93610

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 285450

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 4/24

[April 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Just a placeholder post today. Mostly.

Not sure what the day will hold. Yesterday I was thinking we might hike a wash this morning, but at 5 a.m. (still about a half-hour from sunrise) the temp already is hovering just below 60 degrees. So maybe not. Ideal hiking weather for me is 55 to 70.

As it turned out, the temp hovered right around 70 for quite awhile and no wind so a hike was in order. But we stayed around the house, did Spring Cleaning, put away all the rugs, etc. Also did some work outside, repositioning some stepping stones (about 3" thick, that was a job) and hanging two new hummingbird feeders, as well as some other stuff.

Of Interest

Great quotes from Alfred Hitchcock in today's Dr. Mardy's Quotes newsletter. I often find something of interest to writers there. Today's gem was Hitchcock's "There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it." To subscribe (it's free), send a blank message to drmarydon@mail-list.com

From the Go Figure department, yesterday Dean put up a placeholder post as well, by which he meant no topic. And today is another placeholder from him. Just eerie.

The Day

Woke up at 3, got up at 4. Spent the first half-hour of the day on FB reading comments and new posts. When people bother to comment, I want to read what they have to say.

Just stuff around the house and yard today. Nothing all that interesting, and nothing at all to do with writing.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 250 (journal)

So total words for the day: 250

Total fiction words for the month..... 24975

Total fiction words for the year..... 191840

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13170

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 93860

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 285700

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 4/25](#)

[April 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, might as well be another placeholder post. (grin)

Of Interest

[Three Types of Thinking](#)

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4 this morning. Played with Facebook awhile, adjusting settings and so on. Nothing much after that until around 8:40.

Did a lot of nothing much of the morning. Too windy to walk, my brain in a seeming funk over things I want to do vs. actually doing them.

Had a run to Tombstone to a shop called Smoke Signals there for some more cigars. When I got back I made a run at a story I started last week (hoping to finish one today to keep my 3-story streak intact) but it didn't work out.

So I'm calling today a nonwriting day. Maybe tomorrow I'll have something to report.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 120 (journal)

So total words for the day: 120

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of "Second Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 0649 words. Total words to date..... 0649 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 24975
Total fiction words for the year..... 191840

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 93730

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 285820

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 4/26

[April 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Had a great (short) walk today up an Arizona arroyo, got some good pics. Temps here were perfect at just over 70 degrees in the afternoon. A bit windy, but still.

Received a new humidior, and that took me away from writing for awhile in the late afternoon. I did get some writing done though, and I'll be back to it in the morning.

My new “schedule” for Monday through Friday will be to hike an arroyo each morning with the sun (better light for pictures), then write, then do whatever else needs doing.

I also anticipate setting some new goals soon. Even though I’ve fallen badly off mine, I still maintain setting good, realistic goals is the key to success in any endeavor.

Also, my website went away. Now, all of my “add-on” sites, meaning this one as well as my wife’s and all the sites of my clients and friends, are offshoots of my main website (HarveyStanbrough.com).

In other words, if it isn’t up and running, they can’t be either. Yet all of them were fine. Only the big one was gone.

After about three hours, I realized it’s gone only on my business computer.

Ran Norton Power Eraser and found nada. This computer is a Hewlett-Packard, and they’re famous for overheating. I can’t know, but I’d bet that has something to do with it. Either that, or gnomes.

So I’ll either be looking for a new business computer or, more likely, switching Hal over to handle both business and writing. Much as I hate to do that.

So forward.

Of Interest

[BookExpo America \(BEA\) \[FINALLY\] Embraces Self-Publishing](#)

[Blaming the Reader](#) (for no sales). This includes a list of reasons your books don’t sell even a few copies. It was so good I copied/pasted it into a Word document, mostly so I could re-read it in the future and also to share it with others.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4. Other than writing a fairly short blog post over on HarveyStanbrough.com, I did next to nothing until around 6:30. Out for a morning cigar and to water my tiny (about 1/2” tall) new stands of grass, then back in for breakfast.

Walked an arroyo, took pics. Posted some to FB, had a cigar, then ate breakfast at 10:30.

10:50, started trying to find/fix why my website went away.

Around 2 I finally started writing for awhile. Then UPS notified me they’d dropped off my humidior at the local PO. I continued writing to give the PO folks time to get things sorted. Then I went down there to get it.

As I opened the PO box, there wasn't a come-hither card in it, but the lady behind the wall said she had a package for me. I called out, "604?" and she said yes. So great timing on that.

Then back here to read instructions and start prepping the humidior. Then here to post this.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1246

Nonfiction Words: 500 (journal) + big blog 350 = 850

So total words for the day: 2096

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 1246 words. Total words to date..... 2251 words

Writing of "Second Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 0649 words. Total words to date..... 0649 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 26221

Total fiction words for the year..... 193086

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14140

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 94830

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 287916

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 4/27](#)

[April 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

This morning I had occasion to revisit an old blog post, one I wrote over on the big site back in October, 2015. The information in it bears repeating, especially in light of Dean's recent posts. To read it, click [Brave New World of Publishing](#).

As a caveat to that post, I no longer use [Pronoun](#). They don't allow the author to select the venues to which they distribute the author's work. For me, that's a deal killer.

I have sold one copy of one short story collection through [XinXii](#) (as far as I can tell) for a grand total royalty of \$1.10. So I'm not pushing them anymore either. Then again, \$1.10 is a minuscule price to pay for a lesson.

I also had some problems interfacing with [OmniLit's website](#) (they're also [All Romance Ebooks](#)). Soon I decided the few sales I might get through them wasn't worth the hassle. But that might have just been me. I recommend you check them for yourself, especially if you write romance or erotica.

So today, my titles are distributed through Amazon, [Draft2Digital](#), [Smashwords](#), and through direct sales at StoneThread Publishing.

Draft2Digital remains by far the easiest distribution venue to use.

I still despise Smashwords' extremely clunky interface. If you have only a few titles to manage, it isn't a big deal. But with 200 titles in my account, using the channel manager or anything else there is a nightmare. Still, the number of big-deal sales venues they offer makes the aggravation acceptable.

I haven't mentioned CreateSpace. They are by far the best choice for do-it-yourself print production and distribution. If you don't want to do it yourself, the only print-layout and cover design service I recommend is [Arena Publishing](#). (Note that the URL is .org not .com.)

You'll be seeing a longer version of this post over on the big site on May 6. (grin)

Of Interest

Dean's [How I Organize What I Do](#) is good. Not because it's the only way or the must-way of doing things, but because it works for him. You might get some ideas. I was surprised he didn't talk more about promo folders. Maybe I'll do a similar post myself soon.

And from Book Bub, [The Ultimate Collection of Book Marketing Examples](#). (It's a free download.)

Left over from yesterday just in case you didn't see it, [Blaming the Reader](#) (for no sales). This includes a list of reasons your books don't sell even a few copies.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 at the insistence of my kitten. Around 7:30 I headed out to an arroyo for a 2 mile walk. I won't go into why it turned into a 4.2 mile walk. But it was fun. (grin)

12:30, had lunch, downloaded, trimmed and posted some pics to Facebook. Outside for a break, water grass, etc.

I got my humidifier in a day or two ago and I've been messing with it more than anything else. The hygrometer was cheap and broken, so had to order another one, etc.

Didn't get any writing done again today, at least to speak of. I'll call it a nonwriting day.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 200 (that aren't duplicated in the big blog) + big blog 560

So total words for the day: 760

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 1246 words. Total words to date..... 2251 words

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 26221

Total fiction words for the year..... 193086

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14900

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 95590

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 288766

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 4/28](#)

[April 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I can't believe I've gone from being so enthusiastic about April (in March) to watching the calendar slip away and looking forward to the month being gone.

But there it is. I have to do some serious re-prioritizing of my professional life. Maybe I need a hiatus or something.

Of Interest

Nothing over at Dean's place today.

In case you're interested, beginning on May 1 if you like SF you can get the [Science Fiction May Day Bundle](#). It features work by yours truly as well as works by nine other authors. This bundle ends on May 13.

Also on May 1, the Chills, Thrills and Spills Bundle begins. It also includes one novel by me as well as one by Dean Wesley Smith and works by ten other authors. This bundle ends on May 20.

I'll repeat this information in more detail on a post over on the main blog tomorrow.

The Day

Rolled out just after 4. No hiking today. Had some business to take care of early.

I did pretty much nothing at all until 3 p.m. I did get a lot accomplished, including some website promotion work re the bundles above, some yard work, and researching and buying cigars and accessories on line.

I did a little writing on the same story, but nothing to holler about. So officially another nonwriting day. Probably I'll finish the story tomorrow and maybe even write something big.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 300

Writing of "Untitled Brooklyn Story"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 1246 words. Total words to date..... 2251 words

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 26221

Total fiction words for the year..... 193086

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15200

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 95890

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 288976

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Bundle Rabbit](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 4/29

April 29, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I copied/pasted Dean's post this morning (see below) to a Word document. I want to read it a few times and glean from it what I need. A spark, maybe. I also read over my notes from his lecture on Starting and Restarting Your Writing.

Chores to do around the house today, so I expect today to be filled with laundry, yard stuff and writing.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, the topic of the day is [New Writing Focus](#) (Setting Up a New Writing Schedule). Incredible. The guy has to be hiding in my closet. This is excellent for anyone who wants to start or restart their writing. Check it out.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40 after a half-hour of gentle prodding by my kitten. You haven't lived until you've been prodded awake by a kitten purring, rhythmically kneading the back of your neck, and whispering "Dad" about every four-purr cycle. (grin)

I won't go into all the stuff, but I got a lot of non-writing stuff done. I also wrote in three sessions today, two of them out in my shed while enjoying a cigar. (grin). Finished the short story. I didn't write a lot, but it was a halfway decent day after a long period of doing basically nothing.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1878

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2074

Writing of "An Untapped Field of Endeavor"

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 1246 words. Total words to date..... 2251 words

Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 4129 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 28099

Total fiction words for the year..... 194964

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15400
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 96090

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 291054

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 4/30

[April 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not sure what today holds. A hike, probably, and then whatever.

No hike. There's a chunk of telephone pole (about 12 feet) on the far edge of my front yard. And my little girl climbed to the top yesterday. I had to go up on a rickety picnic table to get her down so she wouldn't jump. I'm too old to raise a four year old, but here I am. (grin)

So this morning I decided to use that pole as the basis for a giant cat toy. I'll build levels so she and the other one can play on it without risk of getting hurt.

This has been a rough month, a roller coaster. So yes, I will be glad it's over.

A very dear long-time friend of mine lost her mother after a protracted period of caregiving and watching her deteriorate.

Another dear friend passed away after a long illness with prostate cancer (ironically, he was a very good urologist). He was also among the best oil on canvas painters whose works I've ever had the pleasure of viewing.

And my oldest son is very near divorce after 11 years of marriage. Ugh.

On the up side, Spring is in full bloom and blossom here in the Chihuahuah and Sonoran deserts of Arizona. Given access to allergy pills, it's incredibly wonderful to behold.

If any of you follow me on Facebook, you've seen a minuscule fraction of the beauty in some of the photos I've posted there recently. Likewise in the posts of my friend, Dan Baldwin. Drop by those FB pages if you haven't.

Of Interest

Nada.

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30.

Did a lot of stuff through the day, mostly to do with the giant cat toy in the front yard. Moved several logs (some up to a foot in diameter and around 3 feet long) and planted them on-end around the aforementioned telephone pole section. It's pretty neat, helped me feel like a Guy, and the girls (cats) like it. Score!

I staggered in to get a shower, then in here to check email. Glanced at the clock and it was 4 p.m. already somehow. So time to post this.

No writing today. But I wasn't really expecting to. This was what I call a relaxing work day. One that gave me a very good sense of exhaustion.

Tomorrow I'll be back to writing full force. I can feel it. And I have no idea what. It feels good to be approaching that particular zone again.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 400

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 28099

Total fiction words for the year..... 194964

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15800

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 96490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 291454

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 5/1](#)

[May 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The drought is over! And I'm SO glad. I've been absolutely miserable. I must have forgotten Heinlein's first two rules: You must write, and you must finish what you write. I remembered them in reverse order.

First I forced myself into the chair to finish a short story I had started. Once that was done, I was more easily able to attach myself to Rule 1 again.

I hope I never slip off them again. Ugh. Don't forget to check out the [Chills, Thrills and Spills Bundle](#). You get the first six titles only \$5, and only \$12 for all twelve titles (including one by Dean Wesley Smith).

There's also the [Science Fiction May Day Bundle](#). Again you get five titles for only \$5. And for \$12, you get all ten titles.

Both bundles are available for only a limited time.

Of Interest

Nothing on writing, but a good post over at Dean's site.

Dr. Mardy's quotes newsletter today: "Old age is ready to undertake tasks that youth shirked because they would take too long." W. Somerset Maugham

There were some great quotes there from Soren Kierkegaard as well.

To subscribe, send a blank message to drmardy-on@mail-list.com.

Finally, if you haven't read the comments yet on Dean's [How I Organize What I Do](#), I recommend reading them. Good stuff.

The Day

Rolled out at 4. Email and coffee, then went to visit Dean's site and wrote all the stuff above. Now I'm going to update my spreadsheet for this new month.

Wow. For the first time since I started all this back in October 2014, I have nothing to carry forward on my spreadsheet from one month to another. A truly blank slate. Very weird.

Around 6 I went outside for my morning cigar and carried along several stories to read from the students of a friend, Sam Turner. Some good stuff there.

7:30, out for a hike.

9 a.m., Two point three miles and a short drive later, cold pizza and Facebook for breakfast. Now it's 10 and I'm out for a smoke.

11:15 Well, that turned into a whole thing.

I don't like to just sit while I'm enjoying a cigar. So I added to the cats' playtoy. (It resembles a Jungle Gym but they're felines so I call it a Jungle James.) That entailed finding and hauling a

big, long old cedar fencepost, embedding it at an angle, and then moving it and filling in the hole.

My test kitten didn't care for it much. "Interesting, Father," she said. "But not enticing in the slightest."

Then I cleaned, filled and repositioned three hummingbird feeders. Gonna look over some pics I took this morning, then post a few to FB for the amusement of my friends.

Also watered my new little strips of grass and some trees.

1 p.m. Time is going by so fast today. I spent a little time looking over some ideas I had awhile back, but I didn't see anything that grabbed me. It'll come.

2:40 I was working in the yard again when a thought occurred. I ran into the house and started writing. Late in the day but I got a good opening for what probably will be my next novel. Woohoo! And the lead character, at the moment, is a seven year old girl named Haley Jo Crowley. Yep, those Crowleys.

4:30, posting to the Journal for the day. It feels good to be writing again, though today was only one long session.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1504

Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2024

Writing of A Crowley Novel (no title yet)

Day 1..... 1504 words. Total words to date..... 1504 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 1504

Total fiction words for the year..... 196468

Total nonfiction words for the month... 520

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 97010

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 293478

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 5/2](#)

[May 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Good May morning to you! No hiking today. I anticipate a day of writing, probably a little work around the old home place, and a trip to buy some cigars.

Of Interest

OMG. If you want a sampling of what Dean's online workshops are like, visit his site today and scroll down to the topic of the night: [Starting Something New](#). He's actually posting an older online workshop on YouTube FREE. Folks, don't pass this up. This is an excellent opportunity, and a \$300 value.

Seriously, I recommend you set aside an hour or so and watch all five or six videos in order. Each video is only 7 or 8 minutes long. And be sure to take notes.

Actually, here are the individual URLs. I recommend when the first video ends, you copy and paste the second URL in the search bar and click Enter. Do that until you've gone through all six videos. This is FREE folks. From a guy who's been in the business successfully for 40+ years.

Vid 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIMM9n5veWw>

Vid 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIPd4Dq6yOY>

Vid 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMFI5cFsSI>

Vid 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQFMH5A1mmU>

Vid 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKQxB4drcl8>

Vid 6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-hZPqnO1KM>

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30. A couple hours with email and Facebook and coffee, lots of coffee, to wake up. Then a cigar with the sunrise and a few pics. I'll share them on [Facebook](#) in a few days. I want to wait a few days to give more folks time to see the bundles post I put up first. (grin)

Wrote for a little while, short session, then a trip to SV to cigar stores. I won't do that again. Let's just say I'm not rich and cigar store owners enjoy making around a 300% profit even after giving a 25% discount.

Just after 3:30 p.m. I started a writing session at my new makeshift desk out in my backyard shed (as I enjoy a cigar). Got through only a couple hundred words (mostly cycling from the beginning) before moving back into the house.

Just after 4 p.m. I was back in the house. The story is moving along nicely, but slowly right now. However, that's only because I didn't give it the time it deserves today. I will do so starting tomorrow morning.

It's a little after 5 now so I'm gonna post this and see you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 855

Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1235

Writing of A Crowley Novel (no title yet)

Day 1..... 1504 words. Total words to date..... 1504 words

Day 2..... 0855 words. Total words to date..... 2359 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 2359

Total fiction words for the year..... 197323

Total nonfiction words for the month... 980

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 97470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 294793

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 5/3](#)

[May 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well another slow start. Not sure what the day will hold.

Turns out I was handed a topic for the day. (grin)

Regarding Freelance Editors Who Do More Than Copyedit

My big problem is that when people ask me things, I tell them the unvarnished truth. Just can't keep my mouth shut. My advice is usually very simple, but it also almost always flies in the face of all the myths we've all been taught about writing and creativity all these years. Sorry.

If you are fortunate enough that a professional writer who is much farther down the road than you are with writing happens to offer a critique of your work (most won't, and I don't), consider carefully what he or she has to say. Then decide whether to apply it to your own work. Apply it or discard it. Up to you.

However, I strongly recommend that you do NOT accept critiques from anyone else, especially those who make a living providing critiques. Instead, just nod, smile, say thank you and go back to writing the story you want to write.

The thing is, nobody else knows your story. Period. They know only their version of your story.

This morning I studied a critique (meaning I read it twice) for a friend. The critique was written by a “freelance developmental editor” whose training consists of being asked by visitors to her husband’s bookstore years ago to look over their manuscripts and see what she thought.

Turned out she enjoyed telling those writers her opinion and has turned that into a living.

She has never written a novel that I can find. On her website, she wrote, “[A]lthough I have the know-how to write a book, my real passion is helping other writers bring their books out into the world.”

That reminded me of all the would-be writers I used to see at some of the conferences where I presented sessions. “Oh, I could write a novel if I wanted to.” Or “Oh, I have several finished, you know, in my head. Just haven’t put them on paper yet.” Or “I’d love to write, but I’d rather help others.”

Uh huh. They have a term for that sort of thing in Texas, and the term refers directly to bovine excrement.

As I said, I read the critique. The first three-quarters of it was how she would have written the story. And she doesn’t have the ear of any particular publisher. So basically she’s just another reader with an opinion.

Don’t get me wrong. ***All readers have opinions, and they should have opinions.*** But they should not foist those opinions on writers as to how the book should have been written. And they should definitely not charge people money for that disservice.

- She talked about characterization and character arcs, but she has never developed a character.
- She talked about deepening scenes (she didn’t call it that) but thought the writer could do that through the characters. (Uh, no.)
- She had specifics, like wanting in one case to make a character work by herself when the character preferred to be teamed up with another character. (Again, no. The characters are IN the story. Let THEM decide.)
- She talked about weaknesses in the plot, apparently never having heard Bradbury’s quote that “plot is the tracks characters leave as they run through the story.”

You get to choose. You can either be the Great Writer On High directing everything the characters say and do, OR you can resign as General Manager of the Universe, toss off all that responsibility, get down in the trenches and run through the story with the characters. That’s where the fun is.

Again, I’m sure this is a very nice woman who’s just trying to bring in some money, but she charged my friend \$300 for this “critique,” which was only a little over 4 pages long. And in the last several paragraphs, she recommended three different “levels” of editing:

- a developmental edit, during which she would go through the manuscript and note in the margins what the writer should do in each instance (um, developmental editors work in New York for big publishers, and I wouldn't even let THEM touch my work);
- a "line edit," "to ensure everything is in the best place [what?] for the flow of the story, that all the character reactions are in good shape [huh?], and that all those plot issues have been addressed [she wouldn't do that during the "developmental" edit?]; and finally
- a copy edit to "address all the wording and sentence structure concerns, as well as most of the grammar, punctuation, etc." [Really? Just "most"?]

And yes, of course, she would charge a different fee for each level of edit.

Folks, as I told my friend,

1. Write your story.
2. Then have a good First Reader and/or copyeditor go over it to find wrong word usages, inconsistencies, etc.
3. Then do your "second draft" to correct *What You Agree With* that the first reader or copyeditor finds.
4. Then publish it and write the next story.

Please.

Of Interest

[Dean's post](#) is good today. More on the Originality workshop, and then Cash Streams. (When you get there, scroll down).

The Day

Rolled out at 2. Email and coffee to wake up, then studied a "critique" for a friend. Oof. That led to the topic above.

Took a hike around 7:30, then back here around 9:40.

I was sitting at the old, rickety picnic table out front with my kitten enjoying a cigar.

My wife joined us, and we decided we needed to replace all the boards (both bench seats and three boards across the top). So we spent the rest of the day until now doing that. We'll finish it up this coming weekend or thereabouts.

So no writing today. But a good day and got a lot accomplished.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 920 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 920

Writing of A Crowley Novel (no title yet)

Day 1..... 1504 words. Total words to date..... 1504 words
Day 2..... 0855 words. Total words to date..... 2359 words
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 2359
Total fiction words for the year..... 197323

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1900
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 98390

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 295713

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Editor Scams](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 5/4](#)

[May 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, today is a late day. Got up late, watered my two new little strips of grass late, checked Dean's site late (not much there today, but he continues to post new vids on YouTube), etc.

No hike or walk today. I plan to work on the novel or story or whatever it is today with my Keep Coming Back technique. Or on something. (grin)

What I "wanted" was another Crowley novel. But "wanting" is conscious mind stuff. Even after 14 novels and a novella, I'm still letting my conscious mind screw with me at times. Just gotta keep pushing it down.

As part of the Conscious Interrupter's ploy this time, I shoulded on myself. Yep.

About 1800 words into the story (while cycling) a thought (conscious mind) occurred: "Aggh! I have to start with action!" So instead of continuing to just write off into the dark, I started a new chapter with action. But again, it was conscious mind stuff.

The thing is, just KNOWING the freedom that comes with releasing control and running through the story with the characters isn't enough. It should be, right? Easy peasy.

But it isn't. You still have to make the conscious-mind control freak shut up so you can actually practice it. And actually PRACTICING it is sheer writing heaven.

Why am I sharing all of this? Because if you see that I'm still struggling with this at times, it won't be so bad if/when you struggle with it yourself. A light never appears at the end of a cave. You have to keep digging until it's a tunnel.

Oh well, onward and upward.

On a slightly different topic, a woman on FB asked whether she could send me the first ten chapters of her memoir for a copy edit. When I said no, she asked why not since it met my minimum requirement of ten thousand words.

I won't copy edit a partial manuscript because one important aspect of a copyedit is checking for consistency. Since I wouldn't have the full manuscript before me, I wouldn't be able to edit in the context of the whole story. As a result, some consistency issues (and other issues) would almost certainly fall through the cracks. And that would be my fault.

In other words, I wouldn't be able to give the client what she paid for: a thorough copyedit. I'd be doing her a disservice, and frankly, I'd rather not take the job than be forced to do shoddy work.

So I sent her an email explaining all of that, then went to add a "complete works only" clause to that page on the website.

Of Interest

[Dean's place](#). When you view one or more of the Originality Workshop videos on YouTube, be sure to subscribe so you'll receive notice when more are posted. Thus far he's posted weeks 1 through 3.

By the way, in the second video of the second week, Dean mentions the Heinlein's Rules lecture and says he's giving it away. He did in the original workshop, but he isn't in the YouTube sessions.

However, that lecture is the hour (in several short videos) that literally changed my life as a writer. It's well worth the \$75. (See <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lecture-series/> Lecture 1.) He also published it as a book, and it's available in all the usual places.

I listened to Dean's entire Week 2 and Week 3 of the Originality workshop this morning. Took until almost 11 a.m. But good stuff.

Like I wrote yesterday, when you get any chance to listen to someone much farther along the road than you are, Take It. As you watch Dean's videos, probably you'll hear a lot of stuff you already know. Now and then, you'll get a real gem, either something you've never heard or something that was never said in quite the right way before. Enjoy. The price is certainly right.

The Day

Rolled out late after a rough night (ulcer). Played with email and a card game to wake up, then out to water baby grass and enjoy a cigar.

Back inside to check and respond to Facebook stuff, and to make a small but significant change to the [Copyediting page](#) on my website.

Took a brief break, then turned to the free Originality workshop on YouTube and watched all of Weeks 2 and 3. Took until almost 11.

Then another brief break to measure some stuff and try to figure out where to put my outside desk (still haven't solved it). Now to the writing.

Well, what I thought was going to be the next Crowley novel fizzled. It just isn't time yet. I tried to force it (conscious mind) so I got exactly what I deserved. Time to cut my losses.

While I was hacking away at it, a picture of an old man leading a burro down a mountain path came to mind, so I opened a new Word doc and started another story.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1556

Nonfiction Words: 820 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2376

Writing of A Crowley Novel (no title yet)

Day 1..... 1504 words. Total words to date..... 1504 words

Day 2..... 0855 words. Total words to date..... 2359 words

Day 3..... 1003 words. Total words to date..... 3362 words (fizzled out)

Writing of Mountain Pass (no title yet)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 3915

Total fiction words for the year..... 198879

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2720

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 99210

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 298089

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 5/5

May 5, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Dean Wesley Smith and Kris Rusch announced a new online workshop today. There will be only 12 slots in June, 5 in July and 5 in August. It's on Teams in Fiction.

I signed up as soon as I saw it, so one slot is filled. Sometimes, for some things, you just have to spend the money, and this is gonna be a GOOD one.

Just as Clint Eastwood's well-rounded realistic characters turned the corner from the old flat "good guy in a white hat" and "bad guy in a black hat" characters, so did Lester Dent's "team" concept change fiction forever. Check it out below.

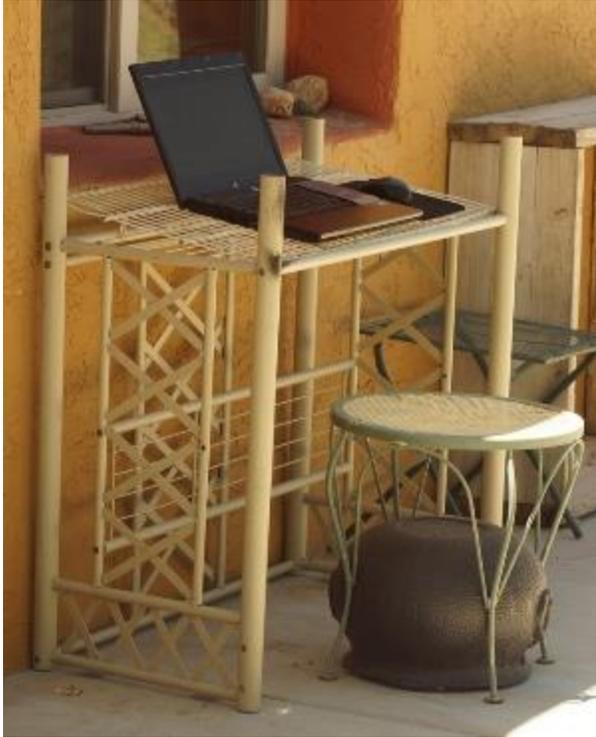
Of Interest

[A New Online Workshop: Teams in Fiction.](#)

I'd love to have some of you in the class with me. I suspect this will be the best one they've ever offered. Really advanced stuff.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4, catching up on my sleep. Email and coffee to wake up, then a cigar break that became watering the grass.



Then an idea hit full force re my outside desk.

That's it over on the left. The window above it is in my office.

So I built that. Took about an hour and a half. It's pleasant outside this morning so I didn't mind extending my stay anyway.

Then I came back in and checked Facebook. One of my sons received the 44th radiation treatment (of 44) for prostate cancer this morning, so now he should be done with it. Woohoo! Y'gotta love a man who looks cancer in the face and says "No, I'm gonna kick YOUR butt." (grin)

At 8:30 I came in to do this and eat a small breakfast. Then back outside to move the sprinkler to another part of the yard.

I wrote a little today, and it felt SO good. One good session and three shorter sessions. This story has a lot of depth as far as scene description goes and also getting into the characters' minds. I love that kind of stuff.

Back at it tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2034

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2334

Writing of Mountain Pass (no title yet)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 5949

Total fiction words for the year..... 200913

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3020

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 99510

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 300423

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 5/6

[May 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, a heartfelt thank you for those of you who emailed to congratulate my son for whipping prostate cancer. I appreciate it.

Second, a few people commented on my outside desk. It was really easy to put together. I didn't really "build" anything. (grin)

I turned the top half of an old baker's rack upside down, drilled two new holes and moved two screws to turn a shallow shelf into added support for the back (and to get it out of the way so my legs would fit underneath).

Then I took an old piece of laminated shelving with a little divider on top. I used a hammer to tap in the top right and top left side so those would fit within the uprights and set it on top. I did that so my 'puter would slope toward me. That's it.

Today my wife will find some 1.5" leg cups to go on top of the four corners to keep out rain and it'll be done. (grin) And it does work great. Of course, the porous nature of the thing also negates the need for an extra cooling fan or any of that stuff.

Of Interest

From yesterday... [A New Online Workshop: Teams in Fiction](#).

I didn't check Dean's site until 3 p.m. today. Huh. Anyway, I'm glad I did.

He put another week (so Week 4) of the Originality workshop on YouTube. Nothing else new, but you're crazy if you pass these up. I'm headed back to writing. I'll watch/listen to the vids tonight after I post this.

Here are the URLs for the Week 4 sessions:

Vid 4/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHMsB7t7WJU>

Vid 4/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtAP1WgOZTY>

Vid 4/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgIHW1UHclo>

Vid 4/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYABQmbomDw>

Vid 4/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpoWkdQr1Ro>

The Day

I woke up at 2, but I rolled over and slept a couple more hours. So I got up just before 4.

The usual email, coffee to wake up. Then setting up the sprinkler out front during a cigar break. Then back inside to check FB and recheck email.

Glad to report at least one other person is planning to join me in Dean's Teams in Fiction workshop. Should be great fun.

Finally started writing at about 10. Wrote 'til about 11, then headed outside to move my outside desk to a new position where there's more shade through the morning.

I'm not hitting this one with anything approximating blazing speed, but I'm having a ball writing it.

I mentioned yesterday there's a lot of physical description and I get to spend a lot of time in the characters' heads. That's my favorite thing.

So a lot of cycling back, adding sensory detail here and there (but always in creative voice) punctuated by brief spurts of writing new stuff to advance the story.

I'm not sure even what the genre of this thing will be, but it will be psychological something.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 345 (no, that isn't a typo)

Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 825

Writing of Mountain Pass (no title yet)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6294
Total fiction words for the year..... 201258

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3500
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 99990

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 301248

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 5/7

[May 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not sure what the day will hold. I have a lot to do around the place, but it will at least be a learning day.

Thanks for the well wishes, especially those of you (3) who sent along John Updike's poem, "Marching Through A Novel." Of course, I didn't include it in the word count for this Journal entry, but here it is:

Marching Through A Novel

by John Updike

Each morning my characters
greet me with misty faces
willing, though chilled, to muster
for another day's progress
through dazzling quicksand,
the march of blank paper.
With instant obedience
they change clothes and mannerisms,
drop a speech impediment,
develop a motive backwards
to suit the deed's done.
They extend skeletal arms
for the handcuffs of contrivance,
slog through docilely
maneuvers of coincidence,
look toward me hopefully,

their general and quartermaster,
for a clearer face, a bigger heart.
I do what I can for them,
but it is not enough.
Forward is my order,
though their bandages unravel
and some have no backbones
and some turn traitor
like heads with two faces
and some fall forgotten
in the trench work of loose threads,
poor puffs of cartoon flak.
Forward. Believe me, I love them
though I march them to finish them off.

Of Interest

Dean posted the Week 5 vids for the Originality workshop on YouTube. Here are the URLs.

Vid 5/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZOwercTdBQ>

Vid 5/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aihnAwHTf8>

Vid 5/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lau-aVDyJyE>

Vid 5/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O89Lcjd7imM>

Vid 5/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT4mZ4qitOM>

Vid 5/6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul-yvpiGe6c>

Vid 5/7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT4mZ4qitOM>

The Day

Got up a little before 4 a.m. A sluggish awakening this morning with little email and lots of coffee. And a cigar. Afterward, around 5:30 I thought to check Dean's site, then came here to write this stuff.

6:15. Writing a little, out to start today's watering, back in for more writing, back out to move the sprinkler.

9:30 to the store and to browse a thrift store.

11:15 back for lunch, games, out to move the sprinkler again.

12:20, final watering for the day. Also I got the swamp cooler on the roof cleaned out, etc. So it's all ready for my final assault on its sluggish, formerly limestone-encrusted self in the morning.

Around 3 I did move outside and got some good writing done. What I mean, it feels really good. Slow going with a lot of necessary translations (a few characters speak in Spanish), but a great deal of fun. The story feels good. This is the most fun I've had in awhile.

Anyway, I just happened to look up and realized it's nearly 4:30 p.m. so I'm gonna post this.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 0629 (yep, not a typo)

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6923

Total fiction words for the year..... 201887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3800

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 100290

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 302177

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [John Updike](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 5/8](#)

[May 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, happy birthday to my firstborn child, a daughter, Audrey. This year she will again be 29. Which means for today I am only 51. I'll take it. (grin)

Not sure what today will hold. Probably no writing. Soon (this morning) I'm taking my wife to a special place she really likes for Mother's Day and then we're going to attend a special MD event in Tombstone. Then probably lunch at the Longhorn there, then back here.

In the meantime, a fun (maybe) topic that I think is appropriate for this day.

There is a curse, of sorts, that I pass around.

It started, of all places, with my children. Well, the first time I uttered it, I did so in the general direction of my children. Every one of them remembers it to this day. Each has reported back to me to tell me not only do they remember, but the curse works.

My curse for them wasn't spectacular or unusual. In fact, it wasn't even original. Most parents (in my experience) have been my predecessors or successors in uttering the curse.

So any originality my version might have had, I can ascribe only to the force and utter belief with which I delivered it. To each of my them, I said, "May you have at least one child who is exactly like you."

And I meant it. From the depths of my shallow soul.

Oddly, the children themselves, when they report the success of the curse, define that success for themselves.

One has a child who never puts tools away after she uses them.

One has a child who expends three times the effort toward getting out of cleaning her room as she would expend in simply cleaning it.

One is the proud parent of a picky (highly selective?) eater.

One has a child who is an artiste (yeah, with an E).

And one, like one of his parents and his grandfather, would rather read a book about pretty much anything than actually DO pretty much anything. Even while in a car on the way to doing that thing.

Yup. Five children — I never cared for the appellation "kids" because children deserve the respect of their appropriate as much as does the next person — five curses and five successes.

I'm batting a thousand.

And of course, I'm a fiction writer, so take that into account as you read the stuff above this. (grin)

Of Interest

Dean posted the Week 6 vids for the Originality workshop on YouTube. Here are the URLs.

Vid 6/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93RilYkh024>

Vid 6/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPlftaXBb5Q>

Vid 6/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ck9QpWqFGJc>

Vid 6/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa731KZQ51c>

Vid 6/5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qnUCx_dfys

The Day

Got up a little after 4:30. Very late for me, but maybe my body is working back toward normalcy. By 6:30 though, the swamp cooler on the roof was fully functional and my baby grass out back was thoroughly watered.

10 a.m. To the San Pedro river for a short walk. By 11:30, we were enjoying a self-guided tour of a huge private rose garden in Tombstone. Afterward we share lunch there at the Longhorn restaurant, then visited a store (The Red Buffalo) for perfume for my wife.

By around 2 p.m. we made it back to the house and caught up with online things. After that I did a little writing on the story, mostly cycling through the first 3500 words. No new writing to speak of, so I won't.

I anticipate a great day of writing tomorrow. See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 560

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6923

Total fiction words for the year..... 201887

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4360

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 100850

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 302737

By the way, if anyone wonders, I keep a copy of this Journal in a Word document. With today's post that document is 799 pages and 350,551 words. That's since October 19, 2014.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 5/9](#)

[May 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Below I'll mention that I got up late after a very special day and a rough evening yesterday. I also postulate that perhaps going to bed later and getting up later is becoming my new norm, but I don't think so. Here's why:

It still doesn't make sense to me to basically waste two or three hours watching brain-dead TV when I could shift those hours to the morning and use them in more productive ways.

For the record, when I say "brain-dead TV," I'm not talking about fantasy or science fiction, in which people and situations are intentionally written and portrayed off the scale.

I'm talking about "normal" dramas or comedies in which the actors are allegedly portraying actual human beings in real-life situations. And failing horribly.

For me, several types of television shows fall into this "brain-dead TV" category.

those that are poorly written and presented by less-than-adequate actors (Two Broke Girls)

those that are SO poorly written that even capable actors can't present them well (Golden Girls, Big Bang Theory)

those in which the only laughs are delivered by an obviously automated laugh track (several shows), and their cousins, those in which the writing and situations probably would be humorous on their own if only the viewer didn't have to suffer through the obvious use of laugh tracks (Big Bang Theory)

those that are well written for the most part, but contain lines of "talk to the viewer" dialogue (the actors deliver lines to each other to explain concepts that real people in those professions would already know) (increasingly, Bones)

those in which the writers obviously don't know what they're talking about and haven't done even the slightest bit of research (in one recent episode, a killer could drive four hours in a straight line in the Chihuahua desert in America [so southeast Arizona, southern New Mexico] without crossing a fence or a road or any other signs of civilization) (this example was from Bones)

those in which the writers insert cutesy, "human interest" type dialogue that has NOTHING to do with the story at hand (again, Bones)

those that contain at least one truly annoying character because s/he and/or lines that s/he delivers are so far out of the ordinary that they suspend even my desire to suspend disbelief (example, in the sitcom The Middle, Rusty, Mike's brother, plays a realistic nutcase who just

doesn't get it; the child Brick, though, is about as unrealistic and annoying as it gets. About the only realistic quirk he has is that whispering thing.)

those that are nearing the end of their run (or should be) and are feeding on themselves (the action all becomes internal to the cadre of main characters and they begin battling each other or solving crimes about each other, etc.) (NCIS, Bones, et al)

And I'm sure there are several other examples that I can't think of at the moment. Thankfully.

Those and others like them are the ones I'd rather skip. Those are the ones that make going to bed at 7 and getting up at 2 or 3 attractive to me. So we'll see.

And please don't email me about this. If you actually enjoy television from around 5 p.m. until 10 or so, that's fine. I'm glad for you. It's just Different Strokes. (Don't get me started.)

What you CAN do with those shows and many more is see the Teams in Fiction concept (up to a point) that Dean will discuss in his upcoming online workshop. Seriously, it's gonna be a good one.

And just in case any of you are wondering, I get nothing personally for passing on information about Dean Wesley Smith's blog, topics and workshops. In fact, other than as an occasional workshop or lecture participant and an even less occasional commenter on his blog posts, he doesn't know I exist. (grin)

Of Interest

Speaking of Dean Wesley Smith, there is a GREAT topic of the night over at his place on [Making a Living Writing Short Fiction](#). Even if you're certain you wouldn't want to try it, there are some great tidbits in this offering.

The Day

Rolled out way late at almost 5. Maybe that's becoming my new norm, but I don't think so. See my ravings about it above. If getting up with the sun is becoming my new norm, I'll sit on the couch with my wife and read while the BDTV is on.

Spent the first hour of the morning per usual, emails, Facebook and watering my new grass. And yes, it falls under the old definition of grass. (grin) Some other stuff, including herding all three of my four-legged babies back inside after my wife discovered I inadvertently left the gate open. Scary.

Aside from being surrounded by coyotes, rattlesnakes and other unsavory types, there are allegedly domesticated dogs in the area that like nothing better than ripping to shreds anything smaller than they. Speaks to their character, I say.

Around 8:40 I moved outside with Hal (my writing 'puter, for any who don't know) to write. Then I wrote all this stuff (from here up).

After that I noticed my battery was draining faster than I'd like, so I went inside, shut this one down and removed the battery, then did a quick search on the business computer for an extended-life battery for this one. Found a 9-cell on eBay for just over \$20 and ordered it. It should last about twice as long as this one does.

10:30, snagged a tall glass of something to drink (solamenta agua dulce) and back outside with Hal. Going to play with my characters in the WIP for awhile, finally. Back in a bit.

4 p.m., I have to go to the store, so I'm posting this. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2198

Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3168

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9129

Total fiction words for the year..... 204085

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5330

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 101820

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 305905

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 5/10](#)

[May 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today, a brief topic, sort of a take-off on Dean's post (see below).

As I wrote below, his post is a great one regardless of whether you're writing and publishing short or long fiction or even nonfiction. I hope you'll read it.

However, I have a few caveats to add.

Re copyediting costs, I will copyedit any fiction or creative nonfiction for a flat rate of .005 per word. So for the 5,000 word story he references in his post, I would charge only \$25. And I'm a very good copy editor.

Re art costs, I use a lot of art and I get all of it from online stock photo agencies. I most often use [Bigstock](#) or [CanStock](#). Individual pics (large, 300 dpi) might run as high as \$15, but I usually get a one-month subscription and end up paying around 30 to 50 cents per photo. It's a little intense as you have to know what you want and download 10 images a day for a month or lose them. But it's a great bargain. (I think Dean most often uses Dreamstime. They're too rich for my blood.)

Re Adobe Creative Suite, I use [Serif PagePlus](#) to design covers, and if I ever do interior print layout I'll use either Serif PagePlus or Microsoft Word to create a PDF-A file to upload to CreateSpace. So no monthly cost there at all.

Re ISBN, I allow Smashwords and D2D to assign an ISBN. Just make sure you have them distribute to different retailers.

I especially like Dean's take on what we create. We are creating stories, yes. But we're also creating investments. Income properties. Your copyright is a property. Again, I strongly recommend you read Dean's post.

Of Interest

From yesterday, there is a GREAT topic of the night over at his place on [Making a Living Writing Short Fiction](#). Even if you're certain you wouldn't want to try it, there are some great tidbits in this offering.

At Dean's place today he follows up yesterday's excellent post with [Some Costs of Short Fiction Publishing](#). This is great information regarding costs no matter what you're writing and publishing.

Finally, if you're interested in getting the Science Fiction May Day bundle, check it out at <https://bundlerabbit.com/scifi-may-day>. I hope you'll share this link with your friends via social media, email, etc. You get up to \$52 worth of good SF for \$5 or \$9 (or more if you want). Support starving writers today! (grin)

And also of possible interest, I tested D2D's paperback production procedure this morning. When I clicked a link to download a cover template, it was from CreateSpace. If I have to create a print cover etc. at CreateSpace, I might as well just use them directly. More control over the interior layout that way too.

So I won't be using D2D's print process. I also won't be using CreateSpace, at least not in the near future. Still trying to get my writing back on track, and it just doesn't matter to me whether I have the books in actual paper.

The Day

Rolled out late again at almost 5. Oh well. The usual early routine with email and Facebook. I posted the SF May Day bundle info to Facebook again. Then headed outside to do the morning watering and enjoy my first cigar.

8:45 I transferred to my outdoor office to write. Originally I had envisioned writing out there only in the afternoons when the sun had passed its zenith. But it's wonderful in the morning. Other than the bees that fill up the massive mesquite tree right behind me, it's great. At 63, there is no finer pleasure than enjoying a good (but cheap) cigar and an enjoyable work in progress (WIP) at the same time. (grin)

9:45, I wrote for about a half-hour, mostly cycling, then remembered to check Dean's site. Then I wrote everything above this. Now I'm gonna stretch my legs a bit, then move back inside. (I have a new battery coming for my laptop that should extend my stay outside by about double.)

I realized I'm too old and cranky to sit on a patio chair while trying to write. So I went to the store and spent twenty bucks on a cheap "task" chair. I'll wheel it into the back door when it looks like rain, but otherwise it'll stay out here with my desk.

1 p.m., I'm back outside. Worked for close to an hour revising my Copyediting and Eformatting pages on my website. Check them out at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writer-assistance>.

2 p.m. Turning to the WIP.

Got a lot of stuff done today, and a little writing. Back at it tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1514

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2264

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words

Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 10635
Total fiction words for the year..... 205599

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6080
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 102570

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 308169

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 5/11

[May 11, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm thinking again about trying Pronoun as a distributor. That would mean I have to allow them to distribute to the four major retailers (Amazon, Apple, B&N, and Kobo) plus Google Play. It's all or nothing with Pronoun.

However, my overall net royalty will increase from this distributor by 3%. So I'll try their process with my next publication (probably a short story) and report back here regarding how smooth or clunky it is.

Also, I'm getting back into the swing of writing. Oddly, the switch to an outside desk helped that a lot. I actually look forward to getting out there to write. Instead of simply turning right from my business computer to my writing computer, I'm going to a different "office" where only the creative mind plays. (grin)

Well, mostly. Sometimes I allow myself to be sidetracked. That's my next goal. Avoid unnecessary sidetracks.

And I remembered aound mid-morning that I have an extra universal "travel" DC laptop adapter. So I found it, took it outside and hooked it up. No more depending on the battery while I'm out there, at least until my extended life battery comes in. I'll be able to keep my writing computer plugged in while I'm in the outside office.

Of Interest

For translations (when my characters speak in a different language, usually Spanish) I use [Google Translate](#).

Nothing new on Dean's site today. But if you missed his previous two posts, I strongly urge you to read them. You can scroll down to 5/10 and 5/9 editions on this blog to find them if you want.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 this morning. Still email, FB and coffee to wake up. Then I did a little research, comparing what each distributor (Smashwords, D2D and Pronoun) say each retailer pays in royalties. They were strikingly different. No doubt because of the terms outlined in the distributor agreement with each retailer.

Anyway, being up earlier paid off. I'm outside at my writing desk a little after 5. Breeze is a little chilly (it's 48 degrees) but not bad. With my current laptop battery, I have about 2 hours. I should have my new 9-cell battery by Friday. I'll check Dean's site after I go back in.

5:30, to the WIP. I wrote for about a half-hour, but the breeze kept picking up and it stayed cold (relatively) so back inside around 6. Nothing much from then until around 9 when I went back out. Wrote for another hour. Still mostly cycling, but enjoying it as the characters keep bringing up new situations.

Around 10 I remembered the universal DC adapter I mentioned above.

Back to writing by around 10:30. Then to the PO at 11 to pick up a couple new flat caps I bought. If anyone asks, I'll tell them I self-identify as an Irish sheep herder. Or maybe an IRA operative. (grin)

About 11:30 the sun was directly overhead (and overheating my office), so I had to come in. Yes, this is me pouting. Put on a load of laundry, then went back outside to look around, try to figure out how to construct a shade for my outdoor office. I have a large patio umbrella, but for my corner of Arizona it isn't really practical. Gets windy here, don't'cha know.

12:15, lunch, sitting under a fan, playing a few games of spider.

1 p.m. back to the WIP. Still inside until the sun has moved a bit farther west at around 2.

2:30, laundry's done and put away and I'm headed back outside. Got some writing done (still both cycling and advancing the novel) but not as much as I'd have liked. Still, it feels good. More tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2200 (weird)

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2800

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 12835
Total fiction words for the year..... 207799

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6680
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 103170

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 310969

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 5/12

[May 12, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, a trip to Sierra Vista looms this morning, so probably most of my writing will be this afternoon. Having an airbag replaced in my wife's Nissan so how long it takes will just depend on them.

Of Interest

Some great, very informative comments on Dean's site today re [Some Costs of Short Fiction Publishing](#).

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3:30 this morning. Email, FB and coffee to wake up. Feeling a little under the weather today, probably just allergies. I'll play the day as it comes.

5:20, outside with my writing computer. It's 51 degrees, very little breeze. When I lived in Indiana, I'd be running around outside without a Tshirt in 30-degree weather. Out here, at 50 degrees I'm halfway to frozen. (grin)

7:30, Still cycling (seems the norm for this story) but I got around a thousand new words done. Off to SV soon so I'll put this on hold for a bit.

4 p.m. Well the guy at Lawley Automotive in Sierra Vista (at 9 a.m.) said the car would be ready in "1.5 or 2 hours," so by 11 a.m. Around noon, a girl in Billing called to say it would be 2 p.m. When my wife protested, the woman said, "Well, they told you it would be 1 p.m." No, they didn't.

If they had told us it would be 2 p.m. or later, we'd have come home. She said, "Well, now it's gonna be around 2." So we hung around. Part of the hanging around was to put two new tires on my pickup. So at least that worked out and I no longer have maypops on the back.

Finally a little after 3 p.m., they finally finished. I was angry. The sheer arrogance of people like that, the sheer disregard for their word, flat makes me angry. Anyway, I drove my pickup home and my wife drove her car home. Ugh.

So if I hadn't written early this morning, today would have been a forced nonwriting day. So a little over a thousand words on the day.

I'll take it.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1025 (weird)

Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1355

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words

Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words

Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words

Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 13860

Total fiction words for the year..... 208824

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7010

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 103500

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 312324

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 5/13

[May 13, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Nothing to speak of going on today. It's a non-writing day for fiction, and pretty much anything else.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [Pulp Writers' Abilities](#). I strongly recommend it. I'll read it when I'm finished outside for the day. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Messed around for a couple hours with email, coffee, just waking-up stuff. When I went outside around 5, I started doing things out there.

And on the spot, I decided this was going to be a non-writing day. Just watering and fixing things around the place (running electricity to my backyard shed, etc.). And that's what I've spent the balance of the day doing.

It's 3 p.m. as I post this. I should be back full steam on the WIP in the morning.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 100 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 100

Writing of Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 13860
Total fiction words for the year..... 208824

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7110
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 103600

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 312424

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 5/14

[May 14, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the month is almost half over and I've had another slow start. See what I can do about that.

Of Interest

Nothing at Dean's place today, but if you didn't see it yesterday, I recommend you check out [Pulp Writers' Abilities](#). If you DID see it, go back and check out the comments. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out late at 4:30. By the time I woke up with with email and coffee, the sky was getting bright. So I went outside with a cigar and finished a little wiring project I started yesterday. And it works!

My HP ProBook 6460b has been overheating, running loud, etc. for awhile. I decided to switch Hal (also HP ProBook, a 4520s, but NOT overheating etc.) over to be my business computer. It has a couple lines across the screen, but over here I use the big 22" monitor anyway.

I was looking at new smaller computers to be my writing 'puter. I prefer 14" or smaller. Then again, I didn't want to spend a lot of money unnecessarily.

Finally I settled on using the "bad" ProBook as my new writing 'puter. Maybe it won't be as bad if I take a bunch of stuff off of it. We'll see.

So back inside around 7, I started switching everything over. Times like this, Dropbox is a life saver. I moved most all of the big stuff onto the new business computer.

Finally around 10:30 I got back to the WIP, still cycling. I do that a lot on a story like this in which external physical and sensual stimuli are important to pretty much every paragraph. (grin) Still, I added around a thousand words in an hour, so taking a little break.

During the break we got a surprise rain shower. Not a lot. Just sprinkling, really, a few times. But it was enough that we had to take time to move some painted boards (for a picnic table) into the shed, then move the computer, the power cord, etc. inside.

While I was on break and inside, I decided to put Office 365 on this computer too. (We have a five-computer subscription and had used only two slots.) I also ordered the new version of Serif PagePlus: X9. I like X6, but the disk finally wouldn't allow me to install it again.

I guess that's all right. But I'd rather have paid to extend the license for X6 than have to endure the learning curve that will come with X9. Still, Serif is the best layout and design program I've ever found, and that includes the Adobe Suite. If you're in the market, check out PagePlus at Serif.com.

2:30 p.m. back to cycling through The Mountain Pass or whatever it's going to end up being titled. I'm enjoying this process, but I'm already looking forward to finishing this one so I can get onto something else. (grin)

Not really a good day of writing, but not bad either. I feel like I'm ramping up in this story, so we'll see how it goes tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2460

Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2980

Writing of The Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words

Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words

Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words

Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words

Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 16320

Total fiction words for the year..... 211284

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7630

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 104120

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 315404

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer](#)

[Series, the writing life, Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 5/15

[May 15, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Been an interesting few days. Not long ago, even though I was outside before 5 a.m., for some reason I just didn't feel like going to the WIP. Silly.

I think it was my conscious mind sneaking in again, hyperventilating and saying, "We don't know where this is going!"

Of course, that's a sneaky paradox. If I know where a story's going, I don't want to write it. Why bother? It's boring. It's like reading a book after someone's already told me how it ends.

I write first to entertain myself. Seriously. How can I do that if I know where the story's going? And all of you who follow this blog have seen me talk on here before, gleefully, about something my character did or said that was completely unexpected. That's the fun of writing.

Instead of seeing myself as the Almighty Writer on High, forcing characters to my will, I get off my high horse and down in the story with them. As they run through the story, I'm just another character, running with them and hastily recording what they say and do. And that's how I like it.

When I learned this technique (writing off into the dark), it freed me like I've never been freed before. It gave me the leeway to let the characters tell the story. All I have to do is try to keep up.

Still, as you who follow this blog know, every now and then my conscious mind wants to "protect" me from myself. After all, if I don't know where the story's going, I might write the wrong thing and people won't like it and I'll feel like a fool. So if I just don't write it, the conscious mind wins and I won't suffer embarrassment.

I thought about that for awhile and figured out what was happening. As I said, sometimes I allow the conscious mind to sneak in. But once I recognize it, I dismiss it and start on my WIP again.

And how to do that?

Simple. I trust my subconscious.

Translated, that means I put my fingers on the keyboard and Just Write the Next Sentence. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence.

It always surprises me this late in the game—after having written and published fourteen novels, a novella, and over a hundred and twenty short stories—that I still have to remind myself of that.

But that really is all there is to it.

Just Write the Next Sentence.

I taught this technique to around a dozen writers. Good writers. Professional writers. But from what I glean from emails and the like, many of them have fallen back into the myths in which they were mired before they learned Writing Off Into the Dark.

How about you?

Of Interest

You can now find Dean's (free) Originality workshop under the YouTube tab on his website.

Also, to read an interesting article about Frank Gruber and other pulp writers [Click Here](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 after a rough night. Ugh. Woke up with coffee, email, and Facebook. Then I visited Dean's page and came here to start the journal entry.

Between 5:30 and noon, I did many things around here, including visiting with the neighbor and various household things. Sometime during that time I also added around 1200 new words to the novel in a couple of sessions.

Then I went outside and did some watering. Then I researched a few cigar stores online, revised my website a bit (the SF bundle ended yesterday) and ate lunch.

1 p.m. back to the WIP.

3 p.m. I've had a couple more good sessions and I'm in the middle of a high-intensity scene, so it's a good place to stop for the day. (You get that, right? If you don't get that, let me know.)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3453

Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal) + 280 (main blog)

So total words for the day: 4353

Writing of The Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 19773
Total fiction words for the year..... 2147374

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 105020

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 319757

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 5/16

[May 16, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I am stymied.

I sent a post from my other blog yesterday to around 500 people. In it, I very briefly discussed the Writers' Resources listed on my website and Dean's (free) Originality workshop. I also mentioned and recommended his upcoming Teams in Fiction workshop. Finally, I recommended signing up for this (free) Journal, where I "offer a great deal more writing advice ... than I ever will on [my main] website, plus links to items of interest to writers."

Eleven people unsubscribed.

If I don't stop trying to help writers over there, I'm gonna run 'em all off. (grin)

So I've decided to switch any "writing advice" topics over to this website. I'll still write an occasional blog post over there, but it will be strictly promotional stuff about my own work.

You guys and gals have stuck by me through this journey, and I appreciate it. Loyalty means a great deal to me, in business as well as among friends and acquaintances. You're the ones who deserve the personal glimpse into my life. You're the ones who deserve the opportunity to learn from my failures and successes.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, check out [Can't vs Don't](#). Literally, my mama always said "Cain't never done a dayum thang." (Yeah, that's how she talked, bless her beautiful heart. grin)

I found his post most useful in the segment about why he believes every writer should learn (at least at first) how to do everything: write, cover, publish, business. The man's reasoning is more than sound.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. Regular wake-up routine (loving the coffee this morning), then here to write everything above this. I also left a brief comment on Dean's "Sunday Fun" post (below the Can't vs Don't post) to voice my envy of him for the in-person writers' gatherings he attends/conducts up there.

Went up on the roof to finish messing with the AC up there (low blower came on, but high blower didn't... it does now). Then I watered the new grass, then wrote a little while. Then I rigged up some more stuff for my outside office to keep the DC converter out of the weather and so on. Wrote off and on, starting at about 8. Having trouble concentrating today. Too many little things going on around me. But it'll settle in.

Headed to the PO around 10:40 to pick up something I have to return. I'll make another run around 3 when my new shipment of cigars should be here.

Nothing spectacular, but a good-enough day. Kind of a lazy day for some reason.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2292

Nonfiction Words: 440 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2732

Writing of The Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words

Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words

Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words

Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words

Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words

Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words

Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22065
Total fiction words for the year..... 217029

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8970
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 105460

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 322489

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 5/16

[May 17, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Cycling

I've come up with a new thing. Well, maybe my own version of an old thing.

I mentioned that I've been cycling back through my current WIP ever since I started writing it.

According to Stephen King (and Dean, et al) there are two types of cycle writers (as opposed to cycle riders): putter-inners and taker-outers.

Most often, I'm a putter-inner. That's because as I cycle back through (all in creative voice, remember), I add sensory details to deepen the scene.

This is thanks to the Five Senses Exercise, which I learned from Kristine Kathryn Rusch in her Thinking Like a Science Fiction Writer lecture and from Dean in his Depth online workshop.

I learned the technique with my conscious mind. We always learn with our conscious mind. But what I need, what works for me, seeps into my subconscious and becomes part of who I am as a writer. So adding depth in this way becomes as natural as putting a period after a "declarative sentence" or a question mark after an "interrogative" (remember those?).

But when I cycle through, I often find that I COULD HAVE added the sense of smell or hearing or sight (but writers always use sight) or touch or taste to bring the reader more deeply into the scene. So when it's lacking and SHOULD BE THERE, I add it.

That's what I mean when I say I'm a putter-inner. And that's what constitutes most of my cycling.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, check out the comments on [Can't vs Don't](#).

But an even more valuable post for me personally is today's [Distracted](#). It's very short, but carries a lot more weight and importance than its size would indicate.

I'll reread that one a few times, maybe even copy, paste and save it. This one is a HUGE lesson I have to learn. I'm always afraid (see? fear) if I allow myself to stop writing for very long I won't start again. Silly, I know, but if you remember, the last couple of months have evoked a lot of whining from my corner. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. Regular wake-up routine (loving the coffee again this morning) with email and Facebook. Then I picked on my DSLR camera for about an hour, taking photos with two different lenses to determine whether an annoying recurring spot was on a lens or on the mirrors of the camera. (My friend Sara can relate.)

I discovered it's on the mirrors, so on to manual cleaning a bit later, after I've re-read that section of the user's manual. (grin)

After that I visited Dean's page and read the comments from yesterday and the excellent new post I mentioned in the Of Interest section above.

Around 6, I moved outside to have a great little cigar and write. I added about 200 words to an explosive scene in the WIP (yes, cycling), then skipped over here to write everything above this, including the topic above.

Yesterday I mentioned having trouble concentrating and reported a lazy day. Today I'm firing on all cylinders so far. (grin) Yay!

I'll head to Tombstone around 9 to pick up a six-pack of Garcia y Vega Galantes. Two of those will tide me over until my new order arrives at the PO around 3 p.m. today. That 3 p.m. thing will be my second deviation from the day. Until 9 and then from around 10 to 3, I plan to write.

Back from Tombstone around 10:30, wrote for a little while. Also started the sprinkler on the front yard, then took care of more email and Facebooks stuff. Wrote a little more, but had to come inside. From about 11 until 2, the angle of the sun is wrong. So far I have around 1200 new words on the day.

3:15, back to the WIP.

4 p.m., I have around 2200 words on the day at this point. Still cycling today, and some of it felt like I was chiseling it out of stone. But I'm enjoying the story so much I don't mind.

Still, I'm gonna call it a day and start again tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2172

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2862

Writing of The Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 24237

Total fiction words for the year..... 219201

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9660

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 106150

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 5/18](#)

[May 18, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Cycling, Part II

Yesterday I talked about cycling and being a putter-inner.

I'm also a taker-outer on some stories, sometimes. That might be the case on my current WIP, but I can't be sure until it's finished. And the end is not yet in sight.

But I thought it might be useful to look at how that works, at least for me, and why.

As we know it, what we call “traditional publishing” has existed for only a very short period of publishing history. It started in the late 1940s and early 1950s with paperback books.

Still, sadly, many writers still believe that’s the only way to go. It’s as if they can’t believe their work is of any value unless it’s rubber stamped by some twenty-something, slush-pile-reading junior acquisitions editor in New York.

But I digress. In the “old days” when the only available avenue to publication was through the gatekeepers of traditional publishing, length mattered.

It was also arbitrary. A manuscript had to be a certain length only to fill the right number of folios and to hit the right price points so the publisher could charge a certain amount and feed all the yawning maws along the distribution highway.

In the rest of the world, a novel might be only 25,000 words, and it’s still that way. Many of the world’s masterpieces were very short by traditional publishing standards.

At the same time, in the US, a novel had to be 80,000 to 100,000 words. If the story ended at 65,000 and it was something the traditional publisher wanted, the writer was instructed to add words.

But writers didn’t understand the why of those arbitrary length requirements, only the what. And those arbitrary requirements are still part of how we think.

Until we break away. Until we choose to allow the writing to be whatever length it’s supposed to be in order to tell the story. That’s something of which I have to remind myself with everything I write.

Still, at some very basic level, occasional thoughts about manuscript length creep in. And again I tell myself, “Don’t write to length. Don’t worry about length. Just write the story.”

When you worry about something in your writing (length, sentence structure, etc.) that’s all conscious mind stuff. In another words, it’s yet another attempt to stop you from writing. If you don’t finish, or if you finish but don’t attempt to publish (because it’s too short or for any other reason), your conscious mind has done its job. It’s protected you from the possible embarrassment of rejection, either by an editor or the reading public.

While I’m writing the story, I’m just running through the scenes with the characters. So I have no way of knowing whether something is extra until the story is finished.

But when I do allow worry about length to creep in, I tend to add what Dean et al call “loops,” little story-related things that don’t add anything of value to the story. And if I remove them, neither does that detract from the story.

So sometimes, I'm a taker-outer.

One note of caution — if your “loop” adds necessary background info about a character, leave it in. The story itself might be complete without it, but the loop might enhance the reader's understanding of the character and how he or she acts or reacts to situations in the story. But if the loop makes no difference, cut it.

If you do cut it, especially if the loop is strong, consider saving it. Sometimes it's a sequel or at least another story in the same world waiting to happen.

How will you know?

Probably you'll think this answer is inadequate or a cop out, but it isn't: You just will.

Of Interest

Nothing new on Dean's site today. He's still playing with his new store. (grin) And nothing else out there in the ether worth commenting on that I could find.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4. After the usual routine to drag myself out of Groggyland, I was outside at the computer by 5:30. Got around 600 words (cycling again, of course) and came here to write all this, then checked Dean's site.

Around 10:30, with clouds moving in to tease us, I turned the sprinkler on the back yard. It got a little over-zealous, so I moved inside with the writing 'puter.

Beginning around 2, the sky finally let go. Sort of. It sprinkled and rained just enough to keep me from moving myself and the writing computer back outside. It was a slow day anyway. Allergies climbed right up on top of me and stomped on me awhile, so I didn't get a lot done.

But it was mostly cycling anyway, so overall a good day.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2101

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2881

Writing of The Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words

Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words

Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words

Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words
Day 13... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 22976 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 26338
Total fiction words for the year..... 221302

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 106930

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 328232

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 5/19](#)

[May 19, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

This morning I was pleased to see that BundleRabbit featured my book (Confessions of a Professional Psychopath by Eric Stringer) to highlight the bundle of which it's currently a part. Cool!

Of course, I took a screen shot and posted it and the link to my Facebook page. [You can see the Facebook post here](#) (if necessary scroll down to the big red BundleRabbit ribbon), and you can get the actual [Chills, Thrills and Spills bundle here](#).

Tomorrow (May 20) is the last day this bundle is available. This one includes a title by Dean Wesley Smith as well. Of course, I recommend it (grin).

Fiction Lengths

From time to time I'm asked the difference in word count among the various literary genres (flash fiction, short story, etc.) of fiction. I think I've talked about this before. There are about as many different lengths for each genre as there are publishers and writers.

My own length chart reflects what I most often find in others. It also reflects numbers that feel right and comfortable to me as a writer. Remember, please, that this does not in any way reflect the artificial length requirements created by traditional publishing.

I use these to set price points more than anything else. For that reason, you'll also see my price points below. Anyway, here it is:

- 6 to 99 words Flash Fiction (in collections only)
- 100 to 2,000 Short Short Story (Short Short) .99
- 2,000 to 6,999 Short Story 2.99
- 7,000 to 14,999 Long Short Story (or Novelette) 3.99
- 15,000 to 24,999 Novella 4.99
- 25,000 to 39,999 Short Novel 5.99
- 40,000 to 69,999 Novel 6.99
- over 70,000 Long Novel 7.99 – 8.99

Note that these are not price points for nonfiction (reference or instruction) books or collections. Also, these are ebook prices only. I'd be happy to answer any questions either in a comment below or via email.

Of Interest

Nothing at Dean's about writing today, but a good post about a battle with a framed door.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. Wake-up stuff per usual with coffee, email and Facebook. Outside with a cigar and my camera, and took a lot of shots of various things, including the elusive Arizona Penguin. You can see those on Facebook as well, below the BundleRabbit post.

I noticed the hummingbird feeders (3 of them) were nearing empty so I mixed up some sugar water and refilled and re-hung all of those.

Finally moved the writing 'puter outside around 8, then checked Dean's page and wrote all this stuff.

I was stuck in the story for about five minutes. It might be the shortest time ever that I've been stuck in a story.

Then I remembered to Just Write the Next Sentence. Then the next. Then the next. And from 8:40 until 11, I wrote just under 2000 words in two good sessions. In between, I took a few more pictures with my camera.

No cycling for that. It was all a new scene. I also did a little cycling later.

At 11, the sun was directly overhead so I moved the writing computer back into the house and came back here to write this. Now I'll take a break and start on the story again shortly.

Well, “shortly” turned into “awhile.” I played with my kitten in the front yard, took a few more pics, checked Facebook stuff, ate lunch and drove to the PO and back.

Then I read Notes from Bisbee, a monthly article my friend, Debrah Strait, writes. She mailed me a copy, but she also puts some of them on her website at DebrahStrait.com. They’re hilarious. Anyway, after that I set about watering the yard, etc.

1:20, back to the novel. Yes, today the WIP moved from “novella” to “short novel” length per my own length chart. (See above.)

Well, it’s almost 4 so I think I’ll call it. Back tomorrow.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 2762

Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3392

Writing of The Mountain Pass (The title might be El Abuelo)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words
Day 13... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 22976 words
Day 14... 2762 words. Total words to date..... 27938 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 29100

Total fiction words for the year..... 224064

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 107560

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 331624

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 5/20

May 20, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

No real topic here today. I have some writing to do. (grin)

By the way, if anyone caught my magical math in yesterday's post ($22976 + 2762$ somehow = 27983) thank you for not pointing it out. I've corrected it in yesterday's post, and of course, in this one.

The secret of being a prolific writer really is to Just Keep Coming Back. A hundred words here, a couple hundred there, and it all adds up. That's what I do with novellas and novels. With short stories, it's either one straight shot or, at the worst, I have to come back to the story only a couple times.

Although with less than 30,000 words written thus far this month I'm not as prolific as the annual total thus far would make it seem. I'm well below the pace I need to nail down a million new words of fiction by the end of the year. So I'll be working on that.

Numbers

Again it's been brought to my attention that some people find word count somehow a less than honorable way to think about writing. So I'll clarify briefly.

FOR ME (emphasis intentional) keeping track of the number of new words I put on the page is both a catalyst and a measurement of productivity. To explain, I'll use a simple example.

Say two writers both meet their goal to write one new short story per week. So at the end of a year, both have written 52 short stories.

The problem is, "short story" isn't a measure of quantity, though certainly "52 short stories" is.

But say one writer writes stories that consist of 2000 words or less. The other writes stories that fall between 3000 and 6000 words each.

Both can claim to have written 52 short stories in a year (an accomplishment) and both can claim to a streak that's lasted at least 52 weeks in a row (another accomplishment).

But one has written 104,000 new words of fiction or less, whereas the other has written between 156,000 words at the minimum and 312,000 words at the most. So who is the more prolific writer?

Depends on whether you want to call "story" a measure of quantity. Either way, both have achieved something incredible. On the other hand, the second writer has gotten a LOT more practice.

And if you want to improve in your storytelling ability, you must practice.

Not to mention, if you're a writer, you must write. Right? If you're a mechanic, you fix stuff. If you're a carpenter, you build stuff. If you're a writer, you write.

I should also point out here that "story" and "writing" are different concepts.

Story is what you have in your mind, or what the characters bring to you. It's what you run through with your characters if you're fortunate enough to have learned to trust your subconscious.

Writing is the mechanical act of putting little black marks on a page in such a way that sometime later another person (the reader) will decipher them. When he does so, the same "story" that you enjoyed will be in his mind as well.

So whatever you choose to do, however you choose to touch benchmarks on your writing, I will continue to use cold, hard numbers. If for no other reason than because it's more practical (FOR ME) to count mechanical words as a benchmark of how far I've come.

It's also practical (again, FOR ME) to use numbers to set future benchmarks (goals) for where I want to be with putting little black marks on a page a month from now, two months from now, and a year from now.

Okay, so I guess there was a topic here after all. (grin) And while I'm on that topic, here's a related one.

Short Fiction and Streaks

Some of you will remember that at one time I had a streak going of writing at least one short story per week. I finally intentionally broke the streak (yes, intentionally... I'm just that stupid) at 70 weeks. I've been taking half-hearted shots at starting and maintaining a new streak ever since.

Partly as a result of that streak, at one time I had short stories lined up for the Short Story of the Week out as far as three months in advance.

I just realized this morning, it's been awhile since I wrote one. But the ones I had queued up kept right on posting every week. And in fact, the last short story I wrote will post this coming Monday.

Yet readers expect a free short story every week. So I'm thinkin', maybe I'd better get hot.

So I'm starting a new personal challenge to write at least one short story every week. And of course, that's in addition to this blog, novels, etc.

Just to challenge myself a little more, I'll wait until Monday after the current story posts to write a new one. That'll make it a true week. But from then on, for at least awhile, I'll HAVE to write at least one new short story every week just so I'll have something to post.

Plus a lot of Donors have gone awhile, patiently, without anything new from me. Thank you all. I'll be getting some new stuff to you soon.

Of Interest

Nada. But Dean did mention there's still space available in the new Teams in Fiction workshop that begins in June. Frankly, I'm amazed. I suspect that will be the best workshop he's ever done. If you have the dollars and want to invest in your writing career, there y'go.

The Day

Well, up and about at 3:30 after a restless night. After the usual routine to wake up, I checked Dean's page and was reminded that the Chills, Thrills and Spills bundle ends today. So I did a slight revision of Dean's post and added it to my Facebook page. Then I wrote a brief post for my main blog.

No doubt more people will unsubscribe over there because of my shameless self-promotion. Sigh. Whatever. (grin)

Around 5:30, I've written everything above and I'm headed outside with my writing 'puter. Wish me luck.

At 6:20, my intrepid watch dog, a chihuahua who believes himself a rottweiler, donned his razorback hog look and came out through the back door growling. A long moment later, a coyote passed about ten yards outside the back fence.

That created a necessary interruption as I had to get inside to make sure the lady cats were in the house. They were.

Before the interruption I had added only a couple hundred new words to the story. Cycling again this morning. One character divulged to me by gesturing with a cane that he uses one, so I had to cycle back and add it earlier. (grin) God I love my characters.

Then I talked with my wife for a few minutes about a trip we're planning in June and the pending arrival here of my oldest son toward the end of this month. Kind of like a diary today, isn't it? (grin)

6:45 back to the novel. Added a couple hundred more words (so that's only about 400 on the day), then took a break to start the water on part of the front yard, then get dressed. Meeting my buddy Dan for lunch later in Benson at the Horseshoe Café.

7:45 back to the novel off an on until I head out to meet Dan for lunch.

Lunch (late breakfast) with Dan from around 10:40 to 11:45, a great time. Shredded beef tamales and eggs. So good it almost hurt. Stopped at the PO on the way back to the house and received some software (Serif PagePlus X9 for covers and layout) I'd been waiting for. Writing this while it installs (it's 12:15) then back to the novel.

2:50, still a slow day, and still cycling. Even with that, I've written over 1900 new words total on the day. No matter what else I get done, it will be a good day.

4:30, calling it a day. I continued to "come back" and continued to cycle, and near the end of the day the characters rewarded me with a new scene. (grin) I love it when that happens. So a much better day than I was expecting.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3238

Nonfiction Words: 1390 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4628

Writing of The Mountain Pass (No idea what the title will be)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words
Day 13... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 22976 words
Day 14... 2762 words. Total words to date..... 25738 words
Day 15... 3238 words. Total words to date..... 28976 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 32338

Total fiction words for the year..... 227302

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12460

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 108950

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 336252

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 5/21

[May 21, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Chores. I love them. Why? Because they provide built-in breaks.

Especially when I'm cycling through a WIP, as I have during almost every session with this novel, frequent breaks are not only necessary but a relief.

As an example, my daily "big" chore is sweeping the concrete patio where my outside desk is located to get rid of the allergy-inducing detritus from the shagbark mesquite that dominates the side yard.

Other less frequent chores this morning included dumping the trash into the dumpster, putting away the items in the dishwasher (my wife most often takes care of that one), and finally changing from my sweats into my day clothes. Jeans and a tshirt.

I also removed the boards for the picnic table from my backyard storage shed and snapped a few pictures during that time as opportunities arose.

In between all of those things, I was writing. Ten minutes here, twenty minutes there.

Of Interest

Still nothing over on Dean's blog. He's working on his new store. It will open Wednesday. For my money, I'm betting he's not back until Friday. (grin) But we'll see.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40 and went through my usual wake-up routine. Around 5:30 I moved outside to write.

Cycling, of course. By 7:20, among various chores, I had added only around 400 new words to the novel. Still, it feels like it's going to be a good day.

7:40, I went back to the novel for a short time. I added only another couple hundred words, though.

Then I worked on the picnic table. What should have taken a half-hour (bolting three 11" boards on top and two on the seats), actually took more like 4 hours. I won't go into why because it's just annoying and I'd prefer to move on. (grin)

Then we had to visit Walmart for a couple new tools (my reward) and some wood putty.
Then we went to lunch, then came home, where I spent time catching up on watering outside.

Then I came inside (into the cool). I closed an old email account (my Yahoo account is now completely gone, so please use harveystanbrough@gmail.com instead), and took care of about a billion other “little” things online.

Then I looked up and it was almost 4 p.m. Dayum. And sigh.

I almost called this a non-writing day, but I decided to include what little I did get done. It all adds up.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 0643

Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1043 (I am sad. Very sad.)

Writing of The Mountain Pass (I have no idea what the title will be)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words
Day 13... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 22976 words
Day 14... 2762 words. Total words to date..... 25738 words
Day 15... 3238 words. Total words to date..... 28976 words
Day 16... 0643 words. Total words to date..... 29619 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 32981

Total fiction words for the year..... 227945

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12860

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 109350

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 337295

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 5/22

May 22, 2016 by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

This is a very odd month. Despite my apparently crass dependency on numbers to gauge my writing (grin), I'm not overly worried about them this month.

I have little doubt that I will end this month FAR below the meager 93,000 words of new fiction I would have if I did my job only three hours per day.

I write about a thousand words per hour. For you new folks, that isn't fast. It's only about 17 words per minute. Who among us can't write 17 words in a minute? I mean, you could probably do that with a chisel on a rock.

And for those of you who still have some other day job, how many of you work only 3 hours per day or less?

So for a person whose job is to sit at a keyboard and make stuff up (write fiction), attaining 3000 new words per day should be a no-brainer.

Normally, I'd be annoyed that I haven't done well in that endeavor this month.

After all, only a fiction writer would even consider saying, "Well, I wrote only 643 words yesterday (worked for only a half-hour) but it all adds up."

Can you imagine a mechanic or a plumber or an architect or a lawyer or a doctor saying, "Well, I spent only a half-hour at work yesterday, but it all adds up"?

Uhhh, no. I'm a very lucky guy. (grin)

But this month, the lack (so far) of production really doesn't bother me. As I've alluded to a few times recently, pretty much this entire WIP has been created by cycling. And cycling just doesn't go as quickly as writing a new scene.

Still, I've thoroughly enjoyed writing every word and scene, and performing each cycling operation.

I have missed my goals many times since I started this journal on October 19, 2014, but this is the first time I really don't mind. The story and the process is just that much fun.

And that is an achievement in itself.

Still, tomorrow morning at 8:01 a.m. the last short story of the week in the queue will post. And I will begin a new personal challenge (and a goal) of writing at least one short story per week.

If you're reading this, and if you're a writer, why not come along on this challenge? And you're more than welcome to email me. Share your successes, your complaints, and those times when you fail to succeed. Goodness knows I lean on you enough.

Of Interest

As I do from time to time (especially for new subscribers) I recommend Dr. Mardy Groethe's free weekly quotes newsletter. To subscribe, send a blank message to drmardy-on@mail-list.com.

Still nothing over on Dean's blog, as expected. He's working on his new store. It will open Wednesday. For my money, I'm betting he's not back until Friday. (grin) But we'll see.

The Day

Rolled out late at 4:30 and went through my usual wake-up routine. Around 5:15 I moved to my outside desk. Like yesterday, though, I wrote in short, intermittent bursts of ten minutes here, ten minutes there as I also attended to various small chores.

And I'm cycling again, of course. At one point, at the end of a scene, I happened to glance at the aforementioned word count. It was 29,999 (so I had added a little less than 400 words). Still, that close. I wrote "The" to top it off. (grin)

Wrote for a little while, took a few pictures, went in to change into my jeans. Then I visited Facebook for a bit, made a few posts and checked email again. Then inside to slap together a quick breakfast sandwich.

8 a.m., back outside to write. Still cycling but also with a bit of a new scene, I added another 1500 words (about one and a half hours' work) over the next three hours.

11 a.m., I moved inside to get myself and my writing 'puter (Hal) out of the direct sun. It's only 80 out there today, and there's a nice breeze, so it's actually fairly cool. Hmm. I might have to think about setting up a second outside desk that's in the shade when the current one is in the sun.

Noon, I was in a new scene and had a decent session. In the past hour, I added another 800 words or so. Then I took a break to water a lot of small trees and bushes. That took a little over an hour. Back in now to chill for a bit, then back to the novel.

Well, overall it was a great day of writing. It's 4 p.m. now so I'm calling it. See you again tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3469

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4249

Writing of **The Mountain Pass** (I have no idea what the title will be)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words
Day 13... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 22976 words
Day 14... 2762 words. Total words to date..... 25738 words
Day 15... 3238 words. Total words to date..... 28976 words
Day 16... 0643 words. Total words to date..... 29619 words
Day 17... 3469 words. Total words to date..... 33088 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 36450

Total fiction words for the year..... 231414

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13640

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 110130

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 341544

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 5/23](#)

[May 23, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

My father, Harvey C., would have been 88 years old today.

He loved to write, and he wrote well, but he never turned it even into a hobby. Having a knack for the language was an embarrassment to him. As a result, it was just something he played with occasionally. Silly notes he wrote to friends, and tongue-in-cheek (or romantic) poems he wrote to friends (or women).

He wouldn't have thought much of this new world of publishing. The ebooks wouldn't have bothered him. In fact, probably he would have welcomed them. He was practical that way.

But he would have decried the fall of the former gatekeepers, most of whom were twenty-something kids trudging through slush piles, their English degrees held before them like shields. Like those who still aspire to "traditional" publishing today, he thought that was the be-all, end-all to publishing.

As to me personally, I like to think he might have been proud, even if secretly. I like to think he would have hidden himself away and read my novels and stories and enjoyed them.

But publicly, he would have eschewed indie publishing as "too easy" to be of any real value. He's one of those who would have dismissed an indie-published story as being "no good" without ever having read even the opening. As to rave reviews, he would have asked bluntly whether they were written by friends or by those who otherwise felt they owed me something.

By and large, he was loved by everyone who "knew" him, but feared by his family. He never outgrew all that was levied against him when he was a child. He is why I left home at a dead run and joined the Marine Corps (seeking glory and with a death wish) when I was only 17. Eric Stringer wrote about him in the novel, *Confessions of a Professional Psychopath*. I'll give you two hints: Dad was not the psychopath, and a little of the novel actually was fiction.

Still, he was my dad. Even if inadvertently, he passed along to me the most precious gift I have ever received: my love of language. Happy birthday, Dad. Te amo y te extraño.

The End Game Approacheth

Well, I'm feeling the end game of my current novel. It isn't within sight yet, but I sense it getting closer.

In the story, tension is building, situations are heating up, and it's all the characters' fault. (grin) Amazing how easily that happens and how much fun it is when you back off and let them tell the story.

I suspect the end will rise into sight within another two days or so. And once I can see it, it'll be a mad dash to the finish line. Hope a good title will have occurred to me by then. (grin)

The good thing (for me) at this point is that I have two long stories (probably novels) waiting in the wings. One is a continuation of Wes Crowley's story (woohoo!) and another is a separate, stand-alone SF novel. Something to do with flying caps. I'm not kidding.

Which will come first? I honestly don't know. Wes generally has been very patient with me, but I think I won't know until this one is in the can.

The only thing I know for sure is that either one will be a blast to write. (grin)

Of Interest

Over at [Dean's place](#) today, he reports having reached a milestone. His 30th issue of his own magazine, Smith's Monthly, comes out tomorrow. In thirty issues, roughly 70,000 words each, he has written more than most fiction writers write in entire careers: 30 novels plus sections of serialized novels plus over 130 short stories. And that's just in Smith's Monthly.

Oh, today's Monday. Check Kristine Kathryn Rusch's site for a free short story. And mine comes out tonight too.

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30 again. And this morning after checking email etc. I got involved in deleting a bunch of old Yahoo email/password combos. Which of course meant in many cases I had to log into the site in question and change those things. So it became a whole big thing. And I finally realized I was eating up writing time and stopped.

Besides, the novel was nagging at me (bless its heart), so by 6 I was finally at my outside desk. I'll finish that other stuff some other time. Or not. Whatever.

I wrote off an on from 6 until around 9 (but only around 1800 new words), then sauntered across the street to chat with the neighbor. Then back to writing. I'm in a new scene so a little cycling (of course) and a lot of new writing.

At 10 I moved inside. I took a break then and checked out Dean's site. Then I moved over here and wrote the "topic" above. Then I came down here to update the timeline this far.

Now it's 11:30 and I'm eating lunch (ham salad and BBQ chips).

11:40, back to the novel.

3:15. Over the last three and a half hours, I wrote two scenes and did some more cycling. I also put water on some trees and moved it a couple of times, put a new arrangement of drawers in the backyard storage shed and took care of a few other chores. Then I thought I should update this journal.

Now it's back to the novel to begin a new scene.

Okay, for my money, today has been a very good day. See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4122
Nonfiction Words: 910 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5032

Writing of The Mountain Pass (I have no idea what the title will be)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
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Day 14... 2762 words. Total words to date..... 25738 words
Day 15... 3238 words. Total words to date..... 28976 words
Day 16... 0643 words. Total words to date..... 29619 words
Day 17... 3469 words. Total words to date..... 33088 words
Day 18... 4122 words. Total words to date..... 37210 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 40572
Total fiction words for the year..... 235536

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 111040

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 346576

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 5/24

[May 24, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A friend and writer who reads this blog recently asked “What is cycling? Are you riding a stationary bicycle while you write, or what?” (I’m paraphrasing.)

Cycling

I think I might never have explained the term here in any detail. It's yet another technique I picked up from Dean Wesley Smith, so there's a good chance I took for granted that you know what it means.

Cycling is part and parcel of writing into the dark.

Writing into the dark essentially means writing without outlining or planning or "directing" the story or the characters. You take a character with a problem and drop him into a setting. Then you put your fingers on the keyboard and write whatever comes. And trust it.

After all, your subconscious has been telling stories since before you even knew your alphabet.

When you write into the dark, you don't "think" about the next sentence or the next paragraph. You don't worry about what's going to happen next or where the story is going. You simply type, allowing your subconscious (your characters) to tell the story.

And when the story's finished, you have a first reader or copyeditor proof it, and then you publish it, period (or if you wish, submit it for publication).

In other words, you write the best story you can at the time, and then you let it go and move on to the next story. This is the way almost every long-term fiction writer writes.

Of course, this flies in the face of almost every major myth about writing and publishing. Especially the myth that a piece of writing can't be any good unless it's rewritten several times and "polished." Ugh. Generally, the more something is rewritten, the worse (and less original) it becomes.

So where does cycling come in?

In my case, as I'm writing into the dark, I often forget to add enough scene description or sensory details. Nearly all writers use the sense of sight, but how does a major scene sound? How does it smell?

Sensory detail is one more way to ground the reader deeply in the scene. To make her feel she's part of the story. So when I've written a thousand words or so (in this story) I "cycle back" and read over the scene, allowing myself to touch it as I do so. (But always in creative voice, always with the subconscious.)

Also, quite often, one of my characters will throw me a curve. Just yesterday one of my characters surprised me by saying another character is a traitor. So I "cycled back" to a point earlier in the story and added a few hints regarding the treason.

Note that if I were writing from an outline or from my conscious mind, I would not have trusted this. I would have "corrected" the character who thought the other one was a traitor. I would have forced him to my will, and eventually you would have read the same tired, flat formula

tripe you read from everyone else instead of my own unique voice. As it is, the story is much fuller and deeper because I allowed the characters to tell it.

The reader will read the book from beginning to end, but the writer is not restricted in that way. You are unstuck in time in your novel. You can move about freely.

So cycling is a cousin to rewriting. But there is one massive difference. When we rewrite, the conscious mind tends to seep in. We become the Almighty Writer on High, directing and forcing things that are none of our business. We worry about specific words we used or sentence structures or how many times “that” appears or other completely unimportant stuff that has nothing to do with Story.

You learned all of that stuff eons ago. What you need of it will seep through your subconscious into your writing. You will use the sentence structure you need without thinking about it just as you will put a period at the end of a sentence without thinking about it.

When we cycle, we remain in creative voice. We remain down in the story with the (other) characters, just enjoying and enriching the story.

So cycling is the art of 1) going back a few thousand words to page 18 to plant a pistol in the pocket of Aunt Marge’s cardigan before she comes into Joey’s house. Why? Because as you were running through the story with her, Joey, and a few others, Aunt Marge suddenly produced a pistol and shot Joey in the back of the head.

It’s also the art of 2) reading over what you’ve recently written *As You’re Still Writing the Story* and adding what your subconscious wants to add (or deleting what the subconscious wants to delete).

Then, when the characters have at last led you to the end of the story, there’s no need to rewrite. It’s finished. You can just send the story *In Your Unique Voice* off to your copyeditor or first reader and move on to the next story.

And that’s something I have to do right now. (grin)

But yes, I’d be happy to answer any questions.

(To see the description of my audio course on this topic, click [Writing Off Into the Dark](#) and scroll down to Course 12.)

Of Interest (quite a bit today)

Read [Dean’t topic of the night](#) on *The Voice*. The keys?

1. Take control of your own career as a writer (instead of giving up control out of fear), and
2. Have fun. If it isn’t fun, why bother? Go do something you enjoy instead.

For new subscribers who would like to see a photo of my outside desk, [you can find it here](#).

Kristine Kathryn Rusch was recently awarded the Asimov's Science Fiction Reader's Award AND the Analog Science Fiction and Fact Best Short Story Award. Finally she was selected as the Asimov's Featured Author. [See the writeup and interview here](#).

Finally, if you like silly western stuff (sayings of Gus McCrae, etc.) check out Western Clothing. If you use this particular link <http://go.referralcandy.com/share/N66TK8X> you'll get 15% off anything you buy.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. And thank goodness.

I wasn't sure how long it would take to write the bit on Cycling above. As it turned out, once I had my coffee brewed and got through a few emails, I started writing it.

Somewhere along the way I checked Facebook stuff and Dean's page, then came back to finish writing down to this point.

Around 5:20 I headed outside to get a few pics, then water and have a small cigar. Then while a second mugga coffee was brewing, I moved my writing 'puter to my outside desk. I added a bit more to the topic above, then wrote this.

6 a.m. to the novel. Nope. Sidetracked myself with some other stuff.

6:45 a.m. to the novel. Really. (grin) Well, more cycling, mostly adding to a tense scene. I enjoy writing second-by-second scenes. If you remember some of director Sam Peckinpah's films, similar to that.

By 9:40, I had added a little over 1200 words. A good start. Now for a break to begin some watering of trees. The desert makes them thirsty.

While I was gone, I glanced over the back fence into open desert and noticed a young bird of paradise tree growing alone. Bravely, it had put out a few flowers in an attempt, I guess, to attract friends.

I went around the fence and dug him up, then transplanted him to a place where he would be watered regularly. Then I built up a berm around one of my trees in the front yard and started the watering process. I'll move the two hoses (back and front) throughout the day.

10:20, back to the novel after I move my writing computer inside. And eat lunch. (grin) So
11:10, back to the novel.

I wrote very little in this last session. I did cycle back a bit and add a bit more to what one character said that was suspicious to the old man but not to the others. I don't write puzzle

mysteries, but I do like adding a little of that when I can. And since psychological suspense is a big part of most of my stories, it isn't that difficult. (grin)

But then I went back outside to attend to the water hoses.

1 p.m., back to the novel.

Just as I thought I was about to get stuck, the novel took an incredible twist. Absolutely amazing. My fingers have been hyper busy trying to stay up with characters for only about 45 minutes of the past 3 and a half hours. (grin) But whatever works.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3398

Nonfiction Words: 1390 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4788

Writing of The Mountain Pass (I have no idea what the title will be)

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
Day 6..... 1513 words. Total words to date..... 7273 words
Day 7..... 2200 words. Total words to date..... 9473 words
Day 8..... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 10498 words
Day 9..... 2460 words. Total words to date..... 12958 words
Day 10... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 16411 words
Day 11... 2292 words. Total words to date..... 18703 words
Day 12... 2172 words. Total words to date..... 20875 words
Day 13... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 22976 words
Day 14... 2762 words. Total words to date..... 25738 words
Day 15... 3238 words. Total words to date..... 28976 words
Day 16... 0643 words. Total words to date..... 29619 words
Day 17... 3469 words. Total words to date..... 33088 words
Day 18... 4122 words. Total words to date..... 37210 words
Day 19... 3398 words. Total words to date..... 40608 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 43970

Total fiction words for the year..... 238934

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15940

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 112430

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 351364

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Keep Coming Back](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 5/25

[May 25, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The Of Interest segment below is about a new bundle mostly, one of invaluable writing books.

Where Are You?

Something Kris Rusch wrote in her blurb for DWS' Stages of a Fiction Writer book caused me to take off on this topic. She wrote

Dean first explored the stages of a fiction writer back in the 1990s, at an informal writing workshop that met at a local restaurant. His exploration of the stages angered half the writers in the room. Those writers booted him out of the workshop because he dared challenge their cozy little writing worlds.

Where are those writers now, you might ask? You got me. Because none of them are professional writers. For all I know, they're still meeting in that same restaurant on Tuesday nights, talking about stories they'll never publish.

So where are you? Are you still talking about stories you'll never publish, or are you writing?

Of Interest

There is an absolutely great bundle of writing books at [StoryBundle](#) right now. I own and have read many of the books in this bundle, but an even better recommendation is that it's curated by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. Lawrence Block's definitive book on writing alone is worth the price of the whole bundle.

Some great comments over at Dean's place on [The Voice](#).

And [Dean's new post](#) is mostly Kris' blog about the bundle. She writes in part, "With these ten books, you're set. Your writing career will move up a notch, and you'll find answers to questions you didn't even know you had." She's right.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4.

At 5:25 I was still working on the topic re writers' groups above. It isn't there. I decided to can the topic for now and move to the novel. If I finish the topic later, good. If not, well, it'll wait. (grin)

3:22 p.m. Forgive me for missing the running tally today. I've been writing off and on all day. Got a ton of other stuff done, mostly landscaping, wrote two more major scenes, did a little cycling (um, in the story), and wrote the resolution.

I'll be back tomorrow with a new project.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4483

Nonfiction Words: 340 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4823

Writing of Nothing for Nothing

Day 1..... 0553 words. Total words to date..... 0553 words
Day 2..... 2034 words. Total words to date..... 2587 words
Day 3..... 0345 words. Total words to date..... 2932 words
Day 4..... 0629 words. Total words to date..... 3561 words
Day 5..... 2198 words. Total words to date..... 5759 words
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Day 15... 3238 words. Total words to date..... 28976 words
Day 16... 0643 words. Total words to date..... 29619 words
Day 17... 3469 words. Total words to date..... 33088 words
Day 18... 4122 words. Total words to date..... 37210 words
Day 19... 3398 words. Total words to date..... 40608 words
Day 20... 4483 words. Total words to date..... 45091 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 48453

Total fiction words for the year..... 243417

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16280

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 112770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 356187

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 5/26

[May 26, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, here we are, back to a re-set of the project word count.

I really need to write at least one short story today and maybe another one before Monday just to keep my hand in and build up a buffer. But we'll see how that goes.

I also have two novels nagging at me. One is a brand-new idea in Wes Crowley's world, and one is a redraft.

By redraft, I mean I wrote the opening before, but it didn't work out. So I tossed it. But I like the idea, so I might sit down and start that one again too. (It's SF.)

Just not sure yet which I want to play with. Or maybe I'll write a short story in one of those two worlds. Of course, I still have a lot of room to write stories and maybe another novel or two in the world in which my last novel, *In the Siberian Fields*, was set too.

It would be easy to take a day "off" today and begin the read-through (aloud) that supplants the need for a proofreader. But I'm in zero rush for that.

What's more important to me is keeping my hand in the game now that I got a good running start toward the end of the novel. I wrote almost half the novel in the last 7 days, with 22,115 words. And that included one day when I wrote only 643 words. (grin)

Why is that important to me? Recently Dean showed on his blog (by example) that it was possible to write a novel in seven days. Now I know I could do it. Yesterday I wrote almost 4500 words without even realizing it until the end of the day. I was just that involved in the story. I was so surprised that I did the math twice.

One Caveat on Word Count

Recently ([Daily Journal, 5/20](#)) I talked about word count and its importance (to me) as a way to judge production and set goals.

I need to add a caveat to that. I also set a daily word count goal. HOWEVER, a word count goal NEVER has anything to do with how long or short a story "should" be.

There is a huge difference between “story” and “writing.” Again, I mentioned the difference and explained it as well as I was able in that 5/20 blog post.

But here’s a little additional example. My personal daily word count goal has been 3000 words of new fiction per day.

Say I write a short story today that comes in at 2987 words. I won’t “expand” that story by 13 words just to meet my daily goal. If I stop writing for the day after that, I’ll just miss the goal by 13 words. Shrug. That’s okay. The goal will reset tomorrow.

On the other hand, if the story comes in at 2987 words and I keep writing on ANOTHER story — say I write a story opening that takes up 500 words — then I will exceed my daily goal by 487 words and there will be two stories entered in the “Writing of” section below.

But never, NEVER, “adjust” the length of a story artificially just to make some silly word count. That’s a traditional publishing ploy, and I won’t ever bow to those false gods again.

I peeked behind the curtain. (grin)

Two More Notes

Today a blog post will go out over on the main site that, I hope, will serve to move those interested in learning about writing over to this blog. If you’d like to help, please tell your writing friends (and curious lookers-on) about this Journal.

I’m intentionally easing into fiction writing today. Not taking a day off, but not hurrying to the writing like I have the last several days.

I really don’t want to set aside the two novel ideas I talked about yesterday (the petulant two year old subconscious), but I do need to write a short story (the adult professional writer).

So the more I think about it, the more I think I’m gonna write a short story in one of those two worlds. It’s a great way to explore a world (I learned that from Kris Rusch) and it adds to my production. So win/win.

Of Interest

Good little post over at [Dean’s place](#) that proves he’s actually human, at least when he takes off his cape. Remember back when I said I didn’t think he’d be back until Friday? (grin)

Pay attention to what he says there regarding meeting “another professional writer.” Sigh. I SO envy that.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. I was fully functional by about 4:45, dealt with my critters at 5. Shortly after that I moved to my outside desk and wrote everything above.

Now it's 6 a.m. and I'm gonna write the opening for a short story. Or maybe something longer. (grin)

All of that means I'm going to open a new Word doc, put my fingers on the keyboard, and write an opening sentence. Then I'll write the next sentence. Lather, rinse, repeat and see where the characters take me. See you in a bit.

Well, that worked out better than I had even hoped. I opened a new Word document, put my fingers on the keyboard and wrote, "Western Z Crowley gripped the sides of the podium so hard his knuckles turned white." Then I wrote the next sentence, then the next sentence, then the next sentence.

By 9 a.m., including two breaks and putting on two loads of laundry, I'd written 2300 words.

Of course, this story will include many people from the world I created in the nine-book Wes Crowley series. So as I wrote the story, when I needed a specific name I couldn't remember, I wrote NAME in all caps.

When the first two scenes were finished, I went to some notes from earlier books, looked up the names I needed, and cycled back to add those in. Sometimes I expanded the scene to include more sensory detail. Sometimes it was fine as-is.

Then at 10 a.m. the electricity went off at least here in St. David and in Benson, the town about 8 miles to the north. (grin) Just stuff that makes life more interesting, right? Now it's 10:30, the electricity is back on, and I'm gonna take an extended break.

Oh, as a side note, this is going to be a short story. But it's also going to be the first chapter or so of the tenth novel in the Wes Crowley series. (grin)

Well, not much of a diary and accounting today either. Suffice it to say, from about 11 until 4 (as I'm posting this) I finished the story among various and sundry chores I had to take care of. Everything got done. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3379

Nonfiction Words: 1140 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4519

Writing of "Saying Goodbye"

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words (done)

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words (But only counting the words one time, of course.)

Total fiction words for the month..... 51832

Total fiction words for the year..... 246796

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17420

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 113910

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 360706

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 5/27

[May 27, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Before I forget, tomorrow, Saturday, more than likely will be a day off for me from writing. I get to drive to Phoenix to pick up my son, who's flying into Sky Harbor from Indiana. And yes, I assume his arms will be tired.

Of Interest

Two extremely important things, both at Dean's place. First, [Restarting Your Writing](#). This is one to copy, save in Word (or whatever) and save to your DWS Lectures file. As is usual with Dean's posts, even if the specific topic of this one doesn't appeal to you, READ IT. You'll learn something valuable that you didn't know.

And [the best bundle of writing books](#) I've ever seen. I'm not kidding. I own most of these already, and I bought the bundle today anyway. That's how good it is. Check it out.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4, coffee and Facebook to wake up.

I worked on a cover for the short story I finished yesterday, then realized I was wasting valuable writing time.

At about 6 I moved outside and started a new chapter. I got exactly one sentence in when another sentence — the opening sentence of yet another chapter — popped into my head. So I hit Enter a few times and started that new chapter. There's enough on the earlier one that I can go back and finish it anytime.

The second one I started will also begin a whole several-chapter segment of the novel. No, I'm not planning anything. I just know that world and that character well enough to know generally what's coming. (grin)

Anyway, around 7:30 I realized I had to mow the yard today. In Arizona, there's no time like morning for such chores, so I changed clothes and went to the local gas station (about 5 miles) for some gas. Got back, got the mower running, and mowed the yard. Then at 9 I moved back out here to write this stuff.

9:30, back to the novel. Wrote 'til about 10:15, then mowed the back yard. Then inside to cool down, eat lunch, check Facebook.

From around 11 until 3:30 I wrote off and on. I got most of one long chapter finished (and I think it'll also be another stand-alone short story) and about a fourth of another one. This is not usual for me, writing in bits and pieces, back and forth. But it's fun.

I'm gonna stop now because I'm pooped and I still have some things to do to get ready for tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2422

Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2842

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 54254

Total fiction words for the year..... 249218

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 114330

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 363548

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 5/28

[May 28, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'll head for Phoenix at around 7:45. (Update: I thought it was about a 3 hour trip, but turns out it's almost an hour less than that to the airport.)

At the moment it's 4:50 and I've been outside with a cigar for about 20 minutes. (grin) The sun is stretching and yawning behind me, attempting to drag itself up for the sixth Monday of the week.

I don't envy the sun (or moon) its job, but I do envy it all that it gets to see. Well, most of it.

I expected to be back from Phoenix by around 4, but I got back around 2:30. This was officially a nonwriting day, and that's mostly how it turned out. I'll report my writing again starting tomorrow.

For now I want to get this posted so at least you get SOMETHing. (grin)

Failing to Success (a tiny topic)

Awhile back I mentioned "failing to success." I think it was during my discussion of word counts, goals, etc. a few days ago.

In case there's any confusion regarding that phrase, here's what I was talking about:

As of yesterday (as you read this), the 27th day of the month, out of a monthly goal of 93,000 words I had written "only" 54,254 new words of fiction. So that's a shortfall of almost 39,000 words. A whole short novel.

So I failed in reaching my goal. Now I could hang my head, beat myself up, etc. And that's what I would have done a few years ago.

But once I decided (yes, it was simply a decision) to make writing FUN instead of some great toil, everything changed.

And the fact remains, I still wrote 54,254 new words of fiction. That included one novel, and one short story and a renewed sense of urgency to do better next month.

So did I fail? Yes. Absolutely. But I failed to success.

To me, that's a total win.

Also, it helps that my daily goal (3,000 words per day) resets every morning, my weekly goal (at least 1 new short story) resets every Monday, and my monthly goal (one novel and 93,000 words of new fiction overall) resets every month. (grin)

Of Interest

At [Dean's site](#) this morning he talks (proudly) about his beautiful wife, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, and the two major awards she won recently. Check it out.

The Day

No report on this today. Officially a day off from writing.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 54254

Total fiction words for the year..... 249218

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18150

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 114740

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 363958

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 5/29](#)

[May 29, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Some mechanics for you this morning, and a tip....

Using the Em Dash (—) to Indicate an Interruption in Dialogue

The em dash (long dash) is essential to fiction. It's an invaluable tool for heightening suspense in fiction when used in dialogue to indicate an interruption.

Unfortunately, Microsoft Word doesn't recognize it as a piece of punctuation.

The upshot is that when you write the partial sentence, then add the em dash, then hit the closing quotation mark, the quotation mark is facing the wrong way.

For awhile I thought I could fix that by using "straight quotes" (not curly) throughout. Then I'd go back and use the Find and Replace feature to replace all the straight quotes with smart quotes.

That doesn't work. Any smart (curly) quotation mark that appears directly after an em dash will still be facing the wrong way. It will look like it should at the beginning of a line of dialogue.

The only way I've found to fix this problem is to add the closing quotation mark after the last word, then use the left arrow to back up one space and add the em dash. The good news is that once you've done this a few times, it becomes a routine part of your typing.

To add the em dash in this fashion, do this. The first time you need an em dash in Word,

1. Put your cursor where you want the em dash.
2. In the Word menu, go to Insert > Symbol.

(If you've put the Symbol icon on your Quick Access Toolbar, just click little down arrow next to the icon. It's the Greek character Omega.)

3. At the bottom of the pop-up menu, click More Symbols.
4. A huge pop-up menu will open. It will have roughly a billion squares. There will be a different character in each square.
5. Click the Special Characters tab at the top of that menu.
6. Find "Em Dash." BUT DON'T CLICK IT YET. Instead,
7. NOTE THE SHORTCUT KEY TO THE RIGHT.
8. If you LIKE the shortcut key, if it's easy for you to use and remember, remember it and use it each time to insert an em dash.

Note: If you don't like the shortcut key, you can change it. For example, I changed mine to Alt+Ctrl+- (hyphen).

Once you've set this up, each time you are writing a line of dialogue and you want to allow one character to interrupt the other, at the end of the first character's line of dialogue, hit the closing quotation mark first. Then back up (using the left arrow key, NOT the backspace) and hit the shortcut key.

Note: Most (if not all) versions of Microsoft Word already are set to automatically insert an em dash when you hit the hyphen key twice. But that doesn't work at the end of a sentence of dialogue. The quotation mark will still come out backward.

There. All done.

I know this seems labor intensive. It is, but only the first few times you do it. You'll get used to it very quickly. After that, adding it won't take a thought. You'll hit the correct keys automatically.

If you have any questions or comments, please add them in the Comments section below.

Of Interest

Nada por nada.

The Day

Rolled out just before 4. Checked email, skimmed Facebook, and read Dean's site (little there) to wake up, then outside with my writing 'puter.

5 a.m. to the novel. I wrote for about ten minutes. Then the topic above occurred to me so I came here to write everything above this.

6:15 back to the novel. Put around a thousand words on the story, and I have to go into town. Back in a bit.

Arrgh. Let the day get away from me. Did a lot of stuff, some visiting, some writing, a few chores. Then I looked up and it was almost 4:30, so I'm posting this.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2572

Nonfiction Words: 670 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3242

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 56826

Total fiction words for the year..... 251790

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18920

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 115410

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 367200

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 5/30

May 30, 2016 by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I hope this will be a writing day. By that I mean I hope I get at least some writing done.

Yesterday it became apparent that this book will have characters interwoven from at least the last three novels in the series thus far, as well as towns, etc.

So today (at least part of the day) I'll spend on "research." And by "research" I mean I'll be culling books 7, 8, and 9 for names and locations of towns, names of characters (and descendants), etc. and putting all those in a Notepad document titled Book 10 notes.

This will not be any sort of an outline, but a reference document so I don't have to try to remember the whole story as I'm writing. (grin)

Of course I'll add to it as I go along with this novel too. At that point it will become a kind of "reverse outline." As I finish a chapter or major scene, I'll add which characters were in the scene, where the scene took place, and a one or two-sentence synopsis of what happened.

Then later, if I need to "remember" something from an earlier scene, I'll just check back instead of having to Search through the whole novel to find it.

And yes, I learned a version of this from DWS. Try it. You'll find it invaluable.

Of Interest

Nada again today.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4 this morning. Woke up quickly with a few emails. Put on coffee, but the babies were restless so I let them all out early (around 4:30), and my little girl disappeared.

So I spent the next hour alternating between sitting at the writing 'puter outside, puffing on a cigar, sipping coffee and needing to find her. Turns out she takes precedence.

Found her around 5:35 while a second mug was brewing. Checked Dean's site. Wrote a little bit, then had to stop and start searching for stuff.

Then I remembered I should create a reference document (see above). This will be a major distraction today, but it will save me many major distractions as I move through the rest of the book.

9:30, well, the reference document didn't take as long as it might have. So I'll be back to writing the novel soon. Should be a good writing day. (grin)

10 a.m. back to the novel. Off and on, inside and outside, writing and doing other stuff. Now it's almost 4:30 so I'm gonna post this for the day. Not a great day, but good enough.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3242

Nonfiction Words: 430 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3672

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 60498

Total fiction words for the year..... 255462

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19350

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 115840

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 371302

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 5/31](#)

[May 31, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Last day of the month. Time for reflection and goal setting. Even with a full day of writing ahead of me in this month, I'm also eagerly looking forward to tomorrow. (grin)

I was thinking about serializing the novel I'm currently writing and posting that every Monday on my site in place of the short story.

However, that would defeat the purpose of my weekly goal to write a new short story every week. I know me. I'd get lazy and start calling fragments stories.

So the clock reset yesterday on my weekly goal. I'll have at least one new short story ready to go before next Monday. I hope I'll have another one in the bank too. (grin)

Those stories will not be part of the Wes Crowley world, unless they're completely separate of the current novel. There are many characters and situations in the previous nine that I've always wanted to explore. Short stories are a great way to do that.

I'm not where I'd like to be for word count (month or year), but the daily goal and the monthly total reset tomorrow.

Frankly, I'm okay with my numbers for the year thus far, given the horrible start I got on the year. And it feels like I'm firing on all cylinders now, so things should only get better from here.

I'm especially happy as I peer through the clearing smoke from the devastation that was February through April. Even after all that, I'm close to catching up with my goal of finishing at least one novel every month for a year.

Of course, I can't go back and finish a novel in months I missed, but I can still hit twelve or more for the year.

To pull even, I need to finish two novels by the end of June (or three by the end of July or four by the end of August). We'll see what happens.

I hope some of you found yesterday's topic on the em dash and manipulating Word's controls of value. Of course, to get that and a lot more information on Word, check out my series, [Microsoft Word for Writers](#). Everything there is based on Word 2010, but most of it applies to other versions. You just have to tweak it a bit.

Of Interest

Nothing on Dean's site.

If you didn't check Kris' site for [Free Fiction Monday](#) yesterday, check it out. Always worthwhile.

Of course, my own latest short story came out yesterday as well. You can check the site for that one.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:20 this morning. Finally getting back to a realistic schedule (for me).

By 4 a.m. I was writing on the novel, albeit still inside. Between managing critters and making coffee and other bits of my early morning routine, I put about 100 new words on the page (a bit of cycling), then moved outside at around 5. I checked Dean's site, remembered Kris's, then came here to write everything above.

5:30, back to the novel. (I'm determined to try to keep up better with the Journal today as well.)

By 10 a.m. I'd added around 1500 new words to the novel. Then a break to set up electricity, etc. as my friend is moving our travel trailer (we bought it from him) over to our house. Back when I can.

Got back to the writing by 2 p.m., which is my usual time so that worked out well. Also got the trailer set up, ran some electricity and water, etc.

Wrote until around 3:45, then came here to finish the journal entry for the day. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3369

Nonfiction Words: 610 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3979

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 63867

Total fiction words for the year..... 258831

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19960

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 116450

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 375281

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 6/1](#)

[June 1, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Brand new month. Man, May went by like a flash. Time flies, eh?

I'm gonna take another page from DWS' way of doing things this morning. I'm going to try to plan.

I know I have two, maybe three nonwriting days coming up on 3-5 June and another two days on 18 and 19 June. So that's four or maybe five days this month when I won't be able to write. For a buffer, I'll say five days.

So that leaves me 25 possible writing days. If I hit my daily goal of 3,000 words per day for those 25 days that will be 75,000 words. That's enough to finish the novel I'm working on now and write a second one, maybe. Depending on how long they are. So we'll see.

And if I don't finish a second novel in June, I'll be close enough that I'll finish it in early July and be able to write a second one and maybe start a third one then.

Setting Goals

It should be easy for me to hit 3000 words per day of new fiction on writing days. But if I could go over that enough to make up for nonwriting days, so much the better.

Daily Goal.... 3,600 new words of fiction per day (the equivalent of 3000/day for 30 days)

Weekly Goal... at least one new short story per week

Monthly Goal.. Finish the current novel and one more (in addition to at least four short stories)

Okay, so beginning today I need 3600 new words of fiction every day. From that must come one new short story every week (due on Monday).

