

## JULY 2017 BEHIND THE CURTAIN JOURNAL ENTRY

### EXAMPLES OF THEMES IN WRITING

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I previously wrote about the value of understanding themes in writing. I promised a follow-on post to help make the idea more concrete. Here are examples from my three biographies:

- **My biography about Russian teen Nina Kosterina:** Nina lived during the birth of Communism in Russia and the oppressive/dangerous Stalin years. Themes that emerge include courage, choices, freedom (or lack of it), coping, love, friendship, duty to family and country, and loss of innocence. And those are themes just focused on Nina personally. There are other larger themes that come from what was happening in the country for those two decades of her life.
- **My biography about Robert Wadlow:** Robert started to grow rapidly as a little boy and became the **world's** tallest person as a teen. The story of his life uncovers themes about being different, prejudice, coping with challenges, family and fortune/misfortune.
- **My biography about Elijah Lovejoy:** Elijah was an abolitionist editor who lost his life defending his newspaper press from a pro-slavery mob. There are themes of courage and bravery, prejudice, suffering, anger, fear, faith, freedom and truth.

I'll come back to this again to share details from some of my picture book manuscripts I'm creating. If I'm struggling with a piece, I find it always helps if I go back to making sure I'm clear about the central themes.

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