

THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

WINGED WORDS





About the Cover Artist Asia Starr

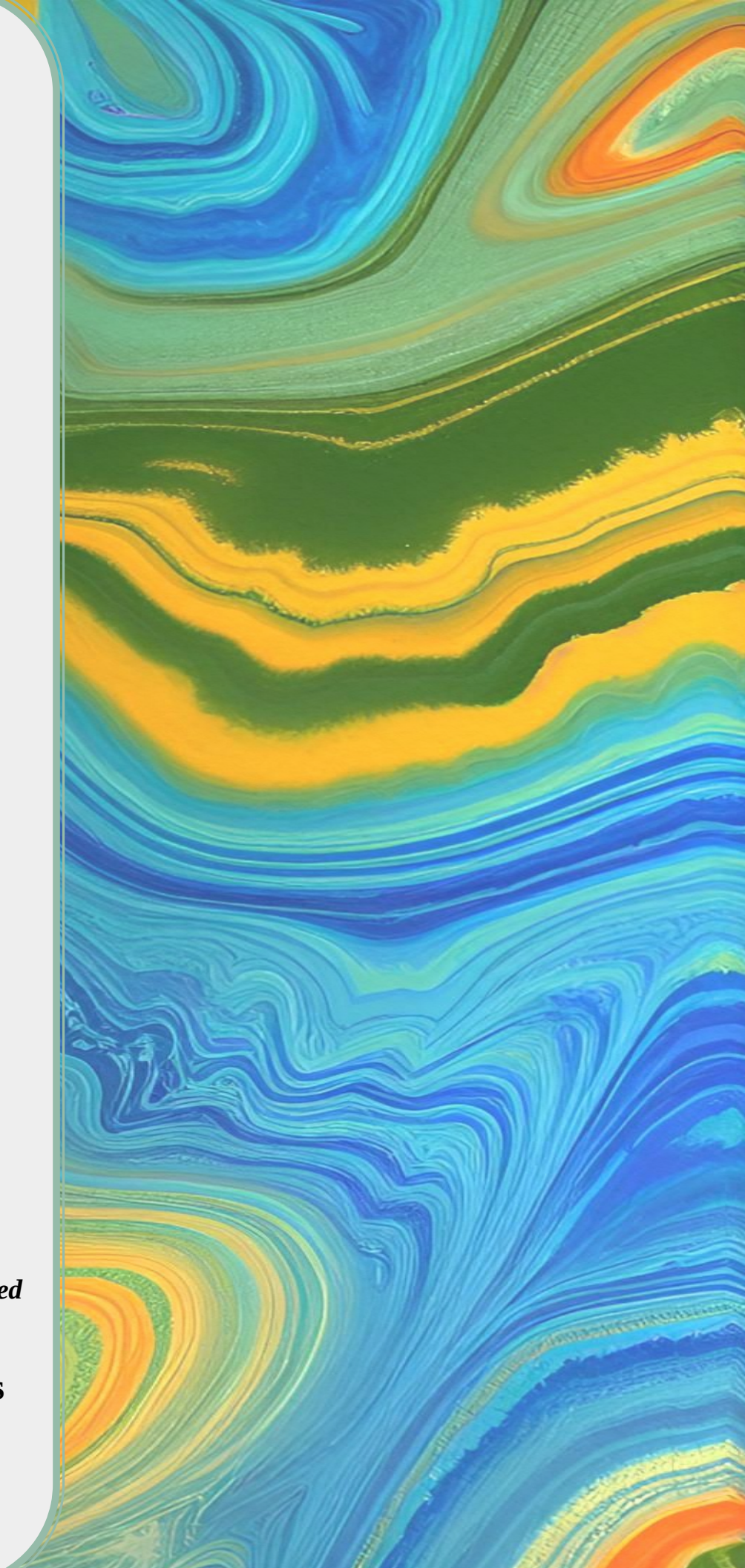
Asia Starr is a Storyteller in the Johnson County Kansas Area, the Head of Design & Layout for [The Story Beast](#) and recipient of the 2023 [J.J. Reneaux Emerging Artist Award](#). Asia specializes in fairytales, folk and humorous stories, with the occasionally Spooky story. You can usually find her telling her stories to an audience of children ranging from preschool to high school. She loves to tell to Adults as well. She hopes to bring that childlike wonder and magic to all that have a chance to stay awhile and listen.

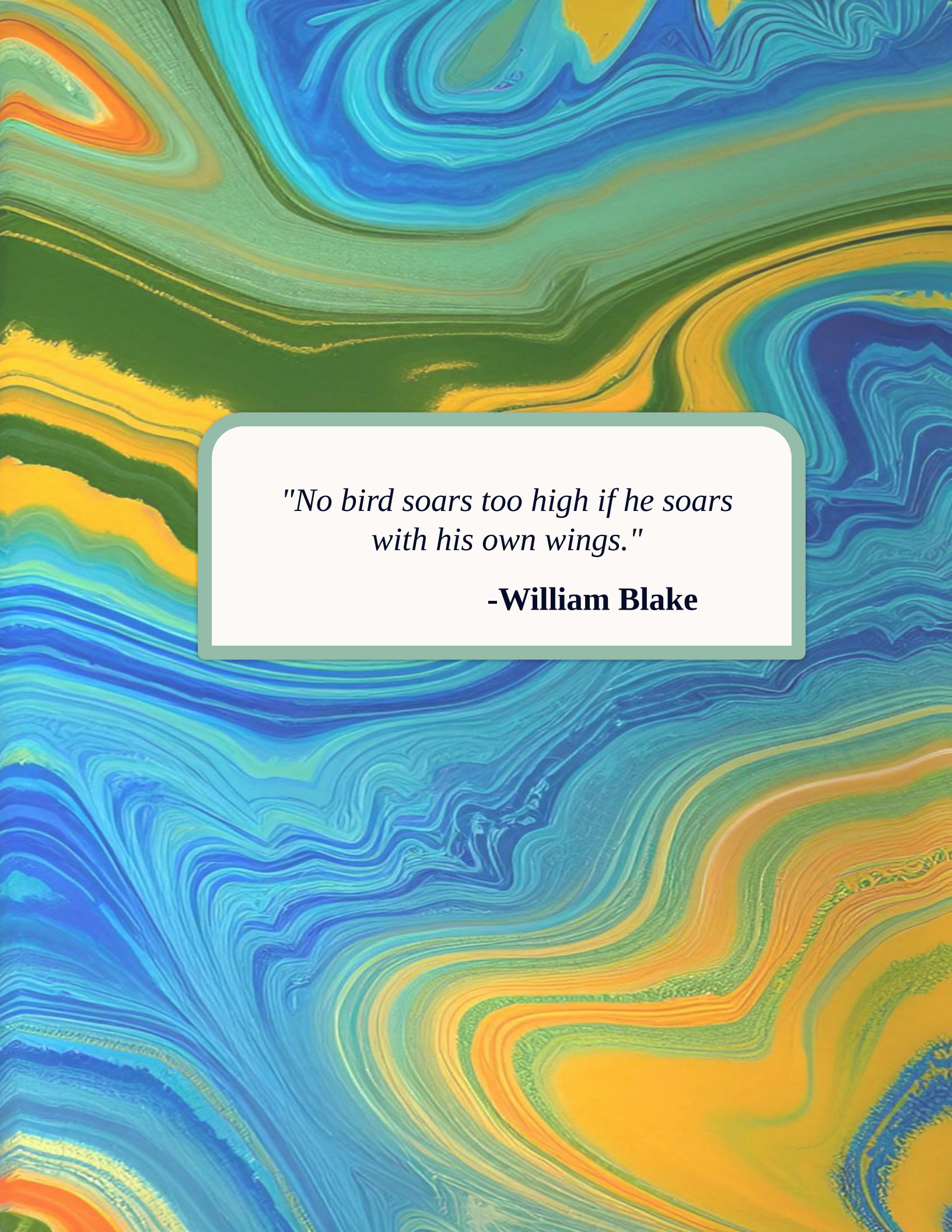
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The Story Beast 2023 Themes

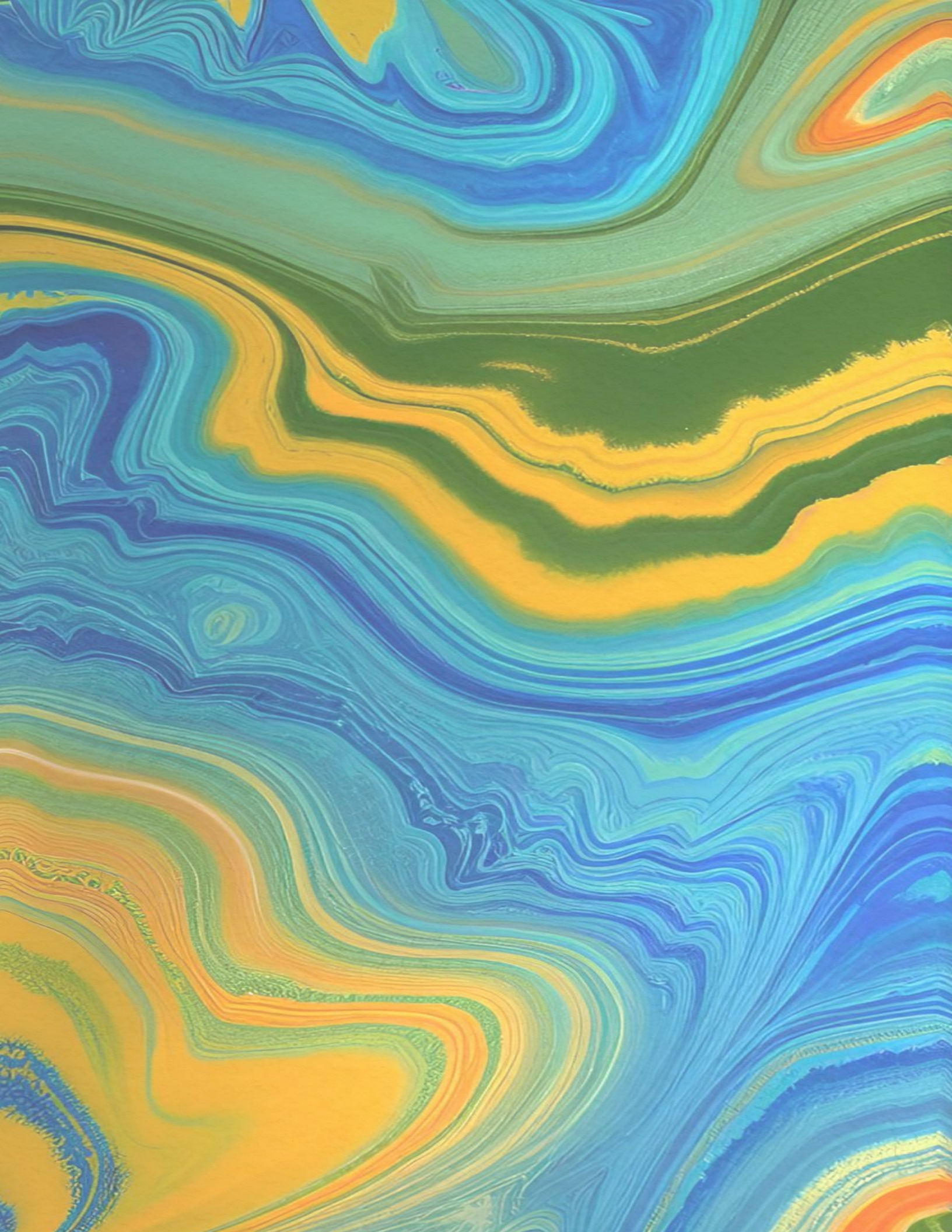
Bright Babblings - Summer
Under the Tome & Tombs - Fall
Peaceful Ponderings - Winter





*"No bird soars too high if he soars
with his own wings."*

-William Blake



THE STORY BEAST

Winged Words

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Spring 2023



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Spring 2023

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*“All in confusion now at last,
The birds upon the shore were cast.”
-The Brownies: Their Book, by Palmer Cox*

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◆ Table of Contents ◆

◆ Letters

- Welcome Letter.....10
- Dearest Crone.....11

◆ Book Notes with Jo Radner

- Book Notes by Jo Radner.....15

◆ Taming the Beast

- *The Golden Triangle* by Joan Leotta.....20
- *She Met Him at the Mall* by Emmalisa Horlacher..... 22

◆ Storycology with Bowen Lee

- *How the Finch Could Get Its Habitat Back* by Bowen Lee.....25

◆ Teacher Tales & Tentacles with Carrie Sue Ayar

- *Standard of the Month* and *Story Chant* by Carrie Sue Ayvar.....28
- *The Postcard* by Phyllis A. Blackstone.....30

◆ Story Feast with Karen Chace

- *Story Feast* by Karen Chace.....33

◆ Journeys

- *The Right Story for the Right Time: Storytelling on the Street* by Juliana Marin.....37
- *Traveling for a Story* by Tobey Ishii Anderson.....40

◆ New Sparks

- *Belle of the Ball: Is the Anime Belle the new “Cinderella?”* by Lex Meyer.....44

◆ Fusions

- *Joe’s Got a Book for That!* by Brandon Spars48
- *The Magician's Trick (Pears)* by Joan Leotta.....53

◆ Hall of the Bard

- *I am a Storyteller* by Wynn Montgomery.....56
- *The Butterfly Effect* by Mike Perry.....57

❖ **Healing Springs**

- *When Florence Flew* by Sara Zeiger.....59
- *Art for the Heart - Shadow Dancers* Photography by Angela Lloyd.....60
- *Rhythms of Life* by Robin L. Reichert.....61

❖ **Puzzles and Games**

- *Lost Word Society* with Carmen Agra Deedy.....64
- *Answers from December 2022 Puzzles*.....65

❖ **Story Sightings**

- *Stories Everywhere*.....67

❖ **Credits**

- *Bibliography*.....70

PULL DOWN

LETTERS





WELCOME!