So with my short week this week, I have to get at least one short story written today or tomorrow. Or Sunday, but I don't wanna push it that far.

It's also nice (for me) that the novel is in a great place right now, so I can veer away from it for a day and come right back.

By the way, nobody's jumped in to join me in writing a short story per week. If you're interested, you may do so at any time. But whatever you do, challenge yourself.

Of Interest

Again, a very timely post over at Dean's place on Ground Effect in Writing <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/topic-of-the-night-ground-effect-in-writing/>. This guy is spot on so often it's almost scary. Great advice here. You don't have to do it his way (or my way) but his advice to seek clarity in your planning is excellent.

The Day

Rolled out late at 4 and found my little girl trapped in my office. Apparently she went in to eat and the wind blew the door shut.

Coffee, email and Dean's post to wake up. By 4:40 I had read his full post and written everything above this.

And after I wrote the paragraph above, several early morning things conspired to take almost a half-hour before I could finally move myself and the writing 'puter (Hal) outside.

5:20, to the writing.

Got around 1100 words on paper on a new story.

8:45 Headed to Sierra Vista (about 45 minutes from here) to take care of some things. Got back around 1, checked the PO, then back to the house. Then email and Facebook stuff (just skimming the surface).

2 p.m., back to the writing.

4:06 p.m., finished "Blue Bell and the Roses." Nothing on Book 10 of the Crowley novel today. I'll post this journal, then put up a cover and post the short story for Monday.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3387

Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3967

Writing of "Blue Bell and the Roses"

Day 1..... 3387 words. Total words to date..... 3387 words (done)

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 3387
Total fiction words for the year..... 261788

Total nonfiction words for the month... 580
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 117030

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 378818

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 6/2

[June 2, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Conscious Mind (Again)

Okay, when I started this book, I wrote a strong opening scene (and short story) set in Mexico.

Then I flashed back and wrote several scenes about the bad guys up in Texas. How and why they gathered, and what happened as they began moving south to do what they're going to do.

But the story isn't all about the bad guys. While they're moving south, life goes on in Mexico.

So two days ago, the last time I touched the novel, I realized it would be a good idea to switch POVs (and locations) back and forth. To let the reader experience what's going on both on the trail south and in Mexico among the unsuspecting folks there.

Great idea. I've used this technique before (as have many others) very effectively.

Bad implementation.

Two days ago, the last time I touched the novel, I started a scene that I thought (notice "I Thought") would add intrigue and depth. And it would have.

But it was a horrible idea for that time period (or even today) in Mexico.

Wes kissed his wife and family goodbye to head out to help train some Guerrero Rangers, an organization he helped start several years earlier.

Both his children, now grown, were home for a week from college. Both are still unmarried.

Pretty much the instant the door closed behind Wes, his daughter took her brother and mother aside and made a joyous announcement: she's pregnant.

Two days ago, I completely missed the problem. I had no idea my conscious mind was screwing with me.

This morning as I turned to the novel, per my habit I read over what I'd written last (cycling) to get my head back into the book.

And there it was.

1. Especially in that era (early 1900s) no way does a young Mexican woman in college get pregnant when there's been no discussion even of a young man in her life.
2. No way does she take her mother and especially her brother aside and tell them. And no way is it joyous news.
3. Her father was Right There a moment ago, so if it's joyous news, why not include him too?
4. No way does her mother (and brother) jump for joy and congratulate her, etc. The list goes on.

How do I know this was all conscious-mind stuff?

Because in the first place "I Thought" this would be a good addition to the novel. In the second, look at all the questions that popped up immediately as I cycled back through it.

Only the conscious mind creates situations that don't fit. They don't fit because you're trying to force them. It's the square peg/triangular hole thing.

Only the conscious mind alerts you to the untenable situation it caused you to create in the first place.

It's a way of feeding your fears. And by doing so, it slows and then stops your writing. It's "saving" you from writing, putting your work out there, and being embarrassed or hurt when someone doesn't like what you wrote.

At this point, for many, the fears (and the excuses) come flooding in. You've heard them and maybe felt them before:

- This story just isn't suppose to be written (or written yet).
- If I can't figure this out, I'm not much of a writer (or a writer at all.)
- I can't just cut this scene. I'll be wasting words.
- and so on

For me? I've been here before. Once I recognized what was going on, I trundled my conscious mind over into a corner. I already cut the scene (moved it to the "cuts" section at the end of the document).

(I wrote the words, so they count for new fiction, and I might use them later. When you write into the dark, everything you put on the page is valuable, even if only to get you to a different place. Fortunately, there were only around 700 words in that beginning of a scene.)

Shortly I'll go back to writing. And you already know how I'll do that.

I'll put my fingers on the keyboard and write the first thing that pops into my head. Then I'll write the next sentence. Then I'll write the next sentence.

Of Interest

GREAT blog over at Kris' place about [Sneaky Money Grabs in Contracts](#). I'm not kidding. You really need to go read this.

Two new links on my website (from Laura Resnick via Kris) include a list of Literary Lawyers and FAQs about Literary Lawyers. For that (and for now) visit my big website at HarveyStanbrough.com and check the left sidebar under Writers' Resources.

[Dean's place](#). Not a lot there today, but I recommend reading it. You might find a pearl of wisdom that I didn't need or recognize. We're all different.

The Day

Rolled out way late at almost 4:30. Ugh. I hate getting a late start. A lot going on this morning.

I checked, read and answered email, then updated the [Short Story page on my main website](#) with the new one I wrote yesterday. Then I hurried over to Dean's blog. Not a lot there, but he is why I remembered to check Kris' blog today.

5 a.m., I let out the pets and scrambled to hurry outside with my writing computer. I read Kris' blog, then added two new links re Literary Lawyers to my website. Then I started a new topic on Taking Your Time. (UPDATE: That topic doesn't appear above because I wrote a different one.)

Around 6 (finally) I moved over to the novel. I read a scene I started two days ago and realized why it was dragging. It shouldn't be there. It doesn't fit. So I cut it and moved it to the bottom of the document into a "cuts" section. (See the topic above.)

I realized, too, that scene happened as a result of my conscious mind sneaking in. The situation was something I felt I "needed" to add. And true to conscious mind stuff, it slowed me down and stalled me. It won't end up in the book (at least in its current form), so I used it as an example and wrote the topic above.

7:15, After I wrote the topic, I moved back here to finish this entry, update the stuff above, etc.

I was going to take another day off from the novel and write a second short story. But that feels too much like I'm bowing to the effects of that conscious-mind scene. Plus I'll already be away (planned days off) tomorrow through Sunday.

Now for a necessary break. Back in a bit.

While I was away, I dragged myself into the 21st century by setting up email on my new smart phone. Then to see whether I could do it, I sent an email. I hear you all laughing. Stop it. (grin)

10 a.m., to the novel, cycling.

Up and down, back and forth, finally had to turn off notifications on the new phone because it was dinging like every five seconds.

Got part of the yard watered, wrote, moved the sprinkler, wrote, tended to my baby girl (cat), wrote, set out some sun tea and brought it in later, wrote, etc. That's most of the day thus far.

This is one of those days when a lot of "little" life things got in the way. More than once I almost shoved away from the desk and declared it a nonwriting day. But if I'm good at anything, it's coming back. (grin)

It's almost 2:45 as I write this. I've put a total of around 1200 words on the page all day. Still, hoping for a good push between now and about 5. And I could go a little longer, maybe, if there are no distractions. This doesn't post until 6 my time. (grin)

Well, I fell a bit short. Darn the luck. (grin) That's all right. I'll be back and firing on it come Monday morning.

See you then. (Tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday will be placeholder posts.) Be sure to check Dean's site on those days.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2746

Nonfiction Words: 1330 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4076

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6133

Total fiction words for the year..... 264534

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1910

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 118360

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 382894

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal 6/3 and 6/4 were only barebones placeholders.

The Journal, Sunday, 6/5

June 5, 2016 by [Harvey](#)

Hi Folks,

Thanks once again for your patience. I got back from the Lower Gila Box Wilderness area earlier today. On the way back we had a double blowout on the freeway. Fortunately, in this case that means ONE tire blew in two places at once.

I've very seldom had more fun than replacing a flat tire along the side of a 75 mph freeway in 105 degree heat. (The asphalt was hotter.)

Anyway, it was just some of that stuff that makes life more interesting.

Then I got home and found a bunch more of that stuff. And I'm tired. So I'm doing that stuff today, resting tonight (I hope), and starting fresh tomorrow.

I wrote absolutely nothing over the weekend, although at the last minute I did take my writing 'puter with me.

I did, however, read several great short stories. Some were by well-known authors (Hemingway, Vonnegut, et al) and some were by relative unknowns. So a lot of fun. At least until that tire blew out.

So I'm back. Thanks for hanging in there, and I'll see you tomorrow early evening.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: XXXX (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6133
Total fiction words for the year..... 264534

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 118360

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 382894

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, 6/6

[June 6, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm back. Got back from the trip around noon or so yesterday. It was beautiful down there, but it was also scorching hot during most of the day.

On the other hand, the nights were cool, but not cold. Made for great satellite watching and late-night talk, which we refer to as The Slathering of Philosophy.

I did no writing. On Friday, I wore myself out early (in the heat) with a trek down to and across the river. It was only knee deep at the deepest, with a good flow.

The next morning (so Saturday) we made two necessary trips into Lordsburg. The first was for our ritual breakfast. That was the best juevos rancheros in New Mexico at a tiny dive called El Charro, not to be confused with the foo-foo large chain restaurant by the same name.

El Charro Lordsburg has all the markings of the typical small-town best-place-to-eat, including regulars. Many were family members of the owners of the place.

At least one was a city father, to the extent "city" applies. Just glancing occasionally in his direction and eavesdropping on his palaver was enough to tell us that many, many far-reaching decisions regarding the administration of Lordsburg are made in El Charro.

I used to tell writers if they want to learn to write dialogue they need only sit in an obscure corner in Denny's in the wee hours of the morning and eavesdrop. There they will overhear the conversations of cops, bums, politicians, laborers, homeless, bar hoppers, et al. The trick is to write down (surreptitiously, of course) what they hear.

This El Charro makes an excellent, if somewhat stunted, substitute learning environment. I love it there.

That was the atmosphere and the environment when the three strangers came in. Except it was later in the morning (around 9 a.m.) and lacking the broad mix of stereotypes.

Today (unless Wes et al tug hard on my sleeve) I'll avoid the novel and write this week's short story. And you've just read the seed of it. (grin)

Of Interest

In order...

Dean's place, June 3, [his take on the Author Earnings Report](#), and a link to [the actual Author Earnings Report](#).

Dean's place, June 4, a bit more on Author Earnings.

Dean's place, June 5, he urges you to visit Lawrence Block's blog and his witty post [A Word or Two for Writers](#). So do I. While I was there, I subscribed. I also recommend that.

Dean's place, June 6, his take on [Either/Or Thinking](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 4:20 at the insistent urging of my little cat, who did her best through the night to show me how glad she was that Dad was home.

Very slow start this morning. Coffee, email and a cigar to begin. Looking forward (only in the linear sense) to a trip to Sierra Vista (around 11:30) to have my pacemaker checked and visit with my ticker mechanic. He looks exactly like a character from Doonesbury.

6 a.m., moved back inside (after cigar, coffee, watching cats, etc.) to write everything above and begin the day in earnest. The plan at this point is to meet my daily goal and finish a short story for this week before I have to leave for SV.

7 a.m., breakfast.

7:40, to the writing 'puter. Around 1000 words later, I took a cigar break. Writing inside today to stay out of the sun for awhile.

9 a.m. back to the story. Another thousand words, another break. Maybe a longer one this time since I have to get ready for the SV trip. As long as I'm back to the writing by around 2, I should finish the story handily today.

3:20, Just got back from SV. Yeah. Just now.

My heart guy had an emergency back in Tucson, so he left. His PA saw the remaining patients. So instead of hovering for an hour waiting to have my doc walk in and say, "Are you feeling all right?" I waited for closer to two hours to have the PA walk in and say, "Are you feeling all right?"

And he did. Finally.

And I said, "Yes, I'm fine. Y'know, you guys shouldn't stress me like this. I have a heart condition."

We all had a good laugh and I left, with a promise flung over one shoulder to make another appointment for January.

Yeah, like I'm gonna keep that promise.

Hey, next time, if the pacemaker tech doesn't blanch and run out of the room repeatedly yelling, "Stat!" and other stuff, I'm not gonna hang around and wait for a doc to tell me he'll see me in six months.

Anyway, now I'm turning back to the story to see how much damage I can do in the next hour or two. I figure I can write until 5:30-ish and still post this in time.

One way or the other, see you tomorrow.

Okay, didn't quite finish but I'll finish it in the morning.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3084

Nonfiction Words: 840 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3924

Writing of "Incident at El Charro"

Day 1..... 3084 words. Total words to date..... 3084 words

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words

Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9217
Total fiction words for the year..... 267618

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 119200

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 386818

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 6/7

[June 7, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today will be a busy and very interesting day. First I'll finish the short story I started yesterday, and I'll work on the novel again today as well. But today also is the first day of the Teams in Fiction online workshop. Looking very forward to that.

I've taken several of Dean's online workshops. Historically, the first session is hyper-easy. I hope that won't be the case this time, but we'll see.

For a while, I was thinking I knew how to write teams in fiction. In fact, I thought (for awhile), my nine-volume tome documenting Wes Crowley's life contained teams.

But the more I think about it, the more I realize that most of the time, the "team" was only two people: usually the main character and a partner.

So that makes me even more excited about this workshop. I love learning new stuff, and especially when it will advance my craft.

Because I suspect some of you might be interested in possibly taking this workshop in the future, I'll post an entry in this blog each week about it. I won't pass along specifics (copyright violation) but I will give you my overall impression. That will be once a week, around mid-week.

Of Interest

Dean's post on [Normal Days](#). You'll have to scroll down a bit. Interesting.

Oh, and [Kris posted a new short story](#) of the week yesterday.

Also I posted a [new short story](#) of the week yesterday. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 4. Coffee and email, and by 4:15 I was tying myself in knots writing yet another post/article concerning people/companies who scam writers out of thousands of dollars per year. I'll post it here in a few days.

6 a.m. I haven't finished fiddling with the article on scammers, but I can do that later. First I'm gonna cycle through and finish that story from yesterday. (grin)

7:45, I finished the short story with around 500 more words, then read it aloud to my wife and my oldest son, who's currently visiting. Then I took care of some minor bookkeeping (word-count stuff), then showed my son a couple of videos from the camping trip this past weekend. Now for a short break, and then to the novel. Woohoo! (grin)

8:20, fixed and ate breakfast, answered some email, checked Facebook and now back to the novel after four days away. Should be fun.

During that session, I wrote only about 300 words. Then my buddy Dan sent me the perfect picture for the cover of "Incident at El Charro." That got me all excited, so I created the cover and formatted the thing, then posted it to the website for release next Monday.

The beginning of it will sound a lot like last night's Journal post, but don't skip it. It's different. (grin) Then I wrote a promo doc and published the thing to Smashwords, D2D and Amazon.

11:15, I was about to go back to the novel (at last) when I received a flurry of emails. So I responded. Sigh.

11:55, back to the novel.

I polished off another 2200 words and my wife put in Second Hand Lions, one of my favorite films. So done for the day. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3105

Nonfiction Words: 540 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3645

Writing of "The Incident at El Charro Café"

Day 1..... 3084 words. Total words to date..... 3084 words

Day 2..... 0554 words. Total words to date..... 3638 words (done)

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 12322
Total fiction words for the year..... 270723

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3290
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 119740

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 390463

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 6/8

[June 8, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Workshop Report

(Because this is important, I even posted it to my Pro Writers blog over on the main site so it will go out earlier.)

Okay, I finally watched and listened to the Week 1 videos from the Teams in Fiction workshop at about 6:30 last night. I expected them to be bland and boring in the first week. Nature of the beast.

In the first week, because a lot of beginning writers take these too, DWS often talks down or very carefully explains things I already know. That's fine. I understand, and for that reason, my expectations generally are low for the first week of videos.

The fun thing is, I took a TON of notes on Video 2 of Week 1. Much of it was realization rather than learning, and that's fine.

By "realization" I mean I realized (with a sense of relief) some things that I was already doing and learned why I was doing them. So that was good. I also learned a few things I had never thought about. So total win on Week 1.

These workshops really are invaluable if you want to improve your craft.

Note: As a necessary disclaimer in this piranha-infested world, I get nothing from referring writers to the workshops. I pass along this stuff only because Dean's workshops really are islands of real value in an ocean of misinformation and scams.

I taken many of his workshops, classic workshops and lectures. If you have questions about any of them, please [feel free to ask me](#). I'll answer honestly.

Of Interest

Dean's topic today is [Follow the Yellow Brick Road](#), a metaphor for indie publishing. Check it out.

Also of interest, he noted today that his Ideas to Story workshop has NOBODY in it (at the link above, scroll down just a bit to Online Workshops Starting). If you want one-on-one attention, this is the workshop to take. It's also a GREAT workshop. I'm a seasoned writer, yet I took it awhile back. And it contained SO much more than I expected. Highly recommended. Very highly recommended.

If you want to take this workshop, email dean@deanwesleysmith.com and ask. Today (now almost passed) is supposed to be the last day. Feel free to tell him I sent you. Not that I have any influence, but it might help convince him to let you sign up a little late.

Finally, [some great comments](#) on his Either/Or Thinking topic from a couple days ago.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 and was outside with my writing 'puter by 4:30. In the cool of the morning, I visited ebay for a little while, looking at computers. Then I shot over to Dean's site where I found the information above.

5:30, I moved over to HarveyStanbrough.com and copy/pasted much of this to get the word out earlier about DWS' workshops.

5:55, finally to the novel.

9:30, cycled back and got about 700 new words of fiction, then realized the ants we've lived with here for almost six years have suddenly become very aggressive.

I personally believe only human beings actually deserve to be hunted down and killed (check their behavior), so I try to respect all (other) living things. But this was too much. So off to Tractor Supply for granules. Watered the ant hills (six of them), spread the granules, watered them in and now am back inside. It's only 84 out there, but humid (for here) so it feels more like 94.

9:35, back to the novel.

Well, I dropped the ball on the diary of my day. (grin) Anyway, I wrote off and on all day, but generally in five- and ten-minute spurts with one good session of about a half-hour. Otherwise it was one of those Life Happens days with a little (distant) family drama thrown into the mix.

Right now it's 4:40. I could maybe go another hour, but I'm tired and I don't want to push it. Tomorrow's another day and I'm already anxious to get to it.

By the way, soon I might try an experiment. I'm considering shifting my 24-hour day a bit and writing later into the evening. If I do that, I'll post this blog the following morning (or later in the evening, which to you will be the same thing).

We'll see. Just a little advance warning. Any comments or ideas, let me know.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2161

Nonfiction Words: 720 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2881

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words

Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words

Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 14483

Total fiction words for the year..... 272884

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4010

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 120460

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 393344

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 6/9](#)

[June 9, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I put a video on my Facebook page this morning. If you'd like to see where I go camping with my buddy (and why), you might want to [check it out](#). I'm no videographer, but I had a great canvas to work with.

By the way, what you'll hear on the video isn't my normal voice. It was really scratchy from being so dry and from the dust. And maybe from 10,000 year old ghosts trying to get me to go away.-

I apologize in advance for this next bit in case it offends anyone. But this blog is a venue in which I share actions, emotions and events that pertain to (or affect my) writing. I prefer to do so openly. Sometimes, maybe, it's also a chance to purge. So feel free to skip this part if you want to.

A Sadness

Yesterday, poison granules in hand, I made the rounds of six ant beds scattered over roughly a quarter-acre. It was a circuit I deemed necessary because after almost six years of us living in this house, the ants had propagated and were becoming a nuisance.

So I reacted in the way many humans react when faced with a nuisance. I killed them.

Like a vengeful god, I killed those who were aggressive, those who were not, and their families. I killed the queen, her attendants and her future children, still beneath the ground in eggs.

I like to think if there's anything redeeming about me, it's my compassion for all living creatures. Okay, living creatures other than human beings, many of whom I would turn off in the blink of an eye without a second thought if it wouldn't result in me going to prison.

But I was wrong. Killing creatures whose only crime is going about their lives and defending themselves against what they see as an intrusion, a threat, is wrong. Period. Even when it's "necessary."

The fact that it's wrong doesn't mean I won't do it again. And it doesn't mean I won't feel justified for protecting my own family (including my pets) from the ants' aggression.

It just means there should be consequences. When anyone takes a life, much less thousands of lives, that person should suffer consequences.

So I did. This morning, after my initial writing session, when the sky was light enough for me to inspect my handiwork, I made the circuit again.

It was necessary to study the results. It was necessary to witness and understand what I had done.

I won't burden you with an explicit visual. Suffice it to say that when ants die, they end in the fetal position. There were hundreds above ground at each mound. I suspect there were thousands below.

Unfortunately, I know people who would point and guffaw at a sight like that. They're of the same ilk as those who would kill a prairie dog with a .357 magnum for practice or shove a firecracker up the back end of a horned toad just to watch it explode as it runs in an attempt to escape. I try very hard not to hope something similar will happen to them and their family.

I have never liked the notion of "manifest destiny," although I have sometimes exercised it. But I disagree with it. Even, or maybe especially, as it regards what human beings haughtily refer to as "lesser" creatures. I'm sure many American Indians would agree with me.

Overnight, without me having the burden of watching and listening (Do ants cry and scream in anguish while being poisoned? I know they writhe with pain.) my "nuisance" vanished. It faded into piles of minuscule individual bodies, all curled into the fetal position.

I both hope and hope not that all of my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are blessed/cursed with this same overdose of compassion for creatures who are unfortunate enough to share this planet with clods like me. I would much prefer that they would suffer for awhile over the death of a single creature rather than simply not notice.

As for me, this morning I'll return to my novel. I'll continue making up more silly fictions. I'll go about my life, eating, drinking tea, and maybe taking an occasional photo of the beautiful things I see around me every day. I'm that much of a hypocrite.

But I'll do a bit of penance too. I began that penance with the circuit to witness what I had done. This brief essay is another small bit. I'll also watch the mounds for the next few days, until there are no more ants staggering around, wondering what happened.

And in a few days, around noon, in the hottest part of the day, I'll carry dirt, a shovelful at a time, to cover each ant hill. Then I'll rake it in, mixing the soil and erasing a bit of the evidence of my guilt. It will be at least a two-hour task. I'll see to it.

Then it will be finished.

And who knows? Maybe I'll sweat out some of the poison that enables me to feel justified in playing the vengeful god.

And the ants? I only hope somehow there really is a vast single consciousness from which all living creatures are born and to which they return.

If there is, I hope somehow they know how very sorry I am.

Of Interest

[Some good comments](#) (I'm not talking about mine) on the Follow the Yellow Brick Road topic from yesterday.

Dean's post today is about [Kris' New Blog Post](#). Be sure to read Dean's topic ([Non-Compete Clauses](#)) too. Just scroll down a bit.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:15 after a long movie night. Coffee, email and Facebook to wake up, then over here to the writing 'puter.

I wrote a little bit (maybe fifty words, cycling) then moved outside with first light. A little later, maybe 4:30, I took a tour of my yard, then wrote another few hundred words on the novel.

At around 5:15, I moved inside to start uploading a video to my Facebook page, then moved back to write the essay above. That took awhile.

7:20, finally, back to the novel.

Still cycling, I wrote another piddly few hundred words, then busied myself (around 8:30) with rearranging a storage building out on the back of the property.

After that, I went to Facebook to finish posting the video. Who knew there'd be so much admin stuff to posting a stupid video on Facebook? Anyway, that's all done.

This has been another one of those "keep coming back" days. Today, though, I got a few half-hour writing periods in addition to all the little ones.

Around 10 a.m. I moved myself and my computer out to the big shed I rearranged earlier today. I got a good session before I realize my battery was running low.

Then I strung a heavy duty extension cord before I realize it wasn't long enough for the job. The addition of two 25-foot cords still didn't quite reach. Oh well.

Moved back into the house for another session, then did some other stuff. Moved back outside around 3:30 to finish up for the day.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3121

Nonfiction Words: 1200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4321

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words
Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 17604
Total fiction words for the year..... 276005

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5210
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 121660

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 397665

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 6/10

[June 10, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Nothing much from me today for this section. Aren't you glad? (grin)

Of Interest

Nothing today that I could find.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and moved outside by 4:30. Five minutes in, it started raining, so back inside.

I worked to put together a proposal to build a new website for another author. That ate up a couple of hours. It's difficult to concentrate on non-fiction business stuff when there's a novel humming along in the back of my mind. (grin)

Finally got to the novel by about 7. A lot of little tasks later, interspersed with brief stints at the computer, somehow I was able to add a thousand new words by 8:30.

A break of about 20 minutes to walk the yard and then check Dean's site (nada) and I'm back to the novel at 8:50.

Well, around 9 a.m. my son showed me a picture of a 1987 Toyota 4WD Four Runner. Long story short, we spent all day talking with a man who could talk the copper off a penny (in the old days) and I finally bought it. Woohoo! That sort of thing happens when two sons come to visit at the same time. (grin)

Got back to the computer (and the novel) around 3:30, hammered out a few more words, and I'm satisfied with the lower word count, considering.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1235

Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1465

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words

Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words

Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words

Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words

Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 18839

Total fiction words for the year..... 277240

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5440

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 121890

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 399130

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 6/11](#)

[June 11, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Sorry, but nothing in this segment again today. In “The Day” below you’ll see some of the reason.

Of Interest

A bit of [Dean’s writing process](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 4 and got a slow start to boot. Still, I got to the writing ‘puter (and outside) at 5.

Checked Dean’s place but he’s a little late getting things going this morning too. Of course, this is the beginning of my day and the end of his.

I wrote about a hundred words or so, then visiting with my sons. As I wrote earlier, slow start this morning.

7:30, visited Dean’s place again and found little there. Some about his process though. An interesting read.

Wow. I completely spaced the diary today. It was another day of hit and miss writing. It included a huge rainstorm (a quarter-inch in about fifteen minutes) and a long delay in the early afternoon when my sons returned from a salvage yard with a battery and parts for my new ride. Then one son had to begin the 8 hour drive back to his house in New Mexico.

But again it was a day when I kept coming back to the novel, along with two fairly good sessions of about an hour each. So no matter what your own process is, Keep Coming Back.

See you tomorrow.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 3641

Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3851

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words

Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words

Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words

Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words

Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words

Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words

Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words

Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words
Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words
Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words
Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22480
Total fiction words for the year..... 280881

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5650
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 122100

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 402981

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 6/12

[June 12, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, a good long post for you today. And I hope informative.

Dr. Mardy's newsletter was in my inbox this morning. It was a good issue on the topic of apologies. But he omitted my personal favorite:

It is a good rule in life never to apologize. The right sort of people do not want apologies, and the wrong sort take a mean advantage of them. P. G. Wodehouse

I do apologize from time to time, though most often I've found Wodehouse's observation to be spot on.

The Use of Italics in Fiction

For many years, I advocated using italics in fiction to indicate anything printed inside the story (e.g., a note or a sign) that the narrator or character was reading. I also used them (as I learned in college) for the titles of longer literary works (books, collections), music albums (but not individual songs), and the names of ships and paintings. That's about it. Oh, and to indicate a foreign language.

(In case you're wondering, the titles of shorter literary works, individual songs, and individual short stories, poems or essays are set off with quotation marks.)

Longer printed matter (e.g., a letter) was indicated by adding a blank line before and after it, and by indenting the left margin by one-quarter or one-half inch for ebooks. (For print books, indent

both margins by the same distance.) That enables the reader to see the actual original letter for herself.

The latter is still true for both ebooks and print. Using the same margins for “inset” printed matter inside a story creates a momentary confusion in the reader. And of course, anything you do to confuse the reader and shove him out of the story is not a good thing.

But I no longer advocate using italics to indicate shorter printed matter or signs. Signs are capitalized. Not ALL CAPS) but Capitalized. And now I preface shorter notes with either the narrator saying The note read, Dear John, Blah blah blah, and blah. And if a character is reading the note aloud, of course it’s inside quotation marks.

So when to use italics?

These days, in fiction, I use them only to add emphasis to a word or phrase when I’m absolutely certain NOT doing so would create confusion in the reader.

So what about “the rules” regarding the titles of longer literary works and all that?

Well, I still would obey those rules if ever again I wrote nonfiction works, for example formal essays, for publication.

But this is about writing fiction.

Of course, the reader can tell when the character is speaking a foreign language. So no italics are necessary there. The titles of longer literary works, the names of ships and all that are still Capitalized, so no italics are necessary there either.

Comments, questions and concerns are welcome in the comments section below (or if you’re reading this in email, on the website).

Of Interest

Dean has works in a couple of book bundles right now, and both bundles are ending fairly soon. Kris is in both of them too. Of course, you already know I highly recommend [The Write Stuff 2016](#) bundle. The other one is fantasy fiction, and you can find it at [BundleRabbit](#).

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. after my kitten spent several minutes attacking my feet and whispering “Dad.” So I woke with a smile on my face.

Email and coffee to wake up, then read Dr. Mardy’s quotes newsletter and went to Dean’s site.

5 a.m., I moved everything outside in the cool (50° F) early morning light. For some reason, this morning reminded me of K. Kristofferson's "Sunday Morning Comin' Down" (as sung by J. Cash) among the most beautiful songs ever written.

I sat down and wrote the topic above, then everything else down to here. Now to make a second mug of coffee. While that's brewing, I'll sweep the outside office area, then move to the novel.

5:45 a.m. I was going to the novel, but immediately realized I hadn't kept up with my reverse outline. So I scrolled through the manuscript, adding notes to that outline.

As I did so, I also cycled a bit, changing a few details to make the ages right and so on. I also double checked to be sure each character (among the group of bad guys) had provided me with a backstory. They had. I was relieved. From here to the end of the story should be a pretty straight shot now.

Every story, short or long, is about one character. My current novel begins with that character in a chapel, about to deliver a eulogy for a deceased loved one. After the eulogy but long before the service is over, he leaves to set out on a vengeance trail.

The next chapter shows the bad guys nearing their goal. In the other chapters, we see the bad guys' progress from when their mission begins, but we also get to see each bad-guy character and how he's tied to the main character, whom the story is about. It's a great deal of fun.

So I did all the stuff above, then wrote this second mini-topic, and now, finally, I'm ready to get back to the story.

7:30, to the novel.

Trying to remember to keep up the diary today. I wrote for a little while, mostly cycling. Then I got the urge to go out and clean some of the interior on the Toyota 4-Runner I bought Friday. So I did that.

It took longer than I expected, but the inside looks a LOT better now. Then I took care of a few other things, before returning to the novel.

10 a.m., back to the novel.

I wrote off and on in three short sessions (that's becoming a recurring theme) until around 11:30. Then I swapped out both shifter knobs in my 4-Runner for some more authentic ones. Then I checked the lights, turn signals, fan etc.

Then I realized the battery on my 'puter was getting low, so I took it to the house and plugged it in. Then I decided to run about 170 feet of extension cord from my shed near the house to my new adobe office, which is, well, about 170 feet away. Got that done, brought out the 'puter and plugged it in.

Out here, it's about 80 inside and 97 outside. I love adobe. Plus there's a good breeze passing through. So until I buy and install a new junction box at the house that will handle the trailer my son is staying in AND my 'puter AND the shed near the house, I'll be working out here.

Puffing about a 56 ring gauge Acid cigar my other son brought me this weekend. Not bad, but it'll dislocate your jaw. Anyway, came here to write this and now it's...

3:30, back to the novel. I'll go 'til around 5 today before I close it out. Maybe I'll make my word count for the day.

Good day, especially considering all the distractions. I'll absolutely take it. See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3234

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4414

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words
Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words
Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words
Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words
Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22480

Total fiction words for the year..... 280881

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5650

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 122100

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 402981

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 6/13](#)

[June 13, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Had a busy day, and only a little of it was writing unfortunately. Still, I got a decent word count.

Looking more and more like I'll finish this novel before I take a few days off (maybe Thursday through Sunday) toward the end of this week.

If not, I might finish it while I'm on "vacation." (Who needs a vacation from doing what you love?)

Anyway, too tired to write a topic here for tonight. And sometime this week too I need to write a new story of the week for next Monday. (grin)

By the way, I forgot to change the monthly and annual counts below yesterday, so what you see down there today includes yesterday's writing too.

Of Interest

Nothing much over at Dean's place, but [Kris has a new story of the week](#) that posted today.

Also, [my own story of the week](#) posted today.

The Day

Rolled out late at 4:30 after a later night than I'm used to. It's 5 now and I'm still trying to wake up.

5:30, I moved outside to the writing 'puter. I'll write awhile, but I have to drive to Sierra Vista around 8 to switch the title over for my 4-Runner.

6:20, just an update. Cycling I've added some 400 new words. As the book nears the end, the going is slower as I have to check back for names, places, events, etc. Still writing.

7:40, with around 1000 new words on the novel, I'm getting ready to head for SV now. Back in a few hours.

12 noon, back and eating lunch. Bought a jack, a water pump, windshield wipers and some new vacuum lines for my 4-Runner. Stopped off to buy a spare tire (used) too, but the ones they had locally were overpriced and in bad shape.

1:30, finished lunch and did a bunch of little things, cleaning out my old pickup, which I sold to my son, moving things to the 4-Runner, etc. Then I checked Dean's and Kris' sites (see above) and wrote a bit on the Journal.

2 p.m., finally back to the novel.

Even with a lot of cycling (the end game is near) I got quite a bit more done, but missed my daily goal by a few hundred words. Not a major thing. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2848

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3198

Writing of Wes Crowley Book 10

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words
Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words
Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words
Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words
Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 28562

Total fiction words for the year..... 286963

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 123630

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 410593

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Keep Coming Back](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 6/14](#)

[June 14, 2016](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Oof. Another very slow start to the day. However, it turned out pretty well, as you'll see below.

I have the second series of videos from the Teams in Fiction workshop to watch today, but I'll put that off until around 11, when it's too hot to be outside.

Down Time

I first met Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch at a conference where we were all teaching probably 15 years ago or so.

I happened by a class he was teaching, probably on my way to the bar, and overheard something that grabbed my attention, so I walked in. I'm glad I did.

That was before the brave new world of epublishing stood up. It was toward the end of his class. He was sitting on a piano, dangling his legs, and Kris was standing nearby.

Someone had asked about literary agents. Dean said the best way to land an agent was to shop your manuscript around yourself with publishers. If (when) one bit, at that point you would call the agent of your choice, tell her you already had a publisher who wanted the manuscript, and offer her the standard royalty cut (at the time it was 15%) to represent you.

Sheer. Genius. And it holds true today, except that today we understand three things we didn't realize back then:

- most literary agents work more for the publisher than for the writer, and
- most literary agents (unless she's also the right sort of attorney) should be unceremoniously arrested and sent to jail for practicing law without a license, and
- it's stupid to give a stranger 15% of your earnings for the lifetime of the story. Seriously.

But I digress. This is supposed to be about down time.

Flash forward about 13 years. I visited Dean's website a few times over those intervening years, but he was not the seemingly endless fount of wisdom that he is now. So I faded away from visiting.

When I happened on his website again in February 2014, he was indeed a fount of wisdom. And suddenly available. One of the first questions I asked was about down time.

I wanted to write a novel, I said. But I seemed attached at the hip to doing little things that kept me from writing. Would his Productivity online workshop help me with that?

Yes, he wrote back. It would.

I signed on, and it did. I learned it was all right to have down time (time away from the writing). The trick was to manage your day — almost minute by minute at first — and to Keep Coming Back to the work in progress. So time management, with a healthy dose of stubbornness mixed in, was the first key to what I wanted to do.

It took me several months to work into my new schedule, though I did take on the challenge of writing at least one short story per week during that time. Looking back, I think maybe writing short fiction was my security blanket as I toddled into the new world.

Of course, after that first workshop, I kept learning from Dean and many others. That's the second key. Keep Learning. If I ever feel that I know it all, I'll stall. My writing will stall and my career will stall. I know several writers who are in that sinking boat right now.

But that also enabled me to realize that down time was not only acceptable, but necessary. Some days I just don't get started as quickly as other days (like today). Sometimes life takes over (like today), and sometimes I just play some inane computer game for awhile (like today).

But again, what's important is to start and then to keep coming back through the day.

So down time? Yeah, it's fine. Going away from the writing for awhile because of a trip (big) or something you have to do (shopping, cooking, a movie, etc., all medium stuff) or just to play a few games of Spider Solitaire (small) is fine.

Then sit down and write. I mean, if you're a writer, y'gotta write. If you just want to talk about being a writer, well, that's a whole other problem.

Of Interest

I left a comment on [Dean's New Novel Started post](#) from yesterday. His response contains some great insight.

Also, his topic for today, [Cutting Stuff](#), is chock full of good information. When you click the link you'll have to scroll down to the topic. Odd how much it fits with my own topic above. (I wrote the topic on Down Time before I visited his site this morning.)

The Day

Rolled out at 3:20. Even with coffee, email and Facebook until 4, I'm still groggy. Ugh.

5 a.m., I moved outside to write, but it's a little chilly. It's 48° but the breeze is cold. So I enjoyed a morning cigar, then moved back inside.

5:30, back inside, I played a few games of Spider solitaire. That spurred me to write the topic above. Then I visited Dean's site and added the "Of Interest" stuff above.

6:30, back to the novel.

I wrote for a little while, then updated my reverse outline. My cell phone sent a low battery warning, so I went back to the house to retrieve the cord, then back out here to plug it into my computer.

Then I figured out a couple more things on my 4-Runner, then came back to the office.

I have a new office about 200 feet from my house. It's another adobe building, warm in the cold and cool in the heat of the day.

I plugged my phone into my computer to charge. Then I wondered about whether I could set up a mobile hotspot on it and connect to the Internet out here. I don't usually use the Internet on my writing computer, but there are a lot of brief translations in this novel (Spanish to English), so it would be nice.

My son showed me the basics, and shortly after he left, I figured out the rest. Total score. And as I recently wrote to a dear friend, it's amazing. Consider, the first telephone of which I was aware had a three- or four-digit number and was on a party line. (grin)

11 a.m., during another thus-far fragmented day, I've added around another 1500 new words to the novel. Off to put my youngest daughter (my kitten) in the house, then to Benson to visit a notary public and then to hit the store.

1:10 p.m., back to the novel.

Well, again I kept coming back and wrote off and on, mostly in spurts, but with one good session. See you mañana.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3721

Nonfiction Words: 1100 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4821

Writing of *The Right Cut of Cloth* (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words
Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words
Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words
Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words
Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 32283
Total fiction words for the year..... 290684

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 124730

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 415414

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 6/15

[June 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Whew. At the end of the day, we'll already be halfway through June. I hope it's been a great writing month for you thus far.

I'll be away on Friday through Sunday this week. Probably I'll pre-post a placeholder for each of those three days. Then I'll update it before it goes out if I get a chance to write and anything changes.

Workshop Report: Teams in Fiction

I finally listened to the Week 2 videos for my online workshop with DWS. It came out yesterday, but I blew it off until this morning.

I got started on the videos at about 5:30. There are only five videos each week, plus a results-of-last-week's-assignment video up front and this week's assignment video at the end.

Each video is maybe 7 to 10 minutes long, but it takes much longer to watch them (for me). I open a Notepad document and take notes during each video. Often that means I have to stop and restart the video in some places to be sure I get the information right. To that information, I add my own take or thoughts that occur.

That stop/restart process happened some this morning on videos 2 and 3 and a LOT on videos 4 and 5. Very, very interesting stuff.

I also emailed Dean a note re something I noticed in one of the last two vids.

Crunching Numbers Again

Just for grins, I wanted to figure some averages (arithmetic means) for my writing from October 21, 2014 (the day I wrote the first sentence of my first novel) and June 20, 2016.

I'm not including short stories I wrote before October 21, 2014 in these numbers. However, I am including my current novel, which I will finish in the next few days, and my next short story, which also will be finished within the next few days.

Since 21 October 2014, I've written 16 novels, one novella, and 78 short stories. The novella and short stories are "short works" below.

Oct 21 2014 – Oct 20 2015 = 52 weeks (12 months)

Oct 21 2015 – Jun 20 2016 = 35 weeks (8 months)

So total time = 87 weeks or 20 months

16 novels in 87 weeks = 5.43 weeks per novel

16 novels in 20 months = 1.25 months per novel

Plus one novella, plus 78 short stories

79 short works in 87 weeks = 1.10 weeks per short

79 short works in 20 months = .25 month per short

94 total works in 87 weeks = .92 week per work

94 total works in 20 months = .21 month per work

Cool, eh? I'll take it. (grin)

Of Interest

In today's blog, on Day 1000 of posting to his blog every day without missing, Dean writes about [The Power of Streaks](#) (scroll down). It's a short topic, but a very good one.

The Day

Rolled out late at 4:15, and I already feel another slow start coming. Coffee and email to wake up, plus I read a few columns online.

5 a.m., I didn't get to the second week of the Teams Workshop yesterday, so I'm going to start the morning with that.

5:30, got started on the vids. Finished around 6:45, then came here to write everything down to this point (except the number crunching above).

7:15, a short break for breakfast, then to the writing for the day.

No breakfast yet. Instead I grabbed a snack and moved out to my office. I wrote for a little while, a few hundred new words while cycling.

Then the notion struck me to crunch the numbers above and add that to this journal. I never quite know what you folks might want to read here.

If I were reading this instead of writing it, I would be interested in those numbers. But if there's anything missing here that you'd like to see, let me know in the comments or via email and I'll try to add it.

Then a quick trip to the house to retrieve the instruction manual for my phone to reset the hotspot I set up yesterday.

8:35, time flies. Back to the novel for awhile.

Just after 12 noon (and doing a lot of little things intermixed with the writing) I've put about 1700 new words on the page today. Gonna take a break for lunch, then back to it.

Well, another decent, if fragmented, day of writing. It's beginning to look as if this story is going to extend over two novels. Hmmm. We'll see.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3466

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3466

Writing of The Right Cut of Cloth (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
Day 8..... 2161 words. Total words to date..... 22442 words
Day 9..... 3121 words. Total words to date..... 25563 words
Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words
Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words
Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words

Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 35749
Total fiction words for the year..... 294150

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 125490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 419640

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 6/16](#)

[June 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, planning. I hope to advance the novel today, but probably I'll do so only with some cycling and stitching.

I also have to write a new short story of the week, create a cover and post the whole thing for release on Monday.

Finally, a few copyedits have begun to trickle in. So I have to make time for that.

Sometime soon I also finally have to read-aloud through the previous novel I wrote and get it published and out. (grin)

Still looking for a good first reader. Here are the qualifications:

- you enjoy reading
- you're interested in reading my work
- wrong-word usages, typos and other small errors "pop out" at you
- you want to make a small fee in addition to seeing my stuff before anyone else does

Of Interest

I recommend you read the comments (there are only 12) over at [Dean's post on Day 1000](#). Some really good stuff there.

Also, Kris wrote a continuation of last week's post on [Thugs, Lawyers, and Writers](#).

The Day

Rolled out right at 4 a.m. Been doing that a lot lately. I think my subconscious is adjusting my body clock so I can hang with the young folks this weekend. Guess I'll find out whether I really am only 26 with 37 years' experience. (grin)

I came out to my outside desk at about 5 to write and pre-post a few placeholder posts for the next few days. Then I wrote everything above this.

Well, around 5:45 I was headed to the novel to do some cycling and stitching.

But as I was moving a few things from one folder to another, I opened a few of the files I was moving and found the topic/situation for the next short story. So I'm moving out to my office to write that.

6:40, to the writing.

I got about 1000 words done on the new short story, then took a break to go get the oil changed on my 4-Runner. The date stamped on the bottom of the old oil filter was February 2011. Five and a half years ago. Ugh.

10, back to the story.

Two good sessions later at around 2500 words I'm in the end game of this one.

1:30, back to the story.

3:30, I just finished the story, then read it to my "first listener" and it passed muster. Now I'm going to create a cover, then publish it and post it and I'm finished for the day.

Earlier, I was thinking I might finish this one and write a second short story. That would put me a little ahead on the story of the week and give me some breathing room. Not to mention a good word count for the day. (grin)

But that was too much, especially considering I have to finish the administrative and publishing stuff on this one.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3435

Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3915

Writing of "One Early Evening in Mexico" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3435 words. Total words to date..... 3435 words (done)

Writing of **The Right Cut of Cloth** (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
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Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26798 words
Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words
Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 39184
Total fiction words for the year..... 297585

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9520
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 125970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 423555

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 6/17](#)

[June 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hi Folks,

Thanks for your patience. Today will be a road day, capped off with visiting our children. This will be the first time we've all been in one room since 1997. Almost twenty years.

Of course, this time there will also be a multitude of grandchildren, and even a few great-grandchildren. Odd, eh? Yet I still say I'm 26 years old. I just happen to have 37 years' experience, so I'm very good at being 26 years old. (grin)

Back on Monday, 6/20.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [A Book I Read](#) is a good blog post with a great topic below it.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: XXXX (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of The Right Cut of Cloth (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
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Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 39184

Total fiction words for the year..... 297585

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9520

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 125970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 423555

[The Journal, Saturday, 6/18](#)

[June 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hi Folks,

Thanks for your patience. Today will be a day of visiting and parties.

Back on Monday, 6/20.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: XXXX (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of *The Right Cut of Cloth* (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
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Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words
Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 39184
Total fiction words for the year..... 297585

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9520
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 125970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 423555

[The Journal, Sunday, 6/19](#)

[June 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hi Folks,

Thanks for your patience. Today will be another road day. I'm sure (writing this in advance) the meals and visiting and partying was fun, but we won't go into any of that debauchery here. Let me get out of the state first. (grin)

If there was anything truly juicy that I can connect even loosely to writing, you know I'll tell you, right? Trust me.

Back on Monday, 6/20.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: XXXX (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of *The Right Cut of Cloth* (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
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Day 16... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 39184

Total fiction words for the year..... 297585

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9520

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 125970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 423555

[The Journal, Monday, 6/20](#)

[June 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, a belated Happy Father's Day to all the dads out there. Over the weekend, I was honored to visit with all five of my children and their spouses (whom I also count among my children) as well as most of my 17 grandchildren, all 3 great-grandchildren, my youngest sister and her 3 daughters, plus my uncle (an authentic tin-can sailor from the Korean War era) and my aunt. It was a once-in-a-lifetime weekend.

Not that we can't or won't do it again, but you can't duplicate perfection. To see how incredible it was or if you'd just like to see the crew, [visit my Facebook page](#).

Now back to work.

I'm actually writing this on Sunday in the late afternoon as I have a sprinkler going on the front yard and the back yard. I'm sitting at my outside desk near the house. My kitten, after almost 3 full days away from "Da" has let me out of her sight for only a few seconds at a time.

This week will be busy. I should finish my current novel. I also have to write a new short story of the week, create a cover and post the whole thing for release on Monday, 27 June.

I also have a website to build and a copyedit to do. And the third week of my workshop on Teams in Fiction will post on Tuesday, so I'm looking forward to that.

Some work-related good news, though. I found a first reader. Or rather, she found me. She also happens to be an excellent novelist. If it works out, and I have zero reason to believe it won't, I'll be trading my copyediting services for her first-reader support. That is a saweeet deal for me.

I did zero writing over the weekend and was not online at all. Now I'm going over to Dean's place to see what he slapped together over the past few days.

Of Interest

First, I recommend reading [the comments on A Book I Read](#). Good stuff there. For one thing, there's a book recommendation on Paperback Confidential. I'm going to find it and buy it. And there's a link to an article about another very prolific writer. Just some things to consider.

His [Saturday post](#) has a small topic on Feeling Like Ground Effect that you might want to read.

And if you check his word counts for the past couple of days, you'll see why I often feel like a complete slacker when I look at mine. (grin)

A very sad, poignant post over on [Dean's site today](#). Odd how much small creatures can bless us and teach us. I recommend it.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4, but I went to bed a little before 8, so total score. I needed some rest after this past weekend, but it was a great time.

5 a.m. outside with the writing 'puter, checked Dean's site and added to the journal.

5:30, to the novel. I wrote a few hundred words, but there were a lot of distractions.

7:30 I moved out to my office and put down about a thousand words, then took a break.

9 a.m., back to the office and another thousand words. The novel is in the end game and moving really well. I can barely keep up with the twists and turns the characters toss out.

Another break at 10. I also moved inside. The day is scorching and there's no breeze to speak of.

10:30, back to the novel. Added another thousand words. The problem with working at the house is that there are so many things I need to do, and those distract me. Email and Facebook; watering the yard, plants and trees; and on and on.

I should easily have a 5,000 word day today, but I doubt it's gonna happen. Too much heat outside and too much humidity outside for the swamp cooler to be more than minimally effective inside. Oh well, it is what it is.

I'm gonna call it early today and get started on a copyedit I had come in.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3709

Nonfiction Words: 680 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4389

Writing of *The Right Cut of Cloth* (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
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Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words
Day 16... 3709 words. Total words to date..... 47417 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 42893

Total fiction words for the year..... 301294

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 126650

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 427944

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 6/21

[June 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. Late to everything today. Because I was not diligent, my baby girl snuck out last night and got stuck high in a pine tree. We searched for an hour or thereabouts, found her and got her down safely.

Then I was too wound up to sleep so I stayed up to watch a two-hour movie that ran 3 hours (commercials and “cutesy” interludes with the “hosts,” whose only contribution seems to be to show their complete lack of class). I sacked out about 10:30, and got up at 5. Ugh.

It all reminded me of why I set up my early morning schedule to begin with. I need to get back on that schedule. So I’ll be working on that in upcoming days.

Later today in general, I’ll be writing on the novel this morning. When the heat drives me inside a bit later, I’ll continue the copyedit I started yesterday and (I hope) make time to listen to the Week 3 vids on Teams in Fiction.

Cash Streams

I stole the idea for this topic from Dean (see below). He plans to do a much more in-depth look at it soon. In the interim, there’s this.

When I talk about cash streams, I mean that in the context of real streams. Same dynamic. Mine start with trickles, really, that flow into streams and then into the river that leads to my bank account.

I have at last count around 200 titles out now. That includes short stories, collections of different sizes, and novels.

When one short story sells through one Amazon store (Amazon Japan, for example), that’s a trickle. There are around 60 Amazon stores in different countries. Other MAJOR trickles (meaning from major retailers) include B&N, Smashwords, Apple, Kobo, Google Play, Inkterra, Scribd, Tolino (Germany), Gardner’s (England), Oyster, Odilo, Biblio, and so on.

Many of those major retailers also have subsidiary retailers beneath them. Each of those, individually, is a trickle. All of the Amazon stores collectively is a stream, and so on up through the others.

But it all boils down to the writing. You can't sell (license) a title you're only thinking about. And that's why I drive myself.

Each time I write a short story, that few hours plus the time spent on the cover and distribution nets me, on average, around 70% of the cover price for each sale. So about \$2.09 for each \$2.99 story I sell. In each retailer. And sub-retailer.

Every time I have five short stories done, I add them to a short collection. So each story contributes a trickle to the larger trickle of the sale of the collection.

Every time I have ten short stories done, I add them to a longer collection. Again, each story contributes a trickle to that larger trickle.

For ease of figuring, let's say my work is available through 100 retailers. (The number of retailers is actually close to twice that.)

Each time I write a short story, then put it in a 5-story collection (\$5.99) and a 10-story collection (\$7.99), that one story contributes to three trickles at each retailer. So 300 trickles.

INSET (Sold alone the retail price of a short story is \$2.99. Sold in a 5-story collection the retail price per story is \$1.19. Sold in a 10-story collection, the retail price per story is \$0.79.)

But forget the collections and extra trickles.

Even if I sold only one individual short story one time per month at each retailer, the stream would add \$2.09 per sale times 100 retailers to my bank account. That's \$209 per month. No biggie, right?

But I have 130-plus short stories "out there." So just for grins, let's say each of my 130 short stories sold one copy in each venue in one month. That's \$27,170.00 in royalties. In one month.

Remember, that doesn't include sales of collections or novels. That's just 130 individual short stories, selling only one copy in each retail venue in one month. And of course, royalties per retailer vary a bit.

Am I making 27 grand per month from sales of my short stories? Uhh, no. Not even close. If I were, trust me, I'd be living on an island somewhere. One with really great fishing.

But It's Possible. And it's possible only because

1. I wrote them, and
2. I offer them for sale in over 100 retail venues.

Jump into the streams, folks. The water's great.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [Some Basics on Cost\(s\) and Benefits of Getting New Cash Streams](#).

If you'd like to see mass quantities of pics of the [Stanbrough Family Bash](#), on my FB page click Photos > Albums > Family Reunion 2016. So there.

The Day

Rolled out just before 5 a.m. Spent about a half-hour finding the little girl (she was under the bed) and trying to determine whether there was something physically wrong with her. I think she hurt her right leg last night in the tree. Also she was badly scared, but she's all right.

Around 5:40, first mugga coffee in hand, I moved outside. Checked email and FB to ease into the day, then posted the stuff above. At 6:20 I finally went to Dean's site.

In the midst of going to Dean's site, I decided to move out to my office. Got a second mugga coffee, set up a light out there, and moved. (I won't need the light today, but when I get back on schedule I want to move out there earlier.)

Okay, in my office, I wrote the Cash Streams topic above. Now I feel all caught up with this admin stuff.

7:40, to the novel. Ugh. Cycling, coupled with a couple of breaks to deal with laundry stuff that my wife couldn't get to before she left for work. Added only around 400 new words.

10 a.m. Back to it.

11:20, a break after adding another thousand words.

11:45, back to the novel. I think it's gonna end today. And I really don't want to let it go.

Well, I might have finished the novel today. It feels finished, but it might need a prologue. We'll see. I'll look over it again tomorrow. See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 5264

Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6294

Writing of The Right Cut of Cloth (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
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Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words
Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words
Day 16... 3709 words. Total words to date..... 47417 words
Day 17... 5264 words. Total words to date..... 52681 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 48157
Total fiction words for the year..... 306558

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11230
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 127680

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 434238

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 6/22](#)

[June 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I finally watched and listened to the vids from Week 3 of the Teams in Fiction workshop. Per usual, this set was chock full of gems. Some I recognized as things I was already doing, and a few were new to me and invaluable.

Given time, today I'll also write the next short story of the week (to post June 27). We'll see.

Of Interest

Nothing over at Dean's place. If you didn't check [Kris' site](#) earlier this week, drop by to check out her new story of the week.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 a.m. Email and Facebook to wake up. Moved outside around 5 and caught a gorgeous sunrise. If you wanna see a couple of pics, swing by my Facebook page.

I spent some time figuring out the spell check on Microsoft Word (it was randomly switching languages) and finally got that solved and settled, then spell checked the Wes 10 novel.

6:30, moved out to the office.

I found I had reached the end of the novel yesterday. But it turns out the book itself wasn't quite finished. I had to cycle back and add some things that were necessary to the ending.

Foreshadowing and so on. Did that until about 10 a.m., then took a break and drove to the store for some things I need.

11:30 into the house to catch up with email, etc.

12 noon, back to the novel.

1:10 p.m., the novel is finished. Taking a short break, then back to the Adobe Office to write the short story of the week. I think. (grin)

Well, around 1:45 I came back with an idea for a sort'a western SF story (see below). Had two pretty good sessions. Didn't finish, but I should be able to finish it tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 5017

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5307

Writing of The Right Cut of Cloth (Wes Crowley Book 10)

Day 1..... 3379 words. Total words to date..... 3379 words
Day 2..... 2422 words. Total words to date..... 5801 words
Day 3..... 2572 words. Total words to date..... 8373 words
Day 4..... 3242 words. Total words to date..... 11615 words
Day 5..... 3369 words. Total words to date..... 14984 words
Day 6..... 2746 words. Total words to date..... 17730 words
Day 7..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 20281 words
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Day 11... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 30439 words
Day 12... 3234 words. Total words to date..... 33673 words

Day 13... 2848 words. Total words to date..... 36521 words
Day 14... 3721 words. Total words to date..... 40242 words
Day 15... 3466 words. Total words to date..... 43708 words
Day 16... 3709 words. Total words to date..... 47417 words
Day 17... 5264 words. Total words to date..... 52681 words
Day 18... 3340 words. Total words to date..... 56021 words (done)

Writing of “The Trouble with Trimble” (story of the week)

Day 1..... 1677 words. Total words to date..... 1677 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 53174
Total fiction words for the year..... 311575

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11520
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 127970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 439545

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 6/23](#)

[June 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, once again I’m thinking of switching this Journal back over to the main site.

The good news is this: If I do that it will go out in the Pro Writers series. In other words it will become my main blog. So if you’re already signed up for that one as well, you won’t have to do anything to continue following my uber-exciting life. (grin)

Today is my and Mona’s 32nd wedding anniversary. Yes, she has put up with me that long. Not sure what the day holds. I’m not smart enough to have planned anything this year.

I revised my website a bit. Where it used to say Pro Writers Services it now says Copyediting. I never did like arguing with others about cover design, so I’m no longer offering a cover design service. And I’m no longer offering to eformat manuscripts for publication.

Copywriting might go away soon too. Mostly I just wanna write.

Of Interest

Over at Dean’s place there’s an interesting discussion on New Workshops. Even if you aren’t interested in taking any of his, reading it might give you some ideas.

I visited Lawrence Block's website this morning too, just to look around, and found this gem: [How Hodge the Podge? How Mish the Mash?](#) Yes, of course it's self-serving, but it's also chock full of great tidbits for writers. If nothing else, to spur your imagination.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 again despite a late night. I was outside by 4:15.

As I enjoyed a cigar, I fiddled with my Android phone, trying to figure out how to delete some useless apps from it. Turns out they can't be deleted. How messed up is that?

After that I messed around with reading various websites (see "Of Interest" for a couple of them) and revised some things on mine.

The rest of the morning (up until around 7:20) was spent on email and Facebook, a political newsletter I decided to unsubscribe from, talking with Mona, etc. Oh, and setting the sprinkler on the front yard.

7:30, finally to the writing.

No. I wrote about 100 words and Norton kept nagging me to restart my computer (like every two minutes). So finally I did. While that was going on, I decided to replace a few vacuum lines in my 4-Runner. And as I was doing that, Mona came out to visit.

She noticed an old pickup that my son bought to flip had a flat right-front tire. It was still cool (the weather), so I decided to take the tire off so he can take it in later to get it repaired.

Then I finished replacing the vacuum lines, went inside to wash my hands, and came back out to the office.

I was completely out of the storyline, so I thought I'd format my latest novel to get it ready for publication. And now it's 9:30.

Thing is, I know we have to make a "big" trip to the store today, and then there's anniversary stuff. So as of right now, I'm gonna call this a nonwriting day. If I get back to it later, so much the better.

3:30. Well, it isn't going to happen today. Life happens. Left for Sierra Vista around 11 and just got back. I don't want to miss at least getting this post out, so if I write anything else today, I'll just include it in tomorrow's numbers.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 580

Writing of “The Trouble with Trimble” (story of the week)

Day 1..... 1677 words. Total words to date..... 1677 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 53174
Total fiction words for the year..... 311575

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 128550

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 440125

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 6/24

[June 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

As I mentioned yesterday, I’m thinking of switching this Journal back over to the main site. Ideas? Comments? Suggestions?

Very busy day today. I’ll try to be back with a topic tomorrow or the next day. Thanks for hanging in.

Of Interest

Over at [Dean’s place](#) not a lot, but some great, thought provoking comments on yesterday’s post re new workshops.

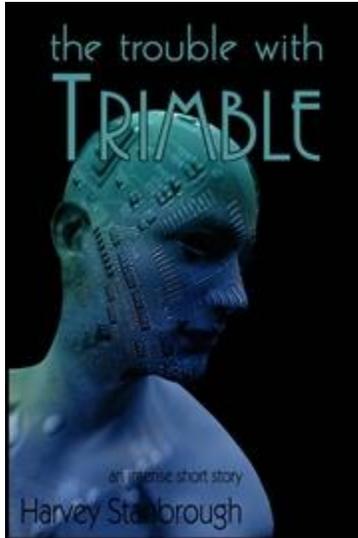
Lawrence Block posted a new blog this morning. It’s also his birthday. See [It’s Always Something](#).

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 a.m. This morning I stayed inside, basically doing nothing important or interesting until around 5. Then I transferred to my outside desk. I still did nothing much other than enjoying a cigar and intermittently glancing over what I wrote on the story two days ago.

6:30, I finally got serious and moved out to my Adobe Hovel (office) to play with the story. I started at the beginning of the story and read through, allowing myself to touch it.

By 7:15 I had added only a little over 600 words. Now I'm coming to the end game.



10:30, finished with the western/SF story. That's the cover over on the left. It came in at a little over 4300 words. The story took a sharp turn that I wasn't expecting. That's good. No possible way will the reader expect it. (grin) I love it when the characters surprise me.

I'm gonna take a break, then write another short story. See whether I can get a little bit ahead on this one-a-week thing.

12:20, well that was a long break. Worked on outfitting my 4-Runner for awhile, then came back out here to format the story and do a cover for it.

1:20, finished with the cover and formatting. Only thing is, I have zero internet access out in the Adobe Hovel so I have to wait until I go back inside to publish it to my Free Story of the Week blog and to the usual distributors. (grin) So I'm gonna poke around for another idea and write another story.

2 p.m., got a good opening written at a little over 600 words. It'll work. Not sure it's going to end with a short story though. I have a feeling I might have started another novel. (grin)

Okay, 3:30 and I'm gonna call it a day. The skies out here are threatening rain. I'll head inside and post this stuff.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3954
Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4334

Writing of “The Trouble with Trimble” (story of the week)

Day 1..... 1677 words. Total words to date..... 1677 words
Day 2..... 2682 words. Total words to date..... 4359 words (done)

Writing of “The Day the World Shuddered and Went Still” (short story... maybe)

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 57128
Total fiction words for the year..... 315529

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 128930

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 444459

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Lawrence Block](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 6/25](#)

[June 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, probably this will be a nonwriting day. Too many little things are piling up behind me, and I really need to take care of those, or at least get a good start on them.

So today I'll alternately work on an edit, apply changes submitted by my first reader for my novel “Nothing for Nothing,” build a website if the guy sends me his login information. Or I'll tell him I'm out if he doesn't. Whichever way it works out is fine with me.

Anyway, here's a topic of the day for you.

Story Starters, Openings and How to Write Fiction

One person asked me in an email yesterday where I get ideas and how I can move from story to story. Apparently because of my flurry of activity recently.

I'm going to answer that in two topics.

First of all, I've started only seven new works since May 4 (finished 6). That isn't a lot. At all. In May, I wrote only two works: a novel and a short story. The short story also became the first chapter of my next novel (so eight works if I counted that twice).

In June, thus far I've written one novel and four short stories. Yesterday I started a fifth short story that might be a novel instead. That's it.

But to story starters —

When I sit down to write a short story, it's most often on the spur of the moment. So I have to come up with a story starter.

What is a story starter? It's a character with a problem (doesn't have to be "the" problem of the story) in a setting. Period. That's it. Seriously.

(But where do I get the characters? The problem? The setting? That will be in "Getting Ideas" in tomorrow's post.)

From that story starter, I write an opening.

To do that, I sit down at the keyboard and write whatever springs to mind. Then I write the next sentence, write the next sentence and so on.

The length of the opening varies from writer to writer. For DWS the opening is around 300 – 500 words. For me, the opening is usually 500 – 700 words. By then, I know whether the story will work.

If the opening works, I just keep writing the next sentence. I don't worry about (or think about) sentence structure, spelling, etc. I just write and keep writing.

I never wonder where the story is going or how the character will solve the problem or any of that. I just write the next sentence.

It really is that simple. It works. It's how Bradbury wrote. It's how Stephen King writes. It's how almost every pulp writer who ever lived wrote. And those of you who have been with me for awhile have seen it first hand.

Do I develop the character?

No, other than knowing his or her "type." Beyond that, like all humans everywhere, the character develops himself (or herself).

I am constantly surprised by the things my characters say and do. And that's good. If the characters surprise me, they will also surprise the reader.

If I think them out, plan, plot etc. in advance, I'm playing the Almighty Writer on High. I don't do that because whatever I can "think up" (conscious mind) the reader can think up. Plotting, planning etc. leads to predictable stories, and predictable stories lead to yawning readers.

Do I agonize over the problem?

Again, no. In my stories, the problem in the opening usually is the "big" problem of the story, but not always. In my openings, the character most often makes decisions and moves toward solving the problem.

What about the setting?

In every opening, I try to invoke all five physical senses. That's what makes the scene come alive in the reader's mind. I love writing dialogue and I love writing action (especially Sam Peckinpah style slow motion stuff, sparingly) but none of that happens in a vacuum.

If you don't provide (through the POV character's senses) a good description of the setting, any action or dialogue is being delivered against a white background. Not good.

Okay, so come up with a character who has a problem. Drop him (or her) into a setting. Sit down at the keyboard and write whatever springs to mind.

And don't worry about it. You're just allowing your characters to tell a story. Nothing more earth-shaking than that.

Back tomorrow with "Getting Ideas."

Of Interest

Nothing that I could find. If any of you have suggestions or recommendations for websites of interest let me know and I'll share them here.

Note: I won't list writers' "boards" or groups or any of that unless they're authentically useful. By that I mean the members don't simply regurgitate the same old worn-out "advice" that never works.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4. I can't be sure, but I think that's going to become my new norm. Looking back at my productivity over the past month, I was just as productive (or moreso) when I got up later as I was when I got up earlier.

I was outside a little before 5. Over coffee and a cigar, I dealt with email, then worked on everything above this plus part of the topic for tomorrow.

It's 7:30 now, so I'm going to work on the edit I got in a few days ago now. Back in a bit.

I worked on the edit until around 11. My eldest son left then, headed for Roswell NM and then on to Indiana. We'll miss him.

Mona and I drove into Benson at around 11:30 to get some things we needed at the store. Then it was back home and back to my Adobe Hovel office to continue working on the edit.

1:15 I'm almost halfway through the edit. Break for lunch, sort tools and play with my 4-Runner for a bit. (grin) Back to the edit at 1:45.

2:45, it's looking like rain, so I'm gonna head back up to the house.

3:15, the end of the day is coming and as I feared, I have done zero fiction writing today. However, I did make major headway on a few other nonwriting projects.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1050 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1050

Writing of "The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark" (short story... maybe)

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 57128

Total fiction words for the year..... 315529

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13530

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 129980

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 445509

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 6/26](#)

[June 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Probably today will be another non-writing day for me. Despite the fact that when I take a day away from writing fiction I feel itchy and annoyed.

I gave my word to a couple of folks who quickly took advantage of my offer to copyedit for them, so I'll do that. But otherwise I think I'm going to shove my copyediting service into the ditch alongside the cover design and eformatting services.

Life Events take up too much of my writing time already. Reckon I'm gonna have to cut the cord on providing services.

Getting Ideas

Turns out this is a long topic. I hope it helps.

Yesterday I talked about story starters. To start a story, come up with a character, give him a problem (doesn't have to be "the" problem of the story and often isn't) and drop him into a setting. Period.

But a character with a problem in a setting sounds suspiciously like an idea. So how do we come up with the idea in the first place?

Often the idea for the story will spring directly from the character/problem/setting combo. In fact, yesterday one writer sent me an email. In part, it read

Last fall or late summer you gave 3 or 4 character names, 3 or 4 settings, and maybe 3 or 4 problems for us to put together for an opening. ... [T]hat exercise gave me the opening for the second book in my contemporary series. (Thanks MAC)

But even more often, ideas simply come at random. Then we assign a character/problem/setting and write the opening.

Example — Right now on my desk, my cherry wood humidor is on my left. An orange Bic lighter is lying diagonally on top. (That's a story idea.)

Okay, let's assign a character. Who are you (the character)? Why are you there? And what are you doing? And how does the setting look, sound, smell? Are you

the owner?

a detective?

a male friend of the family?

a female friend of the family?

a masked burglar?

a business associate?

Remember too, the setting can be anywhere that will hold a cherry wood humidor and a Bic lighter: a small home office, the library in a mansion, an office in a place of business, the front seat of a '58 Nash, etc. Let your imagination run. We don't know what's inside the humidor either, do we?

This idea immediately lends itself to mystery, thriller, psychological suspense, romance, and other genres.

If this notion appeals to you, why not just write an opening? See what happens.

There are several ideas on my desktop, in view as I write this:

an open roll of breath mints with one end opened and folded over
a man pecking away at a laptop computer in the wee hours of the morning
three medicine bottles, set snugly beneath a 22" monitor
a cell phone lying on the corner of the desk. An indicator light is flashing.
a pedometer lying in front of a medicine bottle
a deck of Rider Back playing cards
and so on

Where you're sitting as you read this, look about you. What do you see that evokes a particular feeling or memory or notion? It can be anything at all. Make a list. Exercise your idea muscle. Then write an opening about one of them.

So how do we come up with ideas? The more apt question would be how do we NOT come up with ideas.

But many writers believe an "idea" is actually the whole story. How boring would that be? If I knew the story in advance, why bother to write it? That wouldn't entertain me at all. (grin)

***Remember, the story idea is not the whole story.
The story idea is just the catalyst that gets you to the keyboard.***

Dean Wesley Smith taught me that. Also, he has covered his own process several times in his blog. He has an extensive collection of pulp magazines from the old days.

One of his favorite ways of coming up with story ideas is to "crash" the first half of one old story title into the second half of another old story title. When it appeals to him, he writes an opening.

In addition to just looking around, I tend to get ideas from photographs or from some minor event or from overhearing a snippet of conversation.

Ideas from Photographs

I collect cover photographs from stock photo agencies. I have around a thousand. I intend to use them all.

Every now and then when I want to write a story, I skim through those photos (my favorite agencies are Bigstock and Canstock). If a photo appeals to me, it gives me a title (usually) and a story idea (character, problem, setting) and I'm off and writing.

Plus I already have the photo that I probably will use for the cover when I'm finished. I say "probably" because the story often takes an unexpected turn or two. If the turn is big enough, I have to find a different photo for the cover.

You can also find story ideas in photos that you can't use for covers. The photos can be from any source at all. If it spurs a memory or a thought or a character, you're off an running. But again, don't use any photo for a cover unless you have the license to do so.

Ideas from Events

While I was walking along a dirt road one day, a woman passed me in a minivan.

As she passed me at about forty miles per hour, her left hand was on top of the steering wheel at about the 11 o'clock position. She had twisted her head around to look over her right shoulder and was reaching back and pointing with her right hand. Her mouth was wide open as if she was yelling.

There were three children in the back seat. None were in restraints of any kind. Then a cloud of dust enveloped me and all I could still see was her brake lights as she braked just in time to make the upcoming sharp curve and avoid plunging herself and her children some three hundred feet down a steep, rocky hillside to the wide arroyo below.

How many ideas can you get from that one event?

Ideas from Conversation

Sometimes a snippet of conversation comes while I'm walking the aisles or standing in line at the checkout counter of a store.

But more often a character will pop into my head, usually with an attitude and a line of dialogue. This is most often the result of something I see or hear on TV or from someone I'm talking with.

The dialogue in my head almost always introduces the problem and the setting I need for the opening of the story. And of course, the character is the one presenting the dialogue in the first place. This happens a lot with my Brooklyn characters. (This happened today, actually, and started a new short story.)

So when you ask some presenter at a writers' conference, "Where do you get ideas?" and they say "Everywhere," that's exactly what they mean.

Now, possibly I didn't cover everything you would have liked for me to cover on this topic. If you have any questions, please ask.

Of Interest

An interview between George R. R. Martin and Stephen King. Very good, but about an hour long. [You can find it here](#). I discovered it on Dean's site in the comments from yesterday's blog.

Great interview. I took voluminous notes on a Notepad document. Great stuff. I strongly recommend you set aside an hour to listen. In line with today's topic (above), this interview is Chock Full of story ideas. It is an unintentional writing seminar. I strongly recommend you take notes as you listen.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4. Email and coffee to wake up.

5 a.m., moved outside and wrote the topic above. Then I went to check Dean's site and found the link for the interview (see "Of Interest"). I listened to the interview, taking notes.

7:45, to the edit.

11:45, finished the edit and got it sent off. Turns out my mobile hotspot on my phone works too out in my Adobe Hovel (thanks to my wife for calling Verizon and having them reset my phone). That's a great relief. Of course I won't have it on most of the time. But it's nice to have when my phone flashes to tell me something important needs my attention online.

Going to take a break now. And I've decided when I come back I'm going to write for awhile. (grin)

1 p.m. after a much longer break than I expected, to the writing.

Well, I got some writing done, but not a lot. The edit left me more tired than I thought. Still, I got a good start on another short story. Something completely different. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1077

Nonfiction Words: 1400 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2477

Writing of "Being Eddie Potrano" (short story)

Day 1..... 1077 words. Total words to date..... 1077 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of "The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark" (probably a novel)

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 58205
Total fiction words for the year..... 316606

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14930
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 131380

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 447986

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [George R. R. Martin](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stephen King](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 6/27

[June 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Busy, interrupted day today. I'll write for awhile, take a necessary trip to Sierra Vista, then work on a website for another person for awhile.

I don't offer website building or webmaster services anymore. This is a one-off for a guy who was referred to me. And the price is right.

Being a (Professional) Writer

Disclaimer: This post isn't meant to denigrate anyone. If you're a writer at any level (or not at all), that's fine. This post is only to share a personal joy. If you get anything more out of it, so much the better.

I like analogies. An analogy is an easy, practical way to bring "writer" into line with all the other professions in the world.

There is no angelic chorus singing background when you become a writer anymore than there is an angelic chorus singing background when you become a mechanic.

To continue the analogy, briefly, Dean Wesley Smith showed me a few tools to use, showed me how to use a couple I hadn't known existed, then drove up and dropped me off in front of a garage. "Go be a mechanic," he said. "All you have to do now is show up every day. Otherwise you don't get a paycheck. Oh, and have fun."

- He showed me Heinlein's Rules.
- He showed me Writing Into the Dark.
- He taught me it was in my best interest to resign as the Almighty Writer on High and General Manager of the Universe and let the characters tell the story.
- He taught me that writers, like all other artists, should practice, not hover over one work.

- And then, yes, he kicked me out of the car and said, “Now, go be a writer. All you have to do now is show up every day. Otherwise you don’t get a paycheck. Oh, and have fun.”

I will be forever grateful.

A professional writer, like a professional mechanic, is not something you do. It’s who you are.

That guy who fixes cars for a living is a mechanic. It’s who he is. Yes, five days a week, he shows up at his “job” at a particular place. But the other two days, when he can manage it, he’s working on his own car or a friend’s. He’s “Being” a mechanic.

I took Dean’s advice to heart, even the stuff that didn’t sound quite right to me at first. I’m glad I did.

Sometime in the past few months I flashed past a benchmark. I barely noticed it until I realized, one day, that I think like a writer now. I expected that someday writing stories would become a habit. It didn’t. Sometime or other it simply and quietly became who I am. In a way, I’m glad I didn’t notice “when” it happened. It wasn’t a turning point or a conscious moment. Rather, it was something I became.

The thing is, now I can say I’m a writer. Though other things (Life Happens) sometimes take precedence, nothing is more important to me than writing the next story. Then again, saying it no longer seems all that important. It’s rather like the boor who circulates through parties saying “Oh, me? I’m a mechanic.”

In much the same way that mechanic works on cars pretty much every day, continuously learning his craft, I now work on writing stories (short or long) pretty much every day. When I am forced to take a day off, I get itchy and annoyed.

When I’m not writing fiction, I’m writing non-fiction. When I’m not doing that, I’m observing, reading, and learning from Dean, Kris, Lawrence Block, Heinlein, Bradbury, Alison Holt and many others. When I’m driving, sitting in the doctor’s office or the DMV, or doing something else, I’m thinking about writing.

I have become a professional writer and a sponge. And all because I slowed down One Time long enough to learn Heinlein’s Rules and Writing Into the Dark.

Somewhere along the way I realized my own philosophy of writing:

1. Show Up.
2. Keep Coming Back.

That single-minded, one-track philosophy has enabled me to reach pulp speed on several occasions. On many days I thought might be non-writing days, thanks to SU/KCB I turned out a few to several thousand new, clean words of fiction.

So now I think I’ll get back to that for awhile. (grin)

Of Interest

[New Challenge Starting](#) over at Dean's place and it's exciting to say the least. I might try this one or some version of it myself.

Some good comments on [New Smith's Monthly Issues](#).

Kris Rusch has a new short story out at [KrisWrites.com](#).

And of course I have a new [western/SF short story](#) that will post this afternoon too. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. Kind'a liking that time, I think. It gives me close to an hour to wake up before it's really light enough to move outside.

I checked email and Facebook, visited Dean's site, and wrote everything above this between 4:30 and 6:45.

7 a.m. finally outside and to the fiction.

After a lot of cycling, I added about 1200 new words to the Eddie Potrano story. Now I have to get ready for Sierra Vista.

10 a.m. to Sierra Vista (almost an hour away) to hit the DMV again to title my 4-Runner.

2:30, we didn't get back from SV until 2 p.m. and still no clear title. I'm old enough to remember people, even government bureacrats, having common sense. But apparently what's common to some is a luxury to most nowadays.

Anyway, I need to work on that website, so I'm gonna set aside my fiction for the rest of the day and start fresh again in the morning.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1229

Nonfiction Words: 910 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2139

Writing of "Being Eddie Potrano" (short story)

Day 1..... 1077 words. Total words to date..... 1077 words

Day 2..... 1229 words. Total words to date..... 2306 words

Writing of “The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark” (probably a novel)

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 59434

Total fiction words for the year..... 317835

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 132290

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 450125

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 6/28](#)

[June 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Thanks for the good comments on yesterday’s Topic and on yesterday’s short story of the week. I’m always surprised, albeit pleasantly, when someone enjoys anything I’ve written. Especially when they take time out of their own busy schedule to let me know. I appreciate it.

I’ve pretty much settled on a routine, at least while I have “services” jobs to do for other people.

This morning I’ll write fiction and this stuff, and this afternoon I’ll move into the house (and to my “business” computer) to work on a website and whatever else.

I’m mindful that I also have to write the next short story of the week. But my weekly challenge story will be separate of the two stories I’ve already started. See the brief topic below.

Today is also workshop day (Teams in Fiction) so I’ll get to do that later. Maybe.

But I know “The End Game” (formerly “Being Eddie Potrano”) is nearing the end, so I’m gonna finish that first. After that I’ll either write a completely new short story (to meet my goal) or return to The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark, which I’m almost certain will be my next novel.

Topic: Sticking to Your Guns

Awhile back I started a new challenge (or restarted an old one) to write a new short story at least once a week. Not to FINISH one but to WRITE one, start to finish.

Because my story of the week posts on Monday, for purposes of this challenge the week begins on Tuesday morning and ends on Monday evening.

This past week I wrote “The Trouble with Trimble.” It posted to the Story of the Week yesterday. I also started “The End Game” this past week, but it isn’t finished yet. Probably I’ll finish it this morning.

It will count as a Story of the Week, but it WON’T count as the new story I have to write in its entirety between this morning and next Monday evening.

The way I see it, to satisfy my goal, I have to start and finish a story all within those time parameters. So “The End Game” will be an “extra” story.

What all of that means to me is that this coming Monday, I’ll be ahead by one week on my Story of the Week posts. Woohoo! I’ll post “The End Game” on Monday, July 4 (Mona’s birthday, by the way) and then I’ll post whatever story I write to satisfy my story-per-week goal on July 11.

Great fun, isn’t it? (grin)

To simplify this, just remove the requirement to post a story every week to the blog. Even if I didn’t do that, my goal to write at least one new short story every week would remain.

I hope some of you are trying this. It really is a great deal of fun, especially once you learn to allow your characters to write the story.

Of Interest

There’s a lot over at Dean’s place today. If you don’t regularly scroll down to see comments, I recommend it.

The new post topic is [Approach with Attitude](#). Great stuff.

Also some great comments at [New Challenge Starting](#). There’s one in particular in which Dean answers a question about his writing process regarding writing series.

And finally, more instruction (especially if you’re a mystery writer) in the comments at [Two New Workshops Announced](#).

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 a.m. at my kitten’s insistence. Email, coffee and a newsletter to wake up.

I moved outside around 4:30, but had to go back inside later to move a photo from my other computer to my Dropbox so I can create a fun meme later. Otherwise I generally messed around with Facebook, looking at old photos, etc.

6 a.m. I finally moved to the Adobe Hovel. Got everything set up, then went to check Dean's site. It was SO worthwhile, especially in light of goal setting and my own current schedule. I'm not sure how he does that, but I'm glad he does.

6:30 I was on my way to the writing when I realized something new I needed to do for the website I'm working on. So a slight diversion to fix that. Then I came back here and added to this Journal, including writing the short topic above.

7:15 to the writing.

9:30, finished "The End Game" with another 1700 words. Oof. Man I love stories like this. Off for a break, then back to something else.

12 noon, I did some cycling back in "The End Game" to be sure I had all my little facts right (left/right leg, etc.) and found the story intact. Then I decided to take advantage of having my WiFi hotspot out here. I designed a cover, then published the story to my website for release next Monday.

Then I pushed my luck and distributed it to D2D and Smashwords. But halfway through the process at Amazon, my phone gave up the ghost and, with it, the hotspot. Got exactly what I deserved for overusing the hotspot and all the data that goes with it. (grin)

I'll publish it to Amazon this afternoon up at the house. I should have been writing these past couple of hours anyway. At least I got the story sent off to my donors. (grin)

12:15, back to the novel for a little while. (Yeah, I felt all along it was gonna be a novel.) Then I have to drive into Benson for what I hope will be the last trip to DMV to get a clean title to my 4-Runner.

So today might be a light writing day. I still have to wrap up that website this afternoon too. And listen to my workshop stuff, I hope.

12:35, well I got a couple hundred words added to the novel. But I have to get to Benson, so we'll see what happens when I get back.

That was relatively painless. We were home before 2. Had a great hour and added almost 1000 more new words to the novel. I'd like to keep writing, but I want to make some headway on the website. So I moved inside.

3:15, inside to publish the short story to Amazon and then work on the website.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2909
Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3939

Writing of “The End Game” (short story)

Day 1..... 1077 words. Total words to date..... 1077 words
Day 2..... 1229 words. Total words to date..... 2306 words
Day 3..... 1726 words. Total words to date..... 4032 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 62343
Total fiction words for the year..... 320744

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16870
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 133320

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 454064

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 6/29

[June 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Whew. Late start this morning, for various reasons.

First, we got a good monsoon rain between around 2 and 4 this morning. It lessened to a drizzle and then stopped not long after I got up. We ended up with just under 4/10ths of an inch, exactly one centimeter.

Things get muddy out here quickly, so I wasn't sure (as I was waking up) whether I'd even be able to get to the Adobe Hovel without trudging through mud.

So I settled down with coffee in my house office to eformat a book I've been meaning to format roughly forever for a friend. I finally got it done.

I did come out to the Hovel to turn on a fan and replace the warm air inside with the cooler, outside air. Then I went back to the house and did some other things for the next hour.

Finally I brought my writing ‘puter out here and set up shop.

Topic: A Morning of Distractions

I moved out to my Adobe Hovel office at 7:30. By around 9 I had added almost 1000 words to the novel.

Then I looked up to find my little girl kitten had jumped the fence up at the house and come to visit her dad. (I mentioned in another post this office is about 200 feet from my house.)

That wasn't all bad, but she soon tired of exploring the Hovel and headed toward the window that leads to the open desert. Coyotes, etc. constantly hang out in the nearby mesquites, but I caught her just in time and pulled her back through.

So I took her up to the house and put her over the fence, then came back out here and gathered up my stuff to move back into the house office. Surely I could pull it off.

But no. That's where I got so severely sidetracked. Of course, each thing would take “only a second or two.”

I uploaded a book to Smashwords for a guy. To do that I had to first update his summary and check his search words. Then I hung around and assigned the book an ISBN. Then emailed him to let him know he should forward me any email he gets from them just in case my format was messed up.

Then I played with the website “for just another few seconds” that turned into an hour. I double checked the file to be sure I had everything I needed and —

Then I remembered I was supposed to be playing with the characters in my novel. Two new major characters came in this morning. Probably they're feeling neglected.

Then I looked around for the baby and found her taking a nap beneath the overhead fan above my bed. So I've just moved (very quietly) back out to the Adobe Hovel. (grin)

The point of all this is, those distractions, enjoyable and mostly non-frustrating as they were, quickly cost me three hours. Bam! Just like that, the morning I started eight hours ago is gone.

Fortunately I don't allow that to happen very often. But it's something I have to guard against pretty much all the time. I hope you'll try not to let that happen to you.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, [Clearing the Decks](#) in preparation for his upcoming challenge. It's a brief continuation of his Attitude post from yesterday.

I also highly recommend reading [Martin L. Shoemaker's comment](#) on the Attitude post. Very cool.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 to the welcome sound of abating rain. Coffee and email to wake up. Then I worked on the stuff I talked about above.

7:30 finally moved out to the Adobe Hovel. I used my hotspot to visit Dean's site then take care of a couple other things.

8 a.m., to the novel. Ugh. Slow start. I mean, the novel itself is going fine. But I keep allowing myself to be sidetracked. I talked about that above.

12:10 p.m., I wrote the topic above, and now I'm back to the novel.

3:15, Well, it's another day of KCB. (grin) I'm not bragging here, folks. I'm amazed. Even with all the diversions this morning and then a couple of intentional breaks this afternoon, Keep Coming Back remained lodged somewhere in the brain-housing group north of my shoulders. And I reached my word count plus.

Also the novel's moving along like nobody's business. Man, I love what my characters do for me when I just let 'em run. I'm gonna keep playing for awhile. Then I'll go to the house and file this. Then I have to be an adult again for awhile. (sigh)

Oh, and sometime this week I have to watch and listen to Teams in Fiction. I'll report here after I do.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3636

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4436

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 65979

Total fiction words for the year..... 324380

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 134120

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 458500

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 6/30

[June 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, last day of the month. (sigh) But that leaves room to have a great July. I hope to have a good writing day today and end the month on a high note.

A couple of my sons and a granddaughter I hadn't seen for a very long time popped up unexpectedly last night. Very good to see Miss Taylor Mae. And yeah, it was good to see the knuckle-draggers again too. (grin)

Okay, today sometime I have to finish formatting a book for my friend and I'd like to finish that other guy's website. I also need to create a customized instruction sheet for the website guy re the WordPress dashboard and the theme I used on it.

And I have to write.

And sometime today, maybe I'll watch and listen to this week's videos on Teams in Fiction.

Well, it's getting late. A lot of cycling today.

I didn't get into any new characters today, yet. That surprised me because there will be a LOT of characters in this book, I think. But I'm nearing my daily goal, and that's a good feeling. I'll make my word count plus some.

And the characters I've happened upon thus far keep tugging on my sleeve and divulging different sides of themselves. Hence the cycling.

These are really deep, well-rounded characters in two pairs so far. And the two pairs haven't even met yet.

So it's been a journey of discovery today as well. And that's always a good thing.

Of Interest

[What Does It Take To Be A Full-Time Writer](#). Not as good as I thought it would be, but maybe worth your while.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4. Messed around with just online stuff (newsletters, etc.) until around 5:30. I was supposed to go get lab work done at 7-ish so no coffee, etc. until after that. Anyway, I put off the lab until tomorrow.

5:45 formatting, then finishing that website. Then I

Around 6:30, the boys and Taylor got up. After Taylor ate breakfast, she, the boys, Mona and I all sat around in a very light, cool mist and visited. The boys and I each enjoyed a cigar. It was the best do-nothing break I've had since Father's Day weekend. Thanks for popping in, guys. Moments like that are what keep me from moving to Ecuador.

Then Mona left for work, the kids left for NM, and I came inside to create the instruction sheet for the website client. I also made up a PayPal invoice for him (yay, money) and sent both of those things off. Can't tell you how glad I am to be rubbing shoulders with being done with it.

Finally I updated this Journal.

10:30 a.m., moved out to the Adobe Hovel. I rearranged a few things there so I could open the other window a bit to get airflow.

10:50, to the novel. After a little over a half-hour of cycling, I added 400 new words. Then a short break.

11:45, back to it.

3:45. I've been cycling back all day off and on, mixed in with breaks to walk up to the house to check on the babies and so on. And I've still managed to eke out over 2600 words.

3:54, back to it for a bit.

4:25, okay, I'm gonna call it. Storm clouds are building in again. I love the monsoons and the cooler weather, but I'm not wild about slogging through mud.

I didn't end the day or the month with as big a bang as I wanted to, but I'll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3236

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3836

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 69215

Total fiction words for the year..... 327616

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 134720

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 462336

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 7/1](#)

[July 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Yay! I checked my meds last night and realized I don't need to do labs this morning. I have a couple months of meds left, so I won't need to renew the scrips for awhile.

I think it was Charlie Brown who first said, "No problem is so big you can't put it off for awhile." (grin) So no lab this morning and no doc appointment next week. Woohoo!

This isn't really a topic, but it might help some of you either directly (when you buy and read my books, grin) or indirectly.

Speaking of promotions, one writer with whom I talked recently still believes if he "lands" a traditional publisher, said publisher will pour dollars into promoting his book.

Uhhh, no. It doesn't work like that unless you're Stephen King or one of those guys.

Please don't beleive that nonsense. Even if you go the traditional route, you're still gonna have to do three or four lions' shares of the promo yourself. Just the way the game's played nowadays.

Promotions

As I've said before, the absolute best way to promote your work is to write the next story or book. That's the best form of passive promotion there is.

Of course, that's a good thing. I'm a writer (not a promoter or advertising guy), so I prefer to write anyway.

But nobody else is gonna do the active promotion stuff for me either. So I'm always looking for new ways to promote my work.

If I may indulge for a moment in a personal promotion, now is the time to STOCK UP ON SUMMER READING.

ALL of my titles are On Sale for the entire month of July at 75% off at Smashwords. And yeah, other people's titles are on sale too. (grin)

75% off means ALL of my short stories are FREE there.

Likewise, ALL of my novels (for readers and writers) and nonfiction books for writers are on sale for 75% off the cover price. So, like a buck or two bucks.

To take advantage of this sale, visit <https://www.smashwords.com/>. Then put FrostProof808 into the Search box at the right. Then select your titles and add the code SSW75 at checkout to get the discount.

Whether I do this again will depend on how many sales I get this time, so get hot! And enjoy!

(Note that this does NOT apply at Amazon or any other retailer. But you can get ANY eformat at Smashwords, even PDF.)

Of Interest

Dean talks about his challenge, which begins when he wakes up later today. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 4 with eight hours of solid sleep. I basically did nothing during the first hour. Email, Facebook, coffee. Lots of coffee.

Then I went nuts.

I visited Smashwords, set up the sale, and wrote the stuff above. I posted this announcement here, on Facebook and on HarveyStanbrough.com in a blog post that will go out at 8 a.m. this morning (so some of you have already seen it). Then I visited MailChimp (twice). Once to change the time of the HarveyStanbrough.com post to go out at 8 a.m. instead of 11 a.m. Then again to change my Free Story of the Week post to go out at 5 p.m. on Friday (today) instead of 7 p.m. on Monday. So from now on, my new story-a-week goal runs from Friday at 5 p.m. until the following Friday at 4:59 p.m. (grin)

That was the second hour and a half.

6:35, now for a short break, then to watch and listen to the videos (finally) from Week 4 of the Teams in Fiction workshop. I'm only three days behind. (grin)

8 a.m., I got through the videos and they were as informative and revealing as they usually are. Great stuff. Mostly for me it was validation this week. He talked a lot about things I've been doing for awhile, so that's good. Still, I took a ton of notes. Now for a brief break.

10 a.m., cycling again (I expected this as I rushed through the final scene yesterday) I added about 1000 words. Then a break to rearrange the Adobe Hovel a bit. Tested my guyness, moving heavy stuff, etc. (grin) Went up to the house to get a broom.

While I was there, I dumped a load of dried laundry on the bed (just towels and such), loaded another load of actual clothes into the dryer. Then a big, long cloud rolled over the mountains from the west and a big rain began. (Appropriate for my WIP.)

So I located the babies, made sure they were inside, then came back out to the Hovel. I used the head of the broom to sweep off an interior window ledge (all of five minutes) and came back to record this stuff and get back to the novel. Just as the rain abated. (grin) Weird, very busy day.

10:45, back to the WIP.

12:45, creeping along on the WIP. For this one I have to use the initial chapters to introduce diverse characters in different situations at the same time when a major event begins. Anyone read *The Stand* by Stephen King? Kind of the same structure.

So some of this morning was coming up with characters who could be in a certain place at 3 a.m. when the bad stuff starts. Them, their loved ones, their reaction, etc. So the book might go slowly for a few days until I get all that stuff in place.

Took a brief break, went to the house and unloaded the dryer, stuffed a snack into my pocket, refilled my glass with Gatorstuff and headed back to the Hovel.

1:30, back to the WIP.

3:30, have to cut it off. Duty calls. Today I hope to finish the website a bit later today so that tomorrow I can just write.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3227

Nonfiction Words: 960 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4187

Writing of **The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark**

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 3227
Total fiction words for the year..... 330843

Total nonfiction words for the month... 960
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 135680

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 466523

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 7/2

[July 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'm getting a lot of "Someone Purchased Your Book" notes from Smashwords this morning. In case any of those were you guys, thank you.

Last night some time I decided I would need a kind of outline for this book. I mention this only because it will seem a deviation from my usual routine of writing into the dark for those of you who have been following this Journal for awhile.

But it isn't.

This outline (I think of it as a roadmap) is not to detail what happens in the chapters, but in which character's POV each chapter will be written and to be sure I introduce all the necessary main characters. I think this is necessary because this book jumps around so much.

I'll still be writing into the dark. Where the characters and situations lead the story to deviate from the outline, I'll change the outline, not the story.

Finally, I have to get hot. I'm going to cut off my writing at 1 or 2 p.m. today so Mona and I can lock the babies inside (it'll be hot by then anyway) and head for Sierra Vista. Her birthday is Monday, July 4th. (grin)

My sincere thanks to my acquaintance (friend I've never met) BC for the tongue-in-cheek topic below.

Topic: Writing Is Great Fun (Unless You're Writing A News Story In Which You Detail The Gruesome Murder Of A Child [Or Other Innocent] And Are Required To Interview The Grieving Parents And The Upchucking, Nightmare-Plagued Cops To Satisfy The Public's 'Right to Know')

As you know, Dean Wesley Smith espouses the notion that (fiction) writing should be fun. He says so constantly.

Recently on one of Dean's posts, a respondent wrote, "You think writing about a murdered child is fun?"

But wait. I'm not being fair. I took this out of context.

The respondent made his living for many years as a reporter writing news and other nonfiction stuff. (Just as if news isn't fiction, but that's a post for another time).

ANYWAY, he was making the point that writing a news story about a murdered child — which I assume would include interviewing police and even the child's parents and other loved ones — was no fun at all. And I'm sure it wasn't. Or wouldn't be.

But I'm taking that out of context too, really.

The respondent's point and the example above were predicated on an erroneous presumption: that by "full time writer" Dean meant anything other than "full-time, long-term fiction writer." Indeed, Dean's own post skewed off point a bit. As it continued, it tended toward "lasting" rather than simply making a living.

Graciously, Dean apologized and said he should be more careful to note that he's talking about being a full-time FICTION writer.

I wouldn't have been that gracious. Unless I just wanted to deflect the thrust and move on to more important matters. Like writing. Okay, writing fiction.

Even if I were in the mood to engage, I might have agreed with what I presume (because two can play the presumption game) the respondent meant. I presume he meant witnessing the parents' heart-wrenching anguish as he interviewed them and maybe even the blood spots on the floor of the child's bedroom; enduring the bone-weary, sorrowful look of utter disbelief in the cops' eyes as he interviewed them; and then, yes, putting it all on paper on his trusty Remington in the inverted-pyramid style in time to make the deadline was no fun at all. And again, I'm sure it wasn't.

But that isn't what he asked. His original question was "You think writing about a murdered child is fun?" (There is another presumption there, that Dean somehow indicated that writing about murdered children is fun, which he didn't, but I won't go into that here.)

Of course, even in the context of being a professional, long-term FICTION writer, the answer would be No. But that's because the question is too long.

Had the respondent asked, "You think writing is fun?" the answer would have been a resounding Yes.

Or you could expand the question again, but don't be so specific as to shove a guy into a corner. "You think writing about just any old thing is fun?"

Again, umm Yes.

And that's yet another mark of a professional, long-term fiction writer. You don't always choose the topic. Sometimes the topic (characters, storyline, setting) chooses you.

Do you HAVE to write every image that pops into your head? No, of course not.

Do you HAVE to write stories about murdered children? Or murdered old men? Or murder at all? Again, nuh-uh.

I once wrote a sentence (in a story about a murdered child, actually) that I immediately deleted because it was simply too horrific. I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stomach it. I didn't want to be responsible for putting it into people's minds. In fact, I don't even believe most "slash and gash" horror writers would use it.

Do you have to write stories about fairy dust and roses and a glimmering, shimmering world in which all is well? Oh my god, No.

I mean, write it if you want, but your only sales will be in southern California and inside the Beltway. (grin)

But I digress.

The point is, if you're reading this post, you already know I'm a fiction writer. So if I write a blog post or topic titled "Writing Is Great Fun," I shouldn't have to append the title to read "... Unless You're Writing A News Story In Which You Detail The Gruesome Murder Of A Child (Or Other Innocent) And Are Required To Interview The Grieving Parents And The Upchucking, Nightmare-Plagued Cops To Satisfy The Public's 'Right to Know'."

Okay, just having fun here. I also shouldn't have to retitle the topic to read "Writing Is Great Fun Unless You're A Reporter" or "... Unless You're Writing About A Serious Topic" or "... Unless You're Earning A Living From Your Writing."

Writing is great fun. That's why I do it. If it wasn't, I'd be strolling along a beach or cleaning my guns or camping or drinking myself under a table in a bar somewhere.

If it wasn't great fun for me to listen to and report on whatever is going on in the mind of my characters — ALL of my characters — I simply wouldn't do it. I'd either skip the line that bothered me (see the inset above), move on to another story, or abandon the whole thing and take up one of the pursuits in the paragraph before this one.

And just so you know, I wrote this non-fiction topic "into the dark" with my subconscious mind as well. (grin)

Okay, enough poking fun at my acquaintance. Now to the boring stuff.

Of Interest

A good article on planning for the second half of the years. [Give it a look](#) (you'll have to scroll down quite a ways.) Anyone thinking about dieting or getting in shape might want to check out [the comment by USAF](#) on Dean's site under Workshops and Challenge Starting.

Some good stuff as well over on [JM Ney-Grimm's blog](#). You'll have to scroll down to find things that suit you or are of value to you.

On that same blog, there's a good article on building book covers at <http://jmney-grimm.com/2016/04/building-fates-cover/>. I subscribed after I read that.

The Day

Rolled out way late shortly before 5 a.m. after a rough night.

At 6:30 I moved out to the Adobe Hovel, sat down and wrote the topic above. Just for grins, I'll mention that it's now 7:20. In that 50 minutes I put down 851 words. Right on my 1000 words per hour (that's only 17 words per minute) average when I'm unhindered by cycling. (grin) In the interest of full disclosure, I DID go back later and add two words to the topic: "But wait" at the beginning of the fourth paragraph.

7:45 after a short break, I started the reverse outline (I've talked about this before) and to attend to the roadmap I mentioned above.

8:30, I returned to the novel. Within several minutes, I realized the "roadmap" was not a good idea. Probably I should make a topic of this some time. Maybe tomorrow.

Over the next five hours, including breaks now and then, I wrote what you see below. Not my best, but I had promised to close up shop by 2 p.m. so not bad for a limited day. I'll take it.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3295
Nonfiction Words: 1370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4665

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6522
Total fiction words for the year..... 334138

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 137050

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 471188

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 7/3](#)

[July 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I got Dr. Mardy's quotes newsletter in my email this morning. Two quotes by Jean Cocteau caught my attention, one as an epigram for a story or two:

“You've never seen death? Look in the mirror every day and you will see it like bees working in a glass hive.”

Three titles immediately suggest themselves from this quote: “Looking in the Mirror Every Day” (possible poem or story), “Bees Working in a Glass Hive” and “The Glass Hive.”

The other quote seemed fitting (tongue-in-cheek) for what I'm doing here:

“After the writer's death, reading his journal is like receiving a long letter.”

I'm beginning a walking routine again this morning, albeit only out back where there's a one-mile circuit. There are too many violent dogs (dogs, n. creatures with teeth who will attack on a

whim) along any roads that I could walk from the house, and I don't want to park the 4-Runner "out" anywhere until I get the back glass replaced.

Later, in the Adobe Hovel, before I started writing, I spent some time on the structure. Even without the "roadmap," I still have to pay attention to structure on this one.

I've never written a novel before in which 1) there are so many main characters and 2) the characters and their smaller stories must all be introduced before the big story begins. Of course, the "big story" is a narrow thread that runs through all the smaller ones, but the reader is aware of it long before the characters are.

So I worked awhile with the reverse outline. Then, with a clearer big picture in mind, I combined two chapters, separated another one into two, then switched the positions of two chapters.

All of this interspersed with a tiny bit of writing and four or five necessary very short breaks doing other things.

During this series of mini-tasks, I also realized the WIP will need a prologue or something similar. The story is post-apocalyptic. My intention was to play down the apocalyptic event and work only with the characters' reactions to it during the aftermath. I'm finding that almost impossible to do without devising the event itself.

Topic: Outlines and Roadmaps

I never use an outline, except a diary-like reverse outline, which I've talked about before. The reverse outline, which I learned from Dean, seemed like a good idea. I tried it with the Wes stories, the Jonathan Kirski SF and others, and it worked. And it will work in this case.

But yesterday, because my current novel will involve a lot of main characters, I thought a roadmap (an outline of when and where characters appear and when and where I return to them) would be a good idea.

It wasn't.

I didn't chunk it. I might refer back to it from time to time for ideas. But instead of keeping me on track in this early stage, it served to bog me down. Almost.

It opened the door for my critical mind and I started thinking. And one of the first thoughts was that this is a massive undertaking. No possible way can I put all of this together. No way.

I really should have known better. As I innocently put together the road map, I found ideas springing into my mind. I found myself flashing forward and back in the story. This goes there, that goes here.

This pair will do this. They'll find that. Then this pair will come in. Then this trio, then this group of people. And oh my god, how will this fit with that? How will it all fit together?

And before I knew what was happening, I was looking at the whole novel. Trying to load the whole novel into my mind.

I was making up the whole story in my outline (as the Almighty Writer on High) instead of simply running through the story with my characters, writing down what they say and do.

It's the old elephant analogy. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

But if you don't focus on that one bite, chances are the idea of eating a whole elephant will overwhelm you.

Not to mention the story will be deadly dull to write. Who wants to write a story when they already know the ending? I suspect that's what writers are doing when they complain that writing is such drudgery and such hard work.

But this story, at least up to this point, is anything but dull. It probably will be my first true action/adventure thriller if I don't screw it up.

So I shoved the roadmap to the side, relegated it to a folder labeled Other Files in the The Day the Earth Shuddered folder, and began the process of ignoring it.

That took only a short walk, thoughts about the next scene, and about ten minutes. Then I was off and writing again. (grin)

Of Interest

If you haven't heard yet, [Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and prolific writer, passed away at 87.](#)

Not a lot at Dean's place other than a quiet sort-of rant regarding fireworks and tourists.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, coffee and email to wake up. To my delight, this morning's email held Dr. Mardy's quotes newsletter.

4:15, I started writing all of the above.

5 a.m., to the Adobe Hovel to open windows and turn on the fan to draw cool air through and drive out the heat built up from yesterday. I also swept the floor.

5:50, out for a walk. Probably only a mile.

6:45, back. The light sweat I worked up during the first mile felt so good I did a second one. I visited Dean's site, answered a few more emails, and briefly visited Facebook.

6:55 a.m., to the Adobe Hovel to spend some time on the structure of the novel (see above).

8:15, finally to the novel in earnest.

Ha! "In earnest" I wrote. (grin) I wrote a foreword (it will go at the back of the book, if it's included at all) about the various kinds of aliens and alien invasions. Then I wrote a prologue in which I narrate, as briefly as possible (less than 400 words), the apocalyptic event.

Then I took a brief break, during which I walked up to the house. I saw my wife there and asked whether she'd like to hear the prologue. She said yes and followed me back to the Hovel. After the prologue, I started reading chapter 1. Each time I stopped, she said I should keep going. Four hours later I had read almost the whole novel thus far (around 16000 words) correcting the occasional typo as I went. Fun, but not writing. (grin)

12:25, Another very brief break now, then back to the novel. During the break I made another change for the website guy, grabbed a can of lunch and a tube of crackers, then headed back out here. All morning gone, and I've written fewer than a thousand words of fiction. (sigh)

12:35, back to the novel. I wrote awhile, then moved a few chapters around. And that's the key (I'm learning here). Instead of setting up some sort of "roadmap" I just need to write. On this kind of book, each early chapter is self-contained, almost a story in itself. So I can Just Write them, then put them where they belong later. (grin)

2:20, another break, then back to the novel.

3:30, I nailed down the last thousand words I need for today and I'm at a good stopping place (jagged edge) so I'll see you tomorrow. Have I talked about the Jagged Edge trick before?

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3336

Nonfiction Words: 1270 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4606

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9858

Total fiction words for the year..... 337474

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3600
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 138320

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 475794

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 7/4

[July 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MY BRIDE! Now you all know what the fireworks are really for.

Well, I'm posting this way early today. With today being my wife's birthday, yesterday I decided today would be a planned day off. However, I get up early, so I decided to use that time to write. As you'll see, it turned out even better than I expected. (grin)

No topic today, but I'll be back with one soon.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, not much new, but some good pictures of the book room in his new store if you're into that. Also, in his response to one [comment on Story Two](#) (a day ago), Dean talks more about his current challenges. Kind of enlightening and maybe it will give you (us) some ideas.

Kris' short story of the week should post today as well. [Check here](#) and scroll down.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Wanted to get some writing in before the day begins. Coffee, email and Facebook to wake up.

3:30 to the novel. I got about 1100 new words on the page, then skipped over to Dean's place to see what was going on. If you aren't in the habit of reading back over comments on the previous day's post, I hope you'll get in the habit. Not much new there today, but a great response to one comment on yesterday's post.

Also took a couple of short breaks, tending to my kitten and the pets, etc.

6 a.m. back to the novel.

Discipline is a wonderful thing. I knew I had only a few hours to write this morning, so I set aside almost everything else and bent to the task. (It's such drudgery, you know. grin)

Mona came out and asked about the novel, which is rolling along fine. I read her a new chapter I wrote yesterday and this morning, and it works well. I have almost 2000 words at this point. So with an hour and a half to go, I'll make my word count today, on what I expected to be a non-writing day. Total score.

7:30, back to the novel.

At 8:59 I had written over 3000 words, so calling it a day. I wonder what would have happened if I'd written at this pace all day? Maybe I'll try that soon.

I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable holiday today.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3571

Nonfiction Words: 390 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3961

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 13429

Total fiction words for the year..... 341045

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3990

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 138710

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 479755

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 7/5

July 5, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Hope everyone still has all their fingers, eyes, hearing, etc. this morning after the Independence Day festivities. I do, but then I tend to lock myself away and watch baseball or a movie during the insanity.

My wife and I enjoy (or used to enjoy) fireworks, but it's much better when you don't have to put up with so much of the noise. Too bad you can't press a Mute button but still watch them live in the sky.

We came close years ago. We lived on a 50+ acre farm (one of her family farms) about two miles outside of Pittsboro, Indiana. On the evening of July 4th, we would take a blanket to the west perimeter, spread it near a wild honeysuckle bush, and sit back to watch fireworks. We didn't have to endure OPK (or OP for that matter), dogs, ashes or noise, yet we had a great time.

My first reader got her notes for *The Right Cut* (the Wes Crowley novel) back to me yesterday. Thanks Alison! Now I have two novels to fix and publish. I'll have to work that into the schedule over the next few days.

Somewhere after I hit my daily goal each morning, I also have a copyedit to do. Maybe I can do that for a few hours and then spend an hour or two going over corrections for the two previous novels. (grin) It's a good problem to have all the way around.

Topic: Leaving a Jagged Edge

I first heard this term used (as applicable to writing) by SF author CJ Cherryh at Eastern NMU in Portales NM while she was talking about writers' block and how to conquer it. (This technique works well when writing any genre of fiction, not only SF.)

If you're still at the stage where the blank page is intimidating, or if you "get stuck" when you come back to your WIP after time away (whether a night or a week or whatever), read on.

By the way, you can find CJ Cherryh's blog at <http://www.cherryh.com/WaveWithoutAShore/>. There are some good gems there if you browse. Just remember that different writers write differently, and your way is fine.

First, a note on writer's block itself. I've said for ages, there is no such thing. A sure cure? If you sit down at a blank page (screen or paper) and draw a blank, start writing about the writer's block. Soon enough you'll be writing whatever's on your mind in the way of a poem or story or essay. It works. Try it.

But what about that jagged edge?

As I mentioned above, Ms. Cherryh mentioned this in response to a question from the audience about writer's block. (No, I wasn't the questioner.) The question was along the lines of, "Wull, what about when you come back to the WIP the next day (or whenever) and yer stuck?"

She responded (paraphrased), "I don't have that problem. I always leave a jagged edge. Basically, that means I put the character in the shower. When I get back, I have to write him or her out of the shower. By the time I get that done, I'm back into the flow of the story."

See? That's what I mean when I use the term "gem."

At the time, I had enjoyed considerable success as a poet. But I had never written a novel. (Yep, too scared of eating a whole elephant at once.) And I had written only a handful of short stories.

Many writers (I was one of them) believe a "good stopping point" is the end of a scene or chapter.

It isn't.

Usually, that's exactly why they get stuck. When they come back to the WIP, they're facing a blank page.

The jagged-edge, put-the-guy-in-the-shower technique easily remains among the most profoundly valuable lessons I've ever learned about writing.

Since then, I've actually written scenes in which the character LITERALLY went into the shower or bath. And I did so with the specific intention of having to "write him out" of the shower or bath upon my return. And it worked.

Nowadays (and long before I started writing novels), I still use the jagged edge.

But now a good stopping point is when one character has asked a question of another. When I get back, the other character has to answer the question, take action, whatever.

Or a broad wooden beam cracks overhead and the character looks up, eyes wide in anticipation of the ceiling/roof caving in.

Or a sudden massive roaring jerks the character from a sound sleep and he sits bolt upright to see a wall of water rushing his way. Or a hungry-looking lion peering at him from a tree limb overhead. Or. Or. Or.

You get the idea.

Of Interest

Scroll down at [Workshops Starting and Story Four Done](#) and you'll find a few gems in the topic: Reasons Why I Write Over Major Holidays. I found it timely. (grin)

You can find some great gems of writing wisdom at [CJ Cherryh's blog](#).

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3, but making a slower start this morning than I did yesterday. Very little email, a little time on Facebook to catch up, and played some spider solitaire while I drank coffee and woke up.

Then I headed outside (around 4) with a cigar and my kitten, but I didn't bring my computer yet. Finally brought it out around 4:45 and wrote this stuff. Then I skipped over to DWS' blog, read it, and even left a comment.

5 a.m., moved the computer outside and wrote the topic above (as promised earlier). Going now to post it to HarveyStanbrough.com. Along with another threat (grin) that I'm going to move this daily journal over there soon.

