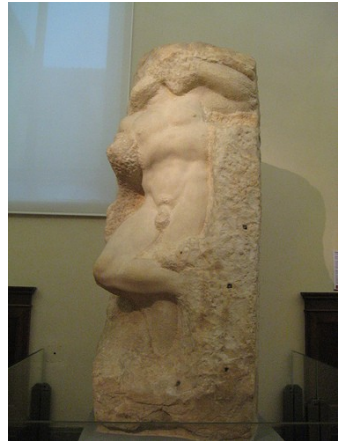


Welcome to the March Ezine edition for  
“The Creative Penn”!



Your monthly dose of **information** and **inspiration** on Writing, Publishing options, Sales and Promotion... for your book. The Ezine has been going for 1 year now—you can see [all the backlist here](#). Please do email me [joanna@TheCreativePenn.com](mailto:joanna@TheCreativePenn.com) with suggestions for any topics you would like me to cover in this ezine—or on the blog itself.



**Writing as an Emerging Sculpture: Inspiration from Michelangelo's Slaves**

Some days the **first draft of a book** feels like hacking away at a huge block of stone, just hoping something will emerge. You can type words on a page and they end up a rough version of the story in your mind. They don't resemble anything like a finished novel, and you can't see how it will get from that rough draft to a final, publishable book.

Well, **take heart from a master**. In Florence, the stunning statue of [David](#) is displayed in the same hall as the [unfinished slaves](#) that Michelangelo carved (at least it was when I was there last!). At the end of hall, in natural light from a dome surrounding the white Carrara marble, David stands in pristine and perfect glory. Perhaps this is intimidating because in the literary world, David would win the Nobel Prize for Literature – but he started in the same way as those slaves. [To read more of this article, click here.](#)

Image: [Flickr CC Jesso-Hackberry](#)

**What do you want to write in your lifetime?**  
**Reflections on Mortality**

As writers, we are called to think and write about the deeper things. **Writing about death** is possibly one of the most important subjects to consider, and one of the hardest. Thinking about death is also important as we consider our own mortality. **Life is short and we have little time to achieve our goals.**



Image: [Flickr CC Autumn Leaf](#)

Why do we waste so much time thinking about things and not actually doing them?! My Grandfather died last week and I went back to England to be with my family. He was a man of deep faith and also had a good life, so it is the way of the world and he was at peace. The death of a grandparent is sad but also a natural part of life. But the hours of travelling in limbo across the world gave me an opportunity to think about mortality and **what we can achieve in one lifetime**, a mere breath on the face of the universe. [Click here for the rest of the article.](#)



**Mindmapping Your Novel Can Help With Scenes**

**Writing the first draft of a novel** involves a lot of idea generation and writing the bare bones of the story, as well as putting the overall structure in place. Sometimes you may come up with a topic or a place or theme you don't know much about before you write it.

I have found [mind mapping](#) to be very helpful for this research prior to writing the scene. The image to the left is a rough mindmap of my research on **storms in Arizona**. I used the [principles in this article](#) on writing about a new place. Although I have been there, it was a long time ago and I have no notes on it.

[Click here for the rest of the article.](#)



## On Writing and Creativity: Lessons Learned By My 35th Birthday

(1) **There is time to write, you just have to decide your priorities.**

People often say they have no time to write. It has to be the most common reason why people don't start or finish writing the book they always wanted to write. 2 years ago I moved to 4 days a week at my day job. That one decision has changed my life. I spent that extra day researching and writing my first book, "[How to Enjoy Your Job](#)", then I started this blog, and then [wrote 2 more books](#), now I am about 1/3 of the way through my first novel. My massive lesson learned is how much difference one day makes. I urge you to consider whether it is worth giving up 20% of your income to achieve your dream.

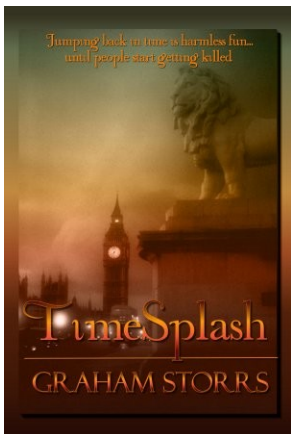
[4 More Lessons Learned—Click Here.](#)



## Writing For High Stakes: Lessons Learned From Dr Who

I have been reading [Donald Maass 'Writing the Breakout Novel'](#) and there is a whole chapter on **raising the stakes in your writing.** This lifts the novel from mundane to the memorable. Once you have established [character](#), then you have to put them through the wringer and set the stakes high to keep the interest. A great example of this type of writing is the last **Dr Who series**, written primarily by [Russell T. Davies](#). I have never watched any of the other Dr Who shows but was immediately gripped by the Tenth Doctor and his adventure. So why were these shows so good? *(and even if you don't like sci-fi you could learn something from them!)*