March heralds in the Spring Equinox, when the Sun crosses the Equator heading North and the hours of the day equals those of the night. Spring is in the air, the birds are returning from their winter travels, and so begins a new season and a new chapter for *The Story Beast*. We are excited about our new publishing cycle. With publishing four times a year (March, June, September, and December), potential contributors have more time to create stories, poems, and artwork for the Beast. We have received some amazing work and we are grateful.

The Spring Equinox is a time of renewal, rebirth, and the promise of new growth and new horizons. Are you feeling like you are stuck in a creative rut, constantly telling the same kind of stories or creating the same kind of art in the same way? How might you refresh yourself? Perhaps it might help to trying something new, or look at what you do from a different perspective? Maybe now might be a great time to experiment, to do something different, to play. When we play, innovation and creativity blossom, rules and constraints are suspended, and we are free to adventure and wonder. Sometimes we forget that fun is good and that we all need to take time to play.

ISSUU.com, the publication software we are using, has decided that it will no longer support publication files larger than 50 pages or 50 MB at the complementary level of service. We have configured our past and future issues to align with these changes. Issues will now have Parts 1 and 2. The pdf versions keeps it as one.

The Beastly Blog (storybeast.org/blog/) is where we will be posting snippets of new articles, stories, and even videos. There will be references to the full pieces, which will be maintained in the Beastly Blog Archive. Please subscribe to the Beastly Blog to stay connected.

The Story Beast YouTube Channel (youtube.com/@storybeastepub) is where we will be posting videos created by our columnists and contributors to give you insight into their articles and pieces in *The Story Beast*.

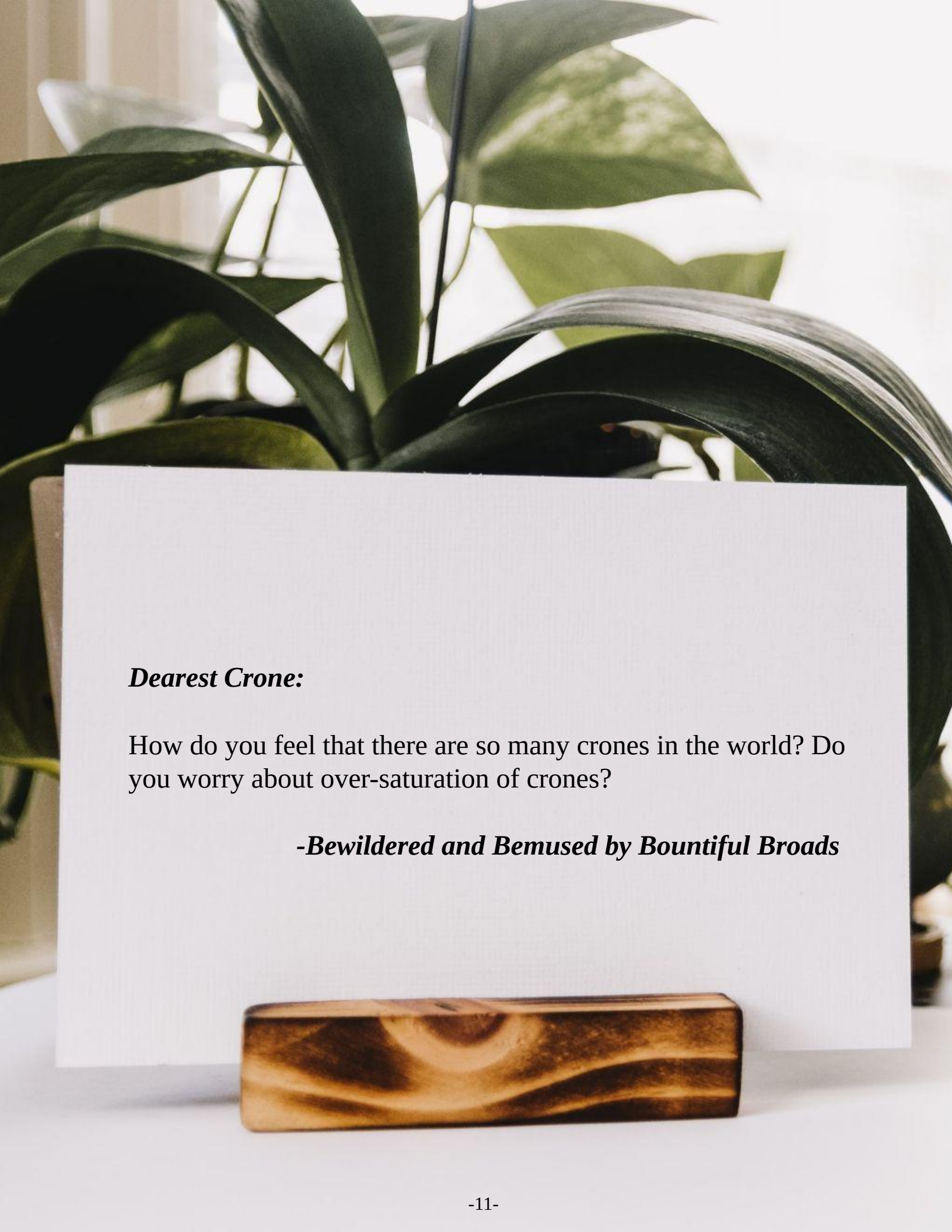
We hope that folks will be inspired by the ideas and articles shared in the Beastly Blog and contribute to discussions in the Blog. This aligns with our vision of having a "Big Tent" and to create a community, where storytellers, artists, poets, and all art forms that use story, are welcomed. Please let us know what you would like to see in this e-Pub and what you find helpful through the Blog and the YouTube Channel.

The Story Beast is your e-Pub and we need your poems, stories, and artwork, as well as articles. We love the creative submissions we have received. We encourage you to keep them coming and to tell your friends about us. Let us know what you think through the Blog or at storybeasteditor@gmail.com.

To all of you who have submitted your words and artwork to *The Story Beast*, thank you. Thank you for entrusting us with your work and allowing us to share your creativity with others. Thank you for reading and we will see you all in the Blog, *The Story Beast* e-pub YouTube Channel, or again in the next issue of *The Story Beast* in June. Stay awhile and feast with the Beast!

Thank you very much.

The Spirits of the Beast
storybeasteditor@gmail.com

A photograph of a potted plant with large green leaves, a white card with text, and a wooden block. The plant is in the background, the card is in the middle ground, and the wooden block is in the foreground.

Dearest Crone:

How do you feel that there are so many crones in the world? Do you worry about over-saturation of crones?

-Bewildered and Bemused by Bountiful Broads

Dear Bewildered and Bemused by Bountiful Broads:

Too many crones? Do you really think there could ever be enough crones? Considering how my bones ache from all the cursing and blessing of people, I could use more crones in the world. I have an endless line of people to annoy -- ur -- test. The next thing you're going to tell me is that there are too many storytellers in the world! Bah!

Where did this scarcity mindset come from? Did you hear this from your parents or grandparents or some acquaintance of one kind or another? Sigh. And harumph.

I've seen it time and again. Someone is lifting their cart and out rolls a potato. A critter by the side of the road rushes to grab the potato. The person shoos the critter away. In all the commotion, the person hangs onto their anger and rolls off with the cart, forgetting about the potato. Meanwhile, the critter has scampered too far off. The potato then rots. Yet, that person will go to the marketplace and still have plenty of potatoes to sell.

By the way, some sweet moss and juicy beetles could bring out the flavors of that rotten potato in a lovely stew. But I digress.

You probably come from a nice village. One hundred or so people there? Maybe more. Oh, whuppity-do. It doesn't matter the exact population. The point is -- that's a lot of people. Simply put, your village has so many opportunities for you to do you. What did you say you were? A storyteller? Right.

Could you have a monthly arrangement with part of your community? Can you reach out to your favorite listeners and find perhaps another monthly arrangement? A quarterly arrangement here? An annual arrangement there? Here, there, everywhere?

I couldn't help but rhyme just now. Your business is being a storyteller, and my business is being a crone. We crones like rhythm in our words. You, storyteller, can appreciate rhythm in your words.

Where was I? Oh, yes.

Depending on which calendar you use -- solar, lunar, or lunisolar -- determines how many engagements you need to survive.

For me, I aim to run into at least one person a day by the side of the road to give them riddles or such. I do enjoy three-day weekends. Raise my bunions up for some cool breeze and toad-eye tea. If you take off the weekends, then – oh, 200ish people? Mind you, often people come in pairs. I have noticed that the stuck-up or dumb ones travel in the morning and by supper time the nice or smart ones come along. Or, sometimes they come as a trio with two jerks for the morning and afternoon and a considerate person by sunset.

So many trails, paths, and roads are out there. I take care of my road. At times, I have to let twins or triplets pass me by because I'm too busy with some sisters or brothers to give attention to them. I whisper to the wind that hopefully a different crone can reach out so those people are not forgotten.

All this talk of scarcity brings to mind some books on Economics found in the 330s of the Dewey Decimal System at the library. If you want to be fancy, International Economics is found at the 337s. Resources and opportunities do not have to be finite.

The truth is that there are not enough storytellers right now. And there are not enough crones. The supply is low and the demand is high once you find your spot on the side of the road like me.

Was I remotely helpful to you? Oh, bother! Then find another crone.

Yours on the Road
- The Crone of All Crones





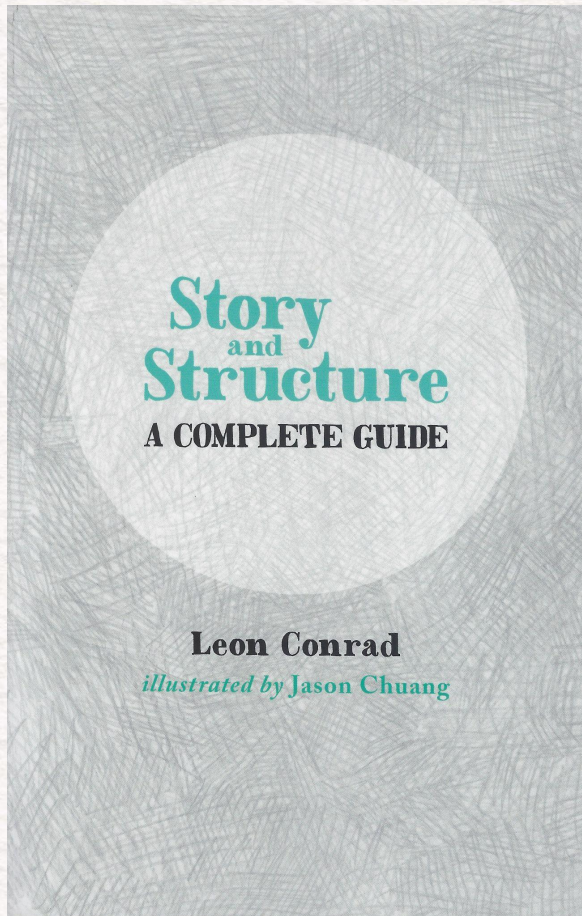
-BOOK NOTES-

“So many books, so little shelf space!”

