

THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

WHISPERING SPIRITS



Fenrir Edition



About the Cover Artist

Angela Juhl is a watercolorist, writer, and multi-medium creative. Her writing has appeared in the *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* and in the journal of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR). She has an MA in English Literature, focused on the Gothic, and is studying Library Science and Children's Book Illustration. She and her art haunt Instagram under the username [the_autumn_gloaming](https://www.instagram.com/the_autumn_gloaming). For more from Angela follow her at [instagram.com/the_autumn_gloaming](https://www.instagram.com/the_autumn_gloaming)



THE STORY BEAST

Whispering Spirits

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October 2022

A Fenrir Edition



[They Had Got Hold of Her Cloak](#), Hans Peter Hansen, 1883

Folk and Fairy Tales by [Peter Christen Asbjørnsen](#),

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*[Old Woman Dwells](#), Arthur Rackham, 1907
The Ingoldsby Legends by Thomas Ingoldsby*

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LETTERS

Welcome to October

Hello, Boils and Ghouls! Welcome to *The Story Beast*, October Fenrir Edition! It is the scary season and the most wonderful time of the year for creatures, beasties, and things that go bump in the night. October is the first month of the new quarter and that means Fenrir, where we will share contributed articles and columns. The other two months of the quarter will be Fang editions. They will be mostly public domain stories with some columns from the editors and leads. In all editions, we will continue to display our Beasts of the month for stories, poems, and artwork. And this month we have some dead ones for ya, bwahaha!

We are actively seeking articles, poems, stories, and artwork for the Monthly Challenge. November's theme is Eternally Grateful, and December's is Guiding Lights. Works do not have to fit the theme. Good stuff gets published. We love the creative submissions we have received so far and encourage all of you to keep them coming. We are always working to improve *The Story Beast* with each new issue. This e-Pub is our gift to all of you. Please let us know what you like, what you don't like, and what you would like to see.

Thank you for entrusting your creative work to us to share with others. This is your e-Publication, so please send in your articles, stories, poems, and artwork. Also, please let us know how we are doing.



Thank you very much.

The Spirits of the Beast
storybeasteditor@gmail.com

Dearest Crone:

How do you get by? I see you always sitting by the side of the road and can't imagine how you're able to take care of your basic needs, let alone purchase any luxury items. I am struggling, and I feel like I'm working like crazy!

Tired and Hungry

Dear Tired and Hungry:

I do much more than sit around on my buttocks, bah! You are quite rude with such a question. Most likely, your tired state has scrambled your manners. Yet, I am always looking out for the weary traveler so perhaps I will show you some mercy. At least it appears you are no lazy bum. Only a misguided one.

We often compare ourselves to others when we are at our worst and they are at their best. You are doing the opposite in comparing my sitting around with your rushing about. As soon as you start comparing, you have created a nightmare. And that nightmare is one that will haunt you.

While I tend to choose daytime for helping those up on the path, I reserve nighttime for taking care of my basic needs as well as indulging myself in some fun. I question how you organize your day. Where are you putting your energy and efforts?

Many troubadours, minstrels, bards, rhapsodes, and griots have passed me by. I hear them mumbling about if only they could work for king so-and-so or queen whatcha-ma-call-it. That would solve all their problems. Or finding some blessed patron or noble to commission them. Bother! Do you think there is one magic soul to ease your burdens? No!

Consistency and perseverance need to be your kings, queens, and blessed patrons. You must take care of what will increase the coins in your purse daily. Not any of this once-a-week blather. Every day.

What could increase those coins?

- Individualized emails to past patrons.
- Calling or emailing friends of these past patrons.
- Listing patrons and merchants who have problems that you can solve through your art.
- Scheduling telepathic meetings (or if you lack this magic, there is something called “Zoom”) with these past and potential patrons.
- Applying for grants.
- Turning to businesses to commission you.

When these efforts have been expended, take time to develop and improve your art. And what of the Dewey Decimals? While 332 delves into Finance and Investments, you will want to roam towards 361 with Fundraising, Foundations, and Grants. In fact, if you are an individual, you can become fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and borrow their status to have access to more funds.

Still want your kings, queens, and blessed patrons? Does that make you feel busy and respected? Remember: looking busy and being busy are two different things.

That reminds me, I must sit by the road after taking so much time with you today. What? Did you utter such things under your breath? Oh, bother!

***Yours on the Road -
The Crone of All Crones***



THE STORY BEAST CHALLENGE



SUBMIT YOUR ORIGINAL

-Story

-Poetry

-Art

that follow the monthly issues theme
for a chance to be the featured

BEAST OF THE MONTH

2022 Challenges

November: *Eternally Grateful*

December: *Guiding Lights*

Submissions due by the first of the month before.

Submit to storybeasteditor@gmail.com

OCTOBER'S BEAST OF STORY

Whispering Spirits



How the Pumpkin Came to Have Its Own Particular Shape

By Tim Livengood

The pumpkin is the most indecisive of vegetables. It has never truly decided if it really wants to be a vegetable or if it wouldn't rather be a fruit.

In the earliest days of the world, when all of the creatures and all of the things of the world were deciding what they would be and how they would be shaped and the way they would live, the pumpkin could not decide.

The sky knew that it would be above the land and the waters, and the land was content to be below the waters and the sky. The birds knew that they would fly through the air (mostly), and the earthworm knew that its kind would live within the soil and avoid the birds. And yet, the pumpkin did not know how it would live.

The fox knew that its kind would live in the forest and hunt other animals, and the porcupine knew that its kind would live in the forest as well, but be so prickly that the foxes would leave them alone. The dog knew that it would live with people, and the people knew that they and their kind would farm and build. And the goblin people knew that their kind would live in caverns beneath the ground where they could scream and yell, in the way of goblins, and it would echo wonderfully well. But still, the pumpkin did not know what it would be.

At last, one day, the First Person came to the pumpkin patch, and spoke to the First Pumpkin. The First Person said, "Pumpkin, of all the things in the world, only you have not yet decided what you will look like and how you will live. You haven't even got a proper shape yet. Pumpkin, you must decide. If you are to be in this world at all, what is it that you will be?"

The pumpkin, although it is the most indecisive of vegetables, is also the most amiable. First Pumpkin said, "I know. We've tried, but we just can't decide. It's so hard. There's so many possibilities! I promise, just give us a little more time and we'll think of something, I'm sure of it."

First Person said, "Pumpkin, you have one more year. But by next year at the harvest time, you must decide what it is you that will be."

First Pumpkin and all the other pumpkins in the pumpkin patch tried very hard to decide what they would be. They tried being short and they tried being long. They tried being yellow and they tried being blue. They tried being round and flat, and they tried being cubes. And still, the pumpkin could not decide what it would be.

The evening before the next Harvest Day, First Person returned to the pumpkin patch and spoke with First Pumpkin. “Pumpkin! So, you have had a year in which to decide. Tell me, what is it that you will be?”

Although the pumpkin is indecisive, it is truthful. First Pumpkin said, “I’m sorry, but we just can’t decide. We’ve had a whole year, but even so, it’s just so difficult!”

First Person said, “Pumpkin, I understand, but you must decide. The whole world is waiting to begin, and the only one still not ready is you. Tomorrow is Harvest Day. You have one more night to choose your way of being in the world. Whatever shape you have and whatever you do when the Sun rises on Harvest Day, that is the way you will be in this world.”

The pumpkin is the most agreeable of vegetables, even though it is also the most indecisive, and so First Pumpkin said, “That seems fair. After all, we’ve had a whole year to think about all the possibilities. I’m sure that we will be able to decide upon something by morning if we just think hard about it.”

And so, First Pumpkin, and all the pumpkins, began very hard to try to think and to decide. First Pumpkin, and all the pumpkins, scooped their seats down into the dirt. First Pumpkin, and all the pumpkins, imagined that they had toes and then they began to tap them. First Pumpkin, and all the pumpkins, imagined that they had legs and then they began to pace back and forth, all over the pumpkin patch. But still they could not decide what it was that they should be.

Now, you might imagine that all of that scooching, all of that tapping, and all of that pacing about probably didn’t do anything at all to help the pumpkins make a decision. And you would be right. But that doesn’t mean that it had no effect on the world. Way down deep underground, in the caverns of the goblin people, all that scooching and toe-tapping and pacing shook clumps of dirt from the ceiling, which fell down on the Goblin King, who was right in the middle of performing a concert of his favorite screams. He was at the very best part, with his head tipped way back to make a particularly wonderful scream, when a clot of dirt fell in his mouth and down his throat and made him choke.

Well, nobody likes to choke on dirt and nobody likes to be interrupted, especially not kings. The Goblin King sputtered and coughed and choked until he could get his throat clear. Then he shrieked, “Who dares to interrupt me in the middle of my best scream? Let’s teach a lesson to anyone up top who thinks they can make dirt fall into MY mouth and stop my screaming and get away with it!”

The goblins tunneled their tunnels up to the surface and into the pumpkin patch, where they began to shriek and scream and complain and yell at all the pumpkins. Pumpkins, being the most amiable of vegetables, tried to understand what was going on and what they might have done to offend the goblins. However, the goblins weren’t interested in anyone’s apology; they just wanted to make trouble. They screamed and shrieked and yelled and bullied the pumpkins, and began to make a terrible mess! They got louder and meaner and nastier the longer they were at it.

Now, the pumpkin is the most indecisive of vegetables, and it is also the most agreeable, and it is also the most amiable; but even a pumpkin can only put up with so much. At last, First Pumpkin could not stand the noise any longer, and so he lifted himself up and went “splock!” right down on the head of the Goblin King, and wrapped himself around the Goblin King so that he was trapped inside.

Seeing what First Pumpkin had done, all the other pumpkins did the same thing to every other goblin. “Splock! Splock! Splock! Splock!” they went, trapping every goblin inside a pumpkin, and every pumpkin had a goblin trapped inside.

You might have thought the goblins were angry before, but being trapped inside of pumpkins did not calm them down one bit, and they became even angrier. The goblins began to scream even louder. As they screamed, they began to heat up. The pumpkins began to inflate with all those angry hot screams, so that they grew big and round and they began to turn yellow and orange and red because they were filled with all those hot screams. The goblins got angrier and angrier, until they got so mad that they began to spit their teeth into the pumpkins, “ppt! ppt! ppt!”, all flat and white and filling up the insides. The pumpkins didn’t like it, and even though pumpkins are indecisive, they can’t abide rudeness, so those pumpkins would not let a single one of those nasty goblins get out.

And that is just the way the pumpkins were, when the Sun rose on the Harvest Day. The pumpkin became forever what it was on that morning, and the goblins became forever trapped inside the pumpkins, the way that goblins still are today.

