

My Work Process at Can Serrat: The interplay of solitude and community enabled productivity for me. Mornings I shared coffee, then worked most of the day. If insomnia raided my bedroom, I could write in my room and sleep late. There were places for all my moods and modes for work on my project: “Second Wave Adventures,” a collection of fictional short stories set in the second wave of feminism in the southern United States of America. Two stories were accepted for publication by the time my residency began.

I worked from a list of ideas to write first drafts, saving the critique, revision and submission process for post-residency. I completed a first draft of six stories and submitted two works for comment in workshop. Off-theme stories sprang to mind and I gave in to the muse, drafting them too. The Rancón presentation day began the salón atmosphere I have always wanted to experience. The staff was very helpful when I asked for a prod or a poke, due not only to their individual natural compassion and wisdom, but experience with so many artists and their processes.

After the residency, I resumed critique, revision and submission, with more stories accepted for publication. Second Wave Adventures is now a 170-page manuscript of 24 stories. It was submitted to a prestigious competition in August 2025. I am seeking a book agent and have plans for a second collection.

**Excerpted from “Road to Nirvana”
An unpublished short story by DD Wilbrink, drafted at Can Serrat, May 2025**

[Texas, 1976]

... “Look at that!” said Honey, pulling me up toward the passenger window just in time to read a huge, homemade sign before we sped past, its iron beams hung with rusty metal letters:

RATTLESNAKES

EXIT NOW

It was then that the van made a new sound. *Kablam put, Kablam put, Kab...*

... We were all broke. It was late Thursday afternoon, and we wanted to get to Tucson by Saturday. It was a twelve-hour drive away, but that didn’t account for time lost hitchhiking.

Our spirits fell faster than the desert sunset. We knew our chances were slim if we stuck thumbs out as a foursome. He searched our faces, a handsome man with a strong build and thick blonde hair brushing past his shoulders. It would not be easy for him to get a ride, either.

I was frightened at the thought of hitchhiking alone. I had done it before and barely escaped a rapist; it was dangerous for a young woman with a nice figure and an easy smile. Having a man along would make it much safer. But what about Honey? She was in her forties, and her son, Spirit, just a growing boy. If Billy went with her, wouldn’t they find it difficult to get a car to stop for three people? If he didn’t go with her, would she and her child be more respected because of her age and motherhood? There were no good answers to this dilemma, no perfect combination to guarantee safe rides.

We were friends, able to discuss the options frankly. Honey said that I needed more protection; hitching with a man could provide that. I didn’t contradict her. We split up, with she and Spirit deciding to leave then. Billy and I watched them walk down the road until they were out of sight. I didn’t feel good about this, but I knew I would feel a lot worse if I were alone. I allowed the choice to be made that would most benefit me. Was the selfish choice the right one? “Ego” was a word that the meditation teacher had used with me; a word used to delay and delay me from the practice I wanted to be taught.

Now, confronting MY wants and needs again, I was very uncomfortable...