

# Whiskers, Wags, and Woofs

## Short Stories, Poems, and Heartfelt Essays

A compilation by Michelle Rayburn and friends

These and other guidelines and tools are available at: [www.faithcreativitylife.com](http://www.faithcreativitylife.com)



**Pease read all guidelines prior to submitting a manuscript for consideration.**

### Target Reader:

This compilation of inspirational tales is crafted with the pet lover in mind, offering a diverse array of heartwarming stories that celebrate the extraordinary bond between humans and their furry companions. From stories of rescue and redemption to heartwarming accounts of companionship and unconditional love, each tale captures the essence of the unique relationships we share with our beloved pets.

Whether you're a seasoned pet owner, a passionate advocate for animal welfare, or simply someone who finds joy in the presence of cats and dogs, this book promises to resonate deeply. It invites readers to embark on a journey filled with laughter, tears, and heartwarming moments, offering inspiration and comfort in equal measure.

So, whether you've ever been enchanted by a cat's graceful movements or touched by a dog's unwavering loyalty, *Whiskers, Wags, and Woofs* invites you to immerse yourself in the world of furry companions and experience the magic of the human-animal bond.

### Examples of Topics Covered:

These are starter ideas, but be creative!

- **Tales of Adoption:** Heartwarming stories about the journey of rescue pets finding their forever homes and the transformative impact they have on their new families.
- **Unlikely Friendships:** Stories that showcase the bond between animals of different species, such as a cat and a dog or a dog and a rabbit, demonstrating the power of friendship and acceptance.
- **Heroic Acts:** Inspirational narratives of courageous cats and dogs who display extraordinary bravery in the face of danger, saving lives and proving that heroes come in all shapes and sizes.
- **Comedic Capers:** Light-hearted tales filled with humor and mischief, featuring the playful antics and misadventures of spirited pets that never fail to bring laughter and joy to their owners.
- **Healing Paws:** Emotional accounts of how the unconditional love and companionship of furry friends help individuals overcome adversity, cope with loss, and find solace during difficult times.
- **Feline Fables:** Stories that highlight the mysterious nature of cats, exploring their unique personalities, quirks, and the special bond they share with their human companions.
- **Canine Chronicles:** Heartfelt narratives that delve into the loyalty, devotion, and unwavering companionship of dogs, showcasing their remarkable ability to comfort, protect, and enrich the lives of their owners.
- **Adventures with Pets:** Exciting tales of exploration and adventure, where cats and dogs embark on thrilling journeys alongside their human friends, showcasing the joy of outdoor escapades and shared experiences.
- **Resilient Spirits:** Stories of resilience and determination, featuring pets who overcome obstacles, disabilities, or challenges to live fulfilling and inspiring lives, proving that nothing can dampen their spirits.
- **Pet Ministries:** Therapy animal programs, comfort dog ministries, or ways your faith intersects with being a pet lover. Illustrating the belief that God works in mysterious ways through the lives of animals.

#### Details:

All books in the Life Repurposed Compilation series include some sort of repurposing, regeneration, and renewal theme that helps people find hope in the trashy stuff of life. Look for ways to tie that in without being overdone (if it works). A little thread is good. Think of words like re-do, restart, do-overs, glimmers of hope, and discovering things about yourself that change you. The series is also faith-based, so inspirational application and themes are welcome.

This compilation will include a blend of short fiction, first-person essays, and poetry with the purpose of producing a wonderful gift book. Absolutely no AI generated stories or poems. Include humor wherever it feels natural. Sometimes a true story works better when told as fiction to protect identities of people, plus it allows some creativity!

**First-person true stories** of 1300–1800 words. (Please, no ghostwritten stories or as told to. Must publish using your real name.) No preachy tone or Bible study. These are essays.

**Short fiction** of 1300–1800 words. (Must publish using your real name.) Fiction will be labeled as such.

**Poetry** can include narrative poems that tell a story (might be rhyming or not), free verse, and clever humor (think limerick or lyric poetry). Please pay attention to meter if you use rhyming verse.

