

Sandy Reay, Author  
**May 2023 Newsletter**

The word for this month is may.  
I may get my songs and novels done.



## What's New?

The last weekend in April, I went to the Pikes Peak Writers Conference. One of the speakers talked about subtext. Until that session, I thought “subtext” was a word that Richard Castle, fictional fiction-writer, used. It was beyond my comprehension. “Subtle” and all related words are not in my vocabulary.

I took photos of the slides, got ideas to use in *The Sinister Umbrella*, and wrote them down.

Two weeks later, I downloaded my photos to transcribe the contents of the screens and my hand-scribbled notes. Just one of a list of chores I had to do. While scrubbing the shower, I thought about subtext. And nearly poisoned myself with “grout cleaner” which should only be used with a mask, rubber gloves, and goggles on a breezy 70+° F day with all the windows open and a fan blowing.

The resulting brain-fog led me to an **AHA!** moment. SUBTEXT IS A CRUCIAL PART OF SONGWRITING. Prose writers call it “show, don’t tell.” Songwriters call it “sensory writing.”

If the first song that popped into your head is “Feelings,” you need to learn about sensory writing. Fortunately, you’ll have two opportunities this summer. I’m hosting two songwriting workshops this summer. Dan Navarro on June 25 and Buddy Mondlock on July 16. I’ll lead sensory writing exercises before their workshops, during the potluck lunch, for the people who want to play with words.

**Sign up now to attend. Space is limited.**

**See Dan Navarro and Buddy Mondlock in concert this summer.**

## The Sinister Umbrella

I’m writing 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 touch of humor and a twist (or three). There’s more info on my website. Just click on the link above.

At the writing conference, a panel of three authors/agents critiqued the first 16 lines of the book. Last month, I spent more time on those 16 lines than on the next chapter to be critiqued. With my notes from that critique and other presentations, feedback from my regular critique group which ran a week late, and my nightmare-come-true plot hole in Chapter 9 that will require revisions to all previous chapters, I did the most logical thing—I ignored all the feedback and started Spring cleaning.

It's not too late to become an alpha reader. You can sign up to read the first eight critiqued and edited chapters. Reply to this email and tell me, "I want to read SU now." If you want to wait to read the first 9 chapters after I apply all edits, reply to this email and tell me, "I want to read SU after you get caught up. So, get busy."

Latest feedback:

"Good voice/ tone to start out and set the scene."

"Wow, can't wait to see what happens next!"

### **My monthly (I hope) email.**

Whatever day of the month is still monthly. I'm working on it. Three days in the recording studio, three days in at the writers conference, decorating and cleaning projects, time spent with my 12 year old collie, and a psycho neighbor who bulldozed my property have taken up a lot of my time. If you want to know more about my psycho neighbor, you can read [The Saga of the Dead Deer](#). If you want to know more about my songwriting, you can visit [Colorado Sandstorm Music](#). If you want to read past newsletters, check out [Archives](#).

If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put "unsubscribe" in the subject or text. I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email, which should be around the Father's Day almost-Summer blizzard. I love Colorado. The weather is a lot of things. Boring is not one of them.

### **Necessary blah blah**

I add content to my website at random intervals. Check out my author website (link below) to see what's new on the home page. 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've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.) I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me** and even then, I only keep your name and email.

[Sandy Reay, Author](#)—ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, The Sinister Umbrella blog, and a long-overdue memoir, You Are the Road That Led Me Home

[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: friends and co-songwriters, and (maybe) Sandy

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

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Crash the Collie