



Hi, I'm Polly Frost. This is my presskit with a bit of background about me and my humor writing. I've also included sample humor pieces and an interview with me about humor writing plus reviews of my most recent book, *With One Eye Open*.

My humor has been published in a number of places, including *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic* and *Narrative Magazine*. Last year, 16 of my humor pieces were published in Daniel Menaker's *Grin & Tonic*, a humor feature on Nook and in *The Barnes and Noble Review*.

I'm pleased to have been selected for both of *The New Yorker* "best humor" anthologies: *Disquiet, Please!* and *Fierce Pajamas*, as well as in last year's anthology *Humor Me*, about which *Blogcritics* wrote: "Editor Ian Frazier has united the works of a brilliant assemblage of humorists including Steve Martin, Ray Blount, Jr., David Mamet, Andy Borowitz, Polly Frost, Garrison Keillor, and Bruce Jay Friedman, in a volume that reminds us what humor is supposed to be." I'm still smiling at being included in that group of great humorists!

My humor book, *With One Eye Open*, was published in 2010 and includes 25 of my most popular pieces on topics that range from food to mommyblogging to friendship in the age of social networking. I was thrilled to get this praise for it from *Elle* columnist E. Jean Carroll: "Miss Polly Frost is so funny and so wildly intelligent, she is the Edith Wharton of her generation."



In addition to *With One Eye Open*, my book, *Deep Inside*, was published by Tor in 2007. Praise for *Deep Inside* as a funny, and hot, book included *The Austin Chronicle* and Ron Jeremy. Yes, that Ron Jeremy -- America's favorite porn legend. I'll always treasure his x-rated rave!

I've also written comic plays: my one-act, *The Last Artist in New York City*, was selected for Best American Short Plays 2008-2009.



I love connecting with readers through live performances and readings. The photo above is from a reading I did recently in Santa Barbara, California. Standing room only, yay!

In 2007 I toured the country with *Sex Scenes*, a comedy show in which actors read stories co-written by me and my husband. I cast over 100 actors in 10 cities -- something that should definitely go on my gravestone. I also learned more about the sex lives of Americans during that tour than I ever wanted to know! Below is me with the wonderful NYC cast of *Sex Scenes*.



This summer I'll be kicking off my new one-woman humor show, *How to Survive Your Adult Relationship with Your Family*. The show came about because I feel that while everyone focuses on how to get over your childhood, the really important thing is to learn how to survive your family *as an adult*. I'll be giving audiences a comic look at the emotional curveballs our beloved -- and *not* so beloved -- relatives can throw us throughout our adult lives along with humorous ways to prepare for and survive these surprising challenges. Hopefully my own family won't hear about the show and attend it! I'm booked to do it in NYC and then in California at wineries. I'm looking forward to performing humor and sipping upscale pinot noirs and sauvignon blancs. Who knew that the wine country was the new Borscht Belt?

I'm lucky to be married to the wonderful writer, Ray Sawhill, who worked at *Newsweek* as an arts and books reporter. We divide our time between NYC and California.



My website is <http://pollyfrost.com>.

Below I've included a recent interview that Caroline Leavitt did with me about my humor writing. After that are 5 of my most recent humor pieces published in *Narrative*, *The Atlantic* and *Grin & Tonic*. I've also included a page of reviews of my humor book, *With One Eye Open*.

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CAROLINELEAVITTVILLE

NOVELIST, SCREENWRITER, WRITING MENTOR, NAMER, BOOK CRITIC, KNITTING ADDICT AND CHOCOHOLIC



MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2010

Polly Frost talks about being funny



Polly Frost is hilarious. An author, playwright, journalist and media producer, she's the author of With One Eye Open, a collection of 25 of hr humor pieces published in The New Yorker, The Atlantic, The New York

Times, Narrative and Grin & Tonic. Plus, she has a great name (wouldn't you love to be called Polly Frost?) Here, Polly talks about the business of being funny. Thank you so, so much, Polly

WELCOME TO MY OBSESSIVE WORLD



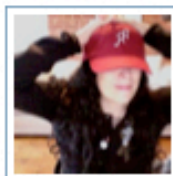
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GIVE A BOOK FOR ANY OCCASION! AND PLEASE POST THIS ON YOUR BLOGS!



If everyone buys a book, authors and readers can save the publishing biz!

I've been publishing humor pieces for twenty-five years. I'm lucky to be have worked with some of the best humor



CAROLINE LEAVITT

I am thrilled to report that my novel **PICTURES OF YOU** will be published by

Algonquin Books in January 2011. (I'm going on tour and I'd love to meet everyone!) I'm the award winning author of eight novels, most recently *Girls in Trouble*, which was a Booksense Selection and is now in its third printing. I'm the recipient of a New York Foundation of the Arts Grant in Fiction and portions of my novel in progress won a Goldenberg Fiction Prize. I was a finalist in the Nickelodeon Screenwriting Fellowship, a semi-finalist in the Fade In/Writers' Net Screenwriting Competition, and a National Magazine Award nominee. Four of my novels were optioned for screen, and I talked my way into writing the script for two of them. I'm a book critic for *The Boston Globe* and *People Magazine*. I teach novel writing for UCLA, do private fiction editing, and I am a professional namer! I live with my husband and son. Visit me at <http://www.carolineleavitt.com>.

