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December 2020/January 2021

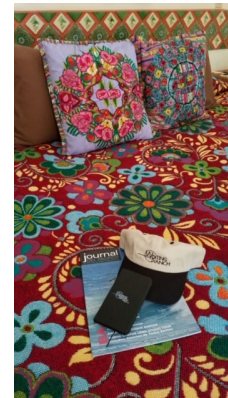


Change Is the Only Constant

Guess what happened! Give up? There have been more changes to the 2021 retreat schedule thanks to COVID!

The **eleventh annual** "Writing Down the Baja" writing retreat in Todos Santos, BCS, Mexico has been rescheduled to **June 26 through July 4, 2021**. Let's gather and light sparklers to celebrate independence from COVID! As mentioned in the last newsletter, an extra day has been added to the week resulting in **seven full days** of workshops and writing. Please visit www.writingranch.com for information and to register.

The annual August Writing Ranch intensive will be held August 12-15,



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Taking place at PLAYA, an artists' and scientists' residency campus, participants will be housed in cabins on campus and evening meals will be served in the main lodge.

October on Buzzards Bay in Massachusetts is holding steady.

Additional schedule changes and more information on 2021 retreats is available at www.writingranch.com.

Waterston Desert Writing Prize: Two Exciting Opportunities

After six years on its own, the Waterston Desert Writing Prize is beginning its first year as a new program of the High Desert Museum. The mission of the Waterston Desert Writing Prize remains the same, to strengthen and support the literary arts and humanities in the High Desert region through recognition of literary excellence in nonfiction writing about desert landscapes, through community interaction with the winning authors of the annual prize, and presentations and programs that take place in association with the prize. To that end...

Second Annual Waterston Student Essay Competition

The Student Essay Competition submissions period begins January 1, 2021. Essays can address any aspect of the High Desert. Submissions will be judged on their contribution to the understanding and appreciation of the region. The student contest is open to all high school-age students (grades 9-12), 18 years old or younger, who reside in Crook, Deschutes, Harney, Jefferson or Lake County. Public school, private school and home-schooled students are eligible. Essays may be submitted by email to waterston@highdesertmuseum.org from **January 1, 2021** through **May 1, 2021**. For full submission details, visit the [High Desert Museum website](#). The prize winner and other applicants will be notified in May. The winner will be invited to appear at the annual Waterston Desert Writing Prize awards event at the High Desert Museum in September 2021.

Al Lehto Blazed the Way as Winner of the 2020 Student Writing Prize



Al Lehto, a senior at Redmond Proficiency Academy, won the 2020 inaugural Waterston Student Desert Writing Prize for their essay, *Badlands*, an essay about the many hours their artist mother spent painting in the Badlands (now a federally designated wilderness area) just east of Bend, and the times they would join her. There, according to Lehto, their mother found solace, escape and inspiration. Al wrote, "As I've grown older, my mom's passion for the aged trees has been more natural and brought me closer to understanding her compassion for wildlife and longing for the great wide spaces they offer."

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Waterston Desert Writing Prize 2021

Seventh Annual to Award \$2,500 Cash Prize and Residency to Winner

The submission period for the seventh annual Waterston Desert Writing Prize opens January 1, 2021. Nonfiction book proposals concerning deserts anywhere on (or off) the planet are eligible. The Prize advocates for the vital role deserts play in the ecosystem and in the human narrative. It recognizes creative nonfiction that illustrates artistic excellence, sensitivity to place, and desert literacy, with the desert as both subject and setting.

Tucson, Arizona author Hannah Hindley was the 2020 winner with her submission “Thin Blue Dream,” a proposal for a collection of interconnected stories exploring the Sonoran Desert’s disappearing waterways, the fish that used to call them home, and the successes and complications associated with efforts to restore depleted tributaries using city effluent. “It’s a strange story of ghost rivers, dead fish, and resilience in the heart of urban spaces in the desert,” says Hindley. Currently completing her Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Nonfiction at the University of Arizona, Hindley is also a wilderness guide and naturalist. She was presented with a \$2,500 cash award and a residency at PLAYA, Summer Lake, Oregon at the sixth annual award event in September of 2020. [For complete submission guidelines, please visit the High Desert Museum website.](#)

Talkin’ the Walk

Visit www.writingranch.com and listen to December 9, 2020 OPB Think Out Loud to hear Dave Miller’s conversation with Ellen Waterston on the writing of *Walking the High Desert, Encounters with Rural America along the Oregon Desert Trail* and to [read recent reviews](#).

New Year's Resolution: Dust Off the Manuscript!

Visit www.writingranch.com for special COVID offers on Manuscript Lab, Manuscript Review and one-on-ones.

Woody Guthrie's 1943 "New Year's Rulins"

1. Work more and better
2. Work by a schedule
3. Wash teeth if any
4. Shave
5. Take bath
6. Eat good — fruit — vegetables — milk
7. Drink very scant if any
8. Write a song a day
9. Wear clean clothes — look good
10. Shine shoes
11. Change socks
12. Change bed clothes often

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15. Learn people better
16. Keep rancho clean
17. Don't get lonesome
18. Stay glad
19. Keep hoping machine running
20. Dream good
21. Bank all extra money
22. Save dough
23. Have company but don't waste time
24. Send Mary and kids money
25. Play and sing good
26. Dance better
27. Help win war — beat fascism
28. Love mama
29. Love papa
30. Love Pete
31. Love everybody
32. Make up your mind
33. Wake up and fight

A Winter Poem

Snow Ellipses

This morning in winter's
front yard—five perfect
ovals traced in the skiff
of fresh snow, melted
evidence of a small fleet
of UFO's that landed
and left, searching for home
or returning there or,
more mysterious because
true, where deer had bedded
for the frigid night, making
wingless snow eggs, forming
elliptical blessings with the round
warmth of their bodies.

- Ellen Waterston

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