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Writing as a Gift

By Jenna Glatzer

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What am I supposed to give Anthony as a wedding gift? I asked Kristin, my bridesmaid and person-who-was-married. I mean, what kinds of things do brides give their grooms? I was thinking of hiring someone to clean the house before we left for the honeymoon so wed come back to a spotless house. Is that a good wedding gift?

Um, no, she said gently, so as not to make me feel like an idiot. It should be something personal. Like, you could paint him a picture, or make a scrapbook, or write him a poem...

A poem? Why, I had at least a dozen poems Id written about him that hed never seen. And if I wrote a few more, Id have a whole chapbook!

Thats exactly what I did. Over the next couple of months, I wrote more poems. I wrote the final one the day before our wedding, capturing my feelings on the eve of our marriage. Then I printed them out, three-hole-punched them, made a cardstock cover, and tied the pages together with ribbon.

On our wedding day, I took him aside after our ceremony and read him the last poem. It was a perfect gift.

But you dont have to wait for such a monumental occasion to use writing as a gift. One of my friends writes childrens books and illustrates them, then gives them to her grandkids on their birthdays. A successful greeting card publisher started out her business because she used to write original cards for all of her family and friends they loved them so much that they encouraged her to offer her sentiments to the masses.

Ive also donated personal essays to anthologies, just so I could give the book as a gift to the person the essay was about. I wrote a love letter to Anthony and sent it off to be published in the anthology Love Letters of a Lifetime, then gave it to him for Valentines Day.

Writing as a Gift

A poem I wrote for my grandmother was made into a plaque by the James Lawrence Company. A poem to my mother was made into a plaque as well, which I gave her for Mothers Day.

For my bridal shower, a family friend gave me two journals: one for Anthony, one for me. On the card, she wrote her instructions: We were to write in our journals every day, and exchange them on our first anniversary.

Your words dont have to be published to be gifts. You can design your own prints, cards, banners, and books on your computer, or go truly hand-made and pick up a pack of construction paper and markers.

If you want to get fancy, you can hire an artist to make you a cover or design your work for you. Finding them couldnt be simpler: try Googling illustrators, graphic designers, or artists and see for

yourself!

You may write and self-publish your family history as a gift for all your relatives and future generations. Print-on-demand companies make this an affordable option if you shop around and do away with the extras.

You may use a program like Greetings Workshop to design a calendar. You can insert your own photos and poems or short sentiments, and even write in your own imaginative holidays.

Write your own romance, starring you and your significant other, as an anniversary gift. (Could be a short story, or a novella if youre feeling ambitious!)

Write a story to be read every Christmas as a new family tradition.

Write an inspirational poem for a relative whos in the hospital.

Write a limerick to stick in your daughters lunchbox.

At the local printer, a personalization shop, or several places online, you can have your words made up into a t-shirt, mug, poster, bumper sticker, magnet, or plaque. Its wonderful to find that strangers enjoy your published words, but it can be even nicer to find that your words can light up your childrens eyes, or your spouses, or your parents. A gift of your talent and your heart is generous, and more meaningful than anything you could get at the local mega-mall. Spend some time today writing for someone you love.

Jenna Glatzer is the editor-in-chief of Absolute Write (

). She has written for

hundreds of national and online magazines, and her latest book is MAKE A REAL LIVING AS A FREELANCE WRITER, which you can find at

. Find out how to get a FREE

editors' cheat sheet with this book!

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Online Gift Certificates

By Simon

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Yes.

Holiday shopping season is here, again. Again, it is time to roll out your wallet and start worrying about your gift choices as well as your bank balance.

Choosing the right gift for the right people has become a hassle that people increasingly want to avoid. Gift Certificates from gift vendors that carry a wide variety of gift selections may be the answer to our prayer.

Happy Holidays!

Simon Lim, about

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