

# Writing Our Way through the Storm

By AWC member Dave Swan



LIKE ANY SELF-RESPECTING SCRIBE, I started the year with modest ambitions: publish my book, top the best-seller list, and write a blockbuster follow-up. Naturally, my goals didn't include grappling with a pandemic. However, I've found ways to cope, and maybe even become a better writer.

When things got serious, I wanted a voice in the debate, so I launched a pandemic diary on my blog. I'm not pontificating (much), just telling the reader what I see. I write about things like face shields, the trials of grocery shopping, and lessons from the last world war. It's a drop in the ocean, but it gives me a personal history of these times and may help others. Writing definitely helps me when I'm down.

The best advice I've heard about pandemic stress came in a tweet from Jennifer March Soloway, an agent some of you may know from the Atlanta Writers Conference: "Feeling stuck? Or worse, uncreative? You are not alone. Be kind to yourself in this moment of uncertainty. You will find that spark again. In the meantime, try reading. It's a great escape and a chance to learn the market. Your writing will benefit, too!" So, after hearing about Pat Conroy at our June meeting, I picked up *The Great Santini*, which I never got around to before. I don't know if it's helped my writing, but I loved every word.

Finally, I entered our "alone together" anthology contest, which I hope a lot of us did. What I'm *not* doing is plunging into The Great Pandemic Novel. Who would want to look back once this is over? My guess is that we'll have a big market for fantasy, romance, mystery, and in light of the racial justice movement, books by, for, and about people of color.

As I tell my diary readers: Take care and be safe. And write.

## My bio

Dave Swan is a writer and editor, as well as a former journalist, cab driver, and disc jockey. His short stories have appeared in the [Birmingham Arts Journal](#) and he's pitching a novel. As one of our social media volunteers, he reminds you to follow us on Twitter [@atlwritersclub](#).

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