

The Writescape Companion

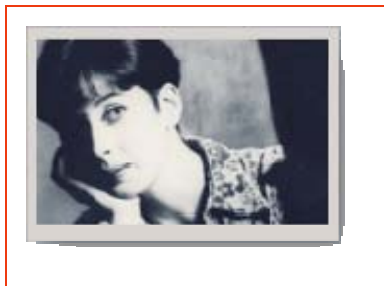
May 2010

Show Us; Don't Tell Us

"Show, don't tell." Writers often use this expression.

One of our alumni asked us how to best use Show versus Tell in writing. So we have devoted much of this issue to that subject.

But let us start by showing you who we have coming to the next Writescape retreat, **Turning Leaves** on October 29, 30 and 31, 2010:



Best-selling, award-winning author of 9 novels, **Susanna Kearsley** (*Mariana, The Shadowy Horses*) is coming to Sir William Mackenzie Inn for our fall retreat.

Susanna will deliver a fantastic Saturday morning workshop on our theme, A Sense of Time and Place.

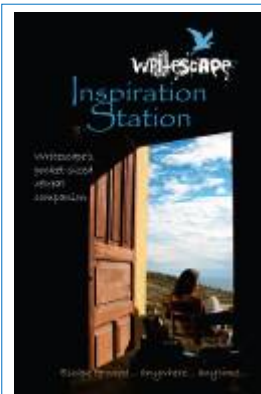
And can you imagine a better place for a Susanna Kearsley workshop than an 1880s manor house? Learn how this experienced writer uses her spectacular gift for immersing thousands of readers inside the pages of her books.

Let us *tell* you that this retreat will fill up fast, so *show* your interest by reserving your place at www.writescape.ca.

Writescape's *Inspiration Station*, shows you how to create your own "Anywhere, anytime retreat"

With more than 100 pages brimming with writing prompts and creative ideas, Writescape's *Inspiration Station* shows you how to create your own personal 'retreat' with as little as 15 minutes of time to spare.

Pg 4 for order details



An excerpt from the new book on the theme of 'clothes':

"Laundry is like a parfait," she said tossing him a pair of green socks...

Wherever you are sitting -- look down at your feet. Start with "My shoes..." or, if you aren't wearing shoes, start with "My feet..."

Coming soon:

May 29

Tasting the Page:
Beyond the 5 Senses
JP Fitzpatrick's, Whitby
10 am – 4 pm

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June 19

**Reason to Care**  
Exploring what motivates your characters and drives your story  
JP Fitzpatrick's, Whitby  
10 am – 4 pm

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July 18

Woods, Water & Words
A day of writing with Ruth and Gwynn at Glentula on Lake Seymour

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October 29-31

**Turning Leaves Retreat**  
Immerse in *Time and Place* at historic **Sir William Mackenzie Inn**, Kirkfield, Ontario





### The Nose Knows

Embrace the power of smell. Use it more often in your writing to connect readers to your story. *Sniff, sniff...do I smell creativity here?*

### Tasting the Page: Beyond the 5 Senses

with Gwynn Scheltema

May 29  
10 am to 4 pm  
JP Fitzpatrick's, Whitby



*Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.*

Anton Chekov

Writers know the power of specific sensory detail in providing rich, layered writing that allows the reader to experience rather than observe. The primary senses – sight, sound, taste, touch and smell – are basic tools in any writer's toolkit.

Go beyond those basics and take your narrative in new directions. Stretch your writing past simple sounds to explore rhythm and balance; go deeper than basic touch to explore pressure, temperature and pain, and more.

Discover these sensory devices and experiment in fun hands-on exercises. Come to Gwynn's workshop prepared to go to new places and try new approaches.

Register for  
[Tasting the Page](#)  
with Gwynn Scheltema

### Break the bonds

What would *you* do if you knew you couldn't fail? Do it anyway!  
Write about it.



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## Reason to Care

June 19  
10 am to 4 pm  
JP Fitzpatrick, Whitby

Register for  
[Reason to Care](#)  
with Gwynn Scheltema

Story rises from action and conflict which, in turn, come from motivation. Successful writers know why their characters behave in certain ways because they know what those characters need and desire.