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2010 (91)

▼ August (16)

Polly Frost talks about being funny

editors, especially Daniel Menaker, who was my editor at *The New Yorker* when I began and who now runs *Grin & Tonic*, which is a humor feature on the Barnes and Noble Nook and on their Review. I'm also fortunate to be married to Ray Sawhill, who's a very funny writer himself and a wonderful comedy collaborator. (We wrote a comic -- and erotic! -- theater project together, "Sex Scenes," which ran for three years in NYC at Cornelia Street Cafe and which we toured around the country in 2007.)

But that question about turning life into humor became a key part of my writing process from mid-2009 to early 2010. It was the most difficult stretch I ever went through, yet a great number of the humor pieces in my book "With One Eye Open" were written during that time.

In the summer of 2009 my brother Daniel, who'd been a gifted cancer surgeon, died of complications from Parkinson's. He'd gotten it as a young man. The world seemed an irrational and precarious place to me, one that attacked people like my brother for no rhyme or reason.

It was hard for me to get much of anything done during that period. But writing humor came easily. That's because you don't have to be going through a really happy period in your life to write funny. As most humorists know, bad times can be *great* times to write comedy.

For example, one of the first things that happened to me the day after my brother died turned into a humor piece.

My mother had asked me to call or email people who needed to know about it, because she didn't feel up to it. Nearly everyone I contacted was wonderful and supportive. There was one person, though, whose response to my phoning and telling her that my brother had died was to say, "You know, I just had a massage and the woman who gave it to me spent the entire time

Laurie Hertzelt talks about News to Me: Adventures...

Kate Ledger talks about Remedies

Kevin Canty talks about everything and Everything

Sitting in a movie, and there is her novel...

Previews of Coming Attractions, Blessings on PW an...

process, process, process

Welcome to writerland

Work for the Afghan Women's Writing Project

Novelist Dawn Tripp and I talk candidly about writ...

Read This Book: Elizabeth Brundage's A Stranger Li...

Read This Book: Beth Kephart's Dangerous Neighbors...

Read this Book: Please Come Back to Me by Jessica ...

Gayle Brandeis remembers her mother

Maddie Dawson talks about the back story for The S...

Lisa Unger ask, "What Kind of Writer AM I?"

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talking about her terrible childhood."

I nearly dropped the phone. I have to admit I got really angry at her. I remember screaming something like, "What one earth does that have to do with what I just told you?"

To which she said, "You're just upset."

I said, "Of course I'm upset! My brother died." I hung up on her.

Now, I'm sure that woman was trying in her own way, but everything she said and did after that just made me angrier and angrier. She wrote me an email about how my brother dying reminded her that her own husband might die, to which I responded that we will all eventually die, but in fact, but her husband was at that moment very much alive while my brother wasn't.

Then she wrote me another email in which she said she was surrounded by too many "wounded birds."

In a rage I walked out to where my husband was sitting and said, "Why do I have to put up with this woman at this moment in my life?"

He looked at me and said, "Because she's a gift to you."

"What?" I said.

"Go write a humor piece about her," he said.

So I did. My husband knew what he was talking about: she *was* a gift. Actually, she inspired not just one, but several humor pieces! In life she was someone I never wanted to see again, but on the page she was someone I eagerly looked forward to writing about.

I cite this example because I often get told by other writers -- writers who aren't professional humorists -- that they'd like to be funny, but don't know how.

Here's my advice: stop trying! Trying to be funny is the surest way *not* to be. If you think about actors who

► 2007 (62)

LINKS I LOVE!

Beatrice

Bells, balls and hype

Caroline Leavitt

Carolyne Howard-Johnson
promotion

Clea Simon

Conversations With Famous Writers

portray comic characters, the ones who are the funniest are the ones who take their characters the most seriously. It's the same thing with writing comedy. You have to take your character very seriously and take their tragedies seriously. If you do that, you'll find the comedy in the character.

If you're open to it, life will constantly give you hilarious material. You just have to get it down and not get in the way of it. That's your job as a humor writer.