Now every year, when the harvest time approaches, the goblins remember how they came to be trapped inside the pumpkins. And as they remember, they begin to get angry, inflating the pumpkins and getting so mad that they spit out their teeth, flat and white and filling up the space inside the pumpkins. The pumpkins get bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and turn white, and yellow, and orange, and red. The goblins press their face up against the sides of the pumpkins and try to get out. But though you sometimes can see a goblin’s face on the side of a pumpkin, the pumpkins still manage to keep those nasty goblins bottled up inside, so that they never -- well, hardly ever -- get out.



About the Author

Tim Livengood is a Hoosier by birth, a Marylander by abode, and a storyteller by habit. He learned to tell stories the traditional way, by listening to his father exaggerate. Tim tells original stories in a folkloric style, as well as the occasional true story of adventure, which is a euphemism for poor planning.

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To be retold in the reteller’s own words in educational or professional settings with attribution.

OCTOBER'S BEAST OF POETRY

Whispering Spirits



WOLFMAN

By Mike Dailey

It was snowing that night when he finally revealed
His true inner self and the feelings it yields
He loved the young woman, should he tell her soon
How he changed on the nights when there was a full moon

Down on four legs though he swore to be true
He drooled at the thought of what he would do
If she felt his presence, if she turned around
If she started to run would he run her down
Would her lips taste as sweet as when first they kissed?
Would he save her for later, would she even be missed?

She looked up; she noticed a smell in the air
The smell of the wild and wet of dog hair
He listened; his hearing was better this way
And he thought to himself, every dog has his day.

To be retold in the reteller's own words in educational or professional settings with attribution.



About the Author

Mike Dailey is a poet in southeast North Carolina living near Sunset Beach with his wife of 50 years. His poems have been published in numerous magazines and anthologies. His poetry can be serious, topical, or very moving but he is known more for his rhythm and rhyme poetry with a twist of humor. He has had three books of poetry collections published.

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OCTOBER'S BEAST OF ART

Whispering Spirits

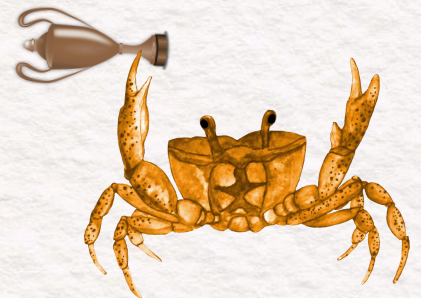


Mayuri

by Rohit Bhasi

About the Artist

Rohit Bhasi is a Bangalore based visual artist with a deep interest in the myths, folk tales and social beliefs that add so much colour to our part of the world. Rohit's work is focused on viewing and interpreting the ancient and the timeless through a contemporary lens and making sense of the world around us through a more vintage perspective. His work is available on [Instagram](#) and [Behance](#).



OCTOBER'S BEAST OF HONOR

Whispering Spirits

The Old Woman with Pointy Fingers

By Eldrena Douma



About the Author

Eldrena Douma grew up in the pueblo tribes of the Laguna, Tewa, and Hopi. Her experiences as a teacher and her Native upbringing made a powerful foundation for her work as a storyteller. A recipient of the prestigious John Henry Faulk Award, she travels the country sharing her captivating stories.

Ba Deh Koh was a young man who decided to return to his family's house in the mountains. The thought of his childhood home falling apart saddened him.

When he was younger his parents raised him and his siblings on their tribal land. He learned to work hard to help his family and community by learning to hunt, grow crops, cut down the lumber needed for his family's needs, and other tasks. But when jobs were hard to keep and hard to find, his parents moved the family to the city.

Left behind were family members and friends, so the thought of returning was exciting, even though he and his dog "Liver Boy" were the only ones going back. It would be a time spent repairing and fixing up the run-down house and planting a garden just like old times.

The first stop was the community store to pick up food and supplies that would be needed for the first week. When he was little it was referred to as the "Old Trading Post" but there was no longer trading going on, just buying and selling.

As he was checking out, the cashier remembered him and his family but more importantly where they once lived.

As the young man talked about fixing up and eventually staying at the house with his dog, the cashier let him know that the old lady with the pointy fingers had been seen in the area of his family's home and land.

"The old lady! You don't believe that story, do you?"

"Why, I sure do! Especially since so many dogs have gone missing since she was spotted. You know the old ones used to tell us that there would be a time when she would return to the bottom of the mountain. They say that you can hear her as she approaches because she makes a noise that is irritating and makes the dogs go crazy! Just be careful, lock your doors, keep the curtains closed at night and keep a close watch on Liver Boy! By the way, why do you call your dog by that name?"

"Well, whenever he goes hunting with me, his favorite thing to eat is the liver. So, as a reward for good hunting we share that meal together."

"Oh, okay, I ask because some old timers used to say liver was the favorite food of the old lady."

Off Ba Deh Koh drove and even though he knew the story was not true, he could not get it out of his mind.

"Irritating noise huh, I don't like irritating noises!"

As the days passed, the house was looking good. He fixed the roof, replaced the windows and doors and made sure they had strong locks. But he forgot the curtains!

"Oh well," he thought, "I will get them when I go for more supplies in town."

Next, he cut enough wood to sell and to use for the winter months in case he decided to stay.

When he went to his field, he noticed that something was taking his crops. Whatever it was, it left footprints and what appeared to look like something that was being dragged.

One hot day, he opened the windows to let the mountain air in. After supper and a hard day of work, the young man fell asleep on the couch.

He awoke to the growls of his dog. When he opened his eyes, the dog was standing by the front door. Without thinking about the time of day, he opened the door and Liver Boy darted out as if to chase after something.

When the dog could no longer be heard, the young man ran out calling its name. Then he heard the most irritating sound that vibrated through the air. All at once his dog came running past him from the woods. He turned and ran after it thinking that it was hurt. But it wasn't -- it was just frightened!

As they both ran into the house one went under the bed and the other locked the door quickly and waited in the dark room on the couch.

The sound of footsteps came onto the porch. A step, then drag, step then drag. It was at this time that he realized that the windows were still open. But it was too late. There was a silhouette of a hunched over woman standing in front of a window.

Her hands came up around her face as she peered inside. On both hands, her pointer fingers seemed to have very long fingernails like SPEARS!

"Go away," he shouted! "Leave us alone!"

"All I want is something to eat," she said. "I know you have what I want!" Her words only added to his fear.

Liver Boy came out from under the bed and was ready to fight. It ran to the door scratching on the bottom to be let out. The old lady began to laugh and say, “Here, doggy, come out to see me!”

The young man reminded himself that his grandmother always told him to stand up to what he feared, “But I don’t think she ever met the old lady with the pointy fingers,” he thought.

Still, he got the courage to face his fear. He tied his dog up and told it to stay. “I have to do this on my own,” he said.

The young man stepped out onto the porch. And looking right at him, two arms-length away, was a pitiful looking old woman, with the longest spear like pointer fingers that he had ever seen. When she looked at him it was as if her eyes were magnets. He could not look away.

Then, he lifted up some dried meat as an offering in friendship. The old woman grabbed at it and devoured it as if she was starving.

That action changed the young man’s thinking about her.

“Why, you’re just an old hungry lady,” he said.

“Yes, I am! What did you think I was?”

And he told her the stories that everyone spoke about her.

“People, they fear most what they don’t understand.”

“One last question I have: why do you have such long pointy fingers? You could hurt something or someone with those.”

“Oh these,” she said as she lifted one up and pointed to him. He stepped back as she started to approach him.

“Don’t be afraid, stand still and just listen!”

With a quick flick of her wrist, one of her long pointy fingers came up to her lips. As she moved her finger up and down, the most irritating sound could be heard.

This work is not to be retold or preformed.





-BEAST FEAST-

A bounty to share.

*From ghoulies and ghosties
And long-leggedy beasties
And things that go bump in the night,
Good Lord, deliver us!*

-Traditional Scottish Prayer



STORIES



The Mansion of the Plates (Japanese Legend)
Woodcut by Katsushika Hokusai, 1830.

[A Haunted Temple – Japan](#)

[Demon Girls of Ujae – Marshall Islands](#)

[The Evil Water Spirits – Native American](#)

[Leelinau, the Lost Daughter - Native American](#)

[The Man and the Ghost - Tibetan Folktale](#)

[The Spirit of the Singing House - Inuit](#)

[The Story Spirits – Korea](#)

[Why Trees Whisper - Estonia](#)

STORY COLLECTIONS

[English Folk and Fairy Tales](#) - Lots of fabulous stories await including some tales to add to your Halloween repertoires. Goblins, witchcraft, and ghosts are waiting for you just around the corner. Boo!

[Japanese Legends About Supernatural Sweethearts](#) - Seven supernatural stories from the land of the rising sun.

[True Irish Ghost Stories](#) by St. John D. Seymour and Harry L. Neligan, 1914. Visit with banshees, poltergeists, and apparitions if you dare!

[Vampire and Ghost Stories from Russia](#) - Six stories to make your blood run cold.

[Victorian Ghost Stories](#) -Twenty-two ghost stories from such spectral luminaries as Bram Stoker, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Charles Dickens.

BOOKS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

[The Empty House and Other Ghost Stories by Algernon Blackwood, 1906.](#)

There are lots of places to visit here, A Haunted Island, Skeleton Lake, The Wood of the Dead, and more...if you dare!

[Fairy Tales and Folktales of the Irish Peasantry](#) - Edited by W. B. Yeats and published in 1888 the stories are here to enjoy, courtesy of Sacred Texts. Revel in tales of the Merrow, Changelings, Pookas, Fairies and Banshees, Saints, Priests, Giants and Devils, Kings, Queens, Earls and Robbers; Yeats covers them all!

[Great Ghost Stories](#) by Joseph Lewis French, 1918. Beware of The Withered Arm, visit The Deserted House and you will leave asking, What Was It?

[Indian Ghost Stories](#) by S. Mukerji, 1917. Step inside to meet the Messenger of Death, The Boy Possessed, and others in these eleven supernatural tales.

[Korean Folk Tales: Imps, Ghosts, and Fairies](#) by James S. Gale, 1913. Visit with Ten Thousand Devils, The Awful Little Goblin, and more mysterious creatures from Korea.

[Told After Supper](#), 1891 by Jerome K. Jerome. Seven ghost stories told on Christmas Eve.

SOMETHING EXTRA

[10 Horrifying Demons and Spirits from Japanese Folklore](#)

– “Oni (demons) and yurei (ghosts) have played a role in Japanese culture for thousands of years, and stories of new spirits continue to be told today. Much of this list is comprised of hannya, which in Noh theater are women whose rage and jealousy turned them into oni while still alive. Here are just a few tales of demons, ghosts, and women you don't want to mess with.” While the full stories are not within the text there is enough information to help you with additional research.

[Halloween Games for the Classroom](#) - A collection of fun and educational Halloween games, printables, activities, and curriculum for grades K-5.

