

Guidelines

1. One submission per RBWG member; **250 words or fewer**
2. Submissions accepted between Dec 1 and Dec 15 only; please do not send earlier
3. If you can, please send a JPEG photograph of the object; **title it with your name**, as that is how we will file it
4. The work may be fiction, creative nonfiction, or poetry
5. As with all Guild projects, please no political or religious material, violence, or erotica
6. Submit in Word as an email attachment; attach photo as a JPEG file to the same email; send to Maribeth at fischer.maribeth@gmail.com

Content

We are asking you to spend time on your submission, to **share it with others who might give you feedback, to revise and revise and revise before sending it to us**. We want your best piece of writing, a piece that matters enough that you are willing to invest time making it beautiful, or wise, or sad, or whimsical, or funny. Treat this as something you'd be sending for a magazine/journal publication.

We want these collective writing projects to represent this amazing organization at its very best. There is so much talent in this group of writers and we want to celebrate it—and you—with this project. To give you time to workshop and revise, **we are only accepting submissions between December 1 and December 15 (to be published in January)**.

Format

1. We are only accepting submissions in Word format (other formats involve a huge expenditure of time to eliminate different forms/styles of punctuation. If you do not use Word, we hope you might reach out to someone who can help you with this. As a LAST resort, contact Maribeth. We don't want you to NOT submit over the formatting issues; we just want your help!
2. Title your work as if it were an exhibit in a museum, followed by the date, and your name.
 - First letter of key words in title are capitalized
 - No quotation marks around title, no italics, no bold font
 - A period after title, another after date, another after your name. One space between these items.

“The Objects of Our Lives” Call for Submissions

Examples below:

Coffee Mug with Chip in Handle. 1977. Maribeth Fischer

Tortoiseshell Eyeglasses. Circa 1967. John Doe.

3. Do not indent paragraphs. Put *a single* space between them.
4. **There is only one space between sentences**, not two. In the past, we have spent time correcting this, but our time is better spent on editing issues that can truly make a difference. So please, help us out here! For those of you interested in publishing, this is a good habit to get into.

Examples from Leslie Jamison’s Essay

From Jamison: *“The objects that moved me most were the ordinary ones, the toaster and wooden toilet paper dispenser, because their ordinariness suggested that every love story—even the most familiar, the most predictable, the least dramatic—was worth putting in a museum.”*

Exhibit 6: Paisley Shirt. San Francisco, California

It was sometime in 1967. We bought our paisley shirts from an outdoor rack in Haight-Ashbury. This was in the early heady days of our relationship; for me all the more intoxicating as it was my first lesbian love affair. Our shirts almost matched, but not quite, mine was psychedelic pink and hers purple. They were definitely first worn at a Jefferson Airplane concert, though the shirt carries memories of places it never went: a year backpacking and picking crops in Europe, leading an olive picker strike in Provence, a camping trip in Death Valley where we watched the sun set on one horizon while the moon rose on the other. It was all so good and right and full of hope, until it wasn’t. I never understood why we ended, although my wanting children probably had something to do with it. The last time I saw her was at Gay Pride Day in Washington D.C. in 1975. That’s a long time ago but the paisley shirt has stayed with me. It reminds me who I once was. (178 words)

Exhibit 8: Bottle of Crystal Pepsi. Queens, New York

After my big broken love—the ending I knew would be my biggest, the life I realized I wouldn’t live—I met a wonderful man who lived in Queens. He took me to trivia night at his local bar in Astoria. He took me to a Christmas party at his law offices in midtown. He took me to the Blazer Pub, near his childhood home upstate, where we ate burgers and played shuffle bowling. I knew he wasn’t “the one” but also suspected I no longer believed in “the one”—not because I’d never met him, but because I thought I had met him, and now we were done. The lawyer was an experiment in all the things I’d never thought I wanted. He made me laugh. He made me feel comfortable. We ate comfort food. We made pancakes with raspberries and white chocolate chips and watched movies on weekend mornings. He found old re-runs of *Legends of the Hidden Temple*, the stupid kids’ game show

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we’d both loved when we were young, and gave me a ten-year-old bottle of Crystal Pepsi he’d found online—my favorite soda back in the nineties, discontinued for years. He was remarkable, but I couldn’t ever quite see him—or see that—because I never really believed in us. The constancy of his devotion started to feel like a kind of claustrophobia. Nothing about us made me feel challenged. It was like he taught me how much I struggled to live inside love—to understand something as love—without difficulty.

