

## ONE MORE TIME WITH FEELING! VIDA'S 2011 COUNT IS HOT OFF THE PRESS.

In 2010, our organization, **VIDA: Women In Literary Arts**, took on a seemingly simple project: to count the rates of publication between women and men in many of our writing world's most respected literary outlets.

We decided to count as what we frequently heard people say about **gender discrimination in the publishing world was entirely anecdotal** (one of our favorite examples: the Established Male Novelist's comment to his reading audience that all is well with gender issues in publishing as he *personally* works out next to a Famous Woman Writer at his gym).

So we counted. **We made some very attractive pie charts** to illustrate some very disturbing numbers. And then we released the information, frankly wondering if anyone would pay attention to our discoveries.

**Pay attention, they did.**

**Immediately, the literary community went into hyper drive** responding to the information VIDA had gathered: furious debates over The Count took place in comment boxes, both nationally and internationally; women writers are discriminated against and should be righteously indignant; women writers are whiners and should simply write better books; women writers should write about more "important" subjects; women writers' subjects are just as important as male writers', dammit!; women writers' subject matter isn't inherently different than men's, it's just reviewed differently; women writers should submit more work to magazines; male writers should submit less; editors should actively solicit more work from women writers...

**VIDA's Count produced scores of responses**, from editors at the most prestigious magazines to undergraduate writing students' blogs—all wanting a share in a conversation that it appears many believe is necessary and long overdue.

**So this year we've done it again.** We hope VIDA's Count will go on annually until that glorious time when it is no longer needed.

**Here's the short version:** the publication numbers don't look markedly different than last year's. But we at VIDA aren't discouraged by this fact--we know that significant cultural change takes time.

We also know that this is a conversation that's not going away; when we talk to other writers, when we talk to our writing students, **we know things are in the process of changing for the better**, that our literary culture's consciousness has been raised. And we believe we've begun to see hopeful signs. Yes, many literary outlets still produced their phallogocentric Best Books list this year. But notice how careful most of them were to create some context for their lists' inherent subjectivity. **The word "Best" now has a permanent asterisk next to it, no matter where you line up in our writing community's gender debate.** And to acknowledge your bias is one step toward opening your mind. We've come a long way since *Publishers' Weekly* breezily dismissed the total absence of women in their top ten list of 2009.

But we at VIDA know there's more work to do and **we're committed to creating more opportunities for women writers in the future.**

We welcome you to VIDA and hope you'll join the conversation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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**VIDA: WOMEN IN  
LITERARY ARTS**

VIDA