POSTED BY CAROLINE AT 8:28 AM

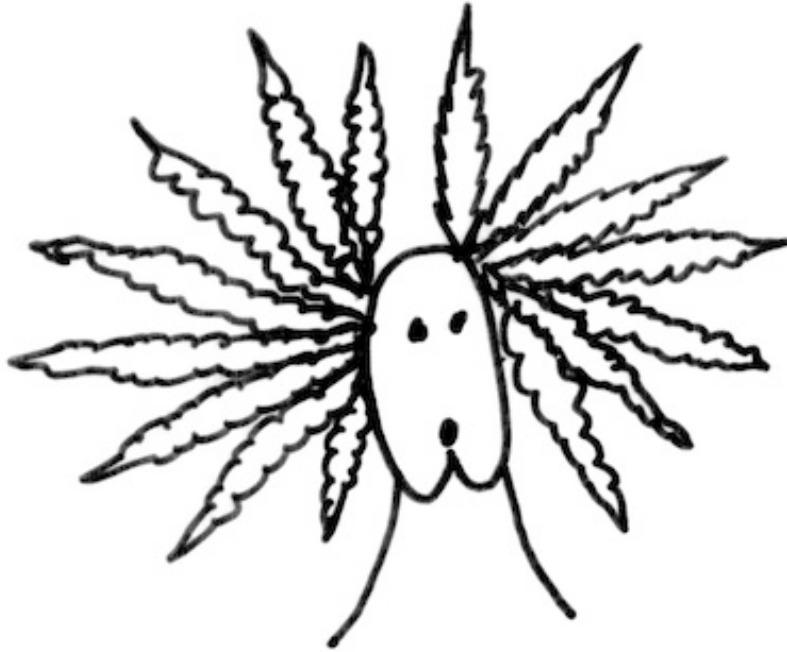
MY DOG BREEDS

Welcome to Have It Your Way Kennels. As owner, my goal is to bring personalized happiness to as many dog owners as I can. Over and over I've witnessed the joy an innovative hybrid pooch can deliver. In response to the demands and desires of today's on-the-go lifestyle, I've applied my knowledge of genetics and customer preference to bring you the ultimate in hybrid dogs. Let me introduce you to my latest new breeds:



The Bollywood Terrier

Here's the perfect companion for your nights with DVD rentals: this terrier won't just watch Bollywood movies with you, she'll do all the dances as well!



The EcoDoodle

This planet-friendly pup is a greenie's dream! Three generations of inventive breeding have resulted in a dog whose coat is 100 percent organic hemp. You'll never stop uncovering this virtuous breed's many benefits.

Just a couple: 1) all shedding is guaranteed not just 100% recyclable but smokable too. 2) The EcoDoodle's high fiber food preferences means that every time you use your Pooper Scooper you'll be helping the world convert from petrochemical energy to biomass!

A warning: Although a vegan, this adorable environmentalist can show a tendency to chase down SUVs. (As a February Special, I'm including a lifetime membership in PETA with each EcoDoodle purchase.)



The Manolohund

A high-fashion masterpiece of breeding for that special person who lives to dress her dog up. Why limit your doggie's playtime to jackets and hats? The Manolohund has been specially bred to share your love of shoes!

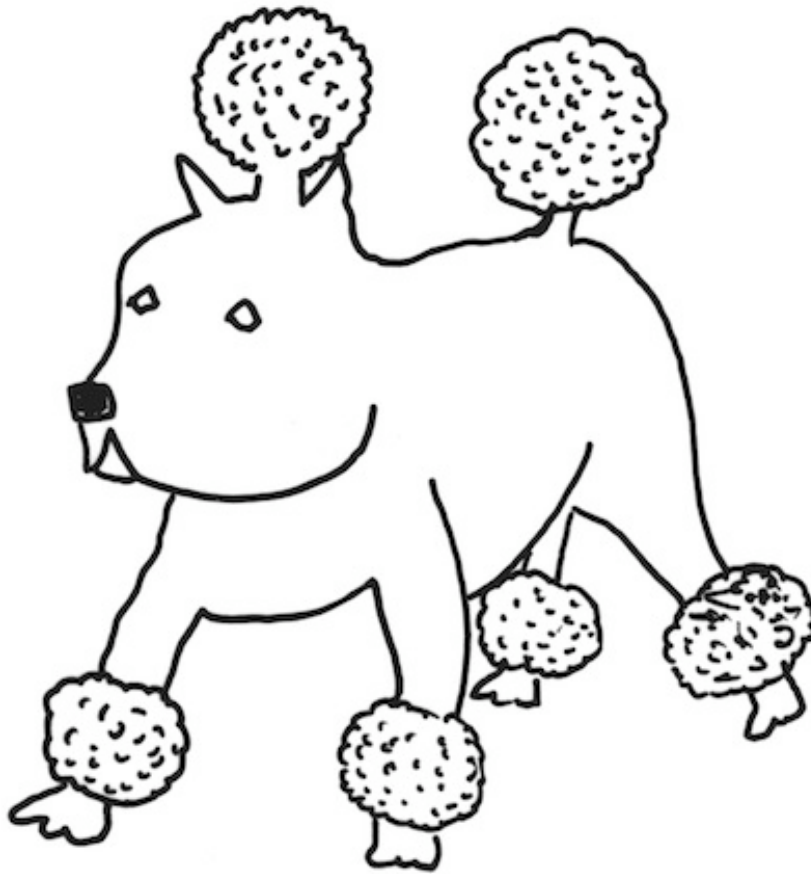


The Shih-Tube

Is the videocam never at your side when your pet does something that will attract online viewers? Could the hit numbers on your uploaded doggie video clips be higher than they've been? The Shih-Tube is the breed for you. This always-on bundle of pep is nothing if not camera-ready. He'll climb and then go down your pool slide not just once but twenty times -- finally a dog that allows you the chance to change your memory card!