BOOK NOTES

So many books, so little shelf space! **I will give any book marked with an asterisk (*) below, FREE, to the first person who requests it by email.** I ask only \$5 for postage and handling. (I note each book's list price in parentheses.) And yet I want MORE books for review! My shelf is undersupplied with the most recent (2022-2023) titles. Have you – or has someone you know – published a storytelling collection or a book about the art form in the past two years? **Please let me know and I will request a review copy.** Thank you.

Wishing you many glorious stories,
Jo (jradner@american.edu)

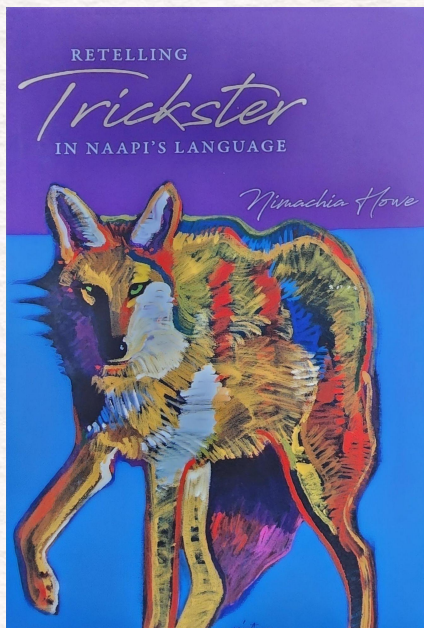


***Leon Conrad, *Story and Structure: A Complete Guide*.** Glastonbury, Somerset, UK: Squeeze Press, 2022. \$39.95.

Leon Conrad sets forth to do an astonishingly comprehensive analysis of story: structural, functional, and psychological. He starts with the question, "What makes a story . . . a story?" Adapting six basic symbols from George Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form*, Conrad analyzes and diagrams eighteen story structures and connects them not only to narratives and poetry, but also to our daily lives and to our general practice of rhetoric. Among the structures, interrelated by their narrative components but distinctive, are the Quest, the Trickster, Transformation, Rags to Riches, Death and Rebirth, Dilemma, and Riddle.

Conrad proposes that a well-told story depends on laws of story; some patterns work, some do not. These laws of story emerge from our human desire for balance, which, according to Conrad, helps us to find fulfillment and meaning in our lives. Story structure is deeply embedded in our consciousness. To help his readers understand the complex methodology he outlines, he performs a detailed analysis of a complex Russian folk tale in an appendix. This is a learned and well-researched approach to the science of story. Readers who enjoy structural investigations will find it very fulfilling.

Story and Structure is a winner of the 2023 Storytelling World Resource Award.

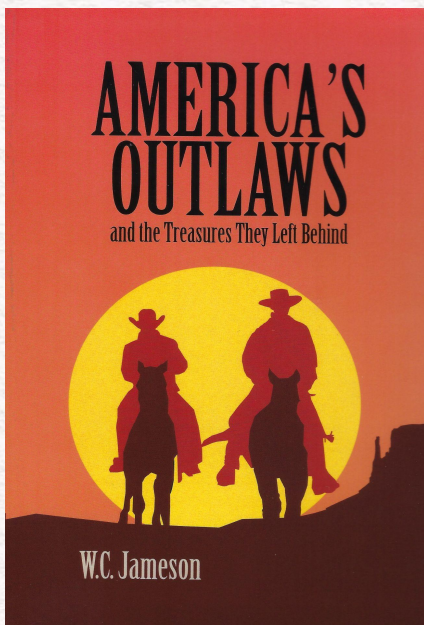


***Nimachia Howe, *Retelling Trickster in Naapi's Language*.** Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2019. \$22.95.

Nimachia Howe's study re-examines the figure of Naapi, a powerful creator in Nitsitapiisinni (Blackfoot) origin stories often inaccurately categorized by Western scholars as a trickster figure. The volume presents five Naapi stories and important, detailed analysis that corrects simplistic assumptions about Native cosmology and the function of narrative.

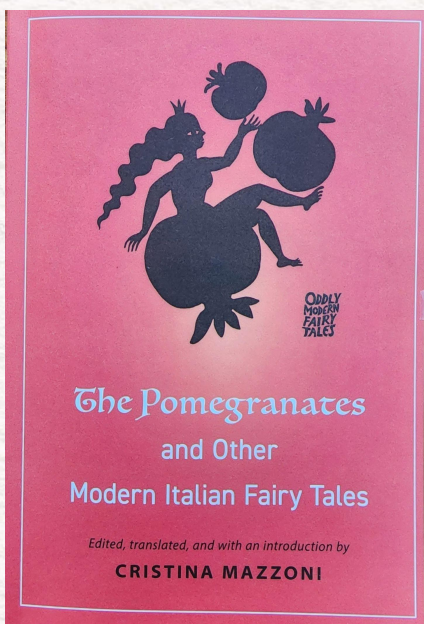
***W.C. Jameson, *America's Outlaws and the Treasures They Left Behind*.** Atlanta, GA: August House, 2019. \$16.95.

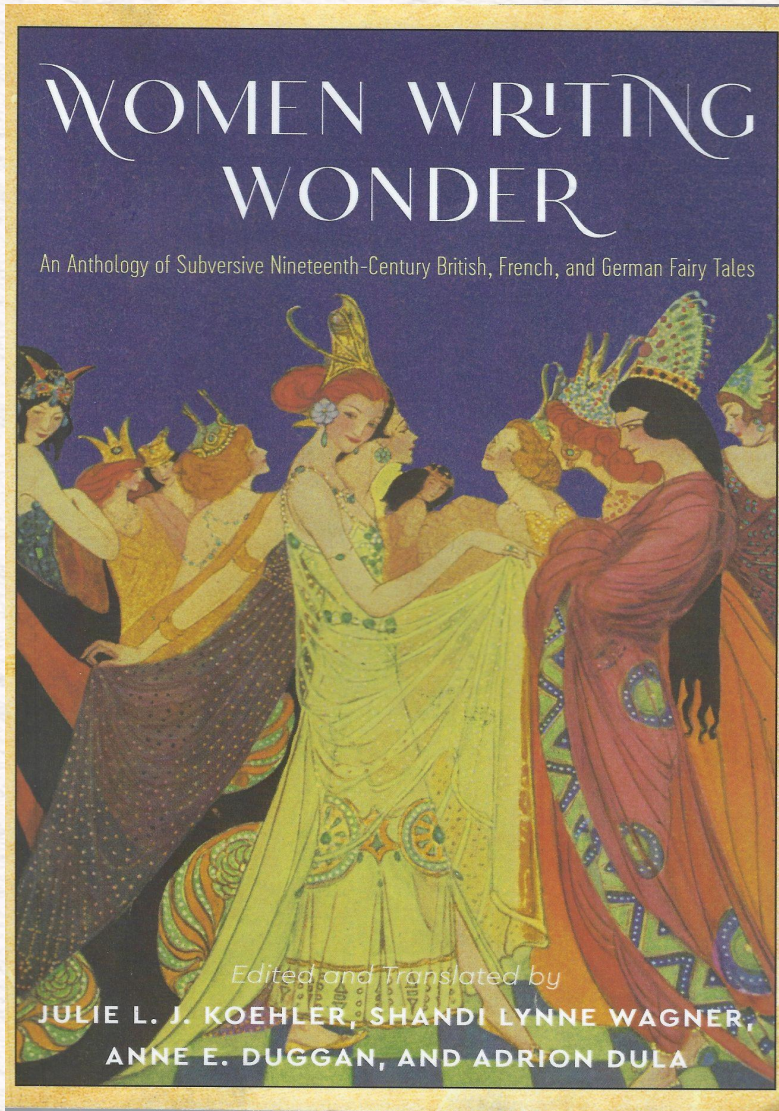
Jameson's latest collection foregrounds two topics dear to the American imagination: outlaws and lost treasure. These thirty stories feature some well-known bandits: Frank and Jesse James, Black Jack Ketchum, the Dalton Gang, the Doolin Gang, and more -- but they also draw in other fascinating outlaw episodes: the bizarre deathbed confession of Alton Baker, the cattle-rustling prowess of Ella Watson, and a panoply of ingenious stagecoach and train robberies. All of the tales culminate in lost treasure: the outlaws are said to have buried fabulous caches, worth many millions today -- sought by many treasure hunters, but never found. Jameson has led expeditions into some of the remote areas he describes, and his portrayals of the landscapes bring their histories to life. Some of these stories would be interesting components in a concert illuminating aspects of the American character!



***Cristina Mazzoni, ed. and tr. *The Pomegranates and Other Modern Italian Fairy Tales*.** Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. \$22.95.

What a gift is this! Twenty Italian fairy tales -- all but one appearing in English for the first time -- published between 1875 and 1914. Some of the authors drew from oral tradition; others wrote original tales; some even adapted French tales (but made some very significant alterations). All are tales of magic and transformation, diverse in styles and perspectives, full of the energy of the newly-unified Italy.





****Woman Writing Wonder: An Anthology of Subversive Nineteenth-Century British, French, and German Fairy Tales*, ed. and transl. by Julie L.J. Koehler, Shandi Lynne Wagner, Anne E. Duggan, and Adrion Dula.** Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021. \$36.99.

Anyone who thinks that revisionist feminist approaches to fairy tales started with the subversive modern writings of such women as Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood, and Emma Donoghue should read this book! Although we know best the collections presented by men -- Straparola, Basile, Charles Perrault, the brothers Grimm, and even the Disney Studios -- the fairy tale has since at least the 17th century been the province of women writers in Europe. Aiming often at an adult audience, women writers have long used the seemingly innocent genre of the fairy tale to express their views on risky social topics. In the 19th century, women across Europe, and particularly in England, sometimes found the fairy tale a safe place to express significant feminist ideas. Heroines resist gender norms and domestic ideology by never marrying. Some take the initiative to save their men. These tales are -- subversively -- at the center of Victorian cultural debates.

So many fascinating stories! Some of the authors wrote with children in mind, producing witty teaching tales such as Hedwig Dohm's "Lotte the Grump." A very unusual tale, "Black and White" (1869), by the German writer Elisabeth Ebeling, presents a handsome, heroic black African prince, Almansor, who because of his skin color is rejected by a white princess (Obstinata!) in a "far-off land"; in despair, he undergoes much suffering and magically turns his skin white, but she still rejects him. Returning home, his father does not recognize his son and threatens to kill him as a devil; his mother takes him to a wise man who guides him to dig a well in the desert -- and Almansor finally benefits his thirsty people, returns to his original blackness, and is welcomed home. Moral: "It does not matter if you look White or Black; it only matters if you are wise."

The book is divided into three sections, with selections from French, German, and English writers, some well known and some brought forth from undeserved obscurity. The collection is rich in variety and profound in its ability to inspire thought about the nature of fairy tales in society.



***Mayako Murai and Luciana Cardi, ed., *Re-Orienting the Fairy Tale: Contemporary Adaptations across Cultures*.** Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021. \$34.99.

This extraordinary collection of path-breaking essays has its origin in a 2017 conference on "Re-Orienting the Fairy Tale" at Kanagawa University, Japan. As the editors point out, the fairy tale has moved beyond a literary/folk genre to inform new media platforms. The fourteen authors in this volume aim to de-center the familiar Euro-American approaches to fairy tale, resisting colonial attitudes and welcoming divergent approaches. The three sections of the collection reflect the scholars' intentions: "Disorienting Cultural Assumptions," "Exploring New Uses," and "Promoting Alternative Ethics and Aesthetics." Much challenging and exciting material here.

***Paul Vaillant-Couturier, *Johnny Breadless: A Pacifist Fairy Tale*.** Translated and adapted by Jack Zipes. Little Mole & Honey Bear (Wayne State University Press), 2020. \$25.00.