Take a closer look inside the whys and wherefores of your characters and charge up your readers' *reason to care* about your story. Gwynn's hands-on and intensive workshop will help you look at motivation in a whole new way!



### Show Me!

Try these exercises to practice 'show don't tell':

- write one line of dialogue that shows a character is jealous
- list 3 verbs that convey the feeling of fear
- describe a gesture or facial expression that expresses joy

Now do each one again for Guilt; Anger; Trepidation; Envy.

*Fundamentally, all writing is about the same thing; it's about dying, about the brief flicker of time we have here, and the frustration that it creates.*

Mordecai Richler



### On the Other Hand...

Take the opposite view today. Delve into something that makes you uncomfortable. Question a belief or convention you've always taken for granted. Write as yourself or one of your characters.

**Quick Tip:** Replace the verb "to be" with active, powerful verbs like "raced" and "slither". Verbs convey action, creating a picture for the reader.

**TELL:** *The car is old and hard to start.*

**SHOW:** *The engine sputtered, nearly died, re-sputtered and then shuddered into a rough idle.*

### "Show, don't Tell"

**TELL** is an assertion or opinion.  
**SHOW** demonstrates, to allow the reader to form an opinion. Avoid "tell" by not using the word for an emotion: *She felt sad.* = TELL;  
*She cried.* = SHOW

## Ruth and Gwynn "Out and About"

On April 23, **Ruth** read poetry at the 7th Annual Words, Wine, Music and Art celebration in Dorset, Ontario with the **Haliburton Arts Council**.

**May 11, Gwynn and Ruth** will be offering Part Two of Creative Communicators for the Ontario government. Just like Part One, this workshop was full within hours of registration opening up. Looks like the Writescape influence can travel anywhere!

**May 31, Ruth** embarks for Camp White Pine for 9 days of creative writing with Grades 7 – 11 students at the **Durham Integrated Arts Camp**, Durham District School Board. This is Ruth's 3rd year at DIAC where mosquitoes and unpredictable weather haven't stopped her from delighting in the expressive and exciting writing of young people.

### Want to contact us?

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## SPRING THAW 2010 RESOUNDING SUCCESS



Thanks to alumnus **Barb Baker** from Calgary, Alberta, for this awesome group shot of the rest of the 17 writers on retreat at Elmhirst's Resort on Rice Lake. Perfect weather, great accommodations and fantastic writers brought out the best in each other's work.

Mark **October 29-31** on your calendar. You won't want to miss **Turning Leaves 2010**. Just over an hour from Toronto, **Sir William Mackenzie Inn** will offer participants another 'retreat to remember.'

## Writescape Announcements

### Here's What Spring Thaw Participants had to Say:

*This past weekend has truly been a turning point in my life...*

A.N., Ottawa

*I was amazed at how each morning's task augmented my work...*

K.M., Durham Region

*Gwynn and Ruth hold a creative space for every type of writer...*

S.C., Durham Region

### Reserve Your Copy of the New Writescape Book:

#### ***INSPIRATION STATION***

Coming Soon: online ordering. In the meantime, visit Blue Heron Books in Uxbridge or E-MAIL us at [info@writescape.ca](mailto:info@writescape.ca).

\$15.95

### Showing How It's Done:

Spring Thaw writers got creative when Whitby, Ontario singer/songwriter **Kathy Himbeault** tickled the ivories with her own musical composition. As Kathy turned her thoughts to lyrics, a few retreat colleagues helped in the creative process. Late into the wee hours a song was born!

Everyone enjoyed a treat when Kathy, accompanied in harmony by Ajax writer **Ingrid Ruthig**, sang the newly composed lyrics at the wrap-up session. Awesome!

Experience a customized escape into the art and craft of writing with **Writescape**. From all-inclusive weekend retreats to one-day workshops, Writescape focuses on your needs as a writer. Let award-winning writers **Gwynn Scheltema** and **Ruth E. Walker** help you escape to write.

**Writescape retreats** are a gift of time – time to recharge your creativity and listen to your muse. **Writescape workshops** inspire and challenge you to explore your craft in ways you might never have imagined. Writers at all levels of experience find support and inspiration.

*Escape to write ... with Writescape*