

Hi, [Firstname]—

I'm contacting you after coming across your profile and realizing that you agented [Book Title] as well as [Book Title]. My name is Catherine Baab-Muguira, and I'm a writer who's contributed to New York Magazine's The Cut, Playboy.com, Salon.com and FastCompany.com, among others. My June 2016 Quartz essay, "Millennials Are Obsessed with Side Hustles Because They're All We've Got," has been shared on Facebook more than 50,000 times and also became the focus of an April 2017 episode of NPR's On Point.

I've just finished a nonfiction book proposal that I believe may be right up your alley – one that comes with some nice proof of concept, too.

In September of 2017, my essay, "Edgar Allan Poe Was a Broke-Ass Freelancer," ran on The Millions. It quickly became one of the site's most-popular articles of the entire year, and was picked up and shared by blogs and magazines including Publishers Weekly and Arts & Letters Daily. Even Michiko Kakutani liked the story on Twitter.

But that piece was just a small excerpt from a much larger project I've been working on. It's called How to Say "Nevermore" to Your Problems: Surprisingly Great Life Advice from Edgar Allan Poe, the World's Most Miserable Writer. To put it glibly, it's the world's first ever self-help book based on Poe. It's one part Alain de Botton's How Proust Can Change Your Life, one part Jen Sincero's You Are a Badass.

As you might expect, I've had a lot of book ideas over the last few years, but I ran with this Poe idea because the commercial potential was obvious to me from the beginning. Poe fans are legion: He has four million fans on Facebook alone, and there are Poe museums in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Richmond, Virginia. Demand for works of Poe biography and criticism has stayed strong for nearly 200 years. And yet, while so much ink has been spilled, no one has ever looked to Poe for advice on how to live a fulfilling, worthy life. This unique, new angle occurred to me when I was suffering from a nervous breakdown in 2016 – which is the starting point for this book and puts some of the "narrative" in the narrative nonfiction.

My hunch is that you'll like the voice and the direction I've taken with this premise, so I'm attaching my proposal and first chapter. If you'd like to discuss them, you can reach me by email at [emailaddress] or at [phone number]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thanks again, and all best,

Cat

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Author and Poet Donna Gordon and the Desire to Put Words Together

Author and Poet Donna Gordon joins Queries, Qualms, & Quirks this week to discuss switching from poetry to prose, the impact of mentors, a long interruption of her writing career, how her visual art helps her writing, needing to write, learning to put herself first, going from being a writer to an author, the stamina it takes to write and sell a book, and collaborating with people who can see things you can't see.

Donna Gordon is a Cambridge, MA-based writer. She graduated from Brown, and was then a Stegner Fellow at Stanford, a PEN Discovery, and Ploughshares Discovery. She was a 2017 Tennessee Williams Scholar at the Sewanee Writers Conference, and a fellow at the Vermont Studio Center in 2017 and 2018. She received the 2018 New Letters Publication Award for *What Ben Franklin Would Have Told Me*, which has been named by the Independent Book Review as one of the top 45 they're excited about for 2022.

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