6 a.m. Ugh, that last bit took longer than I expected. I edited the post a bit, back and forth from here to there, before I finally let it go. A brief break for more coffee, then to the novel.

6:05, to the novel. Cycling back (I remembered to add-in a previously forgotten but very important detail), I wrote a scant 600 words before I realized I needed to mow the back and side yards.

Of course, that turned into more than it was at the beginning. I ended up cutting out a huge, years-old Mormon Tea bush and found a couple new ant hills to get rid of. Murder seems to be my thing lately.

7:30, returned to my 'puter to realize I'd allowed the battery to get too low. Oops. So I packed it all up ('puter, Gatorstuff, cigars, etc.) and moved to the Adobe Hovel where I have a second power cord.

Got settled, plugged everything in, did some CPR on the 'puter and it blinked back to life. Eventually. Then a message popped up from my good friends at Norton. Seems they had done something in the background and wanted to restart my computer.

Okey doke. I saved everything, closed everything, and hit Restart Now. Then I lit a cigar and found something else to do for the several minutes it would take the 'puter to update and restart.

8:30, back, finally, to the novel.

11 a.m. and around 1300 words later, a break to get fill my glass with ice and put my license plate (my wife would say "finally") on my 4-Runner.

11:15, back to the novel.

12:15, calling it a day on the novel. I have a bit of mowing left to do, then an edit to begin. And I hope to get through the corrections on at least one of my previous novels today so I can get the thing published. Hard for readers to find it when it's still in my virtual desk drawer. (grin)

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3078

Nonfiction Words: 1300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4378

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words

Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words

Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 16507

Total fiction words for the year..... 344123

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5290

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 140010

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 484133

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CJ Cherryh](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 7/6](#)

[July 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, another day, another dollar or two. Unless you choose to take advantage of my Smashwords 75%-off sale, in which you can get any or all of my short stories free and all my other stuff for a pittance.

To take advantage of this sale visit <https://www.smashwords.com/>. Then put FrostProof808 into the Search box at the right. Select your titles and add the code SSW75 at checkout to get the discount.

Today I'll write (this morning), then edit. Probably I'll try to squeeze in an hour or so to watch and listen to the videos for Week 5 of the Teams in Fiction workshop. I haven't felt the need to do the homework assignments this time around, so that gives me more time.

Topic: Pseudonyms

In a comment on the 7/2 post, Sam asked, "Why does one use a pseudonym? What is the advantage, if any?"

The obvious answer to both questions, in a nutshell, is anonymity.

If you are the youth pastor at your local church, but your writing tends toward the erotic, you might want to use a pen name.

If you're a practicing doctor and your novels revolve around a hero who regularly practices euthanasia, you might want to use a pen name.

If you're a politician and your heroine advocates honesty and term limits, you might want to use a pen name.

Hey, I'm starting to feel a little like Jeff Foxworthy here. (grin)

In other words, if you write anything at all that might be offensive (I hate that word) or embarrassing to your family or friends but you'd rather not allow censorship to rear its ugly head in your life, you might want to use a pen name.

Often, would-be memoirists choose to wait until certain family members kick off to write their memoir. I've often wondered how many honest family histories have been lost to this "wait for it" attitude. I've long believed it would be better to write the memoir as a novel and slap a pseudonym on it.

If you think about it, memoir is more similar to fiction than dissimilar. Fiction is a recollection of events that haven't happened yet, from one person's point of view. Memoir is a recollection of events that HAVE happened, but still from one person's POV.

But another reason for using pen names recently dawned on me. I used to do this anyway, albeit using personas (a topic for another day) instead of pen names.

If you write in different genres, it might be a good idea to use a different pen name for each genre.

Especially if you write a LOT of stories and novels.

Most of my own stories tend to be in four main categories:

- Historical Western — by which I mean westerns set in an historical time period
- SF, set both on and off Earth — in my case, mostly science fantasy (what Bradbury called “sociological science fiction,” since they’re more about humans’ reaction to the science instead of the science itself) because I don’t care much for the laws of physics as they’re currently written
- Mobster Stuff — I have no idea why. I just like these guys, mostly the attitude, situations and dialogue. I guess maybe this is a mixture of the Action/Adventure and Psychological Suspense (umm, kind’a Horror but without the slash-and-gash stuff) genres.
- Magic Realism — Probably I should toss this one in because I used to write them, I love writing them, and I hope to go back to writing them at some point. I aspire to someday write MR as well as does Isabel Allende. Strictly in my own estimation, I already write it as well as does Gabriel Garcia Márquez. So there.

And then some of my stories are just nuts. Just “out there.”

Now, those are the predominant genres in which I write. Because I love poking around deep in the mind of the characters (good guys AND bad guys), all of these tend to contain some aspects of Psychological Suspense.

Finally, I also tend to toss in a dash of Romance ’cause, well, I’m me and ALL human beings either have romance in their lives or wish they had it in their lives.

But recently I’ve come to fear what I call the “blind men exploring an elephant” syndrome.

Even among my very small audience of dedicated readers, I’ve noticed an increase in numbers of people who unsubscribe from my Story of the Week blog after I publish a certain type of story.

I’m convinced that if the story had a different name on it, those former subscribers would have been more forgiving (for lack of a better word).

So I’m thinking about using pen names again.

Oddly enough, in the case of using pen names for Genre Manipulation, it doesn’t matter that readers know the writer behind the curtain is me. Seriously.

If I had the good sense to label my westerns as written by Harvey Stanbrough, my SF as written by Eric Stringer, my mobster stories as written by Fat Tony Capriotti, and my magic realism as written by Gervasio Arrancado, the readers would simply skip over stories by the “offensive” authors and remain subscribed.

Aren’t people strange? But then, that’s why they end up being characters, yes?

And when you are fairly certain a particular reader will skip a story by a particular writer, it frees up said writer to use that reader as a character in those stories. (grin)

Again, so there.

Note: You can discover the significance of “so there”—and it is significant—by ordering [The Boomer Bible by R. F. Laird](#). You’ll also get a wonderfully funny book.

Of Interest

Y’wanna be inspired? Read [Novelist Finds Formula for Success](#).

You can learn more about [Ryoke Inoue at his website](#), translated into English for your viewing pleasure. This fits with today’s topic. Some of Mr. Inoue’s pseudonyms are Tex Taylor, K. Luger and Billy Smart. (He reportedly has 36 more pseudonyms.)

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 a.m. Around 4 I moved outside with a flashlight (a “task” light), my computer and my coffee. Then I started on this post, including the topic above.

I also skipped around online during this time, finding a cheap (but new) copy of The Boomer Bible, reading Dean’s post, and re-reading the Formula for Success post about the world’s most prolific writer, Ryoki Inoue, then his website.

6:30, finally to the Adobe Hovel and the writing.

10 a.m., after a little over 2500 words I’m taking a break to work on the 4-Runner for a bit.

11:30, well, it turned into a longer break than I anticipated. Back to the novel.

1:30, calling it a day on the novel. I’d like to keep going, but I have an edit to work on, two novels to look over corrections on and publish, and five or six videos to listen to.

See you tomorrow.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 4333

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5453

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20840
Total fiction words for the year..... 348456

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 141130

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 489586

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[Ryoko Inoue](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 7/7

[July 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I got a late start this morning after a LOT of sleep. And that really isn't how I roll. I'm one of those who would never sleep if I could find a way around it.

In fact, when I encounter those who say they "love" to sleep, it doesn't even compute. I've never been able to understand how sleeping away one-third of one's life can possibly be a good thing.

But then I fall back on my old Marine Corps logic. How long others sleep has no bearing on my liberty (meaning time off) or my paycheck, so (shrug) no biggie.

By the way, I'm scheduling a planned day off for this coming Saturday. Probably there will be moaning and gnashing of teeth. But I'm going to provide a tutoring session (maybe day-long) for a friend who needs help.

So if I get anything done on Saturday for fiction, I'll take it.

Today I'll continue with my WIP. No editing today. I might work on my two novels I need to get out. Maybe at least go through and apply the changes even if I don't get the covers done and get the books published.

I also still have the videos to watch and listen to for Week 5 of the Teams in Fiction workshop (a great workshop by the way). And I still need to write at least one short story before Friday. So we'll see how the day unfolds.

An Announcement

I recently decided to take on up to three students to tutor them from beginning to end through a current or recent (unpublished) work of fiction.

Different writers are at different stages or levels of their writing journey. So the tutoring will be personalized. Whatever discrepancies I see in the work, those are what we'll work on.

This might be from basic mechanics (sentence structure, etc.) all the way up to how to add depth to scenes or how to improve pacing and pretty much anything else you can imagine.

Of necessity, I prefer to work with writers who are regional, meaning those with whom I can physically sit down face to face for an extended session of show and tell. Preferably with our laptops side by side.

I already have one student, so I currently have two openings. If this is something that interests you, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and let me know.

I don't know yet what the cost will be, but it won't be prohibitive. I'm not doing this for money so much as to help other writers to get farther along the path.

If you're not close enough so we can meet face to face but you're interested in this, email me anyway and I'll see whether I can work something out with you.

Topic: Personas

Okay, first, what's the difference between a pseudonym (pen name) and a persona?

Basically, a pseudonym is just an alias. It's you writing under an assumed name either for anonymity or faux anonymity (like for genre identification). I say "faux anonymity" because even if you allow readers to know the pen name is also you, they don't care. They pretend not to notice.

But a persona is a personality. It's you, but you aren't writing as yourself. You're writing as another person. You aren't assuming only the name, but the characteristics of the persona. The mentality. The culture. The personality traits and quirks. Everything.

If you like, when you write as a persona you "give yourself permission" (ugh) to actually BE someone else for the duration of the work in progress. Using a persona is a great way to test your ability and interest in writing other genres.

I use personas because they enable me to write different things. If you'd like examples of personas, take a look at <http://ericlstringer.com/>, <http://nicolaszporter.com/> and/or <http://gervasioarrancado.com/>. Yes, they have their own websites.

Obviously, Eric, Nick, and Gervasio are three of my personas. I have a few others as well as several pseudonyms. If you read my personas' bios on those sites, probably you'll get the idea re personas. And the bios are humorous, I think.

My personas have written many short stories and have compiled many collections. Only Eric has written a novel so far, [Confessions of a Professional Psychopath](#).

Oh, I got the photos of my personas from a stock photo agency. People always ask me that. I typically use either Bigstock or Canstock because their prices are much lower than the others.

I feel like there's more to say on personas, but I can't think of it right now. If you have any other questions re personas, or pseudonyms for that matter, please don't hesitate to ask in the comments section or by email.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [Story Six Done... Close Call](#). Worth reading if only for the introduction.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 a.m. (sigh). And the slow start continued with coffee, email and a little Facebook stuff. Then I moved outside at around 4:30 and wrote the stuff above while continuing to respond to emails as necessary.

Finally, at 6:30, heading to the Adobe Hovel and the writing.

8:45. Well, a slow start on the novel too. I noticed an inconsistency and cycled back to take care of it. I use numerals for any two-digit ages and time, and spelled-out numbers for everything else. Just my preference.

And it doesn't really matter how you choose to do it. But consistency is the key. So I wrote only a little over 800 words during the past two hours. Should be smooth sailing now for awhile.

9 a.m., back to the novel for awhile.

1 p.m., writing and cycling, mixed with a few short breaks. So far I have a little over 3500 new words. Gonna take a little longer break now.

1:40, well, what I was going to do didn't work out, so I browsed computers for awhile, then read a newsletter. Back to the novel.

2:30, I wrote a little while, then decided to watch and listen to the videos from the workshop I'm taking. Good stuff. Back to the novel.

3:50, Calling it a day. A really good day, even though much of it was spent cycling.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 5143
Nonfiction Words: 1000 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6143

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 25983
Total fiction words for the year..... 353599

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 142130

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 495729

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 7/8

[July 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

After I left you yesterday, I watched and listened to the Week 5 lectures for Teams in Fiction. Really good stuff. I recommend this one.

I also went over both my previous novels to apply the corrections my first reader found. Then I formatted both of them for publication.

Now I just have to create covers for both of them and ship them out to start earning money. (grin) So in addition to the short story my benefactors got today, those who are at a certain level will receive those two novels also in the next few days.

One (I think) is reminiscent of Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls (the title is Nothing for Nothing) and the other one is the tenth and final chapter in the Wes Crowley saga.

I had completely forgotten my goal of writing one novel per month this year. I'm having so much fun with my WIP that I haven't thought about any of that in awhile. I guess maybe I'll still do it, or fail to success and come close.

Either way is fine. But if I hadn't set the goal in the first place, I wouldn't have written five novels so far this year and be on my sixth.

For the past two-plus years (since April 2014), my overall, unspoken goal has been to be a professional writer. I wanted to wake up each morning with my story in my mind and an urge to get back to it ala Ray Bradbury.

I've reached that goal. Sometime earlier this year, maybe even earlier while writing this WIP, I stepped foot on that plateau without even realizing it. And happily, it's a long way across. I can't even see the other end. But the journey itself is so enjoyable that I just don't mind.

Isn't that cool?

For example, I forgot until last night that I had moved my story of the week deadline to Friday.

This morning I woke with my novel in mind, but I also remembered I have to write a short story. This has happened before, but this time it's different.

This time it isn't something to worry or fret about. It's just something I have to do. Like making coffee or checking email. (grin) Except it's fun.

I also woke up this morning thinking in iambic pentameter. (Don't laugh. You all use it all the time.) Because I enjoy a challenge and I'm a moron, I decided to write this week's short story in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter).

There are only two modes of written communication in the English language. One is prose and one is verse.

Despite popular misbelief, prose is written communication in which the meter is not intentionally manipulated. Verse is written communication in which the meter IS intentionally manipulated. That's all.

Hence, what many call "free verse" is actually a poem written in prose mode. Yep, a prose poem. (What many call a "prose poem" today is nothing more than a cleverly written vignette.)

For a written work to be a poem, it must contain intentional line breaks. Period. If a work is based on the sentence instead of the line, it is not a poem. It is a vignette or a story (short or long) or any of the various kinds of essay.

We already know poems (works based on the line) have been written in prose mode. There also have been other literary works (stories, essays and even novels) written in verse mode.

When I publish this story later this morning or this afternoon (the post will go out to subscribers at 6 p.m.), I'll publish it in both forms: short story and poem. But both will be in verse mode. The short story genre will simply have the line breaks removed, but the rhythm will remain the same.

Disclaimer

Will every line of the poem be in iambic pentameter?

No. Occasionally, for the sake of the story, I will consciously replace an iambic foot with a trochee or anapest. Those are the only three I personally find of value.

But the overall poem will scan as iambic pentameter (five iambic feet per line), and the overall story will scan in iambic feet as well.

Topic: See above.

Of Interest

No specific topic again tonight over at Dean's place, but [an interesting breakdown](#) of his first week of writing a short story every day.

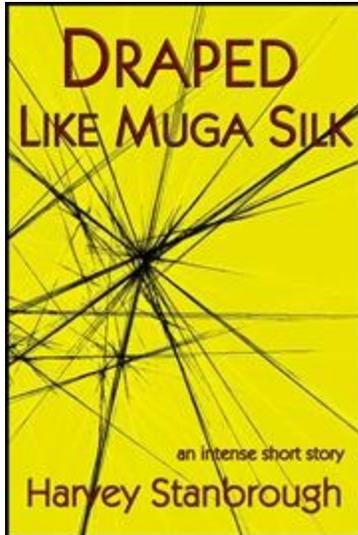
The Day

Rolled out around 3:40, a little later than I expected. I was so groggy I actually forgot to get my coffee for the first twenty minutes.

Around 4:30, I moved outside to check Dean's site and begin writing this post.

5:30, I finally started the short story. Just a line popped into my head: "Charley Bradstreet stepped into the road." (grin) Everything else went from there.

10:40, Okay, cool. After writing 1903 words, I'm done. Frankly, it didn't take as long as I thought it might. Guess I haven't lost the ability to slap a poem together after all.



I wrote and saved the file as a poem first. Now I'll go back and remove all the line breaks and add paragraphs where they need to be, then save that file as a short story. I already have a cover picture in mind.

12:15 Finished formatting and the cover for the short story. (Umm, that's it over there on the left.) I also got it posted to the website so it'll go out tonight.

Then I published the poem to a PDF document. If any of you want a copy of the poem to compare with the story, please email me and I'll send it to you.

12:30, finally to the novel.

Well, I wrote for awhile, then had to call it quits and move up to the house. Rain moving in.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4518

Nonfiction Words: 950 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5468

Writing of "Draped Like Muga Silk" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 1903 words. Total words to date..... 1903 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 30501
Total fiction words for the year..... 358117

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8360
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 143080

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 501197

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 7/9

[July 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, my tutoring session is cancelled for today, so I get to write. Yay.

Walking (not the topic)

I used to walk for the sheer joy of it. That's before I became a professional writer. Back then I'd pretty much rather walk than anything. I went 12 miles on my longest trek, and my "normal" walk (and I was going every day) was five to eight miles. As a side effect, I lost 27 pounds over the course of about 6 months.

Then things changed. I don't even know what things exactly, but things changed. I haven't walked for awhile, save every now and then doing a mile or two on a boring triangular path through the desert. I don't like boring. Boring doesn't suit me.

But this morning I walked a mile on that track. Maybe a little farther because I was sidetracked for awhile watching a line of ants. I traced them to their harvesting ground, then back to their home. Industrious, hard-working people, ants. Not a sluggard among them. Not boring in the slightest. It was the only interesting part of the entire walk.

I know walking is good for health. I've seen it first hand. However, the purpose, the intent, matters (to me).

If I'm walking "to work out," I won't do it. If I'm walking strictly for pleasure and I happen to get in shape, well, that's different.

So coming up, I have to find a way to make walking enjoyable again. To make it something I look forward to doing because I enjoy it, not something I resist doing because someone says I "have" to. Yeah, I'm one of those.

Topic: Practice

An email, and my response, provided the catalyst for this topic. (Thanks, Nan.)

But first a disclaimer: If you're a hobby writer or your sole intention is to write a memoir for the edification of future generations, more power to you. But this topic isn't aimed at you. On the other hand, if you're someone who is or aspires to be a writer of things that are read for money, do yourself a favor and read on.

Among the arts, the practitioners of the various disciplines understand the value of practice. Well, except in the discipline of writing.

What I mean is, musicians make music. Painters paint. Sculptors sculpt.

Every time they approach their craft, they do the best possible job they can do at their current skill level.

Then, if they're fortunate and intelligent and driven, they actively seek out criticism and instruction from those more advanced than they are in their chosen field.

Then they move on to the next piece. Notice that they don't move backward or hover in place to "fix" anything. They don't try to perfect what's already past.

They move on. They Practice.

Again they do the best possible job they can do at their current skill level, seek out criticism and instruction (again, from masters in their chosen field) and then they move on to the next piece.

Lather, rinse, repeat. Seriously. History is replete with examples of masters (including writers) whose early works sucked canal water from all 50 states.

But writers — okay, most writers — just don't get it.

They call themselves writers, but they don't practice writing. They rewrite.

In that endeavor, they nitpick words and phrases. They count the number of times they use "that" and believe it interchangeable with "which" (which it isn't). They hover, scrubbing and polishing and striving for perfection.

It's sad, really. Like watching a brand new bride putting a coat of wax on the driveway. (I know, I know. No offense meant. It was funny, so I used it.)

So maybe they should call themselves nitpicking, hovering, polishing, perfecting rewriters. After all, that's what they're practicing.

I can almost hear some of you saying, "But all writers are different. Rewriting and polishing and perfecting WORKS for me."

Fair enough, and that's more than fine. As I mentioned in an earlier Journal, what other writers do as regards their work doesn't affect my schedule or my paycheck, so I don't care in any material way.

Only thing is, I used to be a rewriter too. In fact, I used to teach people that being a rewriter was a Good Thing.

And of course, I always advocate striving for perfection. (See the "do the best they can at their current skill level" notes above.)

But I advocate striving for perfection the same way other artists do: by writing the best you can at your current skill level, seeking out criticism and instruction from those more advance than you in your chosen field, and then writing the next story.

And the baby boomer said, "So there." And he saw that it was good. (grin)

Of Interest

An excellent, informative response by Dean to a comment on [One Week Marker](#).

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3:30, then proceeded to completely waste the next two hours. The majority of that time I was saving witty or funny (to me) images from a t-shirt outlet. That in addition to a little email and a mugga coffee.

5:30, I told my wife last night I'd walk this morning, so I put on my shoes and slapped around the one-mile triangle out back. The whole time I felt the urge to be in the Adobe Hovel, writing.

6:30, about fifteen minutes ago I intended to move to the Hovel, but my little girl kit looked at me so sorrowfully at the gate that I decided to use my outside desk for awhile instead. So I moved out here, checked Dean's site, and wrote everything above.

7:30, I just finished checking email again, then wrote the topic above. Now I'm gonna move out to the Adobe Hovel and practice. On something. Either my 18th novel or my 137th short story. (grin)

Awful late start this morning, but I expected a nonwriting day today. And this is about the time my tutoring session would have started, so it's all good. (grin)

7:50, More stuff came up, but now to the novel. Well, I wrote (cycling) for about ten minutes, then up to the house to send some emails. Stuff I can't do via mobile hotspot. So back in a bit.

8:30, back to the novel, back to cycling. I realized one aspect was missing, so I'm reading from the beginning, adding that aspect or facet of the story in as I go.

10:15, wow, gonna be one'a those days. Hey, Life Happens. That's why I have that tag in my list. Off to help load recycling into the back of my 4-Runner. First to figure out how to lay the back seat down. Learned all kinds of stuff (all good), made the trip and got back.

So far I've written only about 500 new words of fiction on the day, but on a planned day off, pretty much everything's gravy. Still want to keep up my average, so I need 2500 more words.

12:25, back to the novel.

Well, it's a little after 4:30, but I made my word count goal for the day. (grin) And all but about 800 words of it was new fiction I wrote while cycling.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3085

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4205

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 33586
Total fiction words for the year..... 361202

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 144200

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 505402

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Practice](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 7/10

[July 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Feeling a little “off” today, like the world is skewed just a bit. Of course, I figure since it would take considerable force to skew the world, probably it’s just me. UPDATE: Ended up with a great day, not to mention a two-fer. (grin)

It takes only a little extra effort to post something both here and on the main site. So I think on those days when I post a topic here, I’ll also post it over there. It will appear there the following morning.

That will get those folks used to seeing the Pro Writers post in the inbox almost every morning. Then those who want to unsubscribe will do so and I can move this entire journal over.

Gonna write a short story this morning, then get back to the novel if there’s time.

Not long after I moved out to the Adobe Hovel, I was blessed by this desert I live in.

As I glanced through the screened door, a flock of twenty-two Gambel’s quail came through, scratching and pecking, their topknots (on the males) bobbing. Roughly 4/5 of them were about half the size of the others. Babies. Well, young teenagers.

As I watched (it cost only a few minutes) a lizard came scooting past. I don’t know the specific nomenclature on the lizard. It was what we used to call “mountain boomers.” His movement caused about a third of the little quail to scramble toward their parents. Only nervous quail move like that, both beautiful and humorous in their rush.

The quail settled in to feed again (like watching 6 year old humans play soccer — they move in a tight group) and two little ground squirrels came out. Alternately, they jumped on the ground, scratched, rolled over, flipped, then did all those things to each other before disappearing back into the desert.

By the time they left to the south, the quail had all moved on to the north. And the show was over. Well worth the price. (grin)

Topic: On Writing Seminars

My email correspondent wanted to know whether I was still teaching writing seminars.

Writing seminars — that's what I called them, but actually they were mechanics seminars.

That isn't to say they weren't good or valuable. They were good, and for some, they were valuable. Sometimes just hearing the same thing from a different person or the same thing said in a different way will key learning. That's common knowledge.

Some of my seminars were refreshers of what my students might have learned in school if they weren't busy with more important things, like pimples and how to get to the away games and the opposite gender. Those were about punctuation, grammar, syntax, sentence structure.

Some were about roles. The role of the narrator, for example.

Some were more advanced. Those focused on specific techniques for writing dialogue or dialect or creating characters.

But none of my seminars were about writing as much as about what to put into writing. How to construct things: phrases, clauses, sentences, characters. The difference between a line of dialogue and a sentence of narrative.

Anyway, she wanted to know whether I was still teaching them.

I told her I'm not, or only very rarely. As an excuse, I told her I'm writing pretty much every day now. I even bragged a little about having written 17 novels and over 130 short stories in less than two years.

What I didn't say was WHY I don't teach seminars anymore of the kind she attended. It's still valuable knowledge.

But her email caused me to wonder why I stopped teaching them. In reality, I mean. A seminar of the type she was describing usually cost me a few hours. A half-day, tops. That would leave plenty of time to nail down my 3000 words.

So I thought about it.

My seminars were good (meaning they stood apart) because I taught all those topics from a different perspective.

Instead of teaching "what a writer should do," I taught *how what the writer puts on the page directly affects the reader*.

And by “what the writer puts on the page,” I mean everything. Every word, every phrase and clause, every mark of punctuation. If you use a period, the reader will react in this way. If you use a semicolon (or a comma or a colon or an em dash), the reader will react in that way.

And that was the only thing with which my students ever took exception. Not all of my students, but most. And that’s why I finally stopped teaching “writing” seminars. Most (again, not all) of those who attended didn’t want to hear something different.

Most of them wanted to bask in the warmth of a regurgitation of what everyone else had ever told them about those topics. They wanted to hang out for a few hours with other writers and they wanted to be reassured that they were on the right track.

How do I know? Because the few who were there to actually learn are still writing. Regularly. Some of them, pretty much every day.

And that’s the real reason I stopped teaching those seminars. Those who lived close enough to attend and got real value from them have already attended and are applying what they learned. And the others? Well, they either dropped away completely or they’ll find another source for the jogging-in-place reassurance they need.

My own seminars didn’t go away completely though. I concentrated my efforts on putting them in books and in recording them as audio lectures. So any writers who are serious about learning the craft need only read the descriptions on my main website under the [Lecture Series tab](#). When they sign up, I send them to the dedicated website.

I don’t get a lot of takers, but those who do sign up usually write me later to tell me about how they applied what they learned to their work in progress. And that makes me smile.

Of Interest

Very interesting topic on a [Change in Course](#) over at Dean’s site. Hint: The “stories from July” challenge is ended. But for a very good reason. Check it out. And by the way, I’m jumping in to join his personal challenge and make it my own as well. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 4 this morning. Used the first hour for coffee, Facebook (didn’t check it at all yesterday) and email.

One email was from a former student of my writing seminars. It left me a little sad, actually. Being a writer, it seems, is more about starting groups and attending groups and deciding whether or not this or that group is good. Nothing at all about putting new words on the page.

By about 5:15 I was at my outside desk with a cigar and a second mugga.

7 a.m., I've written everything above. The topic took longer than I expected. Kind'a walking on eggshells with that one. (grin) Then I went to check out Dean's site and was motivated to begin a new challenge. So as not to be a spoiler, I'll let you read it there first. I'll announce my own version on this blog tomorrow.

7:25, got all my stuff together and moved out to the Adobe Hovel to write. Starting with a short story today. This will also count for the upcoming story of the week. At the moment I have no idea what it will be about.

An interruption as the quail, lizard and squirrels came by to say hello.

More interruption as a bird squawked and I glanced out to see my little girl kit was WAY out of the yard. I herded her back to the house.

8:20, finally to the writing, first to update this Journal, then to the short story.

9 a.m., a line popped into my head. "The party was in full swing at 2 a.m." That will start the short story. After that, just writing whatever comes next. (grin)

12 noon, finished with the short story. The ending gave me fits for a bit as I tried to move the reveal as close as possible to the end. Now I'll create a cover and publish it, then a break. Then I'll turn back to my novel for awhile.

3 p.m., Got the cover finished and the story published, distributed and sent off to benefactors. Back to the novel now.

Incredible. It's 3:45. My main character just handed me a scene. In the past 45 minutes I wrote just over 1200 words on the novel. MAN that felt good.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3572

Nonfiction Words: 1430 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5002

Writing of "Dave" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2355 words. Total words to date..... 2355 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 37158
Total fiction words for the year..... 364774

Total nonfiction words for the month... 109100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 145630

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 510404

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 7/11

[July 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Okay. My new goal is this. I'm going to write two short stories every week for the rest of the year. I plan to keep it going after December 31, too. I might break a streak again, but I won't ever break one intentionally like I did last time.

I'm also going to write 12 new novels this year. I've already blown writing one every month. I missed in February and again in March. Somehow, I still managed to have finished five this year and to have written four completely this year. So 12 in a year is totally doable.

If I finish my current novel in the next several days, I should be able to write two before the end of August or three before the end of September. Either one will bring me even.

All of this will give me a great deal more practice writing. It will also benefit my benefactors. And as a bonus, it will put me well ahead of the curve for the free-story-every-week post over on the main blog.

Now I need to come up with an easy way to track my streaks. 'Cause I have streaks coming. (grin)

1. at least 3000 words per day... 12 days
2. finishing (not writing whole) one novel per month... 3 months
3. writing at least 1 short story per week... 8

That last one will sluce into my two-stories-per-week goal. But the one-story-per-week streak will always be 8 weeks longer than the two-stories-per-week streak.

I wrote one on July 8 and one on July 10, but since my short-story week now begins on Saturday and ends on Friday, those were not in the same week. I have to write a new one before Friday to start a two-story-per-week streak.

And streaks are what it's all about. You know, other than the stories themselves.

Topic: The Psychology of Challenges

There's a certain psychology to challenges.

Dean's change-in-course challenge, if you didn't read it, is to write at least 10 short stories per month (so 120 for a year). Mine is to write at least 2 per week (so 104 per year).

That's where the psychology rears its head.

For me, a month is too long to contemplate for short stories. So my first thought when I read his new goals was "Whoa! That's a short story every three days." And fear of failure rose in my throat. Silly, but it is what it is.

Yet I don't see writing two short stories per week as difficult (or fear-inducing) at all. That's a short story every 3.5 days. (grin) Weird, eh?

Part of the fear I felt when thinking of writing 10 short stories per month came from my other goal, to write (whole cloth, not just finish) 12 novels in a year. How would I ever do that if I were writing a short story every three days?

One of the factors is the number of writing hours involved. I would LOVE to be able to always hit 1200 good new words of fiction in 45 minutes like I did yesterday.

But that isn't realistic (for me). On average, it takes me 4 hours (including breaks) to write a short story. So writing 104 short stories vs. 120 short stories (480 – 416) will save 64 hours of writing time. That's roughly a 50,000 word novel (again, including breaks).

Maybe that's the difference. Shrug.

Of Interest

Check out [Kris Rusch's short story of the week](#).

You might also want to check back and re-read [Dean's post on The Power of Streaks](#).

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:30. I moved out to the outside desk around 4:20. Sluggish this morning.

6 a.m. I've written everything above. Gonna start my wife's car to check for a problem, then do some other morning stuff before I get to the writing.

I was going to the writing at 6:15, but a bunch of other stuff got in the way, including deleting files from my old computer, trying to find a way to get rid of the picture on the user account, etc. Ugh. I hate slow starts. I wrote about 300 words off and on so far this morning.

9 a.m. to the novel.

Over the past 4 hours, I've written a bit, got out a bunch of tools, rerouted and created mounts under the carport for a heavy-duty extension cord from the house to the travel trailer, was thwarted in my attempt to find the fuse box (on the trailer), put away a bunch of tools, did some stuff on the 4 Runner, talked with the neighbor, etc.

1 p.m. back to the novel. Still needing my "fix" of 3000 words. (grin)

A little after 2, I'm about 2200 new words into the story. Gonna take a break. Back in a bit.

Okay, well, it's almost 4:30. I moved back to the house and there are more distractions here. Still, I made my 3000 words, barely. I think I'm getting a swamp cooler for the Adobe Hovel soon though. When that happens I should get a lot more writing done.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3021

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3881

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words

Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 40179
Total fiction words for the year..... 367795

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 146490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 514285

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 7/12

[July 12, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Yeah, I haven't started cross-posting my topics from here over to the other blog yet. Not sure when I'll start that.

The more I deal with two separate blogs, the sillier I feel. I might just move this one over and be done with it. We'll see.

For the first time in awhile, I made time to watch and listen to the Week 6 videos from the Teams in Fiction workshop on the day they were available.

Very good stuff. All the videos were valuable this time around. The first few were review, but then he got into new and deeper aspects. I even got an idea for an advanced workshop of my own that I might put together and teach. I believe it will fill a void.

Then again, more than likely, I'll just write a book and make the information available that way.

Today I'll work on the novel a bit, but I also plan to write my second short story of the week.

Topic: Touch

It is my opinion that any writer can write anything once he or she becomes aware of it. But let me explain.

I'm not saying you can write science fiction or action-adventure or horror or romance or any other genre well just because one day you suddenly realize the genre exists. That isn't what I mean.

But I do believe you can present characters well once you become aware of them and the situation in which they find themselves. I do believe you can write dialogue well once you make yourself aware of the reality of it. By "reality" I mean the intimate nuances. And I do believe you can write setting well once you make yourself aware of it, and again, the intimate nuances of it.

More and more, I believe the ability to write fiction well (to tell stories well) depends on your ability as an empath. Either that or your ability to engage your imagination.

Imagination isn't useful only in dreaming stuff up. Imagination is imperative in the ability to put yourself inside the scene and inside the skin of the POV character.

You must SEE (hear, smell, feel, taste) the scene and then write what you see, hear, smell, feel and taste. And you must do so through the senses of your POV character.

In other words, you need Touch. You need Touch in every aspect of fiction. And if you don't already have it (most of us don't), you have to develop it.

Those who have been good at shooting pool will know what I mean.

Touch is a heightened sensitivity. Maybe even a hyper-sensitivity.

In playing pool, the ability to Be The Stick (or the cue ball). It's knowing exactly where and how hard to strike the cue ball with the tip of the cue stick in order to make the cue ball roll in precisely the right direction, speed and angle.

The purpose of all that knowing is to strike the target ball (again, at the exact spot and speed and at the precise angle) to achieve the desired result: the target ball doing exactly what you want it to do.

The pool player who has developed Touch will still miss, but not nearly as often as the pool player who doesn't.

So how do you develop Touch in writing, or in anything really?

1. You have a driving ambition to learn. In fact, your drive to learn will be so strong that you don't even think of it as a "drive." It's just natural, something you want to do.
2. You find ways to become aware of the lack.
 - a. You take seminars or workshops or classes (but ALWAYS from someone farther along the road you want to travel) to be made aware of what you are or are not doing.

b. You read “how-to” books, again, always from someone who has traveled the road you’re on. If their stories are to your personal taste, you read those as well. Twice. Once for pleasure and again to determine what they did that made the story so good.

3. In those endeavors, you become aware that your characters aren’t all that they could be. Aware that your dialogue is stilted or flat, unnatural. Aware that your settings are mostly vacuous voids. Devoid of sensory description. Devoid of focus.

4. You take seminars or workshops or classes. You read how-to books. You read fiction you enjoy (twice). And you practice.

And in THAT endeavor, you develop Touch. In two ways.

1. You develop the ability to recognize what you need, compare it with what you have, and add it just-so to deepen your character or dialogue or setting.

2. You develop an expanded readership through your newfound ability to touch readers emotionally. To tap into their emotions. To have them identify with your characters, dialogue and settings.

Then you write the next story.

Of Interest

Nothing over at Dean’s place today.

The Day

Rolled out right at 4. Took a short while to wake up, then decided to watch and listen to the videos before the day actually starts. After that I finalized my notes and sent them off to a fellow student in the class. Often, different students find value in different aspects of the class.

5:30, I moved outside and wrote all of the above. Then I started looking online at cooling systems. Turns out I can buy a small AC unit for less than I can buy an evaporative cooler. Oh well.

Around 6 I started writing the topic above, and that turned into the idea for a nonfiction book. I took a few notes in that regard, then finished the topic above. The new nonfiction book will be an excellent addition to Writing the Character Driven Story.

Around 7 a hummingbird visited me, personally, about a foot off my left ear, and explained to me that all three HB feeders were either empty or nasty. So I saluted, got up, and cleaned and refilled them.

7:30, to the Adobe Hovel and the writing.

Cycling through for the first half-hour, then started a new sub-scene to introduce a new character. Then the neighbor same up (mine, not hers) so I took a break to talk with him and see my wife off to work.

Then I skipped back up to finish the topic above.

10:20 back to the novel. I continued cycling, going back to add a new detail that needed to be inserted through the chapters. Slow going on the novel today, but that's all right.

11:30 I took a break to hit the PO, then came back and worked on my 4 Runner a bit, mostly figuring out a way to secure the spare tire in the back, standing up. I have to do some work on the apparatus underneath so I can hoist it up there later.

1 p.m., I set the novel aside. I'm back inside now, and going to write the second short story for this week.

3:15, finished the short story, "Johnny Baby". I'll work on the cover and formatting now, then get it out to my benefactors.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3403

Nonfiction Words: 1200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4603

Writing of "Johnny Baby" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2316 words. Total words to date..... 2316 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words

Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words

Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words

Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words

Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words

Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words

Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46355 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 43582
Total fiction words for the year..... 371198

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12970
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 147690

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 518888

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 7/13

[July 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Woke up to a nice comment about my Journal. Thanks Gary. You realize you're only encouraging this madness, right?

Today I'll work on the novel all day. It isn't flying along like it was before. (Yeah, this is the part where I whine a little bit.)

I've experienced a few trust issues over the past few days. I think that's what they call it now. Trust issues. When somebody else is right and you know they're right but you cross your arms and argue with them anyway. (grin)

The whole thing is complicated by the fact that my "someone else" is my own subconscious. Yeah, I touch on this now and then. Like whenever it happens.

My subconscious is right when it says, "C'mon, man, trust me. Just write the next sentence." But sometimes I still allow my conscious mind to cross its arms, put that smug look on its face, and say something like "Yeah? But what about [fill in fake excuse to stall]."

At least I recognize it more quickly now when my conscious mind stalls me for a bit. So that's good.

By the way, in a recent post I mentioned streaks. I forgot this one. The Daily Journal has been going now with almost no breaks for... well, a long time.

I missed a few times, but they were planned or bare-bones placeholders. From here on out I intend to pre-post something useful on days that I'm not here to keep it going.

Topic: One More Reason to Write Short Stories

They're just fun.

It's a great hoot to sit down, flex my fingers, stretch, and write the first sentence of a short story.

Why? Because there's zero pressure. The conscious mind doesn't have time to screw with me.

The short story is about One Event. That's all. Well, and what leads to or results from that one event. Or maybe both. But I seem to lean toward the "leads-to, event" structure.

Despite the title, I'm not trying to convince you. I'm just explaining myself. I seem to do that a lot.

So what's my "one more reason"? I noticed it yesterday.

I was semi-stuck on the novel. I say semi-stuck because I could easily keep writing, but the bad guys haven't made an appearance in awhile. Like since the beginning of the novel.

Oh, the fruits of their labor are everywhere, but the actual bad guys are nowhere to be seen.

Of course, they're microbes, so they're like that. You can't count on 'em to come riding in just because the story seems to be bogging down.

So over the past few days, my conscious mind has been peeking through a slit in the curtain to the room where I keep him hidden. He peeks and he says things like "Shouldn't the bad guys be, like, SOMEwhere doing SOMETHing by now?"

And I tell him to shut up and go sit down. 'Cause if he doesn't I might engage the urge to give him a 158-grain suppository. And that would be inconvenient to say the least.

But he wouldn't shut up. Like two year olds everywhere, he just got louder. (Yeah, that's right. My conscious mind is the two year old. My subconscious is the responsible one. Ask anyone who knows me.)

Then I remembered the conscious mind's goal, always. The conscious mind's goal is to make me stop writing. His ploy this time was to ask about the bad guys. And for a day or two I lent credence to his demands.

Then I remembered something else. I'm writing at least two short stories per week now. HA! Take that, conscious mind. It has nothing to do with the novel, so your bad-guy ploy won't work.

Win-win. Two days this week I got my words done for the day by writing a short story AND writing on the novel.

So there y'go. One more reason to write short stories? To keep your hand in. To keep your streak going. To keep playing.

Of Interest

Nada over at Dean's place. Same thing elsewhere that I could find.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 a.m. After the initial "What the hell am I doing?" it felt good. Coffee and email to wake up, then out to the outside desk by 3:30 to check Facebook and work on this Journal.

It's really weird every day looking down below to see XXXX instead of numbers in "Fiction Words," "Nonfiction Words," and "So total words for the day." But refreshing too. I do love goals that reset.

5:50, to the novel. I wrote off and on, mostly cycling, a few words here and there. The rest of the house comes to life between 5 and 6, so there are necessary distractions.

9:30, I moved to the Adobe Hovel. I opened it earlier and set the fan to draw in the cooler outside air. I cycled back through the story again, adding some necessary details, then started a new scene.

10 a.m., a break to walk a bit. At this point I have just over 1400 words. Definitely a Keep Coming Back kind of day.

11 a.m., back to the novel after a two-mile walk in the Arizona sun and a breather. 'Course it's only a tepid 88° out there. Hey, us guys need to get a sweat-sheen going now and then. That's like Charley, only better looking and it doesn't use drugs.

2 p.m., back to the house. It's 96° outside and 90° inside. I reached the daily goal. After a break, I'm gonna write a little more to jump-start tomorrow, then call it for the day. It's moving along fine again, and I don't wanna screw it up. (grin)

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4589

Nonfiction Words: 960 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5549

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
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Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45268 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46355 words
Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50944 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 48171
Total fiction words for the year..... 375787

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13930
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 148650

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 524437

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 7/14

[July 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. Life Happens. It really does. Today I identified one thing (at least) that took priority over my writing for awhile. You'll see it below.

Still, I thought today would be another good day on the novel. Turned out all right. Plus I have an edit to work on, so there's that.

But I started the day slowly again. Well, in Relaxed Mode, I guess.

I moved outside early, then ordered a new task chair (office chair) for the outside desk from Walmart. (I have one in the office and one in the Adobe Hovel.)

That took awhile because my password didn't work and the re-set they sent me (twice) didn't work, so I cut my losses and created a new account. Sigh.

Then I checked email again, read a newsletter, and cross-posted some humorous stuff to Facebook. That's a small joy in two ways: I enjoy sharing funny stuff, especially irony or sarcasm, and I get almost as big a kick out of seeing how many people take it seriously.

Like I said, a slow start on the day. Also, obviously, it doesn't take a lot to keep me entertained.

I find myself looking forward to tomorrow (Friday) after 5 p.m. That's when my story of the week posts and when my new week begins for that process.

Usually when I'm looking forward to that, it's because my subconscious wants to write a short story. So I'll be aware of that today. If a story idea pops up later today, I'll go ahead and write it. That'll make three for this week.

But hey, I've learned (finally) from long practice that when the subconscious tugs hard on my sleeve, it's better to write it than think you'll remember it after some artificial deadline (or starting point) has passed.

Topic: Writing Processes

I'm interested in the writing process of other writers. Always have been. In fact, several years ago when I was editing a lot, I asked almost every writer I worked with or admired about their writing process. I still have those notes.

No matter how "original" we want to be, pretty much everything we do is informed by things we learn from others. And that's okay. In fact, it's as it should be.

That doesn't mean you can't be original. As the old saying goes, "There is nothing new under the sun."

However, if you give one hundred bona fide fiction writers the same opening sentence (or the same two character names or the same anything), at the end of the day you'll have one hundred different stories.

Some of that difference goes to personal beliefs, whether political, religious, idealistic or whatever. Some of it goes to personal baggage, by which I mean life experiences, the good or the bad, the beautiful or the ugly.

Some of it goes to artificial limitations (e.g., "I have to finish in XXX amount of time" or "I have to make this a short story [or poem or novel]"). And some of it goes to the writer's level of interest, or the lack thereof.

Don't worry. I'm not going to offer you a latchkey sentence or character names or whatever and expect you to turn in an assignment.

But yeah, I am going to ask you to share your personal writing process. You can email me directly if you want, or you can share it with the class (grin) in the comments below.

Don't be afraid to tell the truth. You all know my process. It boils down to

1. Keep Coming Back, and
2. Just Write the Next Sentence.

Your process doesn't have to mimic mine or Dean's or anyone else's. It should be whatever is comfortable for you. Whatever works for you. In other words, it should be whatever it is.

Every writer is different. There are no wrong answers.

But remember, we're talking about the Writing Process, not researching, rewriting, marketing, or other maybe writing-related processes.

Thanks in advance for playing.

Of Interest

Check out [Dean's post](#). Nothing specific, but you might find a gem there. I found one gerund phrase there that grabbed me. Probably I'll turn it into a topic at some point.

The Day

Rolled out this morning at 3:20 and couldn't get to the novel fast enough. Of course, it still takes time to untangle all the cobwebs and mixed metaphors lodged in the old onion.

4 a.m. moved to the outside desk, ordered a chair online, read a newsletter I like, played on Facebook.

6:15, I've written everything above and am headed to the novel now.

8 a.m. with just under a thousand new words on the novel thus far, I'm headed out to the Adobe Hovel.

8:50, a short break to load some laundry.

9 a.m., back to the novel

10 a.m., out for a walk. Two laps (miles), about 37 minutes.

11 a.m., I was going back to the novel when my wife walked out to the Hovel to let me know there was a forest fire threatening the small town of Timberon, NM (in the mountains above Alamogordo). My brother and his wife live there and the cell service sucks because of the terrain.

As you might imagine, that news spurred a flurry of activity here for a bit. But I reached my nephew, who had heard from my brother. They were fine and the fire didn't get their house. Also the fire was mostly contained.

Then my brother called and he, his wife and I talked for about an hour. So anyway, all is well.

12:40, back to the novel.

1:25, okay, I'm calling the novel for the day and heading back to the house to work on the edit.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3218

Nonfiction Words: 890 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4108

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
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Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words
Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50924 words
Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 51369

Total fiction words for the year..... 378985

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14820

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 149540

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 528525

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 7/15](#)

[July 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Note: The titled introduction today has a socio-political bent. Feel free to skip to the Topic below.

Vive le France. Sigh.

Why the sigh?

Um, because I say vive le France not as an emotional young stud gripping an M-60 machine gun in his right hand and an M-14 in his left while standing atop a pile of brass and dead enemy and insanely raging against insanity while raising both weapons into the air and begging — BEGGING — more enemy to attack.

Yeah, ala Eastwood and Stallone and Norris and real people I've known and called friends. Friends who have stood watch atop that wall Hollywood writers enabled Nicholson to immortalize in "A Few Good Men."

No, I say vive le France as a tired old man, almost flatlined with weariness from living in a once-great, now bizarre, ridiculous joke of a nation that allows and even encourages such events through fear, political expediency, and cowardly, asinine, flat-out stupid policies.

I am overwhelmed. Powerless to do much of anything other than buy some posterboard and exercise what little remains of my first-amendment rights.

So I'm powerless period. Because that sort of exercise, in response to any real-world problem, does nothing but waste posterboard and Magic Markers.

The escalating number and frequency of events over the past seven-plus years similar to those in France also have me looking back. (Yeah, terrorist attacks started long before seven years ago, but the escalation steepened dramatically about seven years ago.)

I don't like to live in the past, though I admit it took me awhile to realize the futility of that nonsense. I also don't much care for spending valuable time wishing things were different. They just aren't.

But as I told a friend in an email early this morning, reading about the most recent attack from the "do-what-we-want-or-we-will-f***ing-behead-you" crowd caused me to wish I were younger, had a range of weapons from which to choose, and was independently wealthy.

I would be Charlie Task (one of my favorite characters), offering real-time solutions to real-world problems.

Sigh.

Maybe, maybe I'd still be a writer of short stories and novels too. But man would my stories be more focused.

My most expansive work of fiction thus far, the now ten-volumes that comprise the Wes Crowley story, dealt with terrorists of various stripes. Even then I at least understood the motivations of the Comanche. In their eyes, they were merely defending their homeland of Comancheria. (Yeah, I'm not a big supporter of that haughty Manifest Destiny thing.)

But I was heavily HEAVILY on the side of Wes and the boys when they cut down bullies, thieves, murderers and other scoundrels. And the religious preferences of those scoundrels never came into play.

Bad guys are just bad guys, period, regardless of race, culture, religious affiliation, creed, national origin etc. etc. etc. ad nauseam.

But that was fiction. And in fiction, there's a difference: No restrictive, hand-binding rules of engagement are foisted on the good guys by cowardly, even treasonous, hand-wringing politicians who populate the Department of Just-Us.

And the citizens in those novels? Shockingly, even the stupid citizens who choose to move west and settle in Comancheria while simultaneously eschewing their second-amendment right to own guns and the natural right of all living things to defend their own lives are solidly on the side of the good guys.

Imagine that. Even among the citizens whose only contribution to the country was their willingness to be protected, there was no fretting over whether the Texas Rangers shooting back at the Comanches might hurt the enemies' feelings. And not one time were those citizens "offended" by the actions of the very people who were protecting them.

As a result — in those various fictions — the good guys are allowed to ride in, guns blazing, and do whatever is necessary to stop the madness.

See? Now that's why I love fiction. No morons.

And yesterday I read an article about a woman who wants firearms removed from the promotional posters for the new Jason Bourne movie.

Seriously? I'd like to ask her, "You do know that's fiction too, right?"

Her feigned concern reminded me of a popular anti-war poster from the '60s. It read "Fighting for peace is like f***ing for chastity."

Well, proponents of that notion were wrong. They were wrong then, and they are wrong now.

Killing someone who is trying to kill you and your family, and by extension, your peaceful fellow citizens, and by further extension, your peaceful fellow citizens of the world, is not at all either contra-indicated or ineffective.

In fact, it goes directly to the point, and it does ensure future peace, at least from that particular target.

Now I'm not saying everyone should set aside their personal preference regarding the second amendment and rush out to buy firearms. And I'm not saying everyone should buy a bunch of supplies from the latest issue of SOF magazine and book flights to France whip-up on the bad guys.

And ohmygod I'm not endorsing the notion, as one former extreme-right-wing acquaintance espouses, that we should kill "all" of any particular group, including even the infants, because (she believes) they're inherently evil.

To quote Kramer from the sitcom Seinfeld, "That's just crazy talk."

So what am I suggesting? I don't know, really. As I wrote above, I am overwhelmed.

But as a start, how about we support those who support us instead of supporting those who want to erase us? I know, I know. Wanting to behead infidels and keep women under their nasty thumb is part of the culture of some people. Know what? I don't care.

And while we're at it, how about we stop supporting, in word or deed, those who have raised their right hand at every level of government in our own nation and repeated an oath of office without meaning so much as a word of it beyond "I"?

That would be a great start.

Topic: Writing Stories in Series

Yes, short stories and long.

Not to be terribly mercenary, but the recent event in France, combined with knowledge gleaned from the Teams in Fiction workshop, have lent me the idea for another novel. Series.

In this series, I want to allow my inner-whatever to run free. I want the main character (and whatever team he/she needs at the time) to go to France, whether with a Colt .45 or an M-60 machine gun or a set of throwing stars or whatever, and kick some serious ass.

Dean calls this particular structure the "Lone Wolf." (Don't look it up. This is only Dean and Kris' name for it because they had to call it something.)

In this structure, a single figure (the Lone Wolf) receives notification of a problem, the solution to which falls within his range of capabilities.

He goes to the target region, identifies the problem on a very intimate level, and assembles whatever team he needs to effect the desired outcome. Um, and then he effects the change. End of novel.

In the next novel (or maybe toward the end of the first one), he again receives notification of a problem, the solution to which again falls within his range of capabilities.

He goes to the target region, identifies the problem on a very personal level, and assembles whatever new team he needs to effect the desired outcome. You know the rest. End of novel.

I like the structures (there were seven or eight of them) I learned during the Teams in Fiction workshop because they are ONLY structures. They aren't plots or outlines or any of that. They are completely unrestrictive.

And fun. 'Cause the good guys will win and the bad guys will lose. Hard. As they should.

Vive le good guys.

Of Interest

Dean's topic [Play Ethic](#).

He also announced [Openings in Master Class](#).

And Kris Rusch's post on [Discount Abuse](#).

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:20. By 4 I was outside, but easing into the day again.

I sipped coffee and read a newsletter I get via email.

5:30 I started writing the stuff above, intro and topic.

7 a.m., moving out to the Hovel. I read Dean's post (see above).

7:20, to the novel.

9:45, out for a walk.

10:30, after the walk and making a couple ham salad sandwiches, back to the Hovel. Turned on my mobile hotspot to check and respond to email. Now back to the novel.

12 noon, to the house. The heat is building in the Hovel and I'm spending more time battling flies than writing. (grin)

12:40, after a shower and a little time on the Internet, back to the novel. I've decided I won't work on OPS (other people's stuff) until I've reached 3000 words or noon, whichever comes later.

1:55, calling it on the novel. I'll post this, then turn to the edit.

It occurs to me that once the edit is finished, perhaps I will have developed the habit of getting the first 3000+ words done early. If so, maybe I can raise my daily goal.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3393

Nonfiction Words: 1520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4913

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
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Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words
Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50924 words
Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 55762

Total fiction words for the year..... 382378

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16340

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 151060

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 533438

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 7/16

[July 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Another very slow start this morning. Probably today I'll start with a short story. I don't want to get too far behind on my two-per-week challenge. And my week for short stories begins today.

Very seldom do I get flat-out excited over an email. But this morning I did.

I received an email from horror writer [Christopher Allen \(Chris\) Ridge](#) of Indianapolis this morning. He was responding to my request from a few days ago to share his writing process. I have to say, I wish the guy lived closer. (grin)

You will find the result of my having read that email throughout this Journal entry. Thanks, Chris!

Strictly as a friendly reminder, all of my own books (fiction and nonfiction) are on sale all this month at Smashwords. You can get any or all of my short stories free and all of my other stuff for a pittance.

Visit <https://www.smashwords.com/>. Then put FrostProof808 into the Search box at the right. Select your titles and add the code SSW75 at checkout to get the discount.

Topic: Judging Your Own Work as a Writer

You can't. Period.

I'll be back with a full discussion of this topic in a day or two.

For now, suffice it to say I'm always stymied that, when most of us believe what we've written is Good, we almost automatically think, "But a writer is the worst judge of his/her own work. So it probably sucks."

Yet when we believe what we've written is horrible, we automatically forget that "worst-judge" stuff buy into the assumption as fact.

Just sayin'.

Of Interest

Check out horror writer [Chris Ridge's website](#) to follow his challenge. The guy is writing a story a day for a year off a book of prompts.

The book he's using for the prompts is [Instigation: Creative Prompts on the Dark Side](#) by Micheal Arnzen. I ordered it within five minutes of reading Chris' email. (grin)

If you need the book in Nook (epub) format, it's also [available at Barnes & Noble](#), but it's a little (96 cents) more expensive. I also searched Smashwords but couldn't find it there.

Finally, Dean's post is on [Starting Up Again](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40. It was something of a long night. Outside by 4:30. I played with Facebook for awhile and checked email.

A little after 5 I received a very interesting email (see pretty much everything above). After that exchange I spent some time at Amazon, B&N and Smashwords, then went out to the Hovel to turn on the fan, open windows, etc.

After that I wrote everything above except the topic. I'll do that later today.

6:20, with a nagging thought in the back of my mind and still at the outside desk, I turned to the novel. Cycling through, I added about 200 new words.

The humidity is up this morning, and apparently the flies love it.

At 7 I moved out to the Adobe Hovel. I also tucked a Downy dryer sheet into the back of my ball cap, allowing it to hang down over my neck. Looks silly, but it keeps the flies and gnats away. Elephants too. I haven't seen a single elephant since I put it in there.

8:20, getting nowhere much with the novel. Left for a walk, maybe shake my subconscious loose. It's cooler (78) so I did three miles.

9:10, back from the walk. After several requests and suggestions, none of which had to do with my anatomy, I decided to post Vive la France to Facebook as a note. Who knew some things were more important than writing? (grin)

9:30, to the writing. I've decided to write a short story that also will form a new chapter in my current novel. It also will form a transition chapter.

Up to now each chapter has introduced new characters in small groups. Survivors, they, in a world of few survivors.

But they are separate, uncertain of their future or their past, and certain only of the terrible, horrifying present.

The transition this short story represents will pull them all together. And the story will unfold.

10:25, 800 words into the short story my wife came in to tell me my new computer was here. So I walked down to the house to hook it up. (It's purty!)

11:15, back to the story.

Around noon I finished the story. I inserted it into the novel where it belongs, then headed for the house to start setting up the new computer.

Because today's story is both short story and part of the novel, I counted the words only in the novel. (In actuality, the short story is 2136 of the new 3337 in the novel.)

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3337

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4117

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
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Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50924 words
Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 58099

Total fiction words for the year..... 385715

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 151840

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 537555

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Christoper Allen Ridge](#), [CreatureCriticr](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 7/17

[July 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I got zippo, zilch, nada done on the edit yesterday. You probably knew that was gonna happen.

So I'm officially dubbing today a planned day off. I told my editing client I planned to have the edit done and back to her by the end of the day today. So that's what I'm shooting for. If I have time left after that, I'll write some. We'll see.

Remember yesterday I mentioned the new computer a few times?

Yeah, it pretty much owned me until I got it set up. But now it has to do all the work while I sit back and relax.

And yes, yes I did point at it and laugh and yell, "Yes! You are a mere machine and you will do my bidding, stoopid computer!"

To which it replied, smugly, "Stoopid doesn't have two ohs. It only has You."

Sigh.

My new computer is really cool. It's very thin and light. It's the perfect size with a 14" screen and without that cumbersome keypad thingy. And the action of the keys is both short and saaaaawweet.

But I'll keep Hal for my writing. The only way I can explain it is to say Hal is to my new computer what my old manual Remington was to those newfangled word processors when they first came out.

Hal is Home.

I haven't named the new computer yet, and I might not. But I almost called it Nermal (the wide-eyed-innocent kitten's name, from Garfield) because it's — well, Nermal.

It isn't Tried. It isn't Tested. It hasn't been coated with Arizona Granite Dust and Slanting Rain at 102° for 200 feet in the crook of a fat old balding guy's elbow as he headed for the house at a dead run.

Now Hal? I can pretty much grab it by the top of the screen, let it dangle like Maggie's Drawers at the 200 meter line, and spray half a can of compressed air on it and it's fine. Hell, it even smiles at me and says thanks.

Hal's a nice guy.

Oh, PS. Since I included the word count from the short story yesterday in the novel count, I failed to mention the name of it. It's called "There Will Come Hard Rains."

And yes, the title is after the similar title of one of my favorite short stories by Bradbury. I'll get it out to my benefactors, published and distributed sometime later today.

Topic: Judging Your Own Work as a Writer

As I wrote yesterday, you can't. Period. You can't judge your own work. At least not as a writer.

And not as a reader, either, really, because you're too close to it. A new piece of writing is like a beautiful little toddler. Only if it's YOUR toddler, you KNOW what it leaves in its diaper. And let's face it. After the first couple months, all that "Oh look! He left Daddy a little present" stuff goes out the window.

And that's fine. Judging your own work is just one more thing you have to Let Go.

Let the readers judge it. That's their job.

Your job is to write it and get it to the readers.

As I also wrote yesterday, I'm always flat stymied that if we believe what we've written is Good, we immediately remember that we are the worst judge of our own work. But when we write something we think sucks, we forget all that. We just assume it really does suck, so we don't bother publishing it.

That's a tragic error in judgment for a writer. Especially for someone who wants to be a professional writer.

I have literally written short stories that, even as I was writing them, I thought, "Man, this is a real pig."

But I published it anyway, both on my Free Short Story of the Week and to around 200 sales venues around the globe. And I've received rave reviews EVEN for those stories I thought were pretty much garbage.

Did that change my mind about the quality of the story? Nope. And it didn't change my mind adversely about the taste of the reader either.

All it did was cement in my mind that I have ZERO right to pre-judge work for the reader.

Again, it isn't my job to determine what the reader will or won't (or might or might not) like.

My job is to write the stuff. That's it.

And that is a wonderfully freeing feeling once it finally sinks in.

Of Interest

Nothing of significance that I could find.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 and then blew the first hour doing pretty much nothing. Ugh. I hate when that happens. Kitten wants out this morning, but I won't let her out because I can't sit at the outside desk. It's raining. So at 4 a.m. I'm in the Adobe Hovel and she's annoyed. She'll get me back later, I'm sure.

4:30 wrote much of the above, and now to the edit.

It's difficult to outline what I do during an edit, especially when it's an instructional edit like this one (not just a copyedit). So I won't bother to try.

Around 6:30 I took a break and walked up to the house to put together a breakfast sandwich. Then back to the Hovel and the edit. At 7 a.m. I was a little less than halfway through. So I'll definitely finish today, and probably early enough to get some writing done.

7:20, back to the edit.

9:25, out for a walk. Well, only one lap today. It's only 85° but it's humid at 37% (out here, that's very humid).

9:50, back to the edit.

Well, it's a little after 1 p.m. I've done 40+ pages but I still have 30 to go. So I'm pretty sure this will be a day off from fiction writing at this point. (grin)

3 p.m. I guess I'll have to finish the edit tomorrow. For the rest of today, or at least part of it, I have to create a cover, format and publish *There Will Come Hard Rains*, the short story I wrote yesterday.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: XXXX (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
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Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 58099

Total fiction words for the year..... 385715

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17120

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 151840

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 537555

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 7/18](#)

[July 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I've decided I'm going to make today another day off from writing fiction. Something's just a little 'off' in my personal knoodle. I've hit a turning point in the novel, a pivot. I think maybe my subconscious needs to kick it around for a little while.

I'll finish the edit today, and then I'll work on getting those two novels published and distributed. I'm tired of seeing them on my desk.

And I'll play with the new computer a bit and maybe I'll check out Dean's "Essentials" workshop (see below).

Well, I said I was never going to break a streak intentionally again. Then yesterday, without even thinking about it, I broke my shortest streak of writing over 3000 words per day for 18 days straight.

That probably was a stupid thing to do, breaking a streak to finish an edit when even the client wasn't concerned with how soon I finished it.

The problem was, I was concerned. I told the client I'd finish the edit by yesterday evening. Whether or not I should have made that promise and whether or not she cared wasn't the point.

My personal rule is to always say what I mean and always mean what I say. Period.

If I chuck that out the window, I might as well become a politician and lie every time it suits me.

Topic: Nothing today

Of Interest

Dean put his [Essentials in Making a Living with Fiction](#) workshop on YouTube. To access it most easily, click the YouTube tab on his website.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40. The story I pubbed yesterday is up at Amazon, so I updated my Short Fiction page over at the main site. (All the cover shots there are linked to the book page at Amazon.) It'll go live as the Story of the Week on July 29.

Then around 4:15 I got to looking around my desk. Something didn't seem right. My coffee was still on the coffee-maker. It's a trade-off though. It's cool enough now that I can gulp some instead of having to sip.

I checked to see how long my 3000/day streak had gone, then updated my Journal post from yesterday to update nonfiction totals. In the meantime, I had a cigar, made a second mugga coffee, checked the rain gauge from last night (over .6") and went out to the Hovel to start cooling things down in there.

6 a.m., fixed and ate breakfast, then at 6:30 to finish the edit.

10:40, finished the edit about a half-hour ago. Did some final things and got it sent off to the client. Now for a short break and then to write. Nope. Went to Walmart for some stuff, then back here. Then lunch.

12:30, and this is when I decided not to write fiction today. Just something a bit off today.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 480

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
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Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 58099

Total fiction words for the year..... 385715

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18630

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 153350

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 539065

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 7/19

[July 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I got one novel published yesterday ([Nothing for Nothing: an account of a war in another place](#)). I got the final installment of the Wes Crowley series (The Right Cut) finished too, as far as the prep work goes. I just didn't get it uploaded.

Then this morning I felt wide awake when I got up. I envisioned myself writing before 4. Yeah, that didn't happen. By the time I got to the kitchen to make my first mug, I was slogging.

I didn't even remember to upload the Wes Crowley novel this morning before I moved out to the Hovel. I'll do it this afternoon.

I'll work on the novel today (despite the topic below) and I have a feeling a short story might be forthcoming today as well.

Topic: Writing and I Broke Up

Recently I received a note from a young man in a local writer's group. He noted that, with local stores stocking up on school supplies, this was the perfect time for writers to purchase writing supplies.

His mention that a local supermarket chain is "selling 70 page notebooks, normally \$1.50 each, for 19¢ each, no limit, and note cards, 100 for 48¢" made me smile.

I smiled because his notice reminded me of a stack of hard-back, 8.5 x 11, top-spiral-bound notebooks I carried around with me for years. That and a box of Pilot fine-point black-ink stick pens. (I remember the steel tip kept coming unscrewed as I used them to write grocery lists and the occasional poem.)

I recall at one point sensing that my writing "muse" was stuck because I was using the wrong pens. Owning and using the slightly more expensive Pilots was very haughty of me.

So I rushed out and bought a box of regular old Bic Sticks. Black ink, medium-point. You can't get more pedestrian than that.

When I got home, I set the box atop the stack of pristine journals (8 or 10 of them), turned end to end so they would stack evenly.

And there they remained. For years.

I told everyone I was a writer. As evidence I offered to show them my stack of notebooks, my pens. The “writer’s bump” on the middle finger of my right (write?) hand.

But I didn’t write.

Oh, now and then I’d get fired up and scribble a few notes about a novel I was going to write someday. From time to time I’d write a character sketch. Once a year or so I’d write a scene that turned, of its own volition, into a short story, complete with a “beginning, middle, and end.”

Duh. You can’t write anything that doesn’t have a beginning, middle and end, including the word “Duh” or this sentence or paragraph. But that’s a topic for another time.

Like many would-be writers (and even a few writers) today, I wasn’t a writer at all. Instead, I was enamored with the idea of writing. Writer — the very word evoked the sound of angels singing. Had I continued in that vein, I never would have been a writer.

I didn’t love the process. I had never actually entered into the process. I just loved the idea of someday having a process. I would discuss it with other Writers at Writer Gatherings as we dined on exotic breads and cheeses and sipped exotic wines, the pinkie finger extended just so.

We would complain of what terrible ‘drudgery’ writing was, then smile wanly and sacrifice ourselves on the pyre of it being a ‘labor of love’. We would assure each other that we would never write for money, but simply because we had to. We were unfortunates who had been ‘called’ to endure the endless travails of slogging through our ‘process’.

Truly, as with most romances, it was a lovely dream.

Then, somehow, I woke up. I realized that Writing, this lovely creature I had placed on a pedestal, was using her perch to constantly kick me in the teeth. No possible way would I ever be good enough for that arrogant, stuck-up slut.

And just like that, the dream was over. Writing and I broke up.

The mental image of myself in a smoking jacket, sipping wine and spreading beluga caviar on tiny crackers poofed into a curling ball of smoke and wisped away.

It was replaced with a guy in a ball cap, jeans, western boots and a t-shirt. He wore dark aviator sunglasses, had a two-day stubble, and was leaning smugly against a pickup while puffing on a cigar. Characters raced through his mind. They enjoyed being there, and he enjoyed having them.

Yeah, that’s when I stopped stocking up on supplies and started actually writing.

But Writing and I? Oh, we’re still great friends now that I stopped treating her like she’s something special.

In fact, we see each other almost every day, and we talk constantly. But now that the romance is gone and she's no longer on a pedestal, our working relationship is much more professional.

And now and then, in quiet moments, she tells me that's how it was always supposed to be.

* * *

By the way, if you're looking for a pedometer (measures steps, how many miles you've walked, etc.) take a look at the Omron HJ-303. I found mine in the washing machine awhile ago. Yep, full cycle. And how did the washing machine affect it? It added over 1100 steps. That's all. (grin) It still works fine, keeps perfect time, etc. If you want a great pedometer, I recommend Omron.

Of Interest

Check [Free Fiction Monday](#) at Kris Rusch's site.

Dean's post is good today: [A Large Amount of Books](#). It's informative. It's also a bit like he's patting his own child on the head, but you can get some good stuff out of it.

Also, I missed yesterday mentioning [a presentation at the RWS on the new Author Earnings Report](#). From Dean, "Great discussion about the new romance numbers on Author Earnings report of a presentation [that] Data Guy did at the RWA. In the comments he also talks about mystery and SF/F, so read all the way through. If you haven't studied that yet, you are missing some amazing stuff."

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40. Did a lot of nada, just waking up, moseying into consciousness.

6:15, to the Adobe Hovel, then wrote all the stuff above. Shows you how screwed-up I am this morning. I had to turn on my mobile hotspot to get the "Of Interest" stuff and add it above.

6:40, finally to the novel.

8:40 a.m., around 1400 words in, headed to the house to check laundry. Folded some, put some in the basket to fold later, put another load in the dryer.

9 a.m., back to the novel

10:30, another 1700 words, back to the house. Folded and put away the rest of the laundry, restarted the dryer, put the babies in the house (temp outside is climbing and it's humid) and back to the Adobe Hovel.

11 a.m., continued my break, visited Facebook, posted some stuff.

11:30, back to the novel.

12:20, with a bunch more words on the page, I'm heading back to the house.

Well, I didn't get much more done on the novel. More laundry, a trip to the PO to pick up some cigars, etc. So I'm closing it out.

See you mañana.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4164

Nonfiction Words: 1220 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5384

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
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Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 62263

Total fiction words for the year..... 389879

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19850

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 154570

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 544449

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 7/20

[July 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, the Wes Crowley saga is at an end.

This morning I was about to read the Dr. Mardy newsletter I got a few days ago when I remembered I still had one novel to upload. Books can't sell when they're languishing in my computer.

I opened the file to double check it (again) and found a couple things I hadn't taken care of before.

For example, I use three sources (primarily) for my cover images. So when I add my standard back matter to the file, it reads "Cover Photo courtesy ..." in three lines. So before I upload the book, one of the last things I do is remove two of those lines from the back matter. Stuff like that.

So I took care of those, then uploaded to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. Then I shipped off a PDF copy to my aunt, a big fan of Wes Crowley, then sent off a Kindle copy to my donors. (Thanks guys and gals.)

Topic: More on the Reverse Outline

I covered this topic pretty well back on Friday, April 1. You might [check back there](#) to refresh your memory. When you get there, scroll down.

My current WIP is very convoluted. Almost every chapter is a stand-alone story, or could be very easily. Also, almost every chapter is told by a different POV character.

That gives the reverse outline added significance.

The timeline is extremely important in this novel. In one chapter, we see what's happening in California at 1-3 a.m. Then in the next chapter, we shift to Texas (Central Time) and see what's happening at 3-5 a.m. Then maybe to Washington DC at 4-6 a.m. Then back to New Mexico at 2-4 a.m. Of course, those are all the same time.

So through several chapters, we see a minute by minute accounting of a particular event, how it affects the people in the chapter, and how they react. For that reason, it's important that the chapter I just finished that happened in the afternoon of that day doesn't come before one of the chapters that was still happening at zero dark thirty.

If you've read Stephen King's *The Stand*, the early structure is similar to that.

The turning point I mentioned a day or two occurred when I realized three separate groups of people are equidistant from where they're all apparently going to end up. Also, of course, we've seen what's going on in the place where they're apparently going to end up.

That's what I mean by convoluted.

I'm on Chapter 22 now, having written over 66000 words. Beyond the first five or six chapters (they're still where they were when I wrote them), I couldn't tell you the sequence in which I wrote the others.

This morning (to correlate the timeline) I spent time plucking out a chapter here and plopping it down there. Didn't have to revise so much as a word.

But the point is, I couldn't have done that nearly as easily without my reverse outline.

When I've finished this novel, if any of you would care to see the reverse outline (as an example), let me know and I'd be happy to send it to you.

One note of caution, just in case you don't use the link above to skip back and read about the reverse outline: This is not an outline in the traditional sense. AFTER I finish a chapter, I put the chapter number on the reverse outline, then jot a few notes: the POV character, other significant characters, any important character traits or quirks, and very generally what happens in the chapter. That's it.

This is also an excellent technique to use when writing a "normal" book. It's an easy way to look back and remember names, places, clothing etc. without having to search back through your novel.

Of Interest

A [couple comments on Dean's post](#) from a few days ago, especially his response to a comment about Amazon.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, got some coffee, played a couple games of spider.

4 a.m., remembered to upload a novel. Got final prep and uploading done over the next half-hour.

5 a.m., moved outside, wrote the stuff above. Then I screwed around with Facebook, my kitten, etc. for awhile.

6 a.m. to the novel at my outside desk. Got some writing done with interruptions from the Internet.

7 a.m., finally moved to the Adobe Hovel and the novel. I added about 1400 new words, then spent some time on my reverse outline.

Did a lot of writing today off and on. Moved back to the house at about 2, then took a walk, then mowed the higher grass around the perimeter of the yard.

Sorry I didn't keep up with this account today.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3802

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4602

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
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Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 66065
Total fiction words for the year..... 393681
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20650
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 155370

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 549051

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reverse Outline](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 7/21

[July 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Spurred by a blog post by another writer I decided to write a topic on Distractions and Interruptions (see below).

Of course, I'm talking about distractions and interruptions as they occur when you're trying to write.

I just realized today is Thursday. Sometime today I need to write my second short story of the week. (grin)

Topic: Distractions and Interruptions

I almost skipped writing this as a topic because I imagine you've all been around long enough to have developed your own ways of dealing with such things. So I thought it wouldn't make a full topic.

Occasionally we pick up ideas that we can tweak into our own process from others. At least I do. On the other hand, what works for me might not work for everybody.

So with that disclaimer in mind, what I recommend is

1. Use a dedicated writing computer (if possible). Doing so will
 1. train your mind to expect your subconscious to play when you sit down at that computer, and
 2. distance you from on-computer and/or online distractions and interruptions.
2. Find or create a dedicated writing space. Same reason, on both accounts. Except a dedicated writing space (area, room) might also distance you from personal distractions and interruptions (television, the sounds from the next room, people coming in, etc.).

For me, the suggestions above took the form of Hal, my writing 'puter. Though to some degree I've been slipping lately and allowing distractions through (or allowing myself to be distracted) by both on- and offline interruptions.

However, at least with my current WIP, it hasn't mattered. Writing this one is so interesting to me that I find I can slip right back into it easily even after major distractions.

For example, yesterday at around 1 p.m. I found out via email and almost in passing that one of my elderly (80s) paternal uncles will have a serious surgery soon. That was distracting for the time it took to respond to the email. In my response, I asked where and when the surgery would take place. Then I went right back to writing the novel. I could have simply sat and stared at the screen, refreshing my email and waiting for the response. Had I done that, I would still be waiting as I write this (6 a.m. the next day).

That doesn't mean we can always slip into and out of distractions quite so easily. As most writers know from jarring experience, a distraction ALWAYS takes longer than the "just a second" required by the interruption.

In my case, apparently, much depends on the WIP itself. It also depends on the individual writer's priorities. Or rather, how he or she has set those priorities.

But that's a topic for another time.

Of Interest

Below his post [Crazy Busy](#), Dean takes a stab at talking a tiny bit about the importance of learning taxes.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. Like 3:49 or something. Fortunately, the clocks all slowed down. The first hour pretty much crept by. Wish they'd all do that.

4:30 to the outside desk. Facebook, email, Dean's site and glancing over the last bit I wrote yesterday. I noticed the Hbird feeders needed to be filled (two were low, one was nasty) and did that, then back here to write some on this Journal entry. Oh, and the clocks speeded up again.

5:30, a few chores (setting out sun tea, etc.) and to write the intro and the topic above.

6:30, to the Adobe Hovel.

7 a.m., to the writing. Messed around a bit, thinking about what I'd like to write for the story. Lit a cigar, then saw a person walking on stage in a large auditorium full of people. A line of dialogue occurred to me: "I'm not here to talk about credibility." And the character, the audience, and the venue sprang into action.

A lot of cycling and "touching" in this one as much of it is psychological and deals with the nuances of the interaction between the speaker and the audience.

8:30, off for a 2 mile walk.

9:45, back to the story. Off and on, I brought in my sun tea and sweetened it, fixed some stuff down at the house, talked with my wife, checked email, received a new chair and some cigars via UPS, ate, etc.

1:15, finished with the short story and read it aloud to my wife. She chuckled, so it's a hit. She even called me "incorrigible." As they say in Texas, "Deal!" (grin) Now to grab a little lunch.

1:45, to the novel.

3 p.m., back to the house with around 1300 new words on the novel. Monsoons are moving in. Pretty good day.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3734

Nonfiction Words: 790 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4524

Writing of "That Ain't Right" (second story of the week)

Day 1..... 2350 words. Total words to date..... 2350 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

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Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 69795
Total fiction words for the year..... 397411
Total nonfiction words for the month... 21440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 1561670

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 553571

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 7/22

[July 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Got my new chair put together after it was too hot (and late) to keep writing. Moved it out to the Adobe Hovel this morning. The Hovel is coming right along.

Topic: On Writers and Learning

Writers, those who are serious about the craft and about telling stories, must keep learning.

To that end, I'm always looking for new sources of information. I try to pass along to you anything I find valuable in the Of Interest section below.

To pay it forward, I also try to share what wisdom I've gleaned over the years in these topics. Kind of a thank-you to you guys for hanging around.

This morning, my friend Sam Turner sent along a link to a new (to me) blog. It's in the Of Interest section today below the scoop on Dean's stuff. Sam mentioned that this blog doesn't really have to do with writing into the dark (the non-outline technique I espouse and talk about).

But that's all right. As long as you're reading and/or studying fiction or nonfiction from those who are farther along the path than you are, you CAN glean something that will turn on a lightbulb for you. You CAN glean something that will inform and improve your writing.

Please don't choose ignorance for surface reasons. I've had people tell me point-blank that they won't even read Heinlein's Rules because they don't write science fiction. Nowadays I just nod, smile and say, "That's probably a good idea." Hey, it's their loss, and I've learned through hard experience you can't force anyone into common sense.

Re gleaming important techniques that will inform and improve your own writing, I'm no exception. I haven't read the blog Sam forwarded to me yet, but I will. And note that the current post in the Writers In The Storm blog is a guest post.

If I find something of value in that post, and if the author has his/her own blog elsewhere, I'll look at it too.

If I don't find anything of value, I'll revisit this blog later (because today's is a guest post) to see whether there's anything of value in other posts.

I also go on name recognition.

If the name on a blog post seems familiar to me, I'll read the post. If the name doesn't seem familiar, I'll Google the name. If I can't find the author or find s/he had published only a couple of novels or a few stories, I wouldn't bother reading the post.

Why? Don't novices have anything valuable to say?

Yes, maybe, but as a general rule, most of the time the "wisdom" they impart is stuff I've already tried and discarded years ago. Who has the time to dedicate to slogging through the same old "write what you know" and "kill your darlings" horrible HORRIBLE advice to eventually, maybe, find a gem?

Not me. Hence my insistence on seeking and taking advice only from those farther along the writing path than I am. There are a ton of them.

I recommend you do the same.

Of Interest

[Dean's topic on Attitude](#). You'll have to scroll down. I also recommend you go watch and listen to his Essentials workshop, free online. The best way to get there is go to his site, hover your cursor over YouTube Videos in the menu at the top, then click the Essentials workshop. (As I was writing this, he hasn't yet put up the link for Week 2, but he might before you get there.)

Notice I said I "also" recommend watching/listening to the videos. Dean often says something in his topic that he skips over or misses in his workshops, and vice versa.

You might also check out the [Writers In The Storm](#) blog. No telling what you might find of interest or that will work for you. (Thanks to Sam for bringing this to my attention.)

The Day

Rolled out at 4:40 after a rough night. It will be interesting to see what happens today with my writing after only a few hours' sleep.

Because I allow my subconscious to tell the story, I'm not overly worried about it.

5:15, outside, checked Dean's site, wrote the stuff above, including the title for today's topic. I'll write the topic later if I get to it.

5:40, more email, etc.

6 a.m., moved my new chair etc. to the Adobe Hovel. Then I remembered I still had a few things to do online (post something from a friend to Facebook, etc.) so I used my mobile hotspot to pop back on for a bit.

7:10 a.m., at last to the novel. Around 700 words in the first session. Then a break.

9 a.m., back to the novel. Another thousand words or so. Everything today's been cycling. Stephen King said there are two kinds of writers regarding cycling: putter-inners and taker-outers. I'm a putter-inner. I tend to add or expand scenes or descriptions when I cycle back through.

10:15, a brief respite to write the topic above. I also plunged ahead and wrote a second topic for tomorrow. I'll count those words tomorrow.

11:10, back to the novel.

1:30 p.m., somewhere over my daily goal, headed back to the house.

3 p.m., calling it for the day. Good day.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4677

Nonfiction Words: 880 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5557

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1.....	1272 words.	Total words to date.....	1272 words
Day 2.....	1183 words.	Total words to date.....	2455 words
Day 3.....	3636 words.	Total words to date.....	6091 words
Day 4.....	3236 words.	Total words to date.....	9327 words
Day 5.....	3227 words.	Total words to date.....	12554 words
Day 6.....	3295 words.	Total words to date.....	15849 words
Day 7.....	3336 words.	Total words to date.....	19185 words
Day 8.....	3571 words.	Total words to date.....	22756 words
Day 9.....	3078 words.	Total words to date.....	25834 words

Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words
Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50924 words
Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words
Day 24... 4677 words. Total words to date..... 74875 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 74472
Total fiction words for the year..... 402088
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22320
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 157040

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 559128

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 7/23](#)

[July 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I finally sat down and read the Writers in the Storm blog last night. I scrolled down, down, down through post after post after post.

And I found nothing but writers adhering firmly to (and pushing) the same myths that mired me (and most of us) before I learned better and broke free of them.

I no longer recommend it.

If you read it and found some gems of wisdom, I'm happy for you. If you are able to separate those gems from the massive pile of aromatic not-gems, so much the better.

Just be wary of taking the same advice from one more person when you've heard that same advice for years and it has never worked before.

This is no fault at all of the guy who sent me the URL. In fact, I appreciate him sending it. Any fault lay with my recommending it before I checked it out for myself.

If any of you know of a blog or other source that offers anything unique, anything insightful, please feel free to send me an email. I'll check it out, then include it here for everyone else.

I had a good writing day yesterday, and I was mostly cycling and slacking. I hope to do better today.

I adjusted my Short Fiction page this morning and found I now have 140 short stories. Maybe this "writer" thing is gonna work out after all. (grin)

Early this morning I engaged in a verbal joust with another person (I'm being very kind) re his article in a newsletter I receive. I don't have any idea why I bother.

When my novel is calling so strongly, when there are more stories to write, more characters calling to me, why do I insist on meddling in the affairs of humans? Ugh. It's boring and pointless, and most important, it eats up time.

I prefer my characters. If one of them indicates he's going to be a pox on society, I can just kill him off and be done with it.

Thought of the Day

I enjoy writing skewed definitions ala Ambrose Bierce and Samuel Johnson. Several years ago I defined our system of government this way:

democratic republic, n. That form of government in which, every four years, the citizens are kept busy canceling each others' votes while the electoral college selects a president.

Topic: On What Is "Customary" Among Those Who Critique Others' Works

A good while back a writer sent me a short story and asked me to read it with an eye to critique. She wanted my thoughts, she said.

I told her I don't do critiques. A few writers who ask for critiques are looking for free advice, which is fine. I'm flattered they come to me, and I'm pleased they believe I won't pass along bogus information.

And asking advice is fine. I have no problem with that. If you know what you want and ask me directly, and if I feel it's something I know, I'll be happy to share my knowledge.

But that isn't what she wanted. She wanted blanket approval. She wanted unfounded praise.

Sorry. I don't do that. At least not automatically. For that sort of praise, show your manuscript to your mother. Loving you and everything you do (including telling you how wonderful your writing is when maybe it isn't really), well, that's her job.

But this writer was insistent. She said she thought I was "afraid" to read her story because I thought I might find she was "a darn good writer." Why would I be afraid of that?

All righty then. So I carved some time out of a very busy schedule and read the opening of her story, the first 300 to 500 words. I went in with an open mind. If the opening forced me to continue reading (that's the job of the opening), I would continue reading and praise her for the good points of her story.

It didn't.

So because she asked me for a critique and insisted I read her story, I pointed out what was lacking from the opening that would have hooked me had it been there. Here are the dim spots:

- the POV switched from the first paragraph to the second
- in the first paragraph, there was zero description of the setting on Earth (an Arizona desert)
- in the second paragraph, there was extremely limited description of the new setting (in orbit)

In real life, as a reader, this is where I stop reading and find something else to do. Something more pleasant, like slicing the end off a habanero pepper and grinding it into my eye.

The reader's reaction ALWAYS is the writer's fault. As a reader, if I'm not grounded in the setting, I've not been invited into the story.

On that story, it was as if I walked into a theater to watch actors perform a play, and instead there was a narrator standing behind a mic at center stage reading all the parts to me while I sit on my hands in the audience and listen.

Bo-ho-ho-ho-hooooooring. But I agreed to read the opening. So back to it.

- in the third paragraph, we're in the same setting and there's still no description
- in the fourth paragraph, the POV switches again back to the surface and a guy on a treadmill. Again, no description of the setting. Just a guy with no face or clothing or personal features on a vague, generic treadmill in a room (I assume) that's stark and white. No floor, no carpeting, no furniture, no windows, no framed photographs on the wall. Nothing.

For those of you who know me personally, I should tell you I was not snarky. I told the writer she had written an excellent seed that was "all right" as a story but that would be excellent if she described the setting so the reader could experience it.

She emailed me back to say it's "customary for a critiquer to find something good to say." (In addition to what I wrote in the previous paragraph, I guess.)

She's right. I've noticed that it IS "customary" for a critiquer "to find something good to say."

But it isn't helpful. In fact, it's harmful.

This is one example of a writer who wants only praise. Even empty praise, or maybe especially empty praise, is better than no praise at all.

She thanked me for the advice and said she'd take it into consideration.

Yeah, but she won't.

Of Interest

No new topic at Dean's place, but an interesting response from him to a lady who asked about the line between competency and complacency in writing.

The Day

I got up just after 3. Slogged through emails, comments on Dean's site, a newsletter, Facebook, etc.

Moved outside at 4 to continue the above. Practicing being a moron. Lather, rinse, repeat.

5:30, finally to the novel. Off and on, mostly cycling. (While going through this process I realized one important bit of information was missing. I cycled through, adding it where necessary.) That and writing one new scene added around a thousand new words. During this time, I also sprayed the Hovel for bugs, ate breakfast, etc.

8 a.m., to Walmart for a bug bomb and a large window fan (for the Hovel) and some other stuff. I won't get back to the Hovel 'til tomorrow morning, but it'll be worth it. Also, the big box fan will draw the cool morning air in from the outside to cool it off out there.

9:45, back to the novel, albeit inside today. When I want a cigar, I'll use the outside desk or the picnic table or something.

12:30, still cycling more than anything. I was pleasantly surprised to find I'm up to around 2100 words on the day so far. Not bad for being inside with the distractions of the Internet, little noises, etc.

I'm always happy to pass the 2000 mark. When I do that, I know I'll make 3000 pretty easily. So for me that's money in the bank. In a day or two I'll write another topic on the daily Word Count Goal. The actual number of words itself is never important, but what it can spur you to do can be very important. At least for me.

1:30, back out to the picnic table. It's under a shade tree. At times like this I think of the ancient people who lived here without air conditioning or swamp coolers or any of that. If they weren't asleep during the hot time of the day (siesta) I suspect they gathered in shade wherever they

could find it. Especially when there was a good breeze blowing, as there is now. But I have to wonder, how did they keep their laptops cool?

Okay. Calling it a day at 3 p.m. Came to a good stopping place.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3451

Nonfiction Words: 1450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4901

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
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Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words
Day 24... 4677 words. Total words to date..... 74875 words
Day 25... 3451 words. Total words to date..... 78326 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 77923

Total fiction words for the year..... 405539

Total nonfiction words for the month... 23770

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 158490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 564029

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 7/24

[July 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, today I'm gonna write a short story. No idea right now what it'll be, but I have to stay on top of it since I started the two-per-week challenge. UPDATE: Nope. No short story today. Ugh, what a day.

An Assignment for You

Write a story that features Plethora Medusa. Is that a great name, or what?

I don't care about genre or anything else. Just sit down with Plethora Medusa in mind, put your fingers on the keyboard, and write whatever comes. Might surprise you how much fun it is.

Then, if you want, tell me the first line that popped into your head. The first line that started you writing on this assignment. (It might or might not still be the first line when you finish the story.)

Topic: Nothing today. It's been a rugged day, writing wise.

Of Interest

Not a lot on Dean's site, but he says soon he's going to write a new nonfiction book in blog posts on Attitude in Writing. If it's like previous ones, it will be a collection of gems.

The Day

Rolled out just before 3. Email, coffee, etc. I moved outside at about 4, then indulged in a few games of Spider.

When the east finally started getting light (around 5) I went out to open the Adobe Hovel, turn on a fan to draw in cool air, etc.

6 a.m. Spent the last 15 minutes or so gathering up all my stuff and finally moved out to the Hovel. Then I realized I hadn't checked Dean's site, so I fired up my mobile hotspot and did that. Of course, I also drifted to email, etc. I'm thinking about disabling notifications on my phone for email so I'm not distracted when I'm out here.

Went up to the house at around 7 to get some iced tea. While I was up there, my wife and I decided to take a walk while it's still halfway cool.

Back in the Hovel, as I waited for her I read over my reverse outline. I decided to cut one short chapter (around 1200 words) and combine it with an earlier chapter. This novel is post-apocalyptic action/adventure. It doesn't need any blah scenes or chapters. (grin)

8:30, after a two-mile walk, I'm back at the Hovel. Back on the hotspot to check some stuff online for my wife, then cut the chapter I mentioned earlier and pasted it to end of the other one. Now I'm cycling back to work in the information that's pertinent.

10 a.m., an editing client let me know there was a minor problem, so I'm going back through her manuscript to fix it. Then I tried to send it to her, but her email server kept blocking my email as spam. Starting right now (it's 11:10) I'm turning off notifications on my phone for emails.

11:15, back to the novel. Nope. Other stuff kept coming up. I didn't get started on the novel in earnest until noon. Oof.

12 noon, to the novel.

1 p.m., with just over 1000 new words on the novel, I have to figure out some timeline stuff.

Well, that's taking longer than I expected, but it's a very convoluted novel that spans the United States (so four time zones) and everything happens within one day. I got up through Chapter 16 (of 24), so back at it in the morning.

Worst writing day I've had in a long while.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1025

Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1605

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words

Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words

Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words

Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words

Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
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Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words
Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50924 words
Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words
Day 24... 4677 words. Total words to date..... 74875 words
Day 25... 3451 words. Total words to date..... 78326 words
Day 26... 1025 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 78948
Total fiction words for the year..... 406564
Total nonfiction words for the month... 24340
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 159060

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 565624

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 7/25](#)

[July 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, another sluggish start this morning. But that's okay. Maybe it's Monday or something.

Topic: On Specificity in Timelines

Yesterday I ended the day with a 3-hour session of creating a Notepad timeline document. That entailed going back and forth from this very convoluted novel to the reverse outline to the new timeline document, trying to get all the times to jive.

Why? Because some readers will notice that an east-bound truck driver in western New Mexico can't leave an Arizona truck stop at 1 a.m. (AZ/CA time during that particular month in the novel), drive for an hour, then look at his dashboard clock and see that it's 2 a.m.

This is not a story about quantum leaps. The driver will lose an hour when he crosses the NM state line, so if he leaves AZ at 1 a.m. and looks at his clock an hour later, it should read 3 a.m.

I myself have been jerked out of books in which a catastrophe occurs at 1 a.m. on the west coast. But when precisely the same catastrophe also occurs at 1 a.m. in Albuquerque, Dallas, and New York... uh, no.

Granted, my own problem in this book isn't quite that vague, and my characters even took into account the time the effects of the catastrophe would take to get from San Diego to, say, Cleveland. Not to mention topography, major geological features (the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River Basin, the Rockies and the Apalachian mountains) and how they might be affected, etc.

So after wrestling with this thing for three hours and getting through only about the first 80 pages of a 125-page (so far) story, I watched the Dodgers/Cardinals game. How's that for bailing? (grin) (I felt really bad for the brand-new baby Cardinals pitcher. He had to feel like a roll of bologna in a piranha tank.)

But all the while the timeline stuff was in the back of my mind. So I slept on it.

And sometime in the night, I realized the specific timeline doesn't matter. It makes no significant difference to the story itself. What matters is that it begins in the wee minutes of the morning when very few people are out and about.

So after I've finished writing the story, I'm going to read back through it (I'll have to do that anyway, plus I want to) and change most of the specific time references to general, vague time references.

So 12:15 a.m. will become "sometime around midnight."

The few remaining specific time references will be things like the onset of the effects of the catastrophe at, say, 1:07 a.m. in San Diego. Another will be a US Secret Service agent in DC climbing out of bed at 4 a.m. to head for the gym before he has to report for work at the White House.

So did I waste that three hours yesterday?

Nope.

The more we write, the more we learn about writing. It's called "practice". That three hours was like a 3-credit-hour college class that meets only once a week. With that investment, I learned something I had never realized before. Something I will apply to my writing from here on out without having to relearn it.

And that lesson/class/investment frees me once again to Just Write the Story. I can hardly wait to see what happens next. (grin)

Of Interest

Dean's topic [Change of Mind](#) (scroll down) is worthwhile reading. He also issues a caution in this post that you need to read if you're taking his FREE "Essentials" workshop.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4 at the gentle urging of my kitten. Typical email, Facebook, coffee to wake up. Did a bunch of little things, the last of which was setting out a new gallon of sun tea.

6:45 moved to the Adobe Hovel and wrote all the stuff above.

7:20, to the novel. Cycling to begin, adding or enhancing details. It's easier to skip over sensory details in this story because the POV switches so often. So cycling back to add those details has become the first order of business at each session. That was about 300 new words. Then a brief break just before 8 a.m.

8:15, back to the novel. Wrote more on a chapter I started yesterday, about 1000 words, then another short break at 9:30 to grab a bite to eat.

9:45, back to the novel. I finished the chapter from yesterday with another thousand words or so, then another brief break at around 11 a.m. Set up a dinner date with my wife. We're gonna head up to Tombstone at around 2 or 3 to eat a late dinner or early supper at the Longhorn. (If you've never been, I recommend it. Very good and very filling.)

12 noon, I've added over 3000 new words total so far, then another break just to stretch and walk for a little bit.

12:30, back to the novel

1:20, closing it down for the day. Found a good stopping point (a jagged edge). Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3068

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3928

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words

Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words

Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words

Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words

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Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
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Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words
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Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
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Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words
Day 24... 4677 words. Total words to date..... 74875 words
Day 25... 3451 words. Total words to date..... 78326 words
Day 26... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 79351 words
Day 27... 3068 words. Total words to date..... 82419 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 82016
Total fiction words for the year..... 409632
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 159920

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 569552

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 7/26

[July 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I had a few responses to the “Assignment” I posted in the 7/24 edition of this journal. Thanks, guys! I hope you finish the stories. I’ll come up with a few more of those for you.

Stayed up too late last night watching baseball and then a little of the DNC convention. Both strictly for entertainment. Neither disappointed me in that regard.

This feels like a “drift through life” kind of day. Probably I’ll write a short story. I left a great jagged edge in the novel, so restarting on that won’t be a problem when it’s time.

As regards the novel, I know now I'm nearing the end. I have no clue what it will be yet (yay) but I know I'm in the neighborhood.

And a weird thought occurred to me this morning. Pretty much every chapter in this novel is a short story unto itself. So I'm thinking about publishing this not only as a novel but also as a series of short stories.

If I do that, I might also post those short stories to my Free Story of the Week blog. Hmm.

Interesting. I'll give that some more thought as the thing comes to a close.

For today, I'll write the first short story of this week. Then I have another one due by Friday. (grin)

Topic: Personalities and Characters

I don't personally know any writers who like all of their characters.

Every story I've written has at least one character I like and at least one I don't like. Although none of my characters are all bad or all good.

Back when I used to teach writing seminars, I taught dozens of writers over the years to write "real" characters. It was all very mechanical.

In brief, the "good guy" should have two to four "good" traits (bravery, handsome or beautiful, intelligent, charming, witty, etc.) But the good guy also must have at least one "bad" trait. That's what makes him real.

The "bad guy" (antagonist) should have two to four "bad" traits (cowardice, unseemingly treachery, ugly, lack of intelligence, crass, etc.) But he or she (or whatever organization) must also have at least one "good" trait. Again, that's what makes the character real.

INSETI have an extensive list of traits for characters. Email me if you'd like a copy, or just buy my book *Creating Realistic Characters* <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/44600>. It's on sale until the end of July. Also see "Of Interest" below.

As I wrote above, all of my stories have at least one good guy and one bad guy.

For example, I might like the character who, at the end of his personal rope, stoops to burglary. Maybe he breaks into a convenience store to steal a half-gallon of milk so he can feed his infant. Stuff like that. Maybe even if he carries a firearm or knife into the store with him only to keep the employee at a distance.

But if the same guy shoots the employee on his way out just because he wonders what it would be like to take another life, he slips into the other category.

At that point, I tend to hope he's caught and staked out live over a bed of fire ants.

Or okay, caught and tried and sentenced to life in prison. Whatever. My bad guys don't get away with their bad stuff unless they're carrying on to the next story. But eventually, they pay. Hard.

There's a very good chance I'll still write about him, but I will not be kind.

Finally, like most writers, my characters spring from my own observations of real people.

When I am interested in another person (or character) as a possible friend or acquaintance or representative, I do this: I listen to what the person says, and then I compare that against what the person has actually done in the past and is doing in the present.

I also listen to what others (especially officials) say about the person, good or bad, but I give that input only secondary weight. In the case of those sources, I also listen for what they withhold.

I depend on facts. I don't depend on what people say they "would like" to do, especially if what they would like to do is vague and/or presented as a series of idealistic clichés.

I don't depend on innuendo or propaganda or half-truths or outright lies. (How to tell? Those are usually jam packed with those same clichés and/or blanket assumptions.)

And other than the aforementioned "secondary weight" stuff, I especially don't depend on slanted information from the media or other third parties, other than those who are already within my very small circle of trust.

That process gives me an excellent indication of how the person or character will act in the future. For me, it's the only way to make an intelligent choice re who will become my friend or acquaintance or representative.

Oh, or whether a character will be a good guy or a bad guy.

Of Interest

Every writer out there should be able to ace [This Test](#). It contains some words that even good copyeditors won't catch. Thanks to Steve Adelson for pointing this out.

GREAT STUFF at Dean's site today. First you'll see an updated [Killing the Sacred Cows](#) chapter.

Then you can scroll down a bit and read [A Fresh Start](#).

I forgot to mention it in yesterday's Journal, but there's an excellent short story over at [Kris's website](#).

Less than a week left on the 75% sale at Smashwords. To see my over 200 titles there, [Click Here](#).

Finally, my wife has started putting together a new [Facebook page for StoneThread Publishing](#). Drob by to take a look. I'm actually talking to a tree. It used to be my Writing in Public page, but she's changing it around.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4. Mea culpa. Standard routine for starting the day.

5 a.m., outside to the writing desk. Took a photo to the east and posted it on Facebook. It looked as if someone nuked Lordsburg NM. Then I read Dean's site (and copied/pasted the post on Talent) and wrote the stuff above.

6:15, spent some time talking with my wife about a new StoneThread Publishing discoverability project that she's doing (yay).

7:30, to the Hovel to write a short story. I looked back through some idea files and found a title: Dying. (Yeah, I know.) But it appealed to me, so I wrote the first paragraph: "Well. That was uncomfortable at best. All of them gathering around my bed to see me off. Uncomfortable and prolonged, like a slow-acting poison." UPDATE: "Dying" evolved into "Authenticity".

10:30, with a couple of breaks, I'm almost finished with the story. My wife came out to the Hovel to talk a bit about the project. I read the story to her (so far) and she liked it.

11:45, a few finishing touches to the end to get the rythm right and the story is finished.

Noon. Finished formatting the story, then headed up to the house for lunch and to move my office in out of the heat.

After lunch, I watched TV for about an hour. Then I designed a cover for the short story, then went back to the novel. Got around another thousand words on the page, came to another good jagged-edge stopping place.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4499

Nonfiction Words: 1170 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5669

Writing of "Authenticity" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3304 words. Total words to date..... 3304 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
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Day 25... 3451 words. Total words to date..... 78326 words
Day 26... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 79351 words
Day 27... 3068 words. Total words to date..... 82419 words
Day 28... 1195 words. Total words to date..... 83614 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 86516
Total fiction words for the year..... 414131
Total nonfiction words for the month... 26370
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 161090

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 575221

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 7/27](#)

[July 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Early, early, this is trying very hard to be something less than a good day. High humidity, the weather hovering (annoyingly) between raining and not raining, the temp hovering between tepid and warm, etc.

Judging from all the various weather radar sites I monitor at such times, this morning will be aggravating all the way around.

So I'll sit inside at my desk and work. When I want a cigar, I'll just have to take a nonworking break for a half-hour or so and go enjoy a cigar. With any luck, maybe when the sun comes up it'll break up all this nonsense and I can get back to my routine.

I'll work on the novel first this morning. If a topic occurs to me, I'll write it later. If an idea for a short story springs to mind, I'll divert my attention to write that. I need a second one before Friday.

But don't be confused. This is fun, not pressure. If it were pressure, I wouldn't be doing it. Oops. There's the topic of the day.

Topic: The "Pressure" of Writing

A few days ago, Dean Wesley Smith talked in his blog about Attitude. Everything he said was true and right.

What he didn't talk about was the overwhelming pressure many writers attach to the process of writing.

I don't suffer with that particular malady anymore. Not because I'm stubborn enough to fight it off. And not because I simply renamed it.

I no longer feel any of that false pressure because writing is fun. If it weren't, I wouldn't do it.

And it really is False Pressure.

I mean, what happens if I write only one story this week instead of two?

Nothing.

What happens if I miss my daily word-count goal or any of the other writing goals I've set for myself?

Nothing, except they re-set.

What happens if I choose to write "She vaguely remembered the guy" instead of "She remembered the guy vaguely"?

Nothing.

What happens, even, if my current work in progress bogs down (at almost 84,000 words) and I decide to just drop it and start over or start something else? (I actually thought about that a few days ago.)

Absolutely nothing.

I've written only 17 novels (this is the 18th), and I can't remember what happens in most of them. Even in the Wes Crowley ten-book saga, I remember vaguely what happened, but for the most part I couldn't tell you which book it happened in.

That's how important individual stories and novels are. I don't even remember them. That doesn't mean readers won't. If there is perfection in writing, it's determined by the reader.

Readers like what they like. They don't like what they don't like. As a writer, you can't change that, you can't affect it, and it's none your business. Your job as a writer is to write the best you can at your current level of skill.

For the writer, it isn't about a novel or a story. It's about the writing itself.

All the "pressure" in writing is created by the writer's fear. To combat that fear, I tell myself regularly

- Get over yourself.
- Write the next sentence.
- Write the next scene.
- Write the next story.

I know many writers and would-be writers do feel "pressure" when they write or when they think about writing. How do I know? They tell me.

I often receive emails that ask how I deal with the pressure of writing so much. Some ask, "Don't you do anything for fun?" One long-time acquaintance even advise a month or so ago, "Leave the writing for awhile, and go do something fun."

I don't remember how I responded specifically, but it was some version of "But writing IS fun."

Not long after I learned (finally) about Heinlein's Rules and writing off into the dark, I mentioned to a very long-time acquaintance (also a writer now, but I met him in 1971 in the USMC) that I intended to write at least 1000 words every day.

In other words, I intended to work at my chosen job an hour a day.

He said I would never be able to sustain that rate, that I'd burn out in a month. That the "pressure" would get to me. Heh.

And of course, that's exactly how it happened.

(See? I can write fantasy.)

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, he talks about [Smith's Monthly](#). Pretty interesting. The guy is leaving me in the dirt with his production, but it motivates me.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, outside by 4, but drizzling rain. Just enough to make me think it might really rain. So I went out to the Hovel just to turn on a fan to blow out some of the heat from yesterday.

5 a.m., back to the Hovel to turn off the fan. Can't open the windows (it's raining) so it isn't pulling in any cool air right now anyway.

5:40, I wanted a cigar, so I'm standing under the tin-roof carport as the sky continues to drizzle. My laptop is on the hood of the 4-Runner, and my mouse keeps sliding slowly to the left. (The hood is slanted.) But at least I'm getting something done as I enjoy my cigar.

6:30, finally out in the Hovel again, I was about to start back on the novel when a major crisis hit. Sort of. The High Cool (and High Vent) settings on the swamp cooler stopped working.

I gave up on the Hovel, moved all my stuff back into the office in the house, then climbed up on the roof and did what I and the landlord did last time (clean and check the plugs and fuses). To no avail.

The landlord (and my friend) saw me up top and asked what was wrong. I told him. He came over around 8:30 and started working on it.

In the interim, I wrote the stuff above off and on.

The upshot is he'll replace the switch and the motor. (The switch arced while he was working on it.) So...

9:30, again, about to go back to the novel. Then I remembered "Authenticity," the short story I wrote yesterday. I formatted it and created the cover, but I didn't publish it or distribute it yet. I'll do that now.

10:05, okay, published and posted to the site for release on August 12. Distributed to Smashwords, D2D and Amazon. Emailed to contributors. Now to the novel.

Noon, not quite a thousand words, cycling.

More cycling and some brand new writing through the afternoon, intermittently. Just not been a good day for writing. Back tomorrow

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2195

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3315

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
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Day 27... 3068 words. Total words to date..... 82419 words
Day 28... 1195 words. Total words to date..... 83614 words
Day 29... 2195 words. Total words to date..... 85809 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 88710

Total fiction words for the year..... 416326

Total nonfiction words for the month... 27490

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 162210

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 578536

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 7/28

[July 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Hoping for a good writing day today. We'll see.

I definitely will write more on the novel, but I also need a new short story before the next one posts tomorrow. Whatever time the previous one post (I think it goes out at 5 p.m.), that's the end of my week for my short story challenge.

Topic: Dean Wesley Smith's Essentials Workshop

Yeah, this isn't really my topic so much as pointing you in a direction. I listened to the first two weeks of this workshop this morning.

It's important to note that even though I had heard most of this before (because I've taken several of his lectures and workshops), some of what he said still resonated with me.

Often that happens where you least expect it, in seemingly benign statements. Strictly for an example, he said almost in passing (and I'm paraphrasing here), "People seem to think all the 'regular life' things that affect other people don't affect professional writers. That isn't true."

That one statement helped me a great deal. So I'm just saying, watch and listen. You never know what he might say that will flip a switch inside you.

A day or two ago in his blog, Dean mentioned in passing that he's thinking about not posting the rest of this workshop on YouTube. For that reason alone, I believe you should watch and listen to what's already there.

In Week One alone, he hits on the essence of several of his other lectures and workshops. So Week One alone is well worth your time. Even if you've already heard some of it from me or other sources.

Caution: SKIP the ads, especially the big ones about the "Masters Class" in writing with big-name instructors. I've investigated those. They aren't what they're touted to be.

Okay, here's my synopsis of Week One of the Essentials workshop:

You can skip Video 1 and 2. The first is introductory, period, and the second is a continuation of that. But don't skip anything else (you might even go through 1 and 2):

Vid 3 Heinlein's Rules

'Nuff said

Vid 4 Seven Point Plot Outline

Opening — 1 character with a 2 problem in a 3 setting

Middle — character makes an attempt to solve the problem, things get worse. 4Try/5fail cycles.

Climax — 6 final try/fail (success)

Validation — 7 the story is over.

You sell the current book with the cover and the opening of the current book. You sell the next book with the closing of the current book.

Vid 5 The Five Senses

Include character opinion of the setting

Once he started using all five senses every two pages (every 500 words or so) he started selling.

Only write what the character experiences and include all five senses.

Challenge yourself to do this.

Vid 6 How to Do All This?

Put yourself in the chair and write. Five, ten, fifteen minutes at a time.

Preliminary assignment — write down everything you do in 10 minute increments for a week.

Then circle all the dead time. It's only for you, so be honest.

Dean details his process.

15 minutes a day x 365 days = 91,250 word novel

Write one hour per day (1000 words) five days per week. Do the math.

What happens if you have a work ethic and spend 6 or 8 hours a day "working"?

Idea to Story.... excellent stuff.

Using pseudonyms. Why?

"Writing Fast" means the writer has a work ethic, period.

If you want to write, start writing.

Vid 7 (Craft assignment)

Don't send this to Dean. Do it for yourself. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND you do this assignment.

Write an opening. A character with a problem in a setting, no more than 300 – 500 words, and be sure to include all five senses.

Dean's "given" situation is this: A construction worker in a suburb, has a problem with his/her significant other.

But you can substitute any character, setting, problem. This is how I start every story I write, short or long.

Week Two is all about attitude in writing. The biggies are these:

Vid 1 Goals vs. Dreams

Vid 2 The Importance of Failure (and letting your own voice shine through)

Vid 3 Protect Your Art

Of Interest

Nothing much over at Dean's site or elsewhere today. Tomorrow, my next short story of the week will post at HarveyStanbrough.com.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3, but I sacked out a little after 7, so I got a good night's rest. If I could find a way to avoid it, I wouldn't sleep at all. But given the physical limitations of the human body, I guess it's all right.

Big rain this morning (over 1/4 inch in a half-hour), then fun and games with the kitten, trying to keep her in the yard.

Around 4:45 I decided to watch and listen to the free Essentials workshop. I've recommended some parts of that in the topic above.

7 a.m., writing the topic above, then out to the Hovel.

8 a.m., finally to the novel, and cycling again. I still don't know what the ending will be, but it could come as early as today. Isn't that odd?

Only around 700 words in the first hour. Not bad for cycling. As the end of a novel approaches, situations tend to become more compressed. That's one reason for all the cycling. Tying up minuscule loose ends, going back to add or enhance a sentence here or there to foreshadow something and so on.

I have a feeling when this one breaks for the ending, it's going to move at break-neck speed. I also have a feeling I need to be careful not to write past the ending without realizing it. (grin)

1:30 p.m. I did a bunch of other stuff. Had my kitten out in the Hovel for awhile, had lunch, made sun tea, drove to the PO to check on a package, checked email and Facebook, etc. and now back to the novel. I'm only about 1700 words into the day. Sigh.

3:30, well over the daily goal and the climax is behind me. Tomorrow I'll write a short story first (the second of this week to keep my streak alive) and then probably I'll finish this novel. Man, what a ride this thing is! Even the ending surprised me. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3382

Nonfiction Words: 1060 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4442

Writing of **The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark**

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
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Day 28... 1195 words. Total words to date..... 83614 words
Day 29... 2195 words. Total words to date..... 85809 words
Day 30... 3382 words. Total words to date..... 89191 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 920920

Total fiction words for the year..... 419708

Total nonfiction words for the month... 28550

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 163270

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 582978

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 7/29

[July 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, a short story, then maybe a little more on the novel. That comprises the agenda for today.

Soon I guess I'm going to have to make room in my schedule to learn to do interior layout etc. for CreateSpace. I've decided I want the longer works in paper, even if only so prospective readers can compare the print price with the more economical ebook price.

If I finish the novel today, tomorrow or Sunday, my goal of finishing one novel per month will still be on track.

If I miss, not a big deal. I will have failed to success, given that this novel is as long as two normal novels for me. And if I can sustain or increase my rate of writing (and I can), I'll easily make the bigger goal of writing twelve novels during the calendar year.