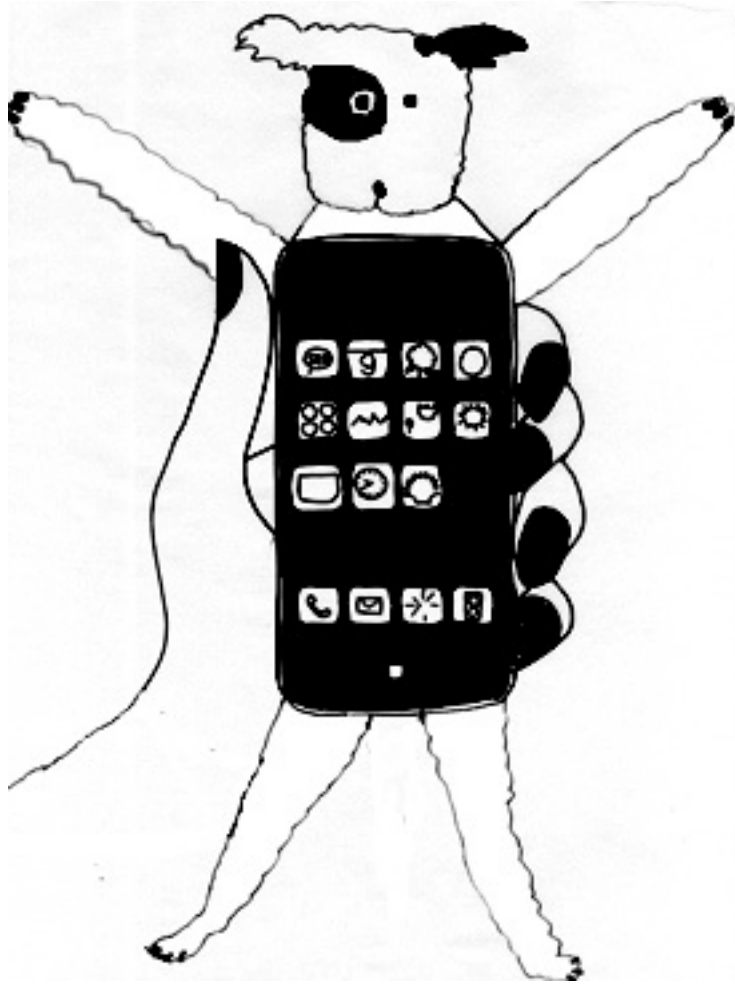
That leg of lamb you've left on the counter? You can trust the Shih-Tube not to steal it until you've got the lighting and focus just perfect.

But don't fear that we've overlooked the basics: we haven't! With the Shih-Tube, skateboarding isn't a twice-a-year fluke, it's an all-afternoon, every-afternoon activity. A little exhausting, yes, but you can be certain that there'll be plenty of time for you to set up a tripod! Be aware, though, that this little superstar will get droopy if more than an hour goes by without a lens being aimed at him.



The Poo-Bull

For this year's first new breed, I crossed the Standard Poodle and the Pit Bull. The result: a dog who'll scare off intruders *and* be hypo-allergenic. A happy side benefit: Animal rights activists who have purchased a Poo-Bull report that that they now have the option of spending their weekends combating the evil of dog fighting. Just bring your Poo-Bull to an underground dog fighting ring. Your Poo-Bull will make them giggle and put an end to that day's dog battles!



The iDog

Let's face it: today's urban girl on the go needs a pocketable companion. Get in early on a furry proof-of-concept that combines wireless connectivity and elegant post-industrial design.

This is one lovebug that does it all! Lonely? The iDog will deliver text messages of devotion even when your eHarmony dates aren't happening. Bored? When you give your iDog a belly-tickle it automatically downloads a new game direct from the App Store! (MobilePuppy account \$99 a year extra.)



The Econo-Lab

As you can see, this puppy is not one to demand excessive pampering and is the perfect pet for a tight budget. This little guy here is up for rescue adoption: his owner took out a second mortgage on his dog house.

If you're ready to become the owner of one of these packages of genetically engineered joy, just use my handy Contact form and your perfect pet companion will be on its way! And if you haven't yet seen the dog who'll be your perfect companion, drop me an email telling me about your special needs. I'll get right to work on it!

© *Polly Frost*

NEW CARBS

Along with everyone else, you've probably been reading a lot about carbs recently: "Good carbs," with their fiber and vitamins; and "bad carbs," which we need to start avoiding.

I don't know about you, but when I read these reports something seems amiss. As someone who has spent decades devotedly exploring the world of carbs, I know in my bones that there's far more to the carb picture than the scientists have puzzled out. Recently I decided to do my own close-observational study and note down my findings about different kinds of carbs. The results:

FOREIGN CARBS

How is it that a foreign name can add innumerable benefits to any dish? For example, on Tuesday I had the chance to compare two identical food items. The first was a donut at a 7-11; the second was a beignet I purchased not long after, across the street at Patisserie Antoine.

The donut produced a heedless urge in me to wolf it down, followed by an avalanche of remorse. The experience with the beignet could not have been more different, although I suspect that Antoine buys his beignets from the same supplier as 7-11. As he pronounced the word "beignet" and placed the pastry on the tiny table I was seated at, I found myself purring. Instead of hurriedly zooming off, I lingered, eating in a civilized manner, and engaging in a most delightful flirtation with Antoine, despite the fact that I had flunked high school French! I spent the rest of the day smiling. Regrets? Rien -- especially about having given my phone number to Antoine.

SILLY CARBS

Next I decided to delve into some carbohydrate-related mysteries. Why do we 1) have a sense of well-being when we nibble candy that's molded like a high heeled shoe? 2) Feel rapturously giddy when we drink a cocktail that's a preposterous color? 3) Forget about waistlines when pasta shows up on our plates in adorable curlicue shapes?

I mused about these questions as I waited for Antoine the next evening at a waterside bar. I played with my Blue Hawaii's little parasol and asked myself: Why is it that scientists are so damned obsessed by the intricate chains of oligosaccharides they find in complex carbs?