**You may submit multiple pieces for consideration, but there is no guarantee of being published.**

U.S. authors only.

### **Timeline:**

Deadline for submissions is June 22, 2024. Absolutely NO late submissions.

- You will be notified of acceptance no later than July 12, 2024.
- You'll receive a PDF of your chapter to proof by August 10, 2024 or sooner with any corrections to be submitted within ten days.
- Your contributor copies will begin going out on preorder during the week of August 26, 2024. (They take up to 2–3 weeks to arrive.)
- We'll have an official virtual launch party around September 18, promoting the book with lots of time in advance of holiday gift giving. (Details later)

### **Rights and Publishing:**

Submissions to *Whiskers, Wags, and Woofs* are one-time rights (whether reprint or new) to be published in a print paperback book and in an e-book with the possibility of an audiobook. You may use your submission elsewhere since you own the rights to your piece. You may use a previously published article or blog post as long as you own the rights for using it and if you edit it to fit the length and audience for this book. Contributors will receive a contract that spells out rights and permissions.

If your submission has been published elsewhere, please specify this on the submissions form.

This will be published under the imprint owned by Michelle Rayburn: **Faith Creativity Life Books**. It will be available for sale on Amazon and other online retailers in the print form and on Kindle for the e-book. It will be distributed by Ingram.

Contributors will have a bio appearing at the end of the book, and they may also include a link to their website in that bio (or to **one** social media platform).

### **Compensation:**

Each contributor will receive 2 free copies.

### **Wholesale Purchasing:**

Contributors may purchase books at a wholesale price of 50% off the cover price plus 10–12% shipping. Orders will have a minimum purchase of 10 books.

Those will be direct shipped from Amazon to the author after payment is made to Michelle Rayburn via a credit card. Wholesale re-orders will be available to contributors as long as the book is in print. Orders take approximately 2 weeks to arrive.

Example: \$15.99 cover price. Authors purchase books at \$8.00 each plus shipping. They may re-sell them at cover price or price them as they wish.

### **Marketing and Publicity:**

Publicizing the book is a team effort. Authors will receive graphics or Canva templates to share on social media and other promotional materials. It is understood that if you submit to the project, you agree to share about the book on your social media channels and email list.

### **Submission Guidelines:**

Manuscripts will be reviewed for consideration and authors will receive one of three responses:

- 1) An acceptance along with a contract.
- 2) A request for further edits before receiving a contract.
- 3) A thank you for submitting, but we don't think the piece is the right fit.

All submissions will go through an editing process, and the author will have the opportunity to view a PDF proof before it goes to print to check for typos. Writers must follow the writers' guidelines and format as requested to be considered for publication.

All submissions will be sent via a Google Form where there is also a place there to upload your Word Document. (No email submissions will be accepted.)

**[Click here for the Submissions form for Whiskers, Wags, and Woofs](#)**

### **Document Setup:**

- Download the FCL Books Word template document from [the submissions info here](#).
- Submissions **must** be in a Word document with the author's name included in the title of the document. Set up Word with:
  - Times New Roman 12 pt. font.
  - 1-inch margins all the way around.
  - Double space the document.

- Indent the first line of each paragraph .3 using the paragraph formatting **and not tabs or spaces at the beginning of paragraphs.**
- Use only 1 space after a period.
- Insert your name and email in the header of the document. (See template.)
- Insert your name below the chapter title exactly as you'd like it to appear in print.
- Include a bio of 50–75 words at the top of every submission (see Word template).
- Please **do not** use bullet points in your story. But do insert subheadings to break up nonfiction chapters or use \*\*\* to indicate a scene break in either nonfiction or fiction.

### Editing Notes:

- You may use em dashes without a space on either side.
- Try to avoid using ellipses if possible.
- Please follow the guidelines of the *Christian Writer's Manual of Style* and the *Chicago Manual of Style* when self-editing your work.
- Deity pronouns (him, he, me, my, his, you, your) are lowercase.
- If you quote any Scripture, the **New Living Translation** is the translation of choice. Suggestion: check BibleGateway.com to make sure you're using the most recent version in your quotes. Copy and paste is the best way to ensure accuracy.
- If used, please put Scriptures in quotation marks as run-in citations with the reference following the quote (no long block quotes or Scripture inserted on lines by itself). Correct example: "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).
- Please check to make sure small caps stay on LORD if you insert a verse.