[History.com - How Ghost Stories Became a Christmas Tradition in Victorian England](#)

“Like most longstanding cultural customs, the precise origins of telling ghost stories at the end of the year is unknown...But, according to Sara Cleto, a folklorist specializing in British literature...the season around winter solstice has been one of transition and change. “For a very, very, long time, the season has provoked oral stories about spooky things in many different countries and cultures all over the world,” she says.”

[Scarecrows and Halloween: Fingerplays and Songs](#) –

Sometimes our audiences are filled with wee ones, and we must be ready with sillier rather than spooky stories. This blog post is filled with fun for the littlest story listeners.



Resources Provided By...

Karen Chace an award-winning storyteller, teaching artist, workshop leader, and author. Since 2002 she has taught the art of storytelling to over six hundred students. She is the recipient of the LANES Brother Blue-Ruth Hill Storytelling Award and the National Storytelling Network's Oracle Service and Leadership Award.
www.storybug.net



-TAMING *the* BEAST-

The Art of Crafting Stories



A LEGEND OF THE WILLOW TREE

A Japanese Tale

Once upon a time a humble willow tree with gnarled and twisted branches grew near a tall and stately companion called the bamboo tree. Many people who passed by stopped to admire the shapely bamboo, but no one seemed to notice the old willow tree.

One morning when the sun shone brightly after a soft rain, a timid little plant with a delicate stem sprang up between the two trees, and looked pleadingly toward the straight, strong trunk of the bamboo. But the bamboo tossed her plummy foliage and said haughtily, “Do not look to me for help. I shall not let you cling around my trunk.”

“Let me take hold of you until I grow a little stronger,” begged the little plant. But the bamboo drew away and said, “Keep away. I cannot allow you to cling to my beautiful branches.”

Then the kind old willow tree whispered through her leaves, “Do not be discouraged, little one. The sun is shining, and the soft rain will come to refresh you. Come to me if you like and grip your little green fingers into my bark. Do not be afraid. In the shade of my branches you shall be protected. Come.”

The tiny plant still looked longingly toward the handsome bamboo. But at last she crept over the grass to the old willow, and began to twine around the sheltering branches. Up, up, the slender vine climbed to the very top of the tree. There it tossed out so many lovely green shoots that the people who passed stopped to enjoy its beauty. And when the early fall days came large buds appeared on the vine.

The bamboo looked at the swelling buds and said, “I wonder what those ugly knobs on the vine mean. Perhaps she has brought some disease which may affect all the trees of the country.”

The willow made no answer to the bamboo, but in her kindly way she whispered to the vine, “Do not feel hurt; I know what the swelling buds mean.”

There was a gentle rain at night, and in the morning the sun shone radiantly in a clear sky. The green buds which covered the vine burst forth into beautiful, sweet-scented blossoms. From crown to foot the old willow tree stood bedecked with glorious colour. The owner of the land called his friends to see the wonder. They looked in amazement at the richly coloured blossoms. Then the master called his labourers and told them to clear a space about the willow tree.

“Cut down the bamboo tree that we may see the beauty of the vine.”

“It is a very fine bamboo tree, master,” said the head servant.

“Yes, it is, indeed,” declared the master, “but there are many other bamboo trees equally fine, whereas no one has ever seen a vine with such a wealth of lovely blossoms.”

So the labourers cut down the haughty bamboo tree, and left the willow and the flowering vine to be admired by many, many people.

*This work is available to all
in the public domain.*

–STORYCOLOGY–

Storytelling for Environmental Awareness and Action

“We believe that the future of humankind depends on our stewardship of the Earth and that storytelling plays a major role in educating, informing, sparking conversations, and moving people towards taking actions for a more sustainable world.”





TREE STORY

by Bowen Lee

The wonderful Linda Yemoto, storyteller and former park ranger, told the audience at Eth-Noh-Tech's recent show on the environment, *Handle With Care: Earth!*, that the best way for people to connect with nature, and therefore take good care of the environment, was *shinrin-yoku*, Japanese forest bathing.



I looked it up. Forest bathing is a walk in the forest. It sounds suspiciously like tree hugging or just going on a hike and being out in nature. But it is very different. So different, there are ministries of health in Japan just for forest bathing, which is prescribed by the Japanese government to counter the ill effects of crowded, high stress, urban living. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese take up *shinrin-yoku* as forest medicine to improve their health and well-being.

This practice provides multiple health benefits from being among trees, such as lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, higher immune system functioning,

increased energy, decreased depression, anger, and anxiety, and stress reduction, walking through a forest gives people a deep appreciation of the forest.

If something is taking good care of you, you naturally want to take good care of it. Even though Japan has the highest density of humans in a city, with 11% of the country's population living in Tokyo, that's 6,158 people per square kilometer as compared to 1,800 people per square kilometer in New York City, two-thirds of the country is covered in forest. From one end to the other, there are 3,000 miles of forest in Japan. 3,000 miles of deeply revered, respected, and well cared for forest.

Ok. This makes me sit up and pay attention. If people have found a very positive benefit to nature that they want to keep, that's a good thing for the world.

I am regularly walking through the woods. At least 4 days out of 7 will find me near trees. But this isn't shinrin-yoku. Forest bathing is a conscious awareness of the biotic and abiotic world you find yourself in. It is full sensory awareness of the natural surroundings. It is learning the story of the forest. To do this, one must listen deeply and feel profoundly what nature is telling you.

And nature speaks when you listen.

There is a famous tree in Point Lobos State Reserve here on the central coast of California. I have walked by it dozens of times. People have painted it, photographed it, written poetry about it. I barely ever looked twice at it. It was just an old Monterey cypress to me. But after reading about shinrin-yoku, I stopped one day and just stood with it for a good half hour. I noticed the buttressing that gives the Monterey cypress its characteristic twisting branches. The tree will counterbalance the wind by growing supporting branches like the flying buttresses of a cathedral. I noticed how a quarter of the branches dug into the hillside like cables fastening the tree on the cliff. I saw the great rift in the trunk where half the tree fell into the ocean, not long ago. And I suddenly burst into tears.

This 300-year-old tree had been through a lot, had been damaged and torn and had to fight to stay on its perch above the sea. And yet there it remained, the Old Veteran, still a home for many living beings, still an inspiration to those who stop and listen.

Since then, many people have confessed to me they have been moved by the Old Veteran. A biker traveled all the way across the country to see it and made it the cover photo for his book about military veterans. My friend Paul Reps took a photo of the tree before it split apart. I cried when he gave me this picture; I had never seen the tree when it was whole.

After my experience with this one tree, I have done forest bathing every week, and I hope to keep up the practice. Walking in a forest with awareness, trying to learn the story of the natural world there, is a profound and moving experience. I suspect it has changed my life.

Reciprocity is one of the keys to a sustainable world. I can think of no better way for people to take better care of the world, than to have the forests of the world take care of us. Shinrin-yoku benefits our good health, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, and who wouldn't appreciate that and want to make sure we always have healthy forests for our good health? So go take a slow walk in the woods and listen to the stories of the trees.



Storycology Head Editor

Bowen Lee divides her time between cities, forests, and the ocean around Monterey, CA. She has been a teacher, a writer, an illustrator, and now, she tells stories, incorporating storytelling into all aspects of teaching. She conducts workshops on storytelling to teach educational content in national and regional education conferences.

<https://storyrex.com>

-TEACHER TALES & TENTACLES-



Teacher Tales & Tentacles

Books are important in the classroom. Sometimes we storytellers avoid books whenever possible as we often assume that then we will read the stories rather than tell them. We find moments to embrace books within performances, such as when we tell literary tales, which require asking for and receiving permission and giving proper credit.

Storytellers and story teachers can do more than the obvious. Mary Hamilton has shared insights on using wordless books in the classroom. If you are a teacher, then you already can do these activities within your classroom through fair use. If you are a guest storyteller, you will still want to follow the normal procedure of getting permission.

Many wordless picture books exist. The bibliography included has been updated and gives a hint of where you may want to start. While the assumption would be that using wordless picture books is perfect for early elementary students, remember that people of all ages enjoy imagery and visual art in combination with oral storytelling.

Standard of the Month:

The United States is unique among TIMSS countries (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) as there is not an official, nationally defined curriculum. Many states have similar standards, phrases, or words in their curricula; therefore, it seems there is a national standard but there is not. Please check the standards of the state where you will be teaching or performing. Search by the featured phrase or word from the standards.

Creativity Within Each Discipline is considered a skill that improves ideas, seeks innovations, and develops problem-solving. Usually, people link creativity with art classes or creative writing. But you will find that every subject has some level of creativity within the curriculum standards. No matter what type of story is featured in the classroom, the act of creativity can justify the presence of storytelling.

National Site to Find State Standards: <https://www.ed.gov>

Building Storytelling Skills with Wordless Books by Mary Hamilton

Storytelling is not a memorization and recitation activity. Such an approach confuses it with dramatic recitation. Storytelling is a dramatic communication art. When retelling a folktale, for example, a teller needs to be able to retell the story using his or her own words, not memorizing and reciting the words found in a single print version of the tale. Many beginning storytellers do not trust that they have the ability to retell a tale in their own words, but when challenged to tell the story in the wordless book, they discover they are perfectly capable of coming up with words that tell the story.

In introducing this exercise, I am careful to model the difference between identifying what is in the pictures and telling a story. For example, “There’s a boy and there’s a frog” sounds like a list or a mere identification of images. “One day a boy and a frog were walking together” sounds like a story. Students I’ve worked with have readily grasped the difference when they hear it and are ready to retell the story from the book they examine.



The Exercise:

1. I model the difference between a list/image identification and a story using a few pages of a wordless book.

2. Partners (or trios, but not larger, because sharing the book would be a problem) look at a wordless book together without telling the story aloud. So, they learn what happens before putting words to the happenings. This is akin to using a storyboard as part of the learning process when working on a retelling of a folktale.

3. Then I ask the partners to go through the book again, taking turns telling the story, changing tellers with each page turn.

4. The exercise closes with the partnerships/trios sharing their retelling of the story to a larger group (whole class or a couple of other partnerships/trios). During this retelling, they are showing the pictures to their audience while they are telling the story in words.

Note: This exercise can also be a solo endeavor, but I've observed that those who are hesitant to talk do so more comfortably when working with a partner/trio.

Criteria for Wordless Book Selection:

- **Length – short** (as compared with wordless graphic novels)
- **Plot – present** (as opposed to wordless books that are concept books with no plot)
- **Plot line must be strong**, not simply a list (“they went, and then they went . . .”) of event retellings.
- **Ease of understanding** – Some books are more demanding than others (for example, wordless books by Barbara Lehman require much more “figuring out” than wordless books by Mercer Mayer). But I do avoid wordless books that would take days of study to understand because this activity is typically conducted within a single class period.
- **More books than are necessary for any given group** – Sometimes a book is just not a good match for a particular partnership/trio, so I like to have alternatives readily available.

