**Crime pays**

*Comedy, not so much*

Medium has been a godsend, allowing me to write what I want, when I want and paying me for the privilege. Without a steady-earning husband, I might not eat much protein—but I can earn a few greasy dollars every week as a writer and I love it.

There’s just one problem. I make pennies for essays, comedy and poetry (yes—even comedic poetry!) and hundreds for crime.

Incest, murder, rape, mutilation and dismemberment. Vanished people. Molested children. I could go on, and in fact I do—but the truly horrific aspect of true crime is that the worse the criminal (e.g. The World’s Most Prolific Serial Killer) the more people want to read all about it.

*The old saying goes: if it bleeds, it ledes.*

*My new saying: if there’s cannibalism, there’s an audience*

**People read poetry on Medium**

I’m not complaining. Far from it, I love that one of my poems has nearly 200 readers! And I’m sure some of those poetry fans had a smile on their faces by the end.

Plus, poetry takes seconds and may even inspire someone to write her own (or his own) poem.

I was heartened when I discovered that Medium has not one, but several, poetry pubs.

But a 32-second poem doesn’t measure up to a 7-minute story in which you are dying (pun intended) to see the killer caught and punished. And to see a picture of his, or her, ordinary looking face.

Stories on the death penalty seem to do well, too. Maybe it’s because the subject is controversial? Justice denied, revenge exacted, or in the case of the state of Alabama—executioners who can barely tie their shoes, much less dispatch killers without controversy.

*The old saying: Poetry is what’s lost in translation*

*The new one: Murder speaks all languages*

**Essays: the death knell**

Is this an essay? I dunno. If it is, it’ll get the lowest readership possible. The only piece of writing that tanks harder than an essay is the Personal Essay.

Let me speak plainly: Personal essays are metaphorical kryptonite

Apparently. I am incredibly dull. More likely, I’m neither famous nor notorious.

My opinion on topics ranging from presidential bravery to why I wake up at 3a.m. is about as interesting as a bowl of oatmeal, y’know the kind made with water but raisins, brown sugar and the adorable pitcher of cream.

I am the plain oatmeal of personal narrative writers. I sometimes mull over whether fame would change this. Yes, if I were Meryl Streep or Michael Cohen or the ghost of Truman Capote….then my opinions about blood sugar would fly.

*The old saying: Everyone will have his 10 minutes of fame*

*The new saying: You’re not that interesting, girl*

I’m no towering intellectual but I am sincere? Or am I? Now I wonder if my sincerity is a lie.

**The bottom-of-the-barrel line**

I know a lot about serial killers and child molesters. At the same time, I am an empathetic person and solid citizen and if I hadn’t read the horror of murder, I would remain naïve. Perhaps my knowledge has saved me.

I definitely don’t pull over at abandoned rest areas, walk alone without a weapon (pepper spray, a knife) or camp without a setting up a perimeter. I am highly suspicious of lone men sitting in pickup trucks at parks.

I’ve looked up all the local child molesters on my state’s sex offender registry (you should, too).

My poems will keep flowing. I will surely write a sequel to The Attack of the Fall Leaf Blowers because recently I became aware there is a machine that doesn’t just blow leaves off your lawn, it sucks them up and pulverizes them! A woodchipper for tree detritus? Who knew??!

Despite my encyclopedic knowledge of spree killers and black widows, I remain unjaded. The world is mostly full of wonderful people just trying to make their way through, in the words of Prince, “this thing called life.”

RIP, the artist formerly known as Prince. Your poetry added sparkle to this world.

*The old saying: Write what you know*

*The new one: Write what you know, and if that happens to include horrible people—go for it!*