This is one of the first anti-war stories written for children, a powerfully persuasive narrative of a poor boy who discovers, as author Paul Vaillant-Couturier had done as a soldier in World War I, that the young and the poor are exploited by rich and powerful "swindlers." Wholeheartedly communistic, the story celebrates the coming of peace as the common people of all countries make common cause. This beautiful edition includes the original 1921 French version with color illustrations as well as Jack Zipes' translation.



This column reviews titles of interest and use to storytellers. Because it is based on submissions sent by authors and publishers, it is not comprehensive. To submit a title for review, send books published within the past year to Jo Radner, Book Notes Editor, P.O. Box 145, Lovell, ME 04051 (Physical address: 178 Merrill Road, Lovell, ME 04051). Book Notes reviews only newly published collections of stories and titles related to the art or applications of storytelling. We do not review recordings, novels, or picture books. Submitted materials will not be returned.



About the Author

Jo Radner has been studying, teaching, telling, and collecting stories most of her life, and has performed from Maine to Hawaii to Finland. Professor emerita at American University, Jo returned to Maine as a freelance storyteller and oral historian. She is past president of the American Folklore Society and the National Storytelling Network.

Website: joradner.com



-TAMING *the* BEAST-

The Art of Crafting Stories



The Golden Triangle

By Joan Leotta

The Golden Triangle was first published in Sasee Magazine in March 2016.

"The Golden Triangle" I speak of is the mass of golden day lilies that filled the corner of my yard when I was growing up. These visual harbingers of summer's start were, and are still, a tangible remembrance of my mother. Bright, showy, hardy, lovely beyond expectation in their June prime.

The autumn after I turned six, she added lilies to a corner patch of our yard -- all the same a special yellow variety that cost the horrific sum (in 1950s) of almost five dollars apiece. I guess the yellow lilies brought the sun into her heart. As she shoved the bulbs into the holes her little device made, she told me, "These will multiply."

In the dreary gray rains of Pittsburgh's November, that corner of the yard was off limits, but since it was too damp and chilly to be outside it did not matter so much that the lily garden now blocked my way to my favorite hiding place in our yard. Yes, they made a line across a large swath of yard, filled in on two sides, with the deep green of hedge marking the side boundaries and the point marked by a boundary stone and my favorite bush. Snow mounds covered the patch in winter, and when my mother was not home to shoo me away, I tramped over this forbidden corner of the yard to reach that corner marker stone. I would climb up on it and dream of pelting the other neighborhood kids with snowballs, though I never did.

Spring brought bright green shoots out in the patch. Their slim green selves shifted with the cool spring breezes, occasionally revealing the nozzle-like buds that would later turn from green to yellow and burst out into trumpet form in summer.

True to her prediction, the bulbs did multiply. In two years, the triangle was large enough for the lilies to act as an audience for my summer outdoor antics. Like so many trumpet-hatted matrons, the patient lilies attended all of my dramatic performances in the yard, warm breezes inspiring them to nod approval for my songs, poems, stories. Day lilies have none of the heady aroma of floribunda roses but then again, neither do they attract those dreaded Japanese beetles. Only bees, butterflies, and birds frequented their innards -- and then only for a short visit. . Beauty without bugs. I came to love those flowers

When I wanted to bring some inside, my mother informed me that their rich golden yellow beauty was not for picking. They remained an outside testament to floral elegance.

After I moved to another city to find a job, on various return visits, I never failed to marvel over that triangle of floral finery. After I married, I lived for seven years in a yard-starved townhouse in Washington DC's Virginia suburbs -- no room for much of anything except for a small kiddie pool and a few azaleas. At last, in 1984, we moved to a house with enough room for a swing set. Ours was a single-family colonial with a soon-to be fenced yard and play equipment aplenty for our then four- and two-year-olds.

Along the fence line, from the gate to the back, I saw a patch of ground I wanted to use for daylilies -- my mother's day lilies. She and my father were planning to move to an apartment, and I wanted some of those golden lily bulbs for my own yard. I wanted to keep them in the family by putting some of her garden in my yard. My father acquiesced right away -- as fathers do. My mother resisted when I asked for "a few bulbs."

"No," she blurted out. "Those bulbs cost five dollars apiece in 1956, and you will kill them."

I do have a rep for having a black thumb. However, I was confident the lilies could survive even Virginia's warmer climate, more clay-like soil, and me.

Her last argument was, "the new people will want them, I know." I won that argument by countering that the new people would never miss a few from the middle part of the swath since the lilies would soon need to be divided anyway.

By the following spring, I was enjoying silk green stems, and my mother and father were safely ensconced in a new apartment. By summer, golden blooms adorned that rectangle of space alongside my fence. In spite of me, in spite of the soil, in spite of the warmer sun, the lilies flourished.

On my first summer visit back to Pittsburgh after the bulb transfer, my mother and I took a drive past the old house so she could enjoy the full expanse of her golden triangle. When we pulled up to the old house and walked up to the gate to the yard, we looked left, and my mother took a step back in shock. "They're gone," she exclaimed. The philistines who purchased the house from her had torn out those five-dollar bulbs (probably consigning them to the trash) and replaced them with plain green sod. My mother gloried in her wisdom at giving me some bulbs before leaving the old house.

When she died in 1997, I was left alone in my reverence for those lilies. In 2003, we sold our house, our patch of colonial Virginia. However, before the new owners took possession, I divided the lilies, leaving some for the new owners and put three lily bulbs in a pot for me. Those three traveled to Calabash, North Carolina, with me to an empty very sandy bed by Caw Caw creek.

Happily, they seemed to enjoy the trip and their new home. First the green spears appeared. Then, when June arrived, all transported bulbs rewarded me with blooms as yellow and full as a row of trumpet-shaped suns shining brightly against a backdrop of white pampas grass plumes and a deep blue Carolina sky.

Although my garden geometry is once again rectangular, when I look out of my kitchen window those yellow heads nod approvingly at me, and I think of my mother and her golden triangle. I suspect that, from heaven, she is reveling in her wisdom at spurring me to carry her bulbs with me wherever I go.

Over the years, the precise name of this once-pricey variety has become lost to me. However, the true name and cost do not matter. To me the bulbs are "Mom's," and they evoke her indomitable spirit. For that and all the memories, these flowers are worth more than gold. I look forward to giving some to my daughter when she has her own garden. No matter the actual alignment in my garden or wherever, these flowers form, and will always form, for me, a priceless Golden Triangle.

To be told in educational settings with attribution



About the Author

Joan Leotta plays with words on page and stage. She performs tales featuring food, family, and strong women. Internationally and widely published, she's a 2021, 2022 Pushcart nominee, Best of the Net 2022 nominee, 2022 runner-up, Robert Frost Competition. Her chapbook, *Feathers on Stone*, is from Main Street Rag. [Joan Leotta, Author, and Story Performer on Facebook](#) Email: joanleotta@atmc.net



She Met Him at the Mall

By Emmalisa Horlacher

She sat down at one of those tables—the kind where you definitely know that other people have sat there before, but you don't know where they have been. She'd just gotten her mall-style Chinese food box with orange chicken and fried rice. She got out her fork and was just about to take the hungriest, biggest bite, mouth wide open, head ready to catch any of the drippings, when she noticed a guy staring at her. She realized how ridiculous she must have looked but there really wasn't much she could do at this point, and she was still hungry. So, she took the bite, then checked back in his direction to see if he was still staring. He was. She shrugged. He smiled. Maybe he was hungry too. He then pantomimed exactly what she had done when she was about to take a bite of her food. She was offended and it read easily on her face. The guy laughed.

In the most polite and dainty of ways she took her doiky plastic fork and tenderly inserted it into a small piece of chicken. Naturally, he was still watching. She lifted the piece of meat with the delicateness of a queen passing judgment over the future of her country. The meat on her fork fell off. She checked to see if he had seen. He was laughing. She started laughing too. It was just silly.

Then, he came over to her.

“Hi,” he said, “I couldn’t help but see you struggle to eat your food.”

“Yes, I’m glad you noticed. If you’ve come to see a show you need pay first,” she said.

“I see.” the guy said. Then he walked away, bought a cookie from the pastry shop, and set it down in front of her. “Will this suffice?”

She slyly slid the cookie into her possession.

“I suppose,” she said.

They began with some small conversation: what brought you to the mall, just getting a birthday present, etc., etc. It was easy between them. No big judgements, no attempts to prove or impress. Just two people, being themselves, with another person. It was fun.

At the end of the conversation his hands started getting really sweaty as he realized he wanted to ask for her number. He wanted to see her again. He wanted to talk like this with another person, with her.

He didn’t want to be weird. He didn’t want to be rude or presumptuous or pushy. She could have a boyfriend. She could have an overprotective father or a big mean dog with rabies. But if she didn’t . . .

She said, “If you’d want to ask for my number I would say yes, but don’t feel obligated please.”

Wow. What a woman.

He brought out his phone and got her number and later that night he texted her.

Then a few dates followed with three years of a serious relationship, a wedding, and four kids. He was on a business trip when the third child came early, and he flew across the nation to be there to hold that precious little girl and her mother. He had cried. The soccer games kept Saturdays busy, and weekdays kept the kids at school, freeing her to paint a gallery. The youngest graduated valedictorian and they were so proud. The oldest ended up in jail. They were so heartbroken. When his mother got sick, she cared for her until her passing. He could never express how much that had meant to him. Grandchildren and Christmas cards became the yearly highlights. Then she was standing at his gravestone, her name next to his but her body still functioning. She hadn’t known how easy life was until she had to live it without him.

She visited that old mall, the place where they met. The fake Chinese food restaurant was still there. It went under a new name now, but the food still tasted like plastic. She stared at the tables. They still carried evidence that people had sat there before. How many people had come and gone over the years? After all the life lived, and the loss she had endured, she finally felt like she understood where those people had gone and where they had been.



About the Author

This coming June Emmalisa Horlacher will be a Theater Arts Studies graduate from Brigham Young University. Her book, “Henry’s Hope” was featured at the Frankfurt Germany International Book Fair Oct 2022. She is looking to continue her writing career in family-friendly entertainment as a producer and screenwriter.

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–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.”



How the Finch Could Get Its Habitat Back

By Bowen Lee



How the Finch Got Its Colors

Long ago the world was dark. All the plants and animals were the color of stones or the earth. Then one day it rained, and rained, and rained. And when the rain finally stopped, a rainbow appeared in the sky. Wherever the Rainbow touched a plant, it became colorful.

The animals wanted to be colorful, too, so they took colors from the Rainbow to make themselves red, or yellow, or blue, or green. Some animals wished to remain the colors of the earth, but many animals took colors from the Rainbow.

When the birds saw what was happening, they, too, wanted colors. The Kingbird asked the Rainbow if the birds could get colors, The Rainbow was fading, but it said whatever colors were left the birds could have. Quickly, the birds flew up into the sky and grabbed colors from the Rainbow. The parrot grabbed green and the cardinal snatched up red. Canaries captured yellow and jays claimed blue. Soon, all the colors of the Rainbow were gone.

Kingbird heard someone crying on the ground and found the little finch weeping. It had waited its turn to get colors from the Rainbow, but all the other birds had rushed ahead to take their colors. Now there was nothing left for the finch.

Kingbird called the birds together and told them what had happened. When the birds realized what they had done, the birds shared their colors with the finch, and that is why the Gouldian Finch is all the colors of the rainbow.

How the Finch Lost Its Habitat

Long ago, North America was full of songbirds. That was before the colonization of the Americas. Once people immigrated to America, they cut down forests to build their houses, farms, factories, cities, and roads. Without trees, songbirds lost their homes. People planted trees for food and decoration, but many of those trees were from other parts of the world, and birds could not live in them. Trees are not only shelter for birds, but their primary sources of food.

The expansion of the United States of America resulted in decimation of the wilderness. There's only about 30% of wilderness left in the USA, and most of that is in protected areas such as national and state parks. People have destroyed habitat for wildlife, such as songbirds, by tearing out native plants and replacing them with non-native species. Uprooting native plants that birds have taken hundreds of years to adapt to, is how the finch lost its habitat.