My recent new goal of writing two short stories per week helps a lot in that endeavor.

Assignment

An adult (any age, either gender) character who's always wishing her life away wakes up at one-day old. But somehow she knows at one-day old what she knew at her original age.

Write an opening (300 – 500 words). Be sure to include all five senses (or those that are possible to include). If the story wants to keep going, write the story.

Have fun!

Topic: How A Short Story Goal Helps With Writing Novels

The first thought of many writers might be that setting a goal to write at least two new short stories per week would hinder the writing of at least one novel per month.

But that doesn't stand up to logic.

In the first place, the sheer numbers show that one has little effect on the other.

If you average 3000 words per day (so if you average working 3-4 hours per day), even if that's only five days per week, that's 90,000 words per 30-day month.

For me novels can run from short to normal to long. That's 25,000 – 40,000; 40,000 – 70,000; and over 70,000.

Note that I never decide how long a story's going to be. I just give it the number of words it needs. The lengths above are strictly for pricing.

So if you write 8 short stories per month (two a week) and they average 3000 words each, that's 24,000 words.

That leaves 66,000 words. You can use them for one "normal" novel, two short novels, or one normal and one short novel (if you toss in an extra thousand words).

So the numbers don't bear out the notion that writing short stories adversely affects your ability to write novels.

But even better, I've found that having to come up with two short stories per week actually HELPS me write novels.

How?

It exercises my "idea" muscle. To write eight short stories and a novel, I have to come up with at least nine ideas per month. (So a character with a problem in a setting. Nine times. Easy peasy.)

I come up with many more than that as I'm casting about. After all, not all ideas will work. Of those that DO work, all of them will work for short stories. But a few also are big enough or expansive enough to become novels. I most often find my novels by accident.

For just one example, last month an idea occurred. A man was gripping the podium in a church. In front of him, below the dais, was a coffin. The top half was open. The man was saying goodbye to a loved one.

The short story was "Saying Goodbye." The novel (The Right Cut) was the tenth and final episode in The Wes Crowley saga.

Another idea occurred. An armed man was among a group of armed men in a line. They were following a mountain trail to a destination where they would blow up a bridge that carried both automobile traffic and a railroad track.

That one never made a short story, but it made a good novel in Nothing for Nothing.

So for a novel, I pick one of those nine or more (whichever interests me most) and start writing. After that, I just go where the characters go and write what they say and do.

Many short stories could run on into novels. Recent stories of my own that could have gone to novels include "Blue Bell and the Roses," "One Early Evening in Mexico," "The End Game," "Draped Like Muga Silk," and "Authenticity."

"The End Game" could have been one chapter (probably the last) in a novel. Another story, "There Will Come Hard Rains" is a short story that actually IS a chapter in my current novel.

And that's just since June 1.

But will I go back and “expand” any of those into novels? Probably not. Too many new ideas coming along. But if I ever do run short of ideas, it’s nice to know I can look back and snatch one out of a short story.

But isn’t a goal of two stories a week and one novel a month an awful lot of pressure?

Nope. If I miss, I fail to succeed.

Isn’t it a lot of work?

Nope. It’s fun. And maybe therapy.

By the way, in the interest of full disclosure, I got an idea for today’s short story from Facebook this morning. In a smart-alecky response to comments by one of my daughters and one of my sons, I wrote, “I wish it were November 20, 1952 and I knew then what I know now.”

There you go. That’s the seed of the story I will write today. (Thanks, Heather and Brent.) Today’s story will publish free on my Story of the Week blog on August 19th.

Of Interest

Dean talks about his workshops, specifically his [Mystery workshop](#). That’s about it.

The new story of the week is up over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

Only three days left to buy my books at 75% off at Smashwords.

If you’re interested, [visit Smashwords](#). Select your titles and add the code SSW75 at checkout to get the discount.

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30 after a late (for me) night. Checked Dean’s site (comments on previous posts, etc.). At the outside desk by 5 to continue email, Facebook to wake up. Slow start today.

7:30, moved out to the hovel to finish the topic above, then write.

8 a.m., just finished the tiny topic and added the assignment. Now to the writing. Oh, and the first paragraph just popped into my head. Since I gave you an assignment, though, I won’t share my opening paragraph with you. I don’t wanna mess with your own process. Onward.

9:10, over the past hour I wrote a long opening (around 800 words) and revisited the topic above to include the stuff about stories that could have been novels, etc. A brief break now to the house to take my coffee mug down there and retrieve the cord to attach my phone to my computer.

9:20, back here to add a bit more above. 9:35, back to the story. Lot of cycling in this one. It's all psychological.

11:30, finished the short story. Gonna make a cover and post it while I'm in the mood. Then lunch, then the novel.

1200, got it formatted and the cover done and uploaded to the site. Now to the house to publish it, then write on the novel.

Finally got to the novel around 2. It was a little rougher switching gears from the short story to the novel than I thought it would be. Probably the novel will be finished tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3077

Nonfiction Words: 1290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4367

Writing of "As Long as We're Wishing" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2055 words. Total words to date..... 2055 words (done)

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words

Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words

Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words

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Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words
Day 24... 4677 words. Total words to date..... 74875 words
Day 25... 3451 words. Total words to date..... 78326 words
Day 26... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 79351 words
Day 27... 3068 words. Total words to date..... 82419 words
Day 28... 1195 words. Total words to date..... 83614 words
Day 29... 2195 words. Total words to date..... 85809 words
Day 30... 3382 words. Total words to date..... 89191 words
Day 31... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 90213 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 95169
Total fiction words for the year..... 422785
Total nonfiction words for the month... 29840
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 164560

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 587345

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 7/30

[July 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

From late last night to early this morning somebody “bought” 141 of my short stories. Of course, all of them were free.

Other than that, the turnout has been dismal.

I’m not telling you this to complain. I’m telling you this in case your works are at Smashwords too and you’re wondering how the sale went. A small group of friends and I discuss things like this often.

Probably I won’t participate in anymore sitewide sales at Smashwords. Or maybe with less off.

On the other hand, this experience also led me to look more closely at actual individual book sales through Smashwords (vs. sample downloads, free downloads, etc.).

As a result of that, I went through my entire inventory this morning and changed the prices on almost all of my books. I’m NOT changing prices on Amazon. They have a tendency to price-match, so I’ll leave that to them.

Among Amazon's many other failings, they offer only two royalty rates: 70% for anything priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99, and 35% for anything lower or higher than that range. This is why (I believe) many authors price their short stories at \$2.99. It's silly.

Just for a brief comparison, when I price one of my shorter short stories (under 2000 words) at \$0.99, I get a 30% royalty from Amazon. At Smashwords, the royalty is 57%.

When I price one at \$1.99, it's 30% at Amazon and 70% at Smashwords. At \$2.99 it's 70% at Amazon and 74% at Smashwords. The royalty from Amazon remains at 70% as the price goes higher (novels, etc.) up to \$9.99. But the royalty at Smashwords increases to as much as 85%.

I also revised my personal "Fiction Lengths and Pricing" guidelines. If you'd like a copy, please let me know.

I hope to finish the novel today. It's in the final stages. Just have to tie up any loose ends. This thing has been a great deal of fun.

I might have to take Dean's course on Thrillers. Because frankly, I have zero idea how anyone can write a "big book" like this (in scope, not length) in only 40,000 or 50,000 words. (grin)

Now, I'm not writing to a particular length. I let the stories be what they want to be. But if I were able to write a thriller inside a shorter length, I'd be very interested in doing that. Mostly because I love the way the pacing fluctuates.

Topic: Nothing today, other than what's above.

Of Interest

At Dean's site, check out [Loving to Learn](#). It's a tidbit that might resonate.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. I was at the outside desk by 4:15 or so and spent the majority of the first three hours of the day with the Smashwords stuff I noted above.

7 a.m., I moved out to the Hovel. Popped on my mobile hotspot to check Dean's site, then wrote much of the above.

7:15, to transfer my Fiction Lengths and Pricing document to a spreadsheet.

8:15, to the novel.

9:30, my wife (and business manager for StoneThread Publishing) came out and we talked about a new home page and a new direction for StoneThread. We're trying to attract booksellers, of course, but we're also making direct sales to readers at a discount.

2 p.m., Well, I've written off and on much of the day. I'm in the end of this novel, but this end is a lot longer than it would be on one of my others. It will be finished tomorrow, or not. I won't force it just to finish a novel this month.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3267

Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3847

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
Day 5..... 3227 words. Total words to date..... 12554 words
Day 6..... 3295 words. Total words to date..... 15849 words
Day 7..... 3336 words. Total words to date..... 19185 words
Day 8..... 3571 words. Total words to date..... 22756 words
Day 9..... 3078 words. Total words to date..... 25834 words
Day 10... 4333 words. Total words to date..... 30167 words
Day 11... 5143 words. Total words to date..... 35310 words
Day 12... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 37925 words
Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words
Day 17... 4589 words. Total words to date..... 50924 words
Day 18... 3218 words. Total words to date..... 54122 words
Day 19... 3393 words. Total words to date..... 57515 words
Day 20... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 60852 words
Day 21... 4164 words. Total words to date..... 65016 words
Day 22... 3802 words. Total words to date..... 68814 words
Day 23... 1384 words. Total words to date..... 70198 words
Day 24... 4677 words. Total words to date..... 74875 words
Day 25... 3451 words. Total words to date..... 78326 words
Day 26... 1025 words. Total words to date..... 79351 words
Day 27... 3068 words. Total words to date..... 82419 words
Day 28... 1195 words. Total words to date..... 83614 words
Day 29... 2195 words. Total words to date..... 85809 words
Day 30... 3382 words. Total words to date..... 89191 words

Day 31... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 90213 words
Day 32... 3267 words. Total words to date..... 93480 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 98436
Total fiction words for the year..... 426052
Total nonfiction words for the month... 30420
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 165140

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 591192

[Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#),
[Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 7/31

[July 31, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Oof. Last day of the month. And it's been a good one.

Around the middle of the month, I hoped I'd be able to nail down 93,000 words by the end. That would mean I met my average daily goal of 3,000 words per day.

On the 16th, I was still woefully behind at slightly over 58000 words. But I had a few very good days as well as several when I eked out a few hundred over my daily goal. Those raised me up.

And that's why I do numbers. Not for the sake of numbers, but to spur me to work.

In case you're wondering, my unintentional mentor, DWS, eschews daily goals in general. On the other hand, he often preaches that what's valuable for marking progress in this profession is averages.

I agree wholeheartedly. But I endorse the daily goal as a way to more accurately strive for and measure that average.

This month, on four days I didn't hit my goal. On two days I didn't write a word of fiction. On one I wrote just over 1000 words, and on the other, I wrote just over 2000.

Still, I should close out the month with over 100,000 words. I think that's the first time.

This is the right time of year to be building speed too. It's the end of what Dean calls "the time of great forgetting," though I don't have that particular problem. The fall season traditionally is the time when writers get back to work.

So effective tomorrow (1 August), I'm increasing my personal daily goal to 3600 words per day. (Yes, I tried this once before and let it filter away. So I'm trying it again.)

Topic: Ebooks and Print Books — A Comparison

Yesterday, a writer (Thanks, Bonnie) sent me an email asking whether Amazon also pays only 35% royalty on print books. That was an excellent question, and it gave rise to this topic.

Years ago when I was still teaching seminars in Tucson, I laid out for my class why I publish ebooks as well as print books.

At the time, two of my nonfiction books for writers and one long poetry collection had been published through a traditional publisher.

My royalty was 10%. (At the time, the standard royalty was only 8%.)

I remember telling the attendees that when I spoke at conferences or traveled to do book signings, sign existing in-store stock, etc. my sales jumped a bit.

Then ebooks came along. When I got my first royalty check from ebook sales, I became an immediate believer in ebooks.

In brief, back then, each time I sold a print book for \$14.99, I pocketed \$1.49. (Of course, out of that \$1.49 came my travel expenses: gas, hotels, etc.)

But each time the same book sold in ebook format for \$12.99, I pocketed \$10.47 (81%, Smashwords). When it sold through Amazon for \$9.99 (so I'd get the 70% royalty), I pocketed \$6.99. Still a lot of money by comparison.

This is the same seminar in which one of the attendees stood up and said she would never publish her books as ebooks. When I asked why, she crossed her arms and said, "I hate ebooks."

That's tantamount to owning a lucrative flooring business but refusing to stock hardwood because you personally prefer carpet. You get the idea.

Because my job in that moment was "instructor," I did point out that she was confusing her tastes as a reader with her business as a writer. But I don't think she got it.

Anyway, with ebooks I was selling for less and making a LOT more money. And there were NO expenses. Zero.

But to Bonnie's specific question...

It's a new world, right? I'm indie publishing even my print books, so that should make a huge difference, right?

Frankly, I created print books not so much to sell them as so the readers could compare the prices they would have to pay for a print book vs. an ebook. Exactly the same cover, content, etc. For that reason, I never paid much attention to print book sales, royalties, etc.

But to research the answer to Bonnie's question, I visited my CreateSpace account. (By the way, CreateSpace is an Amazon company.)

So the huge difference? Uh, not so much. I still make a lot more on a less-expensive ebook than on a paper book.

In April one copy of *Confessions of a Professional Psychopath* sold for \$15.99.

My royalty on that print book sale was \$2.90. That's an 18% royalty.

Where did the other \$13.09 go?

Well, CreateSpace took \$3.49 as their fee. That leaves \$9.60. And where that went, I have no idea. I'm sure some went to Amazon, some to Ingram, etc. Everybody up and down the line gets their slice of the pie.

But the same book in ebook format sells through Amazon for only \$5.99 and earns \$4.19 (70%).

And the same ebook sells through Smashwords for \$5.99 and earns \$4.69 (78%).

Let that sink in for a moment.

I offer a trade paperback book for \$15.99. You buy it. I get only \$2.90.

I offer exactly the same cover, words, etc. but in ebook form for only \$5.99. You buy it. Now I get \$4.69.

See why I prefer selling ebooks?

I thank Bonnie again for her email, for a whole other reason.

In my [Friday, 7/29 post](#), I mentioned that I was going to have to make room in my schedule to learn to lay out print books so readers will see that price comparison (between print and ebooks) that I mentioned before.

But thanks to Bonnie's question, I'm rethinking that.

For me personally, investing time and effort in doing the layout, expanded cover, etc. for a print book only to pull down a \$2.90 royalty per sale just isn't worth the effort. And that's not counting the time it will take me to learn the process in the first place. I'd rather be writing.

So here I sit, firmly in the Pro-Ebook camp. My arms are crossed and I'm officially off publishing print books until the royalty rates become a LOT more attractive.

Does CreateSpace and Ingram et al deserve a cut? Yes. But not so steep that the author can't make a reasonable living.

After all, the “overhead” they all tout as the reason for their unreasonable fees no longer exists. All indie books are print-on-demand. None take up any shelf space until they’re ordered.

Sorry, folks, but print publishing and those who provide services to that end have now fallen into my personal “scam” category.

The least expensive service provider who still does at least an adequate job charges between \$90 and \$130 for print layout plus \$80 for a print cover.

When the book is ready at CreateSpace, it will cost another \$3 or so for a clean proof copy to set on your private bookshelf. (That’s if you proofed it online so the print copy is clean.)

For me personally, \$170 to \$210 is a steep price to pay just to be able to see my book in print form collecting dust on my bookshelf.

But that’s just me.

Of Interest

Nothing that I could find.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3. I was outside early but I couldn’t let my kitten out with me because there were a couple of large owls screeching in the vicinity. That was annoying for both of us. Early morning is our special time together. Then when they were gone and I let her out, a pack of song dogs started yammering. Right back in she went. On her own. She’s a good baby.

Around 4 I started writing all of the above. First the bit on numbers and averages (should’a made that a separate topic), then a much-expanded response to an email for the actual topic.

It’s 5:50 now. Moving out to the Adobe Hovel, probably to finish my novel (grin). Well, I got wrapped up with Other Things (you know, go to the dishwasher to get your glass, decide to empty the dishwasher, etc.).

6:20, finally out to the Hovel and, shortly, to the novel. Well, I turned on my mobile hotspot and checked Facebook, played there for awhile.

6:45, to the novel.

7:45, my wife came out to visit a bit. She’s directing more people to the StoneThreadPublishing.com site, so I have to redo some of that today.

I’ve decided to move the focus of STP from selling to booksellers to making direct sales to readers. Especially with my new determination to move from print books to ebooks exclusively.

I'll be having a mega-sale soon on my print books. More on this and the reasons in the topic tomorrow or the next day.

8:10, back to the novel for a bit. With 1400 new words on the novel, I decided to make one quick change to StoneThread and check Facebook again.

9 a.m., back to the novel. Easy day so far, and the novel's really racing toward the end.

10 a.m., back online for a bit.

10:30, back to the novel.

11:15, to the house for a brief break and to grab some lunch.

Noon, back to the novel.

1 p.m., the novel is finished. What a way to end a month, eh? (grin) Now off to Walmart with my wife, then to work on the website this afternoon.

Hope you all have a great evening. See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4100

Nonfiction Words: 1540 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5640

Writing of The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark

Day 1..... 1272 words. Total words to date..... 1272 words
Day 2..... 1183 words. Total words to date..... 2455 words
Day 3..... 3636 words. Total words to date..... 6091 words
Day 4..... 3236 words. Total words to date..... 9327 words
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Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 41010 words
Day 14... 1217 words. Total words to date..... 42227 words
Day 15... 3021 words. Total words to date..... 45248 words
Day 16... 1087 words. Total words to date..... 46335 words

absolutely no reason, the morning transitioned from a generally vague kind of tranquility to a Rodeo Song kind of day. (Yeah, I get annoyed by the time I've heard the exact same sound repeated for the five hundredth time.)

Deep breath. I'm in the Adobe Hovel now. I have the computer and writing to do. Yay.

Today I'll write a short story (at least one) and then start replacing specific time references in my novel with more vague markers. There are only a few so it shouldn't take too long.

Topic: An Addendum to Yesterday's Topic

The figures I offered re royalty rates on trade paperbacks in yesterday's topic were accurate. However, that was for sales through normal and extended sales channels (bookstores, online, etc.).

If you submit your book to CreateSpace (whether you do it yourself or pay someone else to do it for you), and then SELL THEM YOURSELF you will make a much larger profit than if you depend on outside sales alone.

So if you (like one reader) have your book printed at CreateSpace, then order a boatload of them at around \$3 per copy (plus shipping), then sell them at events where you speak or at booksignings or whatever, you can name your price.

So if the books cost you \$3 per copy and you sell them for \$10 per copy, you'll make \$7 per book. Nobody else takes a slice because you took them out of the loop.

Just remember (if you want to look at what you're doing as a business) that to find your true profit margin, you have to deduct not only the cost of the books (\$3 for 100 books = \$300) but also the cost of the shipping, the cost of your time to do the layout and cover (or the cost of paying someone to do that for you), the cost of your gas to and from the venue, hotel room (if applicable), etc.

For me personally, unless I get at least half a boatload of demands at StoneThread Publishing for trade paperbacks, it still isn't worth the cost. But again, seriously, that's just me.

So, submitted for your liesurely perusal.

Of Interest

You might find something of value over on Dean's site, but nothing specifically today.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, and immediately blew the first two hours on email, working on the StoneThreadPublishing.com website, and doing some cleanup outside.

Around 5:30, Annoying Lop-Eared Cowdog started committing to memory via repetition what I suspect he thinks is a brand new word. He finally shut up around 6. That's about the time I ran out with my camera to get a few shots of the monsoon stuff going on.

6:25, I moved out to the Hovel for the day, ostensibly to write. Then I remembered I hadn't checked Dean's site, so I jumped on the mobile hotspot and did that. Then I remembered a comment I received concerning yesterday's topic, then wrote all of the above.

7 a.m., apparently I'm not quite ready to let go of the novel yet. (grin) I decided to look for those specific time references and change them. Then I'll send the thing off to my first reader and write a short story.

8:30, finished with time refs in the novel. Looking for a photo for the cover.

9:15, finally found a photo and created the cover, but my program's giving me fits so I have to shut down and restart.

11:15, finally finished with the cover and the promo doc. I could almost call this a non-writing day but I hate to start a month that way. A short break now, then to write a short story.

11:45, I started a new short story. Just a guy talking to someone whose presence is only implied in the story.

12:30, my first reader got back to me and I decided to format the novel. That took about 15 minutes and I sent it off to her. (Thanks, Alison.) Now for some lunch, and I'm moving up to the house to finish the story.

12:45, back to finish formatting. I forgot Smashwords requires an interactive table of contents. So for them I always remove the chapter heads and replace them with a series of five asterisks. Oh well.

1:40 p.m., back to the short story.

3:30, finished with the short story, and what a screwed-up little story it is! But I'll let readers decide. (grin)

I didn't have quite the writing day I hoped for, but I got a lot of other stuff done too, so I'll take it.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2577

Nonfiction Words: 1000 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3577

Writing of “Pearlized” (first story of the week)

Day 1..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 2577 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 2577

Total fiction words for the year..... 432729

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1000

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 167680

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 600409

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 8/2

[August 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Probably I’ll write the second short story of the week today, then maybe start a new novel. Or maybe I’ll try to write a short story and it’ll take off into a novel. Or something.

I’m jonesing for the fiction keyboard, and I really do enjoy writing novels.

Topic: Fiction Writers and Learning, Revisited

When I started writing in earnest back in April 2014, I thought I knew most everything. Seriously.

I didn’t.

I’ve learned more (mostly through my email association with Dean) over the past 2 1/2 years than I learned in the other 61 1/2 years combined. Again, seriously.

For months, I’ve been touting a simple process to begin writing a story of any length: short-short, short story, novella or novel.

That process is this:

1. Put a character with a problem in a setting.
2. Put your fingers on the keyboard and write what comes.

It works. This process will get you through an opening of 300 – 500 words or so.

But it isn't all there is.

Yes, you can write a story on that basis alone. But whether you can write a story that will build a readership depends on several other things.

- Can you write a setting that draws the reader in (has depth)?
- Can you write well-rounded characters for whom the reader roots (or whom the reader despises)?
- Can you put yourself deep in the mind of your character and write his or her opinion of the setting and the other characters and the situation (scene or story)?
- Can you write situations and/or outcomes (scene or story endings) that the reader won't guess automatically as he's reading?
- Can you write dialogue that sounds like what you overhear when you're standing in line at the grocery or having a cuppa something at Denny's?
- Can you pace a story so the reader can't take a breath through the action but still doesn't want to put the story down through necessary "slower" times?

Don't get me wrong. If you can't do those things, you can still write stories.

But your stories will be very thin.

Depending on how many of those (or which of those) the story is missing, readers might not even finish reading the story.

Dean mentioned awhile back that due to years of editing magazines, he and Kris can spot a humdrum, routine or thin story from a distance.

Kris specifically can read the first few paragraphs and, most of the time, know what the ending will be. (If she flips to the end and she's right, which is usually the case, she passes on buying the story.)

But forget editors for a moment. After all, editors (at magazines and publishing companies) are still only readers.

If you can't sell a reader on the story, you can't sell any other reader.

And I'm talking personal taste aside. You wouldn't want to try to sell a reader who only buys/reads SF or a historical western, for example.

But if you don't know the "Can you" things above, neither will you sell an SF story to a reader who only buys/reads SF.

The point is, don't stop learning. Seriously. If you do, you and your writing will remain at a certain level and you won't get better.

It takes practice, yes. But it takes practice with a reason, a focus.

And it doesn't matter whether you're writing a story a day or a story a week or a story a month or whatever. I recommend you set a learning goal.

Pick something to learn. Then, in each succeeding story, practice one new concept that you've learned: for example, creating richer, deeper settings or creating more rounded, interesting characters or creating richer, more realistic dialogue.

Soon, your practice will take on a soul of its own, and your stories will improve dramatically.

Now, I'm certain I left out some things you're wondering about. If so, please feel free to comment below or send me an email.

Of Interest

Not sure how I missed posting yesterday that [Kris put up a short story](#) on her site, free for one week.

Dean's post on [Some Numbers](#) was heartening for me. I've used his production as a kind of unspoken gauge of my own over the past two and a half years. Check it out. Maybe it will be heartening for you as well.

Also scroll down to his topic, Going Onward For the Moment (same link, scroll down). (Would that be a great title for a story, or what?)

I disagree with him including nonfiction writing in his pulp speed estimates though. I mean, it's fine if that's what he wants to do, but I won't go that far. For me, "pulp speed" is measured by fiction production.

If I were a ghost writer like my friend professional writer [Dan Baldwin](#), I would count fiction written on behalf of someone else. But I can't see including blog posts and nonfiction books in that production measurement. After all, pulp fiction was... well, fiction.

The Day

Rolled out not long before 4 a.m. Early night, but a lot of sleep. Catching up, I guess.

I spent the first two hours of the day waking up, checking Facebook, publishing "Pearlized" to my distributors, sending it to my donors, etc.

I spent the next hour on trivial things, and finally moved out to the Hovel at around 6:30. Then I cleaned. Some sort of little creatures (spiders, bugs) have been slowly eating me out there. So I swept good (unfinished concrete floor) then sprayed heavily.

Answered more email (on my phone, not the hotspot to avoid using data) and played a couple games of Spider solitaire. As I write this, I glanced down and am amazed it's only 9 a.m. Maybe I'll get to the writing eventually.

9 a.m., I skipped back up and wrote the topic for today.

9:40, rain's building in. To the house to check on the babies.

10 a.m., back to the Hovel to write a story. I like the title of Dean's topic, so I'm gonna see what I can do to write a story based on that.

10:45, to the house to unload the dryer and fold some stuff.

11 a.m, back to the story.

11:50, back to the house to let the babies out for awhile since the rain slacked off.

12 noon, wrote some more, back to the house to grab some lunch.

1 p.m., rain started again, so back to check on the babies. They were all inside so I closed some stuff and back to the hovel.

1:20, easy day today. Maybe the constant overcast and cool temps (low to mid 70s) have me relaxed. Back to the story. Weird. With this story title, the story starts in a dumpster. Well, with a guy ducking down a dark alley at a dead run and vaulting into a dumpster to hide. (grin)

3:15, and I just finished the short story. Had considerable cycling in this one. You'll see why when you read it. The end really surprised me. I'll do the formatting and cover and all that for this one later tonight or tomorrow morning. Right now, I'm gonna start something else. I hope it becomes a novel. (grin)

4:59, okay, since this thing goes out at 6, I set 5 p.m. for my limit. And I started a new novel. Science fantasy. The working title is SAM (the acronym for a machine that's in the story in some capacity). MAN I love writing into the dark! (grin)

I hope you're enjoying this even half as much as I am. Now I'm headed to the house to get this Journal out.

See you tomorrow. I'm headed into the living room in hopes there's a baseball game on.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3952

Nonfiction Words: 1270 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5222

Writing of "Going Onward for the Moment" (second story of the week)

Day 1..... 2815 words. Total words to date..... 2815 words (done)

Writing of SAM (novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6529
Total fiction words for the year..... 436681
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2270
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 168950

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 605631

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 8/3

[August 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Another nice day here weatherwise.

Not much to talk about in a preamble here, so I'll get right into the topic.

Topic: Attaining Your Best

The second part of this topic is numbers-rich. Skip it if you want.

Dean mentioned in his blog post that one reader, in an email, said Dean's numbers (4.5 million words in three years) were "depressing." That it was "more than most writers did in entire careers" and it seemed "like an impossible goal." (Obviously, the reader isn't aware of the habits of many professional writers.)

I've had similar comments on my paltry attempts at writing. Every now and then Good Writers whom I know personally will tell me it's depressing or off-putting when they read my numbers. That they could never do that.

But Dean's reader and my writer friends are missing the point. By a good ten miles.

The point is not to stay up with or surpass Dean's production, or mine, or anyone else's.

The point is *If you're a writer, you write*. You do your job. You keep putting words on the page, day after day, week after week, month after month and it all adds up.

I have a feeling if most of the writers out there kept track of their actual numbers, they would be surprised at what they've achieved without even noticing it.

I notice mine only because I stole Dean's "writing in public" idea. I changed it around a little bit and put my personal stamp on it, and yes, I was driven in part by his production.

The first calendar year that I was a real writer, from 4/15/2014 – 4/14/2015 I wrote 476,176 new words of fiction.

The second calendar year, from 1/1/2015 – 12/31/2015 686,146. (Yes, those dates overlap. But the time period for each is still 12 months.)

And those word counts made me aspire to greater heights of my own.

I'm not competing with Dean, just like the few of you who have emailed me are not (or shouldn't be) competing with me.

I'm competing with myself.

Checking In With Myself

Earlier this year, I was worried about my fiction numbers.

Way back on January 20, 2016 I set "revised goals" for the year. One of those was to write "at least 1,000,000 publishable words of fiction" for the year. It would be my first time.

As late as July 31, I had written 430,152. Divide that by 7 (months) and then multiply the answer by 12 and you get my projected mean fiction output for the year: 737,403. Far short of 1,000,000.

For me, personally, that is unsatisfactory. Again, not because I'm competing with Dean or anyone else. Because I'm competing with Me.

Now to reach my 1,000,000 word goal for the year, I have to write 569,848 words of fiction in 5 months (August through December).

Is that attainable? Yes. But maybe not realistic for me. Not this year.

To hit it this calendar year, I'd have to write just under 114,000 (113,970) words per month for the rest of the year. And frankly, I'm not quite there yet. I'm not quite at that level.

Last month I wrote 102,536. It was an excellent month for me, for where I am right now. If I had done that for 12 months straight, I'd have exceeded my goal with 1,230,432 words. But that isn't what happened. (Maybe if I begin the "year" on July 1, 2016 and then go through June 30, 2017. Hmmm.)

I had a fairly good month in January (though still a little off pace for my annual goal) at around 85,000 words. But I wrote 30,000 words fewer in February. I jumped back up by 20,000 words in March, then fell off the January total badly (by 50,000 words) in April. In both May and June I fell short again of my January total by about 20,000 words each month. Then, as I said above, finally in July, I woke up and wrote 102,500 words for the month.

So I have two good months behind me and a remaining goal that probably is unattainable. For me. At my level.

If I average ONLY my current daily goal (3600 words) for the remaining 153 days of the year (from August 1 – December 31), I'll write 550,800 new words of fiction. That will leave me short of 1,000,000 words for the year by 19,048 words.

But I'm not gonna raise my daily goal by the additional 125 words per day it would take to reach my annual goal. Reaching an annual goal is not that big a deal. I don't want to make the goal more important than the writing.

A goal is only something to aspire to. If I fall short, the world won't end. I'll gear up on January 1, 2017 and set my sights on 1,000,000 words again.

And if I DO manage to attain my annual goal this year, well, then I'll set my sights on either 1,100,000 or 1,200,000 in 2017.

I sincerely hope all this helps you as much as it helps me. And again, thanks for being there. I appreciate you.

Of Interest

[Dean's post today](#) is good, but very brief.

The Day

Rolled out a little late at 4:15. That's okay. I had an easy day yesterday and still wrote a lot of words. And I'm in a new novel now, so that will probably help. (grin) Although typically new novels go slowly for me at first.

By 5 I had formatted the short story from yesterday and created a cover for it. It will post as a free story in early September.

By 6 I had moved outside. I checked Dean's site, added the "Of Interest" thing above, then wrote the topic of the day. As you might imagine, the "Checking In With Myself" part of that ate up some time.

7:15, to grab some breakfast, then publish the story from yesterday to my distributors and email it to my donors.

8:15, headed out to the Hovel to finish the spraying I started yesterday.

8:35, to the novel. A lot of cycling to start with so I've added only around 1300 words in two hours. That's all right. It'll pick up when it's ready. (grin)

10:45, to the house for a break and to check on the babies.

11:30, back to the novel.

12:30, out to talk with the neighbor.

12:50, back to the novel.

3 p.m., with over 3300 new words in the bank, I'm gonna take a short break, then come back and finish up for the day.

3:15, back to the novel.

4:01, calling it a day with a little over 3800 words. I'm really glad the world doesn't end when we miss a goal. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3871

Nonfiction Words: 1000 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4871

Writing of Terminus Loop (formerly SAM, novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 10400

Total fiction words for the year..... 440552

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 169950

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 610502

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 8/4](#)

[August 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Definitely there will be some cycling this morning again, but I'm hoping for a good day of writing.

Sometime today I want to mow the yard too.

Topic: Addendum to Yesterday's Topic

If you're more comfortable measuring your writing production against someone else's but are intimidated by Dean's numbers, consider some other writers you know.

I was fortunate to know and study under SF Grand Master Jack Williamson. He began writing science fiction back in the pulp days before there was a genre called science fiction.

Jack published two novels per year for most of his life through TOR. When he died at the age of 94, he had published one novel and was about halfway through the second.

On production, he once told me, "Oh, I don't do much. I'm barely able to pump out 120,000 words per year."

At the time, that sounded like a lot to me. (This was in the early 1990s, long before I became an actual writer.)

But when I started writing in earnest a couple of years ago, I did the math.

Even if you write only five days per week, 120,000 words per year is only 462 words per day.

So if you write a solid half-hour per day, your output will equal or better that of the great Science Fiction Grand Master Jack Williamson.

Just sayin'.

Of Interest

Nothing anywhere around the web that I could find.

My wife started a new group on Facebook: [The Harvey Stanbrough & Friends fan page](#). Is that cool or what? (grin)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:15 this morning. Weird, but I was wide awake. Visited Facebook and read a couple of newsletters to catch up, checked email etc.

4 a.m., the little girl insisted we move outside, so we did. Then I wrote the stuff above this.

Spent the next two hours working on my website. The link in the header now signs people up for this blog. I also took down the Copyeditor page, added My Personas, then did some other housekeeping things around the site.

5:45, headed out to the Hovel and the novel.

6 a.m., started on the novel.

7:15, with around 1200 words, a break. Up to the house for a bit.

7:30, back to the novel.

8:30, to the house for a break. Oof, nearly a half-hour. Still, the novel's coming along well so no biggie.

8:55, back to the novel.

10 a.m., to the house to grab lunch.

11:15, a brief break to visit the house to answer an email.

11:30, back to the novel.

12:45, a short break.

Okay, wrapping up a pretty good day. Heavy rain moving in so I'm headed to the house.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4481

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4931

Writing of Terminus Loop (novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 14881

Total fiction words for the year..... 445033

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3720

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 170400

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 615433

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 8/5

[August 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Anticipating another good day of writing. However, at this point I'm not sure whether the WIP will be a novel or a novella. Ten thousand words in, only two major characters have reared their lovely heads. Guess we'll see what happens. (grin)

Topic: Nothing today.

Of Interest

Okay, over at Dean's site, I urge you to check out [New Workshop: Speed](#). Even if you don't want the workshop, you might glean some important tidbits from the announcement and/or the topic that accompanies the post.

My own new short story of the week, a (sadly) humorous political satire, posted today at noon. It'll go out in email about an hour before this one does. Check out "[That Ain't Right](#)".

The Day

Rolled out just after 3. After coffee, emails and Facebook, by 4 a.m. I was at the outside writing desk. A little chilly this morning in the mid-60s. I cycled back for close to an hour, not putting a lot of new words on the page.

I did get a few good pics of the sunrise at around 5, then processed them and put them on Facebook along with one of the sunset yesterday.

6:30 I moved to the Adobe Hovel.

7:30, with around 1000 new words I took a break to photograph some teen-age squirrels near the Hovel. Then I went up to the house to get something to drink.

8 a.m., back to the novel after I skip over and write the opening for a short story that just occurred to me. (grin)

8:30, okay, after writing enough of the short story opening to get me going later, then talking a few minutes with some little squirrel friends who live in a pile of junk wood near the Hovel, I'm headed back to the novel now.

Noon, wow, I let the time get away from me. My wife's a little under the weather today, so I'm breaking occasionally (three times since my previous entry) to go to the house to check on her. But otherwise, cycling and writing new words.

Okay, a little after 1 p.m., I'm calling it. Gonna try to mow the yard before the rain hits again. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4171

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4541

Writing of Terminus Loop (novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 1905

Total fiction words for the year..... 449204

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4090

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 170770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 619974

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 8/6](#)

[August 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Thanks, Céline, for pointing out the repetition of the phrase "to talk about" in my short story, "That Ain't Right." I corrected it on the blog post, of course, but I also uploaded a new file to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. So that was very helpful.

In case anyone's wondering, the words I wrote during the diversion yesterday to write an opening for a short story didn't count in yesterday's totals.

The opening didn't really click, though I do like the one character. Kind of a Clint Eastwood "Get off my lawn" sort of guy, but with a soft side. Maybe you'll meet him someday, but not as a result of that particular opening.

Got most of the half-acre or so of grass mowed yesterday before my old-guy tirednicity snuck up on me. If I get my writing done early enough today, I'll finish that this early afternoon.

Topic: Personas Revisited (or Playing with Personas)

I was going to write about Using Personas (maybe Personas vs. Pen Names) in writing, but I thought maybe I had done that one already.

Turns out I had. For an initial discussion of Personas, [Click Here](#).

I mentioned in that discussion that one difference between pen names and personas is that the former is great for anonymity but the latter provides permission for the writer to be a whole different person.

Back in the day, Samuel Clemens wrote under two personas: Mark Twain and Huck Finn. Yes, a character also became a persona.

The former enabled him to write about political issues of his day. The latter (introduced in the first paragraph of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* as the author) gave him an extra layer of distance from shining a light on social issues AND a different voice.

Now, my memory isn't what it used to be. Possibly I've reversed the roles of Finn and Sawyer and the books. The matter remains that Clemens (Twain) used one character as a persona.

My own personas have taken a hiatus for awhile. But that's all changing.

[Nick Porter](#) was actually killed (we think), but he might be back now. I've seen his ghost lurking in hallways, and he's just the sort to fake his own death (see [Death of a Persona](#)) in order to build intrigue. Especially when he's in cahoots with [Eric Stringer](#).

Eric is an odd duck, and he's the first back from hiatus. He recently penned (his word, not mine) two new short stories: "[Pearlized](#)" and "[Going Onward for the Moment](#)". You can read both of these free of charge on [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) on August 26 and September 2, respectively.

[Gervasio Arrancado](#) is not only a persona but a dear friend. I haven't seen him for a long time, and that's as much my own fault as his. I hope to visit with him soon. I very much enjoy the stories he tells, hovering as they do at that point where reality folds into imagination in his magic realism world.

What brings all of this to mind (and to this topic) is that I should have given credit for the story that posted yesterday, "[That Ain't Right](#)" (a political spoof) to one of my personas. It seems

some folks have trouble separating writing they like from writers they used to like but suddenly don't anymore.

Anyway, I certainly didn't write it, and despite the ending, L. Frank Baum didn't write it either. I probably could get away with republishing it under Nick Porter's name.

Nick is an activist for common sense and a blatant, tell-it-like-it-is kind of guy. He also doesn't mind ducking bullets or avoiding the slings and arrows of faux-outraged citizens. But I don't believe he would meddle in domestic affairs. His focus is more on the world stage, so generally he's above all that.

Then again, given the main character in that story, I couldn't assign it to my foxy newest persona, [MJ François](#) either. If you read her bio and consider the main character in the story, nothing fits.

So probably there's a new persona on the horizon. Not to mention allowing my older personas more of a voice. In the future, too, as a matter of pure housekeeping, probably I will mention the actual author's name in the word-count run up to publication below.

As for Harvey, I'm not quite sure what his writings will entail. Well, beyond this boring non-fiction stuff. Maybe SF. Certainly not westerns. The ten-volume Wes Crowley series actually was written by Wes (one book had considerable input from Gervasio), albeit in third person. Kind of an "as told to" thing.

But Wes might well be coming out with more of his own reminiscences in shorter versions. Wes is an action-oriented kind of guy who tends to eschew long, drawn-out tales. You might remember that during the mental filming of the series that bears his name, he disappeared for months on end.

So who will the new persona be? Well, I'm taking applications. Probably he or she will be someone who has sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States (and meant it) and who is willing to recognize and deal with "all enemies, foreign and domestic." So right away, that leaves out politicians. Shrug.

Beyond that, I don't know.

Of Interest

For another unique take on personas (though he makes no distinction between personas and pen names), check Lawrence Block's comments in his [Welcome back, Jill Emerson](#).

Nothing over at Dean's site except that he's been hitting only around 2000 words per day (when he writes) recently. He isn't afraid to say "sort of a lazy attitude today." I like that. I'm personally afraid to give in to those days when they crop up. I'm still at the stage where I fear I might not ever again sit down to write. And that is a horrible thought.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, and by 4 I was at the outside writing desk. From then until now (5:30) I sipped coffee, checked email, took care of a few morning chores and wrote everything above. Out to the Hovel to set the big fan in the window and cool the place down. (It's about 65° out here today, and probably around 80° in the hovel.) Then a short break to brew my second mugga and prepare for the day.

6:30, after Facebook and a few other things, finally in the Adobe Hovel.

6:45, back to the novel.

7:30, with a little over 1000 words, to the house to get something to drink.

7:55, back to the novel.

9:15, after another 1000 words, a working break. I'm gonna head to the house to reconfigure the documents and cover of *Nothing for Nothing: An Account of a War in Another Place*. I'm gonna give it to Nick Porter. It was his anyway. (grin)

10:15, *Nothing for Nothing* is now Nick's. Back to the novel.

Around 10:45, I had about another 400 words when I glanced out through the door to see my little girl headed this way. I went out and collected her, then brought her to the office and closed the door.

11 a.m., back to the novel. The little girl roamed around in here for awhile as I was writing, off and on. But she soon tired of this place and wanted to go to the house.

11:20, I carried her up to the house. No, she isn't spoiled at all. (grin) While I was there I ate a boiled egg for lunch and put on some more, then checked my email and headed back to the Hovel.

11:45, back to the writing.

12:30, I decided to stop for a little while to mow the rest of the yard. Got finished, finally, and after some gasping for breath and getting intimate with a bottle of Gatorade, headed back to the Hovel.

1:30, back to the novel.

2:30, calling it after a good day of writing. The story is flying along.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4188
Nonfiction Words: 1260 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5448

Writing of Terminus Loop (novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words
Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words
Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words
Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words
Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 23240
Total fiction words for the year..... 453392
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5350
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 172030

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 625422

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 8/7](#)

[August 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Hoping for another good day of writing. We shall see. I anticipate the novel will continue to move right along, but I've been wrong before.

Sometime today I need to get to Walmart for some necessary groceries.

Sprayed around part of the base of the house with some poison/deterrent I use. The stuff lasts for about a year, but there was a line of probably a million small ants running right along the base. So apparently the previous treatment wore off. I'll spray around the rest of the base later today when all the babies are inside.

Topic: Publishing Company Names and Imprints

A writer sent me an email in which he wrote,

When I'm self-publishing an Ebook, can I label it as XYZ books—on the copyright page and elsewhere and with its own graphic logo—without any legal registration? If so, does that option vanish if I got the book electronically transformed and distributed through Draft2Digital or Smashwords?

My response (expanded):

First, in this new world of publishing, you really do have to learn at least some of the business stuff. Like how to be an independent publisher.

As I told the writer, yes, you can make up your own publishing company (or imprint). You can do so without “registering” anything (for example, a trademark). It’s not a bad idea to set up an LLC though. HarveyStanbrough.com and StoneThread Publishing are both LLCs (limited liability companies) and both are “sole ownership” businesses.

Anyway, I suggest whatever name you have in mind for a publishing company, first you do a search on Google to see whether the name is already taken. For example, if you own chickens and decide to use Bantam Books as your imprint, that would be a legal no-no because it’s already taken.

And no, your publisher name doesn’t vanish when you distribute through Smashwords or anyone else.

The front matter for my Smashwords titles reads like this:

Title of Short Story
Author Name

the Smashwords Edition of
a FrostProof808 publication
an imprint of StoneThread Publishing

For D2D (Draft2Digital) and Amazon, it reads the same, but with “the Smashwords Edition of” removed.

Just so you know, my publishing company is StoneThread Publishing.

One imprint of StoneThread Publishing is FrostProof808, under which I currently publish short fiction. So if this were for a novel, the front matter would read like this:

Title of Novel
Author Name

the Smashwords Edition of
a StoneThread Publishing novel

and again, “the Smashwords Edition of” would be removed before I submitted the document to D2D or anywhere other than Smashwords.

My own other imprints are Blue TidBits (erotic short fiction) and Writing the World (nonfiction writing books). Probably I’ll start another one soon, but I’m not sure.

Hope this helps. Any questions, please email me or ask in the comments.

Of Interest

In [Going to Be Pushing](#) scroll down for Dean's topic, Pushing On Deadline. Interesting.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, with the little girl repeatedly pouncing on my left hip. Okay. Sigh.

Outside by 4, but not all that relaxing. Sprayed, etc. per above. Didn't even take my computer out there this morning.

Played with email, checked Dean's site, Facebook, etc. for awhile, then went out and turned on the fan in the Hovel to cool it down. Now I'm back inside, just making sure I have all my online stuff done before I go out there.

Actually, I'm gonna stay up here at the house for awhile this morning. Wife's still ill, so it'll be better if I'm closer.

6 a.m. to the novel.

Well, the first full hour of writing (cycling, but still) gleaned only around 400 words. Too many little distractions. I'm headed to the Hovel shortly.

7 a.m., in the Hovel and back to the novel.

Still cycling, mostly putting in some things I inadvertently left out earlier, filling out one scene and adding another. The going is a bit slow, but it's early, so I'm not worried. (grin)

9:30, with about 1500 new words on the page, a break to the house to check on things. Answered some emails while I was up there. One question a writer sent me led to the topic today (above). Then I grabbed a quick bite and headed back to the Hovel.

9:50, back to the novel.

10:45, with a little over 2000 words in the bank, I'm headed out to get some groceries and check the mail. Back in a bit.

12:40, just back, got stuff put away and walked into the Hovel. Back to the novel. Well, I got about 200 words down, then spent an hour doing some stuff for an old (2012) editing client. Sigh.

2 p.m., back to the novel.

Okay, calling it a day at 2:55. I'm not sure how, but I cleared my daily goal again.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3843

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4543

Writing of **The Traveler** (formerly Terminus Loop) (novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words

Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words

Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 27083

Total fiction words for the year..... 457235

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6150

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 172830

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 630065

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 8/8

[August 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Looking forward to another good writing day. This novel is just flowing along in general. It's going so well that when I hit what I would consider a minor snag in anything else I've written, I think maybe the world has ended with this one. (grin)

It's a beautiful, temperate (currently) morning in southeast Arizona.

I bought an extra AC adapter recently for my writing laptop (Hal) so I didn't have to run on battery power when I'm outside. And so I could free up the all-in-one converter I've been using in the Hovel.

I'd been using it for a few days at the outside desk, and it worked fine.

I carried it out to the Hovel a couple days ago and plugged it in, but it didn't work. The computer continued to run on the battery. No matter the configuration, my new AC adapter crossed its little arms and just sat there, stoic and determined to do nothing.

So I carried it back to the house and let it sit for a day or two.

I plugged it in again this morning to use at the outside desk, and again, it works fine. I can only assume it doesn't like the Hovel. So from now on I'll keep it close to the house.

By the way, I'm fortunate in that I get to leave Friday morning for a camping trip with my buddy. Probably Friday and Saturday. So more than likely Friday, Saturday and Sunday will be days off from writing.

Of course, today's only Monday. I'm hoping maybe I'll be finished with the current novel before Friday. If not, I might be forced to take ol' Hal with me. (grin)

Truth of the Day

From a comment by DWS on another writer's comment on a recent post: "[If] you want to know the future of the business, study the past of publishing."

Topic: Sorry. Nothing today.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, check out [Entertainment](#). It's all about the writer as entertainer. Pretty good article.

The Science Fiction May Day Bundle that contained one of my books (The Advent of Simon Stark) is now available for a limited time through Amazon, Kobo, iBooks and Barnes & Noble as a boxed set. You get \$52 worth of great SF for only \$7.99. To see the books, check it out at <https://bundlerabbit.com/scifi-may-day>.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:45, was outside by 4:30, brought the computer out at about 5. Checked a couple of websites and Facebook, then wrote all the stuff above. Finally, with the sun coming up, I went out to turn on the fan in the Hovel and sweep the floor.

5:50, to the novel, still at my outside desk. If the skeeters don't eat me. (grin)

7:30, I moved to the Hovel. Thus far I've added around 700 words to the novel. In the interim, I also cleaned and filled the three hummingbird feeders (should have done this a few days ago) and took care of some other minor chores.

9:30, slow going so far today with about 1000 words thus far. Or maybe it seems slow because of various small interruptions.

The most recent was when I noticed the little girl outside the fence. I brought her to the Adobe Hovel with me, where she wandered, exploring, while I wrote a few minutes here, a few minutes there. When she was ready, I carried her back up to the house. (grin) I don't mind. She's pretty much a pure joy. Back to the novel.

10:30, with about 1600 words done, I'm headed to the PO.

11 a.m., back to the novel. Still cycling, but filling in a lot that I managed to omit earlier.

Noon, another 1100 words on the page, off to grab some lunch.

1 p.m., back to the novel.

Okay, wrapping it up at 2:30 with another pretty good day. I'll take it.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4113

Nonfiction Words: 660 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4773

Writing of The Traveler (or Terminus Loop, novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words
Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words
Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words
Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words
Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words
Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words
Day 7..... 4113 words. Total words to date..... 25804 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 31196

Total fiction words for the year..... 461348

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6810

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 173490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 634838

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 8/9

August 9, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. Interesting morning, and a very slow start as far as getting back to the novel.

First, I got outside early, but every bug known to mankind was hovering around my laptop. It was 74° with 58% humidity. And very still.

On the up side, I don't have a problem maintaining humidity for my cigars. (grin)

Okay, to the meat of this thing.

My intention with the Free Story of the Week is to leave each story up for two weeks, then delete it. But I'm lax in that regard, so this morning I was going through those stories (in the back end of the website), removing those that had been up longer than two weeks.

I happened across "Despidiéndose (Saying Goodbye)," the short story that also doubles as the first chapter of *The Right Cut*, the 10th and final novel in the Wes Crowley series of novels.

Originally I had scheduled it for posting on May 30. But I forgot to mark the category as Free Story of the Week, so it didn't post. That is, it posted to the site, but it wasn't picked up and mailed out to subscribers by MailChimp.

So I rescheduled it for September 9.

That made me curious, so I popped up all "Uncategorized" posts, meaning they were not sent to any list by MailChimp. I found forty-three such posts, all of which should have gone to the Pro-Writers list. And most of them are still valid.

That's just annoying. Completely my fault. I mean, MailChimp can only send out mail after I address it.

So I began the arduous process of looking over those posts. Those that are still valid as-is, I will schedule to post. Those that are dated, I will either not post or update them and then post them.

In other news, I've decided to let go of my two-story-per-week writing challenge. I'm heading out for a camping trip on Friday, and I'd rather finish my current novel by then than use six or eight hours of that time to write two short stories.

I DO still intend to keep my one-story-per-week challenge going though. I just have to manage to write one short story between now and Thursday night. I can do that. See the brief topic below.

I think I wrote twelve stories in that very short streak. For sure, I've written 14 short stories and 2 novels since the first of June. So that's not bad. Failing to success.

One more bit: I'm having trouble deciding whether to call this novel Terminus Loop (an attractive, alluring title) or The Traveler. If it still fits at the end, I'll call it Terminus Loop. If not, well, we'll see.

Topic: More on Streaks

I've talked a couple of times here about the value of streaks.

A streak, once established, tends to feed on itself and grow stronger. In other words, the longer you keep a streak going, the more important keeping it going becomes and the harder it is to break. So it drives your writing (or at least it drives you to the keyboard) and your writing drives it.

That's why I don't really mind breaking my current streak (about 6 weeks) of writing two short stories per week. Like Everything, it's a simple matter of priorities.

Writing toward the end of my current novel easily takes priority over keeping up with some silly streak that doesn't really mean anything and is difficult to track.

Streaks should be easy to track.

And that's what this topic is really all about.

You'll notice that even though I'm dropping the two-story-per-week challenge (and killing that short streak), I'm continuing the one-story-per-week challenge and that streak.

Why? Again, priorities. Keeping that one going is at least as important to me as adding to and maybe finishing my novel.

The novel has no set time limit. I will easily finish it (and maybe another one) before the end of this month. That's the only challenge there.

But to keep the one-story-per-week challenge going, I have to write a new short story before Thursday night, since I'm leaving early on Friday for the camping trip.

Easy peasy. And doing so will extend my current one-story-per-week streak to 11 weeks, back to May 27th. My previous streak for writing at least one short story per week was 72 weeks. I intend to break that.

So the point is to set goals you can easily track. It's easy to track a goal that begins on Friday at 12 noon and ends the following Friday at 11:59 a.m. and involves at least one story per week.

It isn't easy at all to track one that has the same parameters but requires more than one story per week. Too hard to keep track of the dates.

Of Interest

I'm never short of amazed when Dean's topic complements my own. (I didn't check on his until I'd already written the topic above this.) Today it not only complements mine but expands it. Take a look at [Planning](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 2:40. After email and checking comments on Dean's site, I was outside with Hal by 3:15.

4:15, back inside. Bugs are eating me alive.

6:30, I've posted a new post at HarveyStanbrough.com and revised and moved six more. That brings me up through September 27. They will post every Tuesday. Now a break for breakfast and to move out to the Hovel.

7 a.m., in the Hovel. I wrote the stuff above, then remembered to check Dean's site.

7:35, finally to the novel.

8:25, a thousand words on the page and I'm headed to the house to make sure things are all right, the babies are in and so on. Storm clouds rolling in.

9 a.m., back to the novel.

10 a.m., a break to play a little Spider solitaire, check email and all that.

10:30, back to the novel. A bit more cycling and a new scene. The story was moving right along, but I got caught in a timeline snag. The main body of the story takes place over a period of about a half-hour in one world and 6 years in another one. And those two time periods coincide. (grin) Interesting, but a bit tricky where the math is concerned.

11:30, got the timeline worked out. With about 1700 words on the day, I'm gonna break for lunch and to check on the babies.

12:05, back to the novel.

Well, again I let the afternoon get away from me, and again there was a big push in the last hour or so of the day.

Closing down at 2:30 with a good day. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4321

Nonfiction Words: 1080 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5401

Writing of **Terminus Loop** (or The Traveler, novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words

Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words

Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words

Day 7..... 4113 words. Total words to date..... 25804 words

Day 8..... 4321 words. Total words to date..... 30125 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 35517

Total fiction words for the year..... 465669

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7890

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 174570

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 640239

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 8/10

[August 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Long post today (the topic is long) but I think you'll have fun with it.

Nice, cool overcast day here again. I spent the first four-plus hours of the morning cleaning up and reposting more of those blogs I was working on yesterday.

I included one as the topic below today for the sheer entertainment value. I had a great deal of fun writing it in the first place, and almost as much fun updating it this morning. I hope you will enjoy it. (I'm not counting the words in today's topic as part of my nonfiction total since I wrote them a couple of years ago.)

I also created two "placeholder" posts this morning, one for Friday and one for Saturday since I'll be gone. I added an old blog post to those too so you might get something of value from

them. The only thing missing from those will be “The Day” and “Today’s Writing.” I’ll catch up on that on Sunday or Monday.

Oh, also, beginning today, I’m not gonna do the whole hour by hour accounting. Too difficult to keep up with and too time-consuming. I’ll just touch on anything major and go from there.

Topic: sigh... present tense narrative is fine. please write in present tense narrative.

Note: This post was originally scheduled over on the main blog for 3/30/2014. It didn’t post to MailChimp, so I posted it again this morning to appear sometime in November or December. I’m posting it here for you because it was a lot of fun to write. I hope you enjoy it too.

Wow. I’ve learned more in the past few days about the popularity of present-tense narrative than I thought possible.

I haven’t learned anymore about present-tense narrative itself, but I’ve certainly learned a lot about the popularity of present-tense narrative. That and the popularity of, you know, doing what’s popular.

I deliver legitimate, no-fluff, no-foofoo advice. I bow neither to politically correct universityspeech nor to the latest trend.

I’ve written several published articles and several hundred emails advising writers not to do things that will confuse or distract their readers, even momentarily. Why? Because to distract or confuse your reader unintentionally is just inane.

Most of the time I don’t know whether writers put my advice to use, and frankly, I don’t worry about it. I mean, just because I give you something — in this case, knowledge — that doesn’t give me the right to tell you how to spend it, right? That is as it should be.

Okay. So say you and I are walking along the road and there’s a duck sitting in the center of a pond.

Say you look at the pond, then turn to me and say, “Hey, lookit that! A bald eagle!”

And I look, then look again, and say, “Y’know, actually that’s a duck.”

But you say, “No no no! So Ann Sew wrote a book about it, and she says it’s an eagle, so it simply must be an eagle. She wouldn’t write something that isn’t true! Would she? I mean, isn’t that like, illegal or something?”

“Besides, my ornithology professor wrote a treatise about it, and he even laid out all the reasons it’s an eagle. For example, the fact it’s an eagle makes it more interesting and immediate and intimate. So there’s that.

“Oh, and plus, it’s never been an eagle before, so it’s a cutting-edge eagle! Oh, absolutely everybody who’s anybody simply knows that’s an eagle!”

And at that point, having learned my lesson, I just smile and say, “Okay.” Because something finally has dawned on me:

For some, veneer, not substance, is what matters.

For just one example, many—uh, let’s call them “misguided”—university professors teach that a paragraph with word-wrapped lines is a “prose poem.” They don’t understand, or perhaps have never known, three basic concepts:

- The Line (not the Sentence) is the basic unit of the poem;
- “Prose” is a mode of language in which the meter has not been intentionally manipulated (There are only two modes of written communication. The other is Verse.); and
- “Poetry” is a genre. It is the ONLY genre in fact, for which the basic unit is the Line, not the Sentence.

So the “prose poem” does exist, but it isn’t a paragraph and it doesn’t look like one. It’s a poem (a piece of writing based on intentionally, intelligently broken lines) delivered in prose mode (so the poet does not intentionally manipulate the meter).

In other words, the prose poem is what for the past several decades has been called “free verse.” Truth. Look it up.

But don’t try to convince your professors. Ain’t gonna happen. When they teach a concept, whether it’s substantive doesn’t matter. What effect it will have on the reader has no bearing. It just has to Sound Intellectual. Veneer. That’s their job.

Now, as a successful professional writer, I want to give something back. For that reason, part of my job is helping other writers out here in the trenches see past the steam rising off all that fresh bovine excrement.

But what’s a guy to do when his own brothers and sisters in arms are rushing up with shovels full of the stuff and proclaiming how sweet it smells?

So okay. I surrender. I have seen the light, Brothers and Sisters, and man is my face red.

I suppose I was led astray by the success I somehow managed to achieve (Pulitzer and National Book Award nominations as a poet; 18 novels and over 140 short stories as a fiction writer) despite my foolish notions regarding eagles and ducks and poems without lines and stuff-like-that-there.

I was actually ignorant enough to use as role models the likes of James Joyce and Carson McCullers and Kris Rusch. Well, and Samuel Clemens and Shirley Jackson and CJ Cherryh. Oh, and Dean Wesley Smith and Bradbury and Poe.

Sigh. And Asimov and Heinlein and Fitzgerald and Hemingway and Parker and Faulkner and O'Connor and Orwell and Williamson and Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky and Eliot and Borges and Márquez and Allende and so on, ad infi-freakin'-nitum.

I mean, just think how successful they could have been if only they had written in present-tense narrative. It staggers the mind.

I mean seriously! Writing novels and short stories as if they were being delivered as stage direction? Sally crosses the street. She sees a man with a gun. She runs away. Hey, That. Is. Sheer. *Genius!*

- Without a moment's hesitation I immediately thought to myself all of a sudden, "Yeah, sheer 'cause you can see right through it without even tryin'. Ha!"
- An' then myself thought right back at me, "Shut up, Harvey! I'm tryin'a surrender here!"
- An' then I instantly thought to myself again ('cause we're the only ones in here, I promise),"Hey, wait! Ain't'cha s'posed to put quotation marks only around dialogue and not around unspoken thought?"
- "Shh! No! Not anymore! An' it's called 'internal dialogue' now even when the character ain't schizoid. Hey, ain't you been readin' this right along with me? C'mon, man, work with me here!"

That did it. At last the idiot fell silent, and —

"Hey look! I do believe I've started a brand new way of writing. Why has nobody ever used bullet points to set off paragraphs before? I mean, lookit how immediate and intimate it makes everything! 'Sides, them there little half-elevated giant dot thingies are a whole lot easier to see than them little bitty indentations."

"Shh! Shut up, Harvey!"

Sorry folks. You think I'm hard to live with out there, you should see it in here. Ugh. Anyway, where was I?

Oh yeah. Here I am.

So from this point forward—and I am literally slap-your-grandma, double-dog-dare-you, cut-both-our-palms-and-swear-a-blood-oath **SERIOUS** about this: All you other writers out there, especially those of you who write in the same genres I write in, Please Write Your Narrative in Present Tense From Now On.

Really. I am finally convinced. I think it's simply **THE** thing to do and you will enjoy simply **HUGE** success with it.

In fact, while you're at it,

- Don't put quotation marks around dialogue. That's long-since passé.
- Replace all the semicolons in your work with commas (per the advice of a 30+ year PhD professor in a major university in Florida).
- Remove all instances of the word "had" from your writing.

- Remove all of those silly, troublesome “ing words”... you know, the ones that used to be verbs before you put the “ing” thingy on them?
- Use quotation to indicate “internal dialogue” as well as, you know, external dialogue.
- Don’t use more than _ exclamation points per _____. (You fill in the blanks; it’s easier that way.)
- Be sure to use lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of misplaced modifiers. Michener’s work is riddled with them, and isn’t he, like, famous or something?
- Change the verbs in your tag lines really often so they remain interesting. (If you need help with this one, email me and I’ll send you a list. Really. “No, really,” he sentenced.)
- Use reverse constructions in your tag lines sometimes to keep them interesting (like, sometimes write “sentenced Sheila” instead of “Sheila sentenced”).

All of this should render your writing Immediate and Intimate and Cutting Edge and Show Don’t Tell and Not Passive Voice and a whole bunch of other stuff that apparently only I can explain but at least all the others allegedly “know it when they see it.”

I was gonna mention my new bulleted paragraph thing too, but it won’t really be a thing until some professor somewhere writes a paper about it and says it is. So you probably ought’a hold off on that one for now.

‘Course, if any of you are in college right now, please mention that to your professor. Tell her I don’t mind if she calls the concept her own. It should be all the rage within a semester or so.

And listen, if I’ve missed anything that random members of a critique group or random writing instructors or the clerk at the corner convenience store or some guy off the Internet advised you to do, you know, go on ahead and do that too.

Seriously, I’m glad all of you who were wise enough to reject my advice saw the light in time to avoid making fools of yourselves.

But I gotta tell you, I really am old and stuck in my ways, so while you’re all riding the waves of the literary revolution to multi-million-dollar contracts and massive advances, I’ll prob’ly go on writing my stupid narrative in dumb ol’ past tense and all that other stuff. ‘Cause, well, you know, I really am a lost cause. But I will revel wildly in your wildly successful success and I will try not to be too terribly envious.

Seriously, thanks to those who wrote in with their opinions on present-tense narrative. You spurred this, and frankly, I haven’t had this much fun writing common-sense nonfiction in roughly forever. I’m thinkin’ I might’ve been channeling the ugly, non-writing third cousin of Dave Barry. Gosh I hope so.

As one of my heroes used to say,

Good night, and good luck.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's site, [Writing Sales Copy](#) (Scroll down when you get there. He titled it Sales Writing.) I'm not sure why he didn't list the purchase link for the book [How to Write Fiction Sales Copy](#), but there it is. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out at 4 after waking up at 2 and 3 and refusing to get out of bed. The Olympics are kicking my tired old butt. (grin) Sure was good to see the lady gymnasts off to a good start last night though.

Worked at the house and outside desk the first four-plus hours to post more old blogs to the main site and put three of them on this blog (one today, one Friday and one Saturday).

8:30, finally moved out to the Hovel. Realized I needed some more everyday cigars so I jumped online and did that. The I wrote everything above.

Today is the last day on the novel until Saturday unless I can add to it on Friday morning before I leave. I'm coming into the end game on it now, but tomorrow will be an abbreviated day. So I'll write a short story tomorrow.

One-third of the way through the month, I'm on pace for a 117,000 word month. We'll see. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3734

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4184

Writing of Terminus Loop (or The Traveler, novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words
Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words
Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words
Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words
Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words
Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words
Day 7..... 4113 words. Total words to date..... 25804 words
Day 8..... 4321 words. Total words to date..... 30125 words
Day 9..... 3734 words. Total words to date..... 33859 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 39251

Total fiction words for the year..... 469403

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8340
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 175020

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 644423

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 8/11

[August 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Cool morning here at 69° and with a breeze out of the north. Not quite enough to drive me out of my cargo shorts, flip-flops and t-shirt.

I started off this morning revising and transferring old posts that didn't make it to MailChimp a couple of years ago. I even found one that I cross posted here as the topic of the day.

Then I remember today is an abbreviated day. We'll be leaving here around 11 or so to drive into Tucson to retrieve Mona's sister from the airport. So that means my writing day is cut at least in half.

And I need to write a short story for this week. Short day, short story. Sounds perfect. (grin) I could write it as late as this evening or even tomorrow morning before Dan and I head out at around 6:30, but I prefer to have things like that behind me.

Anyway, just in case we're diverted or whatever, I've already posted this to the website and scheduled it to post just before 5 this afternoon. I'll add to it through the day.

This is an important topic. This is one of those that I wish everyone would read.

Anyway, hope you enjoy the topic.

Topic: Top 10 Proofreading Tips

Note: This post was originally scheduled for 4/27/2014. It didn't post to MailChimp, so I'm posting it again now. I revised it (especially sub items in number 4) to express my current opinions, but the main list remains intact. It is timeless.

First, I'm not talking about proofreading someone else's stuff, although you can apply these tips to that process. But mostly here I'm talking about proofreading your own stuff.

Proofreading your own writing is considerably more difficult than proofreading the work of others. Okay so here are the top ten step to proofreading your own work. In true Top 10 format, they're in reverse order:

10. To be sure each sentence makes sense by itself, read in reverse.

Read the last sentence first, then the next, then the next and so on to the first sentence.

When you read in the proper sequence, especially if you're reading silently, your mind will often insert letters and even whole words that are actually missing from the writing.

This is especially true of shorter words like "the" or "of" that happen to occur at the end of a line of writing.

I realize you probably won't do this. That's why it's number 10 on the list. Still, it's a good technique.

9. Check longer words to be sure you haven't omitted any vowels (a, e, i, o, u).

8. Don't depend on "professionals" like news anchors, who use words to make their living, to be correct.

For example, despite its widespread misuse, "likely" is an adjective, not an adverb, and it's synonymous with "probable," not "probably." I cringe every time a weather guy says, "It likely will rain tonight."

7. Use the spell checker, but not as a substitute for your own mind. It will not catch wrong words (e.g., *that* for *than*, *an* for *and*, *waist* for *waste*). You can set some spell checkers to "contextual spelling" now so they will catch "We sent our best solders into battle."

6. If a word doesn't look right or "feel" right to you, don't depend on the spell checker. Look it up in the dictionary.

5. Watch closely for the omission of "ed" or "s" on the end of past tense or plural words. (Reading in reverse will help you catch these as well.)

4. Double check the spelling of words that sound similar to each other. If you aren't sure, look them up. Here are a few I've seen misused often:

- *there* is a place, *their* is possessive, and *they're* means they are;
- *personal* means pertaining to one person, but *personnel* means a group of people within a profession;
- *forward* is a direction, but *foreword* is the opening of some books;
- *effect* is a noun, but *affect* is a verb;
- the writer or speaker *implies*, but the reader or listener *infers*;
- *advice* is what you give someone, *advise* is what you're doing when you give someone advice;
- a whole is *composed* of its parts, and the parts *comprise* the whole; and no matter what the dictionary says
- *till* is a cash drawer (or a verb meaning to turn arable land with a plow; *'til* is the abbreviated version of until. And finally, because someone has to say it,
- *journal* is a noun, not a verb. Seriously. When people say they're *journaling* (or even *chronicling*, a much older bastardization of the language), it's because they've yet to find that big, scary word

writing. Or maybe “I’m journaling” makes them feel important. I don’t know. A writer who says she’s “journaling” is like a mechanic who says he’s “spark plugging” or a carpenter saying he’s “cabineting.”

Note that some dictionaries have begun to blur the distinction between some of these words, even imply and infer. Don’t forget that dictionaries are written by human beings, ALL of whom are biased in one way or another. My personal bias is for learning, not merely accepting.

Living languages change, but that change should be a long, difficult, arduous process, not merely a surrender to stupidity. While I’m on the topic, “ebonics” is not a new language. It is a dialect. And like most dialects, it is a signifier either of a lack of education or laziness in pronunciation.

3. Be careful of words that contain double vowels.

- *Succeed, proceed, and exceed* are the only words that end in “eed.”
- *Supersede* is the only word that ends in “sede.”
- All other words with this sound end with “cede”: *precede, recede*, and so on.

2. Be careful of words that contain double consonants, such as *occasion, occurrence*, and *accommodation*. My personal thorn is *millennium*. Seems like one N should be enough.

1. And the most important tip I can give you: Read Your Work Aloud, even if you do so quietly. (It’s better and more fun if you emote.)

When you read aloud, you’ll catch problems you wouldn’t normally catch with your eyes, especially inflection and punctuation errors. Remember, the reader can’t hear your voice when he reads your work. He has to see it.

If it sounds right to you when you read it aloud, it will sound right to the reader when he reads it silently. When I was editing, I often read my clients’ work aloud as I conducted the edit.

Of Interest

Dean’s topic [Sales in General](#), an extension of yesterday’s Sales Copy topic, is well worth the time it will take to read it. Once you click the link (the heading will read Finishing Up), you’ll have to scroll down to the topic.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and was outside by 4. I was doing the thing I talked about above (moving posts) when I remembered I have a short day and need to write a short story for this week.

Even knowing I have an abbreviated day to work with, I endured a slow start. I think that happens because I’m not worried about the short story. I have no idea even right now (5:30 a.m.) what I’ll write, but all I need is a character with a problem in a setting and for that combination to appeal to me. (grin)

So I cross-posted and wrote all of the above and checked Dean's site by 5:30. Now I'm off for a break (the whole time I'll be considering characters/problems/setting), and then to the writing.

Okay, I wrote for about 3 good hours this morning (around 9 – noon) then made the trip to Tucson to pick up Mona's baby sister. We got back around 3:15. Back to work on the story, and it became obvious I won't finish it today. Just my luck, this one's running longer than my average 3,000 word story. I think it's about half-finished.

This one will be a western about a small fictional town in Texas. And Wes Crowley is writing it. It will be his debut short story. (grin)

We hope to finish it in the morning, but we won't rush it. If it finishes, we'll extend the current streak by a week. If we don't, we'll start a new streak next week.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3635

Nonfiction Words: 700 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4335

Writing of "Untitled Western" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3635 words. Total words to date..... 3635 words (note, not finished)

Writing of Terminus Loop (or The Traveler, novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words

Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words

Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words

Day 7..... 4113 words. Total words to date..... 25804 words

Day 8..... 4321 words. Total words to date..... 30125 words

Day 9..... 3734 words. Total words to date..... 33859 words

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 42886

Total fiction words for the year..... 473038

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9040

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 175720

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 648758

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 8/12

[August 12, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

By the time you see this I'll be screwing around in the Lower Gila Box Wilderness somewhere north of Lordsburg NM. Hal will accompany us, and I plan to write while I'm out there. We'll see.

In the meantime, I preposted this and another Journal to cover the days I'm gone. At least you'll have a topic to consider.

I planned to get up and finish a short story this morning that I started yesterday. But it's looking like it might not be a short story. It's looking like it might be a novella. I don't like to impose artificial limits on stories. I prefer to let them be whatever they are.

Also, I decided this morning, the way I'm counting my story-of-the-week goal doesn't have to coincide to the minute the current story of the week posts. The two are not related, except that the first feeds the second.

So from this point forward, my "week" for WRITING at least one new story per week begins on Saturday morning and expires on Friday at midnight. It's still exactly one week, but it isn't dependent on the posting time of the free short story, which fluctuates.

Topic: S-stutterin' an' St-stammerin' an' St-stuff

This is one of those old posts that didn't make it to MailChimp way back in 2013. I'm reposting it in October over on the big site, but thought you might appreciate an advance look.

A writer sent me an email asking how to write stammering speech. This is my expanded response:

I r-r-recom-m-mend you wr-write st-st-stuttering like th-this. Just remember to s-spell the entire first sound of the st-stutter before the h-hyphen. (And be careful not to overspell it, by which I mean, don't spell what you don't want pronounced.)

After all, s-stutter is not quite the same as st-stutter or stu-stutter, and p-pronounced is not the same as pr-pronounced or pro-pronounced. Read them aloud and you'll see what I m-mean.

M-most often you'll w-want to repeat only the f-first letter of a word, or a single conson-n-nant later in the w-word. B-be careful of repeating the f-first l-letter of a w-word like l-letter though because the lower-case L l-looks like a one (1) and c-can be distracting all b-by itself.

However, you'll want to use the first two letters of a word like though because the TH forms a single sound, almost as if TH is a letter by itself.

And as with all phonetic and other dialect spellings, don't overdo it. The good part about spelling s-stammering is that it's not quite as labor intensive as other types of phonetic spelling. Those who s-stammer often don't s-stammer on the same word or syllable all the time.

Okay, enough of that. When you spell stammering speech, be sure to use the hyphen to indicate the "break." It isn't really a break, and it definitely is not a pause (as that created by a comma or em dash, for example).

As I mention in Punctuation for Writers (get it at [Smashwords](#) or [Amazon](#)) the hyphen is the only mark of punctuation that actually speeds the reader up, making him read two words as if they were one, as in "It was a dark-green Cadillac."

So we use that speeding-up property of the hyphen to indicate the stutter or stammer by rushing the reader through two individual but repeated sounds as if they were one.

Next time you get mega bored, write some s-stammering speech for a little while. It becomes ad-d-dictive.

Ha-ha-ha-harvey

Of Interest

As always, I recommend you check Dean's site. There are some great comments on his [post from yesterday](#). After you check that, just click the Home tab and see what he put up today.

The Day

I'm writing little before I leave to go camping, but I'll write for awhile after we get there and get settled in too. I'll update numbers and all that on Sunday or Monday.

Now I'm gonna go ahead and post this.

Have a great weekend, everybody.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 8/13

[August 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Still out screwing around in the Lower Gila Box Wilderness somewhere north of Lordsburg NM.

In the meantime, I preposted this. At least you'll have a topic to consider.

Note: This post was originally scheduled for 1/10/2014. It didn't post to MailChimp, so I'm posting it again now. I've revised the original post so it's up to date.

Topic: To a World Free of Cliché

Once upon a time, I edited a manuscript that was teeming with clichés, ripe to bursting with platitudes and filled to the brim with trite, self-serving crap.

It virtually screamed Look at me! Aren't I wonderful? Aren't I generous with my time and helpful in all things? Aren't I just pretty much Oprah on steroids?

Of course, the clichés and platitudes were slumping along behind like great lummoxes, mumbling, Hey, uh, looky here. I ain't never had one original thought, an' I'm dang proud of it. This here's m'nose-pickin' finger. Yup, I'm dumber's a bagga bricks.

Did you ever read something that actually made you recoil?

The unoriginal writing in that particular masterpiece bludgeoned me so strongly and so often that I wanted to curl into the fetal position and hide beneath my desk. I hoped the writing gods would come and spirit that evil piece of sh-riting from my laptop.

They didn't. I'd gotten myself into it, they said, so I could get myself out. Ugh.

So why did I accept the manuscript for editing? I got lax.

Although the writer sent me the full manuscript per my request, I took the sample edit from the first few pages. It didn't take long during the edit to realize those pages plus a few more had been previously edited so that they weren't ugly, hairy legged, knuckle-dragging things slouching toward some poor, unsuspecting reader.

But hey, mea freakin' culpa. I gritted my teeth and forced myself to f-i-n-i-s-h t-h-e e-d-i-t. Have I mentioned how happy I am to be writing full time now?

But back to the original point. Far more important than me having to put up with a horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible—I suppose I could have written that (horrible)⁵—piece of writing was the realization that many writers, we who are supposed to be sources of original thought, simply aren't.

So here's a new rule for you, annotated to ease understanding. Not that YOU need it to be annotated—I realize that—but face it: some of the folks reading this are missing more than a few spots off their dominoes.

Strive (attempt with all the power of your will)

never (not even once)

to write (put pen to paper, fingertips to keyboard or mouth to recorder)

an unoriginal thought (a syllable or series of syllables that have been uttered before, by anyone, at any time, anywhere, ever)

except as you do so purposefully (intentionally, with intent, on purpose)

to create (cause to occur, bring into being)

a certain (premeditated, planned, intentional, particular)

effect (emotion, gasp, increase in heart rate, smile, chuckle, laugh, recoiling in horror, etc.)

in the reader (person whom you want to impress so much with your work that s/he will seriously consider breaking into your home just to learn more about you).

Again, Strive never to write an unoriginal thought except as you do so purposefully to create a certain effect in the reader.

That one rule would cover a LOT of the other lessons I've tried to teach writers over the years, especially if you include the use of the various marks of punctuation in that "create a certain effect in the reader" part. And you should.

Of course, if one of your characters actually speaks in clichés and utter platitudes per his role in society, that's fine. Let him.

At least until you hire another character to fit the cliché-ridden guy with reinforced-concrete underwear and drop him off a pier somewhere.

Give me three hours' notice and I'll drive. Hey, I'll even help you load him in the trunk. But your narrator... well now, that's different.

See, thing is, you're a Writer. You were brought into existence on this funny, filthy little blue marble to shake it the hell up, to look it in the eyes and dare it to say or do something that you can turn into a story.

And in your writing, although your characters will wander around being themselves (as they should), your narrator can't.

The narrator describes the scene, period, albeit through the characters' senses and the characters' OPINION of that scene. The narrator provides a great transitory bridge between the colorful, magical world of your story and the grey-white, humdrum existence of your reader's reality.

You and your narrator will describe the scenes in vibrant, expansive splashes of prose that leave the reader gasping for breath, not crawling under his desk to hide from an onslaught of boredom.

You and your narrator will make readers laugh until their sides ache, cry until they're dry, or sleep for three weeks with one eye open.

You and your narrator are too intelligent to mumble clichés or platitudes when you have a perfectly good brain right there between your ears.

And I hope you're just plain too stubborn to use something someone else has used a thousand times.

So get on with it!

Of Interest

As always, I recommend you check Dean's site.

The Day

On vacation days I won't post anything from here down. I'll catch up on the "Today's Writing" section when I get back. (grin)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 8/14](#)

[August 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, I didn't write at all Friday or Saturday. Two days off in a row. But that's fine. I'll get back up to speed soon on writing fiction. I'm also developing an exciting new business venture that was born this weekend. More on that in coming days.

We came back a little early from our camping trip. Massive storms were slowly moving in late on Saturday afternoon and surrounding us. We'd seen that once before, so we took no chances. Dan dropped me in St. David around 8:30-ish (p.m.) and headed for Mesa.

Friday was a good day. First the 2-hour trip itself topped off with the best jueves rancheros in the world at a dive-looking place called El Charro (earlier immortalized in my short story, [Incident at El Charro Café](#)).

Later in the day we hiked in a leisurely manner befitting men who are 26 and 28, respectively, with 37 years' experience. That was followed with a writing and business-of-writing chat that

extended almost to midnight as we awaited the annual Perseid Meteor Disappointment. Suspecting what to expect, we were not disappointed.

Saturday was much the same, with a continuation of writing talk. Naturally, we capped that off with an unpleasurably mega-hike befitting men who are 12 with no experience whatsoever. And who still believe themselves to be bullet proof, sun proof and are, in general, morons. (Guys being guys when there are no women around to say things like, “Hey, that’s a really dumb idea. Don’t you know you could get heat stroke?”)

But fortunately for the world, we survived. In fact, we agreed (after a few bottles of Gatorade while finally seated in our favorite chairs in the shade of a cedar tree), “Well, we did it.” Translation: “We somehow managed to survive that self-inflicted ordeal and we never have to do it again.”

But we will. I know us.

Topic: If You Have To Pay A Fee Up Front, It Isn’t A Traditional Publisher

I was all set to write “Nothing Today” alongside “Topic” but I got an email from an author and— Well, here. See for yourself.

I’ve linked up with a publisher and hope to have our book out by early Sept. No, I didn’t go with Indie but I did opt for a very similar package from [Name of a Vanity/Subsidy Publisher], based in [name of state] and highly recommended by my author mentor back in [name of state].

I’m going with Amazon both print and Kindle and will probably opt for Ingram as well. My main concern with *Kindle is their book return, which requires the author to cover shipping costs for all returned books. Can you share what your own experience has been in this regard?

**The author later wrote to say he meant book returns from Ingram, not Kindle. I responded that I had never had any problem with Ingram re book returns. I believe this is an additional fee his subsidy publisher will charge him and they’re passing the buck, so to speak, onto Ingram.*

Sigh. Here’s my response to you, the choir, whom I seriously doubt need the message:

1. There is no “package similar” to indie publishing. In indie publishing, YOU publish your book. Even if you pay someone to do the eformatting, print layout and cover, that’s your only cost and they don’t share royalties. The royalties are 100% yours. (This service, from honest providers, usually costs only a few hundred dollars. Like less than five hundred dollars.)
2. “Package” is an alarm that designates a vanity/subsidy publisher (twenty-two letters that, in that combination, mean “scam”). I removed the name of the publisher and its location only to maintain the author’s anonymity.
3. I’m not sure what an “author mentor” is, but please send me his/her name so I can recommend (or not) him/her. (The author did send the name. I do not recommend that person.)

4. When a paperback book is published by CreateSpace (Amazon's print arm) it automatically goes into the Ingram catalog. That you have to "opt for" (translation, pay money for) inclusion is just one more red flag re the publisher.

If you're wondering, my actual response to this particular person was

I've never heard of Amazon Kindle having anything to do with book returns. Have you already signed a contract with [name of publisher]? If not, I strongly recommend having an attorney look it over before you do. If you've already signed, I can only wish you luck.

Why so short and to the point? Because I know from long experience that "authors" don't trust people who say things they don't want to hear. And that just doesn't make sense to me.

On one hand you have a publishing company that stands to make tens of thousands of dollars by telling you precisely what you want to hear, and they give you NOTHING (understand? N-O-T-H-I-N-G) that you can't get on your own.

On the other hand, you have an experienced professional writer who has published a few million words via traditional, subsidy (for a short time) and indie publishing and stands to make not one thin dime from what he's telling you.

Which of those two do you think might be more vested in lying to you?

What bothers me about this particular scam is that so many writers and would-be writers are susceptible to it.

Folks, if you believe for a second that you're going to get a good value from ANY subsidy publisher, while you're busy writing that check, go ahead and write one to that Nigerian prince who wants to make you a partner in an international business venture that will make you rich beyond your wildest dreams.

Because like that prince, a subsidy publisher plays on your ego and does, indeed, furnish the stuff of which wildest dreams are made. And nothing else.

Today

Today will be a slow-start day as I transition back to my routine. I'll be writing and I expect to hit or exceed my word count, but I'm also going to work on developing a new income stream that my friend Dan and I discussed this weekend. Thanks again, Dan. (Spoiler alert: I did NOT come near my word count goal today.)

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place a couple days ago in case you missed it, scroll down to read [One Book to Another](#). Some great tips on how to end one story and start another one.

Then scroll down again to read [Something That Makes Me Shudder](#).

And in case I didn't recommend it before, I recommend reading the [comments on his post from a day earlier](#). Good stuff.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 5, checked email over coffee to wake up and found my topic for today.

To my outside desk by 5:15 where I wrote most of the above.

Around 8 a.m. I went to the hovel. I was going to write, but decided to clean it up a bit instead and spray again. Then I added about 600 words to the short story I started a couple days ago.

10, finally to the writing and back to the short story.

Wrapping it up at 3:30. I'm pooped, and I didn't get a lot done. But given that this probably would have been a non-writing day if I hadn't come back early, I'll definitely take it. I should be back up to speed tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2373

Nonfiction Words: 1220 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3593

Writing of "Untitled Western" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3635 words. Total words to date..... 3635 words

Day 2..... 2373 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of Terminus Loop (or The Traveler, novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words

Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words

Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words

Day 7..... 4113 words. Total words to date..... 25804 words

Day 8..... 4321 words. Total words to date..... 30125 words

Day 9..... 3734 words. Total words to date..... 33859 words

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 45259
Total fiction words for the year..... 475411
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10260
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 176940

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 652351

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Scams](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 8/15

[August 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I screwed up. I left the current novel (innocently enough and with good intention) to write a short story of the week (last week).

I was anticipating investing four to six hours in that story. When I started it, it was supposed to be my “goal story” for that week.

But as stories sometimes do, it became something else. And yesterday the undercurrent in my psyche was that the story was siphoning time away from my novel.

That was conscious mind creeping in, telling me finishing that particular story was “important” for some reason. (Well, I know the reason. It would be Wes Crowley’s first-ever short story for which he was listed as the author.) And it was stressing me out. I allowed it to stress me out because I was tired.

Last night I realized I can “power through” (a decision, so conscious mind) to find the end and finish it or I can go back to what I really love to do, writing, and continue with the novel.

Heh. No contest.

So maybe I’m shelving the untitled western for a bit (or maybe forever — who knows?) so I can get back to the vastly different world of my novel. That’s where my heart currently resides. It’s where my fun is.

I know me. Probably I’ll pull out the untitled western again and finish it. Maybe right after I finish the current WIP. Maybe a month from now. Maybe a year.

But even if I never finish it, so what?

I will have fallen off [Heinlein’s Rule #2](#).

One time. For one story. In the overall scheme, not a big deal.

Topic: Nothing other than the stuff above.

Of Interest

The comments on [Finished With One](#) are a must-read.

Also, [Myth of Time](#) is excellent.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 5. Finally catching up on a mostly sleep-deprived weekend. My fault, so I'm not complaining. Just reporting.

Moved out to the outside desk by 5:30, and around 6:30 I remembered to open the door to the Hovel so it can air out a bit more.

7:40, to the writing.

10 a.m., the novel is finished at a little over 35,000 words.

Good thing. I had forgotten I have a trip to Tucson today.

Got back from Tucson and a stop at Walmart with just enough time to post this. Calling it a day. Good because I finished a novel but sucky because I missed my word count.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1802

Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 22212

Writing of "Untitled Western" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3635 words. Total words to date..... 3635 words

Day 2..... 2373 words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Writing of Terminus Loop (novel)

Day 1..... 1137 words. Total words to date..... 1137 words

Day 2..... 3871 words. Total words to date..... 5008 words

Day 3..... 4481 words. Total words to date..... 9489 words

Day 4..... 4171 words. Total words to date..... 13660 words

Day 5..... 4188 words. Total words to date..... 17848 words
Day 6..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 21691 words
Day 7..... 4113 words. Total words to date..... 25804 words
Day 8..... 4321 words. Total words to date..... 30125 words
Day 9..... 3734 words. Total words to date..... 33859 words
Day 10... 1802 words. Total words to date..... 35661 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 47061
Total fiction words for the year..... 477213
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 177350

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 654563

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 8/16

[August 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Whining today a bit.

Today I wanted to start writing again in earnest. I planned to write a short story to begin a new streak of writing at least one a week. But frankly, part of me keeps saying I already did that. So apparently my big problem is one of success. (laugh) Just some conscious-mind stuff I have to work through.

I've already had a streak of short story writing that extended to 72 weeks. That's always in the back of my mind. It's something I'd like to do again (but longer), yet it also seems an insurmountable goal. I'm seeing the elephant right now instead of the single-bite fork in my hand.

Still, anyone who calls himself a writer and enjoys writing short fiction should be able to write at least one short story per week. Even Ray Bradbury himself recommended anyone who wants to be a writer should write at least one short story per week.

But I'm just not able to play in that particular pen right now.

I started four different stories today, and every one of them wanted to be a novel. Not one of them wanted to focus down to one event and be a short story. And I found myself trying to force them.

Normally I'd just take off with a new novel and not worry about it, but my brain is scattered today. For example, which novel start do I want to pursue? I don't know. None grabs me any more strongly than the others.

So I'm calling this a nonwriting day and taking one more day off. I doubt doing so will cause any major upsets anywhere across the world.

I enjoy the camping trips (though more for the talk than the rest) but I'm not wild about how much they set me back. So maybe some adjustments coming that way too.

Topic: Nothing today

Of Interest

[Making a Living With Your Short Fiction.](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, starting to get back into the groove. We'll see. Outside by 4:30, but another slow start to the day.

7:30, finally to the Hovel to write.

11 a.m. Wow. I've started four different stories this morning, and all of them want to be novels. I've never had that particular problem before. (grin)

Calling it a (non-writing) day early. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 390 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 390

Writing of "Untitled Western" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3635 words. Total words to date..... 3635 words

Day 2..... 2373 words. Total words to date..... 6008 words

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 47061

Total fiction words for the year..... 477213

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 177740

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 654953

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 8/17

[August 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I got one comment on yesterday's post and five private emails. All expressed concern about the whining I did here yesterday. (grin)

Interesting. First, thank you to everyone who wrote. But it was only whining, nothing more. I promise. I think I just needed a few days off, and was spurred on in that pursuit by the recent camping trip.

I didn't *have* to take off even the Friday and Saturday that we were in the field. I mean, I had my laptops (yep, plural, two of 'em 'cause the newer one has a longer battery life) with me, and I even took along a DC/AC converter to plug into the cigarette lighter.

I even plugged it in at one point. It didn't work right away, and I conveniently forgot the ignition has to be in the ACC setting in order for it to work. (The cigarette lighter works off the alternator so it doesn't drain the battery.)

Even knowing that, I think maybe the spectre of being stranded 20+ miles deep in the rugged terrain was in the back of my mind, so I didn't push it.

Besides, there was all this natural beauty all around. And I had my camera. And no responsibilities. So there you go. I simply allowed myself to be sidetracked.

I can't and don't speak for anyone else, but for me it's nothing short of wonderful to be a carefree 12 year old again for a couple of days.

In brief, I could have written for a total of about 8 hours before both batteries in both laptops were exhausted. And I had a thumb drive with me to use to transfer the file from one to the other.

So from a standpoint of time, self-serving excuses aside, I could easily have written a short story on Friday (character with a problem in a setting, GO) to keep my miniature streak alive.

Physically, I was back on Saturday evening. But the 12 year old wasn't quite ready to let go on Sunday or Monday or, as it turns out, Tuesday.

So he didn't. He stuck one finger up a nose hole, assumed a voice that eerily resembles tinnitus, and commenced whining about all the reasons he couldn't do what he knew could do. (grin)

Now, today, finally, I'm back in my role as an adult.

Topic: Listening and Learning

Often, they aren't the same thing.

As you know, I often recommended reading DWS' posts and the comments on some of his posts. There are many little gems in those writings, and I recommend mining them.

But I usually eschew specifics. I usually don't tell you specifically which gems are important and which are not. That's because what's right or valuable for one writer is neither right nor valuable for another.

In his recent topic on Making A Living Writing Short Fiction he recommended writing across many genres "and do it all under one name" [instead of using pseudonyms or personas].

I admit to a brief moment of panic. I do write under my own name, but I also write under several personas. (These are different than pen names, as I've mentioned before. But the effect is the same.)

Then, much farther along in the article under "Building a Career and Income," he listed a few reasons the writer "might have no sales." And almost in passing, under number 9, he added "You are writing under four or five names *and not linking them in any real fashion to help readers*" [emphasis added].

So one of the first things I did this morning (a couple days later) was run to Smashwords to be certain my personas' author pages were linked to my name. They all were. Whew.

In case you're wondering how to do that, check out the Smashwords author page for [Eric Stringer](#), one of my more prolific personas. The first line of his bio reads "Eric Stringer (the borderline psychotic persona of Harvey Stanbrough) is a miserably failed newspaper reporter..."

So that was one of the gems I found. I hope you find many.

Of Interest

Check the comments on Dean's [Making a Living post](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 to get started on the day. It's now 6 a.m. and I've just finished writing all of the above. I was about to move out to the Hovel, but it's a nice, chilly morning at 62° so I'm going to stay at the outside desk for awhile.

Well, I moved out to the Hovel around 8 and piddled around with the untitled western for awhile. There are a few scenes in it that I just don't want to let go so I keep trying to salvage it. Maybe it wants to be a novel. Maybe someday, but not now.

Then around 10 (finally) I started a new short story: "What It Was, Was Gunsmoke." Finished it in about 2.5 hours. For all the confidence I usually have ("the story will come, don't sweat it") sometimes I fear the words have abandoned me. Silly, I know. But the fear still comes. And when it does, I write something to get over it. Like to show myself I still can.

I took about a half-hour break to mix Gatorade at the house and grab another cigar. Now it's 1 p.m. and I'm going to start something else. With around 3300 words on the day so far, this should be a good writing day overall.

Okay, got a great start on another story and not sure what length it will be. Frankly, that feels wonderful. Calling it a day at 2:45.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 5348

Nonfiction Words: 930 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6278

Writing of "Untitled Angel Story" (not sure what this will be)

Day 1..... 1974 words. Total words to date..... 1974 words

Writing of "What It Was, Was Gunsmoke" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2654 words. Total words to date..... 2654 words (done)

Writing of "Untitled Western" (officially stalled)

Day 1..... 3635 words. Total words to date..... 3635 words

Day 2..... 2373 words. Total words to date..... 6008 words

Day 3..... 0720 words. Total words to date..... 6728 words (stalled)

Total fiction words for the month..... 52409

Total fiction words for the year..... 482561

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11990

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 178670

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 661231

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 8/18

[August 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Chilly out here again this morning at about 60°. That time of year is rapidly approaching when I'll be glad the walls Adobe Hovel retain the heat of the day.

I got all the admin work done for the story I wrote yesterday. That included preparing a promo document (see the topic below), eformatting for Smashwords, D2D, and to post the story free on my site. (It will go live on September 16.)

In admin time I also include creating a cover and resizing it into three sizes (2000 x 3000, 180 x 270, and 150 x 225), then submitting everything to Smashwords, D2D and Amazon.

Finally I post the story to my website for a scheduled release date and upload both the smaller cover sizes to the site as well. The 180 x 270 cover accompanies the story on the story-of-the-week post. The smaller one goes on my Short Stories page and serves as a buy link (a day or so later) to Amazon.

The process of posting the new 150 x 225 cover to my Short Stories page is involved, and that's an understatement. I have to go into the back end in Text view, add the new table data (TD) and copy/paste the whole thing (the whole page) to a Notepad document. Then I go back and manipulate the table rows (TR) once for each row you see on the page, then save and copy/paste the whole thing back onto the website.

I'm not complaining. That entire process takes only about ten minutes. Still, it's mind-numbingly repetitive and extremely easy to mess up. Thankfully, it's also easy to fix. (grin)

If any of you would like to know more about that, let me know and I'll send you the back end Notepad document so you can see it.

If you wonder about doing your own eformatting and/or submitting your work for distribution to Smashwords et al, pick up a free copy of my ebook, *The Essentials of Digital Publishing*. It's a little outdated, but not much. (For example, I'm not sure there are step-by-step submission procedures for D2D.)

To get your copy, just visit [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) and click the Free Stuff tab. Or you can pick up a copy at Amazon or Smashwords (or other venues) for \$9.99. Amazing how many of those I sell when I offer it free on my website. (grin)

Topic: The Promo Doc, A Time Saver

For each story I write, I create a promo doc. Despite that “doc” tag, I create it as a simple text document.

Doing so feels like a frustrating waste of time at first, but it isn’t as frustrating or annoying as having to retype all the information for each distributor.

So I create the promo doc and then copy/paste from it to each distributor (Smashwords, Amazon, D2D).

There are only four entries in the promo doc.

The first line is the title.

The second line is the publisher. (For short stories, that’s FrostProof808. For story collections, novellas and novels, it’s StoneThread Publishing.)

The third entry is the story description. For short stories, it’s usually a teaser of around 30 to 50 words. I use the same description for both the short and long description at Smashwords, and for the description at D2D and Amazon.

For most of my novels, I also write a much longer description. I use it for the long description at Smashwords and for the description at D2D and Amazon.

The short description at Smashwords can be no longer than 400 characters (not words), including spaces. For example, my short description for *In the Siberian Fields* was 393 characters and 58 words.

The long description at Smashwords (and again, I use it also at Amazon and D2D) is limited to 4,000 characters, including spaces. I’ve yet to reach the limit. The long description for *In the Siberian Fields* was 2,155 characters and 376 words.

The fourth and final entry on the promo document consists of Internet search terms. What might a reader be searching for? What keywords might he or she use to find your book?

When you consider these, don’t include your name or the title. Those already will pop up in search results.

Amazon limits you to seven search terms, separated by commas. (One search term can be longer than one word.) I usually write more than that (if necessary) and make sure the more important ones are within the first seven listed.

Then I copy/paste those terms to D2D (they allow as many as you want) and Amazon (they cut off anything after seven terms). So it’s easy-peasy.

Smashwords is more clunky in that regard. You have to enter each term separately, then hit the Enter key. I find it easier and faster to just write the search terms one at a time for Smashwords than to copy/paste each individual search term.

My search terms for Smashwords and Amazon for In the Siberian Fields were these: science fiction, jews, psychological suspense, lunar colony, inter-arab war, mining bones, second holocaust. (I copied these from Smashwords and they render everything in lower case. At D2D and Amazon, appropriate capitalization would be evident.)

For D2D for this novel, I might also add “horror” “terror” “ghosts” and “novel.”

Any questions on creating a promo doc or if I can help in any way, please either comment below or send me an email.

Of Interest

A pretty good post on [Writing a Novel Quickly](#) over at Dean’s place today.

I also recommend skipping down and reading the [comments on his post from yesterday on Enough for the Moment](#). I even added one.

Ooh, got this one late. Be sure to check out [Kris Rusch’s post on Agent Agreements](#). She says “All writers should read this, even if they’re indie published.” I definitely will read it. I hope you do too.

The Day

Rolled out at 3 and was outside by 3:15. I piddled around for a bit, then remembered I hadn’t done all the admin stuff on the short story I wrote yesterday, so I did that. About two hours on that.

I spent almost another hour (it’s a little after 6 now) writing the stuff above this. Now I’m headed over to Dean’s site for my daily dose of mining gems.

Biscuits and gravy and ham for breakfast (yeah, I’m a troglodyte) and headed out to the Hovel.

7:30, to the Angel story.

8:20, 800 words in, a break to see my wife off to her job.

12:30, with three more breaks over the past few hours, I finished “Pete and the Angel” (yesterday’s untitled angel story). Turns out it didn’t want to be a novel. (grin) This one will post on September 23. With 3500 words on the day, I’m gonna take a break.

2:45, Well I screwed up, sort of. I extended the break and used a lot of it to format the cover, prepare it for posting, and create a cover. I could've done that tonight. Oh well. Back to the writing. I want to at least get something started today.

3:50, calling it a day. I got a good start on a new action-adventure novel set along the southern border of Arizona. I have a feeling this is gonna be fun. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4519

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5699

Writing of "Pete and the Angel" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 1974 words. Total words to date..... 1974 words

Day 2..... 3514 words. Total words to date..... 5488 words (done)

Writing of Haley's Story (action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 56928

Total fiction words for the year..... 487080

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13170

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 179850

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 666930

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 8/19](#)

[August 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Interesting comment and response over on Dean's site this morning. Under his post on Writing a Novel Quickly, a respondent wrote

Got [The Idanha Hotel, the last novel DWS wrote in 7 days], and another random Thunder Mountain novel. I'm curious if I see any difference in quality with 7 day novel vs. regular speed novel (which is probably 14-21 days anyway, so not that much difference, haha).

and DWS replied

Still believing in the old myth, huh? I spend the same amount of time sitting at a computer for a novel that takes a month to write as I do for a novel that takes seven days to write. I just spend less time per day on the month novel. Doesn't make it better, just shows me as being more lazy.

The myth he's talking about is that fast writing is a sure sign of shoddy work. If it doesn't take months or years to write a novel, the novel can't possibly be any good. And of course, that simply isn't true.

In fact, the opposite is true if all the extra time includes editing (except copyediting), rewriting, polishing and so on.

All "fast writing" really means is putting in the hours in the chair and actually, you know, writing.

But I've never seen or heard it explained more succinctly than DWS explains it in that brief comment.

Like I've said often here, there are gems of wisdom to be mined over there. This is why I always read the comments on previous posts.

Topic: Nothing today.

Of Interest

My new short story posts on Story of the Week today. If you're not a donor and you'd like to read "As Long As We're Wishing" free, stop by HarveyStanbrough.com. Want a teaser? What would it really be like to know then what you know now?

The Day

Rolled out late at almost 4:30. Outside by 4:45, checking Dean's site and other routine morning things. Basically I did nothing much but drink coffee, check emails, read newsletters and so on until around 8. That's when I headed out to the Hovel.

Got started on the novel right at 8:30 and took a break about once each hour ranging from a few minutes (stepping outside and walking around) to a half-hour while I checked email etc. up at the house.

At 12:30, with just under 3000 words on the day, I'm headed to the house for lunch.

And at 12:40 I'm back. Decided to bring lunch to the Hovel with me. I'm really into this book right now.

2:30, calling it a (short) day. I have another project I'm working on. I hope to make the announcement sometime next week. But to do that I have to finish laying the groundwork. So I'm off to work on that for a couple hours.

Thanks for following along folks. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4551

Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5011

Writing of Haley's Story (action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 61479

Total fiction words for the year..... 491631

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13630

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 180310

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 671941

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 8/20

[August 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, it's going to be a very temperate day here today. For that reason I'm making this a non-writing day. I'll work around the house and yard instead to get some things off my honeydo list.

UPDATE: Nope. I was gonna make this a non-writing day, but that turned out not to be necessary. Turned out to be a really good day for a "non-writing" day. (grin)

I got a lot of mesquite beans raked up, then picked up and dumped elsewhere. Also drilled a hole through the handle of my pitchfork and wired the head to the handle. It's one of those modern "good quality" things that works fine until you need it to. Tell you what, it'll work now.

If you're relatively new to this Journal, taking a nonwriting day is not my norm. To see the true value of the Journal, I encourage you to scroll down to past entries.

Topic: Retraining Yourself

Yesterday, in that comment from DWS's site that I posted here, he shot down (again) the myth about "fast writing" being worse than "slow writing."

As he pointed out plainly, "fast writing" in itself is a myth. We all write at a certain rate of words per hour. So if you write 1000 words per hour (17 words per minute, my usual speed) you will finish a 40,000 word novel in 40 hours.

So whether you write a novel "fast" just depends on how many hours per day you sit in the chair and make stuff up.

If you write 1000 words per hour and write 8 hours per day, five days per week, you'll finish your 40,000 word novel in five days. It's all math.

If you write 1000 words per hour and write only one hour per week, you'll finish your novel in 40 weeks (23.3 months).

In the first case you'll be seen as a prolific writer. In the second, you'll be seen as a careful "slow" writer.

But DWS does one thing I've never been able (yet) to emulate. He has trained himself, his mind, to "shut down" roughly every thousand words. Every hour.

When that happens, he gets up, moves around and comes back to the keyboard to write another thousand words. Or he watches TV for a while and THEN comes back. Or he runs errands or works at his stores or whatever.

But regardless, he shuts down every hour or so, then comes back and writes another thousand words.

That's something I'm currently (still) trying to train myself to do. I mean, for a guy to have lasted over 40 years in this business, he has to know what he's doing, right?

All I can tell you is this:

I've been practicing at "coming back" and at "breaking every hour" for two years and four months or thereabouts.

On May 20, 2014, I wrote a Pro Writers blog post titled "Retraining." In that post, I pointed out that I was trying to train myself to break every hour.

But also, 2000 words was a good day for me back then. Today the spectre of getting only 2000 polished, publication ready words on the page in a day is frightening to me. And one of the reasons is that I'm learning, slowly, to do two things:

1. While you're writing, break once every hour. Still not completely there, but I'm getting closer almost every day.

2. While you're in the chair to write, actually WRITE. On this one too, I'm not quite there, but I'm coming along.

I don't allow interruptions (or get distracted) as easily as I did even a month ago. When I'm sitting in the chair, especially at my outside desk (fiction writing area) or out in the Hovel (fiction writing area) I write fiction.

When I want or need to do other things, I break.

So this is a work in progress. But I'm MAKING progress, and that's what matters.

It IS possible to teach an old dog new tricks, especially when the dog wants to learn. I hope you're making progress too.

Of Interest

Nothing that I could find. DWS is in the middle of a novel challenge if you want to follow along over on his site. He just reported on Day Two of a seven-day challenge.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and almost immediately began working to finalize a boilerplate agreement for the new venture I'm starting soon.

I was mostly finished with the boilerplate by around 6, so I started raking mesquite beans, etc.

Checked the weather forecast online and decided to make today a nonwriting day. Then around 9:30 I found out that wasn't necessary. Headed out to the Hovel and wrote most of the stuff above.

9:45, to the novel.

11 a.m., taking a short break with about 1200 words done.

11:20, back to the novel. This thing is flying along almost faster than I can type. Still cycling back about every thousand words to enhance necessary descriptions, etc., then moving right along.

12:05, another thousand words, another break.

12:20, back to it.

1:10, 3500 words on the day, so one more break and one more session at least.

1:30, back to the novel.

2:40, with around 4700 words on the day, I'm calling it. I'll head for the house, then write the topic so you guys have something interesting to read. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4776

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5676

Writing of Haley's Story (action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 66255

Total fiction words for the year..... 496407

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14530

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 181210

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 677617

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 8/21](#)

[August 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I started the day off wonderfully when I found Dr. Mardy's Quotes of the Week newsletter in my inbox. It was all about two of my favorite people and writers, the mystery man and Mark Russell.

If you haven't subscribed, I recommend it. To subscribe, send a blank message to drmarydon@mail-list.com. If you want to see today's newsletter only, [You Can Read It Here](#).

Announcement

Need a ghostwriter for your short story, novella or novel?

I'm sure none of you are in this particular boat, but you might know someone who is. Please spread the word for me.

I've been writing prolifically for the past couple of years across many genres and under several pen names or personas.

As a result I've decided to offer my services as a ghostwriter, but for fiction only.

My price range is competitive and I love what I do. I'm an expert at retaining the voice of the eventual author.

So if you know anyone who has a story in them but lacks either the time or the passion to sit down and commit it to the page, please pass along my name. Have them email me directly with their idea at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

I appreciate it. And if you'd like a finder's fee, well, you and I can discuss that as well. Just be sure the person mentions that you referred him or her.

Topic: A Trick for You

I mentioned yesterday that I'm still training myself to write for about an hour per session (about 1000 words) and then take a break.

The retraining isn't easy, but neither is it difficult. It isn't something that can be achieved (at least by me) in one lump sum.

Rather, I've realized, it's something that happens over time, with practice.

I'm pretty much at the point where my brain shuts down after an hour so so. My big battle for awhile (to vastly overstate it) has become reaching a particular number goal.

This is especially true later in the writing day when I've been at it awhile. It's more than easy, especially once I've hit my daily word count, to say "Well, that's enough for today."

But it often isn't. Often I want to keep writing because the story is running. But even then, my conscious mind sometimes tries to shut me down with the "that's enough for today" ploy.

But I've found a way to mostly overcome that. Especially when the story is running. And that's the first trick I want to share with you.

The Trick

First, the numbers (word counts, etc.) are not important in the slightest in any real way. They are important to me personally **ONLY** in that they drive me to sit down at the computer in the first place.

So when I sit down to write, whether for the first session or coming back, the thought in the back of my mind is always “Well, it’s only a thousand words.” I don’t think about time. I don’t think about it being an hour-long session, because I’ve already slain that particular dragon.

Now for me, 1000 words is a little daunting. I can only assume that’s because there are four numerals in a row. (Yep, it’s that simple.)

Why that assumption? Because 999 words doesn’t seem nearly as daunting. But 999 words is only one word less. See? For me, in how it affects my psyche, 999 words is the same as 450 words or 100 words. It’s just three digits, and for me, writing to three digits is pretty much automatic.

This becomes especially important when I’m approaching a particular number goal and still a little short. I think, “Well, I only need another 370 words (or whatever).”

And again, the numbers aren’t important. They just start me writing. But the thought enables me to start writing again. Then I get lost in the WIP and ALWAYS exceed whatever the number was. Wonderful fun.

Yesterday, I ended the day with 4776 words. And yes, even then (after I glanced at the bottom left of my Word document and noted the word count) my first thought was, “Man, I could easily make this a 5000 word day.” The key word in that thought is “easily.” And I could have. After all, 5000 is only another 224 words. (grin)

But I was tired. And near the end of the day is the only time when I pay attention to Time. It was getting close to 3 p.m., which is often the end of my writing day. I’m a little paranoid about getting this Journal wrapped up and “out there” every day.

So I stopped. Because I was tired, I allowed “that’s enough for today” to take over and I stopped.

Now one of my overall learning/retraining goals is to push the tired feeling back to 5000+ or 6000+ words. And I’ll get there. It just takes time.

One note: I’m not trying to reach five or six or seven thousand words in a day so I can finish this novel quickly. I’m not even trying to write fast. I’m just writing, and I enjoy writing, telling stories, more than anything else I do. So the longer I can enjoy writing, the less time I have to do anything else, which for me is fine.

Of Interest

Nothing today other than DWS’ personal challenge to finish his novel in seven days. But be sure to check Kris Rusch’s site tomorrow for her Free Fiction Monday.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and headed outside by 4. There, as has become my habit, I just messed around online for a couple hours. A game or two, email, Facebook, etc.

At around 7 I wrote the topic above, then the announcement. Now I'm going to take a break, then get back to my novel. (grin)

Got to the Hovel around 8, but had an important email come in, so I hopped on the mobile hotspot for a few minutes and responded.

8:15, to the novel. 9:20, after an hour and just under 900 words, a brief break.

9:30, to the novel. 10:20, Slow going for another hour with some cycling and another 600 words, then another break.

10:40, back to the novel. At 11:40, with a little over 1000 words, off to grab some lunch.

11:50, back to the novel. 1:05, with another 1200 words, taking a short break.

1:30, back to the novel after taking a few minutes to add the "note" at the end of the topic above.

Okay, at 2:45 I'm calling it a very good day.

I also got a good short story out of today's writing, so that's the short story for this week. (grin) I won't count the words separately, of course.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 5336

Nonfiction Words: 1100 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6436

Writing of "The Bad Man and the Boxer" (story of the week, but words not added to total)

Day 1..... 2432 words. Total words to date..... 2432 words (done)

Writing of Haley's Story (action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words

Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 71591
Total fiction words for the year..... 501743
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15630
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 182310

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 684053

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 8/22

[August 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, it dawned on me this morning soon after I got up that I had a short story (derived from the current novel) to publish.

So over the next few hours I created a cover and a promo doc, then formatted the story for two distributors and to post. I published the story to the distributors and my website, then scheduled it to release on September 30 as the Free Short Story of the Week.

So no writing early (as usual) but a good, productive morning. I forgot to send it to my donors, so I hopped on the hotspot and did that soon after I got to the Hovel.

