

Sandy Reay, Author

February 2023 Newsletter

Love.

I blame Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, the Lone Ranger, and Tonto for my love of horses.



Living the Dream

I worked for a company that was downsizing. They offered a year's salary to anyone willing to quit. A friend had the opportunity to buy back her horse ranch in the mountains from her ex-husband. She never had to put the worm on the hook. I wriggled onto the bank and climbed the line.

Too late, I heard the old joke: How do you get a million dollars ranching? Start with five million.

My childhood dream of living on a horse ranch in the mountains didn't last. But I learned a lot.

1. Horse ranching in the mountains bears no resemblance whatsoever to anything you've ever seen on TV or in the movies.
2. Pine trees do not automatically grow with branches high enough to ride under. You learn to duck. With luck, you only have to get hit in the head once.
3. Don't ride horses into a bog. Bogs like to hide in low areas with tall grass and ambush clueless riders.

4. If a horse kicks you on your ribs above your belt line, it will crack a couple of ribs. You may not realize it if you are flying through the air at the time.
5. Landing on your back in a bog is a lot like landing on Grandma's feather bed, except for the horses bucking around you.
6. If you're lying on your back with a couple of cracked ribs, there are three things you can NOT do: you cannot breathe, you cannot call for help, and you cannot sit up. You *can*, however, roll onto your stomach to get up, if you are agile and sufficiently motivated.
7. Not being able to breathe while lying on your back under four bucking horses is sufficient motivation.
8. The second-worst thing you can do with two cracked ribs: walking your horse back to the barn in no-longer-new cowboy boots. The worst thing: riding your horse back to the barn. Whoever said, "If you get thrown, get right back on the horse," has never been thrown in a bog. Or tried to get back in the saddle with mud-slick clothes and two cracked ribs.
9. A good friend is one who will help you get on and off your horse even if you are covered in mud.
10. A *really* good friend is one who will clean the mud off your saddle while you're getting your ribs taped.

The Sinister Umbrella

I'm writing **The Sinister Umbrella**, a novel about a young woman whose life is destroyed in a car accident and her struggle to build a new life. It's a young-adult horror story, with a twist (or three).

Several alpha readers and critique partners gave me feedback on the first five chapters. I wrote the first draft for the next five chapters, and Chapter 6 has been critiqued. Chapter 7 will be submitted for critique on Feb. 24, and critiqued the Thursday after that.

It's not too late to become an alpha reader. If you haven't read the first five now-edited chapters and want to, reply and tell me you want to **read SU**. Then you can tell me what to write and why. Critique comment at the end of chapter 6: **Yes, now we have a thrilling motive and I can't wait to see what happens next!**

Another recycled resolution: finish the memoir. I hoped my writing class would inspire me to to finish my memoir, and it did. **You Are the Road that Led Me Home** has been in progress for almost twelve years. Now, I'm learning new writing techniques that help me put emotion in words when the subject's painful and my first reaction is to pull back.

And, I used one of the non-fiction techniques from my writing class in this month's story. If you liked that true story, you might like my poem, **Coming to Colorado**.

My monthly (I hope) email.

“Any day of the month is still monthly.”—the “chronically-late” Sandy Reay. I still have to do my taxes. If you hear screaming, you'll know why.

If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put “unsubscribe” in the subject or text, before the next email. I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email, which should be around St. Patrick's Day.

Necessary blah blah

I add content to my website at random intervals and mention what's new on the home page. You could check out [my author website](#) to see what's new. For those of you who are worried about the “Not Secure” message at the top: that means I didn't pay for a certificate because I don't do online commerce. All my websites display information. I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me**. (I've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.)

[Sandy Reay, Author](#)—ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, works in progress, and a long-overdue memoir

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#)—songs and poems written and co-written by “Sandy Reay and Friends” with an online Cowboy Poetry Book: [Another Horse to Saddle](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Productions](#)—info about all the other websites plus concerts and songwriting workshops by national touring songwriters, including Buddy Mondlock and Dan Navarro. Hint: Buddy and Dan will be back this summer for concerts and songwriting workshops. Keep watching this site.

[AcousticByLines](#)—when and where you can see/hear musicians, co-writers, and Sandy (sometimes)

[YouTube Sandy Reay and Friends songs and poems](#)

Follow on Facebook:

[Sandy Reay, Author](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#)

[AcousticByLines](#)

[Crash the Collie](#)