How the Finch Could Get Its Habitat Back

Douglas Tallamy writes in his books, *Bringing Nature Home* and *Nature's Best Hope*, that in order for nature to heal and remain healthy, we must restore habitat for wildlife. When biodiversity is reestablished on the planet, climate change will reverse itself, balance and harmony of the world will be restored, and the world will be a better place for all living things, including human beings. How do we do this when we have so little open space left? We put native plants in our yards. Tallamy calls it: Homegrown National Park.

I never realized how impoverished my neighborhood was of wildlife until I started growing a few natives in my tiny yard. I started with just California poppy, ceanothus, and a local sunflower. All around me, my neighbors have torn out their lawns and put wood chips or gravel with succulents and non-native shrubs and flowers. One day, I noticed there were butterflies in my yard. I hadn't realized there weren't any butterflies, or bees, before. I put in more native plants, and this summer, finches, sparrows, warblers, and hummingbirds appeared. It was magical, because the bird count before I planted natives was zero. This year, I have the Beneficial Bird Native Plant Chart to guide me, as I cover the last bits of my teeny tiny yard with native plants for my contribution to Homegrown National Park.

Here's the link to that beneficial bird chart: <https://www.wildfarmalliance.org/tool>

Growing plants is a climate action that reverses climate change because plants draw carbon out of the atmosphere and capture it. Growing native plants is a super climate action because native plants provide food and shelter for wildlife, and wild creatures help balance the effects of climate imbalance. They all do their part to keep the planet healthy, if we let them.

My next step is to join community groups that restore native habitat in my area. Then to increase my Homegrown National Park by joining a community garden and volunteering at a local permaculture farm. So even if you live in an apartment and don't have a yard, you can help restore habitat by volunteering in your community. And don't forget these are also ways you can counter your carbon footprint and mitigate those plane trips and long travels by restoring nature. If you don't have a yard or you're not into growing things, you can donate to a native habitat restoration project or agroecology organization. Let them plant a tree for you.

We have so much in America that we have taken for ourselves, water, forests, land. Do you realize the Rainbow has faded and there's very little left for others? How many resources have we taken from other people? What have we taken from the living things that once lived where we are now? For everything you have gotten from the Earth, what have you given back? That's why we have created a global environmental crisis, because we don't give back or share what we've taken.

Feel like sharing? The Finch will thank you, and so will the Earth, for keeping it healthy.



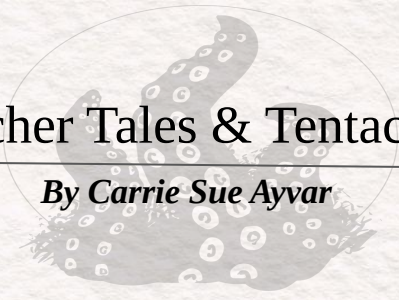
Storycology Head Editor

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.

storyrex.com



-TEACHER TALES & TENTACLES-



Teacher Tales & Tentacles

By Carrie Sue Ayvar

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. Though, many states have similar standards, phrases, or words; it feels like it is national when it is not. Thus, we will introduce words you will find common. Please check the state standards where you will be teaching or performing. Search by the featured phrase or word.

Standard addressed: Problem Solving

Problem Solving: The ability to recognize and demonstrate effective creative problem solving is an essential skill, for every grade level from PreK through Grade 12. It is part of curriculum standards across multiple subjects including Math, Science, Engineering, Reading and Social Studies. Albert Einstein, the brilliant scientist, understood the importance of creative and divergent thinking to solve problems. He said that “to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science.” The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics states that every student, PreK – Grade 12, should learn to build new mathematical knowledge through problem solving and be able to solve problems in other contexts as well.

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

Problems are an inherent and integral part of every story. The elements of every story include the characters, setting, problem, and the resolution of the problem. No wonder Storytelling is, and has been, a vital educational tool through the ages. Even our youngest students can learn to identify different kinds of problems and figure out ways to resolve problems through a story.

I like to start by introducing the parts of the story with a call & response Story Chant, using rhythm and hand motions. Adding simple, clear movements can serve as physical and visual cues. Engaging multiple senses increases the ways that information is processed, understood, and remembered. Plus, it is fun!

Story Chant:

Storyteller: A story, a story. Let it come, let it go. *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: What's in a story? *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: The characters. *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: The setting. *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: Where it takes place and when it takes place. *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: The Problem. (Doo doo dooom) *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: Solution! *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: No problem! *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: The beginning, the middle, the end - Tadah! *Students Repeat*

Storyteller: A story, a story. Let it come, let it go.

After listening to a story we talk about the story elements. Who are the characters? Where and when does it take place? What was the big problem? How was it resolved? I happily accept any answer if they can give me a reason for their answers. Then we play with the story! What other ways can we solve the problem? What happens if we change an element like the characters or setting? This can be done as a class discussion or in small group settings depending on the class and grade levels. For example, what is the conflict or problem of Goldilocks and the Three Bears? Does she have permission to enter the house of the Three Bears? She is found asleep in Baby Bear's bed. How is the problem of this stranger and her behavior in their house resolved?

Even with older students, breaking the Story Elements down into simple parts helps identify and clarify the story, enabling students to ask and think about questions that can help us look at it from different points of view and find new solutions. Certainly dilemma or riddle stories are wonderful opportunities to play and practice innovative, creative problem solving. Like with any muscle, the more we exercise our problem solving skills, the stronger they get.

One of my favorite activities is to use colored index cards, one color for characters, one color for setting, one color for the problem. Each group of students gets several character cards, one setting card and one problem card. As a group they create the story and decide on a solution to the problem. They can share it by telling the story orally, dramatizing it, writing it or even creating a visual picture. Allowing time to play with possibilities, ask open-ended questions and explore creative and imaginative solutions promotes higher thinking skills that can be used across the curriculum and across grade levels.



About the Author

How is it that an Arabic surnamed, Eastern European Jewish girl from Pittsburgh, PA, tells multicultural stories in Spanish and English? Perhaps it is because she is a 3rd generation award-winning storyteller who came of age in Mexico. Blending traditional, international & personal tales, bilingual storyteller Carrie Sue Ayvar (pronounced EYE-BAR) takes her listeners on a journey into the imagination connecting people, languages, and cultures through her stories that flow effortlessly between Spanish and English.

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The Postcard

By Phyllis A. Blackstone

“What is a postcard?” asked the group of five 7th graders seated around my table in the corner of the middle school library. I had just made an assignment that they should each write a postcard to a family member or friend, inviting them to the all-school talent show next Friday night.

Ten eyes glued to my face, and five facial expressions that echoed, “Yeah, what is a postcard?” It was that moment when I realized that these computer whiz kids had no idea about postcards.

I proceeded. A postcard is a card, not a thin paper, but a heavier, stronger card like a 3 x 5 card, that has a short message on one side and the name and address of the message receiver on the other side. It can be mailed to that person when a postage stamp, cheaper than a regular stamp, is attached.

“You mean, I can write a message to you on a card, put your address on it with a postage stamp, and you’ll get it in, what, three days maybe?”

“Yes!” I replied.

“Why would anyone do that?” asked another. “Isn’t it easier to just send an email that arrives in the person’s inbox immediately, doesn’t cost any money, and can be a private message that no one else can see?”

The others nodded. “Yes, you are right. Sending a message by email is faster and free. But let us return to a time of your grandparents and great grandparents, when computers were not available, and the word ‘email’ was not even a word.”



I Googled postcards and the computer, of course, rewarded us with numerous hits. In the next half-hour we discussed the history of postcards, the various uses of postcards, the diverse ways messages can be conveyed through postcards. We discussed the essentials of a postcard: Clear and correct name and address of the receiver, a postcard stamp attached, (“How much?” one asked and a quick search to the US Postal Service found the answer), and a pithy, concise message. (I love teaching the word “pithy” to 7th graders. They think it is an edgy, gritty word and I will hear them using it throughout the semester.)

“The message,” I say, “is always the most important part. It must be pithy and concise because there is not much space on this card. And it must be handwritten unless, of course, you want to go to all the trouble of resetting the printing settings on your printer and insert a card of heavier stock for one postcard, and then resetting all the settings for your regular work! In this case, it is more efficient to use your own handwriting.”

“So, what type of messages could be put on a postcard?” I ask. They respond with ideas such as “Having a fun time. Wish you were here.” and “Sorry your grandfather died. Missed you at practice.”

We then discussed the images on postcards, and another Google search produced a plethora (another good word for 7th graders) of images. “Wow!” “Cool!” “Look at this!” “Jeez!” I let them explore and exclaim.

Finally, I returned to the assignment, the place where all teachers conclude their sessions with students. They suggested an addition to the assignment, which really was a good addition and would cause them much more work as well as collaboration, a fact that I would keep to myself forever. Instead of each one writing a postcard to someone, they should design and create a selection of postcards announcing the talent show and make them available to all students.

“Good idea!” I responded. “How should we start?” Then, the magic begins, they organize, prioritize, analyze, and synthesize, and get to work. “This is good,” I say, “This is good.”

Postcards; an alternative way to communicate.



About the Author

Dr. Phyllis A. Blackstone, storyteller extraordinaire, is a retired educator and professor who used storytelling as her preferred teaching tool from first graders to graduate students. In retirement she tells stories of wisdom and truth, including folktales, personal stories, and creative narratives. Her audiences include children, families, adults, and senior citizens in venues from classrooms to retirement homes. MY STORIED LIFE is an eclectic collection of real and imagined stories that will tickle the funny bone and bring a tear to the eye. Dr. Blackstone currently resides in Brunswick, Maine. Performance information is available at blackstonestoryteller.com.

I can be reached by email at phyllis.blackstone@gmail.com or text at 207-860-6622.

-STORY FEAST-

A bounty to share

“A bird does not sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.”

Maya Angelou





Here in the United States, we are winging our way towards springs. To dovetail with the theme for this month, Winged Words, I offer you some stories about our feathered friends from around the world.



*“All of the birds were very proud of their appearance.”
by Jean De Bosschère from
Beast & Men: Folktales Collected in Flanders, 1918*

[The Bird Grip – Sweden](#)

[Crow Brings Daylight - Inuit](#)

[The Bat the Birds and the Beasts - Aesop](#)

[The Bird of Folklore - Denmark](#)

[The Enchanted Storks - Bagdad](#)

[Fenist the Bright Falcon - Russia](#)

[The Fox and the Stork](#)

[The Golden Bird – Germany](#)

[The History of Caliph Stork - Arabia](#)

[How Hummingbird Got Fire – Ohlone/Native American](#)- This link also includes a lesson plan.

[How the Goldfinch Got Its Colors - Belgium](#)

[The Lucky Bird – Kashmir](#)

[The Turtle and the Birds – South Sudan](#)

[The Wonderful Bird – Romania](#)

[The Wings of the Butterfly - South America](#)

[White Wings – The Tale of the Dove and the Hunter - India](#)

[Why the Wren Flies Close to the Earth](#)

March will also bless us with the first day of spring in the Western Hemisphere but with March comes the wind as well. Below are some tales to keep you warm as the cold March winds blow.

[The Angry Wind – West Africa](#)

[The Boy Who Went to the North Wind and Demanded Back His Flour - Norway](#)

[Sun, Moon and Wind Go Out to Dinner – India](#)

[The Wind and the Sun - Greece/Aesop](#)

[The Wind Demon – Turkey](#)

[The Wind and the Moon - India](#)

[The Wind's Tale - Denmark](#)

“Silver white winters that melt into springs, these are a few of my favorite things” . . . stories about spring, flowers, and the sun.

[Akanidi the Bright Sunbeam – A Siberian Tale](#)

[How the Sun Was Rescued - Siberia](#)

[Clytie, the Heliotrope - Greece](#)

[The Cricket's Song - Guatemalan Folktale](#)

[The Flower Queen's Daughter - England](#)

[How Butterfly's Game to Be – Philippines](#)

[The Spring Beauty - Chippewa/Native American](#)

[Why Cats Sit on the Doorstep in the Sun - Rumania](#)

TEACHING RESOURCES

National Zoo – Follow That Bird!

A Science and Technology Unit on Tracking Birds. An inquiry-based unit to teach core middle-school science concepts through student exploration.