Topic: Pricing

I've been talking with DWS and a few others recently about pricing. And by the way, if any of you would care to add your thoughts on the topic, please email me or leave a comment below.

What spurred some of those chats is something I noticed about traditional publishing's price points for ebooks.

I like James Lee Burke's novels. A lot. But not enough to pay \$12.99 for an ebook.

The other day when I was on Amazon.com considering one of his books, I realized I could get the paper edition for only a few more dollars. And that's when the realization hit.

Now, when I was publishing my novels to paper, I did so strictly for the comparison on the book's page at Amazon.

My reasoning? The reader will see the paper edition for \$15.99 or \$16.99 or whatever, then see EXACTLY THE SAME BOOK, cover and all, in the electronic edition for only \$4.99 or \$5.99.

So I was using the paper edition, primarily, to drive ebook sales. And it seemed to work fairly well.

I've sold very few paper books. That's fine. The royalty was only \$2 and small change for each sale. (And that's only when you select "expanded distribution," which means you have to put a higher cover price on the book.)

On the other hand, I've sold a LOT of ebooks, and when one of those sells for \$4.99, the royalty is \$3.49. (And even higher at Smashwords.)

So I wondered about traditional publishing's exorbitant prices. But I think I've figured it out.

Instead of using paper prices to drive ebook sales (like I and most indie publishers do) they seem to be using daunting ebook prices to drive up paper sales. After all, since they use offset printing and do massive print runs, their per-copy cost per book is extremely low.

The upshot?

I'm gonna stick to my considerably lower prices for ebooks to drive ebook sales when compared with the much higher prices (extended distribution) on paper books.

Of Interest

Dean's ongoing quest to finish his WIP in seven days. Should be interesting to watch.

The Day

Rolled out just before 3 a.m. Outside by 4.

Worked on formatting etc. the story I wrote yesterday (excerpted from the WIP novel), grabbed some breakfast and moved to the Hovel around 6:30 and started working on everything above.

While writing the topic I was sidetracked and considered again putting all my newer novels (seven of them) in print, then selling them directly through StoneThread Publishing.

That led me to get back on my hotspot and query a print layout person as to pricing. I just don't want to learn to do all that stuff myself.

8:30, (finally) to the novel. At 9:15, after cycling for most of an hour and with 900 new words done, a break.

9:45, back to the novel. 10:50, another short break. I only got 500 words this hour, but I went to the house twice (once for a broom and my sunglasses) and swept the area around and under my desk. One thing about having an adobe office — there's always dirt on the floor.

11:05, back to the novel. 12:20, after 1100 more words, a bit longer break. My latest story (the one excerpted from my WIP) is up at Amazon, so I'm going to add it to my Short Stories page. That and grab some lunch, then spend some time with my 4-legged son and daughters.

1:10, back to the novel. 2:10, after another 900 words, another short break.

2:20, back to the novel. This thing's still moving along so fast I can only barely keep up. But I'm already getting tired. Not sure I'll have a good word count today.

3:20, one really good hour later, just under 1300 words. Like I said, when I'm not cycling, the novel's flying right along. So much for not having a good writing day.

I'm at a really good stopping point, I'm gonna call it a day.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4698

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5448

Writing of Haley's Story (action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words

Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words

Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 76289

Total fiction words for the year..... 506441

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16380

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 183060

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 689501

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 8/23

[August 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

It's already been a great day here (at 7:40 a.m.) and I haven't even started writing yet.

My mind is racing this morning, remembering things I let slip earlier and taking off in different directions from some of those things.

So after I moved to the Hovel and wrote a lot of the stuff below, I also created a "Current To-Do" list and put it where I'll see it often.

Items there include

- writing the post for next week re my ghostwriting service (see "The Day" below),
- reading through (aloud) and publishing my two most-recent novels,
- uploading more of my work to BundleRabbit (and finding other bundling resources),
- prepping my last seven novels for possible print-layout, and
- going through more of my old pro-writers posts, then updating those and reposting them to the main Pro Writers blog over on the big site.

Of course, I'll do all that *around* my writing time each day. Though I might take one "day off" if necessary later in the week to catch up on all of it at one time.

That's pretty funny, actually. If I do that, I'll be taking a day off from playing and enjoying myself to trudge through some work. (grin)

* * *

This is gonna sound weird, but this novel is flying along so fast I'm almost afraid I'm going to finish it too soon.

Still, I feel like I'm at about the halfway point (probably a little less), so I'll probably clear 4,000 words again today. Even with the very serious subject matter, this one has been a great deal of fun to write.

Topic: Lessons I Have Learned

What follows are several of the more important things I've learned as a writer. Other than the tenets of grammar and syntax, I learned most of them over the past three years.

I've annotated them lightly. Possibly some of these will become topics for later posts.

The first three are synonymous with Heinlein's first four business habits for writers.

You must write and you must finish what you write (HR 1 and 2). A writer is always either writing or looking forward to getting back to writing.

Rewriting (HR 3) and revising is not writing. Cycling is writing. Writing is a function of the subconscious, creative mind.

You must submit or publish what you write (HR 4). Well, if you want to earn a living. Otherwise, what's the point? (grin)

Write to entertain yourself first. This one took me awhile to learn. But about three novels back, maybe four, I finally got it. I wasn't in a rush to publish any of those. Two of them still aren't published. I hope to read them aloud this weekend (but *around* my writing time) and then publish them. Because again, otherwise what's the point?

Writing-related tasks are not writing. At those times when you aren't writing, you aren't a writer. You're a doing-something-else: rewriter, researcher, reader, learner. In the foregoing list above, the first is not only unnecessary, but harmful.

When you're stuck, just write the next sentence. No need to annotate this.

When you stop writing for the day, always leave a jagged edge. Never stop writing for the day at a clean ending. If you reach the end of a scene or chapter, begin another scene or chapter.

Keep coming back. Even if only for 15 minutes or a half-hour. Keep coming back. You'll be amazed how the words pile up.

"Someday" pertains to dreams, not goals. "Someday" doesn't pertain to things that are within your control. If it's within your control and you want it, do it.

Of Interest

Dean slipped on Day 5, but his "slip" still got him over 4,000 words. The guy's work ethic is an amazing catalyst.

If you're interested in learning to write action in anything, I recommend reading [H.A. Jones' post on Ben Haas](#).

Later in that article, you'll find a link to [writing advice directly from Ben Haas](#).

About those unedited pages you'll find at the second link, one commenter wrote "More here in four typewritten pages than you'll find in many a scholarly writing manual." I agree.

Another guy wrote that he "doesn't agree" with much of what Haas wrote in those pages. I pretty much always agree with anything a prolific writer offers as advice. I at least keep it in mind.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3:30. At the outside desk by 4 where I found pulp writer Ben Haas' name and did some research. You'll find some of that in "Of Interest" above.

Around 5 I was preparing a post for today over on the other site about my new ghostwriting service. But I realized I need to take my time with that, so I'll post that next Tuesday.

Moved out to the Hovel around 6:30. Between then and 7:30 I wrote everything above this (got through the first several items in the topic and left it to add more later).

Then at 7:30, I walked up to the house to talk with my wife about the possibility of doing print books, both for the purpose of price-comparison with ebooks and to sell through our own online stores in Ebay, Amazon and StoneThread Publishing. To me this seems like a smart thing to do.

8:10, finally back to the novel. Well, sidetracked at around 8:30 by an old friend on FB looking for my contact info. Answered him, then stayed there for a bit.

9 a.m., back to the novel. By 10:20, after several small interruptions, I managed to add a thousand words to the novel. Up to the house for a little while.

10:45, back to the novel. By 11:40, I added another 1000 words. Back to the house for a short break and to check on the babies.

12 noon, back to the novel. At 12:45, after adding another 800 words to the story, a brief break.

1:15, back to the novel. This might be my final session for today. At 2 p.m. I took a “working” break to look over what I’ve written above. I added a couple things. Now back to the novel.

Okay, a bit of a short final session, sort of, and I’m stopping for the day at just over 4200 words.

Back tomorrow. Thanks for coming along.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 4238

Nonfiction Words: 940 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5178

Writing of Haley’s Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words

Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words

Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words

Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 80527

Total fiction words for the year..... 510679

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17320

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 184000

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 694679

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 8/24](#)

[August 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

This is gonna be a long post. I apologize in advance. Just the way it worked out.

After I knocked off for the day yesterday, I went to work. (grin)

I spent about two hours updating the rest of those 2013 – 2015 posts over at the big blog. So I knocked that off my To Do list. Then I moved them from Uncategorized (didn't go to MailChimp the first time around) to Pro Writers and scheduled them to post in the future. I'm good now through February 2017.

Writer Bonnie Edwards [commented on yesterday's post](#). I especially enjoyed the quote by James Blaylock, but she talked about some other stuff too that always entertains me.

What I didn't say in my response was that one of the posts I revisited, revised and moved yesterday had to do (in part) with the kind of comical folks she mentioned in her comment.

I thought you might get a chuckle from it, so I've used part of it as the topic below.

The chore fell to me this morning to clean and replenish the three hummingbird feeders we have hanging in the yard. That happens about every other day this time of year. (grin)

One particularly annoying woodpecker hangs upside down from them to help the hummers drain them. At night, the bats take care of the rest.

Also wrote and rewrote the topic for today. Even though it's a cross-post from the other site, I rewrote and revised it enough that I'm counting the nonfiction words on the day.

In fact, I rewrote it the first time yesterday (rewrite is not a bad word in nonfiction) for the other site, then rewrote it twice this morning.

Now the other post (which will come out in February) reads the same as this one, albeit with a bit more over there. So I cross-posted it eventually from here back over to there. Twice. (grin)

Again, it's already been a good day and I haven't started writing yet. I love days like this.

I decided a couple days ago I'm going to try to maintain a 4000 word per day average through the rest of this novel. Should be fun to watch.

Topic: "Oh, I Don't Write for Money," (he said, one forearm draped dramatically over his forehead as a glass of wine and a cheese stick balanced precariously in his other hand.)

First, a disclaimer — I am aware there are folks out there who are not writers and don't care to be. That's fine. What follows is about those who are or claim to be writers.

Over all the years when I was goofy enough to believe I was making a difference presenting in writers' conferences and sitting on panels (there's a waste of time you'll never get back) in genre conventions, I must have heard it at least a thousand times: "Oh, I'm not into writing for money."

And every single time, for me, that begged the question, "Then why in the world are you here?" I mean seriously, if you don't write for money, why are you spending money on the latest conference, convention, or seminar?

Okay, some folks love learning strictly for the sake of learning. Got it.

But what about the other five or six out of a bajillion?

Now don't get angry. Coming from a (former) writing instructor, "Why do you write?" is a completely valid question. But really, it's strictly rhetorical.

The fact is, writers who say they don't write for money belong in one of four groups:

Group One consists of hobby writers.

They really don't write for money. They also don't invest much of their own time and money in learning how to write. When they do invest money in their writing, it's for a good and specific reason.

These are the ones the other family members turn to when someone has to write a eulogy. Perhaps they write to leave a legacy—perhaps a memoir or a family history—so descendants will have a record.

Perhaps they pay a proofreader or copyeditor to clean up the writing a bit, and they might even attend a writing workshop or two. That's perfectly understandable. Absolutely nothing wrong with being a hobby writer.

Group Two are the same folks, but they harbor a secret desire to be professional writers.

They really don't write for money either. And they hedge their bets by not investing much of their own time and money in learning how to write. If they don't learn, they have no reason to write seriously and they will never risk failure.

However, they're so overcome by the fear of failure that they will never seriously consider themselves writers, nor expect others to consider them writers.

That's okay too if they can't overcome the fear, but I hope they find something they love to do and do that instead.

Group Three consists of those who are not writers, will never be writers, and know it. They are who this topic is really all about.

They say that they don't write for money in a tone that indicates they're bragging. They believe themselves above scrabbling for the filthy lucre, and generally — if they actually write at all — they're in pursuit of writing The Great American Novel.

They have an elevated calling, you see, and they're above the whole sordid mess in which we mere mortals are entangled.

However, for some reason they believe others see them as writers (Pssst! No, we don't.) and they attach some elevated importance to that as well. They would fit right into the Brit TV show Keeping Up Appearances, and any one of them could play the role of Hyacinth. And they're precisely as annoying.

Those in this group spend sometimes vast amounts of money on appearing to be a writer. But learning and honing the craft doesn't matter. Appearance — what others believe about them — is everything.

Shrug. Stretch. Yawn. Okay. Whatever.

Those in Group Four are writers, or at least aspirants who have a real shot at being writers.

Those say (usually humbly) that they don't write for money either. But they invest time and money wisely in learning and honing the craft. (Like those in Group Two, they're also hedging their bets, but only out of fear of rejection.) We can lump them in with those in Group Five.

Everyone else belongs in Group Five. They are writers. They never utter "I don't write for money" unless they're being sarcastic.

These folks have learned what those in Group Three will never learn: If you want to write, write. It's that simple.

Neither do they think nonstop of all the money they're going to make. That isn't what it's about. They just write.

As one personal example, I seriously doubt I'll ever make a solid living with my writing. But I also seriously expect my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will rake in cash by the barrel load. And that's fine. But I get all the fun of telling the stories and putting them out there. (grin)

Let's pause here for a moment so you can do a quick self-assessment if you want to. Nobody's judging. Whether and why you belong in any of the first four groups is strictly up to you to decide.

Okay, all done?

Good. Now, here's what you do.

If you belong in Group One, Two or Three, you can go home now.

Stop reading this and go find something fun to do.

Why? Because I see no reason to take you seriously, or at all, as a writer. And frankly, if you're in Group One or Two, you don't expect me to. In fact, you're probably laughing along with the rest of us.

If you're in Group Three and you're still reading — well, sorry.

I realize you expect the rest of us to not only realize you're a writer but admire your tenacity, etc. Here you go. Let's see if I can hit the high spots:

- You expect the rest of us to grovel and beg for an autographed copy of your recent *release*.
- You *authored* your book (but not for filthy lucre) and are selling for some exorbitant amount because it's Just That Good.
- Oh, and because you paid some subsidy publisher a few thousand dollars to like it enough to publish it.

That about right?

You're also probably madder than eight wildcats in an oil drum right now. But really, just chill and go find something you actually enjoy doing. Seriously.

Now, if you're in Group Four or Five (Bonnie), hey, this entire post celebrates you. I'm pulling for you, I'm proud of you and I'm glad you're one of us.

Keep learning, keep writing, and keep making wise investments in your education.

But don't tell people you aren't writing for money. Just keep having fun making stuff up.

Of Interest

A good post with a good gem or two over on Dean's site today on [Novel Challenge Day Six](#). He talks about failing to success.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3:30 after 7 hours of sleep. Seven hours seems to be working into my norm. I'd prefer 6, but I guess I have to do what the body prefers. (grin)

Moved to the outside desk about 4:15, worked on the topic above, etc. All of that took until 5:45, then filled the hummingbird feeders.

That consumed about twenty minutes this morning. Then I took care of a few other things, Facebook, email etc.

So 6:50, still at the outside desk, finally to the novel. Since I have to read back a bit anyway, I'm gonna (finally) create a reverse outline.

7:30, the reverse outline is up to date. Taking a short break to prepare to head out to the Hovel.

8 a.m., in the Hovel and to the novel. Despite a few short breaks to share some almonds with a few baby squirrels about 20 feet from the door of the hovel, I added 1200 words to the novel in the past hour and a half. At 9:30, a brief break.

9:50, back to the novel. After adding another 1200 words, another break at 10:50. I'll go to the house and check on the babies. Man I wish all my novels would run this fast. (grin)

11:20, back to the novel. After another 700 words, I'm taking a break at 11:50 to take care of something I just remembered. Gotta cut some cardboard and cover the tires on my trailer. If I don't do it now, I might forget. Back in a bit.

Well, that took only about 15 minutes. But I took the knife back to the house and decided to check email etc. while I was there. Anyway...

12:20, back to the novel. 1:40, Well, I decided to go through and change a lot of the spelling of some of the bad guys' dialogue to heavy dialect using truncated words and phonetic spellings. Labor intensive, that.

So a little over an hour gone on that, and now to the house to grab a sandwich or something and check on the babies.

2:30, back to the novel.

Calling it a day a little after 3.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4249

Nonfiction Words: 1850 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6099

Writing of Haley's Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words
Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words
Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words
Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words
Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words
Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words
Day 7..... 4249 words. Total words to date..... 28863 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 84776
Total fiction words for the year..... 514928
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19170
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 185850

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 700778

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 8/25

[August 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Feels like a silly day today. To maintain my 4,000 word per day average on this book, I need only 3137 words. But the day doesn't feel quite that silly. (grin)

In addition to having better than a 4,000 word per day average on this book, I also inadvertently started a streak of 4,000+ word writing days. It's gone eight straight calendar days thus far.

Oh, by the way, if the topic below spurs laughter, anger, resentment, disdain or any other strong response within you, I will have succeeded. (grin) If not, well, maybe I ought'a stick to writing advice. (Also see the Mini-Topic in "The Day" below.)

Topic: Writing Legislation Proposing A New Federal Regulation (a sarcasm)

The catalyst for this topic was spurred by an article about two UNELECTED bureaucrats signing into law a brand spanking new 1,690-page, 700,000-word regulation that will drive many would-be truck drivers out of business before they even have a chance to get in.

So I started thinking. Hmm. I'm unelected too. I'm not a bureaucrat (yet), but that's only a minor inconvenience. After all, whether you're a bureaucrat depends on who you know. Who owes you a job.

And best of all, I've written a massive tome that could easily be termed "legislation" and foisted on people as a new regulation. This Journal.

Wow, how the words build up. Even words I'm not watching all that closely.

As of yesterday, the unedited Journal for only this year thus far is 215,206 words. By actual count, it's 601 pages (358 words per page).

The combined Journal for 2014-2015 (started on October 19, 2014) is 247,962 words, or 693 pages. That's a total, since I began, of 463,168 words or 1,294 pages.

See where I'm goin' here? That's almost enough to submit to Congress as a proposed new federal government regulation.

And by the end of this year, with an average of 908 words per day and 128 days remaining (so 116,224 more words and 325 more pages), it will be enough.

My new proposed legislation will come in a little short at 579,392 words and 1,618 pages. Not to shabby, eh?

Of course, proposed legislation must have a fanciful but boring title to make even the first cut. So the title of my tome will be something like "All Writers Henceforth Must Do This In Order To Decrease Greenhouse Gases And To Improve The Pitch And Yaw Of Golf Balls As They Leave The Puck In Center Court."

I'll put the two together and submit the combined document to Congress sometime next year. Then we can all sit back and watch to see how long it takes them to pass it without reading it. (grin)

Corollary to the Topic

Then again, my Journal probably won't sneak through.

Like many of you, I have been subjected to federal regulations for a long time. I suspect they have a machine up there that scans all pending legislation and searches for any legitimately helpful or beneficial phrases or clauses.

In fact, I suspect each senator and representative has at least three interns on hand (so they can go 24 hours a day in 8-hour shifts) whose sole purpose is to feed that machine, one page at a time.

Now, legitimately helpful or beneficial phrases or clauses can be hidden among government overspeak and lawyerly gobbledegook. Factor that in. So it probably takes the machine a full ten minutes to scan each page. So they could get through only 144 pages in a day.

So it'll take them almost 12 days to scan my proposed legislation.

But no biggie. Admittedly, my Journal does actually contain the occasional bit of helpful advice. And judging from past several years' regulatory legislation, if the machine finds so much as one phrase or clause that is actually helpful or beneficial rather than oppressive and/or demeaning, the machine automatically shreds that page.

Whereupon a red light flashes, a bell goes off, and the intern drops the rest of that particular piece of legislation into a handy furnace.

So my proposed legislation will never reach the appropriate subcommittee (which means whichever subcommittee is in session at the time) for a vote, much less the House or Senate floor.

Yeah, so submitting my Journal is a dumb idea.

Not because submitting it would be a complete waste of government time and resources. After all, wasting time and resources is the stock in trade of the feds. But because I write for publication, not so my work will be shredded. Although I don't doubt that it occasionally is.

Then again, I could at least send them this particular topic. It would be rushed through both subcommittee and floor votes and probably signed into law in the next hour.

After all, it doesn't serve any helpful purpose at all.

Of Interest

Read Dean's [Day Seven: Novel Challenge](#). He talks about planning, etc. for challenges.

As I read over Facebook this morning, I happened across [an article by a guy who took FIFTEEN YEARS to write a novel](#). As Dean often says, All Writers Are Different (ahem).

The Day

Rolled out way late at 4:15. Checked email and read a newsletter until around 5 when I moved to my outside desk. An article in a newsletter I receive spurred a silliness and I wrote the topic above.

Around 7:15 finally I started getting everything together to move out to the Hovel.

7:35, finally to the novel. Used the first hour and a half to cycle back through, reorganized one chapter, enhanced a couple of scenes. Added only about 400 words during this. A brief break at 9 a.m.

9:15, back to the novel. Aggh. Nope.

Mini-Topic. Instead of writing, I went right back to wondering what to do about chapter lengths, etc. As if it matters. (It doesn't.)

Folks, this is a prime example of the conscious mind horning in at full strength. It stopped the writing cold. I felt stuck, like I didn't have a clue what to write for even the next sentence. Or even the next word.

However, in the back of my mind the whole time (almost an hour) I kept seeing the beginning of a scene and chapter: the main character pulling up in front of his house in a cloud of dust. My subconscious kept prodding me to write it.

So how do I do that? Put my fingers on the keyboard and start writing. Finally at 9:50, I did just that. Moving along smoothly again now.

9:50, (at last) back to the novel. Taking a break at 11:30 after a long session and 1300 words.

12 noon, back to the novel. Taking another break at 1 p.m. with another 1000 words.

1:30, back to the novel. Wrote about 600 words. Then around 2 I got a phone call from my brother to tell me about a pretty bad medical problem he just found out about. So about a half-hour off for that.

2:30, back to the novel.

3:30, calling it a day. I cleared 4000 words again today. I just don't want to spend the few extra words I have in the bank until it's absolutely necessary.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4173

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5333

Writing of Haley's Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words
Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words
Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words
Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words
Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words
Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words
Day 7..... 4249 words. Total words to date..... 28863 words
Day 8..... 4173 words. Total words to date..... 33036 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 88949

Total fiction words for the year..... 519101

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 187010

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 706111

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 8/26

[August 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Re the guy taking 15 years to write a novel, that was so incredible (by the pure definition) that I went back to TOR and read the comments.

I also skipped over to Wired and read the full interview. Well, I meant to. But then the author said writing the book “made my life a hell for 15 years.”

So the interviewer said, “Whoa. How much of that time was spent really writing?”

And the author said, “Think about it like this: [...]It would not be weird for me to spend 10 hours a day writing over the summer.”

Seriously? How does this guy NOT know that we know he’s L-Y-I-N-G?

I couldn’t go on. The guy must have a DEEP bruise across his forehead from frequent impacts from his forearm as he trudges through the terrible drudgery that is the process of writing. (grin)

But don’t rely on me. Please see for yourself. In fact, let’s have a contest. (grin)

All of you skip over to [read the Wired interview](#). See how long you can make it through without laughing or snorting coffee through your nose. Let the rest of us know in the comments below, and you’ll win something.

Also in the comment, tet me know what you wanna win, only it can’t be money ’cause I don’t have any. Oh, and if you’re from Texas or New Mexico, “I double-dog dare you.”

Topic: A Change of Direction

Reading some of the comments below the article on TOR.com yesterday made me realize something. And Dean has said it many times:

Readers want to know the author suffered for his or her craft.

So I'm thinking about writing all of my novels from now on under different pen names or personas. Seriously.

The stable of authors over at StoneThread Publishing will grow almost exponentially. (Well, not really, but it'll grow fast.)

Then I'll work into the description of each book that it took fifteen months or two years or whatever to write this novel. That it was terrible drudgery, but that I didn't mind sacrificing my wife and children for the sake of my art.

After all, someone has to stand for truth, justice and the American Way, am I right? (Hmm. Why does that sound familiar. Note to self: Check for trademarks on "truth, justice and the American Way".)

In the book descriptions I'll say that the most amazing part of the process was when I felt something sticky on my keyboard and realized it was blood. That I reached up to my forehead and Literally Found That I Was Sweating Blood Over This Thing!

As Doctor Smith on Lost In Space used to say, "Oh the pain!" But oh yes, it was so very worth the while.

Over at Smashwords, you can even do an author interview. So I'll interview each author about his or her process. Why it takes so long to produce true art. Why the author doesn't mind the sacrifice, etc. And each author will come up with an appropriately dramatic answer, dropping an F-bomb just often enough to seem cool.

As you might imagine, the most difficult part for me will be staying on point, not becoming flippant. But I think I can do it.

Seriously. I might do this just to see whether my sales skyrocket. My new mantra will become Give The Readers What They Want in pre-publication hype.

And if sales DO skyrocket, then yes, I will continue to tell readers lies about my "process" etc. I suspect this will be great fun.

Of Interest

Especially if you read or write (or both) SF, check out [Dean's response to my comment on his post from Day Seven](#).

I posted a comment on my [Facebook page](#) some of you might like. Just look for Snark Alert.

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. By 3 I was at the outside desk, playing online and fiddling with the stuff above.

5 a.m. played with a few new pen names. I have a feeling this is gonna be a blast.

5:30, to the novel. Got around 800 words, then a break at around 7 to get a mostly dead lizard out of the house. He was stuck behind a book case (no doubt while trying to escape one of the lady cats). Got him out, took him outside and let him go in some brush. Then prep work to get ready to head out to the hovel.

8 a.m., in the Hovel, back to the novel. Played around for about an hour and a half. On and off my mobile hotspot. I did some cycling and added around another 400 words. A visit to the Hovel from my wife and we talked a bit.

10 a.m., back to the novel. Around 11 a.m. I had another thousand words. Time for a brief break.

11:20, back to the novel.

Well, I lost track of keeping up with the play by play, but ended up with over 4,000 words for the tenth day in a row. Score!

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4409

Nonfiction Words: 840 (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of Haley's Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words
Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words
Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words
Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words
Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words
Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words
Day 7..... 4249 words. Total words to date..... 28863 words
Day 8..... 4173 words. Total words to date..... 33036 words
Day 9..... 4409 words. Total words to date..... 37445 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 93358

Total fiction words for the year..... 523510

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21170

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 187850

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 711360

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 8/27

[August 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I started the morning updating my Heinlein's Rules handout and my Daily Journal website.

On the right side of the menu, you will find a new page: Heinlein's Rules for Writers. It's a shortened version of the updated free PDF document, [which you can get here](#).

I also updated the HarveyStanbrough.com site with basically the same information.

Topic: Updated Annotation of Heinlein's Rules

To see this topic, please visit HEStanbrough.com/heinleins-business-habits-for-writers/.

This is what I added to the end of my annotation:

As I update this paper (early morning, August 27, 2016) I've been following Heinlein's Rules and what I call Bradbury's Unwritten Corollary (put your fingers on the keyboard and write whatever comes) for almost two years now. I started my first novel on October 19, 2014.

In that time I've written 18 novels (I'll finish number 19 in the next few days), one novella, and 147 short stories. I'll write number 148 this week.

And all of that — all of it — is because of Heinlein's Rules.

One quick note from me to you: I am almost 64 years old. I'm not complaining. Obviously I'm glad I found Heinlein's Rules when I did. Today is sooner than tomorrow. That sort of thing.

But had I found them when I was 20 or 30 or 40, they would have had the same effect on me. I would have been a professional writer from that time on.

The point is this: If you want to write "but" you're waiting until you retire (or whatever), Stop Waiting. Go back and read Rule One above. Then sit down and write.

When I'm forced to take a "day off" (why take a day off from doing something fun?) I miss writing. I miss my characters.

I miss the excitement of running through a scene with them, pen and notepad in hand, waiting wide-eyed to see what they're going to do or say next.

I am not kidding. When I'm away from my current story for any length of time, I almost suffer separation anxiety.

And when I finish a novel, whether it's 35,000 words or 97,000 words, I don't celebrate. I almost mourn.

The only "good thing" for me about finishing a story is that I can start the next one. I celebrate starting a new story. I celebrate the excitement and the sheer joy that I know will come to me as I trust my subconscious and my characters.

I wish you the same great joy.

Of Interest

I forgot to mention yesterday, my new [Free Short Story of the Week](#) posted.

Not much elsewhere.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3. Weird the way habits take hold. I was updating stuff (see intro above) almost immediately, and by 4 I was at my outside desk to continue updating the Heinlein's Rules handout and my three main websites.

All of that took until 7 a.m., when I decided to cook and eat a liesurely breakfast. Too often, I eat on the run.

7:40, to the Hovel and the novel. Only about 600 words by 8:25, then a short break up at the house.

That break turned into a series of breaks punctuated by brief stints at the novel. Over the next five hours, I wrote in spurts of fifteen or twenty minutes up to about a half-hour. When I get to actually sit here and write, it's still moving fast. Just a lot of necessary little interruptions.

It looks as if the end will come tomorrow. Guess I'd better figure out a title for this, eh? Or maybe the characters will just hand me that too. (grin)

1:10, back to the novel. I was tempted to stop with only 3698 words on the day. But that's only 302 from keeping my 4,000 words per day streak going, so a break, then one more session. (grin)

Done for the day. Eleven days with 4000+ words. I won't keep that streak alive if I include nonwriting days, so I'm going to count only days when I write anything at all for the purposes of the streak.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4626

Nonfiction Words: 680 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5306

Writing of Haley's Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words

Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words

Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words

Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words

Day 7..... 4249 words. Total words to date..... 28863 words

Day 8..... 4173 words. Total words to date..... 33036 words

Day 9..... 4409 words. Total words to date..... 37445 words

Day 10... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 42071 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 97984

Total fiction words for the year..... 528136

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21850

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 188530

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 716666

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 8/28](#)

[August 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, it's official. [The Day the Earth Shuddered and Went Dark](#), a SciFi Thriller and Nicolas Z Porter's debut novel, will go live on 1 October. Turns out it took Nick five long years to write that novel. (grin) Now he's in a hurry to publish it. Go figure.

And [Terminus Loop](#), a solid, short Science Fiction/Fantasy, is Raymond L. Severeid's debut novel. I don't remember how long it took him. Probably at least a couple of years. 'Cause you know, that's just how long it takes to write anything of Lasting Quality. It will go live on September 17.

I'll do the live read-through on Terminus Loop probably tomorrow (or the day after I finish writing the current novel). If I finish the WIP today, probably tomorrow I'll take a day off to do

that (more admin work). But it's only around 35,000 words, so I can do that in a day if my voice holds out.

Speaking of the current novel, I'm not sure yet who is authoring it. I'm writing it, of course, but the author remains to be seen.

This morning I also created new pages on StoneThread Publishing for those two novels (linked above) and, of course, updated the Novels page too. SO much non-writing, admin work. Ugh.

Then sometime in the next few weeks I have to do the same with *The Day the Earth Shuddered* and *Went Dark*. That will be a more daunting task as it's around 96,000 words.

Topic: Judging Your Own Work Revisited

You can't. Period. So stop it.

Judging your work is not your job anyway. Your job is to write.

I emailed Dean one time and mentioned, almost in passing, that I'd written a short story. I wrote that it was "pretty good, but not up to submitting to Asimov's or anything."

In his response, a butt chewing ensued. Why, he asked, did I feel I had the right to pre-edit Asimov's for Ms. [name of editor]?

Yeah. The message sank in.

Early this morning, in response to a similarly silly, self-efacing comment by a writer on another blog, I said pretty much the same thing.

When a writer thinks her work is good, she immediately remembers that a writer is the worst judge of her own work. Why then, when she thinks her work is bad, does she suddenly forget that truism?

Every time you make that judgment, you keep millions of readers from getting to make up their own mind.

Don't do that. Write it, give it to a first reader (or read it aloud), publish it and write the next one.

By the way, when I mention reading your work aloud, that isn't to judge it either. It's only because when you read aloud your brain catches things (misspellings, wrong words, typos) that it wouldn't otherwise catch.

Of Interest

If you enjoy Lawrence Block's work, today he has [Much to Report](#). And really, it's Lawrence Freakin' Block, so what's not to like?

Not much over at Dean's except I sent him a comment asking whether his "plot loops" sometimes wander off to become short stories on their own. His answer should be there by the time you read this.

The Day

Rolled out at 4, checked email etc. and moved outside. Checked Dean's site, another small blog and wrote the brief topic above.

Then around 6 I read over a newsletter, checked Facebook, and decided to write a promo doc for one of my last two novels (hadn't done that yet) and then republish both of them to Smashwords and Amazon. That'll give me two solid deadlines for getting the live readings done and getting them out.

8:30, finally finished getting the two pre-orders up. I'll go to Facebook now to announce them, then take a break before finally heading out to the Hovel.

9:50, To the novel. I was at the Hovel about a half-hour ago, but realized I'd uploaded the wrong cover for Terminus Loop, so I went back to the house and fixed that. Sigh.

Cycling through the past chapter and by 11 I had added 800 new words. Definitely in the end game. Off for a short break.

11:30, back to the novel and in a new chapter. Another 900 words by 12:45. Gonna walk around and stretch a bit.

1 p.m., back to the novel while I munch on a light lunch.

Well, I didn't finish the novel. I didn't get 4000 words either, for the first time in twelve days, but I still have over a 4,000 word per day average on this novel. I'll take it.

It's in the final action scene (I think). Should have only the wrap up tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3736

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4516

Writing of Haley's Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words

Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words

Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words
Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words
Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words
Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words
Day 7..... 4249 words. Total words to date..... 28863 words
Day 8..... 4173 words. Total words to date..... 33036 words
Day 9..... 4409 words. Total words to date..... 37445 words
Day 10... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 42071 words
Day 11... 3736 words. Total words to date..... 45807 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 101720
Total fiction words for the year..... 531872
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22630
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 189310

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 721182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 8/29](#)

[August 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Should be an interesting day today once I actually get it started.

For one thing, I should finish the novel. I say “should” because I have a feeling I’m gong to scrap the final big climactic battle scene and start over on it.

Why? Because I think maybe my conscious mind took over on part of it, trying to make things fit.

No, actually I know my conscious mind took over. As I’ve told other writers from time to time, any time you find yourself “trying” to do something in writing, that’s purely conscious mind stuff.

In fact, any time you read over your work with a critical eye (note “critical”) it’s conscious mind stuff. This is precisely why I don’t advocate what most writers think of when they revise or rewrite.

So I’ll sit down, maybe even with a completely blank document so I’m not tempted to look at anything else in the story, and write that scene.

It’s protracted (it’s the big climax, after all) and it has a lot of characters on both sides.

I'll finish the novel, and maybe write the short story that's due by Friday at midnight.

Or I'll finish the novel and maybe start the read-through of Terminus Loop. Or something.

Anyway, I have an admin day or two coming up pretty soon. I'm getting behind on admin stuff, and there's no real reason for it. It's stuff that has to be done, and it's stuff that only I can do, so there y'go.

When I finish this novel, that will be eight finished on the calendar year and seven written totally during the year. (I finished one on January 3 that I started back in December.) For contrast, I wrote eight novels plus a novella all year last year, and six of those were in the Wes Crowley series.

Barring health problems or other major life swings, I don't expect to "fail" in my goal to write 12 novels this calendar year.

Topic: Nothing today other than the stuff above.

Of Interest

[Perspective](#) over at Dean's site. You'll have to scroll down to the topic.

It's Free Fiction Monday over at [Kris's place](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 4, then basically wasted the next hour searching for different sites similar to StoryBundle and BundleRabbit. I didn't find any.

Over the next hour and a half, I filled bird feeders, wrote much of the stuff above this, etc.

At 7:45, finally, in the Hovel. 8 a.m., to the novel. Cycling up to the climactic scene first, then finishing this thing.

12:30, done with the WIP (still no official title) at 48804 words. Now I'll go take care of some of that admin stuff. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2997

Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3457

Writing of Haley's Story (working title, action-adventure novel)

Day 1..... 1005 words. Total words to date..... 1005 words
Day 2..... 4551 words. Total words to date..... 5566 words
Day 3..... 4776 words. Total words to date..... 10342 words
Day 4..... 5336 words. Total words to date..... 15678 words
Day 5..... 4698 words. Total words to date..... 20376 words
Day 6..... 4238 words. Total words to date..... 24614 words
Day 7..... 4249 words. Total words to date..... 28863 words
Day 8..... 4173 words. Total words to date..... 33036 words
Day 9..... 4409 words. Total words to date..... 37445 words
Day 10... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 42071 words
Day 11... 3736 words. Total words to date..... 45807 words
Day 12... 2997 words. Total words to date..... 48804 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 104717
Total fiction words for the year..... 534869
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23090
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 189770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 724639

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 8/30](#)

[August 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, only two days left in the month. I'm in a conundrum.

At this time of the month I always feel as if I want to punch up the numbers for the current month. But of course, what I write this month won't count for the new month, which begins the day after tomorrow. So as I said, a conundrum.

Then too, regardless of the month, I want to write, as always. But I also know I need an admin day or two. So today will be an admin day. I have a lot to do.

I've already uploaded two new novels to BundleRabbit this morning. I published them both back in July, but hadn't uploaded them yet. Curators can't find your work if it isn't there. Duh.

While I was in there, I also changed the retail price on most of my works to reflect the changes I made awhile back. That took all of ten minutes.

Later this morning, I'll start a live read-through of the shorter of my most recent three novels, Terminus Loop. Then I'll get it published and distributed and uploaded to BundleRabbit. I hope to do all of that today.

DWS is a self-described “sprint writer.” He might take several days away from writing to do other things, but when he writes, he goes hard at it.

By contrast (according to DWS) his wife is a “drip writer.” She writes a little every day. (To my knowledge, he has never defined “a little.”)

I am a combination of those types. Using a daily word count goal to provide impetus, I try to write a lot every day. And I define “a lot” as 4,000 words per day or more.

But I'm still in training to learn to balance writing with other necessary things.

Of course, doctor appointments and trips to the store and mowing the lawn and other life events cannot be avoided. So the writing is rudely shoved to the back burner when those uglies crop up.

But I've yet to train myself to just casually wander off and do other things when I'm in the midst of a story. And I need to be able to do that. However, although I take a stab at it from time to time, it's still on my “someday” list, and you know how that goes.

At present, from the time I stop writing for the day to the time I begin writing the following day, I look forward to starting again. It's an obsession.

I guess that's all right.

Announcement

I've decided to offer payment for a good first reader. If any of you are interested, please email me separately and I'll give you the details.

Basically you'll read my work (only novels and novellas), email me to tell me about any places in the story where inconsistency (or some other big problem) stopped you from reading, and I'll send you a check.

I'll be announcing this also through Facebook and the larger blog over at HarveyStanbrough.com, but I wanted to give you guys first shot.

An Anecdote

Back in October 2014, I found and got back in touch with a former friend from my earliest days in the Marine Corps (so almost 46 years ago now).

At the time, my former friend (we'll call him Jim) was a corn farmer, primary to hide his real cash crop, cannabis. He was also a connoisseur of literature and a writer, albeit one mired deeply in the myths.

He's also one of these guys who enjoys "chatting" like they do at literary mixers where they serve wine and tiny food.

Well, I'm just not into all that, plus I see it as a complete waste of time. So as gently as possible I explained that I didn't have time for chatting.

"Why not?" he says.

So I say, "Oh, well, because I'm currently putting out around 3000 publishable words of fiction per day. For me, writing takes precedence over talking about writing."

He fired off a response replete with exclamation points. The gist? There was absolutely no possible way I could keep up a pace like that. I'd burn out in a month, he said. I'd be lucky if I even finished the current novel (my first), he said.

He got so angry, I finally had to cut off all contact with him. But I have to admit, sometimes I hope he occasionally Googles my name or looks me up on Amazon. (grin)

Topic: Necessary Admin Tasks

We all have them. By "admin tasks" I mean certain necessary tasks that we would much rather leave to others.

I have two kinds. As a writer and as a publisher.

As a writer currently without a first reader, the main admin task involves reading my work aloud.

I don't really mind that so much. In fact, I actually enjoy it, as I read to an audience (my wife). I emote, doing the voices of the characters complete with emotional highs and lows and so on. (grin)

So it's actually fun, as long as my voice doesn't give out. But I do mind the time it takes away from my writing. Hence the offer above.

As an independent publisher, admin tasks amount to several things I would like to farm out, but most of which I have to do myself. Frankly, it would take me longer to explain what needs to be done and how to do it as it takes to simply do it myself.

Those tasks include but are not limited to

- preparing covers and promo docs for each new project regardless of length (short or long fiction or nonfiction)
- publishing short fiction to my website and my donors

- distributing my fiction (long and short) to my distributors and Amazon
- compiling short fiction into collections and doing all of the above for each collection
- updating my websites with all of my fiction and nonfiction (I have two primary sites and four secondary, persona websites)
- uploading my long fiction (thus far) to BundleRabbit
- seeking out and developing new markets
- various stabs at marketing (beyond writing promo docs, designing covers and the occasional blurb on Facebook)
- and several other things that escape me just now but that regularly rear their ugly heads.

You'll probably notice that "keeping track of sales" doesn't appear on the list anywhere. Neither is it among the "several other things." That's intentional.

Of Interest

Some great comments on Dean's post from yesterday, including [some back and forth with a wordy commenter](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 3 at the insistence of my little girl kitten.

I started the live read-through of Terminus Loop around 8:30. With a few breaks, I finished around 12:15. Glad I did. I caught a few rough errors (eyes blue when they were green earlier, etc.).

Then I finished writing the promo document, then uploaded the final version to Smashwords, Amazon and D2D. The book will go live on all of those on September 17th, the official release date. I also uploaded the book to BundleRabbit. I'll click "List In Marketplace" on the 17th.

Finished all of that around 2. Not a bad day. I did zero writing though. Back to the conundrum.

Now I'm gonna get off here. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
 Nonfiction Words: 1210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1210

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 104717
 Total fiction words for the year..... 534869

Total nonfiction words for the month... 24300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 190980

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 725849

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 8/31

[August 31, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I think I've found a new first reader, so thanks if you were considering taking the job. And if he doesn't pan out, there's one more who's thinking about it.

Easy day today once I get it started. Maybe I'll write a short story today, publish and distribute it, then take care of more items on my "to do" list.

I revised my subscription list so it now has only three levels. You can take a look at those if you're interested over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

Topic: Nothing today.

Of Interest

Interesting stuff over at Dean's site. No new topic, but a new Kickstarter drive for Fiction River, etc.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4 this morning. Outside within a few minutes and got completely wrapped around the wheel creating a "Coming Soon" image placeholder for StoneThread Publishing. Ridiculous how much time that took.

I stopped over at Dean's place, wandered by Facebook, then headed for the Hovel around 7 a.m. Spent some more time online via my hotspot.

By about 10:30 I wrote the first installment of a collection called Songs of the Zombie Apocalypse (fun, yes?), a poem/short-short story called "Ain't Nuffum Bedda."

Probably I won't publish this one, except as part of the collection when it's ready. This is one I'd have to keep reminding readers it isn't me but the character saying these things. (grin)

But if you like really crass, crazy stuff with a dash of horror, a pinch of morbid humor, and a lot of dialect, email me and I'll send it to you. I'm pretty sure this was written by Eric Stringer's truly demented third cousin twice removed, Alonzo Schiff.

A break, then probably to work on my To Do list. There's one item in particular I need to get done.

Okay, got my post written re my new ghostwriting service. I think I'm gonna take the rest of the day and knock some other things off my list.

From a writing standpoint, it's been a good month at over 105,000 words. Of course, tomorrow all that resets to zero. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 765

Nonfiction Words: 1230 (310, Journal; 920, other blog)

So total words for the day: 1995

Writing of "Ain't Nuffum Bedda"

Day 1..... 765 words. Total words to date..... 765 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 105482

Total fiction words for the year..... 535634

Total nonfiction words for the month... 25530

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 192210

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 727844

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 9/1](#)

[September 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Happy Labor Day everyone.

I've updated my main website (and the Journal site), this time with my ghostwriter service. To see the new page, click [HarveyStanbrough.com](#). If you have any suggestions, please feel free to share them.

I believe it's important to start the month right, so I'm going to write a short story today, or begin a new novel. However it turns out. (grin)

Topic: Sorry. Nothing again today.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's site his topic is [Running](#). It's a little about staying in shape and how not doing so can harm a writer.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4:30 this morning. Outside within a few minutes, then worked on two websites and an article for a writers' group magazine.

Got a great deal on a new humidifier so I'm basically doing nothing between now and 9 a.m. when I'll drop Mona at work and pick up the humidifier.

Got back and recast the article for the magazine at the editor's wise request. He caught some things I didn't catch.

10:30, finally to the Hovel and the writing.

Well, I hemmed and hawed for about a half-hour. Then a first sentence occurred and I finally started writing at 11. I love it when that happens. Pure writing into the dark. So in the first half-hour, a little over 570 words, including a little cycling.

12:25, another thousand words and a break.

1 p.m., back to the story.

2:15, a break, rounding up the babies to get them into the house. Big rain coming, I hope.

4 p.m., finished with a disturbing story. This one is as much an exercise in getting into a character's head as I've ever written.

A good start to the month. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4077

Nonfiction Words: 280 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4357

Writing of "A Special Treat" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 4077 words. Total words to date..... 4077 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 4077

Total fiction words for the year..... 539711

Total nonfiction words for the month... 280

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 192490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 732201

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 9/2

[September 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Interesting morning already. Early, something the size and color of a bobcat (but it had a tail) chased my little girl inside my yard. If I'd had my 9mm out here with me, I'd have killed it. Graveyard dead, as we used to say.

Generally, I'm at peace with all creatures, but not when they're in my yard or my house and attacking my babies. Ugh. That was a couple hours ago and I'm still trembling with anger. It hit the top of my 4' gate on its way out. I hope it broke its damn leg.

In more peaceful news, I also cleaned and refilled all the hummingbird feeders this morning just before sunrise. I thought that was early enough to give them an early morning surprise, but five hummers watched, impatiently, as I hung the clean new feeders.

The whole time, one particular hummer kept asking why I have only four feeders when there are five in his family. I can't really tell him it's because I'd rather clean and fill four feeders than five, can I?

Great stuff over at Dean's site today (see Of Interest below). As always, I recommend reading both. No telling what gems you might personally mine even from his less-exciting posts.

Re learning in writing, everything depends on what you need at the time. And as is usual for writers, we generally don't know what we need (or were lacking) until we find it.

Topic: The Value of a Good First Reader

You've all heard me (and DWS) shout to the heavens about how invaluable a good first reader is. And I announced a few days ago that I'd found one.

I'm pretty sure I found the best one on the planet. This guy isn't good. He's excellent.

First of all, he isn't a writer. But he is a voracious reader.

His name is Kenneth Flowers and he's pretty much the most intelligent person I know. As an added bonus, he and I were seniors together in Tatum High School in Tatum, NM. (grin) Most of my friends even in Texas won't know where that is unless they attend the horse races in Ruidoso or hunt in the Sacramento Mountains.

Kenneth started reading my 96,000-word SF novel yesterday. Today around noon, he sent the notes back. Not kidding.

The guy is WELL worth the money, and he doesn't charge much. Seriously folks, the guy is invaluable, and I don't use words superfluously.

What did he find? One place (repeated) that confused him a bit. A few typos (maybe 8). A place or two where two words were run together. A few places where there was a space before a period or a comma. That's it.

He found what popped out at him as a reader. Exactly what he was supposed to find.

If you want his particulars, please email me and I'll send you his email addy. I already have his permission to sick more of my crew on him. (grin)

Of Interest

Over at Dean's site, an important post on [My Seven Keys of a Challenge](#). Yours truly added a comment on that one.

And below that, his "normal" post, [A Fun First Day of September](#).

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3. Three a.m. is my premium time. It gives me time to wake up and get all my stuff in one bag before the day really begins around 5 or 6.

Of course, having it all in one bag is no guarantee I'll be able to lift it. (grin)

Okay, so around 7 I'm still just playing around, checking out the Internet, etc.

8:30, in the Hovel and casting around for a new story or title or phrase or sentence or something to start my next adventure.

10:30, I'm still looking around in old files. Maybe today's gonna be a "day off." The problem isn't a lack of ideas, but that I have so many, and at the moment they're all muddled around in my head, shoving each other aside.

I just realized I've been looking to start a novel. Hmm. I might have to "settle" for another short story for today. Or I might just have to start writing and see where it goes. But for now, I'm piddling.

Interestingly, I rediscovered a nonfiction book I've been wanting to write. Probably you can expect it to crop up in the "Today's Writing" section sometime in the next few days. Or maybe I'll at least list it today. Then you can follow progress on that too.

12:15, at last. I stumbled across something I started a couple of months ago. It dwindled and died, but I liked the idea so I kept it. Mostly for the title, I think.

I took the title, the two characters, and the problem and ran with it. Woohoo! Another SF novel! And I'm in exactly the right mood to write it. This thing is flowing like buttah, and it's completely different than it was the first time I tried to write it. The subconscious knows what it's doing. All you have to do is trust it.

3 p.m. I'm headed to the house. Calling it a day for fiction, but I'm gonna spend some time on the nonfiction book. See whether I can work on both each day. Starting tomorrow I'll hope to get back to 4000 words per day on fiction plus an hour or two each day on the nonfiction.

4:16, well crap. I got to the house and was deluged with emails from a web client who knows absolutely NOTHING about ANYTHING to do with websites but gives all the orders. So that's what I've been battling the past hour plus.

So I'm gonna post this and call it a day. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2619

Nonfiction Words: 950 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3569

Writing of The Three Year Turn (SF novel)

Day 1..... 2619 words. Total words to date..... 2619

Writing of The Top 10 Things Every Writer Should Know (nonfiction)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6696

Total fiction words for the year..... 542330

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1230

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 193440

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 735770

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [nonfiction](#), [Novel](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 9/3

[September 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, another interesting morning.

At my outside desk, I applied my first reader's fixes to *The Day the Earth Shuddered and Went Dark*. Absolutely invaluable, this guy and his input. So that was my "third draft." Took all of a half-hour. Then I uploaded the revised document to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon for preorders. The official release date is October 1, 2016.

A Thought on Twenty-Six Letters

Ours truly is an incredible language.

Something we all know but rarely think about, is that every novel, novella, and short story, every nonfiction book and poem and collection, and everything else ever written in the English language is just various combinations of 26 letters. Absolutely amazing.

And this morning my first-born daughter tagged me in a post on Facebook so I'd be sure to see it. It was a poster that read "I hate spelling errors. You mix up two letters and your whole post is urined." (grin)

Topic: Cycling Revisited. Oh, and Practice Too

Bonnie Edwards recently asked a question regarding characters and character traits ([The Journal, Friday, 9/2](#)). I responded, but could have provided an example.

Knowing that you need something in a fictional work doesn't always equate to putting what you need into the work the first time through.

That's why I cycle back as I write and that's why I recommend you do the same.

In Bonnie's case, she has learned and knows (both functions of the conscious mind) that the "good guy" in a novel isn't all good and the "bad guy" isn't all bad.

In her question, she wondered whether she should add those things in or just write off into the dark and not worry about it.

My response was that she already knew the answer.

Just because you have learned a new aspect of fiction doesn't mean it will automatically come out in your writing before you've practiced it. That's why, awhile back, I advocated practicing one new aspect of writing with each successive work.

She can cycle back every thousand words or so (or at the end of a scene or chapter) and allow her subconscious mind (so creative voice) to add-in something she missed. Like a bad trait for the good guy, or vice versa.

If you're a regular reader of my Journal, you already know I cycle quite a bit in my own writing. My big thing right now — the aspect I'm practicing — is physical description. Invoking the character's five physical senses every thousand words or so deepens the scene. It helps ground the reader in the scene.

And it works, folks. I've received numerous comments from readers saying they feel almost like they're in the book.

Just remember, this is always *the character's opinion of the setting* as expressed through the character's five physical senses.

What do I mean by the character's opinion of the setting?

Say two characters walk into a room and a third character, the one who's already in the room, has been smoking a pipe.

One character might think the scent in the room is pleasant, a calm, gentle aroma of cherries and leather. Another character might choke and gag and think the place stinks.

Say there are wall sconces in the room, set two feet below the ceiling every six feet or so on three walls. And each sconce has a light bulb hidden in an elegant glass shade.

One character might think the room looks girly or foppish. Why doesn't the guy just have a good, strong overhead lamp affixed to the ceiling?

The other character might think the lights are charming.

One might think the room is too bright. The other might think it's too dim.

That's what I mean about the character's opinion of the setting as expressed through his or her physical senses.

Hope this helps clarify things.

Of the new things you learn about the craft of writing, try applying one to each new project.

Now, should you go back to earlier works and update them with the same new aspects?

No, not in my opinion. Keep moving forward.

But when you've applied a new aspect to your current work, in succeeding works it will occur more naturally. In other words, your writing will improve.

And that's what practice is all about.

Of Interest

Nothing new over at Dean's place today. Mostly just stuff about the WMG Publishing's Fiction River anthology.

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30, late. Sigh.

I worked at the outside desk for a few hours, mostly doing the stuff in the intro above, then reading online for awhile.

Moved out to the hovel around 9, but for various reasons didn't settle in to write until almost 10.

Then my little girl showed up at the door of the Hovel. I've mentioned it's around 200 feet from the house. I closed the door securely and let her roam around inside while I wrote everything above.

Around 10:20 she was through browsing and wanted to go back to the house. So I carried her up there, for both the safety of the squirrels in the woodpile outside my door and her own safety. There are coyotes and owls about.

10:30, to the novel. Nope. Caught one more thing in the "Earth Shuddered" novel. Well, there's always one more thing, right? Fixed it, fired off new copies/versions, and back to the Hovel.

11:20, finally to the novel.

Well, I did a lot of cycling today, off and on, and added 1050 words. I'm gonna head to the house and take the rest of the day.

Slow start to the month. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1050

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1910

Writing of The Three Year Turn (SF novel)

Day 1..... 2619 words. Total words to date..... 2619

Day 2..... 1050 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of The Top 10 Things Every Writer Should Know

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 7746

Total fiction words for the year..... 543380

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2090

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 194300

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 737680

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 9/4](#)

[September 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Seems like another slow day, but what do I know? I thought yesterday would be a good day for writing, and look how that turned out.

It also seems like the going is slow on every novel I've ever written. I was telling my wife last night that on this one, it feels as if it's going to break loose and run soon. I hope that will begin today. We'll see.

Topic: The Ten Most Important Things for a Writer to Know

Yes, that will be the haughty title of my next nonfiction book. Well, if I ever actually start it. (grin) For now, I'm removing it from the report below until I start it. Below are the ten chapter heads, each followed by a brief annotation.

These "top ten" things assume at least a nodding acquaintance with the nuances of the language. And that acquaintance should at least include an understanding of grammar, syntax and the appropriate use of punctuation to direct the reading of the work.

1 Heinlein's Rules — It is imperative that writers follow these very simple rules, Heinlein's "Business Habits for Writers." No matter your skill level or genre or field of endeavor in fiction writing, you will not be successful if you don't follow these rules.

2 Trust Your Subconscious — This is writing into the dark. Your subconscious has been telling stories since before you could write. It also holds all the pertinent knowledge you need to write at your current level of development. Do you have to “think” to cross a T or dot an I while you’re writing?

3 Cycling — This is like rewriting as you go, but with one major difference. This is done in creative voice. The subconscious mind has free reign.

4 Keep Coming Back — Persistence pays off, even if you write in only 15 or 30 minute increments. The words add up.

5 Set Goals And Strive To Reach Them — Goals are not dreams. Goals are within your ability to control. Break larger goals into smaller ones. Eat the elephant one bite at a time.

6 Writing Is Not An Elevated Calling — Beginning writers want to believe writing fiction is an elevated profession, something to which they must aspire and forever be found wanting. Ridiculous.

7 Keep Reading And Learning — Read voraciously the works of authors you like, in or outside of your genre. Much that those authors do will begin to inform your writing. This is not plagiarism. This is growth. This is how you develop a style.

Attend seminars and writers’ conferences and conventions where you are able to learn from those farther down the road than you. Read their blogs. Take courses from them.

8 You Must Practice — Write to the best of your current ability, submit or publish, then move on to the next project.

9 Avoid “Peer” Critique Groups — Nothing good was ever built by a committee. No urge is greater than the urge for a writer to change another writer’s work. Don’t let anyone else into your work. Don’t seek out or listen to advice from non-writers or from writers who are not much farther down the road than you are?

10 Don’t Believe Everything You Hear — Take what professional fiction writers say (or others say about them) with a grain of salt. Professional writers tell people (especially aspiring writers) what they want to hear. They also make things up to tell aspiring hopefuls. They are fiction writers. Don’t be shocked to learn they lied to you. Except me. I would never lie to you.

Oh, and also (as evidenced by my own recent fugue), Know That There Will Be Down Times. Because there will.

Of Interest

[Dr. Mardy’s Quotes of the Week](#), especially if you like golf.

Nothing at Dean's place. More of a placeholder post than anything else, but that's normal for him for a Sunday morning.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and was outside by 4. Cold out there at around 60°. But it's supposed to be in the mid-90s later today.

Piddled in and out of the house, email and other stuff until around 8:30. Then to the Hovel.

Around 8:50 I finally got back to the novel.

Noon, pecking along among breaks, just cleared 2000 words. Well, I don't know what's wrong. Probably I'm trying to force it. Did more cycling today, and allowed Worry to creep in a bit. Can't allow that. I'm gonna take the rest of today off and we'll see what happens tomorrow.

I hate reporting stuff like this, but you've been here for the good days so maybe you'll remember those and know they'll be back.

See you tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2023

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2803

Writing of The Three Year Turn (SF novel)

Day 1..... 2619 words. Total words to date..... 2619

Day 2..... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 3669 words

Day 3..... 2023 words. Total words to date..... 5692 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 9769

Total fiction words for the year..... 545403

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2870

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 195080

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 740483

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 9/5

[September 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm shifting gears again. You can read about it in the topic below.

Today I'll be writing a short story for this week. Maybe even two. Who knows.

Topic: Screwing Up and Learning From It. Probably.

You've all heard me say before that you have to be careful of allowing your conscious mind to seep in and take over.

You've also heard me say it's better to not make a work important — in any way, as it turns out.

And above all, it's always better to let a work be whatever it's going to be.

After two years of practice, I'm usually pretty good at keeping my conscious mind at bay. I mean, it's only been two years, but by and large it's been a really productive two years. So the learning curve is probably faster than if I'd written only two or three or four novels in that time.

I'm also usually pretty good at allowing a work to be whatever it's going to be (literary genre, length, etc.). In fact, I often consciously remind myself to be hands-off concerning genre (short story, novella, novel) and length before I sit down and turn things over to my characters.

I don't watch as closely the possibility of letting a work become important, because generally, that isn't a problem for me. But every now and then it creeps in.

Well, it came around again.

Yesterday it hit me that, over 5000 words into my WIP, only two characters had been on stage (four others were mentioned but not on stage) and the story was still focused on One Event.

So there's a really good chance that what I've been trying to turn into a novel Just Isn't A Novel. It's looking more and more like it's a short story, or maybe a long short story (novelette) at best.

We'll see. I really really WANT it to be a novel (important!), and I really really WANT to write a novel right now (important!). Add to that the fact that I'm trying to write a novel every month this year (important!), and the "importance" factor comes creeping in.

Despite all of this, I still feel like this has the potential to be a novel, but that might be an effect of one or more of the above. So unless the characters lead me to at least one more major event pretty soon, that's a no-go.

So how do you solve this sort of problem?

Well, here's how I'm going to solve it.

I've already tossed this story out once and then recast it from Word One as a brand new story. So I'm not gonna do that again. At least not yet.

But I'm going to leave it alone for at least today. Today I'll write my short story for this week to put that goal behind me. Then tomorrow or the next day or whenever, I'll look over what I have in *The Three Year Turn*.

If the characters lead me naturally to continue the story as a novel I'll do that.

But if it still strikes me that it isn't going to run to a novel, I'll scrap what I've written and keep only the idea. Then I'll write the short story or novelette (or maybe novella) sometime in the future.

What's really strange about this is that for me it's a unique experience. A first.

I've sat down to write a short story before and had it run to a novella (*A Little Time*) or a novel (*Leaving Amarillo*, *The Clearing*, and *Nothing for Nothing*).

But never before have I sat down to write a novel and have it screaming at me that it's supposed to be a shorter form.

I guess it's all part of the learning process. But I'll tell you what, I hope this particular one never happens again.

Of Interest

Not a lot around the web that I could find.

Of possible interest, my wife is starting an online store for StoneThread Publishing on Amazon and Ebay for our paper editions.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:40 and did generally nothing until around 10. Then I went out to the Hovel. By around 11 I started a new story. A short story I think, but we'll see where the characters go.

But around 12:30 the temp inside the Hovel was hovering around 88. It's already 96 outside. And this morning I was freezing at 60. (grin)

So I moved back up to the house. I haven't written anything up here for a long time, so we'll see what happens. In total I got about a half-hour of writing done at the house.

Around 2 I got to jonesing for a cigar. Sun's still too high to use the outside desk, so back to the Hovel. Not too hot as long as I keep the door closed and the fan running.

Well, I didn't finish the story, but a fairly decent day I guess. It occurs to me that I'm falling off Heinlein's Rule #2. Hmm. Gotta fix that.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3134

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3934

Writing of "Missiles" (working title, story)

Day 1..... 3134 words. Total words to date..... 3134

Writing of The Three Year Turn (SF novel, maybe)

Day 1..... 2619 words. Total words to date..... 2619

Day 2..... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 3669 words

Day 3..... 2023 words. Total words to date..... 5692 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 12903

Total fiction words for the year..... 548537

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3670

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 195880

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 744417

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 9/6](#)

[September 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today might be a nonwriting day. Commitments out of town. And maybe I need a break anyway.

I put together a short story collection several years ago (before I started writing regularly) called Six Years in May: Thirteen Stories from a Very Odd Mind.

In addition to the thirteen short stories, it also contain an unrelated vignette after each story. The vignette was not related to the story that preceded it or to the story that followed it.

I borrowed that structural pattern directly from *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: The Finca Vigia Edition*. To make mine different, and as an added bonus, the thirteen vignettes comprised a fourteenth short story.

That collection was published in early 2011 by the now-defunct Red Willow Press. Recently I considered publishing a new edition under StoneThread Publishing. I would bring it out again in paper with a new cover and an updated foreword.

But I reconsidered.

Flash forward to three years later when I started writing seriously under several pen names and personas.

I reassigned eight of the thirteen stories to other authors. Those eight stories are now included in other ebook and print collections by those authors. They're all also published as stand-alone short stories (as ebooks only) by those authors.

Flash forward again to present. Rather than publishing a new edition that contains all thirteen stories (and thirteen vignettes) under my name again, I've chosen to allow the old edition to die a dignified death.

My wife listed them in her new Amazon store and will list them in her Ebay store. I think we have five or so copies left.

The ebook edition of *Six Years in May: Thirteen Stories from a Very Odd Mind* is still available through various ebook vendors. The few remaining print editions are available only through us.

But that whole thought process started a new one. Soon, though I'm not sure when, I'll begin compiling a "best of" collection of stories by Harvey Stanbrough. It won't contain any stories by any of my other personas or pen names.

And I intend to repeat my earlier experiment as well, writing a series of new vignettes. I'll tuck one in after each short story, and again, when read in sequence, they will comprise another short story.

This is a great project on three levels:

First, it will both cause and enable me to focus on my own "voice" vs. the voices of my various personas and pen names.

Second, it will be a great deal of fun, especially writing the new stories and vignettes that will wind up in it.

Third, it will create yet one more stream of revenue as a whole and for the individual stories.

Which leads me to the topic.

Topic: Retooling Things

It's important (and smart) that every story you write is offered to the public through as many sales venues as possible. (This is why I eschew and strongly advise against any "exclusive" publishing setup, such as Amazon's KDP Select program.)

But it's also important that each story also brings in as many separate revenue streams as possible. In publishing, redundancy is king.

So when I have written ten short stories (under one author name), for me that's automatically thirteen streams of revenue.

Each short story is published to around 230 venues worldwide via three distributors.

Then I group the ten stories into two 5-story collections. Both of those also are published to the same 230 venues.

Then I stick the ten stories into one 10-story collection. That one is published to the same 230 venues. I also publish a paper edition of that one. And the paper edition opens up even more venues and streams of revenue.

Number of stories (short and long) times number of venues times number of formats (individual or collections or boxed sets, etc.) equals making a living as a writer.

Of Interest

Oops. Yesterday was [Free Fiction Monday](#) over on Kris's site. If I haven't mentioned it before, I read her stories to learn how to write stories.

Not a lot over at Dean's site, but still openings in his online workshops. If any of those speak to you, I do recommend them. I'll even answer specifics regarding any I've personally taken.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and checked all the usual places. Outside by 4, typical morning of doing very little other than online stuff, etc.

Around 7 I wrote most of what you see above. Then some other stuff came up and I decided to take a nonwriting day rather than try to write around it.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 760

Writing of “Missiles” (working title, story)

Day 1..... 3134 words. Total words to date..... 3134

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of The Three Year Turn (SF novel, maybe)

Day 1..... 2619 words. Total words to date..... 2619

Day 2..... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 3669 words

Day 3..... 2023 words. Total words to date..... 5692 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 12903

Total fiction words for the year..... 548537

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4430

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 196640

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 745177

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 9/7

[September 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. A week gone of September, the first Autumn month, and I have less than 13,000 words of new fiction to show for it. I gotta get hot. (grin)

But possibly another nonwriting day today. We'll see. I really need to figure this thing out. I think I'm still laboring under the whole "importance" thing, and really, that's just silly. But silly or not, I feel pressure. Gotta find a way to shake that. Maybe it'll at least help some of you to know I struggle sometimes too. (shrug)

It isn't the result of setting goals. I've been setting and meeting (or occasionally falling short of) writing goals for well over two years.

It would be easy to just make up something to report here, like I had a full day doing blah blah blah and didn't get to the writing. But I don't want to do that. I want this journal to be an honest, open accounting, warts and all.

Rainy, drizzly day here today. It rained all night and gave us only 1/4" in the gauge as of 5 a.m. The rate of rainfall increased with the dawn, and by 7, that was almost a half-inch.

Checked the weather. These are the early bands from a tropical storm moving up the Baja coast. Uncharacteristically, this one will move directly over us (about an hour east of Tucson) through most of the day today.

We need the rain, but it forces me inside, so out of my comfort zone. So any writing I do will be done inside today. I haven't done that for a long while. Of course, I still need a short story for this week, so maybe I should take my forced confinement as a challenge. (grin)

Topic: DWS' Originality Workshop (free!)

If I posted all the URLs for this earlier, forgive the repeat, but this is important enough to risk it.

There are some wonderful gems in this workshop. Ignore any references to traditional publishing as any comments in that regard are far outdated. Otherwise this thing is great.

Here are the URLs for all six weeks:

Originality Workshop

Vid 1/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIMM9n5veWw>

Vid 1/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIPd4Dq6yOY>

Vid 1/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMFiX5cFsSI>

Vid 1/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQFMH5A1mmU>

Vid 1/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKQxB4drcl8>

Vid 1/6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-hZPqnO1KM> Assignment

Vid 2/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar8GGF6GMZE>

Vid 2/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0tmAVhAd0A>

Vid 2/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qeok3FkQ4fk>

Vid 2/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U19MdjMaU10>

Vid 2/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmTfIGSc3FM>

Vid 2/6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stueRDH7Mas> Assignment

Response <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AV9-r1udW4g>

Vid 3/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGei7DxOSTc>

Vid 3/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkZvQ0mRMPQ>

Vid 3/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbZqUF1DM6w>

Vid 3/4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8x_aFQE8Tk

Vid 3/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zcCaqRf9Xw>

Vid 3/6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMvAjbRgWgM> Assignment

Response <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZHcVasf12g>

Vid 4/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHMsB7t7WJU>

Vid 4/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtAP1WgOZTY>

Vid 4/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgIHW1UHclo>

Vid 4/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYABQmbomDw>

Vid 4/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpoWkdQr1Ro>
Vid 4/6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73HVU21FC28> Assignment
Response <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIQgHMO-LJo>

Vid 5/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZOwercTdBQ>
Vid 5/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aihnAwHTf8>
Vid 5/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lau-aVDyJyE>
Vid 5/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O89Lcjd7imM>
Vid 5/5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT4mZ4qitOM>
Vid 5/6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul-yvpiGe6c>
Vid 5/7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT4mZ4qitOM> Assignment
Response <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQfUGMZguik>

Vid 6/1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93RilYkh024>
Vid 6/2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPlftaXBb5Q>
Vid 6/3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ck9QpWqFGJc>
Vid 6/4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa731KZQ51c>
Vid 6/5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qnUCx_dfys

Of Interest

A post that might be of interest on [A Little More Running](#) over at Dean's place.

Also see [19 Fantastic Book Cover Design Resources](#). I am especially interested in [DIY Book Covers](#). They even offer free tutorials about designing book covers in MS Word.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 again. The babies in general and my little girl in specific were (are) annoyed they can't go outside without getting wet. And 'Bit wonders why I won't just make it stop. (grin)

Out and in, towel drying my little girl, deflecting hurt make-it-stop looks and checking stuff around the Internet comprised my early morning. Checked Dean's site, started a load of laundry. All of that's up through about 8:30.

10 a.m., I'm still picking at bits of writing. Seriously, this is just insane.

Around 11 I started writing. A sneering kid, young twenties, is a chair in an interview room in a police station. Smug, like most, but something seems different.

I wrote the first 400 words (opening) and knew how it was going to turn out. I'd have to fill in another 2000 words or so to get there, but I knew where it was going. Not only a surprise ending, but two surprise twists at the end, one in the final sentence. But I already knew them. Stopped me cold.

Normally I'd toss it out. But I went ahead and wrote the thing. I've started and not finished (so far) too many lately. Not finishing because you know the ending too soon is completely understandable (it's boring) but this will get this week's story off my plate. I'll do the cover and all that tomorrow.

Been a rough day, writing and in other ways. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2267

Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2917

Writing of "The Necklace" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2267 words. Total words to date..... 2267 (done)

Writing of "Missiles" (working title, story)

Day 1..... 3134 words. Total words to date..... 3134

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Writing of The Three Year Turn (SF novel)

Day 1..... 2619 words. Total words to date..... 2619

Day 2..... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 3669 words

Day 3..... 2023 words. Total words to date..... 5692 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 15522

Total fiction words for the year..... 551156

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5080

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 197290

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 748466

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 9/8

[September 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Okay, I'm removing "Missiles" and "The Three Year Turn" from the journal for awhile. More on that and why in the topic below.

And I'm happy to report I'm back on track. After an excellent July and August (102,000 and 105,000), I'd really like to have at least a passable September. (grin)

Topic: Checking In With Yourself

As you've seen over the past few days, sometimes it's necessary to take a deep breath and check in with yourself as a writer.

In fact, since I started this Journal, I've had to do so several times. But I think none was rougher than the past few days.

My new first reader loves SF. I happen to enjoy writing SF. I've written several SF short stories as well as a science fiction thriller and a science fantasy novel.

A brief note on the catchall term "SF": SF encompasses science fiction and science fantasy. The best description I've heard of the difference is that science fiction must adhere to the laws of physics as we know them. Science fantasy designates anything that does not adhere to those laws. So, for example, Star Trek was more science fantasy than science fiction.

Without realizing it, I allowed Kenneth's desire to read more SF to combine with my enjoyment of writing it. The combination almost dictated that my next novel be SF. For that reason, I revived the initial idea of The Three Year Turn and started writing it again.

Probably one day I'll write that one and publish it, because I really like the concept behind it. But not right now.

My other recent start, with the working title Missiles, wandered off to be something different. Something ruled by my conscious mind. Again, it's an SF story. I suspect it probably was another reaction to my compulsion to write something my subconscious doesn't really want to write at the moment.

I don't like feeling as if I'm mired knee-deep in mud with swamp donkeys all over the place. (grin)

So this morning I took that deep breath and checked in with myself. Well, maybe with my inner two year old.

Screw what "should be" or "ought to be." Screw being on a roll. (Two of my last three novels fit snugly into the SF category.) What do I *want* to write?

And I heard a guy, in a Brooklyn accent, say, "What? I didn't tell you? Oh wait! Maybe that's 'cause it's none'a your f**kin' business, eh?"

Yeah. I wanna write about that guy. What if a group of Mafioso were having a meeting in the back room of a small club in Brooklyn? And what if the purpose of the meeting was so the boss could send one of them to New Orleans to take over operations there? Maybe with an ulterior motive? I mean, I assume there might be an ulterior motive. Among Mafioso, there almost always is.

“It’s simple,” the boss says, and held up two fingers. He ticked them off one at a time. “One, you go to New Orleans. Two, you be me.”

You can also use checking in with yourself to set priorities or to get yourself unstuck in time in your current WIP or for any number of other reasons.

But for me, for this time, it was simply a tool to pry my head out of my asterisk. You know, the one somebody would put next to my name on a list of used-to-be writers.

(I can almost hear my buddy Gary laughing. “Moron, you ain’t gonna be on no list!” grin)

Of Interest

Not much around the web.

The Day

Rolled out at 4 after waking up at 2:20 and closing my eyes for “a few more minutes.”

8:30, to the Hovel and the writing. “The Necklace” didn’t feel right, so I cycled back through it and added pertinent physical description. A little over 800 words.

9:20, I was going to take a break, but dediced to do the cover, promo doc, etc. I’ll publish it after I head up to the house this afternoon. But for now (10:30) a brief break.

10:40, to the writing. Started a new story set in Mafioso land. I’m gonna enjoy this one. Hit just shy of 1200 words by 11:45. Time for a break.

12:10, to write the topic of the day. Just occurred to me. Duh. Then I messed around for a little while on the Internet.

12:30, back to the story. After another thousand words, a break at 1:30 p.m.

1:45, back to the story. A brief break at 2:30 to take the little girl back to the house. (grin) She came to visit her daddy. That kitten sure makes me feel special.

2:40, back to the story.

Closing down at 3:15 with a really good day compared to what I’ve been doing recently. I’ll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4461 ("The Necklace" plus Brooklyn)

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5241

Writing of "The Necklace" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2267 words. Total words to date..... 2267

Day 2..... 0847 words. Total words to date..... 3114 (done)

Writing of Brooklyn (working title, probably a novel)

Day 1..... 3614 words. Total words to date..... 3614

Total fiction words for the month..... 19631

Total fiction words for the year..... 555265

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5860

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 198070

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 753335

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 9/9](#)

[September 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I had a very productive early morning. When I went to check Dean's site, I found a Stephen King interview. King is among my favorite authors, so I went and listened. Then I listened to a second interview, then to a talk at the Library of Congress.

I didn't find much in the Library of Congress Q&A session (though his brief talk at the beginning was great), but I mined a great many gems from the first two videos, both Charley Rose interviews.

I've included links to all three below in the Of Interest section.

An excellent quote from the second Stephen King interview below: "When people ask, 'How does creativity work?' my response is, 'It works just fine as long as you don't examine what you're doing too closely.'"

And from the third segment below, “I do this [write] because I like it. I have fun. I like to write, and [...] it’s not any kind of a bigger deal than that.”

So much for the notion that writing is some sort of ethereal “calling”. (grin)

As a nod to my own personal struggle, especially with The Three Year Turn, also in the third presentation below, King speaks of an idea he had 25 years before he finally wrote it. He says, “The project was too big for me, and I let it go. But it never entirely left my mind. It kind’a stayed there and hung out, and every now and then it would say ‘Write me.’”

Yep, that’s The Three Year Turn all over again.

Topic: Nothing today, other than the above and what you find in Of Interest below. Good stuff.

Of Interest

After I posted this Journal yesterday, Kris Rusch came out with her post on [Deal Breakers: Myth Busting](#) which she says is specifically for us Indie publishers. Go. Read.

This morning I found [an interview on Charley Rose with Stephen King](#). Well worth the half-hour.

As a bonus, here’s [another Charley Rose interivew](#) with him. This one is less than a half-hour.

As an added bonus, here’s yet another segment with Stephen King, Tabitha King and Owen King, Stephen’s wife and son, [discussing writing at the Library of Congress](#). This one is almost an hour. To me, the first ten minutes or so were good.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30 and set about email, then Internet stuff. Basically I did nothing until around 5:30 when I went to check Dean’s site.

There was nothing of interest there, but I did find a link to the Stephen King interview I mentioned above.

I spent from 5:30-ish until 8:40 (off and on) watching and listening to those, then moved out to the Adobe Hovel.

For various reasons, I didn’t get to the writing until 10:45.

And for various other reasons, many of which had to do with me repeatedly chasing an annoying woodpecker away from my hummingbird feeders, I didn’t keep up with the play by play or get a lot of writing (relatively) done today.

But I’ll take it. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2822

Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3322

Wrting of Brooklyn (working title, probably a novel)

Day 1..... 3614 words. Total words to date..... 3614

Day 2..... 2822 words. Total words to date..... 6436

Total fiction words for the month..... 22453

Total fiction words for the year..... 558087

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6360

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 198570

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 756657

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stephen King](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 9/10](#)

[September 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I was going to make this a non-writing day. I was going to take care of some admin things, get some things done around the house and yard, and so on. I'm not stuck or anything like that. Just thought I'd take a day of doing nothing.

But while I was getting my last novel, the one I was calling Haley novel, ready for my first reader, I realized I hadn't ended it.

When I'm writing, I always keep items the don't fit near the end in a section called "Cuts."

After I copied and pasted those cuts into a new document, I glanced over the end of the story since it was right there.

But the ending I thought I had written wasn't there. It was gone, period.

I went back to the beginning of what was to be the last chapter and read forward from there. Sure enough, the current "end" looks as if I just stoppped writing. Ugh.

So today, either in addition to or in place of some of the other stuff I was going to do, I'll write the ending for that novel and get it off to Kenneth.

And if that leads me into writing more, then I'll put off today's "other stuff" until tomorrow. But I don't expect that to happen.

Finished the Haley novel, now titled "Hotter Pastures." I'll be asking my first reader to let me know if he notices a title in it somewhere that I missed. (grin)

It came in at 49312 words. So I added only around 500 words. Not counting them below or even on my spreadsheet.

It was only about a half-hour's work. If I were on a day off at a "regular" job and stopped by to do a few things in the office or shop, I wouldn't tell the boss I wanted to be paid for that half-hour either. (shrug)

Off to the store. Then back here to take care of some things around the house. By the time I looked up, it was after 2 p.m.

On Tuesday I have to go have my eyes dilated, so there's a really good chance that will be a nonwriting day as well.

Topic: Keeping Track of Writing

If anyone is interested in the spreadsheet I use to track my writing through the year (both fiction and nonfiction), email me and I'll send you a sample. It would be easy-peasy to set it up for your own writing.

Mine not only motivates me, but it provides me with a record I can use to see trends. The "big picture," so to speak.

For instance, I was thinking I had a banner month a year ago in September 2015. But I checked. I wrote 65,000 words, so a decent enough month, but nothing to holler about. October and November were worse at 43,000 and 30,000 words respectively. December it was decent with 82,000. Quite an eye opener to look back at all that.

Of Interest

Well, apparently I spoke too soon yesterday. Dean did a cool writeup regarding his years writing for Star Trek. [You can see that here.](#)

For today, Dean announced a new workshop he's putting together to begin in October. [Check it out here.](#)

Also, I forgot to mention my Free Story of the Week "[Despidiéndose \(Saying Goodbye\)](#)" posted yesterday. If you like Wes Crowley, you'll like this story. This also became the first chapter of the final novel (The Right Cut) in the series.

The Day

Rolled out just after 3. Checked email, Facebook, and Dean's site. Filled the hummingbird feeders, then wrote a bunch of the stuff above.

No significant writing today. Just calling it a non-writing day. I'll fire up again either tomorrow or Monday.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 600

Writing of Brooklyn (working title, probably a novel)

Day 1..... 3614 words. Total words to date..... 3614
Day 2..... 2822 words. Total words to date..... 6436
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22453
Total fiction words for the year..... 558087
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6960
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 199170

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 757257

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 9/11

[September 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Taking the day off today. Third day this month of no fiction writing. Since I'll be out all day on Tuesday, I might take off tomorrow too. So that will make a nice long (for me) hiatus. Then maybe I'll get back to the life.

Frankly, I'm not sure what's going on right now. It's like one minute I was clicking along at 4,000 words a day, and the next I have trouble putting my fingers on the keyboard. (grin)

I'm not complaining, and I'm not fretting. So no worries there. Maybe I just need a few days off.

So why am I telling you all this?

Well, this Journal is supposed to be my attempt to show the life of a professional fiction writer. And like I said a day or two ago, an endeavor like this should include warts and all. (grin)

By the way, I think the Brooklyn story I was so fired up about has simpered off to an unnatural death. Sort of like the last two before it, The Three Year Turn and Missiles.

The difference with this one (the Brooklyn story), is that it feels like it's something I've already done and I just don't really want to do it again. I have a few novels, a novella, and several short stories featuring either these guys or guys just like them.

Just like I don't think I could write anymore stories about Texas Rangers fighting Comanches in north Texas. Been there, depleted it, no need to go back.

Of Interest

Nothing around the web today other than Dean announcing a new workshop. Might be interesting.

The Day

Rolled out at 4. Checked email etc. By 4:30 I was applying the catches my first reader found in the Haley novel, which is now titled No Kind'a Time. Kenneth is going to read over it again and then I'll create a cover and get it out.

With breaks to fill hummingbird feeders, change clothes, and eat breakfast, I got that finished over about a three-hour time period.

Then some back and forth on email again. Now, around 8:30, a break just to take a break. (grin)

Around 8:45 I started writing a topic on world-building, only by "world" I mean the world in which your story is taking place. Or the world in which you would like to write stories.

But I didn't feel like messing with it, so I've shelved that for the time being too. You'll see it here eventually. Probably.

I meant to get back to my writing today, but it isn't going to work out that way. So I decided to make it a day off, then wrote the stuff above. So no changes to the fiction numbers again below.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 460

Writing of Brooklyn (nope. stalled/dead)

Day 1..... 3614 words. Total words to date..... 3614

Day 2..... 2822 words. Total words to date..... 6436

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22453

Total fiction words for the year..... 558087

Total nonfiction words for the month... 74200

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 199630

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 757717

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, 9/12

[September 12, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'm kind of enjoying this hiatus. I spent the first few hours of the morning working to get my latest novel, No Kind'a Time, published and distributed.

It was nice selecting cover art, designing the cover etc. without having a nagging "you must write" in the back of my head the whole time. And the thoughts that did come seemed to come more easily.

An idea (just a name and a personality, really) for a short story popped into my head as I was browsing my cache of cover photos. I jotted down a few notes, then went back to what I was doing.

Topic: Nothing today.

Of Interest

On Dean's site, yesterday he posted about his new POV Workshop. [The comments there and his responses](#) are worth reading.

On Kris's site, it's [Free Fiction Monday](#). If you want to learn a ton about writing fantasy, mystery, suspense, or SF (and probably a few other genres) reading and then studying her writing is a free seminar.

The Day

Rolled out at 4:30 after 9 hours of sleep. I think I needed that. (grin)

By 6:30 I had received my first reader's comments (second round) and applied them to the novel. Now I'll turn to formatting it, creating a cover, and getting it out.

Well, the thing is published (this one under my own name) and out to distributors and donors. It's much easier now to donate to the [Keep Harvey Alive and Writing](#) fund.

- Ten bucks a month gets you every short story as it's published under any pen name.
- Fifteen gets you every short story and every novel as it's published under any pen name.
- Twenty gets you all of that plus every short fiction collection and every non-fiction book as it's published. (I have a couple of those coming soon.)
- And of course, the occasional non-monthly larger donation generally gets you about the same thing. 'Cause I'm not really all that good at math. (grin)

If you've donated, many mucho gracias to you. If you can't, please at least tell others about all this nonsense. Y gracias a usted tambien.

9:45 to help my wife clean out our storage shed.

After that, I mowed the yard, took a gate out of the fence and made the fence whole again, sort of, bandaged my bleeding fingers and hands, dodged a quarter-inch of rain, and watched a little TV.

Tomorrow, I get my pupils dilated. I guess they were acting up in class or something. So no writing again tomorrow, as planned.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 420

Wrting of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22453

Total fiction words for the year..... 558087

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 200050

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 758137

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 9/13

[September 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not a lot going on today. I thought briefly about writing the short story idea that hit me yesterday, but I think one more day off is probably right.

Took care of some “normal” things around the house and plan to leave for my appointment in Safford around 10:30 or so. When I get back, I won’t be able to see worth a flip, so I’m going to post this before I leave.

Topic: World Building (Environment Building)

I woke up a couple days ago with an interest in world building. Or environment building. Building a world or environment in which stories can take place.

In my case, probably because of my ongoing interest in space opera, that means creating a space ship to the finest detail.

Well, several space ships.

If I started with a massive generational ship (one in which several generations of beings are born, live and die while the ship is on its way to colonize some other planet) — well, that’s still only one ship. I want to know that ship intimately, right down to the finest detail.

But what other types of ships might be attached to or accompany that ship? What might the denizens of the generational ship need that would require other ships?

If those other ships are attached or stowed inside the generational ship, how are they attached or stowed?

And then I want to know each of those ship types down to the smallest detail too. It’s necessary just in case a scene takes place in a particular area on any of those thips, from the generational ship on down.

But world building isn’t important only for space stuff. It’s important that you know as much as you can about every world in which you write.

For example, in my novel [In the Siberian Fields](#), the two main environments (or worlds) were a massive fictional mass grave in Siberia and a colony on the moon.

I had a great deal of fun building the latter. Building the former was considerably disturbing. Thought provoking, and interesting, but disturbing.

To build the former, I couldn't just have a colony on the moon. The structural elements of the colony played to the story, so I had to figure those out. Then I had to tie those structural elements to the reason for the bone mines in the Siberian fields.

But there has to be a way to get to and from a lunar colony, so I dreamed-up, thought-out, and even sketched the colony, the passageways, and the landing sites. Of course, all of that had to adhere to the laws of physics as we know them. All of it also had to be structurally sound, and the landing sites had to have certain amenities.

Those for corporation and government bigwigs had more and nicer amenities than did those that existed only to receive workers or academy students.

There were also environmental concerns — air must be recycled, waste must be reused or disposed of, etc.

Tour guides, office personnel, maintenance personnel et al made up the denizens of the colony, and each of those types led different kinds of lives at the colony.

All of that and much more came into play, all while the story was focused on the protagonist, his acquaintances, his history, and the antagonists on three levels: the world government, a specific operative of that government, and those the protagonist originally believed were friends.

And in the Siberian field itself, the “world” details were much more intimate, down to body parts being frozen to other body parts and so on. Yeah.

The point is, not all of that made it into the book in words. But it was in my mind, and if it weren't, the book wouldn't have been as richly written or as well-received.

The same goes for Wes Crowley's Texas panhandle, the fishing village on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, and everything in between. Plus the three main cantinas in the series and the church in which the final book begins. To read about the Wes Crowley books, see [StoneThread Publishing](#).

I had to know those worlds, those environments, intimately. And to do that, I had to build them.

The same goes for every book I've written. (All links below are for Amazon, but I encourage you to use Smashwords too):

in [Terminus Loop](#) it was the lab environment from which a Traveler was sent and the planet that is the third electron from the nucleus of a carbon atom TO which he was sent.

in [Confessions of a Professional Psychopath](#) it was the opulent library with the chairs covered with human skin.

in [Body Language](#), it was the detail of the swamps into which a killer was depositing bodies.

in [The Advent of Simon Stark](#) it was the space ship from which Stark came.

in [The Clearing](#) it was both the ocean-front warehouse that opens the novel and the heavily wooded area in which the killer was depositing bodies.

in [Nothing for Nothing](#) it was mountainous terrain and combat.

in [The Day the Earth Shuddered and Went Dark](#) it was two worlds: Inside (Sandia Labs in Albuquerque) and Outside. The latter was broken into Space, San Diego, the Texas panhandle, Arizona, the Midwest and Washington DC.

And in [No Kind'a Time](#) it was southeast Arizona and Mexico, but specifically dry washes and arroyos.

I probably left out a few, and I omitted all of my short stories, but you get the idea.

In every case, scenes are given more depth (and more fully engage the reader) if you express the opinion of the POV character(s) of the setting.

For more on how to write setting, see [Writing Setting Part 1](#) and [Writing Setting Part 2](#). Or just buy a copy of [Writing the Character-Driven Story at Amazon](#) or [Smashwords](#).

Of Interest

A few more comments on Dean's post about his new [POV Workshop](#).

The Day

Rolled out at 4. Did the stuff you see above, then wrote the topic. I'm going to post this now to be sure something goes out for today.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 920 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 920

Wrting of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22453
Total fiction words for the year..... 558087
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8760
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 200970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 759057

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Setting Goals](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Instruction](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 9/14

[September 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, as it turns out, I'm glad I posted this Journal yesterday before I headed off to have my head examined through my much-dilated pupils. (There's GOTTA be a story there.) We returned to a dark house. The electricity was out.

Probably I'll get back to writing today. Eventually. On the up side, I'm enjoying doing a lot of routine, normal-life things. On the down side, I miss making stuff up. Or maybe the fact that I miss it is another up side. I dunno.

On another down side, I suspect my conscious mind is screwing with me. But on the up side, I'm aware of that and I'm aware that I've written a BUNCH of stuff before without interference from that nonsense.

So it's kind of a "I've done it before so I can do it again" sort of thing.

I started this morning on a positive note by adding my new novel, No Kind'a Time, to my files at BundleRabbit. I think their queueing system is messed up, but I'll check later to be sure the files are all there.

The files still weren't there, so I emailed the guy who runs things over there. He got back to me within an hour. I do like a man who is prompt to respond. Anyway, sure enough, there was a glitch in the program and he wasn't aware of it.

It's fixed now. So I uploaded No Kind'a Time and then upgraded a few other files. When readers order any bundle that contains any of my books, now they may choose from among Kindle (.mobi), Nook/Apple (.epub), .pdf or a zip file containing all three. Woohoo! I love making things more available to more readers.

Assignment

For those of you who enjoy prompts and assignments, here you go:

You're in a chair in a doctor's office to have your pupils dilated for whatever reason. What could possibly go wrong? (Hmm. The eyes have long been called the windows to the soul. What might get in there? Or what might come out?) Run with it.

Topic: Reading and Learning

Yeah, we've been here before, but this probably will be a recurring topic. After all, there are many aspects to the ongoing education of a writer.

One of my favorite sources of setting information is Archaeology magazine. It comes out every other month and most issues are jam-packed with information that can apply to any genre and any time period.

The human experience is just that universal. In fact, the biggest difference between even the first humans and humans today is technology. It boggles the mind.

My personal go-to for new ideas and reference is Popular Science. What don't I like? The preponderance of sneaky advertising, the hyper-thin pages and the fact that it comes out fewer times a year now (a recent change).

But what it does contain easily makes up for those shortfalls.

In the current issue (Summer, July/August) there are articles on LiFi (wireless communication via light instead of radio waves) and on 3D printing a human ovary.

There's another on a guy whose entire face was transplanted, and one on reanimating humans even after they've been clinically dead for several hours — without damage to brain cells or any other lasting effects. (Stephen King's Pet Sematary, anyone?)

This issue also contains an article on thousands of cracker-sized space ships driven by photon "light sails" at one-fifth the speed of light to investigate extra-terrestrial life and inhabitable planets in Alpha Centauri. That one really caught my attention.

There's also a feature article on "virtual reality." But if you think about it, virtual reality is actually only an alternate reality. After all, our "reality" is what we perceive through our physical senses, especially the sense of sight.

What's radically cool about all of those things (and more) is that they are No Longer Science Fiction. They are science fact. And they are happening right now.

Again, although Popular Science is a great source of ideas and inspiration for SF stories, it's also a great source of information for stories in any genre. I recommend you check it out.

Of Interest

Nothing at Dean's place today but a brief placeholder. His Internet server was down.

The Day

Rolled out at 4. Moved outside at the insistence of my little girl by 4:15 and finished checking email etc. out there.

Around sunup, I hung the hummingbird feeders. We have in the vicinity of 15 birds now. Wish I had the energy expended by even one of them in any 5-minute period. (grin)

9:10, to the writing. A pair of western characters are tugging at me. One is a marshal, and the other is an old marshal turned town drunk.

These guys first popped into my head about a year ago, but there was nothing there. I couldn't get them to do anything. I don't think I got a whole paragraph down. So I'll write them and see where it goes. (grin)

The main thing right now is to get my fingers moving again, and to return my subconscious to its rightful place as Storyteller and shut out everything else.

2:40, after five and a half hours of writing and breaks, I'm calling it a day. Not too shabby for just coming back. Not sure whether this will be a novel, but it feels like more than a short story. I guess we'll see.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 4381

Nonfiction Words: 910 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5291

Writing of Marshal Bob Gibson (working title)

Day 1..... 4381 words. Total words to date..... 4381

Total fiction words for the month..... 26834

Total fiction words for the year..... 562468

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9670

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 201880

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 764348

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 9/15](#)

[September 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'll begin with a brief announcement. I've fired up my copyediting service again. If I accept a book for copyediting, my fee will be one cent per word or less. For details (or even just to learn what comprises a good copy edit) visit HarveyStanbrough.com.

I feel all right about getting back into copyediting now that I've built a habit of writing my own work. Of course, clients will receive the benefit of what I've learned as I've written 1,493,784 words of new fiction over the past two years and five months. (grin)

If anyone else out there enjoys playing with numbers, here they are:

Apr 15 – Dec 31, 2014 = 245,170 (8.5 months)

Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2015 = 686,146 (12 months)

Jan 1 – Sep 14, 2016 = 562,468 (8.5 months)

The mean monthly average of that last number is 66,172 words per month. If I can keep up the pace (he said, as if it were grueling), I stand to write 794,000 words of new fiction this year. (grin)

And if I stopped writing fiction from this day forward, I still would have written well over a half-million words this year. All in three to five hours of “work” per day. I'll take it. (grin)

Topic: Nada para esta dia. Lo siento.

Of Interest

I found a personal gem at Dean's post on [Star Fall Is Out](#). Then I immediately went to BundleRabbit and made my two not-yet-released books available for selection in bundles.

Check out [The Book Designer](#). This is not an endorsement of their opinions or services, but merely another reference where I believe you might find an occasional gem.

Over at Kris's site, [Business Musings](#) is good.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3. Outside by 4:30 with email and checking things around the Internet. After that I updated all the upcoming posts on the big site to reflect the revival of my copyediting service.

Otherwise I did little of interest other than writing the stuff above. Well, and a little mowing. And starting a load of laundry.

9:30, to the writing. I need a short story for this week, so I'll write that first.

Had one long break to get my 4-Runner started. Battery's going out. Otherwise I've been writing off and on with drying and folding and putting up laundry.

4 p.m., I have a new story to add to the stock. Lot of little stuff in this one. I'll format it, make a cover and get it out to donors later today or tomorrow morning.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3279

Nonfiction Words: 430 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3709

Writing of "The Shaman" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3279 words. Total words to date..... 3279 words (done)

Writing of Marshal Bob Gibson (working title)

Day 1..... 4381 words. Total words to date..... 4381

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 30113

Total fiction words for the year..... 565747

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10100

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 202310

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 768057

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Book Design](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 9/16

[September 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not a lot going on today. Mostly just writing and battling this moronic woodpecker who keeps trying to raid the hummingbird feeders.

Anyway, let's get right to it.

Topic: Punctuation for (Fiction) Writers

Several years ago, I wrote a book titled Punctuation for Writers. The title was predicated on the fact that, in school, we are all taught how to RESPOND to punctuation as readers rather than how to WIELD punctuation to direct the reading of our work.

It was a very good book, generally speaking, and it's still valid for writers of scholarly and other nonfiction works.

Parts of it are valid for writers of fiction and creative nonfiction too, but not all of it. There are things I've learned since I became a full-time fiction writer that have changed my mind about parts of it.

Because I don't like spreading misinformation, I'm going to come out with a followup titled Punctuation for (Fiction) Writers.

I will expand on the parts of PFW that are still valid, delete the parts that are not (and explain what I deleted and why), and add some new information.

For now, suffice it to say that punctuation is nothing more than a series of marks that designate pauses of different lengths. That is, each mark of punctuation forces the reader to pause for a certain length of time before he or she continues to read.

For example, have you ever tried to simply "read through" a misplaced comma? It's impossible. Almost without you realizing it, your mind goes back, "fixes" (moves or deletes) the comma. Then you continue reading. But you can't simply read through it.

That alone should show you the power of punctuation. And that's just for the lowly comma, the shortest pause created by punctuation.

Pauses of different lengths of time actually create within the reader different responses.

And even different emotions.

You can actually increase or decrease a reader's actual physical pulse, his or her heart rate, with nothing more than the knowledgeable application of the various marks of punctuation.

When the book is ready, I'll let you know. As a thank you for hanging around, I will make it available to all of you at a steep discount. Stay tuned.

Of Interest

Dean talks in a video about [his latest challenge](#). Fun.

Check out my own [Free Story of the Week](#).

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 after waking at 2 and 3. Moved outside early (it's freakin' cold at 52). Checked email, DWS, Facebook etc.

6:30, just remembered the story I wrote yesterday. So off to format that, make a cover, and distribute it. Back in a bit.

7:25, timing myself here. In just under an hour, I formatted the story for D2D and Smashwords, designed a cover, published the story to my blog (scheduled for October 21), and added the photo and link to my Short Stories page. This is short story number 150. (grin) Now off to distribute it to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon.

I hate [writing promo docs](#) (scroll down to the topic), but they're necessary. They enable me to copy/paste instead of reinventing the whole thing for each distributor. Still, I don't like writing them. Guess that's why I forgot, initially, to write one. So I did that first.

7:40, NOW to distribute to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. (grin)

7:48, done. And it took a little longer than necessary to distribute because the servers at the distributors were a little slow. Now I'm off for awhile for a break before I start the writing day.

8:40, to the writing.

2:05, closing it down after a good day. I might finish this one tomorrow or the next day. I suspect it's going to be no more than a novella.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3843

Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4463

Writing of Marshal Bob Gibson (working title)

Day 1..... 4381 words. Total words to date..... 4381

Day 2..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 8224

Total fiction words for the month..... 33956

Total fiction words for the year..... 569590

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10720

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 202930

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 772520

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [punctuation](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 9/17

[September 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I thought my WIP would wrap up today, but I guess it'll be tomorrow. I'm in that stage now where I want it to wrap up so I can get to the next one. (grin)

When I started this one I thought it might run to a novel. Then with the limited number of characters and situations, I thought it might be just a short story. Turns out it's going to be a novelette (a long short story) of about 13000 words or maybe a novella if it creeps up over 15000 words.

Tomorrow, I plan to finish this one and then write the short story of the week for next week. (My week for that runs from Friday through Thursday night.)

Terminus Loop, my latest SF novel, is available today at all your favorite ebook retailers.

I'm wrapped up a little early today, so I'm gonna see if I can catch some college football action. That or maybe start reading Stephen King's novel,

Topic: Nothing today.

Of Interest

Nothing much today that I could find. Dean does talk a bit more about workshops and about his Kickstarter campaign for Fiction River. So maybe something of interest there for you.

The Day

Rolled out at 3:30, late for what I had planned today. I intended to roll out around 2 so I could get my writing done before I headed to Sierra Vista. But we put off that trip until at least tomorrow, so not a big thing.

It takes me an hour to wake up, by which I mean clear my head enough to be actually coherent.

6:40, finally to the writing.

8:30, a long break to make a 4-egg omelet (sausage, peppers, red onion and shredded cheese) and share it with my wife for breakfast. Mmm.

9:30, back to writing.

1 p.m., a short break to grab a snack, then back to the writing.

2:05, done for the day. This one will almost certainly wrap up tomorrow. See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3798

Nonfiction Words: 340 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4138

Writing of Marshal Bob Gibson (working title)

Day 1..... 4381 words. Total words to date..... 4381

Day 2..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 8224

Day 3..... 3798 words. Total words to date..... 12022

Total fiction words for the month..... 37754

Total fiction words for the year..... 573388

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 203270

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 776658

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 9/18

[September 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The temp is hovering around 50 and I'm freezing. Ah well. Maybe someday someone will come out with a heated keyboard.

Decided not to do the trip to Sierra Vista today. I plan (and hope) to finish the current story today. As I mentioned yesterday, it's something more than a short story, but I'll send it out to all supporters since it won't be a novel. I might even post it as a future Free Story of the Week.

I started reading Stephen King's Under the Dome yesterday, and I'm SO glad I did. (My apology for forgetting to add the title to yesterday's post.) I was drawn into it immediately and can only barely wait to get back to it later today. I plan to devote at least an hour a day to reading it until I get finished.

Even at 9" tall and 6" wide (trade paperback), this novel is 1074 pages. Two inches thick. And I already know I'm going to miss the story when it ends. (grin)

Also, on only about page 36, I've already learned something new I want to try later in my own writing. Double score. It's both pleasurable and a course in writing.

Topic: Beware of Rights Grabbers

I really hope I'm preaching to the choir here. Forgive me if that's true, but better safe than sorry. And if you aren't currently in the choir, this should convert you.

A new literary acquaintance I've never met, Linda Maye Adams (see Of Interest below) commented on DWS blog post from yesterday:

Just passing along another rights grab I ran across. It's a writing contest sponsored by a non-profit [Story Shares] who is trying to help teens and young adults read. If you SUBMIT to the contest, you automatically give up all the rights to your story and payment. SUBMIT, not win or place.

I emailed Linda to ask her to divulge the name of the particular non-profit. If she does so I will add it to the quote above [in brackets].

Rights grabbers are organizations that take all rights to your work. And folks, even if it's FOR payment, that's just wrong.

A major example of this is Reader's Digest, at least a few years ago. At the time, they offered payment for short pieces in various sections of the magazine. But upon payment, they own all rights to the piece.

Most, if not all, traditional publishers are rights grabbers, but if you sign a contract with one of those— well, frankly, you deserve what you get.

Unfortunately, rights grabs abound in places you would never suspect. And their stock in trade are writers who don't read submission guidelines and rules of contests.

Like the contest Linda mentioned on Dean's blog. It's only a writing contest, right? No biggie. Submit, win or not, then submit elsewhere.

Wrong. Read Linda's comment above again. If you only SUBMIT to this contest, you forfeit all rights to the work you submitted. You created it. But you no longer own it.

Rights grabbers also appear in other, slightly less innocuous forms. Believe it or not, many subsidy publishers are also rights grabbers. One subsidy publisher whom I used to recommend includes in their contract a "no-compete" clause.

Let's say you've submitted your work to a subsidy publisher and they've "accepted" it (they accept everything).

And let's say later you become unhappy with your contract and are unwilling to pay the exorbitant fee for return of your rights (the fee is in the contract).

If there is a no-compete clause in the contract (and there usually is), you also can't simply slap another title on the work and publish it as a new book on your own.

They will sue your backside off, and they will win.

Okay, how about you slap a new title on it AND rewrite it thoroughly?

Nope. Again, they will sue. And if they can prove in court that even one passage reads similarly to a passage in the original book, they will win.

How to avoid such pitfalls?

Easy. Don't submit your work ANYWHERE without reading the submission guidelines, rules of the contest, etc. And if there's a contract involved, read it thoroughly. Better yet, have a copyright attorney read it.

Of Interest

JA Konrath posted a blog awhile back on [whether ebook preorders work](#). This is Part II, so you might want to click through his link to read the first part too. As always, I also recommend you read the comments on his post. Some good stuff there.

Note: JA Konrath uses KDP's Kindle Unlimited. I do NOT endorse KU and never will. Or any other "exclusive" program (from which many readers are "excluded" because of their buying or reading preferences).

Over at Dean's place, he's posted a [Workshop Curriculum](#) as requested by a few readers. Interesting.

Check out [Linda Maye Adams' blog](#). Interesting stuff. Of special interest to women, but informative, thought-provoking and fun for all. Scroll down a bit when you get there and check it out. It's also her website, so take a look at her fiction and nonfiction too.

See C. Hope Clark (Funds for Writers) [How Dare a Writing Contest Take Your Rights](#).

Finally, a good newsletter today from Dr. Mardy. [A segment on Stephen King](#).

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. again. Ugh. I hate getting up late. Again, I planned to climb out around 2 or 2:30 to get a head start on the day.

But I used part of my waking-up hour (and a half) to write the topic above, so all is well. Then I researched and wrote the Of Interest stuff and also added a blogroll to my website (on the right sidebar).

Finally, at 7:40, to the writing.

10 a.m. through with the story. Now for a break, probably shopping, then back to write another story.

12 noon, Well, I read the story aloud to my wife (forgot I'd have to do that). Fixed a couple of weak spots. I formatted it too and will have lunch, then go shopping.

After that I want to read a bit and there probably is at least one football game that will interest me.

Probably I won't get back to writing today, so I'm gonna close this out for now.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1491

Nonfiction Words: 1060 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2551

Writing of "Charlie Pilsen"

Day 1..... 4381 words. Total words to date..... 4381

Day 2..... 3843 words. Total words to date..... 8224

Day 3..... 3798 words. Total words to date..... 12022

Day 4..... 1491 words. Total words to date..... 13513 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 39245

Total fiction words for the year..... 574879

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12120

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 204330

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 779209

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [C. Hope Clark](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Dr. Mardy](#), [Funds for Writers](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [JA Konrath](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [Stephen King](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 9/19

September 19, 2016 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following few paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for a week. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

If you take a few minutes each day to read these ramblings, thank you. Even if you're only glancing at the Topic and Of Interest section. That's fine. That's what it's for.

If you're only opening and reading this every other day or every few days or maybe once a week, thank you for that too. But please visit the website and scroll back through what you've missed. At least scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are why I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

Today will be a non-writing "admin" day. I just realized I have 40+ short stories that have not been collected. So today I plan to make up at least 4 collections, complete with covers, distribution, etc.

Why? Because short stories don't sell all that well. But collections sell fairly well, only slightly less well than novels.

While I'm at it, I'll also work up a few new promotional blurbs to stick in the back of those collections. (grin)

UPDATE: Nope, not a non-writing day. See The Day below. (grin)

Topic: Using Italic Attribute in Fiction

This is a bit of an embarrassment for me.

I used to actively teach that the writer should use italics to indicate the characters' unspoken thoughts.

When I was actively editing for other writers, I applied that erroneous rule. One time, I even passed up doing an edit for one writer because she adamantly refused to allow me to change characters' unspoken thoughts from normal typeface to italics. I felt like she was paying me to not do my job, and I've never been bent that direction.

At any rate, I was wrong.

I sent a short story to Dean Wesley Smith one time as an assignment for one of the online workshops I took.

He wrote back that he very much enjoyed the story, but had two complaints.

“Why the italics?” he wrote. “And what’s with the ‘he thought’ tags?”

I explained to him that I use italics to indicate unspoken thought. Sentences contained within quotation marks were spoken thought (dialogue or monologue) and any text that was not either contained within quotation marks or set in italics was narrative.

His only response was, “Well, do what you want, but the italics jerk me right out of the story.”

Wow. The one big overall major concept I’ve always talked about — the one concept that underlies all other writing concepts — is that the writer must never do ANYthing to interrupt the reading of his or her own work.

And here was a writer I highly respect telling me that my use of italics pulled him out of the story.

Now Dean has well over 200 traditionally published novels and around a hundred independently published NEW novels (in other words, not including older novels on which rights have reverted and he’s now republishing as an indie publisher). Oh, and several hundred short stories.

I mean WOW.

And an epiphany hit:

Whether or not you use italics attribute (other than for emphasis) has absolutely no effect on the story itself. So it can’t help, but by disrupting the READING of the story, it can do great harm.

Now I had already decided to trust DWS. He wasn’t trying to convince me of anything. He just wrote, “[T]he italics jerk me right out of the story.” The day after he wrote that, I stopped overusing italics.

But I started rummaging through the works of other writers I respect, older and more recent.

In every book, I found italics used, sparingly, to indicate emphasis. Never, not one time, did I find a successful long-term writer using italics to indicate unspoken thought.

Then it happened.

I mentioned yesterday that I’m currently reading *Under the Dome*, a novel by arguably my favorite novelist, Stephen King.

And he uses italics not only to indicate unspoken thought, but also over-uses it (in my opinion) to emphasize entire sentences of dialogue when the character is speaking in an excited tone.

For example, one of his characters might put his hands around his mouth and yell, “*No! Get back! Don’t go over there! It’s electrified!*”

The sentence would be italics AND he would use the exclamation points (arguably correctly to indicate, you know, exclamations).

And every time I encounter it, that use of italics pulls me out of the story.

I’ve already learned a great deal more about writing than I knew just two days ago, only from reading this novel. And his overuse of italics is the only negative thing I’ve learned.

Readers are intelligent enough to know, almost immediately, whether a sentence that is not contained within quotation marks is narrative or the characters’ unspoken thought. You don’t have to tell them with the use of italics. And you might run them off.

While I’m on the topic of things that pull readers out of a story, S. King, at least in this book, also uses **bold font attribute** when he writes a single letter or when the narrator or character reads a sign.

For example, “The car approached the place where the road **T**ed” or The sign read **Dairyman’s Dry Cleaners**.

Not kidding. And that use of bold attribute also pulls me out of the story. It’s just distracting and annoying.

Does it make me stop reading? Well, yes, but only momentarily. The story is good enough that I doubt anything could cause me to stop reading completely. But it does make reading the story a lot more difficult.

My point here (aside from explaining why I converted from Saul to Paul regarding italics) is that some otherwise excellent writers will occasionally make a booboo.

So don’t take everything you see for gospel just because a famous (to you) writer does it.

I seriously hope this helps. And yes, this is part of what will be a chapter in Punctuation for (Fiction) Writers.

I’ll create a cover etc. for “A Turning Point for Charlie Pilsen” this morning first, then maybe do a little reading.

In the past, I’ve been interested in Action/Adventure, Mystery, and Romance, not so much as genres but mixed into whatever else I was writing. King’s *Under the Dome* is (so far) strong in tension and action/adventure and is leading me to be more interested in that as a genre. Though I

will continue to play to my strength (and my overriding interest) in writing psychological suspense.

The mental stuff, getting deep inside the mind of the antagonist and the protagonist, down to the background and motivations of the characters, is especially interesting to me as a writer.

I think I enjoy that process (mind-delving) so much because it seems an exploration that can never be exhausted.

Of Interest

If you've thought about getting my SF novel *The Advent of Simon Stark* but haven't yet, the folks at BundleRabbit decided to make it and 9 other novels [available in a boxed set for one low price](#).

Even though the bundle is long-since over, you can still get \$52 worth of great SF for only \$7.99. This set includes novels from "names" like Rob Lopez, Blaze Ward, David Sloma and Stefan Mears. Don't miss this one folks.

Last day of [DWS' Kickstarter Drive](#). I don't mind hawking this for him a little. He gives so much.

If you didn't look at [yesterday's post](#), either click the link or be sure to scroll down and read the Topic and Of Interest sections. Really important stuff.

The Day

Rolled out just before 4 a.m. again. Becoming a habit. Oof.

Outside by 5. Internet stuff, then formatting, cover design, etc. for the novelette, "A Turning Point for Charlie Pilsen" (yeah, I renamed it).

8:40, as my bride was leaving for her day job, I finished publishing the novelette to the website — it will appear in two installments, on Oct 28 and Nov 4 — and distributing it to Amazon, D2D and Smashwords.