Sampling of Wordless Picture Books (see next 2 pages for Bibliography):

When searching your own library's catalog, “wordless books” and “stories without words” may prove useful search terms. Some of these authors/illustrators have several wordless books, though we have featured only one or more here. “Nearly wordless” are also listed. Titles range from 1971 to 2020.



About the Author

For over thirty years Kentucky native **Mary Hamilton** has sparked the imaginations of story listeners from Florida to Alaska, including three featured performances at the National Storytelling Festival. With her straightforward “just talking” style, Mary creates performances for varied audiences of all ages and venues. www.maryhamilton.info

Wordless Books

Aruego, Jose and Ariane Dewey. *The Last Laugh*. New York: Dial Books, 2006.

Becker, Aaron. *Journey*. Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick, 2013.

Briant, Ed. *If You Lived Here, You'd be Home by Now*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2009.

Briggs, Raymond. *The Snowman*. New York: Random House, 1978.

Day, Alexandra. *Good Dog, Carl*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985.

DePaola, Tomie. *Pancakes for Breakfast*. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

Dorémus, Gaëtan. *Bear Despair*. New York: Enchanted Lion Books, 2012.

Geisert, Arthur. *Ice*. New York: Enchanted Lion Books, 2011.

Griffin, Dagny and Laura Bobbiesi. *Shine: A Wordless Book about Love*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020.

Hutchins, Pat. *Changes, Changes*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Clementina's Cactus*. New York: Viking, 1999.

King, Stephen Michael. *Leaf*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2008.

Khing, T. Tjong. *Where Is the Cake Now?* New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2009.

Krahn, Fernando. *The Mystery of the Giant Footprints*. New York: Dutton, 1977.

Lee, Suzy. *Wave*. San Francisco: Chronicle, 2008.

Lehman, Barbara. *The Secret Box*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.





Wordless Books

- Mayer, Mercer. *Octopus Soup*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011.
- McDonnell, Patrick. *South*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2008.
- McCully, Emily Arnold. *School*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Meddour, Wendy and Daniel Egnéus. *Lubna and Pebble*. New York: Dial Books, 2019.
- Newman, Jeff and Larry Day. *Found*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018.
- Nolan, Dennis. *Sea of Dreams*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2011.
- Rathmann, Peggy. *Good Night Gorilla*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994.
- Rodriguez, Béatrice. *Rooster's Revenge*. New York: Enchanted Lion Books, 2011.
- Savage, Stephen. *Where's Walrus?* New York: Scholastic Press, 2011.
- Schories, Pat. *When Jack Goes Out*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2010.
- Schubert, Ingrid & Dieter. *The Umbrella*. New York: Lemniscat USA, 2011.
- Simard, Remy and Sylvie Desrosiers. *Hocus Pocus*. Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press, 2011.
- Teague, Mark. *Fly!* New York: Beach Lane Books, 2019.
- Thomson, Bill. *Chalk*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2010.
- Turkle, Brinton. *Deep in the Forest*. New York: Puffin Books, 1987.
- Varon, Sara. *Chicken and Cat Clean Up*. New York: Scholastic, 2009.
- Watanabe, Issa. *Migrants*. Wellington, New Zealand: Gecko Press, 2020.
- Wiesner, David. *Tuesday*. New York: Clarion, 1991.
- Winter, Paula. *Sir Andrew*. New York: Random House, 1984.

A vintage-style compass is the central focus, set against a warm, golden-brown wooden background. The compass face is detailed with cardinal and intercardinal directions, and a scale around the perimeter. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing text. On the right side, there is a vertical decorative border with repeating floral and geometric patterns.

-JOURNEYS-

*“What marks do you leave in the places you go?
Who sees them?
Don’t you ever wonder?”*



The Story of our Mural

by Steven Rachwal

My wife Karen and I have lived in our home in Los Angeles for over 27 years. We both work and play at home and have raised two daughters, now in their twenties. Karen is a professional storyteller, and I am a graphic designer. We have spent a great deal of time together, working, living, and loving as a family.

In the Summer of 2020, at the beginning of the COVID lockdown, I decided I was going to fulfill a vision that had popped into my head a few years earlier. I would paint the side of my studio. Not just paint it, but I would paint a colorful mural that would complement the garden as it grew around it.

My studio is our garage that we had converted into a place that I have worked since we moved in. The side of my studio looks out onto our backyard garden and cannot be seen by anyone but our family and our visitors, so it is quite private.

With my idea in mind, I set out on my process. First, I needed to photograph the side of my studio that I would paint. I downloaded the images onto my computer and imported them into Adobe Illustrator. I then traced simple lines over the photographs to create a template of the basic shape and dimensions of the side of my studio.

Next, I sat down at my drafting table and sketched out my ideas for how the mural would look. I wanted it to be a garden theme because I think of the mural as an extension of Karen's garden that she putters around in mostly every day. Her garden brings us both great joy. Sometimes I help with little things, but it really is HER garden.



Once I had a design for the mural that we all agreed on, I grabbed the sidewalk chalk that my kids had from their younger days, and I proceeded to chalk out my design on the side of my studio.

We ran over to the paint store and bought a bunch of exterior paint, mostly bright, happy colors. Now came the fun, albeit physically demanding part -- painting. Don't underestimate the stress a ladder puts on your body. Repeatedly climbing up and down and standing for extended periods of time on a thin ladder rung wears you out. It was a long process, roughly 40–50 hours of painting per wall, but it was fun to see the mural come to life; much like Karen's plants come to life for her. The painting helped me to better understand her joy for gardening.

Once the mural was finished we really liked it. So, we decided that we should paint more of the mural on the back of the neighbor's garage that faces our backyard.

It turned out to be a perfect complement to the first mural, and then my brain started imagining the entire house in this design. No small feat, but if we undertake it one wall at a time it feels less daunting.





Onward to the front of my studio (the front of the garage which faces the street). Although you can see some of it from the street it is set back and people walking by really have had no idea of what we were creating. In the past, we had painted the ground in front of that last mural, but the paint was decaying and needed an upgrade. I came up with a fourth design, and the painting began. This one took a lot longer to paint, probably because of all the detail.

There are a couple of rooms in our house that could use a coat of paint, but we have been having so much fun seeing the mural grow that we decided that the side and part of the front of the house needed to join the mural club. I just finished painting them in August, just before our trip to Argentina as part of Karen's tour with DreamOn Productions.

The neighbors are seeing our house become bright and colorful, and a bit unorthodox. The private little mural that I had envisioned for the side of my studio keeps growing and growing, just like the plants in Karen's garden. And the neighbors are beginning to respond very positively as they see me up on the ladder painting in the front of the house. Their expression of joy in reaction to my expression of joy helps to make our world just a little bit brighter, and much more colorful.

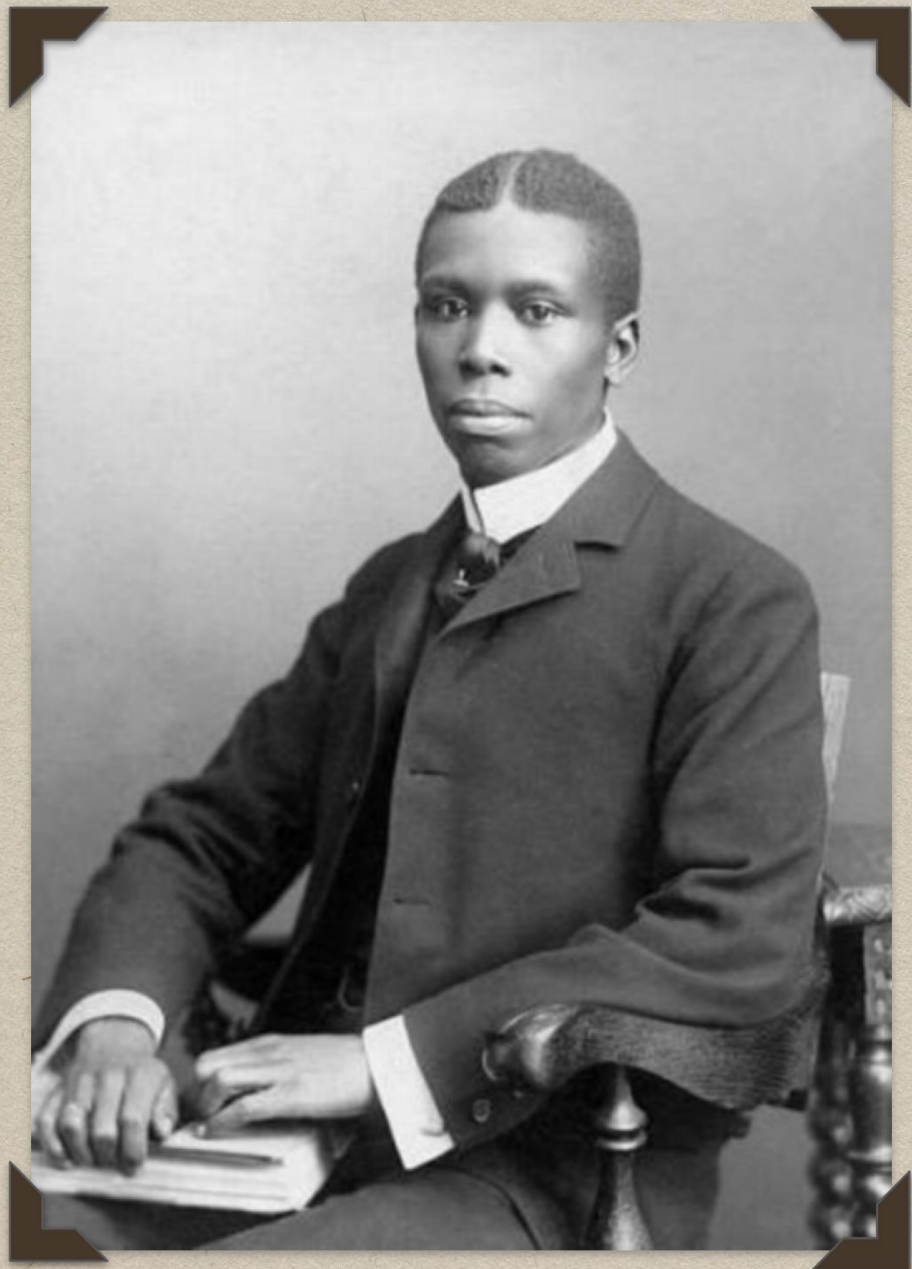


Steve Rachwal is a Los Angeles-based graphic designer and artist. His expertise is mainly in typography and digital collage, but he also is a muralist and cartoonist. His diverse list of clients includes Random House, Chronicle Books, Wiley Publishing, Universal Music Group, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the J. Paul Getty Museum of Art. Steve teaches art to young people, and he has been an adjunct professor in the design department at Loyola Marymount University and is currently an adjunct professor at Middlesex College. In his personal artwork, Steve explores the intersection of design, art, and typography. Most of his focus is on current social justice issues, but he also loves to experiment with surrealistic imagery, which empowers the viewer to decide the meaning and purpose. www.rachwal.com - www.frenchfryguy.com



-LOVE *of* DUNBAR-

Sharing Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872-1906. #Dunbar150
With Oni Lasana





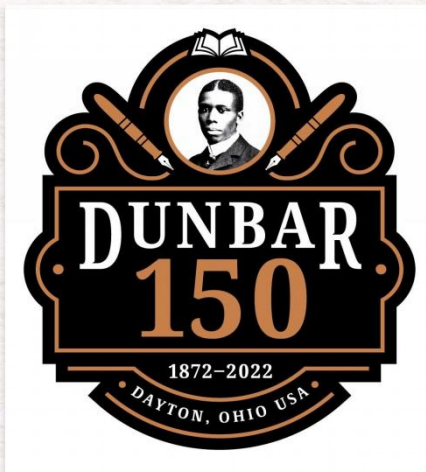
The Boogah Man

By Oni Lasana for Love of Dunbar



About the Author

Oni Lasana was born in Philadelphia, PA, and is a Cultural Consultant, International Storyteller, Poet, Podcaster, Teaching, and Performing Artist. For 30 years she has been in love with the folktales and poetry of American poet and author Paul Laurence Dunbar. She has presented his works in story theater programs and workshops on three continents, live and virtually. www.OniLasana.com



bo•gey•man ('bɒg i, mæn, 'bɒʒ gi-, 'bu-) also boogeyman n.,pl. -men. an imaginary evil character of supernatural powers, esp. a mythical hobgoblin supposed to carry off naughty children.