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/follow-bird-teacher-resources>

U.S. Department of Energy – Wind Energy Curricula and Teaching Materials

“This page provides a list of wind energy curricula and teaching materials for elementary, middle school, and high school students that can bring wind energy into the classroom, even for students at schools without a wind turbine installation.”

<https://windexchange.energy.gov/education-workforce>

Wonders of Wind Teacher's Resource Guide – Students learn about the wind through reading and activities; for grades K-8.

<http://www.need.org/Files/curriculum/guides/Wonders%20of%20Wind%20Teacher%20Guide.pdf>

SOMETHING EXTRA

The Book of Nature Myths by Florence Holbrook, 1902. Read “The Story of the First Hummingbird,” find out “Why the Dove is Timid,” or “Why the Juniper Has Berries,” and so much more. Fifty-four myths to last you through all of the four seasons.

<https://www.sacred-texts.com/etc/bnm/index.htm>

Flowers: Legends and Lore

From amaryllis to violet, beautiful background information on how flowers are entwined with legends and lore through the centuries.

<https://www.inspirationforthespirit.com/flowers-legends-and-lore/>

Myth and Moor – The Folktale of Birds

Terri Windling always offers the most comprehensive information on her subject matter, complemented with beautiful art.

<https://www.terriwindling.com/blog/2020/05/the-folklore-of-birds.html>

Storybug.net – The link below will take you to a blog I wrote about a lapsit program I did on owls. Here you will find rhymes, fingerplays, stories about owls, and more.

<https://karenchace.blogspot.com/2012/12/owls-flying-high-with-fingerplays-songs.html>



Resources Provided By Karen Chace

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. storybug.net





-JOURNEYS-

“What marks do you leave in the places you go?

Who sees them?

Don’t you ever wonder?”





THE RIGHT STORY FOR THE RIGHT TIME: Storytelling on the Street

By Juliana Marin

Out of the corner of my eye I notice my victims, a group of teenagers sitting on a bench. One of them is staring curiously at my colorful dress and cheerful flag. Gotcha.

I beeline towards her across the park, and her eyes widen as she nudges her friends, yes, yes, she's heading our way.

"I've come all the way from Colombia to tell you a story," I announce. "Would you like to hear it?"

The kids turn to look at each other, giggling, uncertain. They've never been offered this before. But we're in a small town in Mexico and we Latinos are naturally curious. "Go on then," says a boy of about 15, whom I'm guessing is their leader. I doubt they'll tip me very much, if anything at all, but that's only one of the reasons I'm doing this.

The teens consider the colorful slips of paper in my woven Story Bag and go for the blue. I hide my surprise. Mexicans always choose either the pink ones or the black ones, they want to hear about love or ghosts. But this kid, the leader, he picked a story to think. It's about an old man who reaches the end of his life and realizes that he never lived. It's a harsh story. But, as promised, it makes you think.

The teens all just stare at me, openmouthed, at the end of the story.

"What just happened?" the boy says. He shakes his head in shock. "I -- wait. You just changed my life right now."

I'm surprised, but I believe him. I've seen stories do this before. Over and over I've had people say to me with tears in their eyes, "That was exactly what I needed to hear. How did you know?"

I didn't know. But the stories did.

I stay with the teenagers a little while, chatting. I tell them about my adventures hitchhiking around the world with only the money I make from stories, because it's never enough to tell stories: you gotta go out and live your own.

Me, I don't come from a traditional line of bards. I started telling stories on the street because I was a broke student who wanted to travel. I was studying at the Vivapalabra Storytelling School in Colombia, which is where I'm from, and one day a Guatemalan man showed up who'd been on the Road for two years, taking stories to remote villages, all on his bicycle. Later I met a French druid in Venezuela, who has been walking—yes, walking—for 10 years. No phone, no social media, just stories, just people.

And if they could do it....



Over 30 countries later, I've learned that every culture does storytelling differently, but that no matter where, the right story for the right person at the right time, is pure magic.

In more developed countries, however, I found that approaching strangers on the street and offering to tell them a story was -- shall we say -- much more challenging. Ironically, the safer a country is, the more afraid people seem to be.

But even in these places there've been people hungry for stories. I just needed to learn how to approach them. Most people out there have never heard of storytelling, and because of this, they're not going to come to storytelling shows.

So, we have to go to them.

Approaching strangers on the street may not always be the best idea. I've had to change tactics many times to adapt to the culture, and in some places, I've been met with hostility. But if you're a storyteller and you still believe in magic, please! Go out, at least once in a while, and tell stories somewhere unexpected. You might get rejected and your stories might not land -- great, you'll learn so much from that. But when you find the right story for the right person at the right time -- like with these kids in Mexico -- it's life-changing.

It was getting late; I had to go. I'd made little money that night, but it had been worth it.

"My name is Rafael," the young man says to me as I say goodbye. "Don't forget me. Because I won't forget you."

I smile. "I won't."

And I haven't. Because you never really forget a story.



About the Author

Juliana Marin (aka @AchiraStories) is a travelling storyteller from Colombia on a quest to scatter stories like seeds to heal the earth. Since graduating from the Vivapalabra Storytelling School in Medellín, she's travelled to nearly 30 countries, funded almost entirely by telling stories along the way. She's performed at storytelling festivals in Morocco, Greece, the UK and of course Colombia, but what she loves most is taking stories to unsuspecting people in unexpected places, be it a streetcorner in Israel, a beach in Cyprus, or atop a pyramid in Mexico. She's currently in Europe, working her way east.

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Herding the sheep

Traveling for a Story

By Tobey Ishii Anderson

Catch me on the fly is what I seem to be telling my husband and friends as I whisk by them. I'll be on the river or lake. That's where I can slow my mind down, but I'm still thinking of my To-Do list: grocery shopping, book club, stories to prepare for a local event. I had a list of stories in my mind and I would like to learn a new folktale, something that I could give a soul to. I was flipping through my mental Rolodex cards stored in my brain when I remembered a story called The Horse Head Fiddle from Mongolia. It was about a young nomadic shepherd and his horse.

There are destination weddings. Why not destination story origins? I was ready for an adventure.

As professional photographers, my brother John and his wife Diana have visited Mongolia several times for photo shoots. When they decided to return, they invited me and my fishing buddy and brother, Paul. So, a family trip to Mongolia just fell into my lap.

I needed to make sure I had the proper clothing as it was the start of winter in Mongolia. My trusty red, down jacket, a warm sleeping bag, and three pairs of long underwear would protect me from 5 degrees F. I had my fly rod and ties, and I packed beef jerky and a bag of protein bars, notepads, and pens. There would be areas cut off from internet service.



Mongolian ponies

Starting in Eastern Mongolia, we drove eight hours on off-terrain roads. Every part of my body shook and shimmied as we drove over bumps, ditches, and small streams. The endless grasslands were filled with sheep and goats. Herds of wild horses and two-humped camels grazed.

The first river we approached was the Onon. It is said that the young Chinggis Khan fished there with his three brothers to bring food for their mother. This was a story I read about during my research on Mongolia. I was fishing a historic river.

The river was crystal clear with smooth rolling rocks. The big open sky was aquamarine blue with a chill in the air. I pulled my cashmere cap over my ears. As we were fishing, a herd of wild Mongolian ponies plodded over towards us to drink the water. They shook their manes, snorted, and galloped on their way. Wild country!

These scenes gave me insight into the life of Sukor, the shepherd, from the Horse Head Fiddle folktale. He dreamed of having a wild pony to help herd his sheep. Watching these magnificent horses galloping along the plains gave me a sense of how he might have felt riding his horse, wading through the river, and guiding the sheep onto the grass.



Yaks grazing in the steppes

We drove through the vast grasslands littered with sheep and yaks. They would roam wherever they wished, as there are no fences. Sukor would be keeping his flock together to bring them home in the evening to his yurt, called a ger by locals.

By the time we approached Western Mongolia towards the Altai mountains, the temperature was dropping at a radical rate. The ice-covered lakes looked like glass, and we could see little fish swimming below the surface.

On the way to the mountain range, we attended the Eagle Festival. This event draws huge crowds from around the world. Twenty Kazakh eagle hunters, with their magnificent golden eagles spreading their wings, paraded around the fairgrounds. Perhaps Sukor would hear the shrill cry of the eagles and look up at the sky to see them flying above his herd.

That night we stayed at the home of the eagle hunter, Kumisbek, and his family. He brought in the golden eagle that he raised. This magnificent bird dug its talons into his thick leather-gloved hand. Kazakh hospitality included milk tea and fried bread with a plate of noodles and mutton. I could envision Sukor sitting next to me telling me about his day.



Kumisbek and the golden eagle



Ger (yurt) nomadic homes



The experience of following in the footsteps of Sukor, seeing the endless Steppes, and feeling the windy chill and snow as winter was approaching, immersed me in this folktale. I could taste the mutton dumplings, drink the lamb soup, and was warmed by the milk tea. I listened to a musician playing the horse head fiddle like the one in the story.

As I collected the visions, smells, and tastes of the Mongolian grasslands, I was ready to tell the story.

“Mongolia is where the big blue sky above blends in with the vast yellow grasslands below in one continuous swoop. There is no seam. This is the story of a young shepherd named Sukor. . . .”

Destination story origin. What story is next?



About the Author

As a Peace Corps volunteer and international school teacher in Asia, Tobey Ishii Anderson has lived and trekked in numerous countries throughout Asia and Europe. She has gathered stories from diverse cultures turning them into adventures. She is a member of the South Sound Story Guild and Asian American Storytellers in Action.



-NEW SPARKS-

**Stories and Articles from the Next Generation,
High School to Twenty-Somethings.**



Art by @frostij_floof on instagram.

Belle of the Ball: Is the Anime *Belle* the new “Cinderella?”

By Lex Meyer

There was once a young girl who fell in love with singing. She adored the sound of her voice and how happy it made herself and those around her when she sang. One day there was a storm near her home and that young girl's mother ventured out into the sea to save another child from drowning. While her mother did save the young child from the waves, she was unable to save herself leaving her daughter to grow up without her. The young girl lost her passion for singing as well as her love for the world around her. Try as he might, the girl's father could find nothing that would bring back the happy young girl that seemed to have passed on with her mother.

This could be the beginning of a folktale passed down through the centuries orally and then written down by the Grimm Brothers. As the title, *Belle*, suggests, it could be a retelling of the 1756 French folktale “Beauty and the Beast.” Alternatively, the father could remarry, and the daughter could suffer at the hands of a jealous stepmother, or a mirror could inform an evil queen that the young girl has the fairest voice of all. Yes, we might feel that this is like many other European folk or fairy tales but wait. This one is told to American audiences through subtitled lines translating explosive Japanese dialog. It is done with bright colors, symbol-enhanced, chibi expressions denoting different emotions, and it is bookended with modern J-pop music in the intro and outro. This is an anime.

According to Wikipedia, admittedly not the best source for research papers, at least according to my high school teachers, anime has been around since 1917. But anime really took off in Japan in the 1960s when the artist Osamu Tezuka made it popular. Anime started becoming more and more popular in the United States starting in the 2000s. In fact, in 2003, *Spirited Away* produced by Studio Ghibli and directed by Hiya Miyazaki, won the Seventy-Fifth Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature.

In my opinion, the defining feature of anime, in addition to it being graphic art produced in Japan, is that it combines cinematographic techniques of film (different angles, panning, zooming, fading, etc.) with cartoon animation. Generally, anime characters have disproportionate appearances, often with larger-than-life heads or eyes. Backgrounds for these animated, often cartoonish looking characters with enormous eyes are quite frequently digitized photographs of real places. Commonly the stories are taken from Japanese graphic novels, called manga.

There are many anime set in ancient times or imaginary worlds. The 2021 anime *Belle* is a sci-fi fantasy written and directed by Mamoro Hosoda. While anime are often in serial form, this is a single movie running 121 minutes and currently available on Amazon Prime.

So, the story departs from our traditional folktale. Our protagonist discovers that she can reinvent herself by creating an online persona fashioned after a popular, pretty classmate. With her new, glamorous persona, Belle rediscovers her passion for singing, and, at first enjoys stepping into the virtual world of fame, glamor, and fortune.

