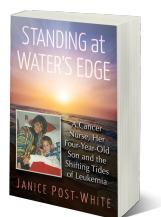




**Is the book you are currently reading entertaining you, enlightening you, or educating you?**

Write a review to get it noticed!



## Book Update

*Standing at Water's Edge* continues to sell, slow but steady. I'm learning a lot about the publishing industry and a little about marketing and sales, but I haven't hired a publicist (for tens of thousands of dollars) or been especially aggressive in promoting my book (due to escalating health issues). My goal is to reach readers who can benefit from its story —parents struggling to understand or come to terms with their child's illness, medical professionals wanting to gain a deeper understanding of the human condition, or cancer survivors seeking hope and inspiration.

If you know of anyone, please [forward this link](#). Thank you for helping me reach my readers!

And what are *you* reading this month? It is commonly thought that we read books to be entertained, enlightened and/or educated. What do you like to read? And why?



## Events & News

My flash essay, *Truth and Consequence*, was published this month in the Spring issue of the beautiful literary arts journal, *Under the Gum Tree*. The journal honors vulnerability and doesn't shy away from tough issues, and the artwork is especially gorgeous in the print copy.

Here's the link to the [Spring issue](#) and to [Truth and Consequence](#), which is a 3-minute read on how showing compassion connects us in our suffering. The piece is a situation that surprised me as I flipped the emotional switch from centering on my own needs to extending compassion and empathy for another.



## Nibbles

### 3 million books are published every year

We have so many great books to choose from! The number of new titles published *per year* has multiplied by ten since 2005 (from 285,000 to 3 million). For three years in a row (since the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic started), self-published books accounted for more than 2 million titles per year, with 500,000 to 1 million books traditionally published (which includes *Standing at Water's Edge* and other books published by Indie and small/medium size publishers).

With 3 million new titles every year, how do *you* choose what to read? Do you gravitate toward recent releases (I often do out of curiosity) or a particular genre? (I read memoir to study craft and support fellow memoirists; I study non-fiction to gain insight; and I listen to character-driven novels in audible when I need an escape.) I always have stacks and lists of books in various formats to choose from, depending on my mood and energy level. Perhaps you do, too. It's so easy to click that buy button!

With two out of three books being self-published today, I'm curious if it matters to you if a book is self-published or traditionally published. In the past, I would favor a book that I knew was vetted by editors and went through strict acceptance criteria—i.e. traditionally published books. I still check the publisher before I buy, but now I'm reading a lot more self- and hybrid-published books as the quality has consistently improved over the years (in my opinion). I've also realized that traditional publishers (especially the Big 5) often prioritize books that they deem marketable and saleable, sometimes over the quality of the writing, although both criteria often need to be met before a publisher is willing to take it on.

This month I've read Prince Harry's *Spare* (out of curiosity), Karen Fine's *The Other Family Doctor* (to support a fellow memoirist and because I love animal stories), Laurel Braitman's *What Looks Like Bravery* (to explore narrative medicine and how she moved on after loss), Rebecca Makkai's *I Have Some Questions for You* (because I loved *The Great Believers*, a finalist for the Pulitzer), Levi Lusko's *Through the Eyes of a Lion* (gifted to me and an inspiring story of moving on after loss of a child to cancer), and Edith Eva Eger's *The Choice*, an inspiring and amazing memoir of healing after living through Auschwitz that we all can learn from. Makkai's book was the only fiction I read. I guess I was looking to gain insight and be inspired this month.

**Of your 3+ million options, what are you reading and why did that book call out to you?**



# Monthly Musings

Compassion and hope have been on my mind this month, perhaps because I've felt particularly vulnerable with unrelenting pain from progressive spine degeneration. Listening to inspiring books while lying flat on my back has sustained me through some long and dreary days.

I was planning on getting my quarterly newsletter back on track on the first day of the month. Which would have been April fool's day. The trick's on me. But the lesson hasn't gone unheeded. I decided I needed to practice self-compassion by being flexible with self-imposed deadlines.

Compassion also appeared forefront in my reading.

A new memoir out last month, ["The Other Family Doctor"](#) is by a dedicated and compassionate veterinarian (Karen Fine) who openly discusses issues surrounding pet euthanasia, among other more routine and sometimes endearing and hilarious escapades of our witty furry or feathered friends. Her stories as a home care family vet showcase her compassion for animals and their humans, as well as for fellow veterinarians. She shared in a social media group that publishers were reticent to take on such a "dark topic" of pet death, but her book is a bestseller in its first month, which attests to how much pet owners need an honest and forthright approach to pet care and death.

Wouldn't you want a compassionate provider for both your own healthcare and that of your pet?

Compassion and hope are also underlying currents in [Edith Eva Eger's](#) incredible story of surviving Auschwitz. How can someone feel compassion for a Nazi perpetrator when suffering the shame, humiliation, and physical torture of a concentration camp? Eger conjures incredible empathy despite her dire circumstances. And she's only 17 years old!

Years later, Eger trains as a psychotherapist and begins to understand and make sense of her responses in the moment and her desire to bury the past. In the process of helping others, she heals herself. It's only when she faces her feelings and processes the events that she can move on with peace (a similar theme in *Standing at Water's Edge*). It's her vulnerability to face her past and acknowledge her inadequacy and imperfections that incites my compassion for her, just as the vulnerability of my surgeon in [Truth and Consequence](#) triggered my compassion for him.

At a time when stress is high and healthcare is focused on agendas, provider burnout, and business survival, I try to remember that we are all connected as humans, both in our suffering and in our joy. I hope you can allow yourself your own vulnerabilities and feel the connection of kindness and empathy in the care you or your pet receives.

And may your reading and writing give you pause to contemplate the challenges and joys of being human.

## Thank you!

Thanks for being a part of my writing wanderings.

In my quarterly newsletters, I share book updates, a behind-the-scenes peek at writing and publishing, and tidbits on my latest lessons learned in life, writing, or publishing. Please share with your interested friends!

Sign up for my newsletter



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Happy reading & writing, thinking & bemusing

*Janice*

### Share this newsletter!



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