Have you ever heard of the Boogah Man? A monstrous whispering spirit if ever was one. The threat of the Boogah Man coming to carry you away from your family, especially as you slept, was the greatest imaginary villain in our childhoods. Just the threat that I would meet up the Boogah man at night, also kept me on my best behavior during my daytime shenanigans. Not.

If you were never threatened by a friend or family member of the Boogah Man's showing up, when you were showing off, your childhood was lackluster and dull fo' sho.

The Boogah Man prose is also found in the book, "Little Brown Baby, Paul Laurence Dunbar Poems for Young People" first published in 1895. I treasure this little reddish used hardback book that lives in my library. It's stamped as property of Oak Park Library with visual sketches by Bertha Rogers. Worn pages of Dunbar's delightful poetry like only Dunbar could produce in his short 33 years.

Paul Laurence Dunbar's wicket sense of humor shined the brightest in his poetry for young people. Always empathetic to human nature and the slyness of childhood attics, Dunbar not only wrote observations, but from his own youthful adventures in his neighborhood of Dayton, Ohio.

The Boogah Man is a great story poem for any storyteller wanting to bring shivers down listeners spine, all in a simple rhyme. Perfect for this time of year as whispering spirits roam the earth waning and warning us all of

—
The Boogah Man!



THE BOOGAH MAN

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Southern Dialect

W'en de evenin' shadders
Come a-glidin' down,
Fallin' black an' heavy
Ovah hill an' town,
Ef you listen keerful,
Keerful ez you kin,
So's you boun' to notice
Des a drappin' pin;
Den you'll hyeah a funny
Soun' ercross de lan';
Lay low; dat's de callin'
Of de Boogah Man!

Woo-oo, woo-oo!
Hyeah him ez he go erlong de way;
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
Don' you wish de night 'ud tu'n to day
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
Hide yo' little peepers 'hind yo' han';
Woo-oo, woo-oo! Callin' of de Boogah Man.

W'en de win 's a-shiverin'
Thoo de gloomy lane,
An' dey comes de patterin'
Of de evenin' rain,
W'en de owl's a-hootin',
Out daih in de wood,
Don' you wish, my honey,
Dat you had been good?
'T ain't no use to try
to Snuggle up to Dan;
Bless you, dat 's de callin'
Of de Boogah Man!

Ef you loves yo' mammy
An' you min's yo' pap,
Ef you nevah wriggles
Outen Sukey's lap;
Ef you says yo' "Lay me"
Evah single night
'Fo' dey tucks de kivers
An' puts out de light,
Den de rain kin pattah,
Win' blow lak a fan,
But you need n' bothah
'Bout de Boogah Man!

Northern Dialect

When the evening shadows
Come a gliding down,
Falling black and heavy
Over hill and town,
If you listen careful,
Careful as you can,
So your bound to notice
Just a dropping pin;
Then you'll hear a funny
Sound across the land
Lay low; thats the callin'
Of the Boogah Man!

Woo-oo, woo-oo!
Hear him ez he go along the way
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
Don't you wish the night would turn to day
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
Hide your little peepers hide your hand;
Woo-oo, woo-oo! Calling of the Boogah Man.

When the winds a shivering
Through the gloomy lane.
And there comes the pattering
Of the evening rain,
When the owl's a hooting.
Out there in the wood,
Don't you wish, my honey,
That you had been good?
Ain't no use to try
to snuggle up to Dan;
Bless you, that's the calling'
Of the Boogah Man!

If you loves your mama
And you mind's your pap,
If you never wriggles
Out of Granny's lap;
If you says your "Lay me"
Every single night
Before they tucks the covers
And puts out the light,
Then the rain can patter
Wind blow lika a fan,
But you need not bother
About the Boogah Man!

*This work is
available to all in
the public
domain.*

-FUSIONS-





THE PATIENCE OF MASTERS

by Brandon Spars

Last year, on August 6, 2022, I was lucky enough to have a Zoom call with Anne Shimojima along with Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo and Nancy Wang, the story-telling duo known as Eth-Noh-Tec. As a white storyteller, I had grown concerned about whether or not it was appropriate for me to be telling Asian folktales and legends, which I do both on the stage as well as in my high school classroom. For example, on stage I have told versions of the Balinese epic, “The Calonarang,” which is a story that is told regularly in masked dance dramas as part of cleansing rituals in Bali. In the classroom, I have told many stories from all over Asia, including the Chinese/Korean folktale known as “The Picky Maid,” which highlights the importance of rice.

I began our conversation with a description of how I use “The Picky Maid” in my ninth grade classroom to illustrate an agrarian society (rice is featured quite heavily in the story). I have written about the story in my book *Setting a Plot: the Impact of Geography on Culture, Myth, and Storytelling* to show the relationship between people and their crops. In the story, a beautiful young maid establishes a test by which she is to select from among the many suitors who seek her hand in marriage. She will marry the suitor who can plant “the perfect field of rice,” beginning at sunrise and finishing before noon.



I went over the basics of the story with Anne, Robert, and Nancy. Nancy pointed out that it can never be understated how important rice is to some societies. In Cantonese, it is very typical to greet someone with the question, “Have you eaten rice?” She mentioned that one seldom leaves a single grain in one’s bowl, and, if a young person does, each grain foretells a pock mark on that person’s future spouse. Robert added that the content and context should always be in service of the story, which made me immediately think that I should expand on the historical context (the transition from Paleolithic to Neolithic societies with the advent of farming) by looking more deeply into some of the specifics of this story and the region from which it originated. Robert emphasized that there is no single, correct way to approach telling stories from other cultures, and that it was a never-ending process or search fraught with tensions.

Nancy illustrated a worst case scenario in which a teller might perform a story and have no idea how to pronounce the names of the principal characters. This, she warned, is actually doing harm to the culture from which the story comes. She added, however, that teaching about stories in the academic setting of the classroom runs fewer risks because of the time that is available to create context, to encourage the student listeners to learn about the story and the people who tell it, and because the focus is *on the story* and the people rather than *the person telling the story*. Performances, by comparison, run the greater chance of the culture being made *to serve the teller*, who may or may not have done their homework.

Anne spoke to these same questions. She began with a brief summary of how she began storytelling as a librarian who wanted to expose students to stories from all over the world. She certainly told traditional stories from Japan, but she also told stories from other cultures with the purpose of expanding her student's horizons, piquing their interests, and making them curious about other places. She was explicit about not telling Native American stories, which she pointed out were "owned." To share Native American stories she would read from books written by reliable authors, most often Native American themselves. She added that she is not the person who can say when a teller can or cannot tell a story. She believes that if one does it with respect and tells the story well (which includes pronouncing the names and words correctly), one can *sometimes* tell a story from another culture. She added wryly that she often hears other storytellers mispronounce the word "samurai," which is an immediate sign that the teller has not done their research, and is therefore, albeit unintentionally, being disrespectful of Japanese culture.

Anne cited three very illustrative examples based on her experience as both a storyteller and as an elementary school library media specialist. In the first, a white teller at a storytelling guild meeting told a Japanese folktale. She wanted to give her main character a name, a Japanese one, so did she call a Japanese friend? Did she contact a Japanese cultural center? Or the consulate? No! She decided she could simply make one up. "Ishimugu," was the name she created because it "sounded Japanese." All present on the Zoom call-- Robert, Nancy, and Anne -- rolled their eyes and shook their heads.

In Anne's second example, an all white cast of students performed "The Crane Wife," a school play about a Japanese folktale. Many things about the production were troublesome for Anne, but in a very respectful letter meant to educate and inform the school, she pointed out that an example of the performance's distortion of Japanese culture was in a climactic scene in which a mother says goodbye to her son. The performance had them kiss each other goodbye, which was very *un-Japanese*.

In a third example, Anne discussed a unit on Japan taught at an elementary school. Of course, she mentioned to the faculty member doing the planning, there should be rice -- not Chinese rice, or Thai rice, but Japanese rice, specific grains cooked a specific way. The faculty member in charge dismissed Anne's constructive suggestion by casually stating that for convenience, they would simply serve rice pudding. "Rice is rice," they said.



Through my computer screen, I could sense the power behind the patience on the faces of all three of these storytellers. I immediately thought of my Balinese wife, who, rather than eating every grain of rice from her plate (she eats with her right hand), leaves a pinch on the table. This pinch of rice is for the four spiritual siblings who are born with her and accompany her through life. I thought of the international students (from China) at my own high school who sit amidst the American students who playfully throw rice at one another. I thought of slurs about Asian products, like the racist term “rice rocket” for a Suzuki motorcycle.

I suppose, at this point, emotion was beginning to build up in me as I listened to what these artists have to endure not only in their professional lives, but personally every day. I certainly see the world through my wife’s eyes... I see all the racist rhetoric, the microaggressions, the privilege that Asian Americans have to swallow constantly, but I have yet to understand what I can say to those who experience it constantly.

Next, Nancy told a story about how they used to lead groups on a tour to a storytelling village in China. What is a storytelling village? This is a place, not quite along the Silk Road, but at an important crossroads where stories were shared for hundreds if not thousands of years. A storyteller who accompanied them on one of these trips told a story entitled, “The Barking Mouse.” In this story, as Nancy explained, the message was that it was good to know many different languages. The mother mouse in the story barks like a dog to protect her children from a cat. Several years later, with a different group, Robert and Nancy witnessed something astonishing. One of the village tellers was telling this very story, “The Barking Mouse.” Many of the original elements were there, but, importantly, the message was different. The moral of “The Barking Mouse” had transformed. Now the story emphasized the necessity that children needed to listen more carefully to their mother’s advice.

