niques of their craft. Creative nonfiction writers employ literary elements such as the use of description, setting, characters, language, and repetition of certain themes. My brother is a good storyteller and he tells me he practices the story in his head, as he's driving in the car. By the time he gets to the family gathering, he's set up his story-- he has his beginning and his points of repetition. This is only my brother a very good amateur story teller. Every good, professional storyteller and writers has this awareness. They are masters at what they do. I think Jamaica Kincaid is a master at what she does. Thomas Mann is a master at what he does. Naomi Shihab Nye is master at what she does. I think good writers know their effect. For instance, Jamaica Kincaid has a distinctive cadence. Her sentences, and therefore the meaning of the piece, is always flipping back on itself. This is seen in "Biography of a Dress" when she writes, "...that my mother saw, a picture on an almanac advertising a particular fine and scented soap (a soap she could not afford to buy then, but I can now), and this picture of this girl wearing this yellow dress and smocking on the front of the bodice created in my mother a desire to have a daughter who looked like that or perhaps created the desire in my mother to try and make the daughter she already had look like that. I do not know now, and did not know then, And who was that girl really?"

When looking at a submission I look to see if the writing has held up from beginning to end. Oftentimes writers know what they want to say in the beginning, then lose their way. This is not to say that one needs a pointed ending. In fact, some endings are too much to the point, too contrived and obvious. But the reader needs to know the path, and the sight they are being led to. If I had advice for authors first sending out their material, it would be to send out a shorter piece, as short as five pages, but a piece that holds up from beginning to end. Another thing I would advise writers to do is to experiment with language and form until they feel an authentic sense of self on the page.



How Important do you think it is for a writer to know her audience/reader?

Toni Morrison said that when she sat down to write The Bluest Eye, she wrote the book that didn't exist for herself-- the book she had always wanted to read. I think most writers write for themselves. They are trying to get to a sense of discover, or a beauty, or a point of meditation, they are trying to unwrap the rubric, and to find something in the writing; I think for each writer the reason is slightly different, but when they sit down they are on the path, trying to get to that essence of self that is both kernel and galaxy, both small, and glacial.

That being said, I think the second audience, that of the reading public looms large in the back of each writer's mind. Every published writer wishes for the same: to bring forth the private into the public. Though J.D. Salinger is famously reclusive as an author, he has said that he has never written a word that he could not imagine in print.

I think it's very important for the writer to have an audience in mind. To this end I think writers are both cynical and hopeful. They write of loss, or death, the fallacies of institutions, the disintegration of culture... and yet they hope for that audience, the audience who might become more humane or at least knowledgeable for having read this work.

Robert Root and Michael Steinberg, in their introduction to creative nonfiction, call creative nonfiction a "transactional" form of writing, that is to say, the writer inhabits and experiences the work. I think somewhere in the writing process there is the transactional experience, mixed with the real life notion of making it all understandable.

The South Loop Review looks for writers who are developing new voices. I like the genre crossing that is going on now in Creative Nonfiction. The illustrated memoir is an example of this for instance Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi provides a glimpse into revolutionary Iran by combining image with writing.