Feeling woozy inspiration, I challenged the hunky, sunburned stranger next to me to a bet: whichever one of us said "oligosaccharide" slower would buy the next round of Blue Hawaiis. He eyed me up and down, then agreed. Soon everyone in the place was shouting "oligosaccharide" and demanding that I dance on top of the bar. How could I refuse? Never before had I cared less about how my behavior appeared to others. My conclusion: Silly Carbs often lead to excellent exercise sessions.

Antoine in fact never did show up -- Frenchmen!

OVERPRICED CARBS

As I nursed a hangover the next day, my intercom buzzer sounded. It was Antoine, pleading in French. I buzzed him up and, in response to his knock, opened the door. There he stood, holding out an exquisitely wrapped box.

“Chocolates?” I snapped. “I’m not that easy.”

“Do you know how adorable you are when you are angry?” he murmured.

“Don’t try that suave stuff on me,” I said.

But I grabbed the box of sweets from him anyway. As I did so, his eyes caught a label the store hadn’t removed from the box. He swore as he reached over and tore it off.

But I’d caught a glimpse of how much he’d spent. That’s when I experienced the miraculous effect of Overpriced Carbs. Indeed, even before I’d tasted a single one of the chocolates, I felt overwhelmed with forgiveness.

Antoine popped a chocolate truffle in my mouth. It was a fitting ending to my carbohydrate research. I was pleased with my contributions to science. For a moment, I did wonder if Antoine had planted a phony price tag on the box, but even if he had, wasn’t that sweet in its own way?

Originally published in Daniel Menaker’s Grin & Tonic on Nook and in The Barnes and Nobel Review.

REBLOCK YOURSELF THE POLLY FROST WAY!

DO ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS FIT YOU?

- **Blogaholism** Do you plot out your day so that it will generate as many blog postings as possible?
- **Twitteritis** Did you Twitter this morning as you made your morning coffee? And then later as you trimmed your toenails?
- **Reviewing Addiction** Do you spend every lunch hour pumping up your ranking as an Amazon reader-reviewer?
- **RSS Dependency** Did you simplify your life by subscribing to RSS feeds only to discover yourself spending more time than ever commenting at blogs?
- **Status Update Disorder** Have you made plans to self-publish a collection of your Facebook Status Updates?

If so, you're almost certainly suffering from from one of the great underdiagnosed ailments of our time. That's right, you may well have Unblocked Writer Syndrome. But not to worry. The solution is at hand. Now -- in just three days! -- you'll be able to put an end to the stream of garbage issuing in such free-flowing abundance from you thanks to:

THE POLLY FROST REBLOCKING SEMINAR™

Polly Frost, you're saying to yourself ... Is this the same Polly Frost who became famous in New Age circles with her "Releasing the Writer Within" seminars in the early 1990s? Yes, it's really me. Let me tell you a little about my journey of discovery.

I started exploring "releasing" techniques back in the late '80s, when I realized that I'd been working on my first novel for fourteen years and had only committed two sentences to paper. Do you remember those days? It can be hard to make young people understand what a difficult prospect the aspiring writer faced. Hurdles had to be overcome. Years of apprenticeship and workshops had to be endured, grants had to be chased, relationships had to be broken up. The aspiring writer needed to move to New York City or -- even worse -- a university town. Discouragement was everywhere.

So I devoted myself to learning how to set free the writer I knew was within me. I studied mind-mapping. I attended improv acting classes. I made friends with my pre-critical self. I conducted "Yes sessions" with myself on a daily basis. I kept a pen and notebook by the side of my bed, and when I went out for a walk I took a pocket tape recorder with me.

I became such a virtuoso at massaging my creative muscles into giving forth their bounty that I became a legend within the creativity community. With much encouragement, I set my novel aside and prepared the course outline for my inspirational writing seminar: "Releasing The Polly Frost Way™"!

The rest is history. "The Polly Frost Way" became a hit seminar on four continents.

You've seen the photos in yoga and New Age catalogues of my students weeping with joy at finally being able finally to commit words to paper.

After six years of phenomenal success, I realized that I'd given of myself everything that was within me to give. I moved to Sedona, Arizona, and once again began to focus on my own creative work. Easing back into my own true nature, I had sketched out a temporary title for my novel and had settled on an author photo when I decided to take a break and explore this newfangled thing they called the internet.

What a revelation! Everywhere on the web I found writers expressing themselves.

I was swept up in the exhilaration. I ran multiple WordPress blogs. I dashed off rants about the New York City book publishing world, sharing them on Scribd as downloadable PDFs. My "What I Ate for Lunch" Tumblr photoblog earned consistently high rankings on Technorati. Fame came to me as well as one of the most prolific commenters at Flickr.

But after a year of madness and intoxication I took an honest look at myself. I took an honest look around me. And I didn't like what I saw.

There was too much writing. And it was everywhere. It was time for me to help writers everywhere find some balance. That's when I developed:

THE POLLY FROST BOOT CAMP FOR SHUTTING YOU UP!

SAMPLE SESSIONS:

(NOTE: Students will not be allowed to text during the three day seminar!)