(1) **The stakes were high every time.** For some reason, all the bad guys want to destroy earth and often the plot has the Doctor saving Earth, or another planet or race. You might think this idea gets tired but with fantastic writing, it was gripping every time. What impressed me about the series was **how intricate and believable the stories were**, even when quite fantastical. The world building aspects draw you in and makes it real. [Read the rest of the article.](#)



Guest Post from  
Graham Storrs,  
author of  
'TimeSplash'

## Marketing Your First Book: 9 Tips For Authors

**OK, you've landed a publishing deal.** It's not a Big Six publisher (the great majority of books are published by the rest) and they don't have much of a marketing budget. Your publisher will not be taking out ads in the Times – or anywhere else with an established audience. They'll send out your book to some reviewers, they'll announce it on their website, they may send out some press releases. And that is probably it. It is quite possible that this small effort will result in absolutely no effective publicity at all. That is why, **these days, most of the work of publicising your book is down to you.** Yes, you. So what are you going to do?

(1) **Get an audience before the release.** When you announce your newly-published book to the world, it would be nice if someone was there to hear you. So how many people read your blog? How many friends do you have on Twitter or Facebook? Are you using LinkedIn groups, Goodreads, LibraryThing? Unless you are being followed (friended, or whatever) by hundreds, if not thousands of people, you probably need to put some time into [building up your profile](#) on these sites. [8 More Tips Here.](#)



Image: [Flickr CC Kristian M](#)

## Emotion and the Writer: A Double Edged Sword

**Writing is one of the best jobs in the world** and many people envy it, but what most people don't understand is that writing is not all that it's cracked up to be. Yes, it is great because it's never routine and you continue to broaden your horizons and learn something new during the research process. But, if you think that writing as a profession is a bed of roses all the way, let me tell you that there are some times when there are sharp thorns underneath and other times when the roses don't smell as sweet as they should.

[Read the whole article here.](#) Guest post from [Anna Miller, from Online Degrees.](#)



## 7 Reasons Why Writers Need To Start Using Video For Book Promotion

A few weeks ago [Simon & Schuster told authors they should blog, social network ... and use video sites](#). You might be freaking out at the thought of being on video, and consider YouTube a waste of time, but **here's why you should seriously consider getting your face, and your books on screen:**

**(1) Video search is increasing and you want to be found.** People go online to find information and entertainment so if your videos are there, people will find them. If you have a lot of videos on a particular topic, you will become a place people subscribe to and come back to. Videos are also highly ranked in Google (which owns YouTube). You will often find videos at the top of a topic search. [Click Here for 6 More Reasons.](#)



## Author Blog: A Great Example From Paulo Coelho

**Are you convinced that you need to have an author blog yet?**

Some of the biggest names in the author starsphere blog regularly so we can take some tips from them.

I am a huge fan of [Paulo Coelho](#), having particularly enjoyed "Like the Flowing River" and his travels on the Camino de Santiago. Since the global success of 'The Alchemist', he has sold over 100 million copies of his books, and been published in 67 languages. He is certainly a successful author by anyone's standards. So what can we learn from [Paulo's blog](#)?

**He blogs himself and regularly.** Paulo writes a combination of short posts, excerpts from his books, articles from other media on him and his books. He also writes in English and Portuguese and sometimes exclusively in one or the other language. It is great to see such a huge name putting himself out there so regularly and without censor. He seems to blog every 2-3 days but sometimes more regularly and started in 2006, before it really became mainstream.

[Click Here For the rest of the article.](#)



**Podcasts:** Remember that podcasts are just audio files distributed on the internet. You can listen online or download to a PC or player. You can also [Subscribe on iTunes here](#).

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- [Creating iPhone apps for your book](#) with Tom Evans, The BookWright



## BALI, Oct 1-6 2010 Writer's Retreat in Ubud

Learn how to **write, publish and promote your book** over 4 days of teaching and 5 nights at the gorgeous KumaraSakti resort in Ubud, Bali.

[Click here for all the details.](#)

Limited to 20 people, booking available now with Earlybird special.

The teaching will be **intense, practical and hands on** and you will learn so much, but there will also be ample time for **massage, yoga, Balinese cultural tours and fantastic food.**

**Until next month then! All the best in your writing—and please do contact me with any suggestions!**

*Joanna*