

Susie Bright's Journal *Donation FAQ*

Why do you ask for donations to publish your blog?

Because this is how I make my living: writing and publishing. The donations I receive make this blog tick.

But other bloggers don't ask for handouts!

I know many people publish private weblogs, for their own pleasure, family, and friends. I enjoy many of those diaries, and I sometimes wish I had one for myself!

But this is a public blog, a little magazine, where my first consideration is my audience, and my peers. I have the same standards for this blog as I do for any of my books, scripts, or performances.

Why don't you make money publishing books, like you always have?

Publishing is in freefall.

90% of the bookstores that I once sold my work in, twenty years ago, are closed. The most influential and famous bookstores in America have shuttered their doors. There's no there there.

Book-reading is an esoteric activity today. The chance that I will have a runaway best-seller and film option deal is Cinderella-like. I'm lucky to still be working in the publishing industry at all, since technology and economy have turned it upside down.

What do other writers say?

I work with hundreds of writers every year, from the famous to the unknown, and there's not one of them that hasn't been profoundly threatened or discouraged. We've all gone through the seven stages of grieving, with the most popular being gob-smacked denial.

What about writing for magazines or other web sites?

Newspapers and magazines have had massive layoffs as well.

Internet publishers often expect writers to donate their time. I left *Salon* and *Bust*, for example— both periodicals I like and respect— because I couldn't afford to keep work-

ing for them. They're considered stellar by others for paying anything at all. But it's not my side gig— it's my everything.

I was paid much more— to write much less— a decade ago. Nowadays my writing reaches millions more readers, and is duplicated endlessly, but it doesn't compensate for even a fraction of its influence.

Can you go on the road, make an income from touring?

For those of you who're musicians, I know you're laughing at this question. Touring takes youth, stamina, and risk. It will destroy your health, eventually, no matter what you're made of. Money-wise, it's the highest trapeze act of all. For families, it's a nightmare.

I love the attention, and I've done my fair share, but I cannot stay out on the road.

You make it sound so bleak.

It is what it is. For writers who've supported their families for years on a centuries-old system, the dismantlement has been quite the shock. We have to either get out of the business, or reinvent our compensation along with the new technology.

Do you blame the New Media?

No, I'm part of the change on the reader side, too. I read, watch and listen prolifically on the Web, and rely less and less on paper. I don't blame readers for going where the action is: I did too! I keep thinking if we can find a way to hang on by our fingernails, it'll come around to something artists can live with.

But aren't you famous— isn't this a non-issue for you?

Notoriety has nothing to do with making money. If I had a dime for every orgasm, every intellectual epiphany, every tender moment and belly laugh I inspired... yeah, I wouldn't be the only one as rich as Midas.

Why do we have to “donate,” as if you're some charity case? Wouldn't Amnesty International or the homeless family down the street be a better choice?

I agree with you. I'm not satisfied with this system either.

"Donation" has an often-pitiful connotation to it, and I don't mean to imply that characteristic at all. I'm not dying— and someone else needs the wood.

I'd rather you to pay me the way you pay for any of your media and artistic pleasures.

I also sell advertising. You could make some money or hay for both of us if you chose that route.

When I find an attractive way for readers to buy or subscribe to my blog, I will jump on it. But it doesn't exist yet.

In the meantime, I need to post as often as I can, with quality, style, and originality, to make the blog successful.

But I don't have any money to give!

Great, neither do I.

When I do get a little money to spend on reading, art, music, or media, I often think about supporting independents, because I know they aren't kept in business any other way.

It shouldn't be up to individual strained consciences to keep the arts alive in America, or to promote creative and provocative journalism. It's an untenable situation. But, here's the rub: THERE IS NO PUBLIC SUPPORT. We have to stay alive in the meantime.

Corporate support, in its current incarnation, is *filthy*. I can't write what Coca-Cola wants me to write, I don't want to go to bed with Mr. Liquor, Miss Antidepressant, and Mr. Cigarette, either literally or figuratively. I've already had my stories killed in major magazines because some guy from Hanes' Pantyhose didn't like my political point of view! That's just one of the more comical tragic examples.

I don't fuck corporate sponsors and I don't write to their specifications— that puts me in rare company. When you come to my page, you're never going to be dipped in shit. Integrity is all I've got, and that's what I'm asking you to patronize.

So you want us to be your patrons?

For the time being, yes. I will bestow upon you my gratitude, my best work, my freebies, my loyalty. But most of all, you get the pleasure of seeing good work, undiminished and uncensored.

How long have you been at this?

25 years.

Is anyone else in your family in the arts?

No, not professionally, I'm the first one.

How often do you work on this blog?

Virtually every day. There's the writing, editing, and choosing stories. And then design, technical demands, reader support, advertiser work, and collaborating with other bloggers.

It's more like running a small magazine than anything else.

I would like to work on it five days a week, with some editorial assistance and other contributing editors, but that's not possible, yet!

What else do you do to earn a living?

I write and edit books, stories, and scripts, I teach classes, I perform, I consult. If one of them carried the others, that would be lovely, but it's a rare occasion.

How do you intend to retire?

I don't have a clue. Please send me your advice.

Do you support other bloggers?

Absolutely. They are the bedrock of intelligent, current news, opinion, and sexual information. I can't imagine politics or sex today without my favorite bloggers— subjects that the mainstream media has utterly failed to understand or appreciate.

Are you going to focus your blog in the future to single issues, like erotica, or sexual politics?

For the time being, I like the mix, and the readers seem to, as well. You need a good [eggnog recipe](#) or [naked ice dancer](#) from Japan every once in a while.

Do you take requests?

Absolutely. The feedback I get is essential. Write me, at my [email address](#) anytime.