“So what exactly is happening here?” Robert interjected. This is a very interesting example of how stories have always traveled around the world from culture to culture, changing fluidly within each respective society in which they are told, but always containing that original spark of inspiration that makes us human, that makes us listen to one another, and honor one another.

Robert shared another bit of insight. Healthy exchange can happen on a level playing field, but when the tables are tilted historically -- through conquest and imperialism -- the disproportionately powerful culture can actually negate the culture in the minority. He used an example that would make immediate sense to me. I have undoubtedly seen Balinese wearing tennis shoes, listening to Western music, spouting English slang terms. Think about the opposite case, and how few Americans know what *baris* or other Balinese dances are. And, if they do know something, it might be *kecak*, which is a rousing dramatization of a particular scene from the *Ramayana* performed for tourists. This dance is not even Balinese. It was created by Walter Spies, an expatriate painter living in Bali in the first half of the twentieth century. Cultures in power not only tend to have great influence over other cultures (think of western music and fashion) but also they often “take” things from other cultures and reconstitute them in a manner that lacks both context and respect. Robert described a brand of popcorn that featured a pink image of the Buddha. He then invited me to imagine how absurd it would seem and how much outrage there would be if this had been done with an image of Jesus Christ. Clearly in non-Western societies, even the sacred elements of a culture are fair game for appropriation and commodification. Nothing is sacred or off limits!

Anne has already been featured in my American Studies class I teach to Juniors. I had invited Linda Yemoto to visit my class to speak about the incarceration of Japanese Americans, and she had recommended a recorded story by Anne, titled “Shimojima Secrets,” which has a short version and a long version. I played a recording of the short version, and my students were spellbound by Anne’s tale about her box of treasure -- a box of photographs and letters that belonged to her family, which proved really to be a magical box of stories.

Next we discussed two of Eth-Noh-Tec’s performances that would be particularly meaningful for my high school students: “Takashi’s Dream,” about a survivor of the atomic bomb blast that ended World War Two, and “The Red Altar,” which follows three generations of Nancy’s family, from their arrival in Monterey right up to the present. When Nancy began to mention the discriminatory policies her family encountered, I blurted, “Yes the Chinese Exclusion Act.”

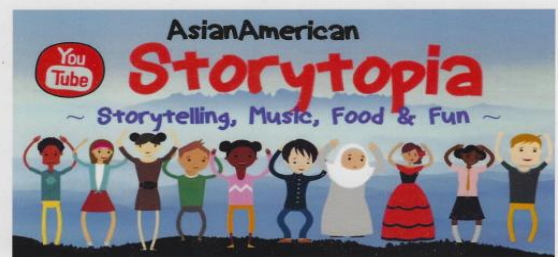
“Everybody says that,” Nancy said. “But there was so much more, and it was happening much earlier than 1882.”

Contact Information for
Eth-Noh-Tec

www.ethnohtec.org

Contact Information for
Anne Shimojima

www.anneshimojima.com



Asian American Storytellers in Unity
<https://asianstorytellers.wixsite.com/home>



Once again, I, the history teacher, had to be educated. Nancy quickly outlined the conditions her family met when they arrived in Monterey. “Chinese fishermen were not allowed to fish during the day. That was for white fishermen.” She followed this up by stating that Chinese miners had to pay a tax that other miner’s did not have to pay.

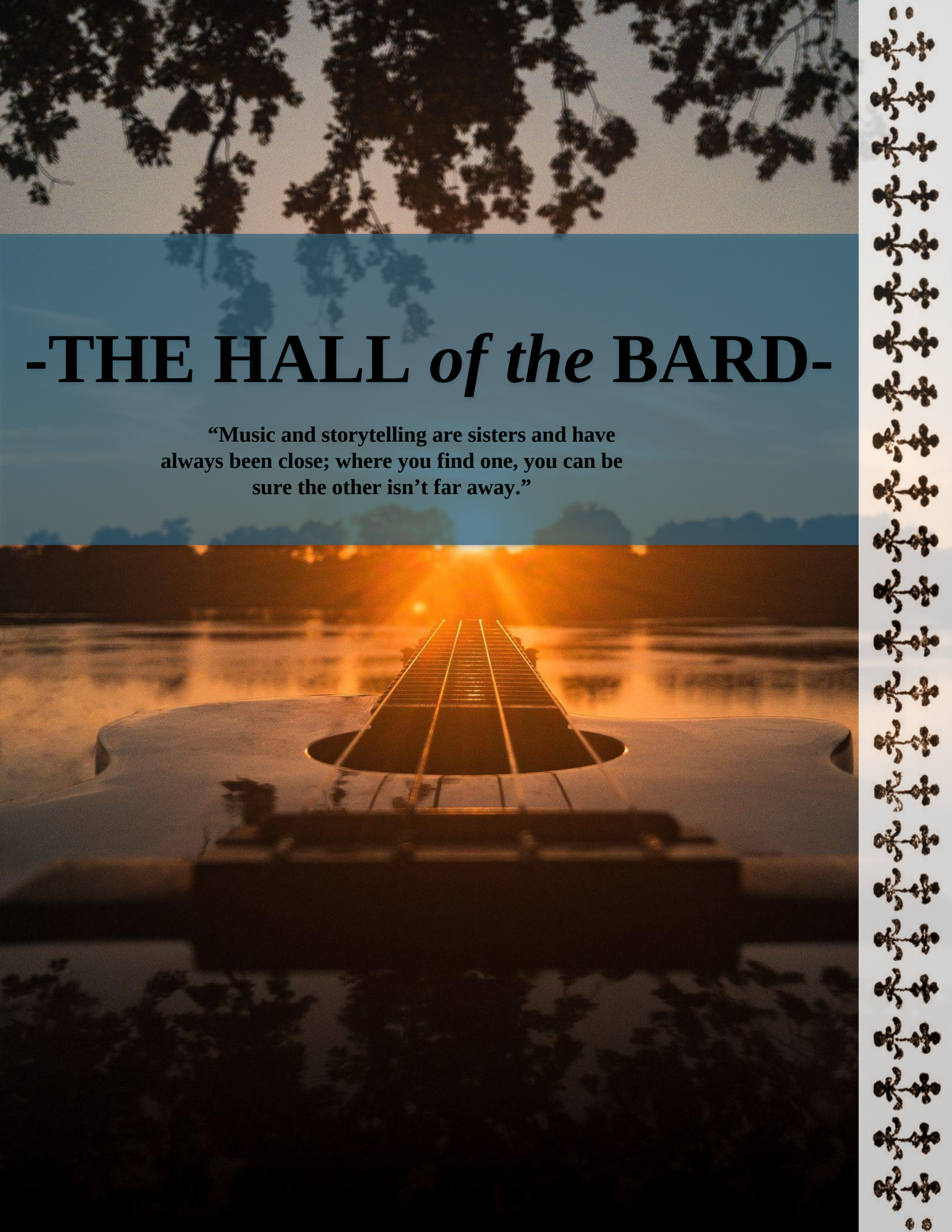
These aren’t new stories. They were just new to me.

We reflected on the anti-Asian violence that was tormenting the Asian American communities on a seemingly daily basis – elderly people knocked over, women punched and kicked. “Why do people feel better than us? Why do they feel they have the right to harm us?” Nancy asked.

Nancy concluded that Asian Americans are sensitive to cultural appropriation because their property has been stolen as well as their dignity throughout American history. “And then they want to take our stories, too...” That was how our conversation finished. There was, however, a moment at the end before the Zoom call ended when nobody spoke. It wasn’t an awkward silence. I think I was actually searching for words with which to express my gratitude, and finding none, just became silently overwhelmed. Robert, Nancy, and Anne, three very busy artists with a thousand things to do, didn’t hurry the closing of our discussion. I suppose like with everything they do, they wanted to be thorough and clear. More than anything, all three of them, in not rushing out of the meeting, were conveying how important they find this issue to be. They really wanted me to understand, and they were willing to talk as long as needed to help just one person catch sight of the water in which he, a white male, is swimming, the air he is breathing, the white noise that has been humming in the background of his life for as long as he has been alive, a white noise that has canceled the voices of entire societies of people.

I was reminded of something that Anne said near the beginning of our conversation when I was thanking them for taking the time to speak with me. I had mentioned that I was aware that they were probably very weary from having to constantly teach white people about their own privilege. I said something to the effect that she had probably spent far too much of her life doing this, and that was when she said that while she has been doing it for decades, her people have been doing it for centuries. Only now, some are starting to listen.





-THE HALL *of the* BARD-

“Music and storytelling are sisters and have always been close; where you find one, you can be sure the other isn’t far away.”



THE HALL OF THE BARD

by Rachel Baker

Hail, friend! Please, sit down. I'll throw another log on the fire. Not too many of us in the hall tonight, but I'm glad you found your way here. It will be dark soon.

I love this time of year. Autumn is a between season, a time of change and of becoming. Autumn's sister, Spring, is another. I love them both. Couldn't choose between them if you asked me. Spring does seem to get more love in the songs, though, I've found. Where are my autumn ballads? Do you know any? I would love for you to send them to me if you do.

I wonder if Autumn gets jealous. That reminds me of our song tonight, another of many versions and many names. I first heard it sung by Loreena McKennitt under the title *The Bonny Swans*; but over the years it's been called quite a few things, including *The Dreadful Wind and Rain* and *The Twa Sisters of Binnorie*. It's a tale of jealousy and betrayal – and of course, it has a ghost. It's October; I wouldn't disappoint you. I did some patchwork for you, and have here a song I stitched together from three different versions. As usual, I altered the language in some places to change archaic words and phrases to their modern counterparts.

The balcony ghosts are getting restless. They know this one and they're anxious to hear it. Do you hear them? You will. As the nights grow longer, they like to sing along. Listen.



The Two Sisters (Child 10)

There were two sisters in a bower;
The youngest was the fairest flower.
A knight came there to court them both,
But the youngest one he loved the most.

He courted the eldest with glove and ring,
But loved the youngest above all things.
He courted the eldest with brooch and knife,
But loved the youngest as his life.

The eldest, she was vexed so sore
And envied much her sister fair.
In her bower she could not rest
With grief and spite she almost burst.

Upon a morning fair and clear
She said unto her sister dear:
'O sister, come to yon sea strand
And see our father's ships to land.'

She's taken her sister by the hand
And led her down to yon sea strand.
The youngest stood upon a stone,
The eldest turned and threw her in.

'O sister, sister, take my hand,
And I'll make you heir to half my land.'
'O sister, I'll not reach my hand,
And I'll be heir to all your land.'