Of course, Belle's newfound fame and fortune isn't without difficulties. Throughout her journey through this new world, she learns that this popularity can come with dangers. One of the biggest lessons she learns is that she shouldn't pretend to be someone else or hide who she is just to do something that she loves. With that, she comes to understand that she also can't reveal her identity and information to just anyone in the vast network of people in this new world, and that she must make difficult decisions about whether to share her true identity with others enamored with her online persona.

So, is anime the folklore for those of my generation? Is that because anime is giving us something that a live storyteller can't?

The answer is complicated.

One of the reasons that anime is reaching youth is that it can be "binged" (watched continuously for hours) on our phones or computers. This was only compounded during the pandemic when we were locked away from one another for two years. But I suppose we could "binge-watch" recordings of storytellers on YouTube or Zoom.

The answer probably lies in the content. A story about not going out into the woods alone at night as a child, while still important, is relevant in a less direct manner today than it was when "Little Red Riding Hood" was first told. Today, we must take the mental step of translating the "dark forest" as symbolic for the worlds (such as the Internet) that anime is explicitly representing. Meanwhile, stories like the meaning behind the movie *Belle* have a much more directly relevant message that people can be anyone online and that means that there is both danger and opportunity.

I do see connections between traditional folktales and anime. Cinderella, after all, when she was transformed into the "belle of the ball" for Prince Charming was, in a way, predicting the ability to do a complete makeover like Belle does with her virtual persona.

Maybe what I want to say is that the divide between anime and folklore isn't as wide as it first seems. Both tackle deep issues at the root of humanity. Perhaps anime in some ways, rather than displacing folklore with its wilder, more colorful fantasy, is simply adding another dimension to it.

In my next article, I will complicate this discussion a bit more when I talk about the different kinds of characters featured in anime productions. One of the most important qualities of anime is its ability to represent diversity, the rainbow of the gender spectrum in all its richness. One of my favorite aspects in storytelling is the ability to see myself in the stories, and while I have always fancied myself as somewhat of a swan living among ducklings, I didn't truly see myself in stories until I watched anime series such as *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*.



About the Author

Lex Meyer (he/him and all neo pronouns) is a high school student from Northern California. He writes with the intention of educating people and making them look at the world in a new light and from a different perspective.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work through The Story Beast Editor
storybeasteditor@gmail.com

-FUSIONS



Joe's Got a Book for That!

By Brandon Spars



Joseph Bruchac

The issue of cultural appropriation of stories (the inappropriate telling of stories, especially by white tellers, of stories that belong to other people and other, often more sacred venues), while it may seem simple, remains a divisive, often contentious issue. As a storyteller myself, I tell a few myths and legends from Indonesia, and in my classroom, I constantly try to bring ancient history to life by telling tales from around the world. In fact, I am even trying to write a small book on this subject, and it was when I showed a draft of the book to fellow storyteller Simon Brooks that he recommended that I speak with Joseph Bruchac. With a generous introduction by Simon, I was able to have a phone conversation with Joseph on August 5, 2021.

Just prior to speaking with him, I had checked his name on the internet, where I learned that he had written over one hundred twenty books, which just astounded me. That was why the first question I had was how he had written that many. He answered by informing me that he had actually written over one hundred seventy books, and then I don't really remember what he said after that -- something about working steadily a little bit every day. Basically, what I took away was that there is no method that leads just anyone to writing one hundred seventy books; Joseph Bruchac is simply an extraordinary person with a lot to teach us!

Joseph began his response to the topic of cultural appropriation by telling me that a storyteller must first know their own roots. If the stories are like the branches of a tree, the history of the teller and their connection to their stories are equally vast beneath the surface, like the roots of any large tree, which sprawl as far as the branches or further but are unseen beneath the earth. By analogy this is what the teller must know about a different culture if they are to tell stories from that culture. They must have roots in that culture. Otherwise, Joseph warns, they will simply be "skating on the surface with the great risk of falling through the ice."

Joseph referred me to his book *Our Stories Remembered*, which I immediately purchased. He emphasized that he would never tell a storyteller that they cannot tell a Native American story because they aren't Native American. He simply said that unless they do not have an understanding of the respective culture and traditions as deep as their understanding of their own culture, then they probably should not be telling that story. Later I was able to read the book, and delve deeper into what storytelling means to Native American people. A sense of not only how important storytelling is, but also how important the stories themselves can be if they are revered. Joseph writes:

Perhaps then, in the long run, it is only through our own stories that people -- Indian and non-Indian alike -- can begin to understand the American Indian heritage. Stories have always been at the heart of all our Native cultures. Although they have been classified as myths and legends, or placed under the rubric of oral traditions, these powerful tales are not just spoken or written words to American Indian people. They are alive. Alive as breath and the wind that touches every corner of the land. Alive as memory, memory that shapes and explains a universe, alive, aware, and filled with power. Our stories open our eyes and hearts to a world of animals and plants, of earth and water and sky. They take us under the skin and into the heartbeat of Creation. They remind us of the true meaning of all that lives. Our stories remember when we forget. (35)

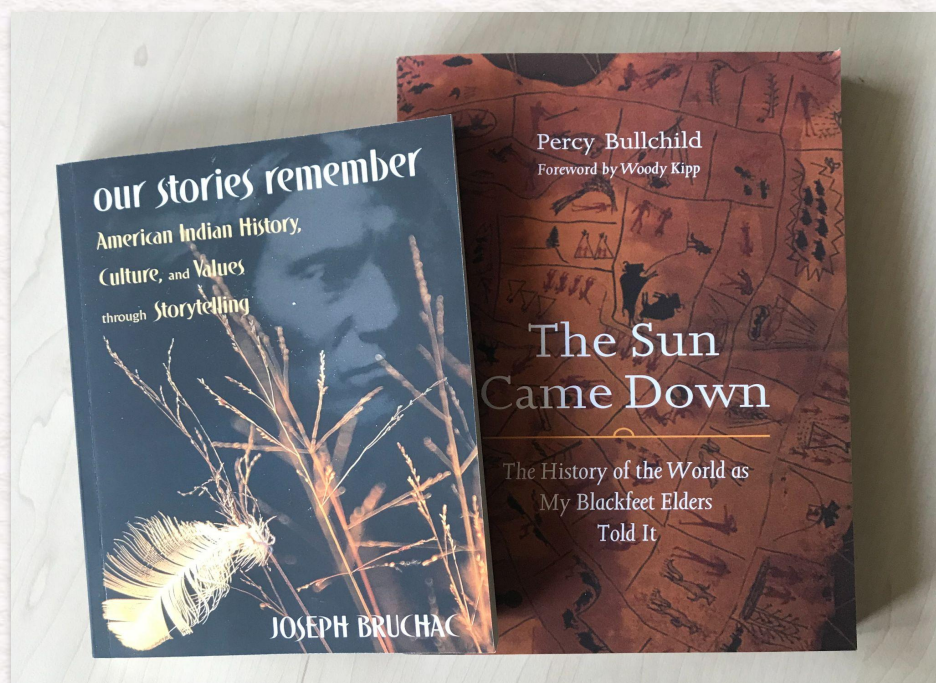
I think a good illustration of how powerful stories can be involves Joseph's own description of stories with respect to the origins of his people. In a later part of the book, he summarizes different theories for the origins of the Native American people on the North American continent. He quickly mentions the version of history that I teach in my ninth grade classroom: the people known as Clovis Man arrived around twelve thousand years ago by crossing the Bering Strait. He discusses how this theory based on carbon dating replaced an earlier one linking Native Americans to the Lost Tribes of Israel, put forward in James Adair's *History of the Native Americans*, who had spent many years with the Chickasaws and Cherokees. As Joseph points out, Adair was unaware that the remnants of the Hebrew language and parallels to the Old Testament he had discerned were a direct result of white missionaries who had been there before him. Joseph then goes on to mention that both of these theories have now been eclipsed by the scientific belief that the original people of North America arrived much earlier, perhaps between 25,000 to 50,000 years ago. The shifting stories that science is telling about indigenous North Americans, however, does very little to destabilize what Joseph Bruchac knows to be true:

Uncertain and changeable as European scientists and theories may have been about Native origins, there was no doubt on our parts about who we were or where we came from. Native tradition -- a word I prefer to use rather than myth or legend, since both those words imply fanciful untruth -- links our origins to the American soil. Here in North America, on Turtle Island, we had our genesis. Story after story tells of our being shaped from this earth. At the very least, unless we are talking about the northernmost peoples of the American continent -- the Inuits who have been going back and forth between Asia and North America for centuries -- any "migration" to North America happened much longer than 10,000 years ago. Much, much longer. We are not just from this land, our stories tell us, we are this land. And the land continues to make us. As Oren Lyons, an Onondaga Faithkeeper, once said to me, "We see the faces of our children yet to be born, just there beneath the soil." (51)

When I think about the metaphor that Joseph used at the beginning of my phone conversation with him -- the image of a tree with roots extending deep into the ground, as deep as the branches are high -- I begin to see how the roots to one's origins, the threads connecting you to who you are and where you are from, and the necessity to know those roots so that you can tell a story that entertains and teaches, may be the very stories themselves. They are the living connections to the earth and to one's heritage, to place and time, and because of that a story (with its living tissues) should never be told in a disrespectful way.

To be more precise, Joseph writes about three different classes of stories: stories of creation, stories relating historical events, and narratives of personal experience. Each has its appropriate time and place for telling, especially the creation stories. These, he writes, should be told only in the winter or at night at risk of punishment by the natural world itself:

Among the Iroquois, it is said that snakes will enter the house of a person who tells a restricted story in the summer. The Abenakis say that a bee may sting the offending storyteller on the lips. In the Southeast, among the Natchez, the Creeks, and many other peoples, stories were to be told only at night and after the coming of the first frost. The Pueblo nations, who stress the importance of stories as guides for behavior, typically relate their stories in their homes on winter nights. The Modocs and Wintuns of California stress that myth-telling in the summer attracts the Rattlesnake, while the Yuroks say that storytellers who recount traditional tales during the daylight hours will become hunchbacked. White Mountain Apache tales are also to be told during the night, when Sun cannot see you, during the coldest months -- from November through February. That way, such great dangers as lightning, poisonous snakes, and biting insects, all of which sleep during the winter, would not know their names had been spoken and come to take revenge. Stories such as that of the contest between the animals of the day and animals of the night, the Chiricahua Apaches explain, must be told only on winter nights. Otherwise the animals of the losing side -- such as Snake and Bear -- will take revenge on the teller and his family. (36)



He goes on to write that ordinary stories, such as personal stories did not have restrictions and could be told at any time with much more flexibility. This makes it very crucial for the teller to know this difference between the different classes of story, which range from anecdotes to sacred texts that must be told word for word in recitations that could last for many days.

Therefore deciding to tell a story should not be taken lightly. Even as a member of the Abenaki, Joseph does not feel he has license to tell stories from the more than 500 different Native American traditions. He mentioned in our interview that there is a tradition from another tribe known as “The Grass Dance.” A member of that tribe requested that Joseph tell the story of the Grass Dance, which gave him permission to do so. Joseph’s book gives more detail.

Some stories are deeply personal, sacred, or restricted in some fashion. When Albert White Man, a Cheyenne traditional dancer from the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, taught me how to tell the Cheyenne story of the coming of the Grass Dance, he told me that I could tell that story only before someone was going to do the Grass Dance. That was more than a decade ago. I have told that story only once since then -- at a powwow just before a Grass Dancer entered the circle. Rather than feeling limited, I regard myself as having been honored by being trusted in that way. However, there are also stories that I have heard and I will not tell or write down because I have been told to keep them in my heart. (40)

Interestingly, it might seem somewhat counterintuitive at first when we consider that the more one knows about a culture and the deeper the connection one has to that culture, the more cautious and careful one becomes with the stories, some of which are off limits because of the deep reverence that can only be internalized through years of study and devotion. In our phone conversation, he contrasted the Grass Dance example with an anecdote about his wife, Nicola Maraé Allain, who is a professor at SUNY Empire State College. She is of Tahitian heritage and had spent her childhood in Tahiti, and was giving a one day workshop in Saratoga. After the workshop a woman approached her. She thanked Nicola and then let her know that she had recorded the dance and would be teaching it to her classes. Of course this was done without Nicola’s permission, and she immediately expressed her disapproval of what this woman was planning on doing. Unfortunately, this, according to Joseph, is the kind of behavior that is quite common among those that are privileged. I might add that this is also the kind of boldness that is possible because of the ignorance of the place that dances and stories have in the cultures that they are from. Ignorance and privilege seem to go hand in hand.