DAY ONE

9 AM Orientation

"Re-embrace Your Inner Critic." Using advanced transference techniques, you will pretend to read your work to the most discouraging person you know: the relative who says "Who do you think you are? You're not funny"; the friend who never got around to reading your short story; the scary professor who always gave your essays a D. You will learn to love them all as they do their best to keep you from typing out another word. Perhaps that little voice that keeps murmuring in your ear that you have nothing of worth to say is really onto something!

10AM: 1PM

"Dragging and Dropping Your Pseudonyms and Avatars." Students will be required to write expressively -- and then sign their real names to what they've composed. Now try writing that nasty one star review! See how it feels to flame someone who knows who you actually are! Writing as yourself will ensure that you have to take responsibility for what you say -- and if that doesn't stop you up, nothing will.

DAY TWO: 9AM -- 2PM

"Rediscovering the Full Grammatical Sentence." Students will be required to write for two hours without using any abbreviations. Traditional rules of grammar will be enforced

by grandmotherly librarians. This is a technique that has been shown to reduce a writer's output by as much as 68%!

3PM: 5 PM

"Denying Yourself Permission." There's nothing like a good "No session" to make you realize you shouldn't keep writing!

DAY THREE

Devoted entirely to our Trademark 12 Hour Intensive, "A Mind Mapping Guide to Silence™." Explore what it's like to keep your thoughts, jokes, anecdotes, and recipes to yourself. Advance warning: We won't be having a "talk back" afterwards!

Upon graduation, students not only receive a diploma with no words on it, but also their very own "Keep it to yourself!" ringtone.

A FEW OF THE MANY TESTIMONIALS I'VE RECEIVED

- **From Alison Caplett, sales force supervisor, Kansas City:** "I spent so much of my wedding texting MySpace updates that I can't remember the event itself, not even my first kiss with my hubby as a married woman! Thanks to Polly's Reblocking Seminar™, I was able to actually get to know my husband. Imagine how much tougher divorcing the dingaling would have been had I not set the constant writing aside!"
- **From Marnie Goodrich, famous New York literary agent:** "Instead of returning my client's phone calls I wrote endless blog postings expressing annoyance at the way my clients expected me to return their calls. Thanks to Polly's Reblocking methods, I have trashed my blog, set aside my ambitions to become a competent WordPress administrator, and am now back to my real work -- discouraging aspiring writers with the tried and true one-liner: 'It's not for me'."
- **From Bryce McDermott, father of three:** "I'd published 107 volumes of memoirs on LuLu when I realized that all I'd written about in the last sixty-five of them was the experience of self-publishing on Lulu. Thanks to Polly's Reblocking Seminar™, I've kicked the writerholism, and as a result have had time to take up drugs and sex addiction. Maybe now I'll actually have something to write a memoir about. But don't let Polly know I said such a thing!"

Yes, you heard right: In the last five years, I've helped literally thousands of people withdraw from excessive writing -- and I can help you too. Perhaps I'm my own best proof of concept. Thanks to my methods, I've been able to set my novel aside once and for all! For more information visit my extensive network of blogs at www.pollyfrost.com.
Comments are not enabled!

Originally published in The Atlantic.

THAT FINAL PAPER YOU WANT FROM ME

Hey Dr. Pettit,

I know you said that a written final term paper is a requirement for your freshman "Intro to Composition" class. I know you said our final paper had to be in a "legitimate literary structure," like an essay or a memoir. And I know that when I pitched you the idea of creating a social network as my final project you started babbling about taking early retirement. You really hurt my feelings with that reaction.

Not to worry, I'm legendary for being a forgiving person! However, you need to give some thought to what you're asking us to do, and how the world has changed.

For one thing, you seem to be under the impression that "composition" is about nothing but text. The fact is, composition these days needs graphics, photos, a cool layout and emoticons. And, let's face it, a composition without clickable buttons is nowhere. I'm surprised you couldn't understand that's why I didn't finish any of the novels you assigned. Where were the hyperlinks? Were you deliberately trying to bore us?

But maybe you just have a weakness for pages and pages of text. After all, in our last meeting you couldn't stop talking about Jami Chu and about how she's a really serious person because she turned in a 400-page all-text memoir, woohoo.

Now, you may not know Jami like I know Jami. I happen to be aware that the only real hardship in her life was growing up in Westchester without a Lexus SUV. And I also happen to know she got her friends to help write her memoir on Facebook.

Don't get me wrong, I'm in awe of Jami's project. Crowdsourcing rocks. But you can see what I'm getting at. That whole single-person-writes-lots-of-words thing is history.

You'll get used to it. You may even get to like it. Really. I remember one class where you were yakking about how great writers do their work alone and how wrestling with their thoughts was such a key part of their process. I was live-Tweeting your rant and you'll be interested to know the consensus of my peeps was that all the so-called great writers drank waaaay too much. Why? Because they were sitting around alone crafting their work.

Frankly, Dr. Pettit, I don't think you should be encouraging us to too much solitary drinking. Btw, those photos of me Renee West posted where I'm lying passed out on the floor in my thong surrounded by a line of empty vodka shots? I'm really not smashed, I was just helping her make a funny photo. But see, that proves my point. We weren't lonely. We were having fun.

The main point here is that you need to give serious reconsideration to your attitude. So I've come up with a solution to help you do just that. For my final paper I've created four different social networking concepts. I've made a special point of relating all my concepts to points that you've made in class about the great writers. I know you'll appreciate the effort this has taken me.

