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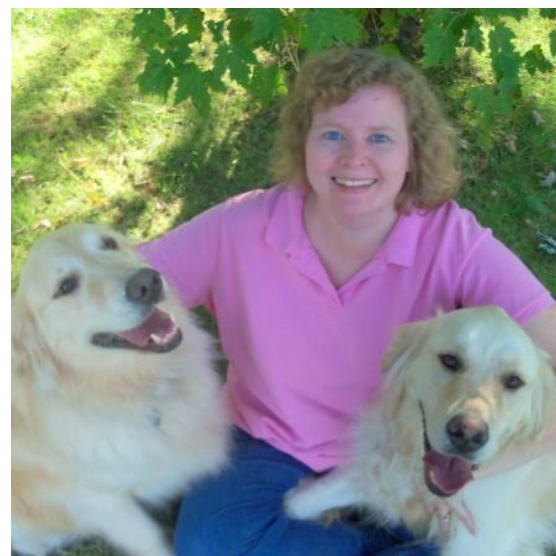
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Author Brette Sember on Balancing Blogging and Book Writing

by Susan Johnston on Apr 2 2012



Veteran freelancer and author [Brette Sember](#) has contributed articles to over 140 publications and written over 40 books on a variety of topics. Her latest book, [The Muffin Tin Cookbook: 200 Fast, Delicious Mini-Pies, Pasta Cups, Gourmet Pockets, Veggie Cakes, and More!](#), was published by Adams Media this spring. She's also a prolific blogger.

Ebyline caught up with Sember to find out how she juggles so many topics and mediums.

Nowadays, authors and publishers are obsessed with the idea of platform, especially as it applies to blogs and social media. But it's hard to juggle constant blogging and tweeting with actually writing a book. Any thoughts on this?

They are completely different animals and it puts such a huge burden on authors to do it all and be everything to everyone. You become a writer because you like to write, but you find that you have to learn all these other skills as well, and that really you spend most of your time doing things other than just working on manuscripts.

And then when you have a great idea for a book, you realize no one will care unless you can show you have a platform. It can be really distracting, and I know a lot of authors who just feel overwhelmed by the social media demands and feel they can't find the time to actually write.

You've written about divorce, cooking, and several other topics. How do you transition between these specialties, both in terms of promoting yourself and shifting your language?

I also write college textbooks and have written books about pregnancy, adoption, seniors, business, and much more—I've got over 40 titles at this point. I like tackling vastly different subjects because it keeps me interested and engaged to be thinking about something different for each project. The primary theme that runs through all of my writing is helping people do and learn things, whether it is getting organized for a divorce, cooking in parchment paper, helping your parent decide about long-term care issues, or improving your reading skills in college.

My focus is always on making information, processes, concepts, and skills accessible and understandable. Really what I'm doing is teaching, I think, which is no surprise since my parents were both teachers. I started out writing self-help law

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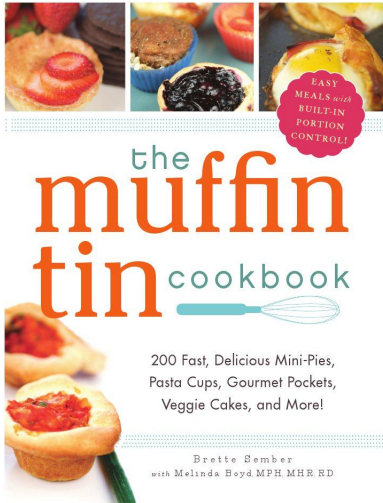
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books, which was all about taking complicated legal processes and boiling them down into step-by-step instructions so that people could file their own divorce papers, for example.

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You blog on your own site and for several other sites including Momma Said and Huffington Post. Journalists hear a lot about how they should be blogging, so how do you decide if a blogging opportunity is worth your while?

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I think there are three main reasons to blog: to promote a book, because it's a paid gig, or because it's a topic you are passionate about. I started blogging about food long before I had a book to promote, so for me, that was about writing to satisfy my own interests and passions. I also sometimes write about travel and decorating on my blog, which has nothing to do with my books. I blog about topics related to my books to keep on top of

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those topics and also to reach readers who might be interested in those books. And I have paid blogging jobs where I'm producing content for someone, which for me has replaced magazine freelancing.

Archives

What was your most unusual freelance assignment?

One of the craziest things I ever wrote was an article about how to use tea for home beauty routines. It involved brewing lots of tea and soaking, slathering, and generally making a mess with it all over myself. On my [MarthaAndMe](#) blog I've done all sorts of crazy cooking and home projects as well, which almost never end well.

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Susan Johnston

Susan Johnston is a Boston-based freelance writer whose work appears in Bankrate.com, The Boston Globe, The Christian Science Monitor, MediaBistro.com, Parade Magazine, and SELF, among other places. She is the author of The Urban Muse Guide to Online Writing Markets and blogs at [The Urban Muse](#).

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