Exciting to know that within a few days it will be available in countries all over the world and in 200+ different sales venues. This new world of publishing always amazes me.

9:15 Wrote most of the stuff above and now for a break as I cast about for a new writing project. (grin) As you know from Today (above) I set aside writing in favor of collecting some short stories.

Around 12:45 I finished collecting story titles into sequence beneath collection topics. There will be a new 10-story collection of SF stories, one of psychological suspense, one combining

Westerns, War, and Women, and one of mobster stories. I probably won't do 5-story collections as well, but maybe.

Agh! I realized I have only nine mobster-type stories. I need one more for that collection. As it turns out, I also need a story for this week. So I'll write one to fit both requirements. (grin) So a writing day after all.

1 p.m., started a new mob story. A short break for lunch, another one to get some water.

All right. Wrapping up at 3:20 with story number 152 under my belt.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2715

Nonfiction Words: 1520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4235

Writing of "Line of Duty" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2715 words. Total words to date..... 2715 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13640

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 205850

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 783444

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 9/20

[September 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following few paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for the next few days. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

If you take a few minutes each day to read these ramblings, thank you. Even if you're only glancing at the Topic and Of Interest section. That's fine. That's what it's for.

If you're only opening and reading this every every few days or maybe once a week, thank you for that too. But please visit the website and scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are why I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

I plan to make this an admin day, mainly putting together those collections I talked about yesterday. I also plan to format and upload a new version of The Wes Crowley Saga so it will include the tenth novel, The Right Cut. Currently it contains only the first nine.

Someone bought the Saga yesterday, and I feel bad that they didn't get the tenth novel with it. (In fact, I'll probably do that before I begin compiling and formatting the collections.)

I started with admin on my websites, tweaking them a bit. At HarveyStanbrough.com I revised the Novels page. Now The Wes Crowley Series cover leads to a new page on that site. All the Crowley Series novels are on that page. I also added the No Kind'a Time cover to the Novels page.

On StoneThreadPublishing.com I added the No Kind'a Time cover to the Novels page too, then added a page for the book itself. Finally I tweaked the appearance of the Novels page on both sites. I hope you'll check it out.

Topic: Pricing and Various Sales Venues

It really is atrocious what Amazon does to authors regarding royalties. This problem came fully home to me today (again) when I uploaded the new version of The Wes Crowley Saga (10 full novels in one book) to Amazon and Smashwords.

At Amazon, to get a 70% royalty, a book must be priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99. All other prices glean the author a 35% royalty.

The Wes Crowley Saga is priced at \$19.99. (Ten novels for \$20 ain't that bad, ya'll.)

From Amazon, for each \$19.99 sale, I get \$6.99. Amazon keeps \$13.

From Smashwords, for each \$19.99 sale, I get \$16.24. Almost \$10 more. Can you believe that? Smashwords keeps \$2.87 and charges a "billing fee" of 88 cents. Of course, that's for sales directly from Smashwords.

But from Premium Catalog Retailers (B&N, Kobo, and about 30 others), for each \$19.99 sale I still make \$11.99. The retailers get \$6 and Smashwords gets \$2.

And what empowers Amazon to do this? Authors who publish through KDP Select, the exclusive program Amazon set up.

When you publish through KDP Select, not only do you cut off those readers who prefer to purchase from other retailers and read .epub files, but you aren't even allowed to publish and sell YOUR book on your own website. Did you know that?

Oh, and just in case you wondered, yes, I could lower the price for The Wes Crowley Saga (remember, this is ten complete novels) on Amazon to \$9.99 in order to take advantage of the 75% royalty rate. And I'd actually make a few tenths of a cent LESS per sale (\$6.993) than I make at the 35% rate for \$19.99 (\$6.9965).

This is the same reason you can purchase my short stories (from 2000 to 7000 words) at Smashwords and all other e-retailers (around 50 of them worldwide) for only \$1.99, but if you go to Amazon the same story will cost you \$2.99.

Amazon is a business. I understand that. But their devaluing of authors and their works really chaps my butt. Please PLEASE never cave to Amazon's KDP Select program. If you do, you'll add one more straw to the problem.

I'm considering "unpublishing" The Wes Crowley Saga from Amazon altogether and doing a blitz advertisement sending Kindle owners to Smashwords to purchase the .mobi (Kindle) file there. The only reason I haven't done so thus far is because I don't want to cut Amazon buyers out either.

Maybe I should write a nonfiction book titled Why I No Longer Distribute and Sell Through Amazon and then offer it for sale ONLY on Amazon. (grin) I wonder whether they would even allow it.

Conundrums, conundrums....

Of Interest

Nada that I could find.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 thanks to my little kitten. She was bouncing hard on my legs, then whispering "Da" in her little kit voice. (grin)

Outside by 3:15 and working on the websites, punctuated by a few trips to retrieve the little girl from outside the fence. She does race in on her own, though, when an owl screeches or when a song dog wails.

5:45, checked around the web for items of interest, checked Facebook, fixed a cuppa coffee for my bride.

6:15, started formatting a new version of The Wes Crowley Saga.

8:30, FINALLY got it done and uploaded to Smashwords, Amazon and D2D. Then I wrote the Topic above.

9:05, moving inside to work. I don't have to be able to see the screen all that clearly when I'm writing, but a bland screen is no friend when I have to pay attention to detail while compiling things.

12:50, wow, I forgot how much work it was to compile a collection of short stories. (grin) Just finished the first one. I'll stick to my plan to take a day "off" today and do at least one more.

But beginning tomorrow, I'll write first and do these things when I have more time. It's better inside anyway where I can see the computer screen more easily.

3:10, two collections down, two to go. I'll do the others later though. Doing even two in a day is grueling. Ugh.

I'll announce the two I got done today in tomorrow's Journal. Both are 10-story collections, and I priced each one at \$5.99, so about \$1.10 per story. Cheap, eh? (grin)

Calling it a day. No fiction writing today, but I got a ton of stuff done. Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 920 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 920

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14560

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 206770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 784364

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [cover design](#), [distributing](#), [formatting](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 9/21](#)

[September 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following two paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for the next few days. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

Thanks for your patronage in following my ramblings. Even if you visit less often than every day, please visit the website and scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are why I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

I have a camping trip coming up on Friday or sooner. So there will be a placeholder post here for whatever days I'm gone.

Okay, as I promised yesterday, if you enjoy collections of short fiction, you can get Mobster Tales at [Smashwords](#) or [Amazon](#).

Likewise, you can get S, F & H at [Smashwords](#) and [Amazon](#).

Topic: Why to Buy Ebooks from Smashwords

First of all, no matter where you buy your fiction, especially if you buy MY fiction, thank you.

Second of all, I'm not getting a kickback of any kind from Smashwords. Darn it. (grin)

I recommend purchasing ebooks from Smashwords for four main reasons. Please note that none of these are opinion. They are fact:

1. Once you've bought an ebook at Smashwords, you may download it in any electronic format the author has made available: .mobi (Kindle), .epub (Nook/Apple), .pdf, .lrf (Sony Reader), .pdb (Palm Doc), .txt (plain text) and .html (online reader).

2. You may download the formats at any time. You may download one or more formats at the time of your initial purchase, or you may return and download one or more formats later. This is especially handy if someone surprises you with a new reader that takes a different format.

By comparison, at Amazon, you can download only Kindle files. At Barnes & Noble or Apple, only .epub files and so on.

3. Although Smashwords does not currently sell paper copies, they DO offer authors the opportunity to list where the title is available in paperback if that's your preferred reading method.

So Smashwords will actually direct you to other sales venues where paperbacks are available. They aren't greedy enough (as is Amazon) to force you to choose between buying from them or nowhere.

4. Finally — and this is especially important if you're also a writer — on titles offered directly for sale on Smashwords, the author receives the lion's share of royalties.

One lady, awhile back, said, "I would buy from Smashwords, but they require me to open an account with them."

Yes, they do. So does Amazon, B&N, and anyone else from whom you're going to purchase pretty much anything. So I really don't see the problem here.

You're spending the same 5 or 10 dollars no matter where you buy. Unless you're into punishing the author for attempting to entertain you, why would you buy ebooks anywhere but Smashwords?

Okay, end of lecture.

Now, IF you enjoy my work in particular, I recommend you buy direct from me, either by emailing me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com or by visiting [StoneThread Publishing](#). We offer a pretty good discount on any titles ordered direct from StoneThread (or from me). That includes ebooks AND any that are currently available in paper.

You can't get a better deal anywhere.

Of Interest

Dean's [Back to Regular Fun](#) is pretty good. If you scroll down to The Writing, you'll see that once again he appears to have been hiding in my closet. Eerie.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 4 (ugh) and was outside by 4:30. I spent a couple hours updating the [StoneThread Publishing Facebook page](#) and then decided to give the StoneThread website a similar facelift. Odd how quickly I can become lost in the design process so that I don't notice time passing. (grin)

Around 8:30 I started looking around the web and found Dean's coming back to the writing life. Also put on a couple loads of laundry, later folded and put away the first while the second is in the dryer.

1:45, well, I've decided this is gonna be another non-writing day. I wrote a couple of openings, but neither one felt like it wanted to run.

It's about 1:45. I'm gonna close this out and post it.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 600

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15160

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 207370

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 784964

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 9/22

[September 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following two paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for the next few days. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

Thanks for your patronage in following my ramblings. Even if you visit less often than every day, please visit the website and scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are the reason I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

Well, yesterday first, I guess. After I shut down here, I had a rough time just watching a ball game.

So I compiled, formatted, created a cover and prepped my third collection of 10 stories. It's titled "PSYCH!(otic?)(osis?)" Then I uploaded it to Amazon, D2D and Smashwords.

Then I saw that “S,F&H” had some autovetter problems on Smashwords, so I redid that one and uploaded it again too. Not a big deal. Took about a half-hour.

Then I hopped into my go-buggy and drove to the PO to pick up a brand new shipment of cigars. I am in hebben.

You can get “PSYCH!(otic?)(osis?)” at [Smashwords](#) or at [Amazon](#). (grin)

Looks like I’ll be leaving late this afternoon for the camping trip instead of tomorrow morning. Yay! I’ll be taking along my ‘puter just in case.

So today I’ll put together a few of topics for you for today, tomorrow, Saturday and maybe Sunday.

I also plan to compile, format, create a cover and distribute a 5-story collection of western stories today, including the novelette, “A Turning Point for Charlie Pilsen.” In fact, the theme of that one suits the collection, so I’ll call the collection “Turning Points.”

Topic: The Only Five Comma Rules You’ll Ever Need

This is gonna sound WAY oversimplified, especially given the nineteen PAGES of comma rules in the HarBrace College Handbook, but it’s true. If you use these five rules, you can’t go wrong:

1. Never put a comma between a subject and its verb or between a verb and its object.

Also you must realize that a subject may be compound, as in “John and Ray went to the store and bought a television and a radio.”

In the example, “John and Ray” is the subject. “Went and bought” is the verb. “A television and a radio” is the object.

Of course, you can also add to the size of the subject, verb or object and you can detract from the size of the subject verb or object.

2. When a subordinate clause introduces an independent clause, separate the two with a comma.

If you aren’t sure about clauses, Rule #2 is an example of itself, as is this explanation.

A clause has a subject and a verb but doesn’t stand alone, meaning it doesn’t make sense by itself.

In Rule 2, “clause” is the subject and “introduces” is the verb, but “when” keeps the clause from making sense by itself. Therefore it is “subordinate.”

3. Do NOT use a comma to separate the clauses when a subordinate clause follows an independent clause.

In Rule #3, “Do not use a comma” is an independent clause and the remainder is a dependent clause. This rule, again, is an example of itself.

As an interesting side note, the subject in Rule 3 is the implied “you.” The verb is “use.”

4. Use a comma before the appropriate coordinating conjunction to join two related sentences.

The coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. Remember the acronym FANBOYS. My female students used to love that acronym.

By the way, you very seldom need a comma AFTER a coordinating conjunction, although that is a bad habit that some folks have developed. (See Rule 5.)

5. Trite as it sounds, when you are in doubt about whether to use a comma, leave it out.

Believe it or not, most comma problems arise from the insertion of misused commas, not from their omission.

When I was teaching grunt English in college, I told my student I would take off 1/2 point for every misused comma or for every comma that was omitted but should have been there. Very soon I was getting perfect papers. (grin)

That’s it! The five rules of comma use. And really, there are only three.

The first one is necessary, numbers 2 and 3 are the same thing in reverse, and Rule 4 is necessary depending (in fiction) on how you want the sentence to flow.

And of course, the last one isn’t so much a rule as a warning. (grin)

Of Interest

I don’t remember whether I’ve mentioned this before, but successful indie author Edita A. Petrick writes a [Marketing Blog](#) that might interest you.

Specifically, check [10 Reasons Why a Book is Not Selling](#). And there are other good topics there.

Since I’ll be gone, watch for my [Free Short Story of the Week](#) tomorrow. It should post live on my website a little after 7 a.m. Arizona time. Or if you’re subscribed, it should come to your inbox at around 5 p.m. Arizona time.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4 after I stayed up to watch the pilot for Designated Survivor last night. I think that’s gonna be a good show. Reckon I’ll have one late night a week for awhile.

I love psychological stuff, by which I mean when a writer gets deep in the characters' heads. And this seems a very well-written show.

9:50, just finished uploading my fourth collection in three days (although this one's only five stories) to D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. Feels good to have those stories out there.

11:05, just finished packing, in case we head out camping today.

Just got an email. We're heading out today, so I'm gonna post this and then get a few ready for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

See you on Monday.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 860

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16020

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 208230

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 785824

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Edita A. Petrick](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 9/23

[September 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following two paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for the next few days. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

Thanks for your patronage in following my ramblings. Even if you visit less often than every day, please visit the website and scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are the reason I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

I trust that I awoke in one of the more beautiful spots on Earth, about 500 feet above the Gila River about 20 miles north/northeast of Lordsburg NM.

Probably last evening my buddy and I set up camp, then smoked cigars, talked writing, and generally slathered philosophy all over the southwest desert.

Back on Monday, 9/26.

Note: Because these are placeholder posts, I thought I'd run some old topics I know very well. These are basics, but a good review never killed anyone. Hope the help in some way.

Topic: Copyright Schmopyright

No, I'm not saying copyright isn't important. I'm saying that, like global warming, it exists without you doing anything at all. Let's get right to it.

I received an email from a former editing client. The subject line was "intellectual property?" His entire email read

Do you know anything about intellectual property rights and trademarks?

The title of my book was part of the book's Library of Congress copyright some ten years ago. If a company wanted to use the phrase for commercial purposes—say, "[It was a sentence, not a phrase, and I deleted it to maintain the anonymity of the former client]" in response to something [they were developing]—would I have any intellectual property rights with respect to this phrase?

Or could it be trademarked?

Instead of inserting only my very brief response, since I decided to use this as a blog post that others might find cynical, humorous, and maybe even informative and useful, I also decided to enhance my response a bit. So here's what I told him, plus some other stuff:

First, I am not an attorney or lawyer or legal counselor or other monkey pro tem of regalia. I don't pretend to be, and I don't even play one on television.

What I'm about to tell you is true, if perhaps a tad snarky. But that doesn't mean someone with more money than sense couldn't use the courts to twist it all out of shape and make your life a living H E Double Toothpicks. Now to the guy's questions...

The fact is, your work is copyrighted, meaning it's recognized the world over as your intellectual property, the moment it's in fixed form (manuscript, analog or digital recording, whatever).

The copyright applies only to the work as a whole, and you cannot copyright the title. (Let me say that part again. *You cannot copyright a title.*)

Your work is copyrighted even if you don't register the copyright with the copyright office.

Also note that the Library of Congress has absolutely nothing to do with it. The title of your book was and is part of the overall work, and the overall work was and is copyrighted in your name.

But it wasn't "the book's Library of Congress copyright." There's no such thing. If you believe obtaining a Library of Congress Catalogue Number (LCCN) registered your copyright, well, it didn't.

Back when I started writing, as soon as I finished writing ANYTHING, I'd race down to the post office, pick up a copyright registration form, fill it out, and mail it along with a \$25 check and one copy of the completed work to the copyright office.

All of that is completely unnecessary, and I suspect it costs a good deal more now too.

If you insist on registering your copyright with the copyright office, I suggest you do so once a year.

For example, gather everything you've written from January 1 through December 31 in a given year and register it for one fee under the title Literary Works of [Insert Your Name], whatever year it is.

Is that legal?

Absolutely. In fact, if I wanted to register my copyrights beginning right now (which I don't), I would fill out one form and compile one massive document titled Literary Works of Harvey Stanbrough, 1957–2016, and send it off, still under that one fee.

If I were paranoid enough, I might even add a picture or my Social Security number or something to be sure some other Harvey Stanbrough couldn't pop out of the woodwork and claim ownership of my work. (After all, my work is so very goshdarn special that simply everyone who's anyone in the world of literature is falling all over themselves wanting to claim it as their very own!)

Then I could start fresh with 2017, 2018, et cetera.

However, please note that I no longer register my work with the Copyright Office because, in my opinion, doing so is a waste of money and time. It's also a waste of my well-groomed and highly valued ego.

That brings us to the Library of Congress and the vaunted LCCN.

The LCCN—Library of Congress Catalogue Number, which 99.83652987% of novice authors fret over (a recent study estimates that 99.3% of all statistics are made up on the spot)—doesn't even ensure that your work is in the actual Library of Congress.

Most novice writers, from what I've been able to discern, believe they either "have" to have an LCCN or that having one will somehow cause their work to be enshrined in the Library of Congress. Neither case is true.

Requesting and purchasing (yep, it costs money) an LCCN only ensures a listing in their catalogue, which again does absolutely nothing to benefit the author or the work.

For all I know, they might even take your money and say your work is listed in their catalogue when it actually isn't. Who knows? Have you ever seen an actual copy of the Library of Congress Catalogue? In fact, if any of you have acquired (bought) an LCCN, do they even tell you that your book is now listed in the Catalogue? I don't know, but I'll bet not.

As I mentioned earlier, you cannot copyright a title.

Now, you can TRADEMARK your title if you want to, if it hasn't already been trademarked, but I understand registering a trademark costs a boatload of money. To research the possibility, I recommend the second link below (if it's still valid). They'll have all the information you're looking for.

Okay, that last paragraph was what I actually told the guy who asked my advice, except that I told him to just key in "register a copyright" and "register a trademark" (at different times) into a search engine like Yahoo or Google. Doing so should lead you to a government site.

I searched for those terms myself in preparation for this post, and I suspect there are many scam outfits out there who are ready and anxious to take your hard-earned cash and then tell you that your copyright or trademark has been registered. I suggest you stay away from all sources other than the actual federal government websites.

Here are a couple of links for you:

US Copyright Office <http://www.copyright.gov/>

US Patent and Trademark Office <http://www.uspto.gov/>

Okay, I guess that's about it for this time.

Of Interest

Be sure to check Dean's site.

You might also want to scroll back through a few posts here and check some of the other sites I've mentioned recently. I'm not sure why they make it difficult (or impossible) to subscribe.

Today's Writing

I'll resume this segment when I get back.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1170 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1170

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960
Total fiction words for the year..... 577594
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17190
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 209400

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 786994

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 9/24

[September 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following two paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for the next few days. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

Thanks for your patronage in following my ramblings. Even if you visit less often than every day, please visit the website and scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are the reason I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

I trust that I awoke in one of the more beautiful spots on Earth, about 500 feet above the Gila River about 20 miles north/northeast of Lordsburg NM.

Probably last evening my buddy and I set up camp, then smoked cigars, talked writing, and generally slathered philosophy all over the southwest desert.

Back on Monday, 9/26.

Topic: Real Dialogue Tips

Because dialogue comes directly from the character's mouth to the reader's ear, no other part of your story is more intimate with the reader. No other part of the story will do more to engage the reader directly.

Dialogue consists of three elements: two parts narrative and one part nuance. The narrative parts are *tag lines* and *brief descriptive narrative*. Nuance is composed of the subtleties of implication. What your character says is never more important than how she says it, as dictated by your use of punctuation, word choice, and sentence structure.

Tag Lines

The purpose of tag lines—Tag lines exist **ONLY** to let the reader know which character is speaking. (Some call these narrative beats.) They do not stand alone. They consist of either the character's name or the appropriate personal pronoun and a simple intransitive verb that indicates utterance. The best verb to use is "said."

More exciting tag line verbs—If someone tells you to use more exciting tag line verbs they don't know what they're talking about. Always using "he said" or "Susan said" is boring, but that's a good thing. Tag lines should be very brief and boring so the reader can skip quickly over them and get back to what matters. An "interesting" tag line will pull the reader from the story line.

Reverse constructions—There is never a good reason to use a reverse construction (verb first) in a tag line, said Harvey. Again, that calls attention to the tag line. And again, the tag line exists only to let the reader know which character is talking. It doesn't set mood, tone, or any of those other literary terms.

Punctuation with tag lines—When the tag line occurs before the sentence, or when it occurs after a sentence that would normally end with a period, the tag line is *always* attached to the sentence with a comma.

Brief Descriptive Narrative Passages

Descriptive narrative passages sometimes are confused with tag lines, but the key word here is *descriptive*. Also, BDNs stand alone. They are complete sentences, separate of the line of dialogue. The descriptive narrative passage enables the reader to see a bit of the scene.

Use action verbs in descriptive narrative passages. When you use action verbs, you will automatically use fewer adjectives and adverbs. Any unnecessary adjectives and adverbs will fall away of their own accord.

Because it will set the tone or mood or voice of the dialogue to come, the brief descriptive narrative passage should appear before the dialogue:

An impish smile creased her lips. “Almost finished there?” (This way we see the smile and hear her tone as she speaks.)

Most often, if the BDN appears after the dialogue, the reader will back up and re-read the dialogue with the new information in mind. This is an interruption in the flow of the reading, and every interruption is a chance to stop reading your story or book.

Brief interruptive narrative passages are used in the midst of dialogue to enhance the rhythm or to give the reader a brief glimpse of a changing setting. Dialogue is wonderful but it doesn’t happen in a vacuum.

In this excerpt from “Mama’s Taste in Men,” a short story, you’ll find no tag lines at all and only necessary brief descriptive narratives. Study it to see why the BDNs are where they are:

My fist relaxed and I reached for Joe Ray’s hand. “Mean it or not, you shouldn’t say bad things about my mama.”

He took my hand and I helped him to his feet. “I just said she had bad taste in men,” he said, wiping cow spit off his face with one hand and dusting off his coveralls with his hat. “Besides, it was only a joke.”

“Well, some things you just don’t joke about. Besides, that ain’t exactly what you said. You said if Mama’s taste for men was in her mouth, her breath would smell like dung.”

“That was the joke part.”

“Well, in the future, keep your stupid sense of humor to yourself.” I thumped his chest with my forefinger. “Else you could wind up covered with cow slobber. Besides, Jake’s okay. He just ain’t got no nose holes.”

“Nostrils.”

“What?”

Sam spoke up. “Nostrils. Nose holes are called nostrils.”

“How do you know?”

Lester, who generally knows what everybody knows, put in his two cents. “Everybody knows that, Vernon. Nostrils is short for nose holes.”

I snorted. “That’s the dumbest thing I ever heard.”

“Maybe dumb and maybe not so dumb, but it’s true all the same.”

Lester was tired of arguing, so Sam closed in for the kill. The Broden Brothers Tag Team. “We’ll wait ’til school and ask Miss Durb. She knows all about such things.”

That was my cue to end it. “Fine. We’ll ask Miss Durb. But school ain’t ’til Monday and Mama’s wedding is tomorrow. So we’re on truce ’til Monday.” I stuck out my hand, palm down, offering them the sign of the truce. “Agreed?”

And the nuances of dialogue? That’s just how your character delivers the part within the quotation marks. The voice should be unique from one character to another. It’s whether the character says “Do you want to?” or “Do y’wanna?” or “You wanna?” It’s whether the character speaks tersely or succinctly or vaguely.

The character should always speak the way a REAL person (of the same gender, same race or ethnicity and same education level) from the same area in the same situation would speak. Not complicated at all, is it? (grin)

Use tag lines only when it’s absolutely necessary to let the reader know which character is speaking.

Use brief descriptive narratives (introductory or interruptive) to enhance the scene for the reader.

Follow these brief tips and your dialogue will be miles ahead.

Of Interest

Again, be sure to check Dean’s site.

You might also want to scroll back through a few posts here and check some of the other sites I’ve mentioned recently. I’m not sure why they make it difficult (or impossible) to subscribe.

Today’s Writing

I’ll resume this segment when I get back.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 970

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960
Total fiction words for the year..... 577594
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18160
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 210370

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 787964

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 9/25

[September 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

(The following two paragraphs will be the intro to this newsletter for the next few days. So you daily readers, for the time being, please bear with me and skip down to the next bold heading, Today.)

Thanks for your patronage in following my ramblings. Even if you visit less often than every day, please visit the website and scroll back through the Topic and Of Interest sections since you last visited.

If you don't, you're missing some very good stuff. And You are the reason I bother to write the topics and list the Of Interest stuff in the first place.

Today

I trust that I awoke in one of the more beautiful spots on Earth, about 500 feet above the Gila River about 20 miles north/northeast of Lordsburg NM.

Probably last evening my buddy and I set up camp, then smoked cigars, talked writing, and generally slathered philosophy all over the southwest desert.

Yep, it all worked out that way. I did little other than read while we were out there. I'm back at home now. Taking the rest of the day to recuperate. Back at it tomorrow.

Topic: More Real Dialogue Tips

In the previous post I mentioned the nuances of the stuff between the quotation marks. Here's a second installment on dialogue tips. This is all about the nuances. If you have questions about any of these, please ask in the comments section. Thanks!

Well-written dialogue should

- be colorful, especially the dialogue of flat or secondary characters, and even more especially if the flat or secondary character is used to foreshadow a later event. Strive to write each line of dialogue so well that the reader will remember it.
 - why? because flat or secondary characters, if they're in a story at all, are there to serve a specific purpose, like foreshadowing for example. They or what they say should be memorable.
- differentiate the characters from each other and enable the reader to identify the same characters in different situations. (A character will act and speak differently in different situations.)
- have the rhythms, the immediate give and take, of real speech. Also, the use of contractions is important, just as it is in everyday speech, unless your character is a librarian who Speaks. Very. Succinctly. And. Precisely. With. No. Contractions.
 - I don't recommend having a character like that. If you do, I recommend letting her hang around only as long as is essential to the story.
- be emotion-laden, both on and beneath the surface.
- reveal the character's relationship to the various people with whom he or she talks.
- give the reader a sense of time and place.
- reveal the character's reaction to his surroundings and to the other characters with whom he shares the scene.

General dialogue techniques

- Use dialogue to reveal the *character* of the character — who the character really is, how he feels about a particular situation or another character — not always with *what* is said, but with *how* it is said, and often with what is *not* said.
 - “You lied to me! You said you were going for a drive.”
 - “C'mon, Baby. I didn't say I was going alone.”
- Allow characters to interrupt each other. This keeps the reader involved in the conversation, as if she's eavesdropping. (To form an em dash to show interrupted dialogue, use either two unspaced hyphens — like this — or an em dash — like this. Do not use an ellipsis... unless dialogue trails off or a character's speech is halting. See examples above.)
- Allow characters to answer a question with a question. This technique is excellent for subtly setting up, or hinting at, a conflict.
 - “If you knew she'd be there, why did you go?”
 - “What difference does it make who was there?”
- Use ragged, non-linear dialogue. Use sentence fragments. The most common is the sentence with the implied you or I as the subject.
 - “Stop!” “Don't even think about it!” “C'mon, give me the gun.”
- Avoid using substitutes for “said” in tag lines. (You've heard this before, yes?) “He said” or “She said” is usually the best choice except when the tag line can be eliminated in short passages. (The definition of “short passage” is left to the discretion of the writer.) Sometimes eliminating the tag lines will cause the reader to pay closer attention to the story. (Witness Hemingway's “Hills Like White Elephants.”)

Next time we'll discuss the use of verbs, especially action verbs. They are essential to the wellbeing of your story.

Of Interest

Be sure to check Dean's site.

You might also want to scroll back through a few posts here and check some of the other sites I've mentioned recently. I'm not sure why they make it difficult (or impossible) to subscribe.

Today's Writing

I'll resume this segment when I get back.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 560

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18720

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 210930

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 788524

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#) [Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 9/26](#)

[September 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'm back, but a little under the weather. I'm also in a bit of a funk. Don't be surprised if this Journal thins out a bit. Anyway, today I'm playing catchup. (See "Of Interest.")

I'm finished with the "few paragraph" promo of this Journal. If folks open it only every several days, don't bother scrolling down, and miss something in the interim, well, they just miss it.

I suspect much of today will be adjusting to being back. Resting, reading, recuperating.

Since I promised in Sunday's post to follow up the two posts on dialogue with one on verbs, I decided to go ahead and run this one. You might or might not need it. Can't hurt.

Topic: Using Action Verbs

In the previous two posts I mentioned using action verbs in brief descriptive narratives. The same goes for longer narratives, of course.

There are three kinds of verbs: state-of-being verbs, linking verbs, and action verbs.

State-of-being verbs do not show action. As their name implies, they are used to indicate a state of being.

The state-of-being verbs are am, is, are, was, were, be, being and been. These are often accompanied by have, has, and had.

Linking verbs (and state-of-being verbs can act as linking verbs) do not take a direct object. They take a complement, which they link to the subject of the sentence; hence, their name.

A linking verb, when it is not one of the state-of-being verbs listed above, is a sense verb. That is, it gives the reader a sense of action rather than letting him see the actual action in a mental movie. Sometimes it actually invokes the reader's own physical senses.

In the examples below, the linking verb is underlined, and the complement appears in italic font:

Bill Clinton was the president. (See how "was" links Bill Clinton and the president?)

I feel angry. (Angry modifies the linking verb "feel.")

I smelled hay and became confused. ("Became" links "I" and "confused." "Smelled" is an action verb and "hay" is its direct object.)

Notice that in every case, the complement of the linking verb either describes the subject (the complement is an adjective) or could take the place of the subject (the complement is a noun or pronoun).

Action verbs are those that actually enable to reader to experience the action through the character and the narrator.

Whenever you write a noun, you place a picture in the reader's mind. When you follow the noun with an action verb, the picture moves and enables the reader to see for himself what's going on. This is why you often hear fiction instructors say you should show, not tell, the reader what's going on.

When you use action verbs, you'll also need and use fewer descriptive adjectives and adverbs. Any unnecessary ones will fall away of their own accord. This means you don't have to "watch" for adjectives and adverbs.

The successful writer will, in effect, show a movie in the reader's mind.

I've long believed the best way to teach a concept is through example and illustration. Bear with the following oversimplified example and you'll understand why you should avoid state-of-being verbs and use action verbs whenever possible:

John was angry.

This sentence contains a subject, John; a linking verb that's also a state-of-being verb, was; and a complement that describes John, angry.

Now, what do you know about John? What do you see in your mental movie? If you have a picture of John in mind at all, is the picture clear or vague?

John was very very angry.

How about now? Now do you have a better mental movie going on? Probably not.

Remember when I mentioned that using action verbs would reduce your dependence on adjectives and adverbs?

Okay, now let's try a sentence in which we allow the reader to see John's anger for himself:

John kicked-in the door, stormed across the living room, and smacked Steve in the mouth.

How's that mental movie now? Is there any doubt in your mind that John's upset? (But notice that the words "angry" or "upset" or "mad" never appear.)

If you CHOOSE to add adjectives or adverbs to the example, they will only enhance it. For example, he "kicked the solid oak door down" is more powerful than "he kicked the door down" because a "solid oak" door is more substantial than one that isn't described.

Then again, would you need "stormed angrily" instead of "stormed"? Nope. It's redundant. "Stormed" conveys that anger connotation without the adverb.

So like much in writing, it's a nuance thing, but one you can easily pick up with practice.

Of Interest

If you didn't see them, some great comments on pricing at Dean's [Got Sidetracked](#) post.

There's a podcast interview with Dean on publishing and writing at <http://diymfa.com/113>.

Today, check out [Focus](#). Good post. One I personally needed.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 4. I'll spend the day today resting and getting back into my routine. Not that I'll get all the way back in one day, but maybe.

Spent a lot of time revising my personal website to include Copyediting, Eformatting and Ghostwriting. Spent a lot more time doing nothing and reading.

Weird. Feel like I'm decompressing today. Another day or two I'll be back to abnormal.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 870 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 870

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 211800

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 789394

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#) [Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 9/27](#)

[September 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I saw a great quote a day or two ago, one that made my life more difficult as it applies to my little girl kit. Something like (paraphrasing), *The most difficult part of parenting is finding the line between boundaries and bondage*. Sigh. True'dat and never was a line more difficult to distinguish.

My wife pointed out that finding and maintaining that line is more easily done with human children than with my little girl. Human children have the same type of brain etc. and understand the language and the reasoning, to at least some degree.

No matter how much I wish she did, the little girl doesn't. Her stuff is based on instinct. So to the point that I've instilled within her a fear of certain sounds (owls' screeches, coyotes' laughing howls, etc.) she "understands" and keeps herself safer than she might otherwise. At least that's something.

But I can't protect her from everything.

And of course, none of that takes into account the heart or the bond between two creatures.

So I'll just enjoy her company while I have her around. Of course, I also enjoy the certainty, as displayed in her beautiful little blue eyes, that she feels the same way. That she has decided to enjoy my company while she has me around. Probably she is the more stoic about it.

Ah, and on the writing front, I also remembered one of the shorter and more profound saws I've ever encountered: It just is what it is.

This annoys some folks because it sounds defeatist on the surface. And I admit that it can sound like that. But my take on it is a little different. It isn't defeatist at all if it's followed with a little self-talk. Something like, "Okay, so what'cha gonna do about it?"

In other words, you give yourself a choice. You have the ability to set your priorities, prepare, and so on. Then you either alleviate the situation. Or you don't.

Note that this is not at all akin to the empty motivational psychobabble employed (for example) by professional athletes. For me, silly things like "psyching each other up" accompanied by chest bumps and high fives have never held sway.

If I want to "do" something, whatever it is, I simply do it. If at the end of the day, I haven't done it, obviously it wasn't all that important at the moment.

Reading a lot today. Sitting and reading as I enjoy a good cigar. Ain't nuffum bedda.

Topic: Nothing today.

Of Interest

[Regaining Focus.](#)

In case you've forgotten [Neil Gaiman's Journal](#).

I really recommend Heinlein's *The Past Through Tomorrow*, a collection of his interconnected and prophetic novel, novella and short stories. If you're a fan of SF, it's outstanding. If not, it's still excellent. I'd bet you can find a copy for pennies on the dollar.

The Day

Rolled out at 3. Spent the first two hours of the morning inside and out, dodging intermittent rain, checking email, keeping one eye on my kitten. Allowing her to be a cat while safeguarding her.

Spent most of the rest of the day reading, and then a little writing on this journal. Told my buddy earlier in an email

I miss writing, but it's a relaxed missing. I haven't had that (relaxed missing) for almost 3 years. Before it's always been frantic. A new level, I reckon. Maybe. And yay. Anyway, I'll be back to

it soon. And even then it will be tempered with “work” in copyediting and eformatting, both of which I’ve decided to open to other folks again.

So I’m generally more relaxed about the whole thing. Probably about time.

Back tomorrow.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 580

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 41960

Total fiction words for the year..... 577594

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20170

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 212380

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 789974

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Neil Gaiman](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Robert Heinlein](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 9/28](#)

[September 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Easing back into writing today.

So today I’ll write the short story for this week. I don’t want to wake up in the morning and still have that to do. Then I’ll format it, prepare a cover and publish it. It will be posted free on the big site on November 18.

Well, plans change. Writing a story, but not sure what it will be. (grin)

Topic: Goals Revisited

Revisiting goals. That was a small part of Dean’s post yesterday. The one thing he didn’t touch on was how goals can help the writer focus. He’s mentioned it before, but it would have been timely in a post on Focus.

My own goals have been rattling around in my mind the past few days, but not pushing to the forefront the way they used to. They still nudge me, but they no longer barge in, shouldering aside all other aspects of my life.

So I'm revisiting them. Right here, right now, as you watch. I'm not necessarily reVISing them, but revisiting them. Checking in with them.

First, a note about my daily word count goal. Yeah, I've pretty much scuttled that. It served its purpose and it's no longer of any particular use to me. So it's gone. Let me 'splain.

This month, as it stands as I write this (early morning), I've written just under 42,000 new, publishable words of fiction. Even though I've chosen to take a bunch of days off.

Now, do I really LIKE those "super months" in which I cleared over 100,000 words of new fiction? Of course. Think of all the fun I had that month. Duh.

But 42,000 words is a realistically good month by most standards, so I'll take it. And I fully expect to end the month with more like 45,000 or 50,000.

So no worries there.

So why did I establish such a seemingly harsh daily word count goal in the first place? Because at the time, I needed it. I used the daily word count to push me at a time when I needed to be pushed. When I was gearing up to be a professional fiction writer.

The daily word count goal was like training wheels. But I'm riding well now, sometimes even with no hands, so I no longer feel the need for the daily word count goal. So that's that.

That leaves me only one immediate short-term goal — writing at least one short story per week — and I want to keep it going. It's interesting to me, and it gives me a little added push. Plus it feeds my Free Story of the Week over on the big site. Still, nothing to do there except write a short story before this Friday at midnight. I can do that.

My overall long-term goal was originally to write 15 novels during this calendar year (1 Jan – 31 Dec 2016) and finish at least one novel per month. Earlier in the year, after I completely missed a couple of months, I adjusted the overall goal to write 12 novels in this calendar year.

Well, now I've missed September too. Even if I woke up at midnight tonight with a blazing good idea for a novel, I wouldn't try to finish even a short novel (25,000 to 39,999 words) before September's gone. It just isn't that important to me. The attempt would add more stress than the challenge is worth.

However, I can still feasibly write 12 novels during this calendar year. It wouldn't be all that difficult, especially if my copyediting/eformatting/ghostwriting business doesn't suddenly bloom. Or boom. Whatever.

So that goal remains. I'll write 12 novels during this calendar year. And I'm not sandbagging here or hedging my bets. I'm only slightly more than halfway there.

To achieve it, I'll have to write (beginning at the earliest, later this morning) 5 novels before December 31 at midnight. Effectively, I'd have to write 5 novels in three months. So 5 novels in 90 days.

Well, we'll just have to see. Can it happen? Sure.

Even if I wrote them with what I call Dean's Approximation (for his own challenge purposes, his novels have to be at least 40,000 words) that's only 2223 words per day for 90 days.

Oh, but doesn't that raise the spectre of a daily word count goal again?

No, and I won't do that. I don't want that level of pressure. How many words I write in a given day doesn't matter. What matters for this goal is that I write and finish five novels in what remains of the year: 90-some days.

Of course, I'm not bound to 40,000 word novels either. I let 'em be what they're gonna be. Although I can tell you right now, none of them will be a full-blown "big book" thriller. (grin)

But either way, revisiting this novel and setting it firmly in my mind again (5 novels in 90-some days) DOES at least act as an impetus to keep me focused.

So over the next three months, the plan is to write 5 novels and at least one short story per week. Woohoo!

Anyway, if you're interested, you know the old saying: Hold my beer and watch this.

Oh, and if anybody else wants in on this challenge, c'mon in. The water's fine.

Of Interest

[Automatic Confidence](#) over at Dean's site. Just one gem from that: "Stop the judgement on your own work. Make the release process automatic in some fashion or another and never give it another thought."

The Day

Rolled out at 4 and did all my usual early morning stuff, email, websites, etc.

Around 8:45 I put a load of laundry in and sat down at the writing 'puter. This past weekend an old Johnny Horton song popped into my head. Some of you might remember "The Battle of New Orleans."

This morning, a young guy (probably 15) popped into my brain. He was walking along a country road in heavily wooded mountains somewhere. He had a fishing rod-reel combo in his left hand. The rod was balanced over his shoulder, and he was singing the opening lines of “The Battle of New Orleans.”

I typed that opening scene, then just kept writing the next sentence, whatever came. I stopped intermittently only to tend to the laundry or retrieve my little girl cat from some untenable (to me) situation. It’s turning out to be an interesting story. We’ll see.

Weird, very weird story that’s already divided itself into “chapters” with POV switches. I won’t finish it today, but I’m sure it’s not more than a novelette.

Anyway, today was a good first day back so I’m gonna close down now and do some reading.

Back tomorrow.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 3662

Nonfiction Words: 1110 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4772

Writing of “Johnny Marsden”

Day 1..... 3662 words. Total words to date..... 3662

Total fiction words for the month..... 45622

Total fiction words for the year..... 581256

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21280

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 213490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 794746

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 9/29

[September 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to the morning. I’ll get right into the topic.

Topic: Funks, Loss of Focus, Whatever

I'm a little annoyed with myself this morning.

I'm one of those guys who is attentive. I always read the foreword to books and the author's note and the credits and all that.

Yet I've failed for some time to read the fine print on Dean Wesley Smith's site.

At the bottom of each post, he summarizes how much fiction and nonfiction he's written during the month, as well as some other things. At the end, he summarizes progress on his annual goals.

I noticed only this morning that he's finished only 8 short stories since July 1 in his "Year of Fiction" challenge. His goal was 10 stories per month. Meaning right now, to be on task, he should have around 30 stories.

Much bigger than that, of his novel-per-month goal, he's finished 2 novels to date. Obviously that total should be 9.

I've been doing a lot of whining lately about being in a funk. Yet since July 1 (to use Dean's parameter) I've finished 17 short stories. (But I'm NOT on a "Year of Fiction" challenge. I'm just writing at least one story per week.) And for this calendar year, of an adjusted goal of 12 novels, I've written 7.

I'm not bragging or comparing. I'm complaining. I'm hoping Dean Smith is all right.

Part of that concern is professional for a guy whom I consider a role model for writers and writing. But part of it — the selfish part — is purely personal for MY role model. If Dean succumbs to a funk or a loss of focus or whatever, what possible chance do I have?

Of course, intellectually I know the answer. I'm not Dean Wesley Smith and our dealings are not connected except in the most superficial way, with me mining his blog for gems, touting his blog in mine, etc.

In other words, I don't have to mimic his success; I only need to make my own. And that's what I try to pass along to you.

Over the years of doing this blog, I've heard occasionally (from writers I very much respect) that reading my numbers is somehow depressing for them. The reasoning goes that I'm so prolific, they could never "keep up."

Huh?

"Keeping up" with particular numbers has never been the point. The point is, if I can set and strive toward goals, so can you. Like a lesser DWS, with my blog I'm trying to illustrate what is possible when priorities and goals come together.

And as a student, that's how I've always used Dean's numbers. I've never felt threatened or depressed by them, but rather invigorated. It wasn't even "if he can do this, so can I." Rather, it was "if he can set and achieve his writing goals, I can set and achieve mine."

And of course, it's perfectly all right to stretch toward those goals (goals that don't make you stretch are not goals), then fall a bit short and fail to success. The success is in the effort.

What is NOT all right (from a student's standpoint) is to simply throw in the towel.

I'm reminded here of the episode of MASH in which Radar explains to Hawkeye that he sees Hawkeye and others as infallible role models. And Hawkeye goes off on him. "To hell with your naivete and your...."

Now, throwing up your hands and saying "Screw this. I'd rather be on a beach on the Gulf Coast" is fine too. As long as it's a reshuffling of priorities or a change of heart and not simply your conscious mind slapping you around.

(Well, if it's your conscious mind slapping you around, I guess that's okay too. Who am I to say what's okay and what isn't for someone else? I actually resigned as General Manager of the Universe some years ago.)

Let's just say my HOPE for you is that it isn't just your conscious mind slapping you around. Been there, done that, and it's a sucky existence.

And I really hope that isn't what's happening to Dean. As I wrote above, his successes have never threatened or bothered me, but they have energized me.

But if he falls flat for some reason and his writing sputters and dies? Or if he out-and-out quits? Ugh. Then I guess I'll find out whether I'm a writer or just a really good pretender.

Of Interest

Of primary importance today, even if you don't currently distribute through Smashwords, is the new [Smashwords Blog post](#). Metered coupons, and they've come along at just the right moment for me.

Some interesting [comments on Dean's Automatic Confidence post](#).

Oh, and this is Thursday, so watch for my Free Story of the Week to post tomorrow.

The Day

Rolled out at 3, at the outside desk by 4. Wrote all of the above plus some that I might use in another topic sometime.

5:45, to Smashwords to revise some pricing. Then to Amazon to do the same. I'm revising upward, not downward. Perceived value and all that.

7 a.m., price revisions made and breakfast gone. To the writing.

2:30, mixed in with a lot of other stuff, I finished the story. If you have a queasy stomach or have to have a happy ending, you might want to avoid this one. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3217

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4117

Writing of "If Mama Ain't Happy" (was Johnny Marsden)

Day 1..... 3662 words. Total words to date..... 3662

Day 2..... 3217 words. Total words to date..... 6879 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 48839

Total fiction words for the year..... 584473

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 214390

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 798863

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 9/30

[September 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, there y'go. Another month teetering on the edge of gone by the time you get this. And the productivity for this month is whatever it is. I can only hope mine will be a lot better for October.

Then again, there are some major life events going on, not TO me but in my peripheral family, that might interrupt me or slow me down a bit. We'll see. It's all just life, isn't it?

Topic: Selling Books

Most often, I advocate against worrying about book sales. But I do know a few techniques for selling more books. Here they are:

1. If you have several books, consider putting together a sampler. Then offer the sampler free at Smashwords, Amazon, etc. (For Amazon, you might have to charge \$0.99.)

In the sampler, you'll include the book cover and then the first 5 or 10 or 15 pages of the book. At the beginning and end of each sample, you'll include live links for where readers may purchase the book if they want to.

2. Schedule talks or presentations at local and regional writers' groups and other professional groups (Lions, etc.) and schools.

At writers' groups, address some aspect of how to write your particular genre.

At professional groups, address your field of expertise, of course tied in with your book(s).

3. Contact the Literature department of your alma mater to see whether they need speakers. (This would be a great opportunity to return as a published author.)

4. Contact local and regional high schools, junior colleges, colleges and universities. Offer to speak to campus writers' groups, clubs, writing or literature classes, etc.

I was once asked to present a writing award to a deserving student. The university paid me \$1500 for that 20 minutes. As an added bonus, my poetry collections are now in the literary canon of that university.

5. Schedule appearances on panels at specific and multi-genre conventions and writers' conferences.

Okay, frankly, panels suck. They're mostly boring for the participants and they're only minimally informative for the attendees, but they get you face time in front of your fans (current and prospective) and they help establish you as an expert, which can lead to other appearances.

Mostly panels serve to allow attendees to see and hear their favorite authors speaking and otherwise acting as if they really are mere mortals.

Note: Unless you can legitimately teach some aspect of writing, always opt for conventions rather than writers' conferences. Why?

Fans and Readers attend conventions, and they want to buy your book.

Writers attend conferences; they want you to buy THEIR book.

Appearing on a panel lends you a touch more credibility, however

6. Attend (whether or not you're invited or paid) and be visible and available at conventions that are appropriate to what you write: Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Horror, Romance, Western, Multi-Genre, etc.

If you aren't invited to present or sit on a panel, the attendance fee for most conventions is minimal anyway, often hovering around \$25 for a three-day pass. The point is, you can't be visible and available to attendees if you aren't there at all.

When a fan walks up and says, "Hey, aren't you...?" say something like "Yep, that's me. I'm not presenting at this one because I applied late, but I thought I'd make time to come hang out anyway." Guess what? You've just made a fan for life. And chances are, his or her friends and acquaintances will come along as well.

If you know far enough in advance about the convention, set up a book signing at the Barnes & Noble or whatever across the street.

Finally, when you're attending any conference or convention, don't disappear when you're talk is over. Be continually visible, friendly and available to pretty much anyone (most will be your fans or fans of the genre) who wants to talk with you about pretty much anything.

Also, paste a smile on your mug and never let them see how tired you are. You can sleep when the convention or conference is over. Do this and you will sell more books than you thought possible.

If you type "[Your Genre] Conventions" into a search engine, you'll find several.

Consider, you're a successful author and possibly an expert in your field. Some of you are prolific, and some are multi-genre authors. All of those things will recommend you to different audiences and venues.

Of Interest

Dean's post on [Point of View](#). Mostly he's talking about what's coming in his POV online workshop, but there are gems to be mined there. It fits nicely with some of the things I've talked about here recently. And yes, I'm gonna dig up the money somewhere to take this workshop.

Also, from an unlikely source, something I think all writers should read: [Strong Concepts Don't Go Out of Style](#).

The Day

Changing this segment a bit to more of a quick summary of the day.

I spent a couple hours this morning updating and reposting some posts from 2013 to 2017 over on the big blog. Those are coming out every week now, on Tuesday, and they're scheduled out through April.

After that I wrote everything above. Ah, then I remembered I hadn't prepped the story I wrote yesterday. They don't sell if you don't distribute them. So I did all that. It will go live on the site as the story of the week on November 18.

This is shaping up to be a nonwriting day. Weird.

Well, I started a novel. I was writing right along and a small emergency reared its ugly head. Stopped me cold. Back to it tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1045

Nonfiction Words: 950 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1995

Writing of Snubbing the Gods

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Total fiction words for the month..... 49884

Total fiction words for the year..... 585518

Total nonfiction words for the month... 23130

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 215340

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 800858

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 10/1](#)

[October 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I just read an article that thrilled me. Well, the subject of the article and much of the information inside it thrilled me.

The article was about Elon Musk's vision of building a metropolis on Mars by the 2060s. Because of the way the article is titled, I expected it to be a mother lode of awe-inspiring facts and forward-looking fictions.

The article wasn't a mother lode at all. I believe it was intentionally mistitled. But there were a few wonderful nuggets scattered about anyway (see for yourself in the Of Interest section). Instead of being a mother lode of SF inspiration, it was the author exhibiting his own character.

So in that way too I found it fascinating. The wily, skeptical author of the article reminds me of most of the non-characters in Heinlein's **The Man Who Sold the Moon**.

Read the article and see whether you agree with me. In the meantime, I'll continue in the topic below.

Topic: Character Study

This isn't really a topic so much as a curious commentary. If you read the article in Of Interest, I wonder whether you saw what I saw, or something similar.

I've had a lifelong fascination with the recognition of character traits and overall character types (stereotypes). But this morning is the first time I've read an article that revealed (to me) more about the author than about the topic of his article.

As I mentioned earlier, the article itself (ostensibly, per the title), was about Elon Musk and his vision of a metropolis on Mars. In other words, the title led me to believe the article was about daring to dream.

And daring to dream is important.

Without vision, without dreaming and goal-setting, untold numbers of scientific advances will never be made. Inventions, at least as often as not, are the detritus that results as dreamers strive for a loftier goal.

But as it turned out, the article wasn't about dreaming at all. Or even about Musk's vision. It was the coming-out declaration of a timid, frightened, even threatened non-dreamer.

What I took away from the article itself (in limited bits) was a sense of wonder that, once again, I'm seeing science fiction come to life.

But what I took away from the writing was the writer's own almost resentful envy. The picture that sprang to mind was of a Spanky (of Our Gang fame) character.

Seriously. His beanie was tipped back. His pudgy elbows were crossed over his chest. There was a frown on his little forehead and a pout on his little lips.

Childish petulance seeped up through the words of the article like sweat beads. It was like watching the reaction of a jungle picknicker who's just spotted a lion studying him and licking its lips. Except frightened and self-righteous instead of openly afraid.

Behind the words written on the page, I heard, "Wow, this would be wonderful beyond belief. But I would never be bold enough to attempt it, so if you attempt it you're a poopoo head. Oh, and here are all the reasons it won't work."

Ugh. I know people like this. They are the naysayers. Not because they don't believe, but because they're timid. I can't imagine a more miserable existence, but they're valuable as secondary and tertiary characters in fiction.

These are the characters who secretly long to look up at Luna and know there's a colony of humans living there. But outwardly they will always postulate that it's impossible.

Why? Because for them, it IS impossible. Better to sit on the bench than get in the game and risk failure. And better to bench the whole team than risk being shown up.

So they cross their pudgy little elbows and talk about legalities and ethics and any other reasons it won't work.

Some people simply have no vision. That's okay. Some will insist that others' visions will never come to fruition. That's fine too.

As writers and in life, we need those characters for the same reason we need failure; it makes the occasional success that much sweeter.

As for the article itself, whether human beings someday actually build a manned outpost or colony (or metropolis) on the moon or Mars or Venus or one of Jupiter's moons is not important.

What IS important is having the vision to believe we can.

Of Interest

Check out [Elon Musk's Mars Metropolis: Insane But Not Impossible](#). It reads almost like Heinlein's *The Man Who Sold the Moon* (an excellent novel, by the way). By the way, as you read, you'll come to find the title of the article should be *Elon Musk Mars SpaceX Plan Questions Legal Ethical*. The writer (or someone) put the truth in the URL.

Dean's post [An Evening of Learning](#) isn't really meaty, but it makes me envious. MAN I'd like to be able to attend a group like that. That's what my buddy Dan and I do about once every other month.

Some great comments on [Point of View](#). I plan to take that one in either November or December. I've never taken a workshop from Dean that wasn't worthwhile.

The Day

Wow. I spent the first half-hour of the day with normal stuff. Email and reading. Then I came across an interesting article that hit me on two levels. The stronger level caused me to write the intro and topic above. That consumed the next two-plus hours of the morning.

Getting a slow start on the novel, but this one's gonna be fun once it takes off. A lot of little self-interruptions today, but not a big deal.

Back at it in the morning.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2413

Nonfiction Words: 880 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3293

Writing of Snubbing the Gods

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Total fiction words for the month..... 2413

Total fiction words for the year..... 587931

Total nonfiction words for the month... 880

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 216220

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 804151

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [POV](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 10/2](#)

[October 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not sure what the day will hold, but probably a good writing day. If I can tear myself away from searching the Internet for the perfect cigar. (grin)

UPDATE: Nope, not a writing day. But a good day in other ways.

Personal to Gnonpom. I'd be pleased to send you Part One and Part Two of The Wes Crowley Saga free as a way of saying thank you for giving me the idea to split it for Amazon.

You need only email me (harveystanbrough@gmail.com) and let me know which eformat you prefer.

Topic: Writing in Series

The more titles you have out there, the more easily readers can discover your work. In other words, quantity is a valuable part of the marketing equation.

That's why I publish and distribute each short story, regardless of length and regardless of whether or how well particular stories are selling.

That's also why I compile, publish and distribute five- and/or ten-story collections of my short stories.

In "Of Interest" below, I mention the release of my SF/Thriller. That's purposeful and it feeds this topic. Have you ever thought of writing series novels?

In *The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark* (that SF/Thriller), a massive cloud of microbes slams into the Pacific off the coast of California.

The impact releases the microbes, who spread rapidly east across the United States and then the world. They feed on warm bloods (even most humans) as they mutate, wiping out most of the human population. The book ends with small groups getting together to reboot society.

A few days ago, I thought about what might happen as a result of that apocalyptic event.

Given the natural human propensity toward a mix of ignorance, stupidity, and fear, the only answer I could come up with was another apocalypse.

Maybe a guy in Russia or China or North Korea survives. And maybe he has the missile codes. And maybe he assumes, since the devastation came from the west, that the US was to blame.

He presses the appropriate buttons and launches missiles at the western allies.

And of course, the recipients of that fiery rain respond in kind.

And all hell breaks loose.

I had the original idea for my current WIP way back when I first wrote a poem called "Snubbing the Gods, 2312." It's a very good poem/vignette, but neither it nor I was ready to develop the idea into a novel.

Then *The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark* came along. Like most ideas in writing, it just kind of happened.

But when I wondered what would happen after that, the poem came to mind again. And with it came the idea that it would be an excellent sequel to the SF/Thriller.

Writing a story based on a poem is called "intertextuality." It's a whole field of study for deconstructionist types. For me personally, because of my bent toward studying psychology and the human psyche, it's only a matter of great interest. But that's a topic for another day.

Now, I COULD write the story as a single, massive sequel. Probably somewhere north of 200,000 words. But that would give me only one more title "out there" to lend to my discoverability.

On the other hand, if I write it as a series of shorter novels, anywhere from 25,000 to 70,000 words, that will give me the personal challenge of walking a delicate balance, as I did with the Wes Crowley series. (To my knowledge, no reader who finished a book in the Crowley series felt unfulfilled with the current read. Yet each was glad when the next novel appeared.)

Each title will increase my discoverability and add to my volume of work (that's the self-serving side), BUT each title will also be a satisfying stand-alone novel (for the readers).

But there's one more very attractive function of writing series. Most big-concept books are also physically long. Writing this overall story in a series will give me a chance to experiment with writing a big concept in a smaller book. And for me, that's nothing short of enticing.

Of course, as with any ongoing endeavor, writing a series will also give me the chance to apply new techniques I learn as I go.

I'll be interested in seeing how the story progresses (how PsOV change, etc.) from book to book. And of course, I'll report that here.

Of Interest

Nothing much around the web today that I could find.

I forgot to announce the official release (yesterday) and launch of my first ever SF/Thriller novel, *The Day the Earth Shuddered and Went Dark*. It's available now at [Amazon](#), [Smashwords](#) and all other ebook venues. (If you'd like to read/review it, send me an email and I'll send you a coupon to get it free at Smashwords. I ask only that you post your review to both Smashwords and Amazon.)

The Day

After doing some necessary chores around the house, playing on the Internet and writing the topic above, I was just about to open my WIP and begin.

Then I got a notification from Smashwords that someone bought *The Wes Crowley Saga*.

That reminded me that I still haven't split the thing into two parts, per the recommendation from Gnonpom (Thank You).

So I decided to do that. I reformatted four files derived from the original two, slightly altered the cover to create two new covers, then submitted the whole thing (both new compilations, Part One and Part Two) to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon.

Then I unpublished the complete *Wes Crowley Saga* from Amazon. So now Amazon readers can purchase the entire *Saga* in two parts, \$9.99 each.

Readers who purchase ebooks from ANY other source now have the option of buying the entire Saga as one book for \$19.99 or as two books for \$9.99 each.

Silly that I had to do it that way. On the other hand, it adds two more titles to my canon.

From those 10 novels I've now racked up 14 publications: the 10 individual novels, the 10-novel set, two 5-novel sets, and the 3-novel set that includes only Books 4, 5, and 6 (back when I thought those were all that would be in the series).

Very cool.

And now, a little after noon, I've decided to take off the rest of the day.

Back to fun tomorrow. See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1050 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1050

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2413

Total fiction words for the year..... 587931

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 217270

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 805201

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 10/3](#)

[October 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I spent much of the day being confused from a writing standpoint, so I got a lot of stuff done around the house and yard.

From what I can tell, my big bright idea yesterday to write a series tied to *The Day the World Shuddered and Went Dark* isn't going to work. At least trying to tie the current WIP back to that novel won't work.

First of all, if events had transpired as I detailed in yesterday's topic, the very few survivors of the microbial meteorite impact wouldn't be survivors very long. The launch of the second apocalypse would have wiped them out, and that would be that.

So any second apocalypse would necessarily have to come at least a generation or two later. And why would that happen? Well, many reasons, but not tied to assumed responsibility for the devastation caused by the meteor impact. Duh.

So the notion that I could tie the current WIP to that book in any real way is gone.

Of course, I could write a straight sequel to TDTWSAWS (mouthful, ain't it?). But frankly, I'm really not interested at the moment in going back to the previous novel and continuing with the same characters and expanding that story.

So as I wrote above, I spent the day confused, mowed the yard, worked on the shed, etc.

I'll continue with this one maybe tomorrow, maybe the next day.

Topic: Nothing today, unless you can glean something from the mess above this.

Of Interest

Not a lot on the Web today, but [Dean ruminates on friendship](#).

Be sure to watch for [Kris's Free Fiction Monday](#).

The Day

After dispensing with email and other typical morning things, I started the day by updating the Short Fiction page on my website. Hard to believe I have over 150 covers up there now.

Got started on the novel around 10 a.m. but allowed myself to become mired in one micro-scene. Ugh. Then I stepped back from it a bit and confused myself. My brain isn't playing right today. Confusion ensued, and I decided to take the day off.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 350

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2413

Total fiction words for the year..... 587931

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2280

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 217620

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 805551

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 10/4

[October 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Wow. Major epiphany. I woke up at 3 a.m. this morning thinking of the novel. As I write this, it's around ten minutes later. My waking-up thoughts went something like this:

- ° the novel is dead-ended
- ° there isn't a whole novel there
- ° I might as well start something new
- ° the idea for this novel is too old (!)
- ° I had this idea back before I learned so much about writing
- ° maybe I shouldn't be writing at all
- ° well, maybe I should take another day off to give the idea time to percolate.

And that's when the epiphany hit. Finally.

How in the world did I not know what was going on?

When I sat down to write yesterday, I started by reading what I'd already written. As always I was going to allow myself to touch it here and there as I read (cycling).

But then I allowed myself to get mired in a mini-scene. I saw something that I THOUGHT (conscious, critical mind) needed more. Then I remembered I'd written what I needed later in the story.

At this point I should have realized my subconscious had already added it where it was supposed to be and leave it alone. Um, but I didn't.

So I scanned down and found it. I cut/pasted it into its new place. Then I did more of that, writing a little now and then to smooth things out as I moved things around.

In other words, I was no longer writing. I was REwriting.

At every step, I was thinking critically about what was in the WIP and where instead of just writing it. It was an excuse to allow the writing to grind to a halt.

And once I felt that sensation of being mired, I decided to take the day off and do something productive. My conscious, critical mind won.

That's what can happen when you allow the conscious mind to come in. It's just insane.

Conscious, critical mind is a thug. And it's persistent. It's almost a physical struggle to push it down. Seriously. I almost wrote (today, in this blog, in this paragraph) "Bear with me for a day or two while I fix this."

But I don't have a day or two. If I take a day or two, the struggle will be bigger next time. I have to fix this today. And the only way to fix it is open the WIP, scroll to where I stopped writing, RESIST THE URGE to read, and start writing whatever comes.

Wish me luck. It's now 4 a.m.

Topic: Critical Mind See above. And thanks for your indulgence. (grin)

Of Interest

If you've ever been interested in writing alternative history or time travel, check out Kris Rusch's Business Musings (I'm not kidding) post on [Idle Thoughts](#). Some interesting how-to gems there. I would love to have been a fly on the wall of the workshop she talks about. If flies could use notepads. She talks about the importance of recognizing turning points in history, and then she talks at length about the new world of publishing. An excellent post.

Dean's post today is titled [Comics and Workshops and Business Diversity](#). Good post. Mine it!

And if you need a refresher, my [Busting the Myths of Digital Publishing article](#) re-posted this morning.

The Day

Rolled out at 3, as I reported above. After I wrote the stuff up there, I sat down to write. That was outside at 4 a.m.

It was a bit of a struggle, honestly, with my critical mind repeatedly trying to get me to go back, cut and paste, change this and that. But I persevered, at least so far. (grin) By 6 a.m. I had added 1500 new words to the novel.

Those two hours of writing were interspersed with unavoidable breaks to find my little girl (she still likes clearing the back fence and nestling among the coyote-ridden brush near the house), getting a second mug of coffee, taking care of morning things with the chihuahua and the other cat, and other little chores.

So all in all, I'm back on task, writing about 1000 words per hour. Sure feels good. And once I banished all the critical mind crap, it seems to have stayed banished for the most part.

I wrote on the novel off and on until noon. Also made and ate breakfast, finished mowing the yard, wrote more on this journal entry, etc. At noon I had a little over 3200 words.

Not going for any particular word count, but I'm going to keep writing while I'm in it. I have to go into town to pick up a new battery for my 4-Runner sometime or other.

I was considering selling the 4-Runner or trading it or something. But I decided to keep it. It reminds me too much of myself to abandon it: it's old, weathered, beat up, worn out, rough as a cob and direly in need of parts, but it's determined. (grin)

Especially given the past several days, today has already been a good writing day. So if I don't talk with you again today, I'll see you tomorrow.

Back then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3325

Nonfiction Words: 850 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4175

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Total fiction words for the month..... 5738

Total fiction words for the year..... 591256

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3130

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 218470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 809726

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 10/5

[October 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

So weird. A few days ago (September) I was hoping October would be a MUCH better month than September. Then October hit and I basically stalled. And I thought, Well, here we go again.

And then yesterday I realized what was happening and corrected it. I really hope that post helped some of you. I figured if I can show you that it happens to me too, and that Just Write The Next Sentence actually works, maybe it'll save you some grief down the road.

I mean, I actually preach the stuff, and it still managed to sneak up on me. And it took me several days to catch it. Writing Into the Dark really is an incredible, amazing technique.

Announcement

For anyone local/regional (or who wants to fly in (grin)), I'll be putting together a daylong (or maybe two-day) craft seminar soon. If you're interested, [let me know](#). (Not you, Bonnie. I already know you're interested and assume you'll bring Shirley with you.)

Assignment

Should you choose to accept it, write a short story based on or in a lunar colony. Remember, even the most scientifically factual SF isn't about the science or technology. It's about the human (or other) characters' REACTIONS to the technology and what goes wrong (or unexpectedly right).

Topic: Getting Refocused, Redux

In Dean's current post, he talks briefly about getting refocused. He's doing so "slowly" and advocates that's the way to do it.

Occasionally I disagree with him, though "disagree" is too strong a term. And that's the case today.

Getting refocused "slowly" is right, maybe, for some people, and it's right, apparently, for him.

As I wrote in a comment on his post,

"I agree that you can't 'just snap back into the chair' if that means forcing the writing. But in my case, if I hadn't snapped back into the chair and forced myself to Let Go And Just Write...."

Frankly, I might never have written again.

I definitely wouldn't have almost doubled the word count on my WIP yesterday. And I probably wouldn't be writing today. Or tomorrow.

To me, all of this — all of it — is a matter of priorities.

When an emergency or “life roll” happens, your priority and your focus has to shift to that situation until you resolve it or it resolves you.

But any other time, YOU decide what's most important, second most, third most and so on. Then you allocate your focus based on those priorities. This isn't a theory. This is a fact. It's how human beings function, even when they don't realize it.

After meeting my basic needs (1. air, 2. water, 3. food), Writing is my main priority in life. Period. Just the way it is. I understand that others have other priorities. And that's fine.

But for me personally, telling myself it's all right to “shift slowly but steadily” back into my writing is a copout. It's self-defeating.

For one things, it legitimizes excuses not to write. And in that way it both sets a dangerous precedent and empowers the critical mind.

It's a way of saying it's okay to make writing a lesser priority. And for me, it isn't okay.

And if writing isn't all that important, why bother.

Of Interest

Over at Book Bub, [some ideas for book promotion](#) that you might not have considered.

See [Getting Refocused](#) at Dean's site. I think you might find something useful in this, but I think it didn't go far enough. Or, in part, in the right direction. (See the topic above.)

The Day

I spent the early morning as usual, outside (freezing) and playing on the Internet. Then I found Dean's post and wrote the topic above. I also left a long comment on his site. In fact, because it might help some who visit his blog, I'm counting it in my nonfiction word count today.

A little late to the writing today as I had to get started on some chores. Those are done or underway, so now to the novel.

Well, a lazy day, sort of. I did some writing, but not a lot. Turns out there's a pretty extensive scene on the moon in a lunar colony in this WIP. Which is cool, 'cause I get to draw a blueprint (sort of, I ain't no architect) of the colony.

I have to have it on paper so I can reference it and also because I hope to include the map in the book. Okay, and also because it's fun.

My son Jason is coming to visit late tonight, so I might or might not get any words on the page for the next few days. Probably will.

But I also have to draw up that colony. It isn't writing, but it will be a great deal of fun (world building, that) and it will inform this novel and probably more in the future.

The thing is, Jason (Jake) is an artiste (yeah, with the e) so maybe he'll help draw my thoughts.

If you've read *In the Siberian Fields*, this is the same colony that was featured in that book, although in much greater detail.

In that book, the protagonist was visiting the colony for a company-mandated tour to see how the product of his mining efforts on Earth would be used in the structure of the colony.

This WIP takes place around 80 years in the future from that one. Otherwise it isn't related. The book continues to come along very well, by the way. No slow downs, no stoppages. Woohoo!

So anyway, now I'm gonna post this and go find some graph paper.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1118

Nonfiction Words: 1320 (920 Journal + 500 in comment on Dean's post)

So total words for the day: 2438

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Total fiction words for the month..... 6856

Total fiction words for the year..... 592374

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4450

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 219790

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 812164

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 10/6

[October 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Oof. I just remembered I haven't written a short story for this week yet. Guess I'll do that this morning. (grin)

The little girl cat, just to show she's smarter than I am, is still in bed. But that's good, because there's an owl screeching out here this morning.

I wanted to share this cover of my recent collection. I really like how this one came out. I'm even using it for my Facebook "profile picture" right now.

Topic: Inviting Guest Topics

Nah, I'm not running out of topics.

But in response to a comment on the 10/3 post, I wrote "I envisioned [The Journal] as a way to plainly let others see what is possible, but also as a free exchange of ideas through comments."

I know not everyone enjoys leaving comments. That's fine.

But most of you are writers. And I really do prefer discussion to lecture, no matter which end I'm on.

So please feel free to write a short article to appear in this space. The only requirement is that it has something to do with writing, publishing, marketing, cover design (etc.) or the history of any of those.

In other words, you have to sell me on the idea that it will be of some importance to the other readers of this Journal. However, you should know I'm a really easy sale.

I've known for a long time that what one writer might find inane filler, another finds important and useful. So if you stick to writing, publishing, etc. chances are you'll get in.

And if you DON'T write and submit a topic, please consider joining the discussion with a comment. Your input is valuable.

I mean, maybe not with your spouse (grin), but here, on this Journal, it's important.

Of Interest

There are many good blog posts on Indie Publishing listed, with links, at Alexandra Sokoloff's blog. [Check it out.](#)

Nothing on Dean's site today (or for the next few) unless you're following his progress on his running. Some good comments (including a couple from me) on his [Getting Refocused](#) post.

My own [Free Story of the Week](#) will post tomorrow morning at around 9 a.m.

The Day

Got up a little before 3 and spent the first couple of hours writing the stuff above and playing on the Internet. Then remembered I need to write a short story to meet my weekly goal, so I'll do that now.

Well, I did a little visiting, a lot of drawing, and some writing today. Enough writing.

This one will take a special cover, so I'll probably do that tomorrow.

Pure psychological suspense/horror, this one. I might have a shot of whisky tonight, try to wash this one away.

Back tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3281

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3731

Writing of "Curious Shapes" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3281 words. Total words to date..... 3281 (done)

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10137

Total fiction words for the year..... 595655

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4900

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 220240

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 815895

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alex Sokoloff](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 10/7

[October 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to report today. Got up a little late, ate up the morning hours with admin stuff, then visited and read the rest of the day. Lucky you, you get a short Journal today. (grin)

Topic: You know more than you know you know, you know?

This is a guest post by my friend Dan Baldwin. (Thanks, Dan.) For more on Dan, see "Of Interest" below.

Hemingway wrote, "A writer, of course, has to make up stories for them to be rounded and not flat like photographs. But he makes them up out of what he knows."

That's wonderful advice, but there's a trap in it.

I have encountered many writers who have shied away from a project due to a fear of not knowing the desired subject matter. "I don't know anything about Planet Zygorth and the Sleekbelly Vixens of Tyros, so I can't write about such things."

Following that logic, Frank L. Baum never would have ventured down the rabbit hole and instead of reading about The Wizard of Oz we'd be reading about The Guy Down the Street in Mattydale, NY.

There are many things I have never done. For example,

I've never been in a gunfight in a wild west saloon (the Caldera and the Canyon series).

I've never sat down with a KKK boss to plan the assassination of Elvis Presley (Sparky and the King).

I've never been stalked by a mad shaman on top of a hill in Arkansas (The Ashley Hayes Mysteries).

I've never been a lonely vampire looking for a family (Vampire Bimbos on Spring Break).

I know nothing about these things, yet I've written about them, sold books and even won awards for writing about what I don't know.

What's the secret?

Take your experiences, your emotions, and the people and events in your life and place them whereverthehell you want to place them in your writing.

Sure, neither you nor I have ever been to a rowdy singles bar with Conan or Han Solo. But we have been to bars, restaurants, and parties with some pretty interesting characters.

We've never been in an old west gunfight, but we've been in heated confrontations in board rooms, committee meetings, and in personal encounters.

We've never been stalked by a mega-python in the veldt, but we all know that sudden zap of fear when we see the lights come on in the patrol car that's been following us for the last mile and a half.

Use that information. Writing is about characters and their emotions, and you know that stuff backwards and forwards. You live it every day. Now, all you have to do is put it in place.

Never be intimidated by what you think you don't know; you really do know more than you think you know. You know?

* * *

Dan's Quote of the Week: "A simple style is like white light. Although complex, it does not appear so." Anatole France

BTW, Dan's new photo books feature 21 of his Arizona flowers snapshots, each with poetic commentary.

Wildflower Stew is only \$7.99 (paperback) and \$2.99 (ebook) and is the first of four. Available in paperback and e-book from [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com), and in ebook from [Smashwords](http://www.smashwords.com) as well as other distributors.

Of Interest

You can subscribe to either or both of Dan Baldwin's sites (<http://www.danbaldwin.biz> or <http://www.fourknightspress.com/>) by emailing him at baldco@msn.com.

Nothing else much around the web today that I could find.

The Day

From the get-go around 4 a.m. I read through (but cycling, subconscious) and allowed myself to touch "Curious Shapes." It wasn't finished. Now it is. Good story, but horrific.

Then I formatted it, created a cover, and published it to my blog. It will post free on November 25. After that I uploaded it to distribution at D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. Now I'm gonna let my fingers thaw a bit, then add it to my website Short Fiction page.

Got enough drawings done yesterday to get me started. Then I hit a rough spot. I'm not sure what the living compartments on the lunar colony look like. So I'll go back to writing today. Interesting process, in that the writing (so my subconscious) informs the drawings, which in turn inform the subconscious.

Well, the writing gave way to visiting. Didn't write a word other than in the short story and on this journal. It's after 1 p.m., so today will be a non-writing day. I'm going to spend the balance of the day reading Heinlein, then get back on the writing tomorrow.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 853

Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1103

Writing of "Curious Shapes"

Day 1..... 3281 words. Total words to date..... 3281

Day 2..... 0853 words. Total words to date..... 4134 (now it's done)

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10990

Total fiction words for the year..... 596508

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5150

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 220490

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 816998

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dan Baldwin](#), [Four Knights Press](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 10/8](#)

[October 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not a lot going on today, so I'll get right to the topic. It's kind of my own personal bias at the moment, but maybe you'll get something out of it.

Topic: Science Stuff

When I sat down to write, I realized I was still tied up with the distances. So I highlighted the chapter in which I will describe the lunar colony so I can return to it later (as necessary). That frees me up to just write the story for now.

(I had hoped to insert diagrams of the lunar colony in the book as plates. But whether or not that happens is secondary.)

However, as I write the stories, I still have to have the distances and dimensions involved down perfectly. Readers catch things like that. And I'm convinced any measurements for a colony will be reckoned in meters, a system with which I am woefully unfamiliar.

But translating distances (or lengths) isn't the big problem. There are plenty of tools that make translation easy. (In the left sidebar at HarveyStanbrough.com see the "Convert Distance" link under Writer Resources.)

The big problem is ensuring everything is to scale.

For example, the living quarters. How much room does a married couple need in that environment? The size of the living quarters, coupled with the number of workmen needed to excavate and build the second colony, will determine the size of the colony.

And of course there have to be offices and labs and schools and stores (or other places to obtain the necessities of everyday life).

Why schools? Both for ongoing training in new technologies of the workers and for the children. This story takes place in a time when children will be born on Luna.

And all of that is interconnected. The size of the living quarters and other facilities affects the size, design, etc. of the overall colony.

And now I'm thinking I might make the colony itself a separate story, probably around novella size. Maybe I'll write and publish that separately as a kind of supplement to go along with the series.

Ah, a series! So for now maybe I need to Focus Down (a major recurring epiphany) and Just Write the Story about this couple and about that team of workmen and this series of events, all taking place in or around the colony.

Hmm, maybe I'll do that.

Of Interest

Not much around the web that I could find.

The Day

Got up early, screwed around with the web, games and my kitten to wake up.

Then I went to play with the novel. I got about maybe 50 words in and had to look up a dimension. Turns out some distances and dimensions are necessary in this story. That is, it turns out one character wants to explain some of the dimensions to his wife. And again, they have to "fit" if I'm hoping to use them in future books as well.

All day went like that. I wrote a little, then worked on the laundry. Wrote a little, watched a few minutes of a movie (Apollo 11). Wrote a little, made a trip to the grocery. Wrote a little, did some diagramming of the colony, adjusted some dimensions (my character didn't like the original dimensions), and so on.

Kind of a lazy day. Almost like it's Saturday or something. (grin) Then I looked up and it was already 4 p.m. Plus we have storms moving in, so there's no telling what the Internet will do.

So not much of a writing day today, but I no longer follow the NFL (much) so I'll be back to write tomorrow. I've decided to "take a knee" when the NFL comes on.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1102

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1702

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003

Total fiction words for the month..... 12092

Total fiction words for the year..... 597610

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5750

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 21090

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 818700

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [science](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 10/9

[October 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Revising this layout a bit starting today. Doing away with “The Day” section. That will be up here from now on, albeit untitled. First will come the summary of the day. Then the topic, if any, then the Of Interest section and the boring ol’ word count stuff.

Well, I’m not sure this morning whether I’m writing one novel or two, simultaneously. I’m going to just keep writing and see what happens. (Trust the characters, trust the process.)

I kept writing in little bits and spurts. Not quite as pieced-in as yesterday, but not smoothly either. I had to stop often to convert meters to feet or vice versa.

That was punctuated with saving a lizard from my kitten (he was large enough to carry her off if he’d been able to get his feet on the ground) and various other things.

So a fairly good day overall. Back tomorrow.

Topic: Nothing today

Of Interest

My wife found [this brief article](#) (with photos and a diagram) of an underground bunker in Georgia (the state) from the Cold War era. Interesting. No dimensions but maybe interesting as an object of research if you have a story set in such a place.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 2042

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2242

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003
Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045

Total fiction words for the month..... 14134
Total fiction words for the year..... 599652
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5950
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 221290

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 820942

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 10/10

[October 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I'm telling you, we can all learn from each other. If you don't believe me, read today's topic.

And, of course, with that in mind, if you have a guest topic or guest post or question (or answer), please lay it on me.

The little girl and I were out and about early this morning (around 3:30), but yowling coyotes and the lop-eared cowdog across the street drove her in about the time I finished my cigar.

I came inside, wrote much of this stuff, then headed back outside (as I promised her) when the big light in the sky came on so we wouldn't freeze. (grin)

Well, I knocked out 2230 words on the novel today. Most of my measuring and dimensions are past and the novel is flying again. I feel good enough about it that I decided to knock off a little early so I can watch a Division Series ballgame that's coming on in a little while.

Back tomorrow.

Topic: Measurements and Dimensions

Got a great email from a respected writer friend last night (Thanks, JGV!) regarding my current WIP. He wrote

What about doing away with the specific dimensions and leaving the images of the structures, etc., up to the reader's imagination unless it's critical to the story? Maybe imply those measurements through dialogue or description like "cramped" or "spacious." (The account of Noah's ark might've worked better without enumerating cubits.)

That's a good and valid point, and as it turns out, he caught me just in time. He made me think.

So when should we include dimensions and when should we not include them? As my friend mentioned, they should be included when they're critical to the story.

That sounds simple, but beneath the surface it's problematic. To at least some degree, the reader determines what is critical and what is not. Omit the dimensions and some readers will find the writing "thin." Include them, and other readers will skip over that part, as I have done occasionally in Heinlein and Asimov novels.

So to expand a bit on the discussion, maybe dimensional details should also be included when they're not critical but still interesting and/or entertaining.

Which leads us to wonder how to determine what is or is not interesting and/or entertaining. To the reader. (Always remember there's a reader on the other end of your writing.)

As I wrote earlier, my friend's email made me think. What I came up with is this question and the following rules of thumb:

Q: What exists within the character's and reader's probable shared area of experience?

1. If the feature you want to describe does NOT exist within the character's and reader's probable shared area of experience (e.g., the layout of a lunar colony), include the dimensions. (Of course, this also assumes significant parts of the story or future stories will take place there.)

2. If the feature DOES exist within the character's and reader's probable shared area of experience (e.g., a bedroom within the lunar colony), do NOT include the dimensions. Here you would opt instead for descriptors like "cramped" or "spacious" because the reader has seen a bedroom and can relate.

I like to think I already knew this, but if I did, I hadn't yet realized that I knew it. I do now, so it's more firmly rooted in my subconscious. That's a Good Thing.

As one other more or less minor consideration, I'm writing into the dark here. I'm allowing the characters to tell the story. (A technique I highly recommend because it's so freeing.)

So say a character wants (or needs) to know specific dimensions as evidenced by her awe at first stepping into a lunar colony. Should I stop the Transition Liaison who appears at her shoulder (having noticed her sense of awe) from delivering a short canned speech regarding the massive dimensions?

No.

The colony is new and wonderful to the character. It's also new and (I hope) wonderful to most readers. So the dimensions are necessary, though probably not critical.

But should I also then drill down to the nitty-gritty and describe in meters and feet and height and width the size of the bedroom in the apartment the character is eventually assigned?

Again, no.

The apartment (living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom) already exists in some form within the character's and reader's shared experience.

So in that case, the character might note (for example) there's barely room for a double bed in the bedroom, much less the seating area and walk-in closet the character enjoyed in her home on Earth. But she doesn't need specific dimensions for that.

And much as people generally disagree with differences between genders in this bizarre day and age, whether or not a character will wonder about dimensional details (and so whether the writer should include them) also goes to the character's gender.

A character who has spent his life excavating sites like the Queen Open-Pit Copper Mine in Bisbee Arizona probably won't wonder at the specific current size of the lunar cavern in which he works. If he does so at all, he probably will do so via comparison (e.g., "cramped" or "spacious" as compared with Queen Mine or some other place he's been).

But if his wife is allowed to visit the worksite, she might well ask questions like, "Wow! How big is this place?" And when he answers, he might well brag. "Well, it's only (insert massive dimensions) but it'll be (insert even larger dimensions) when we're through."

As an added thought, this morning I got another email from another very good writer friend whom I respect a great deal. He recommended writing using whatever measurements I'm comfortable with (feet/yards) to facilitate the flow of the writing. Then I can convert everything afterward to the appropriate unit of measurement. Another excellent idea. Thanks, RJS!

So thanks to my friends for the mental exercise. Overnight I have learned and grown as a writer, and I have JGV and RJS to thank.

I hope this will benefit all of you as well. And maybe spur you to participate.

Of Interest

Nada.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2230

Nonfiction Words: 990 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3220

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045
Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458
Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783
Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901
Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003
Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045
Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275

Total fiction words for the month..... 16364
Total fiction words for the year..... 601882
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6940
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 222280

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 824162

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 10/11](#)

[October 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Normal, typical morning this morning, other than getting up about an hour later than usual. And I had about a two-hour waking up period.

I think maybe I need to start walking again, at least enough to get my energy levels up. I'm guessing maybe a one or two mile walk each day probably wouldn't kill me. Maybe around twilight when the day has cooled a bit.

But I won't report that here other than maybe to say I did it. If that.

I got started late on the writing today, but the novel's coming along. It isn't going to be a quick one though, unless the characters have something in store like a pocket-sized nuclear weapon or something. (grin)

Then again I'm only on Day 8 (writing days) and Day 12 (actual days) so no worries. It seems to be moving a little faster each day, at least so far, and that can only be a good thing.

I played too much on Facebook today, and also answered a veritable ton of email. I might have to remove the Internet from this computer again. Or at least turn it off. When I see one pop up, it's all but impossible for me to not answer it.

I need to put together an email in the next day or two for my former editing clients to let them know I'm copyediting again. And eformatting too, for those who don't want to bother with learning to do it themselves.

Back tomorrow.

Topic: More Stuff on Dimensions (and Description)

One major factor I failed to mention in yesterday's topic is grounding the reader in the scene. Nothing is more important if you want to engage the reader's senses. I think maybe I wrote on grounding the reader (focusing down) awhile back, but I'm too tired to look it up and link to it.

For a few decades now I've taught that few things are more important than engaging the reader. An engaged reader is one who is deep in the story. The engaged reader is down in the trenches, running through the story with the characters.

He can see, hear, smell, touch and taste the setting. When a conversation is occurring, the reader is another character in the story — the Eavesdropper — standing just outside the scene, invisible to the characters, yet listening in on everything they say.

But an eavesdropper can't exist in a bland "white screen" scene. He has to be able to see, hear, smell and otherwise sense the setting.

The veteran writer also engages the reader's — the Eavesdropper's — emotional senses. If the characters are tense, the reader is tense. If the characters are laughing, the reader feels good.

And only focusing down to details through the senses of the characters can accomplish that level of engagement.

In the opening of scene of my very first novel, *Leaving Amarillo*, I wrote

Wes Crowley leaned forward and poked at an ember that had popped out of the campfire a moment earlier. "Been a long trail this time, boys." His attention fixed on the ember, he worked the tip of the stick under the edge nearest him, then flipped it backward into the fire. A few sparks released. "Sure lookin' forward to gettin' back."

If I had it to do over again, with what I know now, I'd have added more sensory detail. The opening scene would read something like this:

Wes Crowley leaned forward and poked with a stick at an ember that had popped out of the campfire a moment earlier. "Been a long trail this time, boys."

His attention fixed on the ember, he worked the tip of the stick under the edge nearest him. The heat singed his knuckles, and he flipped the ember backward into the fire. A few sparks released, drifting upward on the smell of burned creosote. "Sure lookin' forward to gettin' back."

(Notice the paragraphing is different too.)

There are no dimensions here, and none are necessary. No need to describe the diameter or length of the stick. No need to discuss the campfire dimensions, or the size of the rocks (if there are any), etc.

On the other hand, the added details (the heat singeing his knuckles, the visual of the sparks drifting upward, the smell of burned creosote) will enable the reader to get that much closer to the campfire.

At least that's my theorem. (grin)

In case you're wondering, no, I won't go back and add to that scene in Book 4 of the Wes Crowley series (the first I wrote ended up being the fourth in the series). I'm too old to spend any time moving backward.

When I put together the 10-novel collection in one book though, I did re-do some paragraphing so it reads more smoothly. (grin)

So it really is a balancing act. Too much detail (dimensional or otherwise) will cause the reader to skip over a scene. Too little will cause the reader to lose interest and find something better to do, like poking himself in the eye with a needle.

So I focus down to the details. But for me it's easy, mostly. For me, as I mentioned yesterday, it all comes back to what the characters need or want to know. And the characters themselves tell the writer that as the story unfolds.

Of course, whether to include details and what kind of details to include also depends on the type of story.

Two lovers are strolling hand in hand looking up at the moon. She says, "It's really beautiful, isn't it?"

And all the guy can think of to say, "Yes, and y'know, it's 296,000 miles away. The trip would take three days."

Probably she won't see him again, y'think? It's like the commercial currently running on TV for a body spray: "Know when to shhh."

But say a woman in an SF story walks for the first time into the core of a lunar colony, puts her hand to her mouth and says, "Wow!"

Then her husband, who's a guy and whose job is excavating such constructs, probably is going to say, "Really something, isn't it? It's a quarter-kilometer across. And it's almost a half-mile around."

Are those dimensions critical to the story? Um, no.

Are they relevant? Yes, because one character was awed by the scene and the other saw a chance to try to impress her. Braggadocio are us.

So the final verdict on whether and when to include description (including dimensions)?

Eh. Just do the best you can at your current level of knowledge on your current WIP, then publish it, and move on to the next WIP.

Of Interest

Dean's back with [New Stuff](#). Interesting discussion re his upcoming series of topics on Self-Sabotage.

And I forgot yesterday to advertise Kristine Kathryn Rusch's Free Fiction Monday story. Check it out.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3112

Nonfiction Words: 1080 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4192

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045
Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458
Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783
Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901
Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003
Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045
Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275
Day 8..... 3112 words. Total words to date..... 16387

Total fiction words for the month..... 19476

Total fiction words for the year..... 604994

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8020

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 223360

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 828354

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 10/12](#)

[October 12, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Started late again today. Just piddling. Once I got started, the story moved along well.

Gonna post this and go watch some baseball.

Back tomorrow.

Topic: How to Be Original

Okay, the short answer is allow your subconscious to tell the story. Don't "polish" so your stuff looks like everyone else's. Just do the best you can at your current level of skill and let the work stand on its own.

But some folks never reach that point.

Recently a writer emailed me with a question:

A story I'm attempting to critique, consisting of mostly dialogue, is driving me crazy with the absence of ANY quotation marks. Is this a new trend?

Unfortunately, I've heard this before. When I was teaching a Punctuation for Writers seminar, and pretty much any other time I mentioned that dialogue should be enclosed within quotation marks, I heard a similar question often:

"Well, Carson McCullers didn't use quotation marks, so why do I have to?"

Okay, first of all, a writer certainly doesn't "have to" do anything. It's up to the writer.

BUT the opening quotation mark indicates subliminally to the reader that what he's about to read is spoken aloud. That's why. And the closing quotation mark turns that off. Duh.

And omitting all quotation marks serves NO beneficial purpose and is a serious threat to confuse the snot out of the reader.

So as I told the writer, no, this isn't a trend, and it shouldn't be.

Where did it start?

Someone noticed that Carson McCuller wrote that way in ONE of his many novels. So it's kind of a new fad a lot of people are chasing in an attempt to be "original."

And again, Carson McCullers did it in ONE BOOK for some stupid reason. And what about all the MILLIONS of books that have been written WITH quotation marks?

Plus, if you're going to do away with quotation marks, why not do away with periods and question marks too? Why not do away with commas and semicolons and em dashes?

Just think, you could write the first-ever completely interactive novel. Omit all punctuation. Force the reader to participate in the writing of the story by allowing (forcing) him or her to punctuate it as he or she sees fit.

But that's silly, isn't it? We can't possibly omit all punctuation. After all, periods and commas and question marks serve a purpose.

Yeah. And so do quotation marks.

And I've heard folks actually say, "But I don't like quotation marks." Seriously?

Okay, but this isn't a matter of "liking" or "disliking" quotation marks. It's all about the writer's own ego.

If you just want to be a storyteller and entertain people, then write your stories and entertain people.

If you choose to draw the reader's attention away from the story to wonder why you didn't use quotation marks, well, rest easy. Your work most definitely will get the audience it deserves.

And really, it's all up to you. You don't "have" to do anything. If in your estimation, You are more important than the story, then go ahead and omit quotation marks and whatever else you think will cause people to consider you an "artiste."

Personally, I'd much rather folks be standing around the water cooler or break room talking about my STORY instead of arguing about whether I'm "cutting edge" because I intentionally omitted quotation marks.

Besides, I want my work to be original, truly original, not a cheap knock-off of something someone else already did.

Just sayin'.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [A Celebration](#).

And as Dean will probably mention tomorrow, [The October 2016 Author Earnings Report](#) is out today. Very interesting.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 3048

Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3598

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045
Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458
Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783
Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901
Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003
Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045
Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275
Day 8..... 3112 words. Total words to date..... 16387
Day 9..... 3048 words. Total words to date..... 19435

Total fiction words for the month..... 22524

Total fiction words for the year..... 608042

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8570

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 223910

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 831952

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 10/13](#)

[October 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

In case anyone's interested, I've decided to publish this Journal as an ebook in January 2017.

I've also decided to leave it as-is, other than removing any photos (a single click using the Find & Replace tool). Originally I was going to go through, select only the topics and the more interesting introductions, and publish that.

I changed my mind for four reasons:

1. Frankly, gleaning all that stuff and putting it together in a new book is far too much work, and

2. I believe many readers will enjoy seeing my struggles juxtaposed with my achievements, how long it took to write individual works and watching my monthly and annual numbers grow. I hope those numbers will even serve as a catalyst to a few writers.

3. Many people are attracted by the notion of getting to see behind-the-scenes “rough” footage. Those are the same folks who prefer to listen to a live concert album vs. a polished studio album. I’m one of them.

4. I don’t think anyone’s ever done this before, at least to this extent.

As you might imagine, the book will be huge.

As of yesterday, my Word copy of the Journal (for only this calendar year) was over 260,500 words. So using the monthly mean as a standard, I expect it to come in at around 320,000 words. (My annual total for nonfiction below is a short novel’s worth of words below that number because I don’t count anything I’ve written previously, guest posts, etc.)

Also, for this book I’ll break with my usual publishing pattern and offer it for advance sales. In fact, I’ll probably make the official release date January 15. Amazon has to have the final file no less than 10 days before the release date, and Smashwords has a similar policy.

I think the big part of marketing this one will be writing effective blurbs and a good description. And pricing it right. Probably I’ll set it at \$9.99.

I would gladly pay \$10 for a year of Journal entries by a professional writer. Especially if that Journal was chock full of actual numbers, “Of Interest” links and topics on writing. But I guess we’ll see. (grin)

Finally, I’ll probably add a bibliography of novels, novellas, short story collections and short stories at the end. Along with a note, of course, that they can be purchased via StoneThread Publishing and all the usual ebook venues, as well as paper for some of the novels and short story collections.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding any of the above, please either leave a comment at the site or email me. As I hope you know by now, I welcome and value your input.

Anyway, to the novel.

Added less than I had hoped to the novel today, but it’s still coming along. At least it’s almost out of novella range. (grin)

Also I was visited by four red-tail hawks for about 15 minutes. They put on quite a show even after I ran in the house and grabbed my camera.

Hmm. It just dawned on me I didn’t write a story this week yet. Reckon I’ll do that tomorrow.

Topic: Nothing for today other than the stuff above.

Of Interest

Not really much over at Dean's place, other than talking about a new Thriller bundle he's in.

My own next free story of the week, "The Necklace," will post tomorrow at HarveyStanbrough.com a little after 6 a.m. Arizona time. So after you get this but before you get tomorrow's Journal.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2829

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3389

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045
Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458
Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783
Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901
Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003
Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045
Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275
Day 8..... 3112 words. Total words to date..... 16387
Day 9..... 3048 words. Total words to date..... 19435
Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264

Total fiction words for the month..... 25353

Total fiction words for the year..... 610871

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9130

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 224470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 835341

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 10/14

[October 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

When I first started to head outside about 5 a.m., an owl screeched. My little girl cat was already out. She'd been out for about two minutes. Just long enough to jump the fence despite my daily warning not to.

I ran for my flashlight, then back outside. I spotted the owl atop a telephone pole about 70 feet away. (I know it's close to 70 feet because I strung a 100-foot extension cord past it when I was putting together my Adobe Hovel office.)

The owl's screech is not a beautiful, frightening, fingernails-on-a-chalboard screech like that of the red-tail hawks who came to visit yesterday. The owl's screech is a squat, jarring, ugly sound that seems a mixture of the voices of all his recent victims. It's Alfred Hitchcock turned sideways and standing there dead.

Owls see very well in the dark. Even better by starlight and moonlight. And my little girl was out there.

Frantically, I hollered her name.

And she rubbed the back of my leg. She had obeyed my initial request that she stay in the yard. Thank goodness.

So I went back inside (with her and the other two) for awhile. Until the owl moves on. She (the little girl) isn't pleased about it, but are children ever pleased when you're trying to keep them safe and that means keeping them confined for awhile?

* * *

Thanks to ND in Shreveport and JVG in Texas for trusting me enough to tell me what they think of this Journal. One told me awhile back it was becoming "personable" in a good way (I think that's the word that was used) and the other told me recently it was becoming less "fun."

Two notes that said opposite ends of the same thing. I consider that a trend. I see those two folks as saying what another 80% or so are thinking. And both mentioned as examples the little bits I occasionally share about coyotes, owls, the little girl cat, etc.

I had never thought of the Journal as an entertainment venue or a source of fun. The personal tidbits regarding my "new" 4-Runner or my little girl or the coyotes or my massacre of the ants were just things I mentioned in relation to the writing. They were not writing things; they were things that interrupted the writing.

Frankly, I was always afraid those things bored you. Like I'm bored when I go to DWS's site to see/hear more about writing and all I get is how far he ran that day or how many movie posters he picked up. I'm not criticizing. I admire the man for his accomplishments. But that stuff isn't my cuppa.

Now, when he talks about his writer meetings/luncheons or a new seminar coming up and how he and Kris planned it, that's interesting to me.

But the completely non-writing stuff? It's a little interesting, sometimes, maybe, but I went there to advance my craft.

If his daily blog was suddenly about nothing but his stores and his running and his other non-writing stuff, I probably would never visit again.

It's no secret that I stole (blatantly) the idea for this Journal from DWS. But the writing was the big thrust of this thing. In my view, you and I have a symbiotic relationship. I give you writing tips and you help me hold myself accountable. (It's easier to hold myself accountable for my writing when I tell someone else.)

But I finally get it, I think. Maybe the lack of personal stuff is why only around half the subscribers open the Journal when it comes in their email.

This Journal has evolved over the past two years. Now it will evolve again.

First, the specific "Topic" will occur less often. For the very few of you who view me as I view DWS, you'll glean your own writing tips from all the other stuff I put in here anyway. For everyone else, well, I'll add a Topic back in when I feel I have something to say that maybe you don't already know. (If you ask questions, privately via email or in the comments, I'll almost certainly address those in Topics.)

Also, from now on I'll try to remember this is a glimpse into my LIFE as a writer (vs. my life as a WRITER). That's a major re-realization for me. I mean, even my children are subscribed to this thing, and I assume they want to know what the old man's doing.

But bear with me, please.

It ain't easy, churning this thing out day after day. It's enjoyable, but not easy, especially given that my focus is on writing fiction. Most people who write blogs like this post them weekly or less often.

I probably won't go back to the hour by hour accounting. Frankly, that was too much to worry about and I seriously doubt anyone was interested. If it's anything important, it will be included in the daily accounting in more generic terms: e.g., "got up late" or "trip scheduled" stuff like that.

In the meantime, Please, if you don't care either way about the numbers, Don't Read That Part. When you encounter "Today's Writing" below, read it as "Stop Here." (grin) That part's primarily for me anyway. That's why I put it at the bottom.

And if you DO enjoy the numbers or if you DO enjoy the topics on writing or if you DO enjoy the daily trivia, please tell others.

For today, now that I've hammered out all of this (got up late at 4:30, checked email, began on this post, it's now 6:45) I have to write a short story. I prefer to finish before 11 a.m.-ish because my buddy Dan is gonna stop by for pizza and a cigar on his way through to somewhere or other.

Dan stopped by for about two hours. Enjoyed pizza and a couple of good cigars. Back to the story at around 1:30.

Finished with the story. Odd little convoluted thing. It will post on the main site on December 2.

Sometime today I hope to also pre-publish the nonfiction book I mentioned yesterday. A year of this blog. Weeshul C.

So talk with you again tomorrow. As always, thanks for being there.

Topic: If you haven't already (and if it's of interest to you), check out Prepping to Epublish <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/prepping-to-epublish/>.

Of Interest

Kris Rusch's Business Musings is good: [Define Yourself](#). The meat starts about halfway through. But it's all good.

I found a new resource. See [The Writer's Guide to Weapons](#). This will go in the Writers' Resources section of my main website as well.

Nothing at Dean's place today. Flickering lights, impending power outage (maybe).

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2062

Nonfiction Words: 1070 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3132

Writing of "The Man with the Finger and the Rank" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2062 words. Total words to date..... 2062 (done)

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003

Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045

Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275
Day 8..... 3112 words. Total words to date..... 16387
Day 9..... 3048 words. Total words to date..... 19435
Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 27415
Total fiction words for the year..... 612933
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 225540

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 838473

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writers' Resources](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 10/15

[October 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I finally finished Heinlein's short novel "If This Goes On..." yesterday. I try, sometimes successfully, to squeeze in an hour or so of reading for pleasure each day.

"If This Goes On..." is in the old collection I mentioned here awhile back (The Past Through the Future). It was a good story, but I was disappointed with the ending. Seems there wasn't one. It was as if he just stopped writing.

This evoked two responses from me. As a reader, I was a little annoyed. Only a little. It was still a good story.

But as a writer, I was bouyed in a perverse way. Sometimes even the greats "just stop writing," no doubt where they believe the end has occurred. Or maybe he just got tired of the characters or where the thing was going.

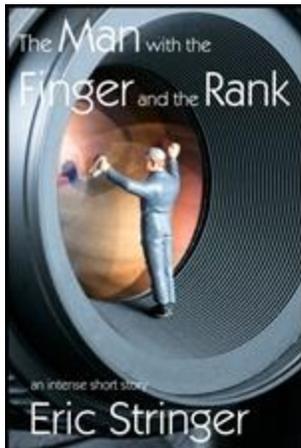
There was a massive climactic battle scene. That worked very well. But two things worked against an appropriate ending.

1. The reader suspects at least most of the way through the novel how it will climax (not end, but climax).
2. There was no denouement. No wrapping up. No scene to tell the reader it's all right to close the book and go do something else. It was a bit unnerving. Rather like reading a sentence that doesn't end quite the way you potato.

* * *

Rolled out late again at 4. The little girl and I played outside for awhile. Which is to say she played while I sat in one spot and froze (low 40s) while enjoying a cigar and checking email etc. Normal stuff.

I haven't been posting pictures often here because I don't take a lot of pictures, when I do I post them to Facebook, and it's time consuming. (grin) I have a large-format DSLR camera, so I have to crop and/or resize everything before I post it.



However, I've decided I'll post my ebook covers here just in case they interest you. So here's the cover for the story I finished yesterday.

And on the right is a photo of one of the red-tail hawks who blessed me with a visit a couple days ago.

Got a really good, hot shower this morning. I heard cleanliness is next



to godliness and I wanted to see how the other half live.

Or maybe that's just a really good line that occurred to me.

Remember that I am a professional fiction writer. Don't be surprised if I lie to you. Duh.

Back to the novel today. With even an average day of writing it will move from the novella realm into the novel realm today.

* * *

Well, I didn't go right back to the novel. Around 8 I chose to bite the bullet on the nonfiction book I want to publish on January 15, 2017. So I did some prep work.

First, a title. I'm calling it The Professional Fiction Writer | A Year in the Life. It's a Stippled Page publication (an imprint of StoneThread Publishing). I roughly formatted it (what I have of it so far) so I could submit something. Of course, I'll replace that file with the clean one around January 1, 2017.

I wrote a long description (came out to 252 words), derived from that a short description (65 words), then came up with seven search terms (writer's reference, writer's resource, writing tips, writer's links, professional writer, writing short fiction, writing novels).

I put all of that in a Promo document. I've talked about the value of a promo document here before. Then I created a "fill-in" cover, just something to upload for now.

Then I made the whole thing available for preorder on D2D and Smashwords. I have to wait until tomorrow to publish it to Amazon because they're accepting pre-orders only up until January 14, and of course I want this to go out on January FIFteenth.

Sigh. One more reason I'm so very pleased to offer my work through several distributors instead of only Amazon.

Okay, now finally to a cigar and the novel.

* * *

Well, I was telling Dan yesterday the novel is dragging. I mentioned here earlier I felt like maybe I was writing two novels at one time. My stuff doesn't usually get that divergent, that convoluted. Maybe I'm holding onto something from ealier that I should have let go.

I didn't write a word on Snubbing the Gods (aka privately known as Arzachel 2, after the crater on the south side of the moon just west of the meridian). If you have binoculars or a moon map you can see it. It's due north and slightly east of the more popular Tycho.

But that writing gave birth to another. I started writing Consensus today. Not sure what it'll be, but writing it is pure fun.

I'll leave Snubbing the Gods below for awhile in case it wakes up. If not it will disappear. I hate breaking Heinlein's Rules (#2). Then again, he broke them on occasion himself.

It's already 3 p.m. I'm gonna write awhile longer, then file this report. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Topic: Nothing today other than the stuff north of here.

Of Interest

To follow me on Facebook click <https://www.facebook.com/harvey.stanbrough> and “Friend” me. Then hover your cursor over the little “Friends” box on the bottom right of the cover photo (the wide photo) and check Get Notifications. That’s all there is to it.

Oh, I get a little political on there. If you don’t like that, you can also find me at <https://www.facebook.com/AuthorStanbrough/> and <https://www.facebook.com/orderSTP/>.

Otherwise, nada.

Today’s Writing

Fiction Words: 1833

Nonfiction Words: 930 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2763

Writing of Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003

Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045

Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275

Day 8..... 3112 words. Total words to date..... 16387

Day 9..... 3048 words. Total words to date..... 19435

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264

Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 29498

Total fiction words for the year..... 615016

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11130

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 226470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 841486

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 10/16

[October 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, not a lot to report this morning. Crows about the area, strangely paired off (like the hawks the past two days) although it isn't the season for pairing off as far as I know. Isn't that reserved for the spring?

The little girl escaped the yard this morning, but she was smart about it. She hid beneath a bramble bush where nothing could get at her.

When she came back inside, walked over and rubbed my legs to say hello, I picked her up and calmly threatened her with kitty whippin's if she doesn't stay in the yard. Then I hugged her and put her down. The girl is a blessing.

It's an agreement we have. I issue empty threats, she ignores them. But I'm certain she leaves the yard less often than she otherwise would. Everything is as it should be.

* * *

Not to jinx the thing, but I have a sneaking suspicion (only 4100 words in) that The Consensus is going to be a novel. And it's very odd.

It's springing from my mind and through my fingertips as fast as I can write, yet it's leaving me room to think as well. Most often I write 250 or 500 or 1000 words then cycle back and add in something the characters are pressing into my fingers. Something they wanted me to add earlier but I missed. I'm happy as a hog in slop and the other hogs all asleep.

I'm hoping the glory of my July (102,000 words) and August (105,000) is returning to me. But I'm also thinking maybe I need to reinstate my daily word goal. I didn't always meet it, but it kept me focused.

So beginning tomorrow, I'm back to a daily goal of 3,000 words of new fiction per day. And remember, what matters in this gig is averages. But setting and striving for a goal helps me reach a better average.

My bride just came out (I'm at the outside desk) to tell me the second game of the ALCS (Cubs, Dodgers) will begin at 3. So there's my deadline for today.

I read what I've written thus far to my bride and she liked it. I do too. I also listened as she read from a memoir she's putting together. Great fun.

Closing it out for the day at 2:30 with a little over 2000 publication-ready words. This is an exciting story. (grin)

Just My Take

Football. I was a passable running back and a pretty good left defensive end (I was small but quick off the line) in my day. As a result, I've always been a football fan, especially of the SEC colleges and with a few select Big 10 and Big 12 teams thrown in for good measure.

But I was also a fan of certain teams in the NFL. For example, I favored the Colts during P. Manning's entire tenure, and my current personal favorites are Green Bay, Denver (despite Kubiak) and New Orleans.

However, until the NFL schools their more spoiled rich kids in basic manners, I won't watch another NFL game. I see no reason to give them my unearned and undeserved attention when some of them refuse to show respect for the flag, the armed forces and first responders, and the National Anthem.

Do they have a right to be disrespectful spitwads to the very people and standards that ensure their way of life?

Yes. Yes they do. But like all spoiled children (and parents of spoiled children, in the case of the NFL owners), they sorely need to learn it works both ways.

Now back to my escape from Bizarro World to The Consensus for awhile.

Played too much on Facebook etc. today. Writing in spurts.

Of Interest

Dean's post on [Workshops](#) was good for me for a comment he made regarding the month of October.

In a comment on his post (but because of a glitch I think it might appear on his Coast Workshops tab), I wrote

Isn't it odd how that works? After over 102,000 words of fiction in July and over 105,000 in August, my September fell away with just less than 50,000, and halfway through October I've hit only 30,000 (and stalled hard on a story 22,000 words in... ugh). Sometimes the magic just doesn't work. The secret, for me, in addition to enjoying the playtime, is to remember I've been there before so I know I can get there again.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2304

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2994

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833

Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (working title, badly stalled)

Day 1..... 1045 words. Total words to date..... 1045

Day 2..... 2413 words. Total words to date..... 3458

Day 3..... 3325 words. Total words to date..... 6783

Day 4..... 1118 words. Total words to date..... 7901

Day 5..... 1102 words. Total words to date..... 9003

Day 6..... 2042 words. Total words to date..... 11045

Day 7..... 2230 words. Total words to date..... 13275

Day 8..... 3112 words. Total words to date..... 16387

Day 9..... 3048 words. Total words to date..... 19435

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264

Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 31802

Total fiction words for the year..... 617320

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11820

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 227160

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 844480

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 10/17](#)

[October 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, up a little before 4 after a late night watching the game and then a new Brit show that just started on PBS. Well-written show called The Durrells on Corfu.

Outside to freeze with a cigar (low 40s) and be serenaded by some seriously off-tune coyotes.

I wrote everything below by about 9:30. I also posted the topic below to my main blog for release on October 25, so that took a little while.

Now I'm on my way in to change out of my sweats and long woolies and into my another-day-in-the-desert clothes. Then to a day with The Consensus.

Well, I honestly expected a good day of writing, but it didn't turn out that way. I won't bore you with details. Suffice it to say there was a whole thing with trying to renew some of my domain names (for my personas' websites) and some other stuff.

Still, the new daily goal I reinstated on myself works.

I almost tossed in the towel early, at around 3. But I would either have had to count today as a non-writing day or put down a disgustingly small word count.

When I remembered I had reinstated my daily goal, I went back to the story, put my fingers on the keyboard, and wrote the first thing that came to mind. Then I wrote the next sentence, then the next sentence and so on. (Writing into the dark, anyone?)

And it worked. You'll see the result below. Had I stopped when I was going to and hadn't called it a non-writing day, the count would have been a very small three-digit number.

But armed with the need to hit a daily word count goal and the knowledge that I can write right up until around 4:30 or 4:45 (ACLS tonight at 5) I kept going. Still didn't hit my daily goal, but I came a lot closer.

Vive le daily goal. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Topic: NaNoWriMo (yawn, stretch)

A friend sent me some information re the upcoming NaNoWriMo annual "challenge."

In case you're interested, the link is [Tips for Surviving the Agony and Ecstasy of NaNoWriMo](#). There, I've done my civic duty. Now I can play a bit.

Okay, first, how about that title, eh? I mean, seriously, "The Agony and Ecstasy"? Does that evoke a picture of a poor, beleaguered, suffering-for-his-art writer with one forearm flung dramatically across his forehead or what? (grin)

I'm joking. Really. I don't knock anyone who does NaNoWriMo. I know a few writers I respect a great deal who take part every year. (One is Sam, one is Ann and one is Dawn. There are probably others, and that's fine.)

My friend also mentioned that NaNoWriMo is very similar to WITD (Writing Into the Dark).

Well, sorry, but it isn't. The only way it even approximates WITD is that there are words involved.

WITD practitioners strive to write clean copy the first time through (including cycling while in creative mind). I'm not even saying WITD is "better," but it is definitely different. These things aren't even cousins, unless they're very distant cousins.

NaNoWriMo participants aren't called upon to create anything of value. They're called upon to put down 50,000 consecutive words in a month (about 1667 words per day) with the premeditated intention of going back to "fix" it sometime in the future.

I suspect that's because it's loosely tied to (and therefore encourages) the harmful notion that it takes much longer than a month to write a quality 50,000 word novel. (And where'd they come up with that arbitrary 50,000 words?)