### Tips for Making Your Submission Stand Out:

- Follow the guidelines for submission.
- Show vulnerability and authenticity.
- Make your writing engaging and help the reader feel part of the story.
- Be creative and fun in titling your chapter.
- Use clever subtitles throughout your nonfiction chapter to break up the text and capture the reader's attention.
- Use dialogue to show rather than tell.
- Use creative nonfiction techniques to tell a story and capture the reader's interest.
- Write with the reader always in mind. The book is for them, even if it's your story.
- Tell a story in a way that connects with a reader's emotions; make them laugh, cry, get chills.
- Start with a strong hook. Do not give away the ending in the opening!
- Know where you're going with your story and artfully unfold it.
- Avoid controversial issues, political topics, or denominational topics.
- Share specifics, rather than generalizations. Unpack it for the reader.

If you haven't been able to find the answer to a question in this document, which is now longer than a college application, please send an email to [michelle@faithcreativitylife.com](mailto:michelle@faithcreativitylife.com) 😊

I look forward to seeing your contributions!

Michelle

### About the publisher of this project:



**Michelle Rayburn** is a successful indie author and is a copyeditor, cover designer, and typesetter for other authors. She has won multiple awards for her books. *Life Repurposed*, the first compilation she published in 2021, received honorable mention in 2022 for the inspirational gift book of the year in the AWSA Golden Scroll Awards. *Renewed Christmas Blessings* achieved #1 New Release status on Amazon. Learn more about Michelle at [www.michellerayburn.com](http://www.michellerayburn.com) or about Faith Creativity Life Books at [www.fclbooks.com](http://www.fclbooks.com).

### Praise from writers who have been part of an FCL Books compilation:

“Having been a contributor to two of Michelle Rayburn’s amazing compilations, I couldn’t be happier with the experience. Michelle is a fantastic cheerleader, excellent editor, and makes the entire process fun. I have loved reading the final products, seeing a topic from so many different points of view, and enjoying the sense of community with other like-minded writers.”

“Working with Michelle Rayburn is a real treat. She is professional, approachable, and gracious, and her compilations reflect that. Her talent and creativity cause each contribution to shine like a gemstone in the perfect setting.”

“Professional, organized, goal-oriented and thorough each time . . . She offers appealing marketing tools and easy to implement strategies. Most of all I appreciate that her goal is to honor Christ and draw people to him. I trust my own reputation in her hands.”

“The entire process was so well-organized. Michelle provides clear guidelines and due dates, communicates effectively with contributors, and produces a beautiful, professional book that writers are proud to be part of.”

“Michelle has been a true professional. She does what she says she’ll do. She explains everything that’s going to happen which was so important to a rookie like me. . . . The whole process was enjoyable!”

“Michelle took my story and smoothed it out so it flowed better. She’s a wonderful/knowledgeable editor, easy to work with, and wants only the best for her authors. I look forward to submitting to future anthologies!”

“As one who loves this kind of teamwork and has collaborated on nearly twenty such books over the last several years, covering a variety of topics and with numerous publishing houses and overseeing authors, I find Michelle’s work to be outstanding. . . . Being one of her authors has brought me an abundance of joy!”

“Michelle created an opportunity to experience a fun project from start to launch. Not only did she stretch me to write my best, she advocated for me in the mailing process. The launch was a breeze with memes and giveaways and created a great teamwork atmosphere. I'm grateful for the journey!”

“[Michelle] encourages, equips, and motivates us to do the best work we can do from the submission process to marketing the book. . . . I'm very grateful to the Lord for being a part of *Renewed Christmas Blessings!*”

“Michelle Rayburn is gifted at bringing the best out in all her author friends. Being in her compilation books is an honor and a joy. She is a gracious, godly leader. Michelle is organized, talented, professional, AND terrific at marketing too!”