'O sister, reach me but your glove,
And my dear John shall be your love.'
'Your darling John shall be my love,
For I will not reach you my glove.'

O sister, sister, save my life,
And I swear I'll be no man's wife!
'Cursed be my hand if yours I take
For you have caused my heart to break.'

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam,
'Til she came down yon bonny mill-dam,
And out it came the miller's son
And saw the fair maid floating in.

'O father, father, draw your dam!
Here's either a mermaid or a swan.'
The miller quickly drew the dam,
And there he found a drowned woman.

Then by there came a harper fine,
That harped to the king when he did dine.
When he that lady looked upon,
He sighed and made a heavy moan.

When he that lady did come near,
Her ghost to him then did appear.
'Make a harp of my breast-bone,
And bring it where I once called home.'



Faithful John by Walter Crane, 1914

Household Stories from The Collection of the Bros. Grimm

The Two Sisters (Child 10)

He made a harp of her breast-bone,
Whose sounds would melt a heart of stone.
The strings he made of her shining hair,
Whose notes made sad the listening ear.

He brought it to her father's hall,
And there was the court assembled all.
He laid this harp upon a stone,
And it began to play alone.

'O yonder sits my father, the king,
And yonder sits my mother, the queen.
'And yonder stands my brother Hugh,
And by him, my John, sweet and true.'

But the last tune that the harp played then
Was 'Woe to my sister, false Helen!
There she sits she who pushed me in
And drowned me for the sake of a man.'

*This work is available to all in
the public domain. Version
blended by Rachel Baker.*

THE HALL OF THE BARD

by Rachel Baker

You're looking at my harp now, aren't you? Hmm. I'm afraid what it's made of and how I got it are both stories that are much too long to tell tonight. It doesn't play by itself, though. It doesn't give me any answers.

If only closure was as easy to come by as it is in a song, where spirits appear before our eyes to answer our questions and tell us what we should do next. I just gave you a version of the song where the younger sister's ghost instructs the harper on what to do so that he can help her accuse her murderer, but in most of the ones I read, that verse is omitted. The harper's reasons for committing such a strange and gruesome act are his alone – or, considered from another angle, ours. Though the younger sister and her parents get their closure, the song itself leaves us with many questions of “why?” and “what next?” unanswered.

Have you ever done something without knowing why? Did it turn out to be the right thing to do?

When you leave here, listen for what may be speaking to you. Until next time.

About the Author

Rachel Baker is a fiction writer, playwright, and lover of storytelling in all its forms. She has had short plays produced with Theater Cedar Rapids in Cedar Rapids, IA and Violet Surprise Theater in Chicago, IL. She currently lives in Iowa City with her partner and their two cats, where she is working on her first novel and “will come and go all as she please, and not ask leave of any.”

-HEALING SPRINGS-



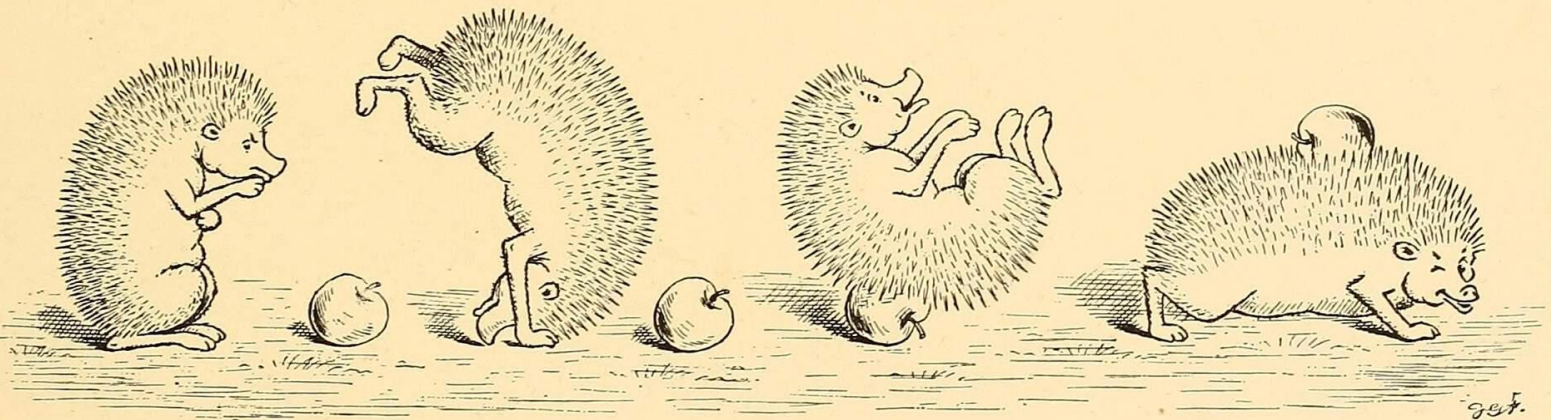
After Apple-Picking

By Robert Frost

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.

I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to
touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with
stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like
his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

This work is available to all in the public domain.



Study of Hedgehog Stealing Apple.



-PUZZLES and GAMES-

"Curiouser and curiouser!"

Riddle

What is that which is
The beginning of eternity,
The end of time and space,
The beginning of every end,
The end of every race?

-SB

Last Month's Answer: The Mole

LOST WORD SOCIETY

by Carmen Agra Deedy

It's time again to play along with Carmen Agra Deedy's LOST WORD SOCIETY.

For the spine-shivery month of October, we went on a deep dive and discovered this extraordinary word that fits the season. Utterly absent from modern English, it's a real jaw-dropper, and one worth, um, resurrecting.

Each month we will give you an archaic, obsolete, or otherwise "lost" word. We will make up three silly sentences using the word, probably incorrectly. Your job is to make up a definition for the lost word. The challenge, should you decide to accept it, is for you to use your new word in a story, just for fun. Next month we will publish the true definition of the "lost" word and provide you with another one. Remember, don't look it up; make it up.

Here we go. Have fun!

SKELM (n.) Obsolete. Another truly dead one that's pining for the Fjords.

1)As they approached the ancient castle, they could see the corpses floating in the stagnant moat, the skelm on its surface reflecting the cold moonlight.

1)Following the King's edict, when the executioner was done flaying the traitor, all that remained was the bloody corpse and his skelm.

1)The creature snatched the last in line, clamping a bloodied claw over its victim's face, thrusting its skelm through the middle of its back, silencing it forever.

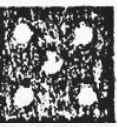
Last Month's Lost Word:

MIXSHIP (n.) Obsolete (OED) - evil or wickedness.

Mixship is a very old word. The origin of the first half of this compound word is from the Old English "mix" — originally a word for dung or other "filth." Hence, a ship of vileness or . . . wickedness. Quite the word, eh?



For more fun explore:
Carmen Agra Deedy's LOST WORD SOCIETY
at <https://www.facebook.com/carmenagradeedy>
for new words every weekend!



Minute Mysteries

by Harold Austin Ripley

17 Too Clever

“Receiving no reply to my ring and finding the door unlocked, I went in,” said Albert Lynch. ‘Dawson was seated at his desk shot through the head. Seeing he was dead, I called the police and remained here.’

“Touch anything, Lynch?” asked Professor Fordney.

“No, sir, nothing.”

“Positive of that, are you?”

“Absolutely, sir.”

The Professor made a careful examination of the desk and found Dawson had been writing a letter at the bottom of which and covered by the dead man’s hand, was a penned message: “A. L. did thi——” and weakly trailed off.

Further examination disclosed several kinds of writing-paper, a pen-tray holding the recently used pen, inkwell, eraser, stamps, letters, and bills. The gun from which the shot had been fired was on the floor by the side of the chair, and the bullet was found embedded in the divan.

After a few questions, Fordney was quickly convinced of Lynch’s innocence.

“What do you make of it, Professor?” inquired Inspector Kelley.

“Though the scrawled note certainly looks like Dawson’s writing, I am sure an expert will find it isn’t. I’m not surprised to find the gun free of prints. Pretty thorough job, this. Good thing for you, Lynch, and for us too, that the murderer was careless about something.”

“Right,” said Kelley. “But you aren’t such a wise old owl, Fordney. This is like the Morrow case we handled. Remember?”

“Good for you, Inspector,” laughed the Professor.

How did both men so quickly determine that the incriminating note had not been left by Dawson?

23 Before the Coroner’s Inquest

“Let’s run over your testimony before the inquest opens,” said Fordney.

“All right,” replied Curry.

“About three-thirty on Thursday, I got into the boat in front of my cottage and rowed upstream. About fifty yards below the bridge, I looked up and saw Scott and Dawson going across it in opposite directions. As the two men passed, Scott reached out, grabbed Dawson, and hit him in the jaw. Then he pulled a gun, and, in the scuffle that followed, Scott fell off the bridge. He dropped into the water, but, as the current was strong, by the time I reached the spot, he had sunk. When I finally pulled him into the boat, he was dead.”

“Was it a clear day?” asked Fordney.

“Well, it had been showering early in the afternoon, but the sun was shining then.”

“Are you positive Scott got that bruise by hitting his head on the rocks when he fell? The prosecution, you know, is going to claim that Dawson hit him on the head with something, then deliberately pushed him off the bridge,” commented Fordney.

“I know he got that bruise on the rocks,” stated Curry emphatically.

“All right,” said the Professor, “but I don’t think the jury will believe you. Personally, I’m sure Dawson didn’t intentionally kill Scott, but we’ll have to have better proof than that if we hope to acquit him.”

“By the way,” he continued, “be sure to state you knew of the grudge Scott bore Dawson.”

Why was the Professor doubtful the coroner’s jury would believe Curry’s testimony?

