



Take This Quiz To See If You Can Retire Comfortably

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Hi all, this is Erik Pedersen with a note that I'm off this week and my colleague Samantha Dunn is taking care of The Book Pages. Enjoy and I'll be back next week!

By Samantha Dunn

Many local book lovers and writers know Susan Hayden as a fixture on the Southern California literary scene. Hayden created and curates “Library Girl,” a reading series at the Ruskin Group Theater in Santa Monica now entering its 14th year.

A recipient of the Bruria Finkel/ Artist in the Community Award from the Santa Monica Arts Commission for her “significant contributions to the energetic discourse within Santa Monica’s arts community,” Hayden has gained a reputation as a champion of emerging writers and established authors alike.

Now Hayden has joined the author ranks, too: “Now You Are a Missing Person,” a lyrical memoir told in story fragments and poems, was published in July through Whittier-based independent publisher, [Moon Tide Press](#).



Susan Hayden created and curates “Library Girl,” a reading series at the Ruskin Group Theater in Santa Monica now entering its 14th year. (Photo credit: Jim Brock / Courtesy of the author and Moon Tide Press)

Q. What does it mean to be a “literary citizen”?

It means not just being an avid reader and writer, but holding space and giving space to (and for) other writers, having an active community consciousness.

Q. You’ve been a longtime champion of SoCal’s writing community. How has supporting writers influenced or inspired your own writing?

Every month, I feel ignited by the courage of the writers who contribute to my show, Library Girl. I don’t hyper-curate and those who come to read open up and take chances, knowing they are in a safe place. Encouraging boldness in others and witnessing the results has given me permission to be more raw and honest in my own writing.

Q. What do you wish people knew about attending poetry readings and the like?

I don’t consider the show I create every month to be a poetry reading, per se. It’s intended to be a mix of genres, kind of like my book. That said, every series, every reading is different, has its own character. It’s important to keep a very open mind when attending.

Q. What did “Now You Are a Missing Person” teach you about yourself and the writing process?

Writing the book reinforced my impulse to trust doing things my own way. When I follow that impulse I am rarely let down. When I accommodate convention, I don't soar. Bending the forms was freeing. I had no model but always saw the book as needing to be written this way. Completing the book has been surprisingly healing.

Q. What's one piece of writing advice you always fall back on?

I have more than one piece!

Do it for yourself first, not worrying if anyone will like it.

Start with a question, not an answer.

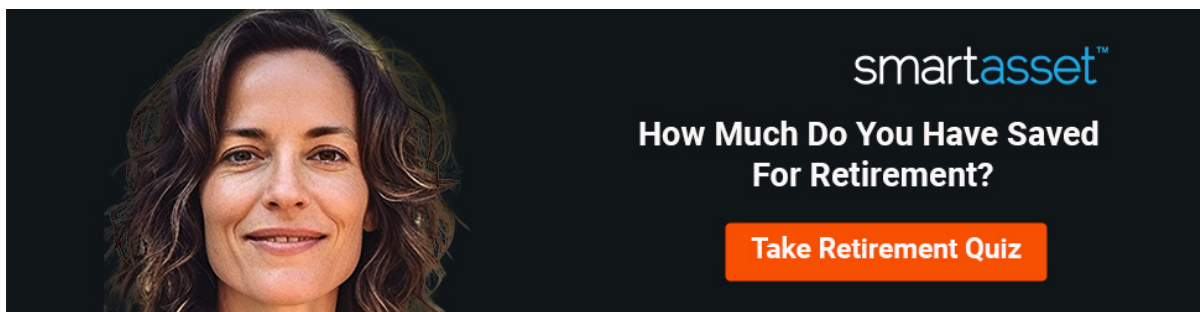
Make a visual collage with words and images before starting to write. That's what I do. It's the best way for me to collect my unconscious thoughts and concerns.

Q. Finally: What book or writer do you always recommend others read?

"A Moveable Feast" by Ernest Hemingway.

Please feel free to email epedersen@scng.com with "ERIK'S BOOK PAGES" in the subject line and your comments may appear in an upcoming newsletter.

Thanks, as always, for reading.



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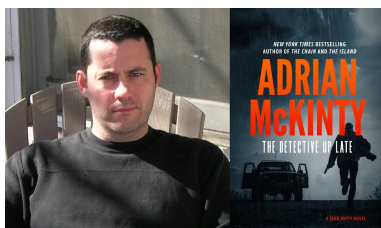


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Bye! (Getty Images)

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