

# The Future of the Forward Motion Writers' Community

written by Holly  
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By Holly Lisle

*Note: I created the Forward Motion Writers' Community in its first iteration back in late 1997 or early 1998, and was both its administrator and a very active participant for about five years. That has changed. The following is my letter to the community, posted Nov. 13th, 2003.*

There's a scene in **Talyn** where Talyn is offered the choice between a magnificent banquet that represents just about everything in the world, including power and adulation on the one hand, or on the other hand a single canteen of cold water and a sword.

She is a warrior, and the warrior's way is not the banquet, the adulation, and the power. With real regret but also understanding of who she is and what she must do to continue to be who she is, she chooses the cold water and the sword.

I find myself with the same decision. This place is a writer's banquet, and for some years now it has been a home for me – a place to be as well as a place to pay forward. It has been one of the driving forces in my life, sometimes a compelling addiction, sometimes a hideaway from the frustrations of work. I am tremendously pleased with how it has turned out – how much the community as a whole has embraced paying forward, how very alive this place is. It has brought all of you here, and you are individually and as a group, proof that there are good people on the Internet, and that good people gathered together can do some amazing things.

But on the other hand, there is cold water and a sword.

My heart, my head, and my gut have all been telling me for a couple of years now that I need to get off the Internet. When I write, my mind twitches between the fiction I am writing and the article I could do about the fiction I'm writing, about the useful lesson I have just figured out, about the thing that just happened that I could blog. Every time it twitches, I stall.

I'm not a teacher. I'm not a non-fiction writer. I'm not a blogger. I write novels. They're my sword. And I find that in spending too much time at the banquet, my fighting skills are suffering, my sword is blunted, my focus is scattered.

It's time to take up the sword again, to sling the canteen over my back. It's time to go.

I wanted to tell you all goodbye. To thank you for being a huge part of my life for these last five or so years. I want to encourage you to keep writing, to believe in what you're doing, to pay forward so long as paying forward doesn't damage your work.

I want to reassure you – Zette has proven to be superb at administrating this place, and come the first of the year (unless she wants it sooner) the place will be hers. The community is still growing and it has grown beyond me. It is its own place now – not my place, but Forward Motion. And while the fact that it continues to add members is good, a much more important fact is that its members are working. You're helping each other, you're moving toward publication, setting goals and meeting them, writing stories and books and sending them out. I look at your Pilgrimage pins and your badges of accomplishment, and remember when some of you came here having never finished anything, and see that you've now finished a novel or several, or short stories, or articles in **Vision** and know you'll be doing more. You're wonderful.

Zette is, too, and though she is not thrilled with this unexpected bump, the community could not be in better or more dedicated hands. Starting now, any donations go directly to her. Please also continue to support **Vision** with your articles – some of you came here because others of you took the time to share what you had learned, and some of you are writing because others of you had just the right piece of inspiration to get each other moving. **Vision** for the last three years has been tangible paying forward, and its current issues and archives are rich and deep because you have made them that way.

Your domain is paid for for the next ten years – I took care of that when I got FM its own site. Because the software licenses are non-transferrable and I haven't yet been able to work out an exception, I'll maintain contact with the software manufacturers for the chat room, the community calendar, and the boards, so you'll stay with current software, and won't have to buy anything new until you're ready.

Please know that leaving is not easy for me. Over the past two or maybe three years, I have come right up to this point numerous times – my heart and my head and my gut don't get together on too much, and when they do I know I should listen. But I didn't want to. I'd talk to Zette, I'd talk to Sheila, I'd try to figure out ways to keep the community going once I was gone, and then I would back off. I wanted to be with you, so I stayed.

But I keep coming back to my dilemma: the banquet, or the water and the sword.

I'm older, the writing is physically more demanding than it was ten years ago, I have very little work time, I cannot afford the twitches in my mind that take me from story to article to blog entry to website.

It's time I listened to myself. Time I did what I have known

for quite some time now that I have to do.

With my love, and my best wishes, and my hopes that someday if I run into you at your booksigning or at a con where you're a guest, you'll tell me "I was at Forward Motion, and I'm doing this full time now," I'll say goodbye.

Be well. Believe in your dreams. Help the next folks coming up the mountain behind you. Thank you for sharing these years with me, and making them wonderful. Thank you for **being** wonderful. Know that I will miss you more than words can convey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holly". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a long vertical stroke extending from the bottom of the 'y'.

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