**DO
NOT
PASS**

**ANSWERS
AHEAD**



SOLUTIONS FOR PAST PUZZLES

AUGUST 2022

94 Foxes and Geese

The smallest possible number of moves is twenty-two – that is, eleven for the foxes and eleven for the geese. Here is one way of solving the puzzle:

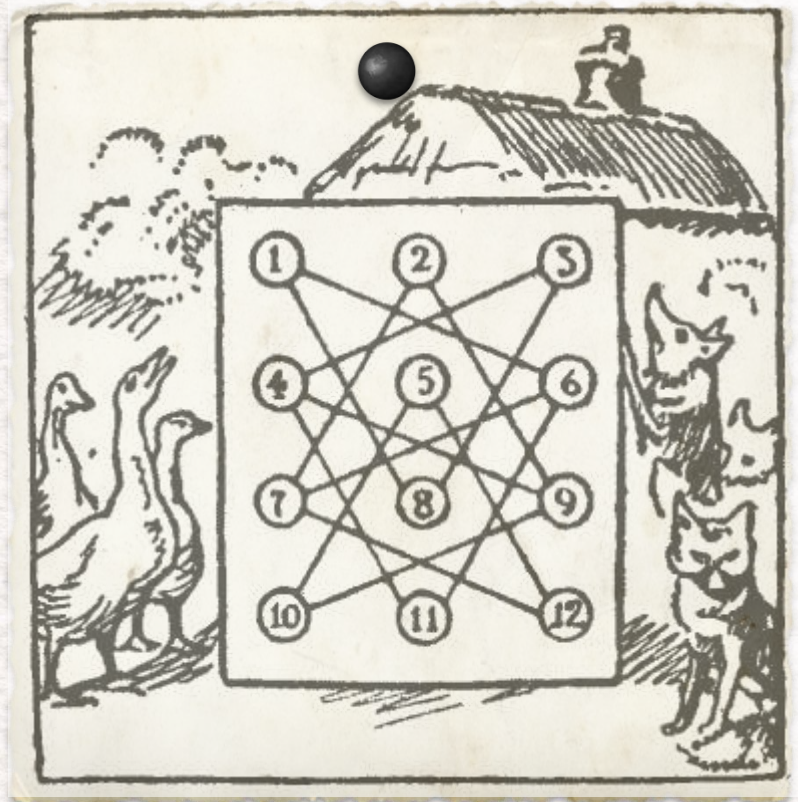
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10--5  11--6  12--7  5--12  6--1  7--6
-----
1--8   2--9   3--4   8--3   9--10  4--9

12--7  1--8   6--1   7--2   8--3
-----
3--4   10--5  9--10  4--11  5--12
    
```

Of course, the reader will play the first move in the top line, then the first move in the second line, then the second move in the top line, and so on alternately.

The reader will now satisfy himself without any difficulty that the puzzle requires eleven moves for the foxes and eleven for the geese. He will see that a goose on 1 or 3 must go to 8, to avoid being one move from a fox and to enable the fox on 11 to come on to the ring. If we play 1--8, then it is clearly best to play 10--5 and not 12--5 for the foxes. When they are all on the circle, then they simply promenade round it in a clockwise direction, taking care to reserve 8--3 and 5--12 for the final moves.



114 The Tramps and the Biscuits

The smallest number of biscuits must have been 1021, from which it is evident that they were of that miniature description that finds favour in the nursery. The general solution is that for n men the number must be $m(n^{n+1}) - (n - 1)$, where m is any integer. Each man will receive $m(n - 1)^{n - 1}$ biscuits at the final division, though in the case of two men, when $m = 1$, the final distribution only benefits the dog. Of course, in every case each man steals an n th of the number of biscuits, after giving the odd one to the dog.



62 The Ambiguous Photograph

One by one the members of the Club succeeded in discovering the key to the mystery of the Ambiguous Photograph, except Churton, who was at length persuaded to "give it up." Herbert Baynes then pointed out to him that the coat that Lord Marksford was carrying over his arm was a lady's coat, because the buttons are on the left side, whereas a man's coat always has the buttons on the right-hand side. Lord Marksford would not be likely to walk about the streets of Paris with a lady's coat over his arm unless he was accompanying the owner. He was therefore walking with the lady.

As they were talking a waiter brought a telegram to Baynes.

"Here you are," he said, after reading the message. "A wire from Dovey: 'Don't bother about photo. Find lady was the gentleman's sister, passing through Paris.' That settles it. You might notice that the lady was lightly clad, and therefore the coat might well be hers. But it is clear that the rain was only a sudden shower, and no doubt they were close to their destination, and she did not think it worth while to put the coat on."

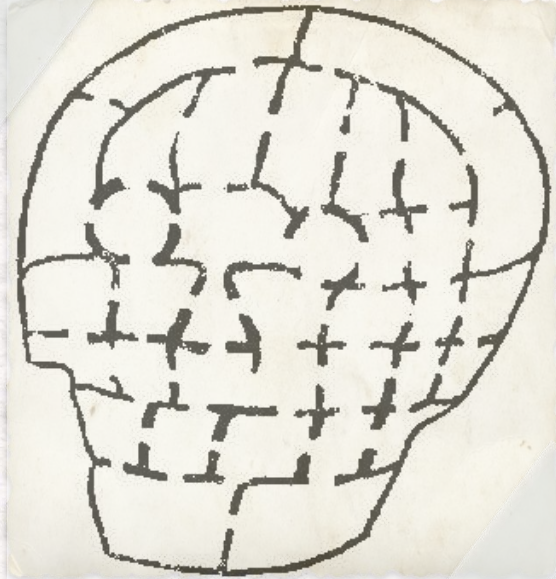




SEPTEMBER 2022

34 The Noble Demoiselle

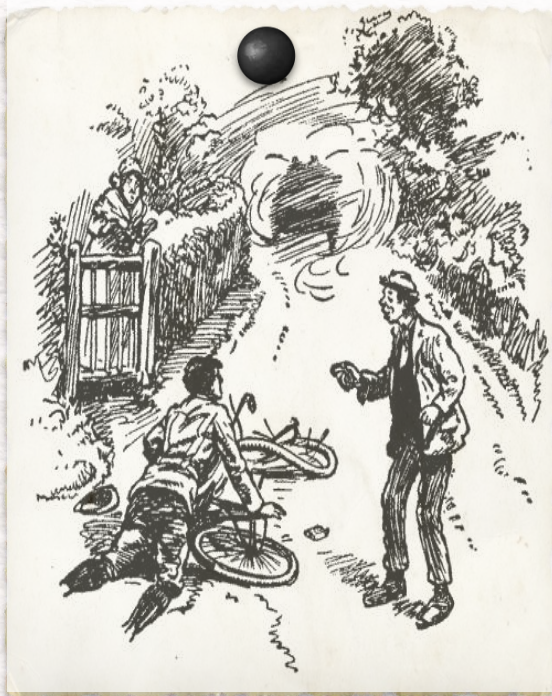
"Some here have asked me," continued Sir Hugh, "how they may find the cell in the Dungeon of the Death's-head wherein the noble maiden was cast. Beshrew me! but 'tis easy withal when you do but know how to do it. In attempting to pass through every door once, and never more, you must take heed that every cell hath two doors or four, which be even numbers, except two cells, which have but three. Now, certes, you cannot go in and out of any place, passing through all the doors once and no more, if the number of doors be an odd number. But as there be but two such odd cells, yet may we, by beginning at the one and ending at the other, so make our journey in many ways with success. I pray you, albeit, to mark that only one of these odd cells lieth on the outside of the dungeon, so we must perforce start therefrom. Marry, then, my masters, the noble demoiselle must needs have been wasting in the other."



The drawing will make this quite clear to the reader. The two "odd cells" are indicated by the stars, and one of the many routes that will solve the puzzle is shown by the dotted line. It is perfectly certain that you must start at the lower star and end at the upper one; therefore, the cell with the star situated over the left eye must be the one sought.

64 The Runaway Motor Car

Russell found that there are just twelve five-figure numbers that have the peculiarity that the first two figures multiplied by the last three--all the figures being different, and there being no 0--will produce a number with exactly the same five figures, in a different order. But only one of these twelve begins with a 1--namely, 14926. Now, if we multiply 14 by 926, the result is 12964, which contains the same five figures. The number of the motor car was therefore 14926. Here are the other eleven numbers: 24651, 42678, 51246, 57834, 75231, 78624, 87435, 72936, 65281, 65983, and 86251.

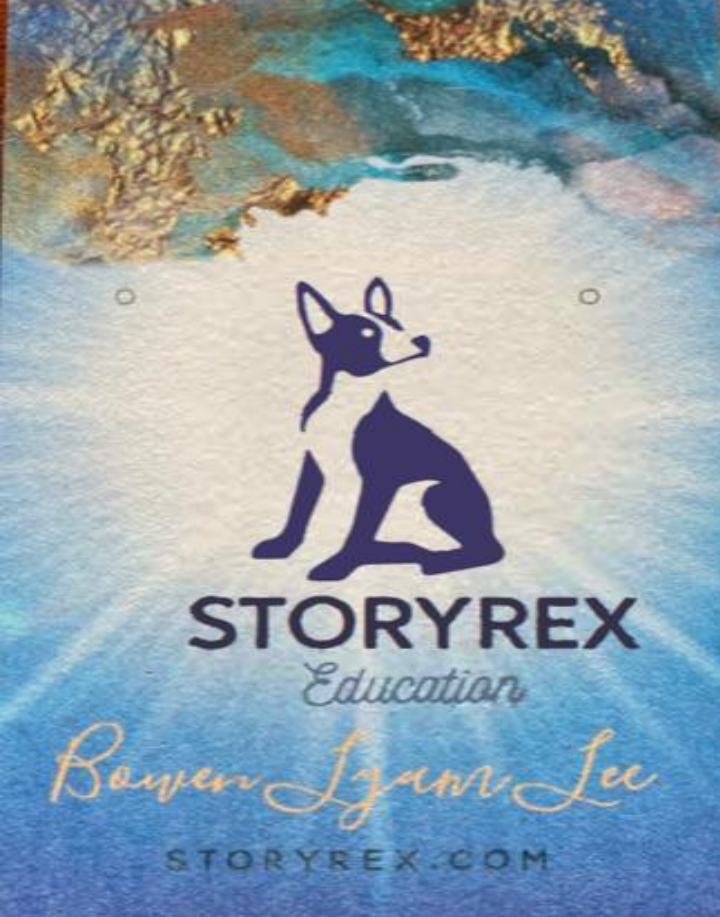




-STORY SIGHTINGS-

What's going on?





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Look and you'll find
something magical close
to you.*

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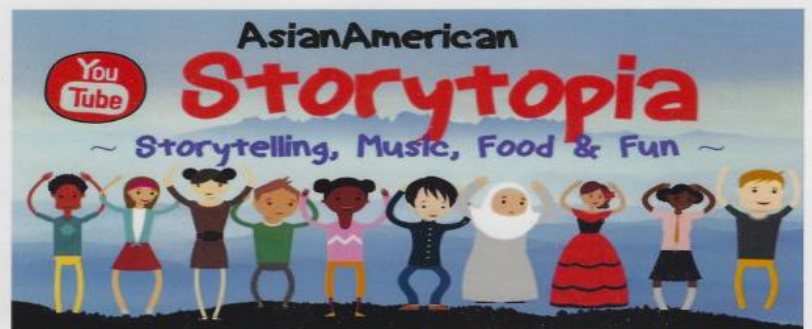
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Tinos was designed by Steve Matteson as an innovative, refreshing serif design that is metrically compatible with Times New Roman™. Tinos offers improved on-screen readability characteristics and the pan-European WGL character set and solves the needs of developers looking for width-compatible fonts to address document portability across platforms.

Updated in May 2013 with improved hinting and released under the Apache 2.0 license.

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Storytelling for me is magic. I hope you
felt that same magic and love through the
course of reading this publication.

May you always wonder, dream, and share.

-Asia Starr
Head Design &
Layout

<https://mamastarrstorytelling.com/>



Thoughts? Feedback? Feelings?
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