For that reason alone, I personally don't see NaNo as a valid challenge. It's designed to get the participants started, and then they have eleven months to "clean up" what they wrote before the next NaNo begins.

To me, that's a lot of silly extra work. And chances are the cleanup will do more harm to the novel than good.

Still, that NaNoWriMo "gets people started" might be the one good thing about it.

Then again, what's wrong with simply not writing if you don't have the driving desire to write?

The answer is, Nothing.

And how much is the world harmed if people don't write because they don't have that driving desire?

The answer is, About as much as it's harmed (or helped) when an actual writer finishes a novel and moves on to the next one. Not at all.

Now I DO like the goal aspect of NaNo.

But again, there's a downside. Realistically, anyone could do the same thing in any given month.

Yeah, I know November is National Novel Writing Month (hence NaNoWriMo), but so what? It could as easily have been any of the other months. Or all of them.

I mean, what's to keep NaNo participants from setting a goal of writing a 50,000 word novel in ANY month? Or, for that matter, EVERY month?

For example, my goal for this calendar year remains 12 finished, published novels. The difference is that I'll write each novel cleanly the first time through, then let it go (WITD).

So why not do it in conjunction with NaNoWriMo, report my numbers, etc?

Because when I do it on my own (again, just my preference), I don't have to hear other voices spouting nonsense about writing rough first drafts, etc. (Some — not all, but some — even advocate “free writing” during NaNo: intentionally not giving a thought to capitalization, punctuation, etc. in favor of speed.)

What would really impress me is to see someone other than [Dean Wesley Smith](#) (even me) make it through JaNoWriMo, FebNoWriMo, MarNoWriMo, ApNoWriMo, MayNoWriMo, JuNoWriMo, JulNoWriMo, AugNoWriMo, SepNoWriMo, OcNoWriMo, NovNoWriMo, and DecNoWriMo with a published novel to show for each session.

Anyway, I've already blown my chance at that one with no novels finished in February, March and September of this year. But my goal for next year is already set: at least one completed novel per month and fifteen on the year. (grin)

And if anyone cares to join me in any given month, just holler.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, maybe beating a dead horse with [Trust the Reader](#). But check it out. You might find a gem or two.

It's [Free Fiction Monday](#) over at Kris's site. As I write this, the story from last week is still up but the new one should be there by the time this posts.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 2465

Nonfiction Words: 1060 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3525

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833

Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137

Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602

Total fiction words for the month..... 34267

Total fiction words for the year..... 619785

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12880

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 228220

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 848005

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 10/18

[October 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Mona found a kitty whisker from my little girl under my pillow this morning. ('Bit sleeps curled up under my chin each night.) Mona came out with it and said, "Look. 'Bit was waiting for the whisker fairy." (grin)

There's going to be a free online indie author business conference on October 22. For details, see "Of Interest" below. Lot of stuff there.

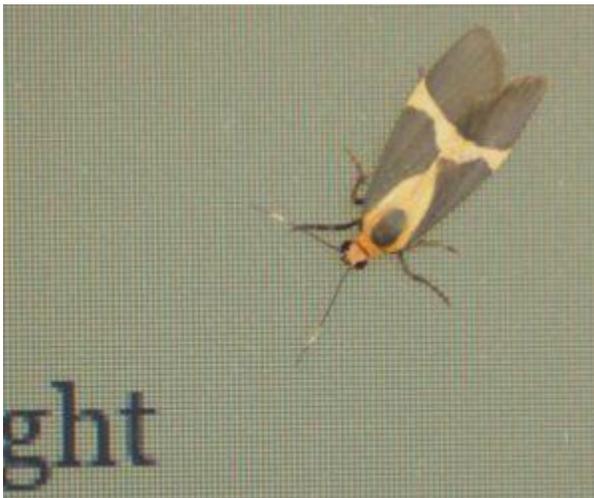
Frittered away much of the early morning on Facebook.

Which reminded me, my wife checked our passports a couple days ago and found mine expires in less than two months. So I spent some time online this morning reading requirements and then downloading the renewal form.

In case you're in a similar fix, the passport "book" costs \$110 (but it's good for ten years). The card costs only \$30, but you can use it only for non-air international travel and only to Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean and Bermuda.

I'll be renewing the book. I figure \$11 a year isn't all that bad.

As I reported on Facebook, I was writing along fine on my WIP at about 9:30 when a friend stopped by to visit.



Here are a couple of pictures.

I left the type on the first photo (the font is Georgia, 10 point) so you could see how tiny this creature is.

In the second photo, the background is a folder icon on my desktop.

When it flew away, the undersides of its wings were a vibrant, international orange.



Of Interest

First, some great comments on Dean's [Trust the Reader](#).

Second (again from Dean), you can listen to or read a transcription of [An Interview with Kevin J. Anderson](#) or watch the interview on [YouTube](#).

I also recommend you spend some time looking around on [The Creative Penn](#). Good resource.

From The Creative Penn, "Also, make sure you check out the [Indie Author Fringe](#) this coming week, a free online conference from the Alliance of Independent Authors." Yeah, free? I'll be attending.

Today's Writing

I decided to try putting the writing stuff down here in "Today's Writing." Duh. We'll see how that works out.

I wrote pretty much continually (off and on) from about 9 this morning until 1 and managed only around 2000 words. Ugh. Yet the story is moving along nicely, so no real complaints.

I ate lunch, then took a break to finish reading a Heinlein novella and begin reading a short story, then returned to the writing around 2. By 3, I had another 1300 words.

So 2000 words in four hours, and another 1300 in one hour. Maybe there's something to this calming down and taking breaks stuff Dean preaches all the time. (grin)

Stopped for a few minutes to add to this Journal (just the writing stuff down here) and now to take a short walk.

The walk turned out to be a little longer than I expected. I realized I hadn't seen the little girl for awhile. She's so tiny she can hide pretty much anywhere. As is often the case, she finally walked out from underneath some brush and found me.

I'm not entirely sure what I would do without her.

One ballgame or another is on probably at 5 this afternoon, so I'll turn-to for about another hour of writing, then call it a day. Right now I'm at a "natural stopping point," and that's probably the worst possible place to stop. I'd have to come back to a blank page. So I'll finish the chapter I'm working on now, then begin a new one before I stop for the day.

Sure glad I sat down yesterday, put my fingers on the keyboard, and just wrote the next sentence. If I hadn't, this one might have been dead in the water too.

Also I know I can pull a short story for this week too out of what I've written in the past two days. So the pressure's off there. Maybe even the first of a series of short stories. "The Edge of Time" series. Hmm.

Okay, a little over 1100 more words in another hour. A good day.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 4418

Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5048

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833

Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137

Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602

Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020

Total fiction words for the month..... 38685

Total fiction words for the year..... 624203

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13510

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 228850

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 853053

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alliance of Independent Authors](#), [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Indie Author Fringe](#), [Kevin J. Anderson](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Creative Penn](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 10/19

[October 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, a slightly atypical morning this morning, and a very short post. I won't elaborate because I don't want to write it down. Suffice to say it had to do with killing something to put it out of its misery.

Working on laundry this morning, and this, and writing. The ALCS Game 5 comes on at 1 my time, the NLCS Game 4 at 5. I'm pulling for Toronto and the Cubs.

Despite my intention to stop writing in time to watch the games, I didn't get started until 10.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, a couple of interesting comments on the [Kevin J. Anderson interview](#). If you haven't read/listened to/watched the interview yet, I encourage you to do so. You can find links in yesterday's Journal.

In today's post, Dean talks a little about revising his website. If you need any help with your own website, please feel free to email me with questions. I'm pretty good at that stuff. And I'm always open to handing out advice or discussing things with like minds.

Today's Writing

Started writing late, around 10:30, and by 12:30 (only a few minutes' break) I had 2300 words. So it's going well.

By 12:55 I had another 400 words. I'm going to watch the game for a while. If I'm not back, it's still a pretty good day. I'll take it. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2701

Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2931

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721

Total fiction words for the month..... 41386
Total fiction words for the year..... 626904
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13740
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 229080

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 855984

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 10/20

[October 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, for awhile I entertained the notion that I was going to make the transition from a summer schedule (up at 2 or 3, to bed at 8 or so) to a schedule more suited for winter (up at 5, to bed at 9 or 10).

But I guess that isn't going to happen. Looks like my body clock has settled on a hybrid schedule. To bed at 8, 9, or 10 and up at 2 or 3 or 4. And the former seems to have no relationship to or effect on the latter.

I was glad to see the Cubs win the game last night. I hope they carry whatever magic that was over to the next game.

I rolled out at 3 this morning after waking at 2:30. Went outside almost immediately with the little girl. She much prefers doing her business outside, and who am I to argue? I only want her to remain safe.

Played on the Internet awhile, read Kris' post, some other stuff. I went inside at about 5 to see what time the ballgame was on this afternoon. Twelve hours from now. Lots of time to write, read and do other things.

I came back out, wrote for a little while (mostly cycling, adding details). Then I slipped up. I responded to some email, read a newsletter, then sidetracked myself and watched a 20 minute video on a news program.

The video featured three men — an Army Ranger, a Navy Seal and a Marine — who were in Benghazi at the CIA compound. Against a direct order to stand down (do nothing), they ran to the villa to try to save the ambassador and the others.

Those same three men later co-authored the book that became the movie “13 Hours.”

I understand there are contradictory reports about that order to stand down. However, I know men like those and I believe them. Others are free, of course, to believe whatever they like.

For me there’s a single litmus test when trying to determine who’s lying and who’s not. I ask myself one question: Which person stands to gain something by lying? Always, every time, that’s the one who’s lying.

Anyway, that derailed my urge (or maybe my ability) to write for awhile. I’m took a break. Despite Kris’ blog post (see [Of Interest](#)), sometimes writing doesn’t seem all that important.

Don’t get me wrong. This isn’t about politics. It isn’t so superficial as all that.

Of Interest

I urge everyone to read Kris’s post, [The Importance of Fiction](#). I hope it helps you more than it helped me, at least on this day.

Today’s Writing

Started writing this morning at 5:30. Stopped around 6 to make coffee, get breakfast, etc. Long break, waiting inside for the cold to abate, checked a website for glitches for a friend, etc.

Back to writing at 8. I created a Notes and Names text document (similar to a reverse outline) for my current WIP, and did some cycling through. Almost slipped into conscious mind stuff for a bit, but staved it off and started a new scene.

Then I took a short Internet break and allowed myself to be sidetracked (see above).

Now it’s after noon and I’m back. I still have Benghazi in my mind, but I don’t want to make this a non-writing day. I don’t want to allow my ire over liars and traitors to derail me. They aren’t worth it.

So I’m going to put my fingers on the keyboard, start another new scene, and write what comes. Whatever it takes, right?

Stopped writing at 4 p.m. with just over my daily goal. I’ll take it, given the day.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3010

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3610

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731

Total fiction words for the month..... 44396
Total fiction words for the year..... 629914
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14340
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 229680

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 859594

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 10/21

[October 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Rolled out way late at quarter-to-five this morning. Woke up at 2:30 but just kept going back to drowse mode. I have to do that every now and then (can I get an amen?).

I checked the Internet, came up to current on Facebook, and started a post for the publisher's newsletter over at StoneThread Publishing. (It will go out to a small list in a week or so.)

In doing that, I also found some problems at Amazon and Smashwords (see below). I'll have to rectify the Smashwords problem in the next few days. Only Jeff Bezos can rectify the Amazon problem, and something tells me he won't.

By the time I got through all of that, it was after 8 a.m. My wife will head away to her day job at around 8:30, and I'll head away to mine.

Song dogs were out in force this morning, and close enough to see. The baby girl passed me, headed for the door in low kilter, as I walked from my outside desk into the back yard to see whether I could spot them.

One of them, as I watched, stopped, rocked his head back and howled like a wolf starring in a movie. Picture perfect. Of course I didn't have my camera.

So now I have a crow (a massive thing with probably a four-foot wingspan) who believes himself a hawk and a coyote who believes himself a wolf. It's a beautiful world. As long as Hawk stays up there and Wolf stays out there.

You will remember I already uploaded the draft version of *The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life* to Smashwords and Draft 2 Digital.

I couldn't upload the file to Amazon at the time because January 15 was not yet available as a release date.

I went back to Amazon this morning to upload the file and got a surprise.

Even though the option to "Upload a Draft" is still available, when I tried to do so a brief nastygram popped up saying Amazon no longer allows Draft uploads. To make the book available for preorder, I have to upload the final draft.

Of course, the final draft of this book won't be available until after December 31 (the final Journal entry for the year) so that's an impossible request. So I can't make it available for preorder at Amazon until early January. Which means it won't be available for preorder on Amazon at all. Groan.

So when the final version is formatted and clean, I'll still publish to Amazon, but not as a preorder. Then, on whatever day I push it to Amazon, I'll also select "publish now" at Smashwords at D2D. Sigh. Good ol' Amazon. Anything to make the writer/publisher's job more difficult.

It does not speak highly of me that I am grateful Jeff Bezos is not currently within reach. If he were, I would be asking for bail money.

Now, although you can preorder the book at Smashwords, you cannot do so at retailers to whom they distribute. Formatting glitch. My fault. So I'll rectify that sometime this weekend, upload the new file, then be done with it until the final version is finished.

Topic: Believing in Yourself and Doing

A coyote who believes himself a wolf isn't. Except maybe at the spirit level.

An Arizona Black Eagle (crow) who believes himself a hawk isn't. Except at the spirit level.

We humans are no different. No matter what we believe ourselves to be, what can be attained or achieved in spirit is not the same as a physical transformation.

We can howl with the spirit of a wolf or soar (with ecstasy) like a hawk. But we can't actually be those things.

On the other hand, like all other animals, we can figure out how to do what we want to do.

Human beings cannot fly. But we can (and have) contrived ways to get ourselves into the air: airplanes, balloons, parasails, mechanical wings, etc.

This is where many writers fall flat. We can never, despite all the words we use when describing ourselves to others, "be" writers anymore than we can be a wolf or a mechanic or a carpenter.

But we "can do" (and have done) writing. It is something we commit, not what we are.

We have contrived apparatuses (apparati?) that enable us to write, to communicate and tell stories via the written word.

So in the final analysis, it is each aspirant's task to get beyond "can."

To attain the nearest approximation to Hawk, the crow has to combine Belief with mechanics and application: flapping the wings in a certain way, gliding for a certain amount of time and in a certain pattern.

Likewise the coyote, to draw nearest to actually being a wolf, must combine Belief with mechanics and application: holding the head at a certain cant, using the right intonations in precise ways and for precise lengths of time.

And the human who aspires to being a professional writer must also combine Belief with mechanics and application. A human simply believing and saying he is a writer isn't enough.

Neither are obtaining an apparatus and achieving a level of skill in using it enough.

If the human being wants to approximate being a writer, he must write.

Of Interest

Great post on [Dictation in Fiction](#) at Dean's site today.

I also encourage you to visit [NaNoWriMo Every Month](#). A lot of good stuff there. Scroll down. There are gems to be mined.

Today's Writing

Started writing around 9:30, interspersed (as always, it seems) with little life things. By 11 I had around 1100 words (cycling and a new scene) and went to read for a while.

12:30 after reading part of Heinlein's "Methuselah's Children" back to writing.

Well, I allowed too many distractions in today. Picked at the writing off and on. Missed my goal by a couple hundred words, but I'll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2775

Nonfiction Words: 1010 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3785

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506

Total fiction words for the month..... 47171
Total fiction words for the year..... 632689
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15350
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 230690

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 863379

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kevin J. Anderson](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 10/22

[October 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Rolled out on time today (around 3:30) but really groggy. Took a long time just to feel mentally functional. Well, you know. As functional as I ever get.

I was thinking about taking an admin day today to fully format the nonfiction book I've been talking about here recently: [The Professional Fiction Writer | A Year in the Life](#).

Apple won't let the book through unless I remove all "competitor" links (a childish response). Amazon is much the same way.

I find it odd that the two biggies are so frightened of readers maybe buying something from a different store.

I'm reminded of the old Christmas/Santa classic movie scene in which Macy's decided it was genius to send shoppers to other stores and thereby build good will.

Anyway, in the manuscript for the book there are other problems in other areas as well. If I publish it as-is, I'll have to spend at least one full day going through to edit or delete links, etc. So we'll see.

Now I'm also thinking I might just publish a much slimmed-down version that includes only the topics. But somehow that doesn't seem enough.

I've lived long enough that the slightest bit of indecision keys me to leave it alone, check back later and decide then. So that's what I'll do.

Maybe taking a day off today anyway. If I "feel" like getting back to the writing later, I will. But probably, I'll spend the day watching college football and then the Dodgers at the Cubs for game 6 this afternoon at 5.

And I'll spend at least part of the day doing some prep work in the kitchen.

I enjoy cooking, primarily coming up with new stuff. This morning will be ground chuck slow-boiled together with green chili, red onion, white onion, red enchilada sauce (medium), diced tomatoes with red peppers. I'll use it for juevos rancheros this morning, and for Sonoran (flat) enchiladas later. Or maybe add some cumin and go to chili with it.

The kitten jumped the fence and was out for awhile. I try to not worry about it. But would I try to not worry about it if my 4 year old human child had a propensity for crossing the usually quiet neighborhood street because she might not get hit by a car? Same kind of thing.

Don't know whether you noticed (I didn't) but I completely blew off the story of the week goal this week. I wrote a chapter this week that I could use as the story (I even mentioned it recently), but looking back on it and doing that would feel like cheating to me, so I won't do that.

So the streak dies. It's so important I don't even know how long it ran this time. (grin) I still plan to write at least one short story every week. It's a fascinating form, and I want to keep my hand in.

Well, I did a lot today, but no writing other than this stuff. Among many other things, I washed my wife's car and (finally) my 4-Runner, and it didn't dissolve. I thought it might, as it looked to be made primarily of dirt, secondarily of mud and tertiarily of rust. But it's still there. Yay.

Now to take off the jury-rigged back bumper so I can use the underneath spare tire rack. That or make a cover for it and fit it to the roof. But I'd hope I'd never have to get the thing down. It weighs in the neighborhood of a b'jillion pounds.

It's about 2:15, so I'm gonna go ahead and post this now. The novel's been tugging at me. If I do anything on it today, I'll report tomorrow.

Topic: Time Off

Yeah, I've heard all the stuff about "recharging the batteries" and "refilling the well" and all those reasons to take time off. But this isn't that.

I used to smoke cigarettes. When I quit, cold turkey (eight or nine years ago, I think) part of that process was making myself smoke one when I wanted to.

The key was that if I could control when I DID smoke, then I could control when I DIDN'T smoke.

Same thing now with my subconscious, the guy who does all my writing for me. I've put him in a time out. I could have written today, probably hit two or three or four thousand words fairly easily, but I want to be in control of that.

So when I take time off, sometimes it's to do other things (family emergency, camping, etc.) but sometimes it's to show myself who's boss.

Today was one of those times.

I had the urge to sit down and write four or five times today. Each time I said Nope, and found something else to do. And my subconscious went off into the corner and pouted for awhile.

Tomorrow I'll welcome it back. We'll sit down at the 'puter together and whip out some words. But for today, he's not the boss of me. (grin)

Caution: You can't let something like this be your conscious mind telling you to take a day off and use "being in control" (or whatever) as an excuse. But you can do it for real if you want. It's kind of refreshing in an odd way.

Of Interest

My latest free story of the week, The Shaman, posted yesterday at HarveyStanbrough.com.

If there was ever any doubt in your mind where kittens come from and why they're so very special, check out this video:

<https://www.facebook.com/456580737816809/videos/729854773822736/>

Today's Writing

El zippo.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 970

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 47171
Total fiction words for the year..... 632689
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16320
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 231660

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 864349

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 10/23

[October 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Rolled out at 4:30 this morning, but relaxed and knowing it was going to be a good writing day. I'm beginning to think writing off the NFL was among the best decisions I've ever made.

By 7 I had already written around 800 new words on the novel. It took a slightly different direction than I anticipated, but that's good. After being intentionally set in a corner for a day, the subconscious is eager to get back to playing in this new world. (grin)

I'll write most of this journal entry this afternoon after I've stopped writing fiction for the day.

For now (so I don't forget), an update on the world. My kitten jumped the front gate while I was still in explore-the-Internet mode. I grabbed my flashlight and told her to get back in the yard.

Naturally, she ran around the corner to the side gate (where she usually comes in). That was fine, but before I could get there to open it for her, she jumped it too.

In doing so, she surprised a bird that was stupid enough to roost within a few feet of the ground in vines that are growing up the fence near the gate.

He, awakened from a dead slumber, flew straight.

She, being a homicidal muffin on legs, pursued as if she'd been fired off a catapult. (Get it?)

At the back door, he flew into the window (Go toward the light, young bird) in an attempt to escape. Where he hit was six feet off the ground.

Whereupon my muffin, standing at her full six inches, leapt straight up and caught him at six feet.

I was amazed. But by then, I was close enough to catch her on the way down (at about four feet elevation) and ran my hands over her hands and face to dislodge the bird, who disappeared as if into another dimension.

Just then, my friends (at the moment) the coyotes howled in the distance. I used that as an excuse to send her into the house and close the door.

And I swear I heard, In a nearby mesquite tree, the labored breathing of a sparrow with one wing over his chest, as a man might do after ducking, in sequence, a gun shot and then around a corner.

So an adrenaline-charged beginning to the day.

Then I went to the novel, which is where I'm going again now.

I did not note the short story, "Harold Cranston's Final Trip," below because the story (except for a ten-word epigram) is derived from the novel.

Of Interest

I don't remember whether I've mentioned it before, but if you sign up for the free newsletter at [Creative Market](#), you'll receive an offer of free goods (fonts, website templates, photographs and more) every week on Monday. They also offer great sales from time to time on various items. Finally, their blog (included in the weekly newsletter) can be invaluable with design tips and many other things.

I've decided to make my [Audio Lectures](#) available to recipients of this Journal at a steep discount. Follow the link, read the How to Sign Up information, then scroll down to select any courses in which you might be interested.

Now take \$20 off any course. That means Courses 2, 3, and 5 through 8 are free to you. All I ask in return is that you spread the word on those you like to your writing friends. While you're at it, tell them about this Journal. (grin)

You really can't beat free instruction from a guy who knows what he's doing. Most of the time.

Today's Writing

Started writing this morning about 6. Took a break around 7 to add to this Journal.



I stopped at around 11 to read part of my manuscript aloud to Mona. She liked it. I decided to make it a short story, although I had to add a brief epigram.

So at 11:45 I'm diverted for a bit while I format, create a cover, etc. for that. Then back to the writing. (That's the cover over there on the left.)

At 12:20, I finished with formatting, the cover, and the promo doc. Now to distribute.

12:40, finished and posted to the site for release as the free story of the week on December 9. Now to email my donors, a bite of lunch. Then back to the writing at 1 p.m.

Back to writing around 9 after breakfast.

Well, writing off and on, literally in 5- and 10- minute sprints, so not too bad a day though I expected a lot more. I was able to create an alien species, no easy task. And their ship, which is also a living creature who is in a symbiotic relationship with them. (grin) A lot of fun.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1716

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2516

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833

Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137

Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222

Total fiction words for the month..... 48887
Total fiction words for the year..... 634405
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 232460

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 866865

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Instruction](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 10/24

[October 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today's topic is extremely important. Be sure to scroll down and read it.

I rolled out around 3:30. Coyotes were howling so the girl and I stayed inside for about an hour before we came outside. I checked email and around the Internet, and she patrolled the yard.

Well, I was all set to go camping this weekend with my buddy Dan. Then I remembered the World Series runs Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and (if necessary) Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Sigh.

It dawned on me this morning that I'm very glad I've kept a running tally of my nonfiction writing. In that count I include this Journal (minus repeated word counts on novels) plus nonfiction books, but no emails, etc.

With my fiction and nonfiction writing combined, I'll hit around 1,068,000 words this year.

With my fiction (based on what I've written thus far) I'll end the year with around 782,000 words.

For my nonfiction, again based on the year to date, I'll end the year with 286,000 words.

In trying to figure that out, I found an excellent new resource: a calculator that tells you with the click of a button what day of the year it is on a given day and how many days are left. For example, yesterday, October 23, 2016, was the 297th day of the year and there were 69 days remaining. For the link, see Of Interest below.

Topic: Learning (Free)

No, this isn't about my audio courses on various aspects of writing, many of which I offered you free yesterday.

This is much bigger than that.

If you're into expanding your knowledge, you can take free online (and audio and video) courses from the world's leading universities at <http://www.openculture.com/>.

I recommend getting a glass or cup of your favorite beverage. Then plan to sit for an hour or two and browse. This site is an incredible resource.

Because of my interest in the possibilities posed for space travel by magnetic drives, I'd like to know more about Electro-Magnetic Fields (under the guise of Engineering).

So I went to OpenCulture.com and searched their archives for "Engineering." Then I scrolled the results a bit and found "Electro-Magnetic Fields."

In just one of several listings, I found a series of 42 YouTube lectures by Professor Harishankar Ramachandran at https://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=1CE5B4FFFA997E5D. (Just in case you want it too.)

Then I created a new folder on the favorites bar of my browser and dragged the URL above into it.

I went back to the list on Engineering and found 12 audio lectures on Introduction to Engineering by Todd Laursen of Duke University. Yep, dragged it into the folder as well.

And yes, I will make time to watch/listen to these videos and audios. If I find I can't understand the concepts they offer, I'll keep them in my file and go back to search for more basic or prerequisite audios/videos/courses.

Here's the key: Even if I don't use what I learn specifically in my stories, my own newly gained knowledge of the topic will *inform* my stories. Remember, learn with the conscious mind, and create with the subconscious.

When I searched Writing Fiction, I found several lists of tips on the subject by Hemingway, Faulkner, Borges, Fitzgerald, Lovecraft, Chandler, Vonnegut, and many others. There are "rules" for writing short stories, horror, detective stories and others. As always, take them with a grain of salt. These folks write fiction. They are not above lying to you. (grin)

OpenCulture itself offers [10 Rules for Writing Fiction](#) by 29 different authors.

Now again, use your discretion, especially when it comes to writing advice. What works for one will not work for all. In fact, what makes sense to one will not make sense to all. But be advised

(you already know this), if a concept makes you uncomfortable, it's probably something you need to learn and practice.

I've always found it a valuable process to master a particular technique before deciding whether to keep it or toss it. Notice I didn't say "try" a technique. I said "master" a technique.

If you simply try something once or twice, it's all too easy to toss it aside as unsuited to you. But if you master it first and then toss it aside, at least you're doing so for a reason other than it giving you a minor bit of discomfort.

In my browsing for courses for myself, I also happened across the [MIT OpenCourseware website](#). I clicked the Find Courses tab, and I was amazed at the number of courses that popped up.

Go. Browse. Learn.

Of Interest

Here's that [Full Year Reference Calendar and Calculator](#) I mentioned above.

From the topic above, here's the link to [OpenCulture](#).

Here's a direct link to an alphabetical listing at OpenCulture of [1200 free courses](#).

Here's the [MIT OpenCourseware website](#).

[Dean's site](#) — I mention this only because he says he's making some big changes soon.

Today is also [Free Fiction Monday over at Kris' site](#). That feeds into learning too. Her stories are great for entertainment, but they're even better to study for how to write short stories.

The Writing Day

Between about 5:30 and 8:45 I researched and wrote most of the stuff above this, ate breakfast and changed clothes.

This is silly. By 10, I'd written only about 300 words. Oof. Then I made the mistake of visiting Facebook for awhile. If I spent this much time on Facebook at any other job I'd have been fired, and rightly so, long ago.

Finally back to the novel at 12:30 with maybe 500 words on the day thus far up to that point. (Just trying to lay it all out honestly here. Distractions happen to all of us. I hope.)

AT LAST a decent day of writing. Now if I can just hit that for 5 or 6 hours a day instead of 3 maybe this thing will start to come together. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3499

Nonfiction Words: 960 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4459

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721

Total fiction words for the month..... 52386
Total fiction words for the year..... 637904
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18080
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 232460

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 871324

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [MIT](#), [OpenCulture](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writers' Resources](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 10/25](#)

[October 25, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Very cool morning, coolness wise. One of my former Marines added me to a “secret” group on Facebook. It’s basically a reunion of the (mostly) young Marines I served with in Second Light Anti-Aircraft Missile Battalion in Yuma Arizona 30-some years ago.

They were some of the best people I ever knew, at once my brothers and my sons. It’s great to be back in touch, and it cause me to think back a bit.

So for anyone who wants to know some personal stuff, read on. If not, skip down to Great Breakfast.

On November 25, 1970 (almost 46 years ago), I graduated basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and became a Marine. Initially I had three MOSs (job descriptions). I was an 0311 (infantry rifleman), 0331 (machine gunner) and 0351 (light anti-tank assaultman).

Later I was switched, against my wishes, over to 6753 (later, 7222), a HAWK missile system radar operator. I've never understood why, but I always assumed it was because of my age (I turned 18 in boot camp) and the fact that my first enlistment was for four years.

Twenty-one years after I graduated boot camp, on October 1, 1991, I was transferred to the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve on retainer. (You don't "retire" after twenty years. You are on retainer.) Ten years later I was retired.

During that time, I was blessed and honored to serve with some of the best Marines, officer and enlisted, ever to have worn the uniform.

My experiences while I was on active duty in the Corps spurred me to write probably the greatest thing I'll ever write. It's a simple toast, and I offer it to my guys here:

*May your days be vibrant,
your evenings calm,
your heart safe and warm at home.
Semper fi.*

Today, as I write this almost 46 years after I graduated boot camp, I'm wearing a ball cap with a Marine Corps emblem embroidered on the front of it. I have several. I wear one or another without a second thought almost every day.

Most of the time, I still remove my cover (the ball cap) when I enter my house or a building. When the National Anthem plays on television, whether or not anyone else is around, I still find a reason to be standing up.

On the rare occasion when I am fortunate enough to hear the Marine Corps hymn, again whether or not anyone else is around, I still come to attention. The Hymn runs through my mind almost constantly when I'm walking (and back in the day when I was running).

My oath is as meaningful to me today as it was the day I first raised my right hand and all the times afterward when I reenlisted. A solemn oath isn't something about which you simply change your mind. If you can do that, it wasn't a solemn oath in the first place.

If I had it to do over again, I would change nothing. I would do all the same things again, even though now, with 20-20 hindsight, I can adjudge them right or wrong. That's what life is. But I would do them more strongly and with greater conviction.

* * *

Great Breakfast (in about five minutes)

Who knew you could find recipes here? (grin)

I like breakfast sandwiches, and this is usually my “big meal” of the day. My latest favorite is bread, sliced colby-jack, tomato, egg, and thin-sliced ham.

Making this is fun. I start a scrambled egg frying. While that’s working, I layer Miracle Whip on two slices of bread, then cut and add a slice of tomato and a slice of colby-jack to each slice of bread.

I flip the eggs (I love flipping stuff in a skillet), then add pepper and whatever other spices. I lay a slice of provolone on top of the egg, then the slice of ham.

When the egg has cooked long enough so the bottom is done, I flip the whole thing so the ham’s on the bottom. (I haven’t missed on the flip yet, knock on wood. Probably tomorrow.)



A half-minute or so later when the ham is seared and the cheese is melted, I slide the whole thing onto one slice of bread and add the other to the top. Nom nom nom. (grin)

Tonight will be snacky stuff while watching Game 1 of the World Series.

Oh. That thing to the left is a silhouette photo of Hawk, our Arizona Black Eagle who believes (and professes) himself a hawk. Aspirations are good.

Of Interest

Over at Dean’s place, [Adjust\[ing\] A Goal](#). An excellent example of “failing” to success outside of writing.

The Writing Day

Rolled out at 4:15, was at my outside desk almost immediately and, off and on, checked email and Facebook, wrote the stuff above and had breakfast.

Now it's a little after 8 and I'm headed for the novel for the first time. Should be a great day of writing today.

Wrote a little right off the starting block. Then I was taken with a notion that some chapters were out of order. So I took a little time to create a reverse outline (with the new sequence), then rearranged the chapters. It flows much better now.

Well, same ol', same ol'. I frittered away much of the day, did some admin stuff, and finally started writing in earnest around noon-thirty. Yet I managed to steal a pretty good day.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 4093

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4993

Writing of The Consensus (novel)

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721
Day 10... 4993 words. Total words to date..... 28814

Total fiction words for the month..... 57379

Total fiction words for the year..... 642897

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18980

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 234320

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 877217

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 10/26](#)

[October 26, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, a long post today, but I hope one that's worthwhile for many of you.

First, I bit the leather strap and signed up for Dean's POV online workshop this morning. Just in case any of you would like to join the same session, I signed up for Class 42, beginning on November 1.

They run for 6 weeks, with (usually) five homework assignments. I rarely turn those in, but I find them valuable for continued practice and study. Naturally, I'll report back here with my assessment of the class. Really looking forward to this one.

To see why I'm excited about it, you can [read the description here](#) (scroll down to Point of View).

Now I think I know POV fairly well, and I'm certain I handle it well in my novels. But there's always more to learn and I inevitably learn a LOT of collateral things from Dean during these workshops. Well worth the money if you don't mind investing in your craft.

Not a lot else to report today other than roughly a b'jillion sparrows alighting in the yard on their way south in two big flocks.

But I was reminded early by a friend about the odd writing habits of famous writers. So let's chat about that for a little while. (grin)

Topic: Odd Type Writers (a purloined title)

Like maybe Hemingway's drinking is why he wrote so well.

Or he wrote standing up while in his underwear and with a drink in his hand.

Or that (as he allegedly told one aspirant) he wrote standing up while in his underwear because the gravitational pull on his 'nads enabled him to access his masculine source.

Uh, okay, frankly, I've never known a man who was able to AVOID "accessing his masculine source." Naked, in his underwear, or in any other state of dress. Just sayin'.

Or I do most of my writing on yellow legal pads while standing on my head on the sidewalk and spitting BBs at passing motorists. (I know. Ludicrous. But if I repeat it often enough and say it to one or more interviewers, someone out there will try it.)

It is true that Hemingway often wrote while standing up (but not in his underwear and not with a drink in his hand) because an old injury to his spine made sitting for long periods uncomfortable. He also kept a daily word count. (grin)

These sorts of myths proliferate in the writing community, and I even heard many of them when I was in college. From professors. Whom I was pre-trained to trust in all things.

Only my ability to think, my distaste of soundbites and my general aversion to blanket gullibility enabled me to see through the veneer of nonsense. Well, that and the fact that on my website it plainly states “Caution: professional fiction writer. I will lie to you. And you will enjoy it.” And I don’t want to be a hypocrite.

Oddly enough (or perhaps appropriately enough) most of these gems were started by the writers themselves when asked ridiculous questions.

When someone asked Harlan Ellison where he got ideas, finding himself in just the right mood he said, “From a little shop in Schenectady.”

Yeah. But you don’t hear of writers booking flights to Schenectady and racing up and down the streets looking for a sign that reads Ye Olde Idea Shoppe, right?

So why do so many of us buy into these other ridiculousities?

I don’t know.

Maybe because we want to think if we do something weird because we believe a famous writer did the same weird thing, we’ll invoke some sort of magic and lightning will strike.

A long time ago, another writer (Thanks, Bob C) sent me a list of “unusual work habits for writers” that he “picked up on Quora.” I quote some of them below. Please note that despite the title, most of these are not “habits” at all. The comments in parentheses are mine.

Truman Capote wrote lying down, as did Marcel Proust, Mark Twain and Woody Allen. (Anyone ever try this? I did, a very long time ago. It’s stupid.)

Charles Dickens, Winston Churchill, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, Philip Roth, Lewis Carroll, Thomas Jefferson, Fernando Pessoa and George Sand all wrote standing up. (Yep, I tried this one too. My feet and back were both aching within a half-hour. I’m betting it’s nonsense unless there’s some other valid reason that has nothing to do with the writing itself.)

Roth also walks half a mile for every page. (Really? Umm, why? Think maybe this is just a comment on his balancing walking for health with being sedentary?)

Roald Dahl wrote in a shed. (Been there, done that [re The Adobe Hovel], but I don’t know that it’s “odd” or qualifies as a “habit.” It’s just a good place to write.)

Umberto Eco has a converted church as his scriptorium. One floor has a computer, one has a typewriter, one in which he writes long-hand. (Nope, not buying it. Why switch back and forth? And if so, why stick a flight of stairs between one and the other?)

Haruki Murakami commutes into a city apartment in Tokyo where he writes. (Okay. <shrug> So?)

After the publication of Joe Gould's Secret, Joseph Mitchell came to the office at the The New Yorker magazine almost every day for the next thirty-two years without filing another word. (How is this a writing habit? Seems more like a scamming habit. Or a visiting habit.)

Ray Bradbury wrote an early version on Fahrenheit 451 in nine days on a rented typewriter in the UCLA library basement. (This one is true, but it isn't a habit. It was his only access to a typewriter at the time. And it wasn't just "an early version." And how is this either sensational or odd?)

Will Self uses a wall of Post-It notes to plan and structure his writing. (Not odd for someone who wants to outline or storyboard.)

Elmore Leonard writes on yellow legal pads. (Is this odd? Yellow legal pads were the original laptop. Like card catalogues in libraries were the first Google.)

Michel Faber corrected the first manuscript of The Crimson Petal and the White with house paint because he couldn't afford Tipp-Ex. (Maybe, but neither odd nor a habit. More of a necessity, eh?)

Gustav Hasford was a serial hoarder of very overdue library books, and had 10,000 of them in storage lockers. (Wouldn't want his library fine, but again, not a writing habit.)

Don DeLillo types each paragraph onto its own sheet of paper, so that he might concentrate better. (Now that's odd, if true, but I don't buy it. And even if he did, with apologies to trees, so what?)

Gay Talese would pin pages of his writing to a wall and examine them from the other side of the room with binoculars. (Nope, not buying it. All the binocs would do is make them appear to be within arms' length so, you know, a lot of wasted effort there.)

Jonathan Safran Foer has a collection of blank sheets of paper. (So do I. It's called a "ream." And again, not a writing habit.)

Cormac McCarthy said that his perfect day is sitting in a room with some blank paper. (Nope, not buying it as written.)

Ethan Canin copied John Cheever paragraphs out to learn what made the man's writing tick. (I've done this and I don't find it odd at all. It isn't a writing habit, but probably a very good learning habit.)

Anthony Trollope required of himself two hundred and fifty words every quarter of an hour. (GREAT habit [1000 words per hour, 17 words per minute]. Ever heard this one anywhere else? But I see nothing odd about it.)

J.G. Ballard, a fan of discipline in writing, prepared very long outlines, and aimed for 1,000 words a day. (<shrug> Okay. But not a writing habit. More of an outlining habit. Or maybe obsession.)

Walter Benjamin advocated delaying writing an idea as long as possible, so that it would be more maturely developed. (I've heard something similar about the guy who wrote Texas and Hawaii and all those. Wonder how many ideas they lost?)

Richard Ford and his wife shot a book by Alice Hoffman, after she had given his book Independence Day an unfavorable review. (This is not a writing habit. It is, however, a tad unbalanced if true.)

If you're interested in such things, whether for inspiration or laughs, I recommend a book titled Odd Type Writers by Celia Blue Johnson (Perigee, 2013).

Of Interest

Check out [Kevin J. Anderson's website](#). Some good stuff there. I especially recommend checking out his Categories, like the Short Story Category (Hint: it isn't all about short stories) and the Novels Category (nope, it isn't all about novels) and the Process Category. You get the idea. Take some time. Browse. And remember to take everything with a grain of salt. Keep what feels right to you and pitch the rest.

[Dean's post](#) caused me to check out KJ Anderson.

The Writing Day

I rolled out around 3:30 and spent an hour on catching up with overnight events (emails, etc.). Then outside to read a few newsletters, catch up on Facebook and so on.

I grabbed a quick breakfast (just toasted English muffins with some sort of cream spread), then put on a load of laundry around 6:30.

Incredibly, with most email and other Internet things behind me, I started writing at around 8 this morning. The novel has entered a stage where I can hardly wait to get back to it each time.

Around 9 I folded and put away laundry, then changed from sweats into day clothes.

Around 10 I came back out to write some of this and look over my reverse outline to see where to go next.

That is, which characters to feature in the next chapter. This book is one of those in which the POV changes every two or three chapters to different characters in different scenes around the world. And one scene that's decidedly off the world.

Well, I reached the end of a chapter and it feels like the end of the day, though the word count is a bit low. A lot of cycling today (a result of splicing together some of the parts I shifted yesterday). But I'm good with where it is. I already know where I'm starting in the morning.

By the way, for anyone who thinks this novel is moving along quickly at 31200 words in "only" 11 days, please realize that's only a mean average of writing a little over 2800 words per day. In other words, it's not all that much.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2406

Nonfiction Words: 1660 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4066

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721
Day 10... 4993 words. Total words to date..... 28814
Day 11... 2406 words. Total words to date..... 31220

Total fiction words for the month..... 59785

Total fiction words for the year..... 645303

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20640

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 235980

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 881283

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kevin J. Anderson](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 10/27](#)

[October 27, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

A lot of good stuff down in the Of Interest section for you today.

Rolled out at 3:30 this morning, but not feeling well today. I'll write both fiction and here, but I probably won't get nearly as long-winded in today's post.

Again I'm rethinking the massive undertaking of publishing a year of this Journal.

I've received gentle hints that a book featuring only the topics and the more interesting stuff from "The Day" might be of greater interest to more writers. So maybe I'll go that way.

After all, the word counts serve their purpose to keep me motivated. I hoped they might also show others what is possible but maybe not.

I'll give it some thought. And thanks for the input, those of you who have provided it.

Of Interest

[The Curse of Early Adopters](#) over at Kris's site.

And with me, a dog, chasing a rabbit from that post, if you own a Mac and publish ebooks (umm, Alison H), check out [Vellum](#). If it would work for PCs I'd be on this, but quickly.

From The Creative Penn, [Five Ways Authors Can Use Facebook Advertising](#). I saved this one to read again. Lots of external leads for marketing things in this one.

Over at Dean's place, [A Really Nifty Podcast About Podcasting](#).

The Writing Day

I did little to nothing for much of the morning. Just some little things around the house and yard.

I was about to turn to the novel around 11 when I realized I wanted to write a short story for this week. You'll see the results below.

I'm still mindful of hoping to finish my novel this month, so I'll be pushing on that for the next few days.

Closing down at 2:40.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3149

Nonfiction Words: 280 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3429

Writing of "The Spring on the Screen Door" (short story)

Day 1..... 3149 words. Total words to date..... 3149 (done)

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721
Day 10... 4993 words. Total words to date..... 28814
Day 11... 2406 words. Total words to date..... 31220
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 62934
Total fiction words for the year..... 648452
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20920
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 236260

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 884712

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens, marketing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [short fiction](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 10/28

[October 28, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Some lessons — most notably, those that repeat when I need them to — never cease to amaze me.

I received an email last night from a dear friend who also happens to be a good writer and an avid reader. (Thanks, Nan.)

She, along with many others, recommended publishing only the personal and writing tidbits from the journal. It makes sense, so probably that's what I'll do. For one thing, it's incredibly easier from a standpoint of organization. Some copying and pasting, and voila.

This morning, I received a second email saying possibly I could add an appendix of “statistics” on the writing year. That would include the chronological growth of each book and story, etc. Another good idea, one I will take under advisement.

That idea also expanded on itself. Now I'm thinking I might forego chronology altogether for the bulk of the book, segmenting it instead by Topics, Life (with a better title than that), Chronology of Writing and Links of Interest.

I'll have to see how Topics and Life play out separately. I might have to combine those two, as I seem to remember the latter often leads into the former. So maybe Life & Topics for the bulk of the book with Chronology of Writing and Links of Interest as appendices.

Anyway, thanks to everyone for the suggestions. I consider everything you send.

Perhaps most importantly, since I will almost certainly forego the chronological log, I can begin putting this thing together Now rather than having to wait until the year has passed.

Because this is a nonfiction book, I still want to avail myself of the pre-release option. Now I can do so even at Amazon since the book will be completed long before the official January 15 release date.

So again, thanks to everyone who has donated their time to give me an opinion on this process. And there's still time if you'd care to let me know what you think.

Now here's that repeated lesson I mentioned above.

Topic: On Letting A Story Be What It Is

My friend (Nan), in her first email, also took a moment to comment on the current Story of the Week. She said frankly it could have ended with the smoke streams twisting together. (This was 19 paragraphs and 235 words shy of where the story ended).

The thing is, on re-reading it to prep for this topic, I agree with her. As a reader.

But I've also heard from readers who love that the smoke streams created a "heart" as they twined together. (grin)

So my point with this brief bit is that both of those sets of readers got what they wanted (a satisfying ending) from the story.

It all comes back to the subconscious creative mind.

Had I felt I'd "written past the ending" as I was writing the thing (that's happened to me before), it might well have ended where Nan suggested.

But it didn't, so it didn't.

The slight divergence between the two opinions serve to remind me again to not second-guess my subconscious, but just let the story be what it wants to be.

I love it when that happens. (grin)

* * *

In other news, my wife and I have decided to renew our study of Spanish during the early evenings after the World Series is over.

For me, it's mostly to help my writing. What I can speak, I can write, and learning it with another person only adds to the enjoyment.

Spanish is the most beautiful language on Earth in both its music and its simplicity, and I've always had an affinity for it. Looking very forward to this.

Of Interest

Yet another (timely, for me) lesson from Dean is [One Topic Per Post](#). I'm glad he added the qualifier "mostly" so he has a little wiggle room when he doesn't have time to write a topic, storms screw with his Internet, etc.

My new Story of the Week, Part 1 of the novelette "[A Turning Point for Charlie Pilsen](#)" posted this morning.

Thanks to my friend Mike Green for posting J.A. Jance's post this morning about [things writers should remember](#).

The Writing Day

Up and at 'em around 4 this morning. I spent some time messing around on the Internet with various things that probably are wholly uninteresting to anyone else. Then I came here and wrote this.

Started the fiction writing by switching the positions of Chapters 4 and 6, then did some cycling and necessary stitching. God I love this book! (grin) That added around 500 words.

Then I started a new chapter.

I didn't get as much done today as I would have liked. Frittered away some of it, cycled during some of it, and time snuck up on me with some of it. Oh well.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2475

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3275

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721
Day 10... 4993 words. Total words to date..... 28814
Day 11... 2406 words. Total words to date..... 31220
Day 12... 2475 words. Total words to date..... 33695

Total fiction words for the month..... 65409
Total fiction words for the year..... 650927
Total nonfiction words for the month... 21720
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 237060

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 887987

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [J.A. Jance](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 10/29](#)

[October 29, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Probably not a lot to talk about this morning. I plan to write some on the novel today and maybe also put up another short story I've already mostly written. If I do, I won't count the words again as it's derived from one of the novels I started and abandoned awhile back. So the words are already counted.

I'm taking at least a partial day off. Some winter camping opportunities are coming up, but in a high-wind area. I mean, it's so high-wind that it's even cold there in the evening in summer. So I'm going shopping for a heavy coat today.

Topic: Misplaced Modifiers

I love misplaced modifiers because they're almost always funny.

What spurred this? In Dean's post yesterday he wrote "So today I was up to my normal time, then went to work when I would be going to bed with this person from New York."

Umm, with what person from New York would he be going to bed? (grin)

Of course, any normal person would forgive this slip since it happened in a blog post. But not in a book. Any copyeditor worth his/her money would have caught it.

This is important, especially if such a gaff occurs in an otherwise serious scene in a novel. As you might imagine, they can suck the wind right out of a serious scene.

Not that they aren't still funny. But do you really want the reader laughing when he should be recoiling in fear or at least experiencing a rise in his blood pressure?

I don't think so.

Here are a few of my personal favorites (some misplaced, some just awkward constructions).

Russ' eyes fell on a barrel full of scrap cuttings.

Old and worn, he could see the layers of paper were beginning to pull apart.

Roughly the size of four football fields, Nick had already marked off search areas.

Chris tried unsuccessfully to catch his eye.

Efficient as ever, both Carleton and Peter were in front of the house when the car arrived to assist Dr. Cauldwell with his luggage.

She set up the small grill on the beach she always kept with her....

She was looking for a proposal to renovate the concert hall in the mess on her desk.

Creeping quietly into the kitchen, the refrigerator suddenly clicked.

One had a drooping eye and a displaced nose with uneven shoulders and a badly swollen leg.

Being in dilapidated condition, I was able to purchase the property within budget.

After being buried in our filing room for years, I discovered the minutes of that all-important meeting."

Do not sit in the chair without being fully assembled.

Two company automobiles were reported stolen by Corporate Security this week.

No one was injured in the blast, which was attributed to a buildup of gas by one town official.

And by the way, James Michener is famous for these. And yes, while teaching seminars, I've often been asked, "Well if Michener does it, why isn't it all right?"

Sigh.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's site he links to the Joanna Penn Blog ([The Creative Penn](#)). She recently attended the master class on the coast with DWS. This is her early report. Well worth the read.

PLUS I finally found out how to subscribe to The Creative Penn, and I recommend doing so. On the right sidebar of her site, scroll down a bit to "Subscribe to the blog by email, or connect with me on social media." Then click the little envelope logo and enter your email address. I did, so I'll probably be prodding you about this in the future.

The Writing Day

Decided to call this a non-writing day. I didn't write enough to talk about. I was busy with various things until around 9:30, then went to Sierra Vista. We didn't get back until 3, so I'll pick up on the novel again tomorrow.

See you then.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 640 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 640

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
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Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721
Day 10... 4993 words. Total words to date..... 28814
Day 11... 2406 words. Total words to date..... 31220
Day 12... 2475 words. Total words to date..... 33695
Day 13... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 65409
Total fiction words for the year..... 650927

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22360
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 237770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 888627

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 10/30

[October 30, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, as this day begins, it looks like I'm not gonna get a novel finished this month. However, after visiting Facebook for about 10 minutes, I posted a notice that I'll be off there for the next couple of days in an effort to push through my current novel. So we'll see.

If not, no biggie. The overall goal of writing and finishing 12 novels during the calendar year remains. I just need to pick up the hours in the chair and the actual typing while I'm in it. I love this new "no excuses" world. If you wanna write, write.

I watered the yard off and on today. My yard is large, so that entailed moving the sprinkler a few times. It seemed like every bird of every variety within ten miles came in for a bath and just to frolic.

Otherwise I wrote (again, off and on) and took a trip into the nearby town (Benson) for groceries and in the hunt for a coat.

Per usual, I started the morning in sweats, a hoodie and a thick, insulated flight jacket and I'm ending it in thin cotton shorts and a t-shirt. Life in the Chihuahua Desert. (grin)

Of Interest

Over at [Dean's place](#), he mentions the online workshops and the next Coast workshop (The Anthology Workshop). Worth a look if you're interested.

There's a [Recommended Reading List](#) at Kris's website.

Now, for anyone who might be interested, this photo is of the kind of missile for which I was a radar operator for part of the time while I was in the Marine Corps.

We no longer have these (or their operators) in the arsenal. This is a HAWK missile. The acronym stands for Homing All the Way Killer. Not kidding. Hokey, eh?

If you've never attended a live-fire of a missile, here are a few fun facts for you:



Upon launch, the launcher for a HAWK missile actually drops out from beneath the bird. Then the bird ignites and disappears.

The HAWK moves so fast at launch that it's impossible to watch it take off with the naked eye.

We occasionally used to slice off a tiny bit (maybe a quarter-inch square) of solid fuel and use it to heat our food. Set a can on top, touch a match to it, and BAM! instant boiling food.

The speed of this thing probably is still classified, but they weren't far off (if they were off at all) when they said the only thing on Earth that could outrun a HAWK missile was another one fired a second earlier. And yes, that includes the SR-71 (Habu) if it was flying low enough for HAWK to reach it.

I even got to see a few of these come off with bad telemetry and go skipping across the desert floor. I also saw a few launch, then turn due north (Marine for "straight up") whence eventually they came straight back down. Interesting times. Fortunately, we had a good young lieutenant on the Destruct button on those days.

The Writing Day

One really good thing happened yesterday. During the very small bit of actual fiction writing I did yesterday (counted in today's totals), the novel took a sharp turn.

And it was one of those that I absolutely did not expect, yet when it happened it was one of those slap-your-forehead of-course moments. (grin)

So that's what I started with today.

Wow. I moved or switched positions with five chapters to improve the flow and to finesse the timeline. Most interesting was the almost two hours I took to "edit" one chapter. It was a great deal of fun.

That chapter is the only one in which the only characters are alien beings. I initially wrote it in only subconscious, creative mind. But the aliens are a liquid life form.

Think for a moment (if it interests you to do so) what that entails. How they interact with each other and with outsiders. The vocabular and syntax they might use to express themselves in words humans could understand.

So after the initial writing, it took considerable conscious thought and fine tuning to both have the alien beings remain true to their own thought processes while communicating in a way the reader will be able to understand. Like I said, a lot of fun. (grin)

After everything, I wrote only a little over 2300 words today. That's fine. The ending hasn't quite revealed itself yet, but I know it's close. And frankly, I'm not anxious to get there. I've very much enjoyed this one.

By the way, if you're watching my numbers, I messed up back on Day 10 and docked myself 900 words. The figures below are correct. Glad I keep a spreadsheet that catches this stuff. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2373

Nonfiction Words: 670 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3043

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1.....	1833 words.	Total words to date.....	1833
Day 2.....	2304 words.	Total words to date.....	4137
Day 3.....	2465 words.	Total words to date.....	6602
Day 4.....	4418 words.	Total words to date.....	11020
Day 5.....	2701 words.	Total words to date.....	13721
Day 6.....	3010 words.	Total words to date.....	16731
Day 7.....	2775 words.	Total words to date.....	19506
Day 8.....	1716 words.	Total words to date.....	21222
Day 9.....	3499 words.	Total words to date.....	24721
Day 10...	4993 words.	Total words to date.....	29714

Day 11... 2406 words. Total words to date..... 32120
Day 12... 2475 words. Total words to date..... 34595
Day 13... 2373 words. Total words to date..... 36968

Total fiction words for the month..... 67782
Total fiction words for the year..... 653300
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23030
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 238370

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 891670

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 10/31

[October 31, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, Happy Hallowe'en, or as they say in WriterLand, the last day of the month.

Awhile back I mentioned it was a slow month but that I still expected to hit somewhere around 60,000 words. As it turns out, I cleared that hurdle fairly handily a couple of days ago. So not really a good month, but a decent one. (UPDATE: Just shy of 70,000 for the month.)

Also, a day or two ago I said my goal to write 12 novels during this calendar year was still in play. Well, the goal is still attainable. The likelihood of attaining it, though, is another matter.

When I finish the current novel, it will be my 20th overall and the 8th written wholly in this year. To write four more novels this year, even short novels of 35,000 words each, would take 140,000 words. So around 70,000 for each of November and December.

Hitting that word count is completely possible, and if that's all it took, attaining the goal would be easy-peasy. But there are a lot of IFs.

IF I hit on an idea that runs to a novel. And then do that three more times.

IF the story runs so I can finish it in 15 days.

IF I can do that four times back to back to back.

IF I can strike that delicate balance between wanting to attain the goal enough to make it a priority.

And IF I can do that without wanting it so much that attaining it becomes important and therefore all but impossible.

I guess we'll see.

My online workshop with Dean on POV begins tomorrow. Looking forward to that, though the first week is usually more basic stuff and an overview.

Got a pretty good shot of the sunrise this morning. I posted it to [Facebook](#).

Not a lot else going on. Two of our visiting hummingbirds are still hanging around. Most of them headed for warmer climes to the south a few weeks ago.

Of Interest

Note of Disclaimer: I don't necessarily endorse every opinion or site or technique you will find in this section, but all writers are different. If you visit these sites, you will occasionally find gold.

Over at Dean's site, a post on prioritizing at [Massive Numbers of Writing Things To Do](#).

Check out David Lucas' [Winding Trails Media](#). Be sure to explore The Write Pack Radio and Winding Trails Theater links while you're there.

In case you've thought about podcasting (a great tool for authors), check out <https://theaudacitytopodcast.com/>.

Finally, it's Free Fiction Monday over at Kris' site with [Victims](#).

The Writing Day

To the novel at around 8.

I finished! A short novel at a little under 39,000 words, but it's finished (pending my first reader's comments). And I was surprised right up to the last few paragraphs. I love it when that happens. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1855

Nonfiction Words: 470 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2325

Writing of The Consensus

Day 1..... 1833 words. Total words to date..... 1833
Day 2..... 2304 words. Total words to date..... 4137
Day 3..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 6602
Day 4..... 4418 words. Total words to date..... 11020
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 13721
Day 6..... 3010 words. Total words to date..... 16731
Day 7..... 2775 words. Total words to date..... 19506
Day 8..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 21222
Day 9..... 3499 words. Total words to date..... 24721
Day 10... 4993 words. Total words to date..... 29714
Day 11... 2406 words. Total words to date..... 32120
Day 12... 2475 words. Total words to date..... 34595
Day 13... 2373 words. Total words to date..... 36968
Day 14... 1855 words. Total words to date..... 38823 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 69637
Total fiction words for the year..... 655155
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23500
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 238840

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 893995

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [David Lucas](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Podcasting](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 11/1](#)

[November 1, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Even if you choose to skip everything else in today's edition of the Journal, be sure to scroll down to read the topic below.

I began the day with the online workshop on POV with Dean Wesley Smith.

Folks, I actually learned something in the first week. From the very first video (each is only about 5 minutes long) I was reminded of something I already knew, but I also learned some new things. This is an invaluable workshop. Part of it is what he says, and part of it is how he says it.

He recommends taking the Depth workshop first, but frankly, if you keep an open mind and just trust what he's saying, I don't believe that's necessary. If you remember a character with a problem in a setting, that every word should come through the characters' opinion of the setting, and to include all five senses, you're gold.

(I took the Depth workshop earlier, so I know whereof I speak.)

There's still time to enroll in the POV workshop. So if you've been on the fence, I'm telling you (and it's important enough to "yell" it in this post), this is a great investment.

* * *

I also began the day nonplussed. I finished my novel yesterday. Oh dear. Whatever will I do? (grin)

Of course, I still need to write the story of the week, and if I'm to even come near my goal of writing, in full, 12 novels during this calendar year, I have to begin a new novel pretty soon.

But for today, probably, I'm going to take off from having fun and make today a nonwriting work day. To see what provided that impetus, see the topic below.

In addition to the stuff described in that topic, I will also decide what form my new nonfiction book (A Year in the Life) will take and get started on that.

When I begin writing fiction again (if not later today, tomorrow) it will once again be DWS to the rescue, after a fashion.

He typically provides a writing assignment at the end of Weeks 1 – 5 of an online workshop, and this week was no exception.

The prompt? A female (or male, your choice) is lost in a city park. Write a 500 word opening. Remember to provide depth to pull the reader down into the story.

Well, that's easy enough. A character with a problem in a setting. He gave us all three.

So sometime today or probably tomorrow morning I'll write the opening. When I do, I'll report the word count below. If it's only an opening for the assignment, I'll report it as such. If it takes off and "runs" (most of my openings do) I'll report it as a short story or novel beginning, complete with a (tentative, at least) title.

Topic: Universal Book Links

So what if there was a way for a reader to click a single link (book cover, etc.) and be redirected to a screen where that reader is allowed to select any retailer? A screen where he can even set his favorite retailer?

Well, that would be wonderful. Anything you can do to make the buying process easier for the reader is a Good Thing.

That day is today. Actually, Draft2Digital announced this innovation way back in August, but I only this morning got around to opening and studying their email. Sigh.

If you distribute through D2D (or even if you don't) you can now use the Books2Read Universal Link tool to create just such a link.

To begin, click <https://www.books2read.com/links/ubl/create/>. Key in (or copy/paste) any current purchase-link URL to your book, then click Make My Universal Link.

I added all 19 of my published novels, plus my novella and novelette, plus my last six short stories this morning in all of maybe a half-hour. In that short time, I received (and saved) all 27 universal book links.

Now I'll go to my Short Stories page on my main website and change the URL for each photo in the top row (the most recent 7 stories) to that universal book link.

Then I'll drop in on my Novels & Novellas page (still on HarveyStanbrough.com) and change the links on all those novels to universal book links. And from today forward, every new novel or short story I write will link to a universal book link.

On top of everything else, this just makes me feel better. I don't feel so much like a shill for Amazon.

In my case, since I also distribute through Smashwords, I fed the Smashwords purchase link into the Books2Read universal link generator. So now all of those novels and stories link to the Smashwords store as well as to Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Scribd, 24Symbols and Inkterra. And you can manually add other store links if you want to.

To see how this works, drop by <http://harveystanbrough.com/short-stories/> and click any cover in the top row. You don't have to buy anything, but this will enable you to see first hand what I'm talking about.

This is a radically cool new tool. I hope you'll find it as useful as I have.

Of Interest

Note of Disclaimer: I don't necessarily endorse every opinion or site or technique you will find in this section, but all writers are different. If you mine these, you will occasionally find gold.

Over at Kris' site, [Writing, Mysteries, Bundles and the Contracts Book](#).

The Writing Day

Well, you'll probably be happy to know I wasn't able to hold up on the writing assignment. I wrote the opening (577 words) required by the assignment. Now I'm gonna take a break for lunch, then go do some of that nonfiction book thing I mentioned earlier.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 577

Nonfiction Words: 940 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1517

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 577

Total fiction words for the year..... 655732

Total nonfiction words for the month... 940

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 239780

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 895512

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 11/2

[November 2, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, this is little more than a placeholder really.

I thought about doing here what DWS recently did on his site, adding a sidebar widget to count words, etc. But that would defeat the purpose on my end, so I'm not gonna do that. I like seeing the running totals below all the text. And it's at the end so anyone else can skip it if they want.

I didn't get anything done on the nonfiction book yesterday. I'll hold off on that until I'm in the right mood. Then I'll probably take a full day or two and just plow through it.

Screwed around on Facebook and on my main website this morning for awhile. On the latter, I added or revised a few links and updated a page or two.

Otherwise, just stuff around the house. Watering, laundry, stuff like that there. Worked on the 4-Runner a bit, headed into town for some grocery shopping, etc.

Of Interest

I made substantial changes to the [Subscribe to My Work](#) page. Lowered recurring donation amounts, added a bennie.

The Writing Day

Hi there. Well, you caught me unawares (not IN my unawares but unawares) and in an odd mood. No writing today. Nada. Zip. Zilch. Squat. The Big Goosegg. But I'm okay with it. Really.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 220 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 220

Writing of
Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 577
Total fiction words for the year..... 655732
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1160
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 240000 (wow. nice round number)

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 895732

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 11/3

[November 3, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, at least part of why yesterday turned out to be a non-writing day was my pent-up excitement about World Series Game 7. That's over now. I watched every annoying, frustrating, elation-filled moment, and I'm glad I did.

I understand that both teams waited a long time. But Cubs fans probably feel Cleveland lost because they haven't paid their waiting dues yet. When they've waited forty more years (or at least one more year) maybe it'll be their turn.

I'd like to choke Joe Madden for trying to fix something that wasn't broken — and thereby breaking it. Otherwise watching the game was a great experience.

But I'm glad I took yesterday off. Because I also had one hell of an idea for a novel.

That doesn't usually happen to me. Usually I have an idea, start writing it, and then it either expands into a novel or it doesn't.

But this one was born a novel idea. It's a weird, bone-chilling clashing of personality types (in one person) and it's far too big to be a short story. So I'll start on that today.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [Ten December Online Workshops](#) is worth a look.

The Writing Day

A good first day on the novel. Oh, and just to put it out there, this is not from the assignment I sent Dean. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3945

Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4175

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945

Total fiction words for the month..... 4522

Total fiction words for the year..... 659677

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1390

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 240230

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 899907

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [applying the craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 11/4](#)

[November 4, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, in writing the current novel, I also inadvertently wrote a new short story. So I'm covered for this week. (grin)

"The Sad Tale of Susan Jordan" will go out to donors later today or tomorrow. It will post to the Free Story of the Week on December 23. This story will give you a great pre-look at the novel. Of course I won't count the words separately as they're also part of the novel.

As I was working on the novel this morning (around 500 words, cycling), I actually stopped for a bit and created the promo doc, or most of it. I couldn't do the story description yet, but the keywords are locked in: horror, psychological suspense, crime thriller, murder, torture, kidnapping, serial killer. Get it? Yeah. It's gonna be one of those. Disturbing.

Nothing interesting/exciting happening around the Stanbrough camp today, and frankly I hope it stays that way. The snakes/coyotes and my little girl are all behaving, each on their own side of the fence.

Just a quick note to any cigar smokers out there. If you haven't tried a Carlos Toraño yet, you're missing a great bet. Specifically, for every day, Toraño Vega Dominicana (I prefer the toro). My goodness what a great cigar.

Took a break to read some more on the Heinlein book I've been reading. Currently I'm on Methuselah's Children. Wow. Quite a story.

Of Interest

One really great question and answer in comments on Dean's post about [Workshops](#) from yesterday. Check it out.

Also at Dean's place, [Putting Together Smith's Monthly](#). Might get some ideas there. I did.

Oh, and Lawrence Block has a new post. See [The Leaves Are the Least of It](#).

The Writing Day

A light writing day today. Not every day can be a great writing day, though that's what I expected when the day began.

I wrote awhile (around 500 words, cycling), then took a break. I came back and wrote most of the stuff above, then decided to create the cover, promo doc, etc. for the short story that doubles as chapter 1 of this novel.

Other things to do so not a lot more writing today.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2018

Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2378

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963

Total fiction words for the month..... 6540
Total fiction words for the year..... 661695
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 240590

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 902285

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Lawrence Block](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 11/5

[November 5, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Outside early this morning, but the cold eventually drove me back inside. It's 41, but the wind is icy.

There hasn't been a lot recently over at Dean's place. Mostly, he says, that's because he's changing things up on his website.

Well, the blog post is only one part of his website. I don't understand how segmenting his blog into the post plus new sidebar widgets, etc. improves anything.

For just one example, blog post readers who don't care about his progress on his novels and other writing can simply stop reading before they get to that point. They also won't bother going to the sidebar widget to follow that progress because it doesn't matter to them, so it's no great loss.

On the other hand, those of us who are motivated or find new ideas in following his progress have to hunt them up. So to me the fragmentation seems unnecessary and even harmful.

Nothing lasts forever, of course, and I think he's probably getting tired. I've gotten that way a few times with this blog, and I haven't been at it nearly as long as he has. But he's a major source of learning for me in an amazing number of ways, so I hope he hangs around awhile.

* * *

I played with Facebook quickly this morning, answered email, then formatted and distributed the short story that is also the first chapter of my current WIP, a novel about a serial killer. I also published it to my website to go live on December 23. Odd that it will publish there after the novel comes out.

I changed the title of the story to “Ice Scream.” Then I emailed it to donors. You can see the cover at <http://harveystanbrough.com/short-stories>. Top left.

If you are not a donor, you can get all of my short stories hot off the press for as little as a \$6 per month recurring donation to the Keep Harvey Alive Fund. (grin) There are other levels and benefits too. For details, see <http://harveystanbrough.com/subscribe-to-my-work/>.

* * *

After that I made omelets for myself and my wife. I enjoy making them more than I like eating them. If I had more money than sense I probably would open an omelet restaurant and just play with making omelets all day.

* * *

I’m at a good place with the novel, so today I plan to work on my nonfiction book. Probably all day. Maybe all day tomorrow too, so a nonwriting day today as far as fiction goes. Probably. Of course, if the mood strikes, I’ll go back to the novel.

But I really need to knock out that nonfiction book. I’m convinced it’s a great idea, so I want to knock it out and get it off my mind.

Well, it might take more than a day or two. I decided the only way to do this is page-by-page, editing out unnecessary stuff, links, etc. as I go.

To give you some perspective, I started at 8:30. By 9:30 I had it all compiled (Oct 2014 – Oct 2014) and currently I’m working on page 3 of 951 pages. The whole thing (including much that I will cut) contains 528,546 words. (grin)

Perhaps I’ll devote weekends to it until I’ve finished.

Well, at 12:30 I’m only on page 12. (grin) But it will go a lot faster as I fine-tune what to keep and what to toss out. I’ve had to go back and forth a few times.

It’s now 2 p.m. and I’m on page 17. I realized around the November 3, 2014 entry that I need to keep the word counts for the day and for the WsIP (works in progress) because very often they are tied directly to what I wrote in the text above them.

Plus if I put them in an appendix, I’d still have to date them to put them in context. Then readers who do want to know about the numbers would feel the book is too segmented.

Okay, I’m shutting down at a little after 3. Now that I know what I’m doing, I hope to make good headway on this thing tomorrow. Then it’s back to the novel.

Of Interest

Nada that I could find.

The Writing Day

Nothing today but this Journal and the Intro for the nonfiction book.

And a re-think on the whole weekend/weekday thing. I miss playing in my novel. If I can manage it tomorrow, I'm gonna write on Jonah for at least awhile. Nonfiction's just no fun.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 740 (Journal)
Nonfiction words: 1420 (Intro to Nonfiction Book)
So total words for the day: 2160

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 6540
Total fiction words for the year..... 661695
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 242750

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 904445

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [nonfiction](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 11/6

[November 6, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Election day is coming on Tuesday. Please validate my and others' service to the country, defense of your rights, and your birthright by going to your polling place and voting.

* * *

Today DWS talks about Keeping Track of Books Published (see Of Interest).

I have a spreadsheet for that. If anyone's interested, email to let me know and I'll send it to you. I keep mine more as a ready reference when anyone asks about a particular book than to keep count, but it works both ways.

My spreadsheet is color coded, with short stories in white, collections in blue, and novels/novellas in green. (Compendiums, like boxed sets of novels, are in green as well.)

My spreadsheet columns across the top are titled

Author (because I use personas sometimes),
Collection (two numbers, right justified for which collection, by number, a story goes into; left justified for the number of the actual collection — I have 29 now),
(for the number of stories in a collection), Publication Date,
Words,
ePrice,
Pages (where applicable, for print),
pPrice (again, where applicable),
Universal Link,
Smashwords link,
Amazon links (phasing out),
Smashwords ISBN (phasing out),
Print ISBN 13 (phasing out), and
CreateSpace link (phasing out).

Of course, you can add or delete columns as you wish.

This morning I went back and added a column of Nonfiction Titles as well so I can keep track of those too.

Of Interest

Dean's [Keeping Track of Books Published](#) is worth a read.

The Writing Day

Well, I made a little headway on the novel in addition to doing a lot of other stuff today. But frankly, 3 p.m. basically snuck up on me.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1358

Nonfiction Words: 270 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1628

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 243020

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 906073

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 11/7

[November 7, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Oof. God I'll be glad when tomorrow has come and gone. I'm not usually one for wishing away time — it's such a precious commodity — but I'll be slap-your-grandma happy when smoke clears and we find out what the electoral college has decided about our constitution and the rule of law.

What does this have to do with writing?

Easy. I'm not invested in either party (or any of the four, if you swing that way). But I'm heavily, deeply invested in preserving the Constitution. Period. And that investment heavily affects my writing. Even my ability to write.

I almost envy those who simply don't care. Then again, that same level of non-passion will infect their writing too, and I would not deign to waste my time reading it. Without passion, writing is flat and failed. Without passion, our nation is flat and failed.

* * *

My first reader (Kenneth Flowers, krf1952@gmail.com if you need a great first reader) for The Consensus got back to me with an early review, though he's going to read over the whole thing again before he gives me the full rundown.

Still, stuff like this is nice to hear: "...your aliens are magnificent. Just the slight taste was so interesting and I hope you explore them further in the future."

I will, believe me. I enjoyed what little they showed me too.

* * *

Didn't even get started writing until almost 11 a.m. Did a lot of little things before that, fretted over things I can't control, but made my opinion known. Widely.

Of Interest

Dean's [Business and Writing](#) is worth a look.

Today is Free Fiction Monday over at Kris's place with [Updates](#). As I've said before, if you want to study excellent technique, you can't beat KKR.

The Writing Day

Actually, I didn't write today. I canceled even trying at around 1. I'm going to read and watch the Internet for more shoes to drop.

I might write tomorrow, but probably not. I have my workshop to attend tomorrow, and there's the election. I suspect it will be a very late night.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 330

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4510
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 243350

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 906403

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 11/8

[November 8, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Up and outside around 4 this morning. The baby wanted to go play outside. (grin)

I watched a Ted Nugent “live” vid on Facebook. Very cool to see someone from my generation (and a legitimate rock star at that) being so vehemently strong re the USA.

Today will be a nonwriting day. Some things are just so vastly more important than sitting around making stuff up.

Also my friend, neighbor and landlady is having our house repainted soon. November 14, I think. The painter wants to pressure wash the house this Thursday.

So today (instead of taking another day to do this) I’ll combine election day with clearing things away from the house so he can do his job. So for awhile my outside desk will be removed and all of that will be disrupted. It’s okay. Shakeups are always a good thing and they’re necessary sometimes.

I’ll also find time today, probably, to watch and listen to the Week 2 lessons on the POV workshop I’m currently taking. If not today, I’ll do that tomorrow or maybe Thursday.

Thursday this week (November 10) is also the 241st anniversary of the birth of the United States Marine Corps. I can’t begin to explain how very proud I am to have been a tiny, minuscule part of that for a very short while.

To any brothers or sisters or spouses in any branch of the Armed Forces out there, Semper Fi. It’s the Marine Corps’ motto, but most members of all the branches of service truly meant their oath and are indeed “always faithful.”

Got my final report back from my first reader, Kenneth Flowers (krf1952@gmail.com if you need him) and it was better than I hoped. (grin) His “job” for me is to spot glitches and errors, and believe me, he did. His job is not to “like” what I write, but he also did that. Kenneth is a voracious reader, so naturally I was pleased.

Because I don’t foresee having anything else to say today, I’ll go ahead and post this early (it’s near 8:30 a.m. out there). If you haven’t already voted, I hope you will.

Of Interest

Some great comments on [Business and Writing](#) over at Dean’s place.

Today’s post, [Copyright and the Fear of Learning](#) is good too.

Over at The Creative Penn, [an interview \(and a full transcript if you’d rather read it\)](#) of Lisa Cron discussing her book Story Genius: How To Use Brain Science to Write a Riveting Novel with Lisa Cron. Note: I do NOT endorse buying a book about writing from someone who doesn’t

write. However, I did find a few gems in the transcript of the interview. (Wisdom is wisdom, and even non-writers get it right sometimes.)

The Writing Day

Nope.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 460

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4970
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 243810

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 906863

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 11/9

[November 9, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Very slow start today. And this is much more placeholder than a real post.

I'm a bit of a politics junkie, which is exactly like saying if you stand in the path of a tidal wave you might experience a bit of moisture.

The simple fact is, what I do here (sit alone in a room making stuff up) is entertainment, nothing more. The nation, the Constitution, and what happens to it is far, far more important.

I was to bed finally at 1:30 a.m. (better than an all-nighter) and then up at 5. So another nonwriting day today. I have to decompress a bit, so I'm doing necessary things around the house.

Of Interest

Dean's post on Copyright and the Fear of Learning has some good [comments](#). His post today was basically a placeholder.

The Writing Day

Nada.

I expect to be back to writing tomorrow. Thanks for hanging in there.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 160

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX/

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5130
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 243970

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 907023

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 11/10

[November 10, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, happy 241st Marine Corps birthday to my brothers and sisters in arms out there.

Second, I'm especially annoyed and irritated this morning, and all because I read Kristine Kathryn Rusch's Business Musings post. (I subscribed, so it came to my inbox.)

Kris' current post has very little, and then only peripherally, to do with business. Still, it might be worth your time to read, so I included it in Of Interest below. If you preferred a different outcome in the presidential election, I recommend you read it. She commiserates. A lot.

I have known for a very long time that most writers and other literary types lean (to put it very lightly) to the political left. That's fine. Everyone has a right to wear whatever uniform they choose.

Yet somehow, I'm still amazed when I'm blatantly slapped with anti-American sentiment in America. It makes my heart hurt.

I guess I'm just stupid, at least from the Left's perspective. A few have told me as much. And that's fine.

On the positive side, I'm stupid enough that the oath I took to support and defend the Constitution of the United States was not just a string of meaningless words to me.

On the negative side, I'm stupid enough that I can't overlook any Secretary of State, regardless of political affiliation, abandoning men in the field. Even if I could overlook all the other myriad complaints, from murder to violation of the US Code and even high treason. Which I can't and don't, personally.

I form my opinions of others, both in and out of political office, by comparing what they themselves say with what they themselves do or cause to be done. To me, that's the only honest, fair way to form an opinion.

Would that all writers — by definition some of the most open-minded people on the face of the earth — should do the same. But then, that's just my opinion.

* * *

Today I'm trying to make the transition to using my newer computer this morning. Actually I've been doing that for the past few days. The keyboard spacing is slightly different, which is a little odd, but otherwise it isn't too bad.

I thought today would be the first day of fiction writing on this one. But no, it wasn't. I piddled around. I worked on some things outside, got the heat turned on for the house, worked for awhile with websites, played on Facebook and did some other things. But no writing.

I suppose I'll write at least a short story tomorrow. I need that, for creativity, for productivity and just to have fun again for a change. Oh, and to meet my goal for this horribly disrupted week.

Maybe I can get a few of my Brooklyn boys to break heads on some of the morons who are burning flags in Chicago and New York and LA because they didn't get their way. I guess as long as it was criminals whipping other criminals, that would be okay, right? Sigh.

The whole thing makes me wanna chew wheels and spit nails.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, [Some New Goals](#). Yeah!

Just in case anyone out there is "against" ebooks or not basically knowledgeable about them, here's [Seven Questions About Ebooks](#) from BookBaby. *Note: I do NOT recommend purchasing their services in formatting, editing, etc. They're far too expensive. Do it yourself or hire me or some other professional who doesn't overcharge.*

If you pulled for Clinton in the election, Kris Rusch's [Business Musings: Third Quarter Blues](#) will probably interest you.

The Writing Day

I rolled out at 3:30 and was outside by 4 with a good cigar. Then, mostly, I wrote the stuff above this.

After I write a short story for this week, I might return to the novel start (Jonah) or I might sideline it and write something else. Jonah is a story about a serial killer. I'm really not in the mood for that right now. You'll see the first chapter in a short story called "Ice Scream" on my site on December 23.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 580

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX/

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 244550

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 907603

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 11/11

[November 11, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, I wish all of you a happy and thought-filled Veteran's Day. I hope everyone reading this is appreciative of veterans (myself excluded, please—I don't mean this to be self-serving) and what they sacrificed. I was thanked every two weeks the entire time I was in. That was sufficient.

I rolled out at 4:20 after 9 hours of sleep. I opened the day with a good cigar, then spent the balance of the early morning reading and responding to emails and liking or ignoring Facebook posts.

I started to write a topic titled Making Some Changes. In it I was going to detail the process of determining how many websites I manage (28) and finding an unused one on which I could post my personal opinions on matters (to me) of grave interest.

But no need for all that fluff. Suffice it to say I won't be posting anymore personal-opinion bits here or over on my main blog. I probably will set up a website where I can do that, though, because I'm not big on continuing to turn the other cheek while being repeatedly slapped.

If/when I get that website set up, I'll post a link here in the Of Interest section a few times just in case any of you want to subscribe. Like everything I provide that is short of professional services, it will be free.

Just in case any of you follow me on Facebook, I should mention I have also withdrawn from that. My account is still there, but I've cut off all notifications. I can't write "hello" without someone questioning my motives. As Logan Pearsall Smith once wrote, "If you want to be thought a liar, always tell the truth."

I'm simply not in the mood to write fiction today, so I probably won't. Probably I will spend today and the rest of this weekend working on my next nonfiction book, *The Professional Fiction Writer | A Year in the Life*.

That work is currently billed as a "series of original, uncut blog posts [that form] an intimate glimpse into the day-to-day life of a professional fiction writer. And a great deal more."

And the more I think about it, the more I like that.

I think I'll just go through, page by page, and remove all active links, then post it as-is. That way readers have more choices. They can glean from it what they want and skip over what they don't want.

I've tried to go through it and keep only what all readers will want to see, or in the alternative to remove anything that someone else might not want to see. But frankly, that's a fool's effort. It feels far too much like trying to phrase dialogue or narrative in a way that all readers will like. That's an impossible task, and one that I suspect would serve only to destroy what is potentially a great resource for writers.

After all, maybe there's someone else out there like me. I would love to have had such a resource when I started writing. Then again, maybe there aren't. I guess we'll see. In the end, I decided to give potential readers the same opportunity I've given you: the opportunity to use what works for you and to ignore what doesn't.

And now I'm going to go do just that. Have a safe and warm Veteran's Day weekend, everyone.

Of Interest

I found DWS' Blast From The Past <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/blast-from-the-past/> wonderful. A great bit of nostalgia for writers and history buffs.

The Writing Day

Nothing.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 600

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX/

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6310
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 245150

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 908203

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 11/13](#)

[November 13, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, another day, another two dollas an' fo'ty cent'.

I'm in a slump. There, I said it. But it's all right. Not complaining. I'm sure you've all been there too.

My novel isn't stalled, and ideas for stories continue to come, but I feel as if I need time to lick my wounds. I hope I get fired up and moving again before I close down the Journal for good, but that might or might not happen.

I suppose this week, for me at least, is one of those Life Events that take awhile to get over.

* * *

To those of you for whom my daily posts and/or my word counts have been important, that will continue in some form over on the big site.

Also, I plan to leave the Journal up as-is until some future time in case anyone wants to look back over it.

* * *

As I run through the Journal That Would Be A Book, yesterday (I did another 130 pages out of almost 1400), I noticed that very early on I posted an entry in which I said the Journal might be a book someday. Go figure.

Today I'm working on the nonfiction book again. Definitely just another way of taking time off from having fun.

And it's slower going at least so far today because I'm cross-posting some topics from the journal (beginning along in May 2015) over to posts at the main site. Over there, I'm currently halfway through September 2017 with new posts.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, [The Power of a Streak](#).

The Writing Day

Nada. Pero I expect to get back to writing tomorrow. Reading through parts of the Journal as I prep it for publication is really motivating me to write.

I have a feeling I might just can Jonah as a novel. I'm not much in the mood to write it. It's about a serial killer and it just doesn't appeal to me right now.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: XXXX (Journal)
So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX/

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7090
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 245930

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 908983

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#)

The Journal, Monday, 11/14

[November 14, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, the painter is coming today to pressure wash the house. He shouldn't need anything from me in that regard, and I hope he doesn't.

I thought maybe I'd go back to the novel I started (Jonah) and begin again there today, but I'm just not feeling it. Plus I already got a great short story out of it. Maybe I'll get back to it someday, but for now it's gone.

If you remember the "BTK Killer" from a few decades ago, Jonah was going to be based on that idea, that clash of personalities: a vicious murderer who tortured his victims but who also, for all intents and purposes, appeared to be an upstanding member of his church and his community.

But as I said, I'm setting it aside for now. Some truly unsettling stuff. If you read the short story, "Ice Scream" when it comes out, you'll understand what I mean by that. I don't need that in my head right now. It will post on December 23 on the big website unless I write something for Christmas and move this horror thing out a week or two.

* * *

Retraining, at least for me, has been an ongoing process. Or maybe retraining and then adjusting.

I wrote some of my best sessions when I was hanging out in the Adobe Hovel. It's still out there, and the desk, chair and electricity are still in place. Maybe soon I'll "adjust" myself back out there where it's less convenient to entertain interruptions.

The painter will be back again in the morning, and for the next two mornings after that. Maybe tomorrow morning would be a good time to move back to the Hovel. I guess maybe we'll see.

* * *

I thought I might get back to writing fiction today, but I didn't. I do realize, by the way, this hiatus is not a big deal to most folks. But it's strange for me. I did get through July 2015 in eformatting the old Journal for publication. I'll be glad when that process is finished.

During this month, I've written fiction only four days out of 14. But it also feels oddly good to be taking this time to just not worry about it. It's all part and parcel of my ongoing retraining, I'm sure.

Soon, I'll get focused on the writing again.

* * *

I almost wish I hadn't decided to shut down this Journal, but as a respondent mentioned a couple of days ago, nothing lasts forever. Still, I'll miss chatting at you every day, even when most often the echo comes out of a seeming vacuum. (grin) And chatting "at" is never as much fun as chatting "with."

This always has been a more intimate venue than the "big" blog, but it just never grew. Increasingly, I realized I was preaching to the choir here, and a dwindling choir at that. It's a very short leap from preaching to the choir to the sense that I'm just nagging people who are too nice to unsubscribe. (grin)

Those of you who are still reading, again, thanks for being there. You made this journey considerably more fun than it would have been alone.

Of Interest

If you aren't currently subscribed to the Pro Writers blog over on HarveyStanbrough.com (and if you value my opinion on writing), please subscribe. [You may click this link to do so.](#)

It's [Free Fiction Monday](#) at Kristine Kathryn Rusch's site.

New and interesting post over on Lawrence Block's site: <http://lawrenceblock.com/well-its-an-old-story/>.

Over at Dean's place, he posted his take on [The NaNoWriMo Challenge](#). Interesting to see he thinks about it much as I do.

The Writing Day

Nothing. Maybe tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 600

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945
Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963
Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX/

Total fiction words for the month..... 7898
Total fiction words for the year..... 663053
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 246530

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 909583

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lawrence Block](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 11/15

[November 15, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

The painters are here today to prep. They're at least chipping and scraping a few areas the power washer missed. Not sure what else they're doing. Tomorrow they'll paint the body of the house and on Thursday the trim.

I was about to head out to the Hovel, but then I remembered I have a workshop to watch and listen to today. I can't do that in the Hovel because my Internet signal doesn't reach out there.

And that reminded me to check Dean's site for his post. It's below.

I'm kind of surprised this was not a good week for the workshop. Not a productive week, and



really not even an informative week. The

“instruction,” for lack of a better word, was convoluted, vague, and very general. Not good. I really hope next week will be better.

Not writing so far today. Not even working on the nonfiction book. Of course, I can get back to that any time. Doing a little laundry (weird how quickly two people can come up with two loads of laundry) and otherwise playing with Facebook, etc.

If you’re a fan of Luna, the last couple of days was the “super moon.” I got some pretty good closeup pics. That’s one of them there on the right. It’s of the eastern edge as we view it.

If you’d like to see a few more as well as a few of the planet Venus, [Click Here](#), then scroll down a bit.

I almost posted a topic called “Grain of Salt.”

Here’s the gist. Take ANY writing advice from ANYone, even me, even DWS, with a grain of salt. Chances are you know more about some aspects of writing than I do or Dean or anyone else does. Just be sure what you “know” isn’t something you learned from a professional who is not a fiction writer (e.g., an English or Lit teacher).

I noticed awhile back, when Dean’s passing along something about which he isn’t 100% sure, he has certain “tells,” and they’re tells that anyone can pick up on: he flushes red, he confuses words or phrases, he hesitates, etc. So I’m just saying, watch for those tells in others. And above all, if something seems “off” to you, especially if the instructor doesn’t provide concrete examples, question it, if only in your own mind.

Of Interest

Dean talk about [Intensity in Your Writing](#).

The Writing Day

Nope.

No reason to add word counts to this anymore, so I’ve deleted them. I’m still keeping them on my spreadsheet.

You folks take care.

Harvey

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 11/16](#)

[November 16, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Spent the early morning hours outside (until around 6) tapping away on this Journal entry. Also rearranged a menu item or two on my main site, did some updates on other sites and removed the link to subscribe to this Journal.

The painters painted the body of the house today. They hit here about 7 and didn't leave until close to 1 p.m. I spent most of the morning outside with them and didn't even think about writing. I'll get back to it when I get back to it.

Wow. Can you remember all the stuff I've passed along to you over the past two years? I can't, but as I said, I'll leave this Journal up for awhile so you can refer back if necessary.

In the meantime, here's a synopsis for you.

Topic: The More Important Writerly Things

GENERAL

Heinlein's Rules — You can get a free copy, annotated, by [clicking here](#).

Writing Into the Dark — Trust your subconscious to tell your stories. It's been telling stories since your pre-alphabet days. Those of you reading this can listen to my audio lecture free. Click <http://hestanbrough.org/category/12-writing-into-the-dark/> and enter this password: WTD10hY41No1A4 (case sensitive). This is my way of saying thank you for having been part of this experiment.

Cycling — Write the best, cleanest draft you can the first time through.

Set Long-Term, Mid-Term and Short-Term Goals — then break them down into manageable bites and work toward them. Make some of your goals recurring to set yourself up for streaks.

If you must fail (and you will, if your goals are set correctly), Fail to Success.

In words and works produced, average is what matters.

Dreams are nice to have, but they are not within your control. Goals are completely within your control.

Regularly check your priorities and adjust them as necessary — You are responsible for setting your own priorities.

Keep Learning, Part I — If you are weak on subject/verb agreement, punctuation or any other mechanical aspects of the language, learn them. You owe that much to your readers.

Keep Learning, Part II — If you are weak on the craft aspects of writing (depth, pacing, dialogue, etc.) learn them. You owe that much to yourself.

Find More Than One Knowledgeable Source — Even if they say the same thing, one might say it differently enough that you'll "get" it in a way you didn't get it before.

CRAFT

Don't be the Almighty Writer On High. Get down in the trenches and run through the story with your characters.

Use the Five Senses — Insert the POV character's opinion of the setting in every major scene. Filter that opinion through all five (when possible) *of the character's* physical senses and emotions (not yours). Characters, like all other real people, have different opinions of dark, light, cold, warmth, a smoky room, a clean room, etc. This is the only way to ground the reader in the scene. It's also an excellent way to let the reader know who the character is, the "character" of the character.

Focus Down on a detail to immediately pull the reader deeper into the scene.

Keep Coming Back to your writing.

Just write the next sentence.

When in doubt, hit the Return (Enter) key to begin a new paragraph (pacing).

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Heinlein's Rules (see above).

Any fiction that really impressed you by any writer. Read it through once for pleasure, then go back and focus on the sections that blew you away to see how he or she did that.

Lawrence Block's Writing the Novel from Plot to Print to Pixel

Lawrence Block's Write for Your Life: The Home Seminar for Writers

Lawrence Block's Telling Lies for Fun & Profit: A Manual for Fiction Writers

Lawrence Block's Spider, Spin Me a Web: A Handbook for Fiction Writers

Steven Pressfield's The War of Art

Harvey Stanbrough's Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction

Harvey Stanbrough's Punctuation for Writers (2nd Edition, and ignore the segment on italics)

Harvey Stanbrough's Creating Realistic Characters

Dean Wesley Smith's How to Write a Novel in Ten Days

[Dean Wesley Smith's blog](#)

[Kristine Kathryn Rusch's blog](#)

Harvey Stanbrough's Pro Writers blog ([subscribe link](#))

Harvey Stanbrough's Free Story of the Week ([subscribe link](#))

[The Creative Penn blog](#)

Of Interest

At Dean's place, [Go Slow](#). It never ceases to amaze me how much my writing life and his seem to run in parallel sometimes. Wow.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 11/17

[November 17, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I don't like to leave anywhere on a low note.

After I posted yesterday's Journal, I glanced through one of the books on the reading list: Block's [Telling Lies for Fun & Profit](#). It's a compilation of many of the articles he wrote for a writing magazine.

The titles of two of those articles caught my attention. Given my recent predicament, you won't be surprised to learn those titles were "Time Out" (p. 95) and "Do It Anyway" (p. 99).

In the first, he wrote "The writer who gets things done is the writer who shows up for work day in and day out. Regular hours and regular production are the keys to productivity." Okay, I knew that.

Then he wrote that in one book he was writing, the first part went like gangbusters. Then he came to a place where he had to switch the POV to a different character. And he bogged down.

EXACTLY what happened to me with the current WIP.

And enter the conscious, critical mind. If you remember, a day or two ago I wrote in this Journal that I'd "already gotten a short story out of it anyway." Right? Meaning if I don't complete the novel, no big deal.

But it is. It's a HUGE deal.

If I quit this novel—a novel that's based on a ready-born novel-sized idea (do you know how rare those are?)—it will just make it easier to toss out the next one. I might as well consign myself to taking long, quiet walks in the desert and abandon this whole silly notion of writing novels.

Wow. Okay, I'll skip to the end.

As a result of reading those two articles, and combining what Block wrote there with my self-description as an disciple and adherent of Heinlein's Rules, I was determined to start writing again this morning. That didn't happen, but I will start tomorrow morning on the same novel, the working title of which is Jonah.

I'll start with the new POV character in a new chapter. So it will be like writing a new novel from word one. I'm no longer even certain where the scene that was also a short story will fit, and I don't really care.

I'll just be happy to get back to writing at all. As I also realized from Block, if you're a writer, it isn't important that something be "good." That's a value judgement that I, as the writer, am not qualified to make anyway. What is important is that I finish the thing.

So I will.

Given my track record, I'll probably finish it in 30 writing days or less. That would put the finish date somewhere around the middle of December. I can't think of a better early Christmas gift to myself.

I also looked over his take on using pen names (and by extension, personas). As a result, I'll be making some sweeping changes in that arena too. Everything the man wrote made perfect sense.

Tomorrow I will update you below (those of you who want to know) on my progress with the novel.

And then, having regained a modicum of my discipline for writing, tomorrow (Friday, November 18) probably will be the last post from this Journal. And I'll be able to leave on a high note after all.

Bless you for being there. I hope you will take advantage of the reading list I left for you yesterday, the free audio seminar, etc.

I noticed I had one new subscriber yesterday. (grin) Just in time to get the free stuff as it turned out, but not soon enough to have to put up with most of my bellyaching. (grin)

Of Interest

At Dean's place, he's running an [Online Workshop Special](#) for one week. Worth a read if you've considered taking his workshops. And the price is definitely right.

Kris Rusch, in her Business Musings column, shared [Running A \(Writing\) Business In Uncertain Times](#). There are some good thoughts in it.

Kris Rusch remains the best fictionist I know and obviously has a very good business mind. In the past, her mantra has been "Keep political opinions to yourself. Put it in your fiction." She even mentions that again in this post.

But as forewarned by the title, she begins again on the results of the election, with which she strongly disagrees. That is her prerogative. If you agree with her or can wade through the muck, I recommend her Business Musings. And I always recommend her fiction for pleasure and study.

The Writing Day

I wrote all of the above yesterday afternoon (after I posted yesterday's article) and this morning from 4:30 to about 6. Now to change into my day clothes. The painters will be here in less than an hour.

Well, today the painters brought a radio. Loud. I'm working on the nonfiction while they're here. I'll get back to the novel after they leave. I'm hoping that'll be around noon.

Uhh, no. It's almost 3 p.m. and they're still here. After they leave I have a few necessary chores to do, so no writing today.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Keep Coming Back](#), [Lawrence Block](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 11/18

[November 18, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

As I glance back over the Journal for the past two years (putting it together and formatting it for publication), I see that I stopped publishing it twice.

I also checked the registration date for this particular URL (hestanbrough.com). I found it doesn't expire until April 15, 2017.

I enjoy this quasi-connection, chatting with other writers, even though it seems mostly a one-way chat. I've also recently had one new member subscribe.

So (here's a shock) I'm going to keep going on it.

I find the 6 p.m. post time a little too tight sometimes, so I might adjust that soon. But otherwise I'll just keep sharing. I might also make other changes from time to time.

I really hope some of you enjoy this Journal and that it helps some of you. I don't know any other place where you can find a professional fiction writer who shares all the day to day bumps and bruises as well as the "good" stuff.

Anyway, if you'd rather not receive it, please just email me and let me know. I'll unsubscribe you. If you want to keep receiving it, just hang in there.

* * *

In an enjoyable back and forth email session with Kris Rusch, I happened on a realization. An epiphany, even.

All the recent political turmoil and the worry over it, whatever "side" you're on, is just more conscious mind stuff. That's all it is.

Get that? It was nothing more than the conscious mind giving at least me one more "reason" not to write.

I didn't recognize it before because this particular conscious-mind stuff isn't related directly to writing. But it sidetracked my writing anyway.

So really, whether and how much and when I (you) write all boils back down to priorities.

I've made a lot of noise about priorities in this blog over the past two years. My number one priority is writing, I said. Repeatedly.

But recently, in an email with a like-minded friend who is also a writer (I was amazed!), when he wondered aloud how many Facebook followers I'd lost because of expressing my right to free speech, I wrote, "...some things are more important than writing."

But that simply isn't true unless you allow it to be true. And it certainly isn't a blanket statement. How important one thing is when compared to another thing is a function of priorities. And priorities, as I've said many times, are up to the individual.

Again, I've always said my number one priority is writing. I still feel that way, so I guess maybe I'd better get back on the stick.

If something adversely affects your ability to write, and if it comes from the conscious mind, you can choose whether to set it aside.

Certainly some major life events take precedence. For example, the illness or death or other departure of a loved one. But not politics. Politics, for most of us, remains nothing but a bothersome, tiresome hobby.

By relegating politics to that insignificant category (a bothersome hobby), I can move on with my writing. If things come to a head and I am forced to choose between upholding my oath or reneging on it... well, that isn't really a choice. Not for me.

But otherwise, I'll leave politics to others. Now if I can just remember.

* * *

I worked on the nonfiction book from around 8:30 until 11, then took a break for lunch. I hoped to work my way up through October 31, 2015. I ended up getting through March 8, 2015. So a win there.

I've also decided I'm going to get at least two books out of this process. One will be the whole Journal, pretty much uncut except where I repeated a topic or something. The other will be a collection of the topics themselves. I believe both will sell to different folks. At least this way I give them a choice.

Of Interest

Something else I've learned as I'm formatting the past two years of this Journal: I can't put live links in it. So from now on I'll show them here physically as well as hot linking them for your convenience.

At Dean's place, see [The Power of the Creative Voice](http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-power-of-the-creative-voice/). Absolutely excellent, and a bit astonishing even if you already practice WITD. (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-power-of-the-creative-voice/>).

Just to clarify something from yesterday's post. I strongly support Kristine Kathryn Rusch. She is (IMHO) the best fiction writer alive today in either gender, bar none. She also has the sharpest, most analytical business mind (re the writing business) of anyone whom I'm aware. And she shares her knowledge in both fields. No downside.

Today's Writing

I played with my current wip (Jonah) a bit over three hours, but frankly, very little came. I'm just not into the story anymore. Hey, stuff happens.

I've gotten two short stories from it, one horror and one sort of church-lady humor. Go figure. Unless lightning strikes with a new direction before tomorrow, I'm shelving it.

Then I'll work on the nonfiction book until I get it finished. It isn't writing, but it's writing-related admin stuff, and I really want to get it out there and be done with it.

So here I am. I hope you're still out there too. If you aren't — if I'm just blissfully talking to myself — well, that's all right too.

Fiction Words: 0719

Nonfiction Words: 790 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1509

Writing of Jonah (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3945 words. Total words to date..... 3945

Day 2..... 2018 words. Total words to date..... 5963

Day 3..... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 7321

Day 4..... 0719 words. Total words to date..... 8040 (stalled)

Total fiction words for the month..... 8617

Total fiction words for the year..... 663772

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10420

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 249260

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 913032

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 11/19](#)

[November 19, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, thanks to all of you who came out of the shadows to let me know you're there and you're glad the Journal will continue. You have no idea how much I appreciate it.

Today and tomorrow, unless some character walks up and slaps me, will be nonwriting days for fiction, though I will be working on the nonfiction book. Actually, I hope to finish formatting it today.

That process will be interrupted for a few hours as my wife and I watch the third film in The Hobbit series. Talk about special effects! Woof!

Anyway, with a little luck, I'll have TWO nonfiction books formatted today. Nothing like getting those dollars rolling in. (grin) If I don't finish both today, I probably will continue with them tomorrow.

Topic: Reverse Outlines Revisited

This topic sprang from a comment (a question from another writer) on Dean's site this morning.

Awhile back I talked about writing a reverse outline.

The idea is, as you write your novel off into the dark (no pre-plotting, outlining, etc.) sometimes keeping track of characters, what they're wearing, major situations, etc. becomes cumbersome.

Now when I write a novel, I open the Word doc (novelname.doc) and start typing whatever comes.

But I also open a Notepad text (novelname notes.txt) document. I use Windows but Mac has something similar. I keep it open and minimized on my screen as I'm writing the novel.

In that .txt document, at the end of every chapter or major scene, I fill in a few details about the chapter or scene.

Those details might include

character names and anything significant (wearing a brown leather vest or a grey longcoat, what sort of weapons or car or whatever else is involved),

place names (was the hotel called The Amarillo Inn or the Amarillo Inn? did the scene or chapter take place in Justin, Texas or Eustace, Oklahoma?),

names of any minor characters introduced in that scene or chapter and their occupation (does that guy run the livery stable or the general store?), and so on.

Anything at all that I think I might need to remember later in the novel.

This takes only a few seconds per chapter or major scene and it keeps me from having to scroll back or use the Find function to search for the information.

On Dean's site, the question the other writer asked was about series short stories.

I know many writers (like Dean) can set out to write short stories in series.

I can't.

But sometimes, a character from a short story (or novel) I wrote awhile back tugs at my sleeve and pitches another story to me.

So when I write a short story, I also keep a reverse outline of it. Then if I do return to that world to write another story, I don't have to open the original story and read through it for information. I only have to open the "shortstoryname notes.txt" document and I'm good to go.

Try it. You'll like it.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, [Sometimes It's Just a Day](http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sometimes-its-just-a-day/). (http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sometimes-its-just-a-day/)

I also recommend reading (or re-reading, as I just did) [Go Slow](http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/go-slow/) (http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/go-slow/). A truly great post.

Today's Writing

Nada, pero está bien.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 510 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 510

Writing of (tentative title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8617
Total fiction words for the year..... 663772
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10930
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 249770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 913542

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 11/20](#)

[November 20, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Today again will be a nonwriting day for fiction, working on the nonfiction book. I didn't get as far as I thought I would yesterday. I hope to finish formatting it today.

The third Hobbit movie was good, but not as good as the first two or as The Lord of the Rings. Actually there was too much tension, too many battles, stacked one atop the other. (In any writing, too-much anything waters down the effect.)

And the final wide-scale battle was over much too quickly, too easily. So for the wide-scale battles, they were just a little unbalanced. The final focused battle between two kings was about right.

* * *

Yesterday I turned 26 years old, albeit having gained one more year of experience at being 26 years old. I now have 38 years' experience. My lovely wife presented me with a pair of thermal gloves without fingers (so I can type) but with handy mittens attached. Very nice. They're thick, though, in the palms, so typing with them on is a learning curve. Still, better than my hands freezing. (grin)

* * *

I mentioned yesterday that this URL (hestanbrough.com) registration expires on April 15.

For that reason I'm thinking (again) about moving this Journal over to the main site. (I considered this before back in June, but then I was going to force-feed this Journal to the subscribers of my Pro Writers blog. I won't do that.)

Currently, that website displays the free story of the week from Friday when the story posts through Tuesday morning. Then it displays the Pro Writers post from Tuesday when that one posts through Friday when the new story of the week posts.

If I move the Journal over there, here's what would happen:

Because the Journal would still go to the Stanbrough on Writing list at MailChimp, your delivery would be uninterrupted.

The Journal would become more visible because the home page of the "big" website displays the most recent post.

the free story of the week would still display on Friday morning, but only until the Journal posts on Friday afternoon.

The Pro Writers post would still display on Tuesday morning, but only until the Journal posts on Tuesday afternoon.

On Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday, the current edition of the Journal would display.

I'm asking—Any thoughts or recommendations? You may respond in comments below or via email. I value your opinion, and thanks in advance.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, he's gone back to what he calls the "cluttered" posts that include his word count. Yay! The guy motivates me, and it was difficult for me to adjust to checking the separate word-count page.

As another commenter wrote, Dean's word counts "remind me that
a) I can always strive to write more, and

- b) whatever I write is a win, and
- c) no words doesn't mean the end of my writing world.

I also recommend reading (or re-reading, as I just did) Go Slow (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/go-slow/>). A truly great post.

Today's Writing

Nada, pero está bien.

I worked on the nonfiction book again today. I finished formatting the Journal (slightly over 2 years of it) at 4:45, then posted this.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 550

Writing of (tentative title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8617
Total fiction words for the year..... 663772
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 250320

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 914092

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 11/21](#)

[November 21, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, there's been some confusion about what will happen when I move the Journal over to the main site.

First, if you receive the Journal via email subscription, you won't notice any difference and you won't have to make any changes. You'll still receive the Journal at the usual time every day.

But if you receive the Journal via RSS feed, the feed itself will change. The current RSS feed is <http://www.hestanbrough.com/feed/>.

The new RSS feed will be <http://harveystanbrough.com/category/daily-journal/feed/>. To continue to be notified of the Journal every day, you'll need to add that feed to your reader.

As it stands currently, **I plan to make the switch on December 1**. You can add the new feed any time between now and then. You won't receive any notifications of the new Journal posts from the new feed until December 1.

But again, if you receive the Journal via email subscription, you don't have to do anything. Your service will continue uninterrupted.

A Note on Post Categories

When I put up a new post, I click a box next to a specific category. That causes the post to go out (via MailChimp) to a specific list of subscribers through a specific RSS feed.

If you happen to visit the "big" website at HarveyStanbrough.com and click the Pro Writers Blog tab in the menu, you will see *only* the weekly posts from the Pro Writers category.

Likewise if you click the Free Story of the Week tab, you will see *only* the most recent short story or two. (After a story has been up for week or so, I remove it.)

And after I make the switch, if you click the Daily Journal tab, you will see *only* the Journal posts. (If you click it right now, you'll see the archives of the Journal before December 16, 2015.)

And again, that's only if you're on the website itself.

A Few Other Notes

Yesterday I mentioned that the home page of the "big" website displays the most recent post, whether the weekly Pro Writers blog or free short story or (soon) the Daily Journal.

That's true. That most recent post displays at the top of the page. But if you scroll down, you'll see whichever post came before it (in any category), and so on.

Until I make the switch, you'll see alternating Pro Writers posts and Free Story of the Week posts. I post to each of those only once a week, so they alternate. The Pro Writers post appears at the top of the main page from Tuesday through Friday. Then the Free Story appears at the top of the page from Friday through Tuesday.

But after I make the switch, because I post to the Journal every day, posts from the other two categories (Pro Writers and Short Story) will appear at the top of the page for only part of one day each.

Specifically, the Pro Writers post will appear at the top from 8 a.m. on Tuesday until I post the Journal on Tuesday afternoon. The Free Story will appear at the top from 8 a.m. on Friday until I

post the Journal on Friday afternoon. On Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the Journal post will appear at the top of the page.

I hope this isn't terribly confusing. If you have any specific questions, please email me. I don't want to run anybody off.

* * *

I have some running around to do today. First I have to drop off my Lenovo (main writing) computer this morning with a techie so he can mess with it. I hope he'll be able to get it to accept an external DVD/CD drive. Otherwise I won't be able to load a new cover-design program I bought. Sigh.

UPDATE: Turned out the drive was just no good. The whole line of them. So I ordered a new one as recommended by my tech friend. In the meantime, he let me use his to upload and install my program. Pretty good guy.

I also hit the PO. Got all that done and was back by noon-thirty. And I realized, I still have to create a TOC for the big nonfiction book. That probably will take several hours. So I've backed out of being in a rush on that. I'll make time to work on both nonfiction books now and then and hope to have them both finished and uploaded by December first.

Now for some fiction before the whole day disappears.

Of Interest

Some email programs block emails that contain "too many" live links. For that reason, since I'm adding the link in text, I'll no longer include live links.

At Dean's site, two very important posts:

In 11/20/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/112016-daily/>) he explains what he's doing now. It's a good read, and as a bonus, he added the first video from his Heinlein's Rules lecture. Do yourself a favor and check it out.

In Artistic Freedom (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-freedom/>) he shares a GREAT topic post. Enlightening and freeing. Enjoy.

And Free Fiction Monday should be up over at Kris' site. I just visited her Facebook page. She has TWO stories up. One at WMG Publishing (<http://www.wmgpublishinginc.com/pudgygate/>) and one on her website (<http://kriswrites.com/2016/11/21/free-fiction-monday-blind/>).

You might want to friend her on Facebook and then click Get Notifications below the little Friends icon. Her personal Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/kristinekathrynrusch>.

Today's Writing

Just for grins, with my thus-far very low monthly word count this month, I checked back to see what I'd written in November 2016. Only 30,118 words.

Weird to know that even with fewer than 9,000 words this month so far, I could still easily surpass last year's November total by the end of this month. (grin)

Got a little writing done today on a short story (I think) and it felt GOOD.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3269

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4129

Writing of "Regarding Martha Ramis" (tentative title)

Day 1..... 3269 words. Total words to date..... 3269 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 11886

Total fiction words for the year..... 667041

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12340

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 251180

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 918221

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 11/22](#)

[November 22, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Up way late at 4:30 this morning. In the rush to get a lot of other things done or started (laundry, etc.), I forgot I have the Week 4 vids from the POV workshop to watch and listen to today.

Finished the vids. Excellent as always. Even though I didn't turn in the "homework" assignment from last week, there was a TON of great information in the first video, in which he talked about the assignments. I took voluminous notes (over 1200 words). Great workshop.

Folded and put away laundry, showered and changed clothes, and straight to the writing by 10 a.m.

Finished "Being Martha Ramis" by 11. Then I turned to creating a cover, distributing it, etc.

I decided to do all that on my new computer with the new program I loaded yesterday. Of course, I hadn't set up the program to match the older version on my other computer yet, so that took awhile.

Got the cover done, got the short story distributed, then allowed myself to be distracted with a bunch of other stuff (a comment on my "big" blog, etc.) and frittered away a few hours. So after a relatively good day yesterday, I let today slip away to almost nothing.

The rest of the week is taken up with the Thanksgiving holiday. I'll be writing, but who knows how much I'll get done. Frankly, I'm already looking forward to December.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place, Chasing the Market (<http://www.deanwesleymith.com/chasing-the-market/>). I also recommend scrolling down to read his 11/21/16 Daily.

For the future, in March there will be an Indy Publishing Expo with several big-name speakers in Tucson. For info, please visit www.tucsonselfpublishingexpo.com. I'll repost this after I've moved the Journal.

Today's Writing

Not much. Sigh.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 520

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 820

Writing of "Regarding Martha Ramis" (short story)

Day 1..... 3269 words. Total words to date..... 3269

Day 2..... 0520 words. Total words to date..... 3789 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 12406

Total fiction words for the year..... 667561

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12640

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 251480

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 919041

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 11/23](#)

[November 23, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I messed up. I forgot I'm probably going camping from 2-4 December. So I'll make the switch with the Journal to the big site sooner than that. Again, it won't make a difference to those of you who are signed up to receive the Journal via email.

Well, yesterday after I sent this, I got some admin stuff out of the way. I finished formatting and uploaded *The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life*, which actually contains almost TWO years of this Journal.

And that leads me to today's topic. (And the topic within a topic.)

Topic: Distribution

I mentioned a day or two ago that I wasn't looking forward to manually creating a TOC (table of contents) for *The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life*. But to distribute it through Smashwords, an interactive TOC is required. Just the thought of it made me tired. As it turns out, I had no idea.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me share with you the process for manually creating an interactive TOC. Consider it a topic inside a topic.

1. Go through the entire document, stopping at each chapter heading. (You can use the Find function to do this easily.) At each of those headings, create a bookmark. (For specific instruction on anything in Microsoft Word, visit HarveyStanbrough.com and click the MS Word for Writers tab.)

