



The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

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Rejection

Rejection rarely bothers me anymore – I see it merely as an occupational reality. We’ve all heard the details of J.K. Rowling’s struggle to get the *Harry Potter* series accepted and media stories like the one below. I find them comforting – they put my rejections into perspective.

The newspaper in Calcutta, India, carried out a sting, sending the opening chapters of two Booker Prize-winning novels to 20 London agents and publishers: Stanley Middleton’s Holiday (he shared the Booker with Nadine Gordimer in 1974) and V.S. Naipaul’s In a Free State (1971). Many did not reply at all, and the ones who did...rejected both. Nobody recognized the authors. (The Telegraph, Jan 13/2006)

Writers must develop a coping strategy (a thick skin) for dealing with turndowns. Rejection is an inevitable consequence of submissions, whether you are sending out articles or book proposals. Sometimes you receive a form rejection letter, often – nothing, and occasionally a personalized rejection. If rejection sends you into a dead faint, here is a dose of smelling salts: don’t take it personally!

Rejection can have myriad causes:

- Your book doesn’t fit the publisher’s list one year from now.
- A similar article was published four months ago.
- The editor is angry at their spouse/mother/child....
- The editor is overwhelmed with unsolicited mss.
- Your style doesn’t fit the publication’s requirements.
- The editor knows his competition has just bought a similar ms.
- You failed to convince the editor of your promotional skills.
- The editor liked your idea but not your query letter.

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From the editor’s desk

Congratulations go to Beacon Literary Services client, Doug Matthews, who received his first commercial publishing contract following successful self-publication; also to Shirley Walker, whose *From Sailing Ships to Spitfires* was bought in 2004 – Borealis Press released it at Christmas. Looks good! Well done!

Writers are many things but we need to learn to become impervious to unpleasant rejection slips. When an editor/agent pens downright nasty comments to you, don your non-stick skin and let them slide off.... If you don’t, they will diminish you and haunt your writing. Instead, focus on your publishing successes or your next submission. Vent, if you must, at your writers’ group – they will understand only too well.

Spring is nearly here! Think about new growth for you too. Take a workshop, read a new author, join an online group! Stretch yourself, breathe the fresh air of this new experience, and put yourself out on a limb! Write in a different genre, learn two new words a day, try composing a paragraph with no adverbs or adjectives!

Julie H. Ferguson

An Author's Chronicle of Book Production – 2

December 05 – a quiet month for me as the author of *Sing a New Song*. Probably not as quiet for my publisher as they finalized the Spring Catalogue 2006. I have been reflecting on the media I want to contact for interviews once the book is released. Sent the five endorsements to Dundurn's art and publicity departments – they were very pleased with them.

January 06 – After a 4 month wait, finally received the images for Part One from the BC Archives. Wrote captions, packaged them up, and couriered them to Dundurn (1 hour). Also finished my Reviewers List and Press Release list – sent it via email and snail-mail as requested. (another 2-3 hours work). Revised my webpage to reflect the book's final cover and added the five pre-pub endorsements (1 hour). Designed a colour flyer to promote the book (2 hours). Visited the bookseller who will be selling my book at a big convention in late May and gave her some flyers (1/2 hour).

February 06 – I've been worrying that the book will be late as I had not received notice of who was editing the ms. It finally arrived electronically on the 21st, following a friendly phone call from the freelance editor. Had a good chat and started our relationship, which bodes well. She instructed me in how she wants the file handled using 'Track Changes' and 'Comments.' (1/2 hour). It's a different world from hard copy editing. Now concentrated work begins at my end again – I don't enjoy this stage much. Booked a week in Paris for June to recover!

Forthcoming events for writers (for details see [website](#))

- Mar 2, 9, and 23** - **How to Craft Irresistible Query Letters** for writers of books and articles. Creative Writing Diploma Program, Guildford Park School, Surrey, 7-9pm for each session. **Register [here](#).**
- Mar 4** - **How to Craft Irresistible Query Letters** for writers of books and articles. VCC (downtown), 9am-4pm. **Register [here](#).**
- Mar 25** - **Writing with Power!!** (9-noon) and **Brainstorming Brilliant Bios** (1-4pm) for those who want to increase their chances of getting published. Creative Writing Diploma Program, Johnston Heights School, Surrey. **Register [here](#).**
- Apr 19** - **Crack Open Your Creative Channel!** for writers. VCC (downtown campus), 6:30-9:30pm. **Register [here](#).**
- Apr 26** - **Book Magic: Turning Writers into Published Authors** for those who yearn to get a book published. VCC (downtown campus), 6:30-9:30pm. **Register [here](#).**
- May 6** - **How to Craft Irresistible Query Letters** for writers of books and articles. VCC (downtown campus), 9am-4pm. **Register [here](#)**
- May 10** - **Writing Online: the New Adventure for Writers** for writers of all kinds. VCC (downtown campus), 6:30-9:30pm. **Register [here](#)**
- May 17** - **Brainstorming Brilliant Bios** for those who want to increase their chances of getting published.. VCC (downtown campus), 6:30-9:30pm. **Register [here](#)**

Rejection... (cont)

Whatever the reason, if you write reasonably well, rejection of your work means, for that single instant in time, the 'fit' isn't there and it is only ONE person's opinion. Think of rejection this way: *a server in a restaurant offers you coffee after dinner. You decline. The server is not rejected, you simply prefer tea.*

Rejections also can be positive. They may make you dig deeper, opening up more and better markets, as well as other opportunities.

Remember this too: if an editor rejects a piece of yours with a short note, take it as BIG encouragement. If the editor also tells you why s/he declined your submission, fix the deficiencies and resubmit it. This response signals your readiness to revise and try again, as well as perhaps the beginning of a relationship. You should make this your standard operating procedure.

Previous issues of *The Beacon* are archived at www.beaconlit.com/beaconli/newsletter.htm



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