



The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

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Book Trailers: The New Way to Wow!

by Cricket Freeman, literary agent, [The August Agency](http://www.augustagency.com)

Book trailers are becoming increasingly popular to pitch and promote books, fiction and nonfiction, just as movie trailers have been used for films.

The beauty is anyone can make a book trailer, given a bit of creativity; moviemaking software is now standard on both Macs and Windows (MovieMaker). I did mine, never having used the software before, and it took only a few days. Some trailers are animated, some use lots of video, some are the opening scene of a novel acted by actors, some are the author talking about their book, some are funny, some campy, some provocative. The best have something that demands the editor, agent, or reader buy the manuscript or book immediately.

How are book trailers used? First, for authors to interest agents, agents to interest editors, editors to build the buzz within the house, publishers to build the buzz with bookstore buyers, authors to circulate and play at book signings, and agents and editors to place on their websites. The broadest use is to turn the trailer loose on the Internet on YouTube to drive readers to a bookstore or Amazon and buy. So it does a LOT with just a bit of your time, and much imagination and creativity.

© Cricket Freeman 2008.

Ed's note: Cricket prepared a nonfiction book proposal as well as a book trailer for her biography/memoir. I was impressed with her trailer's simplicity, which was highly effective and suited the subject well. The video was in black and white and used still images, text, and music, but no voice. You can view Cricket's trailer at www.augustagency.com/NavigatingJohn.htm. To see different kinds of book trailers and get an idea about the excitement, go to: www.bookscreening.com or www.youtube.com/results?search_query=book+trailers&search_type=where.

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From the editor's desk

This issue marks the ninth anniversary of *The Beacon's* publication. I wonder how many of you have been faithful readers since the inaugural edition. Please, let me know.

My good friend, Cricket Freeman (previously Pechstein) is a US literary agent with The August Agency (www.augustagency.com). We keep in touch and about a month ago, she sent me a video about her non-fiction book that is under consideration in New York. I was riveted by it—the video, as well as her book idea. It is called a **book trailer**.

Cricket's explanatory email to me, with her kind permission and slight modification, has become this fall's lead article. It is a "sit-up and smack you between the eyes" piece that everyone who is thinking of pitching a book to an editor/agent or is promoting their latest book must ponder seriously. A book trailer may be the latest thing, but it must be professional. Anything amateurish defeats the purpose and you'd be better to stick to just your query and proposal or synopsis.

A new way to wow agents and editors!

Julie H. Ferguson

Style and Voice: What's the Difference?

By Joyce Gram, writer and editor

Elizabeth Lyon begins *Manuscript Makeover*, her recent, masterful tome on fiction writing, with one of the most difficult distinctions in the art of writing, that between style and voice. She imagines a panel discussion among literary agents and editors at a writers' conference on what they most look for in a novel submitted by an unpublished writer. Original style, answers one, distinctive voice, and then story. Fresh, original style, says another, individuality of the author's voice. The puzzled Every-writer in the front row courageously asks what is meant by "voice" and how that differs from "style," to which one of the panellists responds, "It's difficult to put in words, but we know it when we see it."¹

Not all attempts at definition are so unhelpful, and once you see—really see—the difference, I think you will begin to relax and not try so hard to cultivate your voice.

The best definition I have heard comes from my own writing teacher, Eileen Kerna-ghan, who says, "Style involves the structure and rhythm of the sentences, choice of words, use of metaphors and images. Voice is the disguise you wear when you write. It's more than style or point of view or word choice, though it incorporates all those things."

All fiction writers strive for a strong, distinctive, authoritative writing voice, one that will lift their words out of the fast-food category and into collective memory, like "Call me Ishmael. Some years ago..." But, as Browne and King say in *Self-editing for Fiction Writers*, this is "something no editor or teacher can impart. There are, after all, no rules for writing like yourself. Voice is, however, something you can bring out in yourself. The trick is to not concentrate on it." The best exercise in developing your voice, they say, is to work on your manuscript.²

To which I say simply: read and write, and write, and write.

© Joyce Gram 2008

¹ Elizabeth Lyon. *Manuscript Makeover: Revision Techniques No Fiction Writer Can Afford to Ignore*. 2008.

² Renni Browne and Dave King. *Self-editing for Fiction Writers*. 2nd ed. 2004.

Also recommended: Constance Hale. *Sin and Syntax: How to Craft Wickedly Effective Prose*. 2001

Fall events for Writers

(for additions, visit www.beaconlit.com/schedule2008.htm regularly)

Sept 29 - Word on the Street, Library Square, Vancouver (11am-6pm). A festival for writers and readers. Details at www.thewordonthestreet.ca/vancouver/

Oct 24-26 - Surrey International Writers' Conference. Meet Julie and take a look at her latest book—the second edition of *Book Magic: Turning Writers into Published Authors* (see above). Visit www.siwc.ca for details.

Oct 28 - Your Road Map to Self-publishing Family Books, Histories, and Travel Memoirs, etc. Learn the most direct route to your destination, locate points of interest, avoid dead ends, and prepare to have fun on the way. Creative Writing Diploma Program, Guildford Park Secondary, Surrey, 7-9:30pm. Register [here](#).

Nov 1 - Two for one! *Book Magic: Turning Writers into Published Authors* (9am to noon) and *Crafting Irresistible Query Letters* (1-4pm) for all fiction and non-fiction writers (unsuitable for poets and screenwriters) who want to learn more about getting their books published. VCC downtown campus. Register [here](#).

Nov 29 - Book Magic: Turning Writers into Published Authors (9am-4pm) see above for details or go to www.beaconlit.com/. Creative Writing Diploma Program, Johnston Heights Secondary School, Surrey. Register [here](#).

Dec 6 - Self-editing for Writers, Creative Writing Diploma Program, Johnston Heights Secondary, Surrey, 9am-4pm. Leader— Joyce Gram. (To be confirmed.) Register [here](#).



I am proud to announce that the second edition of *Book Magic: Turning Writers into Published Authors* is now available.

Significantly updated from the March 2007 edition with 40 new pages and a chapter on electronic publishing, *Book Magic* is indispensable for every writer who aims for publication. Easy to read and practical, it provides all the spells and magic bullets you need to understand the publishing industry and increase your chances of getting commercially published or ably manage your own self-publication. ISBN 978-0-9739493-3-9
Price: USD\$16.99

Order now at Amazon.com or orders@beaconlit.com

Details and trailer(!) at www.beaconlit.com/BookMagic.htm

Please visit the Beacon blog at:
www.beaconlit.blogspot.com



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