For me, in this book, that would be each date heading and each topic.

2. Save the document with another file name (I just hit Save As and add TOC to the current file name).

3. Use the Find and Replace function again. This time under Formatting > Font, search for normal font face. Leave the Replace With block empty, and click Replace All. This will leave you with nothing but your chapter titles. Copy/paste this and use it as your table of contents listing.

4. Now go to each TOC item in the list, right click and create a hyperlink that links back to the corresponding bookmark. (In the hyperlink dialogue menu, you'll also have to select Place in This Document the first time.)

5. Finally, make the heading of the TOC listing (Contents) a bookmark. I call mine TOC. Then I add "Contents" at the end of each chapter and link it to the Contents bookmark. (Actually, after I

create the first Contents hyperlink, I copy/paste it at the end of each chapter.) When the reader clicks Contents anywhere in the book, the link will take him directly to the Contents listing.

Very mechanical, and therefore boring and easy-peasy, right?

In my process with this book, thankfully I first created a new document (see 3 above) and created a TOC listing first.

I searched for any “normal” text, then replaced it with nothing. That left only bold text, and that was what I would put in the TOC.

But the result of that process only magnified my sense of dread. Exponentially. The TOC listing alone, even single spaced, added THIRTY-SIX PAGES to the book. There were 1004 (that’s one thousand and four) individual TOC elements in my listing.

That’s a lot of bookmarking and hyperlinking. To create an interactive TOC would take something close to 4,000 mouse clicks. And that’s a conservative estimate.

Okay, back to Distribution.

No way was I going to create an interactive TOC for 1004 items. So for the Smashwords edition I created a TOC that had only six items (Dedication, Intro, A Year in the Life, About the Author, Frontmatter and About StoneThread Publishing). Then I submitted it.

Now, if Smashwords comes back after their human review and wants to make me manually create a full interactive TOC, I just won’t do it. The book will still be live and for sale in their store. They just won’t distribute it to a bunch of minuscule markets.

I’d LIKE to have the book available in those markets, but not enough to take on the headache of creating such a massive TOC. Priorities, right?

But what about the larger markets like Apple?

Enter Draft2Digital.

I used D2D for distribution of this massive book to the Big Four (as I think of them): Apple, Kobo, B&N Nook and Tolino. They also distribute to Page Foundry and 24Symbols, a subscription service. I used D2D because their conversion engine creates the TOC for me based on formatting. How cool is that?

I also uploaded the book separately to Amazon, of course.

So *The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life* will go on sale “live” as scheduled on January 15 in all venues.

Later I'll separate out the topics and put them in a separate book or (more likely) books. Not sure yet what format those will take. Maybe I'll group them per subject.

But I have no pressing need to slap them together and rush them out by a certain date. And you can bet my major distributor for those will be D2D as well.

So why the cheap price for a 500,000 word nonfiction book?

Because I've already invested the time in creating the thing. I think it's valuable to some readers (who are themselves writers), and I want to give something back.

Oh, and I also created a PDF version of the book, which I will sell myself for \$9 per copy. I'll make around \$7 per copy for every sale at Amazon, B&N, Apple, and Kobo. A Smashwords sale will bring me around \$8. And person sales will bring me \$9. Not bad.

Now let's all join hands and hope it sells a million copies. (grin) If it does, the party's on me.

* * *

Rolled out late again around 4:20 this morning. Around 6:30 I created a PDF file of the nonfiction tome (over 1300 pages) and then moved the whole folder over to my Nonfiction folder. Later today (or soon) I'll add it to my website.

I could've sworn a few days ago I created a spreadsheet to hold all my nonfiction titles. But yesterday and thus far this morning, I've been unable to find it. That is truly annoying. I hope I don't have to completely redo it, but I guess I will if I have to.

For now (a little after 7) some breakfast and then to the writing.

Of Interest

Extremely interesting discussion in the comments over at Dean's (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/chasing-the-market/#comments>).

At his 11/22/16 Daily post (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/112216-daily/>) Dean put up the first video of his Writers Block lecture.

Dean also continues the ongoing discussion of Artistic Freedom with Writing to Market... Timing at <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-to-market-timing/>.

StoryBundle. If you sign up for an account (you don't have to buy anything) over at <http://storybundle.com>, you can download a free book: Jo Lallo's The Book of Deacon Anthology. It "includes the entire Book of Deacon trilogy as well as Jade, a short novel set after the events of The Book of Deacon, The Rise of the Red Shadow, a prequel to the trilogy, and more!"

Today's Writing

I revived Snubbing the Gods. I decided to quit sniveling, put my fingers on the keyboard and just write what comes.

I listed it back on October 16 as “stalled” at 22,264 words. I brought those words forward (from Day 10) so the count will remain unbroken.

A fairly decent day today punctuated with a trip to the store and messing around in the yard at the house.

Feels good to be writing again.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2493

Nonfiction Words: 1200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3693

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (tentative title)

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264

Day 11... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 24757

Total fiction words for the month..... 14899

Total fiction words for the year..... 670054

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 252680

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 922734

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 11/24

[November 24, 2016](#) by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I hope you have a good Thanksgiving day. This will be a nonwriting day for me. A few thoughts....

Frankly, I find the whole idea of a “special day” to give thanks for what we have a bit ludicrous. Don't we all do that pretty much every day?

Still, I'm glad this day gives fortunates an excuse to gather with family and friends and so on. I'm glad it spurs some to extend good will outside of that small circle, many for more than the one day.

I'm glad it reminds us to give coats for the coming winter and food and other necessities year round to those less fortunate than we.

Maybe today should be called Fellowship Day instead. Or Fellowship Reminder Day.

Anyway, I'm thankful and grateful for my Life and all aspects of it: persons, experiences, and opportunities. And no matter how ludicrous I find this day personally, I'm grateful it provides the opportunity to announce my thanks publicly.

Life 101

Part I: Don't follow the crowds; be the one the crowds want to follow.

Part II: Upright is not a matter of degree.

Of Interest

Not much around today.

Today's Writing

I rolled out late this morning. Getting to be a habit.

On Thanksgiving 2014, I wrote 4497 words on Longing for Mexico, my second novel. On Thanksgiving 2015, I wrote 3092 words on The Scent of Acacias, Book 9 in the Wes Crowley novel and my eleventh novel.

Today, having made a great re-start on a novel here in my camp, I will take a nonwriting day.

Today Thanksgiving occurs during a time when several untoward things are happening in my extended family.

Those things range from two seriously ill (and elderly but stalwart) uncles, to a younger brother with a severe physical problem but a never-ending sense of humor, to traffic accidents (no one seriously hurt), to one grandchild saying something, in the complete and utter ignorance of youth, that cut her father, my son, to the quick.

So today I'm taking the day off. I'll spend the day with my bride, wife and life partner, Mona, and consider again how very fortunate I am.

May your Thanksgiving be the best ever.

See you tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 370

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (tentative title)

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264
Day 11... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 24757
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 14899
Total fiction words for the year..... 670054
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14210
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 253050

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 923104

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Life Happens](#), [Non-Writing Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[Thanksgiving](#), [the writing life](#)

**WITH THE NEXT ENTRY, THE JOURNAL IS POSTING TO
HARVEYSTANBROUGH.COM/CATEGORY/DAILY-JOURNAL**

[The Journal, Friday, 11/25](#)

[November 25, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Beginning today, I'm posting this Journal to my main site at HarveyStanbrough.com. If you came here looking for the Free Story of the Week, either scroll to the blog post below this or click the Free Story of the Week tab in the menu. It will still post every Friday at 8 a.m.

If you're looking for the Pro Writers blog post, click the Pro Writers tab in the menu. It will still post every Tuesday morning at 8 a.m.

This Journal will post every day at 7 p.m. (All times are Arizona time.)

To all of my regular Journal readers, Happy Get-Over-All-The-Stuff-You-Ate-Yesterday Day. (grin)

I rolled out closer to my normal time this morning at around 3:30. I spent the first two-plus hours with email, Facebook etc. and read The Creative Penn post (see Of Interest below). If you don't subscribe to that blog yet, I do recommend it.

* * *

There's no time like the present. This morning around 11:40 I switched the RSS feed for this blog over to the main site. This evening I'll post this over there, and it will go out at 7 p.m.

If you receive this via RSS, the new feed is <http://harveystanbrough.com/category/daily-journal/feed/>.

If you receive it via email, you shouldn't notice any difference, except maybe a different header. (I don't think so, but maybe.)

I also added a final post to the blog over at HEStanbrough.com, where this one was based for so long, redirecting folks to the other site for future posts.

Finally, I jumped over to the other site (HarveyStanbrough.com) and revised the header there to include "& The Daily Journal." Check it out. Lemme know what you think.

* * *

Mona and I passed a quiet Thanksgiving yesterday, watching four episodes of Deadwood. We were both put off by the obviously gratuitous use of "foul" language.

Yes, even me. Especially as a writer.

Topic: When to Let Your Characters Use "Bad" Language

Okay, first of all, a disclaimer: I personally believe there is no such thing as "bad" language. Every word in the language serves a purpose.

For writers, every word in the language is a tool to be used in crafting a story. But like any other professional tool, it should not be abused.

With that in mind, I'm not sure what the writers of the popular HBO series Deadwood were trying to do, but I suspect they cost HBO some viewers. With regard to dialogue, the first few episodes comprise an excellent example of what not to do.

NOT because there was some "bad" language, but because the use of it was most often gratuitous.

The main bad guy constantly dropped the F bomb. That's fine. It was expected and it suited his character.

But with only one exception, every other major character (and all the minor characters) did the same thing, also constantly. That was neither expected nor in character.

Here's my recommendation.

Part I: As you run through the story with your characters, write down what they say (in their own voice and using the vocabulary they want to use) and what they do.

Part II: Be sure to include their opinions of the setting and any emotions they express about the setting. Do these two things and you're gold.

Part III: Don't Edit (!). Which is to say Don't Force Your Will On The Characters.

So why the (!)? Because when I say "don't edit," that goes both ways.

If the character wants to use one or more words that you personally find offensive, let him. Don't force him to clean up his act.

If another character DOESN'T want to use that word (most don't, especially in mixed company), don't force it on him.

Are there exceptions? Well, there are exceptions to how characters talk in various situations, yes.

For example, most of the men I know wouldn't drop an F bomb in a social setting in mixed company. That might mean a setting in which there are women present or it might mean a setting in which members of a different social stratum are present.

The same men, in a social setting in which they are among trusted male friends (peers), might use foul language occasionally. It's a familiarity thing.

And the same men, if they find themselves in a social setting in which they perceive the other men to be in higher standing than they, might use the same language more often than they usually do in order to gain favor.

But there are no exceptions for you, the writer, when it comes to allowing characters to be who they are in a given situation. When you relinquish control, you also relinquish responsibility. Just let 'em be who they are.

Of Interest

See The Creative Penn (<http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2016/11/24/facebook-ads-beginner/>) for a really great (realistic) post on using Facebook ads.

Free story of the week, "Curious Shapes," posted at HarveyStanbrough.com this morning.

Just a brief post-holiday post over at Dean's place.

Today's Writing

Added 800 words in the first session, mostly cycling but adding some much needed sensory detail. Then breakfast, then switching the journal over to the other site.

Back to writing at around 12:45.

Not a lot done today, but for a quasi-holiday, I'll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2099

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2859

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264

Day 11... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 24757

Day 12... 2099 words. Total words to date..... 26856

Total fiction words for the month..... 16998

Total fiction words for the year..... 672153

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14970

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 253810

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 925963

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Creative Penn](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Instruction](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 11/26](#)

[November 26, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the transition from HESTanbrough.com to HarveyStanbrough.com with the Journal seems to have been flawless. No problems reported as yet.

I rolled out around 3:30 this morning but did very little for the first 4+ hours other than email, Facebook and games.

* * *

The floor of our house, with the exception of the bedroom and the two offices, is Saltillo tiles. The house itself is rammed earth. Think adobe, but without bricks.

The external walls are close to three feet thick. But the ceiling is a normal ceiling with a steel roof above it. It's insulated, but not as much as it would be if the roof were of the same construction as the walls.

So when it's hot, the walls absorb the heat, then radiate it through the night. In the summer time, the floor tiles offer a cool respite on the feet.

But in the winter, the walls absorb and radiate the cold, and the floor does the same. So this morning we pulled all the winter rugs from beneath the bed and unrolled them in strategic locations through the kitchen, living room and bathroom.

For all of that and my silly waste of the first few hours of the day, I didn't get to my writing until 9 a.m. Later today, during breaks, I intend to work a bit on my 1987 Toyota 4-Runner and maybe a bit on yet another outside office.

Of Interest

Not much of interest today that I'm aware of, other than a new Recommended Reading List over at Kris Rusch's site (<http://kriswrites.com>).

Basically, the world is returning to semi-normal after Thanksgiving Day. Tempered, of course, by the oncoming rush of Christmas.

Today's Writing

As anyone following this mess knows, yesterday I restarted a novel I allowed to stall about a month and a half ago. I don't usually do that, but with over 22000 words into a good story, I decided to have a go at it this time.

A couple of days ago, on Day 11 of writing this one, I cycled back a bit to add necessary sensory details, but I also wrote a new scene. Then yesterday I did some more cycling (for a description of Cycling (hint: this is NOT the same as rewriting and it has nothing to do with bicycles), please see <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-tuesday-524/> and scroll down a few lines to Cycling.

Today, as I'm able with all the other little life stuff going on, I'm cycling again as well as writing new stuff. Today's effort also requires some copy/pasting and stitching together a few scenes. I'll be very glad when this process is finished and I can just move forward with the novel.

Very few new words today, but that's all right. Part of the process with this novel. Probably I'll have one more day like this before the novel takes off.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 670

Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1170

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (tentative title)

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264
Day 11... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 24757
Day 12... 2099 words. Total words to date..... 26856
Day 13... 0670 words. Total words to date..... 27526

Total fiction words for the month..... 17668
Total fiction words for the year..... 672823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15470
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 254310

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 927133

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 11/27

[November 27, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm so spoiled. First, I have the best job in the world. Think about it. Day in, day out, I sit alone in a room making stuff up. It doesn't get any better than that.

And second, I live in southeast Arizona. So on my rising this morning it was almost 50° outside. I enjoyed a good cigar as I began the day with emails and Facebook and a few games of Spider solitaire to wake up.

Of course, it'll be getting cooler all day as a mass of cold air settles in, but still.

Topic: Being Unstuck in Time—A Bit More on Cycling

If you haven't read the post on cycling (<http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-tuesday-524/>), I recommend reading that either before or after you read this topic. It will help. Even if I repeat information, chances are you'll "get it" one way even if you don't get it the other.

When a reader buys and reads a novel, she reads it as a linear story. She begins with Chapter 1 and reads straight through to the end. If you've written it well, she won't even put it down until she's reached and read the resolution.

So it's safe to say most readers assume the novel was written that way too.

When little niggling details of the plot and subplot seem come together as the scene or story resolves, you, the writer, appear to be a genius. It's almost magical to the reader.

Maybe in a scene in Chapter 2, the reader sees Aunt Marge surreptitiously slip a .32 caliber Owl revolver into the pocket of her housecoat.

Maybe in a scene in Chapter 19, Aunt Marge answers an insistent knock on her door late at night. Maybe a guy forces his way inside, and just as he begins to attack her, she pulls her revolver and enables him to assume room temperature before the EMTs arrive.

Then the reader remembers, possibly with a slap on her own forehead, the minuscule reference to the revolver that she almost skipped over back in Chapter 2 because it seemed just another part of the scene.

Bam! Just like that, the writer has achieved genius status and is rewarded with a reader-for-life.

Of course, the reader assumes you worked painstakingly from an outline. As part of that outline, in Chapter 2 Aunt Marge got a gun because she was going to use it in Chapter 19, although she couldn't possibly have known what was going to transpire that far in advance.

Yeah. The thing is, neither did the writer. Well, neither did the writer who was smart enough to allow his subconscious to tell the story. He was unstuck in time, just enjoying the story the characters were living for him.

That's where cycling comes into play.

You, the writer, are not working from an outline because

1. You're writing to entertain yourself first, and
2. How boring would it be to write a story when you already know how everything's going to turn out? That's a lot like watching a sporting event or a movie after some moron tells you how the whole thing ends.

In entertaining yourself, you sit down, put your fingers on the keyboard, and write. Period. Write whatever comes. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence.

You aren't being the Almighty Writer On High with all that heady responsibility.

You're down in the story, running through the scenes with your characters. Having Fun. Enjoying Yourself. You're writing down what the characters say and do, and you're thankful every day they allowed you to come along.

Then, late in the novel, Aunt Marge, who eschews violence in any form and firearms in particular, pulls a revolver and shoots a bad guy just before he would have done her grievous harm.

And you sit back from the keyboard as if she shot you instead. And you think, What? Where in the world did she get that gun?

We don't know, but she DID get it. The evidence is bleeding on her living room floor.

So you check your reverse outline (see <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-friday-41/> and <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-wednesday-720/>).

Then you cycle back to that scene in Chapter 2. You read over the scene (still in creative voice, giving your subconscious its head), and there it is.

There's the point where Johnny turned away for a second as he and Lilly were taking their leave. And you put your fingers on the keyboard and record Marge slipping the revolver into the pocket of her housecoat.

And just like that, the world is all better.

Then you flash forward again to that point in Chapter 19 with the perp lying on the floor. You read over the last few sentences, then put your fingers on the keyboard and write the next sentence.

You're probably writing faster at that point because the ending has revealed itself to you, or you know it will soon. So you're bored, and you just want to finish this thing and put it out there for your readers.

Because you love your readers?

Well, okay. Maybe. But mostly because you want to start the next story. (grin)

But back to this cycling thing for a moment, and to being unstuck in time. The truth is, it's next to impossible to hold a whole novel in your head, and who would want to? Where's the fun in that?

Writing off into the dark (no outline) and cycling give you the best of both worlds. To the reader it looks as if you knew all along that Aunt Marge was going to shoot that intruder. But in reality, you were unstuck in time, entertaining yourself first. Writing for You.

But for your readers, to ensure a seamless reading experience, you also had the ability to move back and forth at will, adding what the characters told you to add.

And that's fine. As Hemingway once wrote, "Never tell 'em you had to learn to write. Let 'em think you were born with it."

Of Interest

Dean's writing again, but no topic today. Just a regular day in his 11/26/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/112616-daily/>). More to report in a few days, maybe. In the meantime, you at least have my silly topics to look over.

Today's Writing

A little before 6 a.m. I wrote the topic above. Then I got a shower, changed out of my sweats, and started cycling through the novel again (from where I left off yesterday), playing catch up and stitching things together, erasing any seams.

1 p.m., just back from the store, lunch and putting things away. Back to the novel. I halfway expected to be finished with the cycling before we left here around 11:30, but that's not the case. Still, it won't get done until I do it.

Ahh, that's better! Not a lot of new words added today, but I finished splicing and cycling. Tomorrow the novel should start moving along at a much faster pace. Woohoo!

See you then.

Fiction Words: 1061

Nonfiction Words: 1100 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3061

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (tentative title)

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264

Day 11... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 24757

Day 12... 2099 words. Total words to date..... 26856

Day 13... 0670 words. Total words to date..... 27526

Day 14... 1061 words. Total words to date..... 28587

Total fiction words for the month..... 18729

Total fiction words for the year..... 673884

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16570

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 255410

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 929294

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Instruction](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 11/28

[November 28, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out a little late at 3:30. Checked email and Facebook stuff. Then I went to work on a huge Christmas Sale for StoneThread Publishing. We're practically giving them away (grin).

This sale went "live" on Facebook this morning (Monday, 11/28). But we wanted to give you guys a little better pricing.

Note that all prices are valid only through StoneThread Publishing. Even if we decide to run a sale through various vendors, those prices will not be this low.

Shameless Promotion

From now through December 24, ALL ebook novels, 10-story collections, 5-story collections and poetry collections, are on sale for \$2.50 each. The complete Wes Crowley Saga (10 novels in one massive book) is only \$13.

All ebooks are DRM-free. Share with your whole family! And No Shipping! 😊

Of course, these prices are valid only through StoneThread Publishing. To order or for more information, please email orders@stonethreadpublishing.com.

Print Addict?

Additionally, from now through December 21, ALL PRINT BOOKS are on sale for \$7.50 each. Free standard shipping! These are not stocking stuffers. These are quality trade paperbacks.

Many print titles are available signed by the author. That would be moi. (grin) For a complete list or to order, email orders@StoneThreadPublishing.com.

* * *

Finished up all of that and the topic below around 6:30, then realized I hadn't added my latest novel, The Consensus, to my website yet. Doh! So I raced over and did that.

Then my wife mentioned it might be a good idea to prepare a flyer for her to pass out where she works. So I did that.

* * *

I started on the novel again, then remembered I have to download 10 pics from CanStock. sigh. First I have to select them.

Every now and then I sign up for a subscription to a stock photo agency so I can download pics on the cheap to use for covers.

My current subscription allows me to download up to 10 pics per day for a week. All that for \$30. So around \$0.42 per picture, as opposed to around \$7 per picture if I bought them one at a time. It's a great deal if you use a lot of cover pics and know what you're looking for generally.

But that ate up a couple hours.

Topic: Selling Books to Writers

I'm talking about fiction books and fiction writers here.

If you've written a really good book FOR writers (for example, Punctuation for Writers or Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction or Writing the Character-Driven Story), knock yourself out.

But leave your novels and short stories at home.

When I was presenting regularly at writers' conferences around the nation, I saw a host of fiction writers trying to sell their books to attendees. For a very short while, I was one of them. Generally, this is a bad idea.

Why? Because those who attend writers' conferences are writers. They don't want to buy your books. They want You to buy Their books. (grin)

Even "name" authors (think Stephen King) have a difficult time selling fiction to other fiction writers.

So why am I making an exception to this general rule?

Because I DO buy novels and stories written by Stephen King. I also buy (some) novels and stories from Dean Wesley Smith, Isabel Allende, Lawrence Block and others who meet three requirements:

they are farther along the road than I as writers;
something about their work blows me out of my socks; and
I aspire to learn from them.

When I see myself as a student of another writer, what better way to learn from them than to read their work for pleasure, and then go back and study the passages that blew me away?

And that's why I'm making an exception in Shameless Promotion above. As I told another writer recently, if you think maybe the stuff I'm teaching you is good, I appreciate that. But years of (sometimes repeated) lessons have taught me that we generally get what we INspect, not what we EXpect.

So in the promo above, I'm offering you an opportunity to see first-hand whether I know what I'm doing. (grin) Naturally, I hope you will take advantage of it.

Of Interest

A new topic over at Dean's place in Courage in a World of Artistic Freedom (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/courage-in-a-world-of-artistic-freedom/>). This is a really great post. I hope you will read it.

There should also be a new story of the week over at Kristine Kathryn Rush's site (<http://kriswrites.com>) for her Free Fiction Monday thing.

Today's Writing

Finally, I moved to the novel at 9:30. Wrote for about a half-hour and realized I'm writing two novels at one time. How can I tell? Maybe the story's just getting convoluted. They do that sometimes.

But this one isn't just taking odd twists. It took a hard turn and wandered off into a whole new story. And the two main stories are far too divergent to ever get back together. Even the main character is different. Same name, same guy, but he acts different and even talks different than he did in the "other" story.

That happened to me once before, though I don't recall which novel (or novels) came out of it. Anyway, I didn't get enough writing done to record it, so I'll count this as a nonwriting day.

For any new subscribers out there, don't worry about it (if you were). When I started this Journal I made a pact with myself to record the bad as well as the good, the rough times as well as the smooth. This is one of the rough times. (grin)

I'll spend the balance of the day finding where these stories are conjoined. Then I'll do a little surgery. I suspect I'm gonna have to chunk a few thousand words and start fresh a ways back.

Anyway, see you tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 930 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 930

Writing of Snubbing the Gods (tentative title)

Day 10... 2829 words. Total words to date..... 22264
Day 11... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 24757
Day 12... 2099 words. Total words to date..... 26856
Day 13... 0670 words. Total words to date..... 27526
Day 14... 1061 words. Total words to date..... 28587
Day 15... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18729
Total fiction words for the year..... 673884
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17500
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 256340

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 930224

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 11/29

[November 29, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Whew! Rolled out a little after 4 this morning, and had an email requesting a list of my books. When I tried to reply, the email bounced. Uh oh.

So I set to work trying to figure out why I couldn't reply from "orders@stonethreadpublishing.com."

Finally, almost three hours later, I figured out how to correct the problem. Narrowly avoided a disaster there. But I did avoid it and I learned something in the process. So that would be a win.

After that I finished fine-tuning the list of available titles from StoneThread Publishing (Nick Porter, Gervasio Arrancado, Ray Sevareid, Eric Stringer and me) and emailed it to interested parties. If you'd like a copy of the list, [Click Here](#). It was fascinating to think I wrote most of that stuff in the past two years.

Then I created a new Christmas Sale page on both [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) and [StoneThreadPublishing.com](#) and posted the whole thing to Facebook. I did some other little things while all of that was going on. Now I'm gonna take a break (9:30-ish) and then turn my hand to my real job: writing something.

Well, as I read through some of the original *Snubbing the Gods*, I realized it wasn't two separate stories: it's three. This is gonna be fun once I get it sorted out. Three short stories minimum, three novels, or some combination of the two.

Let me 'splain.

Sometimes (this is only the second time for me) a character who starts out as a secondary character suddenly grows a skin and hair and a personality. He becomes another protagonist, or antagonist.

That's what happened here. So I think I'm off and writing again, although I don't have even a clue what to call this particular story. So for now, it's tentatively titled *Ray Acuna* after the protagonist.

I took the segment of *Snubbing the Gods* that introduced *Ray Acuna* (about 400 words). I read over those first few paragraphs. Then I tossed the whole thing and started over.

So *Snubbing the Gods* is officially shelved. DOA. Gone. Kaput.

Ray Acuna is shown below. It feels good to be back on track.

Of Interest

Not much over at Dean's place today. Nothing else that I saw.

Today's Writing

Not a lot, but a lot more than lately. After I read a little about Ray Acuna and got solidly in the character's head, I put my fingers on the keyboard and wrote what came. Learning all sorts of new things about him and people he knows. Way cool.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2058

Nonfiction Words: 430 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2488

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058

Total fiction words for the month..... 20787

Total fiction words for the year..... 675942

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 256770

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 932712

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 11/30](#)

[November 30, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Yesterday was so hectic, I actually forgot to view and listen to the Week 5 videos of the DWS workshop I'm taking right now. So I spent the first couple of hours this morning doing that.

Well, summer in southeast Arizona is officially over. Shortly after the sun came up this morning (pilot light was on, blower wasn't working yet) it was 21° outside. Ugh. No moisture in the air to hold in the heat of the day. It Is Eye-Cee.

Topic: Horrible Advice

By “horrible advice,” I mean advice from people who recommend you do exactly the same garbage you’ve been hearing your whole life and THAT DOESN’T WORK.

This topic was keyed by an article at BookBub: “Self-Publishing Your NaNoWriMo Book? Don’t Miss These Steps” (<http://insights.bookbub.com/self-publishing-nanowrimo-book-steps/>). I provide the link NOT because I recommend the article (I Don’t), but so you can see first-hand what bad advice looks like. I intend to defrag (or maybe frag) their advice a bit later in this topic.

Okay, first, as everyone who follows my Journal knows, I don’t like NaNoWriMo. It’s wonderful to get a person started writing. But in every other way it’s terrible. Now, I know some of you like it, and that’s fine.

Most notably, it is actively based on the premise that you should give yourself permission to write a bad “first draft” and then fix it later, and it prods you to involve others in your work (critique, content edits, etc.). There are other bad things about it, but those are the big two.

So with that as the basis, back to the BookBub article.

First, their introductory premise: “Your NaNoWriMo book is most likely not ready for readers today.”

No, if you wrote it in accordance with NaNoWriMo guidelines, it probably isn’t because you INTENDED for it to be bad.

Writing something intentionally bad the first time is like filling a wheelbarrow with dirt a shovelful at a time. Then moving it halfway to where you want it. Then dumping it. Then loading it all back up again and moving it the rest of the way. So metaphorically speaking, how many times you “revise” or “rewrite” or “polish” is the number of times you’re dumping and reloading the wheelbarrow.

But if you wrote the cleanest “first draft” you could at your current skill level, do this:

1. run your contextual spell checker,
2. have someone proof it for spelling errors (yes, even after you ran the spell checker) and wrong-word usages, and
3. publish it and start writing the next one.

IF YOU TOOK NANOWRIMO’S ADVICE and intentionally wrote a “bad” first draft, I advise you to go back through it ONCE, reading for pleasure but with your fingers on the keyboard, and allow yourself to touch it. When you finish, it should be as good as you can make it at your current skill level. This is not rewriting because it’s done with your creative subconscious in control.

Okay, now to the ten points BookBub says you shouldn’t miss (and why you should ignore them):

1. Revise the book (and they say “several times”).

Umm, no. Not even once. I’m a writer. I’m being paid to write. I’m not being paid to rewrite, revise, or polish. **IF YOU DO REVISE, REWRITE OR POLISH, YOU WILL POLISH YOUR ORIGINAL VOICE RIGHT OUT OF YOUR MANUSCRIPT.**

2. Get critique partners.

Umm, No! I strive not to allow my own conscious, critical mind into my writing. Why would I allow someone else’s? Also, why in the world would I accept advice from someone who isn’t a LOT farther along the road as a writer than I am?

3. Do line edits. (Wow. Under this one, they list “43 Words You Should Cut From Your Writing Immediately.”)

Again, no. This is your proofreader’s or first reader’s or copy editor’s job. And please PLEASE don’t cut ANY words from your writing “automatically.” Words are there to be used. Use them as necessary.

4. Hire an editor.

Okay, yes, a copy editor. But a “developmental editor?” Seriously? How can ANYone else POSSIBLY know more about your characters and your story than you do?

5. Understand your target audience.

Blah blah blah. Everyone knows this is smart. In the real world, it means “Be aware that there’s a reader on the other side of the book.” That’s all. Don’t worry about it. Besides, If you write what you love, readers will come. (Do I need to repeat that?)

6. Choose a great title.

Umm, yeah. Duh. But most often the story itself will give you the title. Again, don’t worry about it.

7. Hire a cover designer.

Okay, but I recommend you learn to do it yourself. I design all my own covers. Most of them take about five minutes if I have already selected the cover photo. This isn’t difficult if you follow a few basic common-sense guidelines.

8. Format your book correctly.

Again, duh. But I wonder why they didn’t say “Hire a formatter?” Anyway, this is also something you can learn, **FREE OF CHARGE**, by downloading *The Essentials of Digital Publishing* from my Free Stuff page at my website.

9. Choose retailers and/or distributors.

Yeah, this is kind of misleading. (Like if you stand in the path of a tidal wave you might get “kind of” wet.) As long as you aren’t insane enough to go exclusive with Amazon or anyone else, you’ll do fine on this score. And if you DO go exclusive, well, then you don’t have to worry about stores and distribution, do you?

Here: Upload ebooks to Amazon and Smashwords and let the latter worry about distribution. For print, upload to CreateSpace and then select “Extended Distribution” and you’re done. This advice is gratis from yer Uncle Harv.

10. Create a marketing plan.

Uhh, no. Write the next book. The most effective marketing you can do is to write the next book. And the next one. And the next one. Do that, take my advice on other matters (like #9 above) and understand that writing is about the long term and marketing will take care of itself.

But if you’re stuck on the notion of marketing, I recommend Kris Rusch’s book, Discoverability.

Of Interest

At Dean’s place, An Interesting Assumption (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/an-interesting-assumption/>). He flat nailed it. Pretty good daily post below that too.

Today’s Writing

Started on Ray Acuna around 9:45 after writing everything above, checking Dean’s site, etc.

Got about 900 words done in a good first session, then went in and tried to try on my old field jacket from the Marine Corps (17 years ago).

Uhh, No. Seems there’s a three-inch gap down the front that didn’t used to be there. Funny how clothing shrinks over time. Off to the thrift store it goes. Back to the novel at 11:30.

Guess I’m finally back on track with writing. Pretty good day today. Oh, and I’m pleased to announce this feels like it’s gonna be a novel. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 3752

Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4882

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058
Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810

Total fiction words for the month..... 24539
Total fiction words for the year..... 679694
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19060
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 257900

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 937594

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Applying the Craft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 12/1

[December 1, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

A brand new month! Yay!

I received an exciting email yesterday from Claudia Benitez Garcia. Claudia is the editor of the Cultural section of a beautiful Mexican magazine called Este País (<http://www.estepais.com/>).

Two or three years ago, I received another email from a gentleman named Pedro Poitevin. He asked my permission to translate my triolet (poem) “God?”. Permission? Are you kidding? Of course, I was honored and told him so.

Then in yesterday’s email, Claudia wrote, “[W]e are going to publish a Spanish translation of your poem “God?”, done by Pedro Poitevin. By the way, we really like your work and for us it is an honor to publish it.” She added that they would send me a few copies of the magazine.

Well, I was thrilled. I’ve always loved the Spanish language (especially Latino Spanish) and welcome the opportunity to immerse myself in the magazine.

She also asked whether I would be willing to submit any new, unpublished short stories to the magazine. Yes, yes I would. Although right now I have no unpublished stories. Of course, I can remedy that in a few hours.

This is better than money, folks (not that there won’t be money involved). As I’ve written here before and as I preach constantly, if you write what you are passionate about, readers will come.

To satisfy any curiosity that might be out there, here’s the poem:

God?

If you are there, bequeath a gentle snow
to blanket grass and hills and trees and us,
the weary ones who really need to know
if you are there. Bequeath a gentle snow,
and let it drift to comfort us below
these endless marble rows, victorious.
If you are there, bequeath a gentle snow
to blanket grass and hills and trees and us.

* * *

A Brief Topic: And / Then

A while back I read an article or note somewhere in which the author advised writers to never use “then” as a conjunction. To always use “and” instead.

Of course, as I do with most blanket policies, I disagree.

Yesterday in the topic I wrote that all words in the language serve a purpose. That’s especially true when writing in English, in which the entire meaning of a sentence can hinge on a nuance.

In my WIP, I just wrote a sentence that provides a very good example of this concept:

She nodded and shivered as if cold.

This sentence means nodding is a sign of being cold. It isn’t at all what I wanted to convey.

Now it reads

She nodded, then shivered as if cold.

Using “then” in this way establishes a sequence: first this, then that. It also identifies only “shivered” as a function of being cold.

Purists (especially those who adhere to the notion of keeping “then” out of their writing) might point out that the addition of a comma before “and” would have created the same effect.

Almost, but not quite.

The coordinating conjunction “and” still connects (coordinates) the two verbs. So using “and” and a comma would necessitate the insertion of the same subject again (she).

Note again, this is a nuance. The connotation is only slightly different, but it is different.

Is this something you should consciously look for in your writing?

No. Absolutely not.

Do you have to “decide” on a case-by-case basis whether to put a period at the end of a declarative sentence or a question mark after an interrogative?

Of course not. But you learned those things long ago and they seeped into your subconscious. So now they come out automatically when you write.

So it is with this “and / then” conundrum, and so it is with all other words that one person or another advises you to omit from your writing.

Trust your subconscious as you write. Let your characters tell the story they want to tell.

When you aren’t actively writing and you’re in the mood to be a student, consider (or reconsider) and learn new things.

Those that are useful to you will seep into your subconscious and come out “automatically” as necessary when you write. And those that don’t, won’t.

* * *

Today in addition to my usual email, Facebook etc. I did a couple loads of laundry, etc.

Laundry creates custom-made breaks in writing to fold stuff, put it away, etc. But mostly today I’m dedicating to writing. I want and need a good start for the month.

I’ll try not to get too sidetracked with Other Things today. We’ll see how that goes.

Later today during a break I’ll also endeavor to find and break out my Pimsleur System Spanish language lessons. Mona and I are really looking forward to beginning our study of that beautiful language again, though I can’t be sure her Hoosier tongue will ever get the pronunciations quite right. (grin)

Of Interest

If you wanna see something really cool from a NaNo participant (who’s also a professional fiction writer), check out Dawn’s Final NaNo Report (<http://hstanbrough.org/final-nano-report/>).

Dean’s post Fiction River Volume #20 Now Out (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fiction-river-volume-20-now-out/>) is interesting. Plus kind of a neat short video in Dean’s 11/30/16 Daily. To find that, just scroll down on the Home page.

Today’s Writing

After messing around the first few hours of the morning, I started writing again on my WIP at around 9. Took a brief break around 9:45 to fold and put away a load of laundry.

Not as good a day as I'd liked, but I'll take it. The story is coming along well, but I cycled back a few times to add some things when what I thought was going to be secondary characters took center stage.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1934

Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2904

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058

Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810

Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744

Total fiction words for the month..... 1934

Total fiction words for the year..... 681628

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1934

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 258870

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 940498

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 12/2](#)

[December 2, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the morning started off weird. I was up at 2:30. Then the coffeemaker didn't work. Then my small heater in my office didn't work. One of those days when everything's a little off.

In case I didn't mention it the other day, and in case you're interested, I now have a list of all the books (novels, collections and nonfiction) available in the Christmas sale. To download it, Click Here(<http://stonethreadpublishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/StoneThread-Publishing-Available-Titles.pdf>).

By the way, if you want any of the print books signed, be sure to order them sooner rather than later. I have only one or two copies of some of them.

Got a bunch of little necessary chores done by 9:40. Among the little chores, I downloaded 10 new cover images from CanStock Photo. My subscription resets around 11 a.m., so I'll have to take a break for that (so I don't forget). But otherwise it should be a day of Just Writing.

10 a.m., I need to see what I can get done today on the novel. I think this is the first time I've called a one-off a "novel" when it wasn't even to 10,000 words yet. As of yesterday, this one's just barely out of the short story range.

* * *

Well, a bit of a slow start. I sat down at my outside desk, keyed in about ten words and realized I hadn't seen my kitten for awhile. She has a penchant for escaping over the fence. It's a game we play. Unfortunately the coyotes like to play too.

So up I went, cigar in hand, to find her. First I checked the house. That took only about five minutes. Then I checked the neighbor's chicken coop area. About four months ago, I found her there looking longingly at the laying hens. But she wasn't there today.

Then I circled the perimeter of my vast holdings (all told, maybe an acre) and ended up bush-whacking about thirty feet outside the back (south) fence and around the perimeter again. No cat.

Finally I came back through the barbed wire (for ya'll in Texas, that's "bob war") outer fence and circled out behind the Adobe Hovel (my other outer office) and the corral. But the horses (they're the neighbors') weren't spooked so I didn't think she was out there.

Then I checked the room where they keep hay. The door's always swinging open with the wind. No cat. Then I headed back for my fenced-in yard.

Where of course, she was sitting patiently just inside the gate waiting for me. The look on her face said, "Dad, why you wanderin' around out there?"

She patiently led me into the house and my office, arching her back about every third step, and I gave her a treat for being such a good girl and putting up with me. Then I went back to my writing. Almost an hour later. Sigh.

I said earlier it was that kind of day, didn't I?

* * *

I'm supposed to be camping with my buddy this weekend, but the fact is, I'm a weenie. Despite (or maybe because of) enduring Cold Weather Training in a haven called Pickle Meadows in the High Sierras above Reno several years ago (57° below Zero in a snow cave) I don't do cold weather well.

It isn't bad, but when my cigar's finished I prefer to get in out of the icicle-strewn wind. So there. And yes, if you didn't know, it gets extremely cold in the desert in the winter. No moisture to hold in the heat of the day. It all heads out for Jupiter or somewhere and we desert rats hibernate.

Of Interest

A new resource for you at English Language & Stack Exchange (<http://english.stackexchange.com/>). I found it this morning while researching what they call that sheet-thing the barber drapes over you while you're in his chair. (It's called a barber's cape.) Very useful.

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (<http://vlaa.org/get-help/other-vlas/>) has a comprehensive listing of state VLA organizations.

There are some good comments on Dean's "An Interesting Assumption" (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/an-interesting-assumption/#comments>)

Finally, you'll find an extremely worthwhile effort to save Red Wolves at <http://bit.ly/2eY2r74>. I hope you'll visit and sign the letter. That's all they ask.

And in case you're interested, here's an excellent article on General James "Mad Dog" Mattis. He probably will become the new SecDef: <http://thefederalist.com/2016/12/02/served-james-mattis-heres-learned/>.

Today's Writing

A rocky start at about 400 words, but a good start on a new chapter that'll probably end up earlier in the book than where I'm writing it.

Well, I didn't get nearly as many words done today as I wanted to, but the story is moving along fine. No excuses. I just didn't spend the time in the chair.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1587

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2277

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058

Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810

Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744

Day 4..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 9331

Total fiction words for the month..... 3521

Total fiction words for the year..... 683215

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1660 (wrong number yesterday)

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 259560

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 942275

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 12/3

[December 3, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to report today. I rolled out around 3:30. As soon as I got my coffee, I started in on my WIP. There was no email to speak of and little on Facebook this morning.

I generally accept Saturday and Sunday as days off from writing. I prefer to write, but I allow distractions more easily on those days because those are the only days when my wife and I can do things together.

I added over 2000 words to the story today in two average sessions. In between, we went to the store and the post office.

I also downloaded ten more cover pics for book covers and then dallied at CanStock for a while to select more for my Favorites folder. The actual downloading process goes much more quickly if I already have a selection of photos from which I can choose.

Of Interest

Nothing that I could find. Just a placeholder post at Dean's place.

Today's Writing

Today I did some cycling back, mostly to expand scenes a bit and add depth. I also wrote two new scenes.

This is an odd little work in progress. I'm all but certain now it's only a long short story (novelette) or novella. Primarily because it's about One Event.

Initially, I thought it was going to blow wide open. It still might, but it's looking more and more like the characters want to remain focused (tightly) on that One Event.

And that's the real difference between short fiction and long fiction. Short fiction is always about one person and one event. A novel is still about one person, but it's about several related events.

So a couple of good sessions today. I'm going to come back to the WIP tomorrow morning early, but if the characters don't lead me someplace I'm not expecting, well, novelette or novella, here we come.

We'll see.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2158

Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2478

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058

Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810

Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744

Day 4..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 9331

Day 5..... 2158 words. Total words to date..... 11489

Total fiction words for the month..... 5679

Total fiction words for the year..... 685373

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1980

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 259880

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 945253

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 12/4](#)

[December 4, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Another slow start this morning. But different. More relaxed. I could easily make this a day off, but I'd really like to resolve my current story. Either to finish it or ride along as it takes off in an exciting new direction that will turn it into a budding novel.

I'm such a dork. Remember all that crying and whimpering I did here a few days ago? I wrote that I had recorded my nonfiction books in a spreadsheet, then promptly lost it. For awhile, I thought maybe I hadn't created that spreadsheet at all, that I'd merely thought about doing it.

Well, this morning I found it. I was doing a little research for the topic below when I found my nonfiction titles, all of them, listed among my fiction titles (by publication date) in the same spreadsheet. Sigh.

Well, at least I found it.

Topic: Goals Revisited

Seems everybody likes to set goals on January 1. That's a great idea.

Setting a goal anytime is a great idea as long as it's something you really want to do. Something you're serious about. And most of us prefer to set goals on a "turning point" day. A day that feels like a new beginning. Hence the popularity of January 1.

I won't get into common sense philosophy here: that every day (trite as it sounds) is the first day of the rest of your life. Or even that every day is the first day of a new calendar year.

Instead, I want to talk again about recurring goals, those that automatically re-set. Those that automatically and regularly give you a First to work with:

The first hour of the new day.
The first day of the new week or month.
The first day of a new year.

That's how I look at goals when I'm establishing what I want to accomplish. When I finally go off-planet (or into the planet, depending on your point of view), I want to leave a massive body of literary work. Relative, of course, to the time I had to write.

Of course, that's an open-ended proposition. We don't know when we'll be making that trip. Consequently, we need to do what we can Now.

Recurring goals help with that. They provide us with the Firsts we need:

If I set a goal to write a certain number of words per day, that goal resets in the first hour of every morning.

If I set a goal to write a short story every week, that goal resets on the first day of that week.

If I set a goal to write a novel every thirty days, that goal resets on the day after I finish the latest novel.

I don't always attain my goals, but I always get close. I always achieve more than I would have if I hadn't set a goal to begin with. In other words, I "fail to success."

So when you set your goals, consider making some of them recurring.

As a related aside, this year on January 1, one of my recurring goals was to write one novel per month, so 12 during the year. (I later revised that, upping it to 15 for the year.) I won't hit that goal. I missed too many months. However, thus far, even with the bad months, I've written 8 novels. I'll take it.

But again, a "calendar year" can begin anytime. I started my first novel on October 19, 2014. So October 19 is the first day of my literary new year. From here on out, that will serve as my annual goal-setting date.

Of course, I'm a little behind in that endeavor. But that's all right. Toward the end of this topic I'll set my own new annual goals, here in public for everyone to see.

As I was writing this, I became curious. Just for grins, I glanced back over my Fiction spreadsheet this morning and isolated what I'd written from October 19, 2014 forward.

I was surprised to find that within my first calendar year as a professional fiction writer, I wrote 10 novels and a novella.

In the next calendar year (Oct 19 2015 – Oct 1 2016) I wrote 8 novels.

And in the current (for me) calendar year that began on October 19, 2016, thus far I've written one novel. Not a bad start on a new set of goals. (grin)

So my goals for the year, retroactive to October 19, 2016, are

to write a novel every thirty days. (This shifts my goal-reset from a fixed date to the first day after I finish a novel.)

to write at least one short story per week. (I'm already behind in this one, having written only 4 short stories since Oct 19, the past 6 weeks. But that's all right. I'll get back on track starting with my midnight Friday deadline this week.)

to write at least 3000 words of new publishable fiction every day. I've done this easily before. Probably I could push it to 4,000 words per day, but the lower number is still attainable when I take necessary days off.

Just an additional note on writing at least one short story every week. The purpose of that goal isn't so much to write more short stories as it is to practice writing openings.

The more openings I write, the more will become short stories and the more will turn into novels. So writing at least one short story per week will help feed my goal of writing a novel every thirty days too. (grin)

Of Interest

Over at Dean's, 22 comments now (good ones) on his *An Interesting Assumption* (<http://www.deanwesleymith.com/an-interesting-assumption/#comments>)

Today's Writing

Other than all the nonfiction above, I didn't get started writing until almost 10 a.m. I seem to be relaxing my way through the day today. Things were very intermittent after that.

I added a little to the story (not quite 500 words) but I'm not going to count this as a writing day. I'll look at the story tomorrow with fresh eyes.

Interestingly, I've never had one quite like this before. If it's a novelette, it's finished. But just as I was about to write The End (figuratively), a notion flitted through my mind that these two characters want to continue, and they want me to go with them.

Thus far, it's still about One Event. So maybe the characters have other events in mind? It's becoming a boy-meets-girl thing, albeit in an apocalyptic setting.

And don't get me wrong. All characters continue. But the invitation to continue running with them through the story doesn't always come. This time, maybe, it did.

I'll know tomorrow. Then I'll either publish this as-is (a novelette) or I'll climb back down into the story with them.

See you then.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1070 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1070

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058
Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810
Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744
Day 4..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 9331
Day 5..... 2158 words. Total words to date..... 11489
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 5679
Total fiction words for the year..... 685373
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3050
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 260950

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 946323

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Monday, 12/5

[December 5, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Very strange day today. I rolled out around 3:30, but I didn't even think about getting to the story until around noon.

Before that, I did the usual email, coffee, and Facebook. Then I went to download pics from CanStock and found my subscription has expired. That was a fast week. Maybe I'll renew for one more week, maybe not.

Then I set about straightening up my office. It had gotten to the point if you'd walked through the door, you wouldn't be able to see me sitting behind my desk. It was that stacked up with stuff.

Also the walls were bare. They've been that way since we painted (and by "we" I mean my wife) several months ago. So I remedied that too.

Then I put on a load of laundry. Then it was noon. I checked Dean's site, then came here.

After I wrote what's above and below (except the Today's Writing part) I folded and put away laundry. I'll get to the writing around 1:30.

Topic: Writing for the Reader

First, this short topic was keyed by Dean's post on his site today. But that doesn't make it any less valid. And I can't tell you how strongly I hope I'm preaching to the choir here.

I recommend you scroll down and read Dean's topic before coming back to continue with this one.

If you're wondering, I agree completely with Dean's post, but with a proviso. It's EASY for me to agree because awhile back I made the conscious decision to stop worrying about sales. I came to be a professional fiction writer so late that I just don't worry about sales. All my efforts go to writing the next work. I figure my grandchildren and great-grandchildren might rake in some cash, and that's fine.

On the other hand, I can honestly say I've ALWAYS been cognizant of the reader. Even before I was a "real" fiction writer.

Those who have taken my seminars or heard me speak at writers' conferences and conventions can bear that out. More times than I can remember, I said some version of "Every word, and even every piece of punctuation you put on the page, must be placed with the reader in mind."

Trite as it sounds, it's true. And as "common-knowledge" as it seems, thousands of writers just don't do it.

They SAY they're aware of the reader. Then I'll read a sentence in their work like, "Her eyes shot across the banquet room." And when I ask them about it, they say something truly stupid (IMHO) and dismissive like, "Oh, the reader will know what I mean."

Now up to a point, they're right. The reader will take the extra second or two to "understand," then go on reading. At least the first time. Or two. Maybe three.

But writers who do that once will do it again. And again. And again. All in the same story.

Writers who write like that make a false assumption: that they Deserve to have the reader figure out what they mean.

Uhh, no. Sooner or later, the reader will bust up laughing right in the middle of a tense girl-finds-boy romantic scene in your novel. Then she'll put your book down and go find something less annoying to do.

I recently stopped reading *Under the Dome* by Stephen King because he kept pulling me out of the story.

And when that happens, it's the writer's fault.

The reader's job isn't to decipher the story, and it isn't to figure out what the writer meant.

The reader's only job, which she took on voluntarily by paying good money for your story, is to be entertained. Period.

Your job, the writer's job, is to do everything within your power NOT to rudely jerk the reader out of the story.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, *Sales vs People vs Artistic Freedom* (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sales-vs-people-vs-artistic-freedom/>). As is often the case, he teaches more than he means to. I hope you'll read it.

Today's Writing

Well, again I let the day get away from me. I still have more non-writing stuff to do, so I'm gonna stop for now. Still no idea whether this is going to run or end up short.

Back at it tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1038

Nonfiction Words: 640 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1678

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058

Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810

Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744

Day 4..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 9331

Day 5..... 2158 words. Total words to date..... 11489
Day 6..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 12527

Total fiction words for the month..... 6717
Total fiction words for the year..... 686411
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 261590

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 948001

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 12/6

[December 6, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, my Christmas Sale announcement posted today on the Pro Writers blog on my site. It will be interesting to see how many unsubscribes I get tomorrow. (grin)

Rolled out right at 3:30 this morning and went through the usual routine. Afterward, I took care of some last-minute Christmas shopping online. I love this new world.

However, despite the ready availability of goods and services via the Internet, I would still trade all that in less than a heartbeat for the days when schools were allowed to actually teach students, children could do non-electronic things without parental supervision (eat dirt, play outside all day, walk with a friend to a favorite fishing spot, etc.) and without the fear of some jerk kidnapping them or worse.

Sometimes (okay, often) I long for the day when someone will kick the plug out of the wall and let those who know how survive. These days that's the stuff of fiction. Fortunately, I'm a fiction writer.

* * *

Oh, by the way, I'm backing this Journal up to post at 6 p.m. like it used to. Not sure why I moved it to 7. Even if I write later into the day like I did today, I still have time to get it out.

Of Interest

Dean's post on [Artistic Choice and Making Money](http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-choice-and-making-money/) (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-choice-and-making-money/>). I also recommend reading the comments.

Today's Writing

Got to the story a little after 9 a.m. I'm reading through the whole thing today, giving it the best possible chance to be all that it can be. Without joining the army. (grin)

Paused around noon to work on my 4-Runner a bit. Around 1, back to the story.

Well, try as I might, this story is sticking to one main event. It's in novella range now, at least. I'll finish it tomorrow, then write something to meet my short story goal for the week.

See you then.

Fiction Words: 3364

Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3694

Writing of Ray Acuna (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058
Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810
Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744
Day 4..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 9331
Day 5..... 2158 words. Total words to date..... 11489
Day 6..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 12527
Day 7..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 15891

Total fiction words for the month..... 10081
Total fiction words for the year..... 689775
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4020
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 261920

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 951695

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 12/7

[December 7, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I lost a long-time subscriber to this Journal yesterday. Being a kindly and gentle woman, she gave her reason for leaving as "too many emails."

I appreciate that, but I admit thinking for a second, "Then why not delete some of the others?" (grin)

Seriously, I appreciate all of you who choose to hang in there. Whether you read or skim the Journal every day, “save” it and read it once a week or so, or don’t subscribe but receive it via RSS feed. Even if you just drop in from time to time to see what’s here, thank you. You are my life blood.

As for the lady who chose to leave, I wish her well and I do hope she drops in from time to time to pick up what she can.

Some Numbers

I noticed last night after I posted the Journal that I’m probably going to make a million words this year (January 1 through December 31).

Of course, that’s both the fiction and the Journal, but still. Crazy to think I’ve put that many words through these fingers.

I’m also actually annoyed that I probably won’t make even 750,000 in fiction during the same calendar period. That goal is a little over 60,000 words away. So I could make it, but probably not. I’d have to churn out an average (mean) of 3000 fiction words per day for the next twenty days. If I got a good story (or it got me) that would be fairly easy. But I’m not gonna count on it.

As I mentioned here a few days ago, I also am working on a different calendar, from October 19, 2016 through October 18, 2017. So I’m also looking forward to seeing what I can do with that.

* * *

I forgot to watch and listen to the Week 6 videos from the POV workshop yesterday. So I did that this morning (and took voluminous notes) in addition to doing a bunch of little stuff.

I recommend this workshop. As usual, Dean taught more than he meant to. I’m pleased to report I already knew a lot of what he talked about, but even unintentional validation from a long-term professional writer is a good thing.

Of Interest

Again I recommend reading the comments on Dean’s topic from yesterday, Artistic Choice and Making Money (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-choice-and-making-money/#comments>).

Today’s Writing

Got to the writing late. I finished a couple of rough spots in A Rough New World (formerly Ray Acuna) around 12:30.

Well, I got a little over 1700 words done on a VERY strange short story. We’ll see how it goes tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2134

Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2554

Writing of A Rough New World (427 words, done)

Day 1..... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 2058
Day 2..... 3752 words. Total words to date..... 5810
Day 3..... 1934 words. Total words to date..... 7744
Day 4..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 9331
Day 5..... 2158 words. Total words to date..... 11489
Day 6..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 12527
Day 7..... 3364 words. Total words to date..... 15891
Day 8..... 0427 words. Total words to date..... 16318 (done)

Writing of “The Dawning of Dexter Murfee Nettleson” (short story)

Day 1..... 1707 words. Total words to date..... 1707

Total fiction words for the month..... 12215
Total fiction words for the year..... 691909
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 262340

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 954249

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 12/8](#)

[December 8, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out at 4 this morning. The usual early routine, then to the story from yesterday. It's a weird little thing, fun to write, but I'm already glad this one will be finished today so I can get on with writing something else.

Today a true American hero passed from our lives. John Glenn went off-planet for the final time at 95 years of age. I still have some old 3-cent Mercury postage stamps somewhere. God speed, Colonel Glenn.

Topic: Including You in a Process

One of the ways I get more in-depth ideas is brainstorming. Often I brainstorm alone, but even then the seed of the brainstorming session is planted by someone else.

Awhile back (mid-November), a friend in the Republic of Texas tossed me an idea he said he didn't feel ready yet to tackle himself. He knows my affinity for SF, and he was admittedly spurred a bit by a new television series regarding a Mars colony.

In an email, he talked a bit about "the potential conflict between the long-term planning and execution of constructing of a culture, a civil government etc." Necessarily, this would have to do with "matriarchal vs patriarchal leadership, child rearing vs work, division of labor" and so on.

Mid-November. This morning, having finished a novella yesterday and a short story today, I was casting about for ideas and happened across his email again. I also replied (again) and it went so well I thought I'd share it with you in a topic.

Here's what I wrote, dressed up just a bit.

I've always been thrilled with the selection process for colonists. (I wrote a poem on the topic, "Some Future Home," several years ago.) Obviously, even before we talk about children and the rearing of the same, each colonist would have to be able to contribute something of real value to the community. Okay, so it would have to be a group of scientists from the hard sciences.

Also they wouldn't want liars and all the conflict that would bring, ergo there could be either no sticklers for religion or all of the same religion. And zero professional politicians. Zero. Just sayin'.

To take into account The Human Factor, all opinions would be welcome (perhaps even required — yes, required I think) and counted. But they would also be weighted on a sliding scale.

For example, an opinion on a question of physics would 'weigh more' if it came from an engineer than from a botanist. An opinion from a combat vet on defensive (or offensive) strategy would weigh more than the opinion of a non-combat military veteran (so, a theorist), and his opinion would weigh more than that of a civilian with no military experience beyond Boy or Girl Scouts.

I would recommend the colonists be dark-skinned individuals (though not necessarily Negroid) for the inherent ability of more darkly pigmented skin to withstand the ill effects of certain cosmic rays.

The colonists would have to be "mature," by which I mean they would have as few immaturities as possible, and NONE on the surface. (I have attained adulthood only within the past couple of years, and I'm 64. Much as I'd love to go, under my own rules, I probably wouldn't be allowed.)

Age also would be a factor. Perhaps we ship a load of babies — infants — in stasis with 24/7 lessons playing in their minds for the duration of the trip. They arrive at 23 to 26 years old, ready to go. (They couldn't satisfy the maturity test, but their parents, grandparents, etc. could. And who knows what DNA testing could tell us before lift-off?)

Regardless of who went, all (or most) would have to be Alpha personalities, albeit with a strong leadership ethic. By that I mean they are more likely to care more for the others than for themselves or whether the others “obey” them.

The conflicts would arise when something that was not planned-for seeped through.

Perhaps some latent personality flaw is brought to the surface by the stress of the new environment or the living conditions or some other factor.

Or perhaps something is introduced from the outside, an environmental “bug” even the best scientists back on Earth didn’t foresee. Maybe under One rock on the new planet is One bug that’s been waiting 10,000 years to awaken. Maybe a wayward foot moved the rock when the sun was at just the right declination, etc.

Maybe it can (and does) penetrate the impenetrable EnviroSuit and has a certain effect on its victim. Maybe it’s a good effect. Maybe not. Maybe it turns him/her into a native “Martian” or other denizen wherever they are.

Or maybe we spring forward and the colonists land only hours or days before a group of Transformers land and our colonists find themselves caught up in a crossfire between opposing forces. Or maybe they land only hours or days Other “natural” colonists land from elsewhere in the galaxy, and there’s a turf war.

And maybe our guys win (not all other galactic species are more advanced than we in Every way) but they have to live with horrible consequences.

Or maybe their guys win and we zoom back to Houston where the world suddenly can’t raise the human colonists anymore and have no idea what happened. Fade to black.

Or maybe it’s a western set in space. Maybe a Bad Guy comes to town, his raiding party at his back, and the first thing he does is shoot Hubble so Earth can’t see the bad guys massing.

Or maybe he TRIES to shoot Hubble and for the first time the techies on Earth are forced to reveal to us lowly humans that Hubble has a defensive capability, which of course ticks off Russia, China, et al. because any defensive capability can readily be turned to offensive use.

Now, I’m generally kind of a stew writer. When I have a novel idea, I generally have to let it stew for awhile, let it sit. Let my subconscious play with it a bit.

Later, if I glance at it again and it strikes me, I write an opening. If that takes off, I’m off and running. If it doesn’t, well, back into the file it goes.

So if any of these ideas strikes you or stirs within you another idea, run with it.

One thing — write it from your own point of view. This isn't from the POV workshop I just finished. But think about it. You don't have to know all the innerworkings of a space ship in order to write a story set on a space ship (for example).

Do you know everything about the internal combustion engine and drive train in your car or pickup? Probably not. Yet you drive it to the grocery or to golf outings or wherever regularly.

You can do the same thing with any environment. If you're an engineer, tell the story as an engineer. If you're a police officer, tell the story from a security standpoint. If you're a barber, well, they'd need a barber on a long flight, right?

Now think about this: Every idea in this topic could just as easily be jerked out of space and placed in an environment on Earth. Enjoy.

Of Interest

Dean's back on track with his topics on artistic freedom with Belief and Artistic Choice (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/belief-and-artistic-choice/>). I'll be interested in seeing (tomorrow) what sorts of comments he gets on this one. Below that, his 12/7/16 Daily is interesting too.

Today's Writing

At 6 a.m. I moved back to the story to find out what's gonna happen. Breakfast, coffee, etc. more writing, and by 8 a.m. the story was finished. Yay!

The day got away from me. I wrote the topic above and not much else, and my neighbor's helping me fit a plexiglass window into the back end of my 4-Runner.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1622

Nonfiction Words: 1330 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2952

Writing of "The Dawning of Dexter Murfee Nettleson" (short story)

Day 1..... 1707 words. Total words to date..... 1707

Day 2..... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 3329 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 13837

Total fiction words for the year..... 693531

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5770

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 263670

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 957201

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Friday, 12/9

[December 9, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, after the usual morning routine I remembered to update my Short Fiction page at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#). So a bit of admin stuff to begin the day. There are now 160 short story covers on the page that appears when you click the Short Fiction tab on the site. Another sort-of milestone.

A short post today. After yesterday, I thought you might want a break. (grin)

Of Interest

Some good comments on Dean's Belief and Artistic Choice (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/belief-and-artistic-choice/#comments>).

Also, don't skip it, a VERY good post in 12/8/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/12816-daily/>). For me, both instruction and validation. Excellent.

For those of you interested in SF or Space or Saturn or NASA, my wife sent me this link regarding the hexagon on Saturn:

Today's Writing

Pretty good day today, but still below my daily goal. Still, I'll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2536

Nonfiction Words: 140 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2676

Writing of Jill Montgomery (working title)

Day 1..... 2536 words. Total words to date..... 2536

Total fiction words for the month..... 16373

Total fiction words for the year..... 696067

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5910

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 263810

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 959877

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 12/10

[December 10, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. This is gonna be almost just a placeholder post.

I rolled out around 4, did not much until around 7, helped clean house for awhile (sort of). Then I wrote a bit, then went to Sierra Vista for some stuff, then back here to write a bit more. A really flat day. Just not a lot going on.

I'll try to get back on task in the next day or two with a topic of interest.

Of Interest

Nothing really at Dean's today either or around the web.

Today's Writing

I wrote about 800 words, then headed for Sierra Vista on a sort of spur of the moment trip. Got back around 2:30. Back to the story.

I'm not stuck or mired or whatever at all on this one. I have zero idea right now whether it will be a novella or novel. Just have to wait and see. Or write and see. (grin)

Well, a really light writing day today. It's Saturday, I guess.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1301

Nonfiction Words: 170 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1471

Writing of Jill Montgomery (working title)

Day 1..... 2536 words. Total words to date..... 2536

Day 2..... 1301 words. Total words to date..... 3837

Total fiction words for the month..... 17674

Total fiction words for the year..... 697368

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6080
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 263980

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 961348

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 12/11

December 11, 2016

Hey Folks,

Well, there is a very good chance this will be a nonwriting day. I'm working through a memoir for a long-time friend, and it's fascinating. I hope to have it published for him as an ebook by the end of the day, so I'm going to stick with it for awhile and see what happens.

Started the entry above (and working through the eformat and cover for my friend) around 4. By around 11:30, it was published and distributed through Amazon, D2D and Smashwords. Feels very good to have been allowed to help.

By the way, the book is excerpted from his diary over several years while he struggled with COPD. If that's something with which you or a loved one are afflicted, check it out. The title is **BREATHE: Living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**. It's both personable and informative.

Anyway, then to lunch in Benson with my wife, then the grocery and back here. It's almost 2 p.m. now. No writing today.

I'll start in again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Oof. Not a lot around the web that I could find.

Today's Writing

Nada today. Planned nonwriting day.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 200

Writing of Jill Montgomery (working title)

Day 1..... 2536 words. Total words to date..... 2536
Day 2..... 1301 words. Total words to date..... 3837
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17674
Total fiction words for the year..... 697368
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 264180

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 961548

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Monday, 12/12

December 12, 2016

Hey Folks,

Rolled out at 3 this morning and started reading over an excerpt a friend sent me from his next novel. It's gonna be a good story.

The little girl is in the house this morning, though tapping on a glass pane near the bottom of the door now and again. She wants out, but there are two owls perched out there in the darkness. Uhh, no.

When the moon set and the owls quit, I let her out. Not five minutes later, the coyotes started. In she went again.

I remind her now and again that a big part of my job is to keep her safe. She is not impressed.

Topic: A Mechanical Tip on Pacing

Sentence length and paragraphing have everything in the world to do with pacing.

First, a disclaimer.

If you're writing some sort of Literary fiction, it's probably all right to use long, drawn-out, convoluted sentences and massive paragraphs.

But let me stop here for a moment and define what I mean by "Literary fiction." I'm talking about the kind of fiction

that "sells" primarily to non-paying markets like college literary journals, and

in which flowery, exorbitant language is more important than the story itself.

I'm not putting it down. I've written some of it myself, especially back in the day when I was first turning my hand to magic realism.

But if you're telling stories in an attempt to entertain readers, and especially if you would enjoy developing a paying readership for those stories, read on.

Again I'm going to digress just a bit. As many of you have heard me say in various workshops, longer sentences tend to convey emotion and short, terse sentences tend to evoke a sense of drama.

A short, terse sentence that follows an emotion-laden longer sentence packs more dramatic punch than it would otherwise. (For an excellent example of this technique, see my short story "Soft as a Breeze.")

Likewise, if you use too many short, terse sentences in a row, the overuse tends to water down the dramatic impact.

Punctuation enters in as well. A sentence that contains less interior punctuation will read more quickly than a sentence that is riddled with the stuff.

So for example, a longer, less-punctuated sentence that revolves around one or more strong action verbs will read more quickly (and convey stronger emotion) than one that is over-punctuated.

What do I mean by "convey stronger emotion?" You can actually increase the reader's physical heart rate. That's what I mean. Again, reference "Soft as a Breeze" for examples.

Okay, so that covers the intentional use of sentences. (But you don't THINK about this while you're writing. Internalize it and it will seep out of your subconscious as necessary.)

Paragraphs are a different matter.

I mentioned above that I abused paragraphs back in the day, and I did. More so, I didn't abuse them intentionally. I abused them because I didn't know any better.

You can intentionally use longer paragraphs to slow the reader down, but even that's dangerous until you really understand the concept.

And the concept is this: *Readers enjoy reading stories that pull them through.* "Page turners" they're often called, pretty much across all genres.

And the quickest, surest way to create a page-turner is to hit the Enter (Return) key more often. If you read back over a longer paragraph you've written, you'll know where to hit the Enter key.

It's simply a fact that it's easier to read a shorter paragraph than a longer one. Not only does the shorter paragraph (with due respect to sentence length and punctuation) read more quickly, but the white space that follows it will pull or propel the reader to the next paragraph.

Many readers will actually skim over a longer paragraph rather than reading every word. If you're an avid reader, you've probably done so yourself.

You can actually see the effect of this (and my own growth) if you read *Leaving Amarillo* (the first novel I ever wrote, even though it's chronologically the fourth in the series) and then the later books in the same series, especially *The Rise of a Warrior* (the first prequel and Book 1 in the series) on through *The Right Cut*.

Or if you read some of my very early short stories (toward the bottom of the page at <http://harveystanbrough.com/short-stories/>) as compared with my more recent ones (toward the top of the same page).

Many young-in-craft writers don't understand the power of paragraphing in pacing. Because it isn't something taught in high schools or colleges, many never learn it.

Then again, here's your chance. And yep, I'd be happy to answer any questions, in comments or via email.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's place today, I urge you to read *Fantastic Bundle Almost Finished!* (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fantastic-bundle-almost-finished/>) unless you've already bought the bundle. Some great writing books here.

Today's Writing

Another light day. Finished "The Fading of Jill Montgomery," which turned out to be a short story.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1301 (exactly the same as two days ago! weird.)

Nonfiction Words: 820 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2121

Writing of "The Fading of Jill Montgomery"

Day 1..... 2536 words. Total words to date..... 2536

Day 2..... 1301 words. Total words to date..... 3837

Day 3..... 1301 words. Total words to date..... 5138 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669
Total nonfiction words for the month... 71000
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 265000

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 963669

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 12/13

[December 13, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm about to embark on an interesting experiment.

Yesterday I received a 200,000 word creative nonfiction manuscript to copy edit. First "real job" I've had in a while. It's going to be interesting, to say the least, how this meshes with my writing.

Notice that my concern is how the work meshes with my writing, not how my writing meshes with my work. Priorities.

The two shouldn't clash at all, and one shouldn't create any problems for the other. Well, except that both require time at the computer and feed into the same fatigue pool. But otherwise, no.

Copyediting is a function of the conscious, critical mind, whereas fiction and my other writing is a function of the subconscious.

And my critical mind already reared up once, strongly. One major thought was "Maybe you should take a hiatus from writing fiction until this project is finished." Seriously?

But I recognized that for what it was, then came here and wrote this.

Back when I was copyediting before (full time), I was also "trying" to write. Hear that? "Also" automatically relegates the writing to second priority, and "trying" is always a function of the conscious mind. Wrong approach for a professional writer, but one I had difficulty breaking out of.

So it's back to Heinlein's Rules now as it was then. If it weren't for Heinlein's Rules, I wouldn't have pulled it off back then.

And I wouldn't have written and published 20 novels, 2 novellas, and over 160 short stories plus nonfiction books in the past two years, not to mention this diary. (You can get a free annotated

copy at <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Heinleins-Business-Habits-Annotated.pdf>).

So going back to copyediting will be a challenge, but a fun challenge. I think it will help me make writing more of an escape to playtime with my writing. Whatever happens, it should be interesting. And of course, you'll see the effects here.

My intention is to edit from whenever I get up until around 11. What remains of the day (around noon until 5) I'll use for my own writing. I've been writing more in the afternoon than in the morning anyway. My daily writing goal remains 3,000 words per day of new publishable fiction.

I have a goal on the copyedit too. I want to copyedit at least 35 pages per day. If I reach that, the copyedit will be finished by the end of December.

When I get 35 pages done, I can either keep going and roll-over the excess in the bank, or I can stop and go to playtime for the rest of the day. Either way, every day the goal resets to zero. I'll post those totals here too, just for fun.

Yesterday I spent three hours running my contextual spell checker on the document. So this morning I started with a clean draft. No need to watch for spelling and wrong-word usages (at least not closely).

* * *

Finished working on the edit for the day at around noon and worked a little formatting the story I finished yesterday. It was about a woman running on a wilderness track.

For some reason, that motivated me to try some situps and pushups. Back in the day I could do 100 of each fairly easily, but that day was a long time ago. I won't tell you how many I did today, but it released some endorphines or something. So I added a short walk to the mix.

Back by 1 p.m. and looking for a story to write.

Of Interest

Dean's place, Artistic Choice and The Voice Finals (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-choice-and-the-voice-finals/>) is good.

Today's Writing

Well, a nonwriting day as it turned out. I could have written, but no idea grabbed me and took off. Plus I spent a lot of the afternoon slobbering over a 1995 Toyota Tacoma I have my greedy eyes on.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 650

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 265650
Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 964319

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 12/14

[December 14, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Got up late at 4 and went outside to get pics of the second supermoon in what, two months?
Anyway, that took some time. Had to replace a battery in one camera, etc.

Then I sipped hot coffee and hunted my kitten, who had jumped the fence while Dad was busy
staring at the sky. Found her, got her back in and got some exercise to boot.

The cultural editor of the Mexican magazine EstePaís emailed to say the issue with my triolet
“God?” is out and in the mail to me. She also included a handy link to the electronic version. If
you’re interested, you can see my poem at <http://www.estepais.com/articulo.php?id=808&t=dios>.

You can see other poems by Pedro Poitevin, who wrote the translation of “God?” here:
<http://www.estepais.com/articulo.php?id=803&t=poemas>.

And finally, you can see the entire magazine here: <http://www.estepais.com/articulo.php>.
I installed an add-on to Firefox (my browser) so I could translate the page and read the
wonderful things the translator said about me (grin).

Then I finished my morning cigar and came in to get a second mugga coffee and check Dean’s
place. But I didn’t do anything on the edit yet. Two and a half hours gone.

* * *

I got to the edit late and dealt with insubordinate (but grown, or perhaps groan, and well-meaning) children for a few hours as I edited. As a result I ended up with only 26 pages on the day. However, because I had some pages in the “bank” from yesterday, I’m still 7 pages over the average I need to maintain the pace. So it’s all good.

It’s 12:30 now. To my own writing for the rest of the day.

Two hours later, I played with a few openings, but nothing worked. By which I mean nothing grabbed me and went running through a scene. Not a major thing. I’m gonna make a trip to the store and then the post office. Then I’ll be back to either write some fiction or not.

Of Interest

Dean’s A Fun Christmas Present (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-fun-christmas-present/>). (After you’ve read Dean’s intro, click “bubba’s 2016 xmas letter” (or here: <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/bubbas-2016-xmas-letter.pdf>) to download the PDF.

Also of interest if only for a tiny bit on priorities, I recommend Dean’s 12/13/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/121316-daily/>).

BY THE WAY if you decide to buy Judge Bubba’s book, here are the links:

Ebook: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01B75DKLW/>

Paper: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1523279508/>

Today’s Writing

Nope. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 400

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 266050

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 964719

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51

Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 12/15

[December 15, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Last night after I sent off the Journal I wrote “Wow. I hope I’m ABLE to push aside the critical mind stuff and turn to writing when I’m through editing for the day.”

But that’s just silly. I’ve experienced this kind of thought off and on (mostly on) for the past two years, yet I’ve accomplished more in that time than many do in an entire career. (grin) I always end up pushing down the critical mind, so I’m not gonna worry about it.

Things are piling up here, so today I’m taking a planned nonwriting (nonplaying) day to get some of those things done.

Today I will edit with an eye toward putting more pages in the bank. I will also make corrections to a manuscript (Kenneth Flowers’ BREATHE) and do the necessities for my novella, A Rough New World, and my short story, “The Fading of Jill Montgomery” so I can get them out to readers.

I will also sign up for another week-long subscription to CanStock and download 10 cover pics. So no writing today unless something just rears up and refuses to remain in my head. Then all bets are off.

Well, it’s almost 11 and I’ve just finished all my personal admin stuff for the day. That included making edits in Kenneth’s book (BREATHE) as well as designing two new covers and publishing the short story and novella I recently finished. It’s still incredible to me that those will be for sale or lending in over 200 venues worldwide within a week or so. Mind boggling.

So now a short break, then to the edit probably for the rest of the day.

Knocked out 41 pages today before my eyes gave out. Reckon maybe I need to rest every hour or so. Duh.

Gonna edit like a wildman in the early hours tomorrow, then lunch and talking writing/marketing with a friend. Then I hope to get back to writing something LONG tomorrow.

Of Interest

Some interesting comments on Dean's Artistic Choice and The Voice Finals
(<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-choice-and-the-voice-finals/#comments>)

Not a lot else over there today.

Today's Writing

Uhh, no.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 330

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 266380

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 965049

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 12/16

[December 16, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Today, as it turned out, is another nonwriting day. But read on. There are good things in this edition of the Journal.

Windy here. Big wind. Strong stinkin' wind. Even the cats don't want to go out. Windy in New Mexico too. Two large trees hit my son and daughter's house in Roswell. Damaged the roof and cut the electricity. Sigh.

While visiting Amazon yesterday to place my short story and novella in their store, I found they have a completely new publishing interface. It's much cleaner and it seems a little faster.

They did make it a bit more clunky with regard to adding search tags. Before, you could copy/paste up to seven search tags and insert them in one fell swoop. Now you have to insert each tag individually, ala Smashwords. Annoying. But overall I like Amazon's improvements.

Okay, so I decided to do a topic on distributors today. Here's the way I see it:

Topic: Distributors

Draft2Digital remains my favorite distributor. They pay royalties monthly, and they send you a monthly statement from each venue that includes the amount (in dollars) of your royalties from that venue. Very up front and easy.

The conversion engine at D2D turns out higher-quality .mobi (Kindle) and .epub (Nook/Apple) files than the one at Smashwords turns out. D2D also provides a universal link where a prospective reader can click one time to find your book at the the reader's favorite venue (B&N, Apple, Amazon, etc. even Smashwords).

They also have a slick, clean interface. The only downside to D2D is that they distribute only to Apple, B&N, and Kobo, as well as the smaller Scribd, Inkterra (formerly PageFoundry), Tolino and 24Symbols. Still, at least they hit the big ones, less Amazon.

Amazon is just Amazon, but it's a major sales venue and they sell in around 60 countries. (Most of the other larger sales venues do too.) And they don't accept distribution from anyone else (yet) so I continue to distribute to them individually.

Even with improvements on their interface, for speed and efficiency, they're still somewhere between the very quick, slick interface at D2D and the dragging-boots-through-mud interface at Smashwords.

Amazon pays royalties monthly, but they remain two to three months behind, and they make it difficult to find how much you've been paid and by whom. (You have to log into Amazon, go to your account, wade through reports, etc.)

Smashwords is the grandpappy. They distribute to the same ones D2D distributes to (except 24Symbols) plus eleven others, including the massive Gardners in the UK.

They also maintain their own store, with really good royalties if the customer buys directly from them.

I still distribute to Smashwords primarily because of their in-house store and their coupons. And since I'm there anyway, I allow them to distribute to all those others that D2D doesn't reach.

However, I don't think I've made enough money from those other venues (the extra ones D2D doesn't handle) to buy a burger and fries yet. I've done pretty well selling through their store.

To reward D2D for the benefit of working with them, I distribute through them to every venue they support.

Then I go back to Smashwords' "(Distribution) Channel Manager" and click "Opt Out" for Apple, B&N, Kobo, et al that D2D is handling for me. That, too, is a very clunky, flint-chisel-on-a-stone-tablet kind of process, and it serves to remind me why I prefer D2D.

So whatever else you do, get a D2D account. If I was going to distribute through only two distributors, I would pick D2D and Amazon. That covers all the biggies in one bag.

Pronoun—I mentioned this new distributor awhile back, so I suppose I should mention them again now. Okay, I still don't use them. Their interface was designed by someone for whom condescension apparently is a lifestyle. They DO distribute to Amazon, so that's one thing in their favor. But frankly, I'd rather put up with Amazon's interface than Pronoun's silliness.

* * *

Well, my friend and I were going to talk marketing today over a pizza and a couple good cigars. Neither of us know anything about marketing, so it would have been the blind leading the blind, but we both like pizza and cigars. So. However, he was unable to make it due to illness. Any marketing geniuses out there? Wanna do a guest post? Please?

* * *

Did some more editing. I'm jonesing to write fiction, but nothing again today. However, today I decided to reprise (revive?) my Adobe Hovel office and my old computer. I think I need to do what I did before, namely, dedicate a space to writing fiction, especially while I'm stuck in this dual role. More on that tomorrow probably. For now, another nonwriting day today and back to the edit for awhile longer.

Of Interest

Over at Dean's site 12/15/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/121516-daily/>). He posted very late today (after noon) so if you check on your own, there y'go.

By the way, visit Kris Rusch's site (<http://kriswrites.com>) and sign up for her newsletter. She's giving away the first novel in her Diving series. Trust me, this is a great deal.

Today's Writing

Yeah, no.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 820 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 820

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 267200

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 965869

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)

And this is on a memoir. I copyedit much faster on fiction.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 12/17](#)

[December 17, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

When discussing consistency in a seminar I taught a year or two ago, I mentioned as an example, that the writer should use either “toward” or “towards” throughout the manuscript. I also said, almost in passing, that “toward” is the American version of the word and “towards” (most often pronounced “t’ords”) is the Brit version.

I wasn’t talking about the use of the word by a particular character or in a writing set in a particular country. I was talking only about consistency. I’ve seen hundreds of manuscripts in which the writer writes “toward” one time and “towards” another time. So I was saying the writer should pick one (toward or towards) and then use it throughout.

Shirley, a friend who is from Great Britain originally, was in attendance and quietly corrected me. Rather than either of us risking embarrassment in that public venue (and to get on with the class) I let it pass rather than discussing it further.

I also don't know how I could have discussed it further anyway without pulling out my copy of "the" dictionary. (I am blessed to own a copy of The Compact Oxford English Dictionary. All 19 volumes in one massive tome, accompanied by a magnifying glass.) And specifically for American English, I use the American Heritage College Dictionary.

But no matter. In a discussion concerning consistency, it was a moot point anyway. I wasn't saying you shouldn't call a "crow" an "Arizona Black Eagle." I was saying only that you should pick one and stick with it through the story.

Now Joanna Penn, in the "Of Interest" section below, offers a blog post on the differences between British and American terms. She mentions the term in question, not as a specific example but (as I did so long ago) only in passing. Very entertaining.

She even offers "five major, easily adoptable" nuances between the languages that will make you "golden" with most readers. I hope you'll read it.

You can also take advantage of the links on my website under Writers' Resources in the left sidebar. The entries marked Dictionary are most appropriate for this discussion, but if you haven't browsed the list in awhile, I encourage you to do so.

* * *

Rolled out about 3:30. It was almost 60 degrees but with sustained winds of around 40 mph. Spent the first three hours writing this little bit of stuff and exploring Author Marketing Club (see the second entry in Of Interest below).

By 6:30 it was sleeting and the temp had dropped to 36°. And still high winds. Ugh. Gonna be one of those days.

Yesterday I hit upon a few ideas for novels, actually set in a world I've written in before. In that world, a new worldwide political organization had been established; a second worldwide purge of the Jewish people had occurred; an inter-Arab war was going on as Arab nations fought each other over the division of Israel after the worldwide political organization threw it to the winds; and one child who was missed in the purge grew up to become a miner of bones for a calcium extract in the Siberian burial fields. So he was mining the bones of his own people.

I wrote only the last idea, a 73,000 word story about the boy who grew up to mine the bones of his people and the effect that had on him. That novel was In the Siberian Fields.

But the other ideas have gone unwritten to any real depth. Oh, and there was also a moon colony involved, complete with a love interest for the young miner featured in In the Siberian Fields.

I thought I might start one of those other ideas today, but a few factors combine to make that unlikely: 1, it's Saturday, so I'm not the only human in the house and there are other things to be done; 2, with the weather like it is, although I could easily get to the Hovel and work out there, I feel a need to be here, in the house, to fend off or attend to any possible catastrophes; and 3, a day like this just begs to be a day off. It's a curl-up-on-the-couch-and-watch-TCM kind of day, though I will get some editing done. I can't afford to fall behind in that.

So I said all of that to say this: We'll see what happens.

* * *

Moving right along on the editing. No writing again today, but I got a lot done.

I'm selling my 4-Runner and getting a Toyota Tacoma, also 4 wheel drive. So I spent some time today getting the 4-Runner prepped and taking off some things I want to keep (like the brush guard, etc.).

I also edited 73 pages, getting through page 230 and putting me 54 pages above the mean of 35 pages per day.

Of Interest

A must read at Joanna Penn's site, Making British Characters Realistic as an American Writer ... and Vice Versa (<http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2016/12/16/british-american-characters/>).

Also, if you know as little about marketing as I do, here's something to consider: <http://authormarketingclub.com/>.

An interesting note at Dean's site in 12/16/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/121616-daily/>).

Today's Writing

Nope. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 870 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 870

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10170
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 268070

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 966739

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 12/18

[December 18, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out at 3, and by 4 the baby wanted to go outside for awhile. We did, and then (around 5) I put her in the house and went to the Adobe Hovel to explore writing some fiction.

I started a magic realism story. I didn't get very far (only a few hundred words) before my cigar was finished and I headed back to the house.

Then an unexpected trip to the store for a few groceries, then back home and out here (outside desk) to write this stuff, check Dean's site, etc.

Wow. It's been a long time since I set out to write a story of a certain length intentionally. I was invited to submit a short-short (under 2000 words) to the Mexican magazine I mentioned a day or two ago. To me, such requests are an honor, so I'm trying to come up with something appropriate.

Of course, after they've published it (if they do) I'll also publish it to my website as a story of the week and independently as a stand-alone story.

This might also turn into another sequence of stories revolving around the same main character. So we'll see.

For now I'm going to edit a bit. I don't want to squander the pages I have in the bank.

* * *

The edit is running well (I now have 59 pages in the bank), and that's all right because it's "important" as it's my job. But I'm letting it take too much of my time. Changes coming tomorrow.

I've tried hard for over two years to keep my fiction writing from becoming important because I don't want to pressure myself with it. I never want it to feel like a job. It's important to me as a release, as playtime.

Writing fiction, telling stories, is still my personal priority. But I don't want ever to make it just another job.

I expect I'll write fiction tomorrow before I return to the edit.

Of Interest

Not much that I could find today. Dean talks a bit about the ongoing problem at his site. You have to hit Refresh when you first get there to see his latest post. Or some of you will have to do so.

Today's Writing

Nothing today to speak of.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 400

Writing of "Ila and the Train" (I'll report beginning tomorrow)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18975
Total fiction words for the year..... 698669
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10570
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 268470

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 967139

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)

Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Monday, 12/19

[December 19, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out right at 3:30, wide awake, then honestly did nothing for almost the first two hours. Babies to take care of and all that, so I got nothing accomplished.

I took care of some small things around the house, then turned my attention to the edit from around 8 until noon. In that time I got 36 pages done, so I increased the bank by one. Now to fiction for the balance of the day.

This will be a really short post as it turns out. I finished my first magic realism story in years. This one won't go out to donors as I've sent it to Mexico for possible publication in a magazine there. If they turn it down, or when I get rights reverted after it's published, I'll send it to you then.

Of Interest

Nothing at Dean's place today (still fighting a cache problem on his website).

Be sure to check Kris Rusch's site for her Free Fiction Monday at <http://kriswrites.com/2016/12/19/free-fiction-monday-stille-nacht/>.

Today's Writing

See below. Very pleased with this story. And I think Ila might have more to say.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 2279

Nonfiction Words: 180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2459

Writing of "Ila and the Train" (magic realism short short)

Day 1..... 2279 words. Total words to date..... 2279 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254

Total fiction words for the year..... 700948

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 268650

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 969598

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 12/20

[December 20, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Probably today will be a nonwriting day, and possibly a non-copyediting day as well. My son will be here in a couple of hours to help me buy, register, etc. a Toyota Tacoma 4WD pickup. I suspect much of the day will be devoted to that and visiting. I don't get to see my children nearly as much as I like.

Still, for resources alone, this is a Journal entry you don't want to miss. Read on.

UPDATE: Yep, nonwriting, nonediting day. Just got back around 4. I have a Toyota Tacoma now, but it was an endurance trial. (grin)

* * *

Before I forget, yesterday Joanna Penn posted "Seven Years And 300 Episodes. Creative Lessons Learned..." at <http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2016/12/19/special-300/>. I'm not big on podcasts, so I read the transcript.

Some great stuff there, including some great ideas you can try for yourself, new ways to distribute your work, etc.

But I was disappointed to see her and her guest (Mark Lefebvre, Director of Self Publishing and Author Relations at Kobo) go political.

It is nothing short of incredulous to me that the political left, for whom the watchword is “tolerance,” are among the least tolerant people on Earth. Witness the ongoing remarks, riots, terrorist acts, plans to disrupt the upcoming inauguration, etc. etc. etc. ad nauseam.

There are people whose job is to comment on political goings-on. Entertainers, myself included (as some have pointed out), are not among them.

Of Interest

At Dean’s site, Artistic Freedom and Being a Victim (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/artistic-freedom-and-being-a-victim/>).

Dean’s daily post, 12/19/16 Daily, also deserves separate mention. Find it at <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/121916-daily/>.

Finally, here’s an interview with Dean by Carl Slaughter of File 770, “a major science fiction journal of news and opinion”: <http://file770.com/?p=32565>.

For those wanting to explore translating your work into other languages, check out Babelcube at <http://www.babelcube.com/>. NOTE: I am not endorsing this (yet) but merely offering it for your inspection.

For another self/indie-publishing platform (similar to Smashwords and Draft2Digital) check out StreetLib at <https://www.streetlib.com/int>. NOTE: I am not endorsing this (yet) but merely offering it for your inspection.

Today’s Writing

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 360

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11110
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 269010

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 969958

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... XX pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [epublishing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Translation](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 12/21

[December 21, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Not sure what today will entail. Editing for sure, and probably writing. Otherwise who knows.

Well, I took an unscheduled trip to the grocery, a pure pleasure in my “new” 1995 Toyota Taco(ma) pickup. Then back here to [post a photo of the pickup on Facebook](#). Then I wrote the topic below, and finally moved to the edit. It’s 11:30 a.m. already.

* * *

Well, I edited off and on while playing with my pickup. It’s an overcast, cold, glum day here today, so the babies stayed inside during most of it.

Topic: Goal Setting (and Letting Go)

I’ve been so involved for so long in setting goals, then striving to achieve them, that I sometimes forget to Just Let Go.

That is especially true in the final few months of a year because I’m striving to meet annual goals and/or play catch up on those.

For example, I set a goal for this year to write a novel per month. Yeah, well, that one ain’t gonna happen.

But that’s all right. I’ve finished 9 novels, a novella, a nonfiction book and 47 short stories. I wrote all but one of those (a novel) wholly within this year. I also compiled and published 4 short story collections, three with 10 stories each and one with 5 stories.

I’m happy with all of that. So far. (grin)

I still have 10 days to go, beginning tomorrow. That should mean at least two more stories and (I hope) at least the start of a new novel.

But if it doesn't, that's all right too. As part of my ongoing retraining as a writer, I'm learning it's all right to let go sometimes.

I love Christmas, though I came late to loving it. I have learned, and am learning, to cherish moments with individuals and groups, writers and nonwriters, and there is no better time of the year than this to both cherish and practice that concept.

Especially in this still-PC time, cherishing Christmas is a little challenging at times, but that makes it all the more attractive to me. Call it a personality flaw.

So let me pause here for a moment to wish each of you a very merry, happy Christmas season and Christmas day. If you celebrate it, so much the better. If you don't, that doesn't cause it to cease to exist, and I still wish you all the smiles and hugs and fellowship the season brings regardless of your beliefs.

As for me, for the next 11 days (including today), I intend to Just Let Go. I'll get done what I can, whether editing or writing or folding laundry or cooking or loving my friends and family.

And sincerely, thank you for being along on the trip.

Of Interest

If you need a quick way to search public records (for personal reasons or for research) there's a database, searchable by state, at <http://www.courtsystem.org/>.

Not much else out there.

Today's Writing

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 500

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11610
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 269510

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 970458

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, 12/22

[December 22, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, a really blah day out here today. Probably today I'll just edit and build that bank. I've pretty much written off the rest of December for writing fiction.

Not officially but just in a "don't sweat it" kind of way. It's something I tend to do, and I'm not sure why. A year ago (or so, at the end of a 12-month period) I was closing in on 750,000 words for that year. Once I hit that 750,000, I all but stopped writing.

I didn't necessarily WANT to stop writing, but neither did I have any particular urge to put new fiction on the page. Weird. It's a mental thing, I'm sure. It's almost like I'm afraid to reach a goal because then it won't be special anymore. Or something.

For another example of this warped thought process, it would have been relatively easy this year to hit 1,000,000 words total (fiction plus this journal), but I think once I realized that I slacked off. Hmmm. I'll give it some thought, see whether I can figure it out.

If I glean an insight or two, I'll pass it along, but don't hold your breath. I might need professional help on this one. (grin)

Topic: Roberta Jean Bryant's "Seven Laws of Writing"

Recently I pulled a scrap of folded, crumpled, mutilated paper out of my desk. I opened it and found Jean Bryant's Seven Laws of Writing.

I had actually typed them on a sheet of typing paper, then cut out around them and saved them. I don't know for sure when that was, but I'm certain it predates the book in which they're now found (see below).

Anyway, now and then when I look back on this I am amazed it took me so long to learn these incredibly straightforward guidelines.

These "laws" are excerpted (now) from Roberta Jean Bryant's *Anybody Can Write: A Playful Approach* (2002). You can find it at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/0760731764/>. I recommend it. Of course, the book contains a great deal more than these laws.

But for now, here are the Seven Laws of Writing:

1. To write is an active verb. Thinking is not writing. Writing is words on paper.
2. Write passionately. Everyone has loves and hates; even quiet people lead passionate lives. Creativity follows passion.
3. Write honestly. Risk nakedness. Originality equals vulnerability.
4. Write for fun, for personal value. If you don't enjoy it, why should anyone else? Pleasure precedes profit.
5. Write anyway. Ignore discouraging words, internal and external. Persistence pays off.
6. Write a lot. Use everything. Learning comes from your own struggles with words on paper.
7. Write out of commitment to your ideas, commitment to yourself as a writer. Trust yourself.

There you have it. Writing into the dark, anyone? Add this to Heinlein's Rules and it's all you need. Well, that and a keyboard.

Of Interest

At Dean's, an interesting post at 12/21/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/122116-daily/>).

His other post is about the writing bundle ending very soon. If you don't have it, I recommend it.

If you would like to find free ebooks from the public domain, check out Project Gutenberg at <http://www.gutenberg.org/>.

Today's Writing

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 540 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 540

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 270050

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 970998

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Project Gutenberg](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 12/23

[December 23, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Just a placeholder post today.

A family situation came up in New Mexico, so I have an unscheduled road trip today. Nothing bad, but a blessing in thick disguise. Sure glad I built up a slight lead in the edit. After today I'll have a small deficit, but nothing I can't make up in short order.

I hope you all have a wonderful day.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

Check out Dean's 12/22/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/122216-daily/>).

Today's Writing

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 100 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 100

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12250
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 270150

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 971098

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... XX pages. Total to date..... XXX (-5)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 12/24](#)

[December 24, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I now have a grandson living with me. He needs a little help, and I suspect it will help me as much as it helps him. I mention this only because my schedule will inevitably change.

I will continue to write (and for now, edit), of course. And I will try to remember to post this Journal each day. If I happen to miss a day now and then, just know I'll be back a day later.

Today it will be all editing. I began the day -5 pages, so in the hole. To pull even, I need to edit 40 pages today. If I can do enough over that, I won't have to edit in the morning, save in the very early morning when everyone else is still asleep. (grin)

I hope you all have a wonderful, very merry Christmas.

Of Interest

At Dean's 12/23/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/122316-daily/>) is interesting.

I also recommend you click <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/122116-daily/#comments> and scroll to read the third comment and Dean's response below it. Gems to be had there.

Today's Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 190 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 190

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 270340

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 971288

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)

Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... 00 pages. Total to date..... 380 (-5)
Day 12... 87 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+47)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 12/25

[December 25, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Merry Christmas, everyone, and whatever you believe Him to be, God's blessings on all of you.

Topic: Blessings

(in part, copied from a friend's post on the Internet)

I am thankful for my blessings:

For the wife who says it's hot dogs tonight,
because she is home with me, and not out with someone else.

For the teenager who is complaining about doing dishes
because it means she is at home, not on the streets.

For the taxes I pay
because it means I am employed.

For the mess to clean after a party
because it means I have been surrounded by friends.

For the clothes that fit a little too snugly
because it means I have enough to eat.

For my shadow that watches me work
because it means I am out in the sunshine.

For a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing
because it means I have a home.

For all the complaining I hear about the government
because it means we have freedom of speech.

For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot
because it means I am capable of walking and I have been blessed with transportation.

For my huge heating bill
because it means I am warm.

For the lady behind me in church who sings off key
because it means I can hear.

For the pile of laundry and ironing
because it means I have clothes to wear.

For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day
because it means I have been capable of working hard.

For the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours
because it means I am alive.

And finally, for too many e-mails
because it means I have friends who are thinking of me.

And from me, personally, I am thankful for those who serve and enable all of the above, and for all of you, my friends and acquaintances. I am blessed by your presence.

Of Interest

A brief Christmas wish at Dean's at 12/24/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/122416-daily/>).

Today's Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 360

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12800
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 270700

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 971648

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... 00 pages. Total to date..... 380 (-5)
Day 12... 87 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+47)
Day 13... 00 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+12)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Christmas](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Monday, 12/26

[December 26, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, probably another nonwriting day. I'll get at least some editing done, but we're still making adjustments due to the recent 1/3 increase in size to our family. (grin) Switching around some furniture and so on. Making everything as close to "normal" as we can for ourselves (Bryan, Mona, me) and for the kits and the pup.

Indeed, another nonwriting day. But today I had stirrings of a story within me. It (the fiction writing) will burst forth soon, maybe even before this edit is finished. The edit is a blessing in a way. In addition to providing a little more income, it also is enabling me to look forward to the next calendar year of writing fiction.

In the meantime, those of you who were dismayed at times by my numbers (*which I display here to show what is possible, not as some sort of bar to be fretted over and surpassed*) should be flying past me with your writing like I'm stapled to a tree. (grin) And I hope it is so.

Of Interest

A lot of good stuff at Dean's place today:

Pulp Speed Writers (<http://www.deanwesleymith.com/pulp-speed-writers/>) is a great post.

Step One of Getting Ready for a New Year (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/step-one-of-getting-ready-for-a-new-year/>).

And 12/25/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/122516-daily/>).

Today's Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 180 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 180

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12980
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 270880

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 971828

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... 00 pages. Total to date..... 380 (-5)
Day 12... 87 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+47)
Day 13... 00 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+12)
Day 14... 60 pages. Total to date..... 527X (+37)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, 12/27](#)

[December 27, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning, checked email and Facebook, coffee in hand. I also spent some time in thought.

I wrote most of the stuff below between about 3:30 and 7, then worked on a friend's website to create a new page. Then I made a horribly unhealthy (but delicious) breakfast for myself and my grandson, then came back to finish writing the stuff below.

Now, at 10 a.m., I'm moving to the edit.

* * *

I recently experienced a major epiphany, actually as a result of something I read while editing a very long memoir.

Some background...

Speaking very generally, as a child I didn't have a positive male role model. In fact, I had a very strong negative role model. He was so strong in that regard that my stepmother, who was a very good woman, was rendered ineffective as a mother. I had a roof over my head (one of the standards of my day) but the price I paid for it was dear.

My father was a man who never worked-through many of the bad experiences to which he was subjected as a child, and as a result he passed along a lot of that to me. (I was the eldest of six siblings.) I'm happy to report that the two youngest had a much different father than I had, and I'm glad for that.

But the upshot is, I learned nothing positive about being a man from him except through negative lessons (i.e., he acts like this, so I will act differently). Possibly the most evident example is my own hyperactive sense of compassion. Another is my selfishness. (The excuse was "If I don't take care of myself first, I can't take care of others.") On one hand, that is an invaluable lesson and something of a truism. On the other, taken to extremes it becomes an excuse for being self-absorption.

When I was 12 years old, I read a filler in the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal (a newspaper) that read, "Live your life so that when you're all alone, you're in good company." I haven't always lived up to that, but I've never forgotten it.

My first positive male role models were my drill instructors in Marine Corps basic training (SSgt Abraham, Sgt Salgado, Sgt McGrew). They at least set me on a path, and I learned everything else I know regarding manhood in bits and pieces from other men I encountered through my life. Most of them were (and some still are) friends who aren't even aware of the impact they had.

Move to present day...

Over the years I strived to help others, human or otherwise. But even with all that, I never quite got the hang of being the best husband and father; the best “head of the family.” And that leads me to my recent huge epiphany.

I won’t go into detail about that epiphany here, partly because it doesn’t matter outside of myself, and partly because it has nothing to do with my self as a writer.

I will say that it has a great deal to do with beginning a master’s course in being the head of my family. The undergraduate courses consisted of taking care of the Marines who came under my watch and even some things I learned from that little cat I often talk about here.

The final exam was (and is) my grandson coming to live with me. And my “cheat sheet” is what I realized while editing the current project.

But if you’re still reading, you’re wondering (rightly) what all of this has to do with writing. Here it is.

Topic: Life Events and Life Rolls

I’ve always felt more alive when I’m involved in a challenge.

It just struck me this morning that what’s going on in my life as a writer right now is what Dean often refers to as a “life roll” or “life event.” A definite challenge.

First, these are two distinct areas of focus.

The life event is a major bump or dip in the road. Sometimes the life event is all-inclusive (e.g., the anticipated death of an elderly loved one) and is over within a few days. Not the mourning, of course, but the immediate disruption.

Other times, the life event (e.g., a family emergency with which you can help) leads to a life roll. It might last a week or a month or several years.

Recently I realized someone in my extended family needed help that either only I could provide or that I could provide more easily than anyone else; that combined with the decision to act on that realization comprised the life event. It was over in one fairly long day.

The life roll is everything that comes afterward. Yesterday I realized that life roll probably will last from a few to several years. Still, this is not a sentence but an opportunity.

Dean often talks about life events and life rolls as situations that practically require a writer to set writing aside until the life event/life roll has ended. He’s never stated that outright as far as I know, but every example he’s provided seems to point in that direction.

Believe me, the easiest decision I could have made in response my own recent life event/roll would be to suspend my writing until all of this is over. Unfortunately, in my case that would almost certainly mean stopping writing altogether.

But that's silly. So I had a conscious decision to make.

There are, and will be, adjustments. But I'll continue doing my "job," sitting alone in a room making stuff up.

I don't "have" to suspend doing what I love. I just have to be patient and work with my schedule.

So yes, there has been a major life event, and yes, I am now in the midst of a major life roll. But wrapped as it is in a challenge, I find the whole situation invigorating.

For me this happens at a very opportune time. Witness,

I've been distracted from my writing by the edit I'm working on.

Which in turn provided me with the impetus for an epiphany.

Which in turn enabled me to clearly see that I needed to take on this life roll/challenge.

Which in turn means I'll have to made adjustments to my fiction writing time. But in making those adjustments

I'm abetted by the approaching end of the edit itself and by the approaching New Year, both of which will happen almost simultaneously.

So on January 1, the edit will be behind me and my first-ever million-words year of fiction writing ahead. And it's all gift-wrapped in the colorful paper of the life roll. What could be better?

Goals for 2017

My own fiction goals for 2017 (2017? Whatever happened to 1978?) are as follows:

3000 words of publishable fiction per day

1 novel per month, 12 on the year

1 short story per week

* * *

At this point, I'm over two days ahead on the edit. That feels good.

Of Interest

From Dean, a Blast From The Past To Help With the Future
(<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/blast-from-the-past-to-help-with-the-future/>).

And another great bit of reading in his Dare To Be Bad Revisited For 2017
(<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/dare-to-be-bad-revisited-for-2017/>). (An excerpt: “For seven years my fixing and polishing had gotten few stories written and finished and no sales. Mailing unfixed stories got me a career.)

Ever get confused when attempting to conjugate a verb? Check out Verbix at
<http://www.verbix.com/languages/>. It’s also now in the left sidebar of my website along with roughly half a ton of other useful links under Writers’ Resources.

Today’s Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1240 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1240

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14220
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 272120

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 973068

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... 00 pages. Total to date..... 380 (-5)
Day 12... 87 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+47)
Day 13... 00 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+12)

Day 14... 60 pages. Total to date..... 527 (+37)
Day 15... 71 pages. Total to date..... 598 (+73)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 12/28](#)

[December 28, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Ahh, first, thanks to those who responded re yesterday's Journal entry. I didn't mean to sound as if I'm complaining. I'm not. I'm thrilled at my current situation. I think my point was simply that it's all right to "roll" with life rolls and keep on writing.

In other news, I am constantly amazed by the level of ignorance on display these days. And the humor it spawns within my twisted soul. (grin)

At the moment there's a massive flap (pun intended) going on about removing "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. In the current flap, the current pledge, minus the words "under God," is printed on a photo of the US flag. The subtext read "Perhaps it's time to return our country to its original founding father's vision." [punctuation is original... apparently we had only one founding father]

After I commented that I saw nothing wrong with "under God" being in the pledge, a man wrote "Not if you want to change the founding fathers' intent." (Umm, the founding fathers had nothing to do with the pledge of allegiance.) And some woman, apparently the current General Manager of the Universe, dropped in to say "That's because you believe there is a God and you think it's all right to shove it down other people's throats."

Wow. So one guy believes the founding fathers wrote the thing. And one woman believes she knows anything at all about me. Amazing.

Well, that got my attention. I suppose I'm as easily enthralled as I am bored.

So I did a little research. It took me all of five minutes to discover the ACTUAL original Pledge of Allegiance was penned by Colonel George Balch in 1887 (roughly 111 years after the founding fathers did their thing). The original pledge read, in total, "We give our heads and hearts to God and our country; one country, one language, one flag!" (The exclamation point isn't mine.)

Five years later, in August of 1892, a guy named Francis Bellamy wrote a pledge that read, "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

This is at least closer to the "original" pledge these folks are all up in arms wanting to "restore."

From Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_Allegiance) ““Bellamy noted that, “In later years the words ‘my flag’ were changed to ‘the flag of the United States of America’ because of the large number of foreign children in the schools.” Bellamy disliked the change, as “it did injure the rhythmic balance of the original composition.”“

How about them apples? (grin)

In case you’re wondering, “”The United States Congress officially recognized the Pledge for the first time, in the following form, on June 22, 1942: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

This is the one all those folks want to “restore” as the “original” Pledge (and, erroneously by about 166 years) they believe was put forth by the founding fathers. It was finally amended by Congress to read “under God” in 1954.

And that’s what has all these folks so upset. Sigh.

Well, that was an interesting diversion. And much ado about literally Nothing.

* * *

I’m gonna edit again today, though the fiction bug is pushing. I woke up a little after 2 with a story idea in mind. Good to know those things are still rattling around in there.

An unscheduled 3-hour trip to Sierra Vista, then back to editing. I finished another 69 pages. I’ll finish it tomorrow.

* * *

Yesterday I talked about Life Events. In Dean’s post for today (see below) he wrote “Maybe for a month or six months or a year you won’t find the time [to write] as life beats on you with something special. But if you don’t really have this fear [finishing what you write], you will come back to writing when life gets off your back and you will finish your work.”

How cool is that?

Of Interest

At Dean’s place, check out Failure Must Be An Option (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/failure-must-be-an-option/>). This is a great post.

Some great comments on Blast From The Past To Help With the Future (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/blast-from-the-past-to-help-with-the-future/#comments>).

Today’s Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 690

Writing of “”

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 272810

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 973758

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... 00 pages. Total to date..... 380 (-5)
Day 12... 87 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+47)
Day 13... 00 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+12)
Day 14... 60 pages. Total to date..... 527 (+37)
Day 15... 71 pages. Total to date..... 598 (+73)
Day 16... 69 pages. Total to date..... 667 (+107)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 12/29](#)

[December 29, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out a little before 3. I checked email and played on Facebook for about a half-hour, during which I was able to rouse considerable ire with a personal request of the person currently occupying the White House.

Then, coffee in hand, cigar clenched firmly between teeth, I started working on the edit. I finished it around 8:45, then ran a final spell check in the track-changes version. Then I save it with another file name, incorporated all the changes and deleted all the comments, and sent both copies to the client. Woohoo!

I know I won't have anymore edits coming for awhile, so it's back to the writing and full steam ahead.

For now, my grandson and I are headed to the store as soon as he gets back from his walk. As for the rest of today, who knows.

Well, about a half-hour after we got back from the store and got things put away, I caught a chill and started shivering like a wild dog passing razorblades.

I'm sure it's nothing but a result of doing roughly 110 mph for the past week or so in a 10 mph body. (grin) So I'm off for the rest of the day.

Of Interest

At Dean's place, What's the Point? A Deadly Saying (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/whats-the-point-a-deadly-saying/>).

The comments on Failure Must Be An Option (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/failure-must-be-an-option/#comments>) are must-read excellent.

ALSO see his New Coast Workshops Announced (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-coast-workshops-announced/>). If you're interested, read the full descriptions under the Coast Workshops tab on his website. MAN I wish I could do the SF workshop in April! But other commitments at the moment.

Today's Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 280 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 280

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15190
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 273090

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 974038

Edit Totals

Day 1..... 51 pages. Total to date..... 51 (+16 in the bank)
Day 2..... 26 pages. Total to date..... 77 (+7)
Day 3..... 41 pages. Total to date..... 118(+13)
Day 4..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 156 (+16)
Day 5..... 73 pages. Total to date..... 229 (+54)
Day 6..... 40 pages. Total to date..... 269 (+59)
Day 7..... 36 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+60)
Day 8..... 00 pages. Total to date..... 305 (+25)
Day 9..... 38 pages. Total to date..... 343 (+28)
Day 10... 37 pages. Total to date..... 380 (+30)
Day 11... 00 pages. Total to date..... 380 (-5)
Day 12... 87 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+47)
Day 13... 00 pages. Total to date..... 467 (+12)
Day 14... 60 pages. Total to date..... 527 (+37)
Day 15... 71 pages. Total to date..... 598 (+73)
Day 16... 69 pages. Total to date..... 667 (+107)
Day 17... 47 pages. Total to date..... 714 (Done!)

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

The Journal, Friday, 12/30

[December 30, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

December 30, 2016. Wow. And here I am, occasionally still wondering where 1978 went. I'm not sure why, but whenever I have to write a check, I still want to put 1978 in the Year block. I'm always shocked to realize (again) that isn't only the wrong year, but the wrong century.

I watched Secondhand Lions again yesterday, this time with my grandson. What a great film. If you haven't seen it, I strongly recommend it. Soon we're going to gel all weekend and watch Lonesome Dove, the three prequels first, then the original three films. Because I like them. And because they contain gems of wisdom throughout.

In two days, the annual totals below will reset to zero.

More working with my new friend and charge today (my grandson) so no writing. Gonna dig through boxes, see whether I can find my old GED prep stuff I used when I was teaching GED prep classes, etc.

Wow. I almost ran out of time. I have to get this posted, so I'll see you tomorrow.

Of Interest

At Dean's today, My Beliefs [about writing and publishing] to Help New Year Perspective (<http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/my-beliefs-to-help-new-year-perspective/>).

Today's Writing

Nothing today. Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 210

Writing of ""

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21254
Total fiction words for the year..... 700948
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15400
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 273300

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 974248

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Nonwriting Day](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 12/31](#)

[December 31, 2016](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy new year's eve. And I hope 2017 is the best year yet for all of us.

I will write for awhile today and I'll watch some college ball because, well, it's college ball.

I guess I can still say I'm a writer. (grin) Details below.

I wrote a bit, then carried a load of recycling stuff to the center, then back to write a bit more.

The Peach Bowl started a little after 1, so I'm off for the rest of the day.

Of Interest

Please see Dean's Once More... For the New Year... Pulp Speed (<http://www.deanwesleymith.com/once-more-for-the-new-year-pulp-speed/>).

Also see his 12/30/16 Daily (<http://www.deanwesleymith.com/123016-daily/>). It's worth the time.

Today's Writing

I wrote a good opening for a really weird SF story, all writing into the dark.

A phrase popped into my head — “the day before the Sturgis Metal Run” — and I was off and typing.

Back tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1890

Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2050

Writing of “Popper”

Day 1..... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 1890

Total fiction words for the month..... 23144

Total fiction words for the year..... 702838

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15560

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 273460

Total words for the year (fiction and nonfiction)..... 976298

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