

'Solitary Walker' Wins Reader Views Best Historical Fiction Award

N.J. Mastro's "Solitary Walker: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft," depicts how the first feminist struggled to become an author in a male-dominated world.

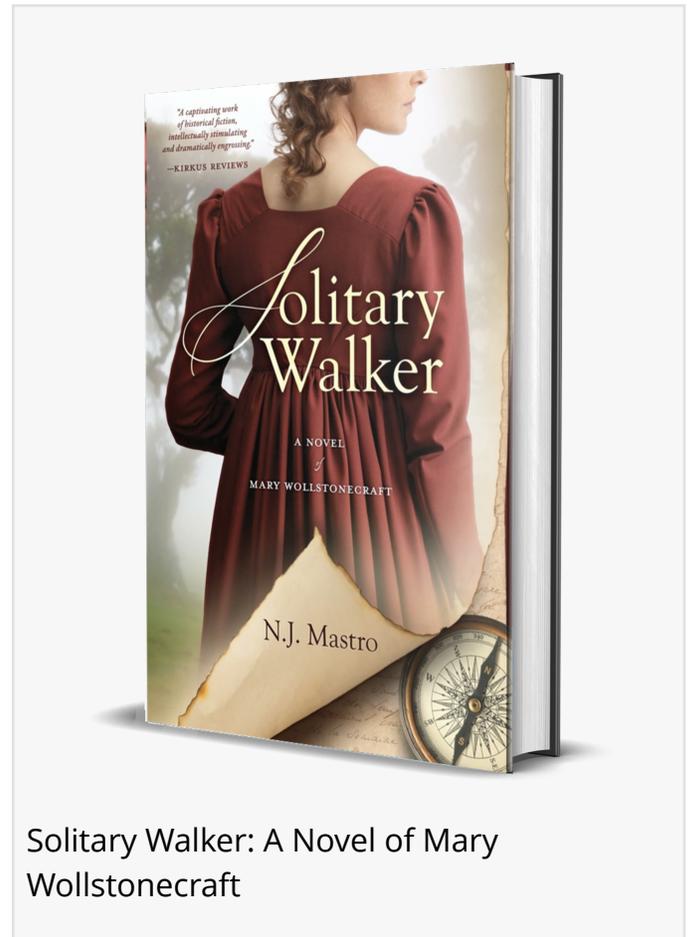
AIKEN, SC, UNITED STATES, March 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Mary Wollstonecraft may be best known as the mother of Mary Shelley, but she was a dynamic personality in her own right who defied convention by voicing her opinions about marriage and the need for women to have the same rights as men. Wollstonecraft is depicted in N.J. Mastro's new biographical novel, "Solitary Walker: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft" (ISBN: 978-1-68513-561-4, Black Rose Writing, 2025).

In addition to winning the Reader Views Best Historical Fiction award, N.J. Mastro has won the Tyler R. Tichelaar Best Historical Fiction Award in this year's Reader Views Literary Awards for "Solitary Walker: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft."

This debut novel blends fiction and biography to create an illuminating portrait of the woman described as the world's first feminist.

Mary Wollstonecraft was at the forefront of revolutionary ideas in late eighteenth-century England as a political writer, novelist, career woman, wife, and mother. Faced with family poverty, she set out to support herself—and by extension her family members—by working first as a lady's companion, then as a teacher and as a governess before becoming a writer. She wrote for newspapers, penned novels, and when the French Revolution erupted, wrote to support the need for equality among all men, followed by her most famous political treatise, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman."

More interested in intellectual pursuits than romance, Wollstonecraft believed marriage was



Solitary Walker: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft

detrimental to women and opposed it, but most men could not understand the kind of relationship she wanted. Mastro takes us into Wollstonecraft's thoughts as she attempts to befriend artist Henry Fuseli, who ultimately rejects her. Next, Mastro details how Wollstonecraft was persuaded into feigning marriage to Gilbert Imlay, only to have him abandon her and their daughter. Finally, Mastro deftly explores how Wollstonecraft found short-lived happiness with William Godwin before her untimely death.

Tyler R. Tichelaar, winner of the 2009 Reader Views Best Historical Fiction Award for his novel "Narrow Lives" and the award sponsor since 2010, says, "Solitary Walker" is "one of the most significant novelizations of a famous woman in recent years. Mastro offers a convincing portrait of just how daring Wollstonecraft was to try to live life on her own terms. Rather than place her subject on a pedestal, Mastro makes her someone we can all empathize with in her quest for acceptance, happiness, and justice for her sex."

Reader Views reviews more than 2,000 books each year by self-published and small-press authors. Its Annual Literary Awards recognize the very best of these up-and-coming authors. "Solitary Walker" joins a series of previous historical fiction winners on such diverse topics as pirates, opera composers, wars, and witchcraft. In addition, Mastro has also won the Autocrit Emerging Writer Award for a debut novel in the Reader Views Literary Awards contest.



NJ Mastro



Reader Views Literary Awards

Readers agree "Solitary Walker" deserves all of its accolades. Reader Views states, "the book delves into Wollstonecraft's inner life without presumption. We see her thoughts and feelings in a way that allows us to see Wollstonecraft as she might have been. The inclusion of actual letters and quotes from her and those around her added to the realism." Kirkus Reviews declares: "A captivating work of historical fiction, intellectually stimulating and dramatically engrossing." And Joan Fernandez, author of Saving Vincent: A Novel of Jo van Gogh, says, "I wept at the end. Mastro's meticulous research brings to life a heartbreaking tale An unputdownable novel and more."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

N.J. Mastro is a historical fiction writer and book blogger who publishes Herstory Revisited, a blog dedicated to biographical novels about audacious women from the past. Mastro has a master's degree and a doctorate in educational leadership. Besides being an experienced public speaker, she is an avid reader, master cook, and wine enthusiast. Originally from Minnesota, Mastro now resides in South Carolina.

"Solitary Walker: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft" (ISBN: 978-1-68513-561-4, Black Rose Writing, 2025) can be purchased through local and online bookstores. For more information, visit www.NJMastro.com.

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