HashingItOver

Your classroom theme: I remember that day when you said the great writers have their own special subjects they explore over and over again.

My idea: I realized that in a way you were talking about me and my friends. We love nothing better than discussing our relationships and our day to day issues, and doing it over and over. So here's the concept: A social-networking site where we can do that without anyone telling us to shut up already.

Like my boyfriend Ian, for instance. He's always telling me to get to the point and it just gets to be too much. "Jesus Christ, this must be the 90th time you've talked about that stupid Jami Chu and what she might be up to. Don't you think that diminishing returns have kicked in yet? And if you insist on 'having a discussion' about the diet that you think Dr. Pettit should be on one more time I'm gonna go postal." Blah effing blah.

Sorry about the language, Dr. Pettit, but I knew you'd want me to be true to the moment. Just like you say great writers are.

Ian has been studying Game and thinks he comes off as more Alpha if he acts all assertive and dominant. Meanwhile I've got him doing my laundry, lol. Boys.

So anyway, at first this network will be invite-only, just me and my buds doing Twitterish updates. But of course word will get out because there's no way it couldn't. And soon there will be millions of women on HashingItOver, because as Ian constantly points out -- isn't it amazing how often guys repeat *them*selves? -- we of the female persuasion don't have to know the people we're gossiping about in order to be experts about what they ought to be doing.

My best concept so far, and this is a really hot one, so please KITY (that's txt for "keep it to yourself!"): A "Rehash" button. Hit it, and a whole new discussion on the exact same topic starts up, just like you hadn't talked it to death yesterday. Ian calls it infuriating babble but to me it means a fresh start.

I know you're thinking, How about the male demographic? You seemed amazed that first day in class that it was eighty percent us "young women" and talked about how "young men" are falling behind.

Point taken. They need encouragement. So we'll invite in a few at a time, just like in real life. We'll let them strut around, posting messages like "Bitch, speak sense" -- and then we'll take them down! If they put up a fight, we'll just mock them about being Ultimate Fighting addicts while avoiding the gym, and then tell them to go wash their hair and stand up straight. It always works, and girls love doing this. After all, I've got to cater to my core audience, which is dynamic young women like me.

EmptyNesters

Your classroom theme: Great writers have original takes on things. The way I know this is because I just copy'd and pasted it from your classroom wiki.

My idea: People your age and even older have ruined Facebook. I mean, why would someone young put up with anti-wrinkle creams showing up in the right-hand ad column? It's beyond annoying. Solution: Give parents their own social networking site.

Proof of concept: I bet your own daughters are glad you're too snobby to go on Facebook. Ask them about it and get back to me.

The thing that inspired me is the way my parents have been acting ever since I went off to college. With the economic downturn, Dad's Wall posts have all been about how much it's costing him to pay for my college education. Meanwhile, in her Updates, Mom goes on and on about the classes she's taking towards a Special Ed degree and about how that will fulfill her.

So here's my gift to Mom and Dad's generation: their very own online place where they won't embarrass me and my friends with their solarized-to-disguise-how-old-they-are Profile pics and their Notifications where they joke about fiber supplements. I really **don't need** to be exposed to ****any**** of this stuff!!!!

Mainly, of course, they're going to spend most of their time figuring out how to use the service. (Note to self: Do I really want to maintain a big Support department?) But I'll brighten their day up with a lot of GenX/Boomer-appropriate mini-apps tailored to exploit whatever sense of fun they still retain.

Lists:

"25 Ways I Guilt-Trip My Kids."

"15 Inappropriate Fashion Ideas I Stole From My Daughter."

"The 12 Most Recent Ways My Children Have Disappointed Me."

Gifts:

Mom will love logging on and seeing that she's received an animated GIF standing for "2 Jolts of Hormone Replacement" from one of her best friends.

Or maybe one representing "Congratulations, you're having a late in life baby!" I'll have my friend Shelby design some adorable little icons. She's a graphics wiz.

Dad hates cutesy shit, so I'll probably just skip the whole gifts-for-men concept.

Awards:

For the guys: "Whose profile pic most says, 'I'd really love to hook up with an Eastern European babe'?"

For the women: "Most number of friends who wish you hadn't gotten back in touch with them."

For both genders: "Lamest attempt to stay hip in terms of musical tastes." It'll be just like being back in high school. Who can resist that?

You should feel free to pitch in here with ideas too!

NotTellingYoutheNameofThisOne

Your classroom theme: I'm thinking about that one lecture where you held up a novel called "Catch-22" and used it to talk about irony and paradoxes and how great writers use them to investigate the hypocrisy of society.

My idea: A social-networking site for me and my generation that's completely secret.

I know you probably didn't mean to bring me down with that lecture, but the way you got me thinking about stuff like irony and paradox made my head hurt. It spoiled my weekend and then the migraine got even worse when I went on Facebook and saw that someone had posted another, different photo of me on the floor at Renee West's party, and from that different camera angle my ass looked big, and not good-big, just huge, and not bootylicious-huge either, just ... :-)

Anyway, it's O.K., I don't want you to feel guilty. Because, despite the humiliation you inflicted on me, now I understood the paradox behind social networking.

Here it is: the whole point of bothering with social-networking at all is to share your rudest, wildest, bad-grrl moments with as many people as you can. At the same time, you shouldn't do that because one of those people might turn out to be somebody you're hoping will hire you.

Simple solution: An underground social-networking site that reacts to the presence of employer IP addresses by changing URLs. If you pick this project, I'll find a geek, give him shares in the corporation, and set him loose on the challenge.

Then I started to question myself. How can I make any money off a secret site? Advertisers might complain. Is that a sign my idea is too far ahead of its time? Yet didn't you say that the great authors would write even if they never got paid? Does that mean we should create something just because it's a good idea? My head started to hurt again.

By the way? "Catch-22"? I'd heard my parents use that phrase. I was amazed to learn that it comes from the title of a book. Although you shouldn't have introduced me to self-doubt, I *am* grateful to you for teaching me that novels are good for something.

F2F

Your classroom theme: That boring talk you gave about that gay English writer who got famous saying "Only connect." Wow, it didn't take much in those days, did it?

My idea: Well, this one's too good to give away right up top.

O.K., I'm having my weekly phone conversation with my grandmother, Nora. Granny Nora refuses to get a computer, if you can believe that. And she says she doesn't even understand what it is Facebook's good for. (The two of you would probably really hit it off.) Granny Nora's always saying, "There's nothing like real live friendship."

I have something to say about that: Granny Nora has *no* idea how boring she's being.

Anyway, so she's yakking on and on about Judy Simpson, whose titanium hip replacement didn't work out but who has been there for her since kindergarten, and Marianne Duffy, who takes a lot of Mexican cruises and brings over fresh peaches from

her tree, and Phyllis Burton, who she met in AquaCize and whose third husband risked his life to save Grandma's sofa when her condo flooded.

At first I was doing my usual thing of downloading iPhone apps while pretending to listen. But then, Whoa! What a great idea I had! You'll really like this one. Scheduled get-togethers of old folks -- and they'll be completely F2F!

(F2F stands for "face to face." "Catch-22" / "F2F". You can learn from me as much as I learn from you. Too many teachers don't understand this, and it can be tiresome to have to point it out over and over.)

I might be willing to pour coffee at one of their get-togethers for the sake of a photo op. But mainly I'll have to be the concept person since I have no patience for the way old people ramble on.

And can you believe how often they go to funerals? "The worst thing about getting old is that you lose all your friends," Grandma once said to me during a phone convo. I explained that since I'd just deleted three so-called "Friends" from Facebook I knew exactly what she meant. Then she spoke crossly with me, so I had to pretend we got disconnected.

Impressive, right? I'm positive that you've come to your senses now where social-networking goes. I also hope you've noticed the care I've taken to "write" this email. Whew, was that a lot of work! It was hard to refrain from using graphics, but I set aside my layout program out of respect for you. By any reasonable standard, that should budge my grade up a bit.

Btw -- and this is just between us -- I happen to know that you're letting Caitlin Switzer do a FlipCam documentary of her dance internship in Bali as her final project. To be honest, I can't see why you're letting Caitlin do a multimedia project and ***not*** me. It doesn't have anything to do with the amount of time I've noticed her spending in your office, would it? Just having fun interpolating, lol.

Anyhoo. I'm certain you'll be persuaded that each of my social networking sites is worth at least a dozen drivelly, overlong memoirs. At least I hope so, otherwise I'll have to create a competitor for that very successful social-networking site dissyourprofessors.com and use it to talk about the way you and Caitlin swap so many charged looks in class. :-)

In any event, I'm sure we'll continue sharing a mutually profitable relationship. To incentivize you a little more: If you come through in this case, I'll consider making you my sophomore-year advisor.

TTNT (That's the way we say "til the next time." You'll learn!)

Sabrina McEvoy

Originally published in Narrative Magazine as a Story of the Week.

PRAISE FOR MY HUMOR BOOK *WITH ONE EYE OPEN*

“Just as Benchley had a proclivity for presenting ‘the commonplace as remarkable’ – as James Thurber noted when he referenced his influence in *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* -- Frost, whether it’s carbohydrates, or conversation, or punctuation, also has the wit and wherewithal to take the quotidian and make it quotable, or put drollery into the doldrums.” -- **Gordon Hauptfleisch, *Blogcritics***

“If you’re not laughing at your life, you’re doing it wrong. *With One Eye Open* is a fun and fascinating read. *With One Eye Open* is a solid addition to any humor collection.” -- ***Midwest Book Review***

“Polly Frost has silver tongued wit, and it shows brilliantly throughout this collection ... my personal favorite being the designer dog piece. I see a lot of myself in several of the pieces Polly has written for this book, and if I can not laugh at myself, well what fun is life then really?” -- ***Tiffany’s Bookshelf***

“Polly Frost’s humor collection, *With One Eye Open*, could could just as easily have been called, *Both Eyes Open*. Frost has her eyes focused on the ridiculous aspects of life, and understands our obsession with everything from computer games to the latest lifestyle fad. Any aspect of society is a likely target for her humor. It’s all in fun ... the stories poke fun at our lifestyle, everything from Twitter to addiction to sex. If you’re looking for intelligent humor, try Polly Frost’s *With One Eye Open*.” -- ***Les’a’s Book Critiques***

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“There were several themes in this book, that had me rolling on the floor with laughter... If we all looked at life like Polly Frost does, we would do a whole more laughing and a lot less crying. We might even look at exercise from a different perspective.” -- ***Debbie’s Book Bag***