I brought up my own case. I teach a ninth grade humanities class that looks at the transition from nomadic/hunting/gathering societies of the Paleolithic Era to the sedentary villages of the Neolithic Era, beginning, according to Jared Diamond in *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, around 11,000 BCE. Prior to studying the transition, the class looks at cave art from Lascaux and other sites, from which a rich cosmogony has been theorized. In an attempt to look at the effects that sedentary life and farming had on human consciousness we turn to Joseph Campbell who analyzes the rise of the Sacred Marriage, which involves the sacrifice of a king to The Goddess. Campbell includes a summary of a Native American tale from the Blackfoot tradition, entitled “The Buffalo Dance.” This story was created shortly after the Blackfoot were made to cease their perpetual travels with the buffalo herd and begin an initially miserable existence as farmers on a reservation.

While I didn't get into the specifics of how we analyze the story within this historical framework -- the transition from hunting/gathering to sedentary farming/herding -- we did discuss the appropriateness of using this story within this context (and my telling it to the class). Joseph focused on my source. Joseph Campbell, he reminded me, had his own agenda (read: purpose) when he summarized the story, and so, if I wanted to be more respectful, I should, right off the bat, look to a better source. He recommended *The Sun Came Down* by Percy Bullchild rather than Joseph Campbell to be used as a source for Blackfoot stories. Then Joseph critiqued the framework in which I was re-purposing the Blackfoot story. He pointed out, rightly, that people need to see nomadic cultures as fully sustainable rather than simply a preliminary stage on a deterministic path to agriculture and technology.

The original reason for my talking to Joseph was to get advice for my book, but I couldn't help but feel that Joseph has already written a book answering my deepest questions. I also felt that in the future, when I have a question, I should probably assume that Joseph Bruchac has probably already answered it in one of his books. The one thing I can contribute, though, is to do my small part by doing a better job in my classroom framing the stories and the historical periods and cultures from which they derive. I will end with the following apt quotation from Joseph:

There are, I believe, a couple of simple rules that should be followed by non-Native people in their use of our stories.

The first is to accept the fact that Native people do have the right to their own traditions. This means that the first people to turn to about a story are the Native people themselves. It also means that you have a responsibility to obtain permission to use that story if you are a writer or a professional storyteller. (I do not include teachers in this category if they are using material in their classrooms from books written by American Indian writers. I have been told by every American Indian writer I know that they welcome such use of their work in classrooms. That is why they wrote their books -- for them to be read and well used.) Connected to the issue of permission is the author's and storyteller's responsibility to give something back in return for what they have been given. It may mean sharing royalties or making a commitment to support a Native community in various ways. Let your heart and your honor show you the way.

The second is, once again, to remember always that there is not one overall American Indian culture. There are many. When talking about an American Indian story you need to be specific about what particular Native nation owns that story. Always acknowledge the nation and the individual or individuals who have shared that story. Remember, too, that stories are embedded in a cultural matrix. Every story lives within the larger circle of a nation, and there are aspects of the story that can be understood only by knowing more than the story tells on the surface. (39-40)



Fusion Head Editor About the Author

As a teacher of both high school humanities and college writing, Brandon has always brought storytelling into his lessons. He has contributed to countless workshops and conferences on the intersection between storytelling, ancient history, and pedagogy. He is the author of four books on storytelling. You can find out more about him at brandonspars.com



The Magician's Trick (Pears)

By Joan Leotta

"The Magician's Trick (Pears)," previously published online by Spelk, in 2015 was selected in 2016, by Centre College Norton Center for the Arts, to be a part of an exhibition where artists created visual art to accompany stories. Her work was one of only eleven chosen from many literary submissions.

I brought Aunt Claudia a box of Comice pears to celebrate her 95th birthday. Her favorite. She opened the box.

"Green globes, soft to the touch. Ripe. Like me," she sighed.

"You're not green," I protested.

"But at my age, I am certainly ripe." Her eyes twinkled. "Let me thank you with a story."

She began "Once there were pears whose juices ran down the chin when you bit into the sweet creamy flesh. Only rich folks could buy them. The farmer who brought them to market refused to give one to a starving beggar, even to sell him a bruised one for a reduced price.

"That same afternoon, a magician bought one for the required silver dime. He devoured the entire pear, except for the seeds. With a flourish, he planted the pear seeds right there! One by one he dropped them into the slim trough of a sidewalk crack."

Auntie took a pear out of the box and bit into its soft green skin. The white inner flesh gleamed, and liquid sweetness dripped down her chin. The drops shone like dew on a fine old rose.

"Good!" Auntie proclaimed.

I jumped up with a napkin to blot up the pear's transgressing stream of juice. I laid the napkin on her lap.

"Have a pear with me." She gestured toward the box.

I hesitated. The pears were for her.

She smiled and continued the story between bites.

"The magician waved his hand over the newly planted seeds. Instantly, a fully-grown, fruit-laden tree sprouted up. He offered his pears to all, free of charge. The beggar took the first perfect specimen.

"The merchant was amazed. He also ate one of the magician's pears and found it to be as good as his own.

"When the pears were gone, the crowd dispersed. The magician quickly vanished into the alleys around the market. The merchant turned to pick up his cart to move it to a busier corner." His cart was almost empty! He shivered and then realized the pears given out by the magician had been his own. The tongue of his wooden cart had been the tree. The magician's art was in making the pears seem new, the magician's 'trick' had been to share even when the merchant was unwilling."

Auntie placed the pear remains, full of seeds, on the napkin I had given her. I stole a look at my watch. Was it time to leave yet? I did not have much time to give that day. So busy.

She waved her hand over the box of pears and repeated, "Have one."

In that moment, enchanted, I recalled the years of magic she had given me in stories, love, and gifts of favorite things. I sat back in my chair, devoured both the pear and tale and shared a cart full of hours with her.

To be told in educational settings with attribution



About the Author

Joan Leotta plays with words on page and stage. She performs tales featuring food, family, and strong women. Internationally and widely published, she's a 2021, 2022 Pushcart nominee, Best of the Net 2022 nominee, 2022 runner-up, Robert Frost Competition. Her chapbook, *Feathers on Stone*, is from Main Street Rag. [Joan Leotta, Author, and Story Performer on Facebook](#) Email: joanleotta@atmc.net

-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.”**





“Grandpa, the Storyteller,” by Victor Issa. Located in North Lake Park in Loveland, CO.



About the Author

Wynn Montgomery belongs to two local Colorado Spellbinders® groups and regularly shares stories in elementary school classrooms (where he is “Pop”) and in senior care facilities. His delivery style reflects his Southern heritage whether he is sharing personal stories, classic folk tales, historical stories, or tall tales. Visit his YouTube channel for sample stories.
Email: wynnmill@comcast.net

To be told in educational and professional settings with attribution.

I am a Storyteller

By Wynn Montgomery

I tell stories; that’s what I do.
If you like, I’ll share one with you.

There won’t be a movie, no TV screen,
No tablet, no iPod, not any machine.

The only pictures will be those you create.
It will take us both; we must collaborate.

Just lend me your ears; hear what I say.
Then “see” my story in your own way.

Some of my stories are older than old—
My own version of what others have told.

Others are brand new, fresh from my head,
Based on something I thought, heard, or read.

All are stories told from the heart—
Never finished, ever-changing oral works of art.

Once heard, these tales belong to you.
I’m a storyteller; that’s what I do.

The Butterfly Effect

By Mike Perry

Once?

On a day that smelled of summer, a gentle breeze blew,
and a caterpillar spun a chrysalis on a branch.

Slowly bending, it startled the yellow feathered bird,
who sat upon it singing its calliope song before flying away,
scaring the rabbit who lived in the vegetable garden

and causing it to run through the tomato patch,
bumping into plants along the way as the red-ripe fruit fell,
gently shaking the ground, making the quietest noise, and waking the sleeping leprechaun who maintained
the garden scarecrow.

Coming alive the scarecrow shook in the wind, alerting the boy who was pulling weeds as he looked up to
find a tiny blue ball on a string, a toy, which he placed on his dresser, next to the invitation from a birthday
party, where he had seen a magician give a red balloon to a little girl before she accidentally let it go.

And floating all the way to yesterday, it was found by a teacher who kept it inflated magically for years in
an old bottle, an old bottle given to her as a child from her grandfather, a ragman, the same bottle she now
handed to her curious grandson.

When he asked her to help him place a branch inside.
A branch that held a chrysalis.
A chrysalis that hatched into a magnificent butterfly.

As he watched.
While he sat.

On her porch.

And it landed upon his nose, as it dried its newly formed wings
on a day that smelled of summer, as a gentle breeze blew.

To be told in educational settings with attribution



About the Author

Although Mike loves to write original tales and poetry too, his experience stretches from Gilbert and Sullivan and dramatic theater, to youtube videos and corporate voice overs: from circus clown and corporate mascot to classroom teaching and college presentations. To him? It's all storytelling!

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-HEALING SPRINGS-





When Florence Flew

By Sara Zeiger



When I first began visiting Florence, she could use a walker to make her way to the front door and let me in. As the years passed, her legs grew so weak that she relied on caregivers to move her from her bed to a lift chair in the living room of her ranch house.

There wasn't a lot of life in that living room. The large picture window that looked out on her backyard didn't let in much sun. The glowing screen of the television was her window to the world. She watched a news channel all day long that showed an endless succession of disasters, massacres, and horrifying acts of human cruelty.

The ritual I'd established during my visits began with finding the TV remote and turning the TV off. Then we'd begin talking. Florence had an agile mind and a rich vocabulary. Words flew between us during our conversations together. She had been a second-grade teacher; I had taught as well. We shared with one another many of the experiences we'd had in the classroom, as well as her memories of different parts of her life.

Then it was time for me to tell her a story. I'd try to find a connection between what we'd been talking about and a folktale which I hadn't yet told her. Once I interviewed her about the experience of listening to me tell stories. She said, "Whatever I say, you connect it with a story, because you've got a head full of stories. When you're telling me the stories, I try to understand the end before you get to it, predict where it's going. I don't always predict correctly. After you leave and the story has been told, I sometimes make up a different ending to the story." Although her body no longer could travel, her mind could.

Florence had a wry sense of humor. She and I had been matched up through a "Friendly Visitor" program and she called me her "friendly visitor" despite years of weekly visits. She could also be whimsical, as when she told me of the elaborate adventures she had with Freddy, her goldfish. They'd venture far beyond the boundaries of Freddy's glass bowl "exploring many deep pools and waterways together." As I transcribed these adventures, Florence shared an imagined conversation with Freddy: "I offered to take him on a walk and he said, 'You know I can't walk. Why don't you go for a swim with me?'" I thought about Florence herself being unable to walk out of her house and felt deep admiration for her ability to take flights of fancy with Freddy.

Perhaps a year before she died, Florence asked me to write the obituary which would go in the paper after her death. She had no surviving relatives and wanted to be sure that every detail was correct. However, she couldn't help herself from making mischievous comments during the process. She'd be giving me some information about her life and then dictate, "each individual can donate up to 50% of the funeral cost for which each donor can have a ride in Queen Florence, the Lexus." Finally, I said, "Florence, we need to make two obituaries: one for the newspapers and one for you."

I'd started visiting Florence when she was 89. In the year when she'd turned 94, I arrived one day, and she was unable to talk; she was breathing with staccato sounding breaths. Because she was unable to talk with me, I got her copy of Shel Silverstein's "Where the Sidewalk Ends," one of her favorite books, and began reading to her. I read for about an hour with no sense of whether she could hear me or not. I stopped, leaned over to give her a kiss, and said, "Florence, I have to go now." With a tremendous effort, she breathed out the word, "Why?" So, I sat down for another hour and read more poems.

Then I left. The next day, I learned that she had died at 8 PM that evening. One of her favorite caregivers was with her. No longer confined by her body's limitations, Florence had flown from Freddy and me. I pulled out the playful obituary and reread the opening words she had dictated to me, "Florence Fichman, Queen of the World, yesterday achieved her lifelong dream to become an angel."

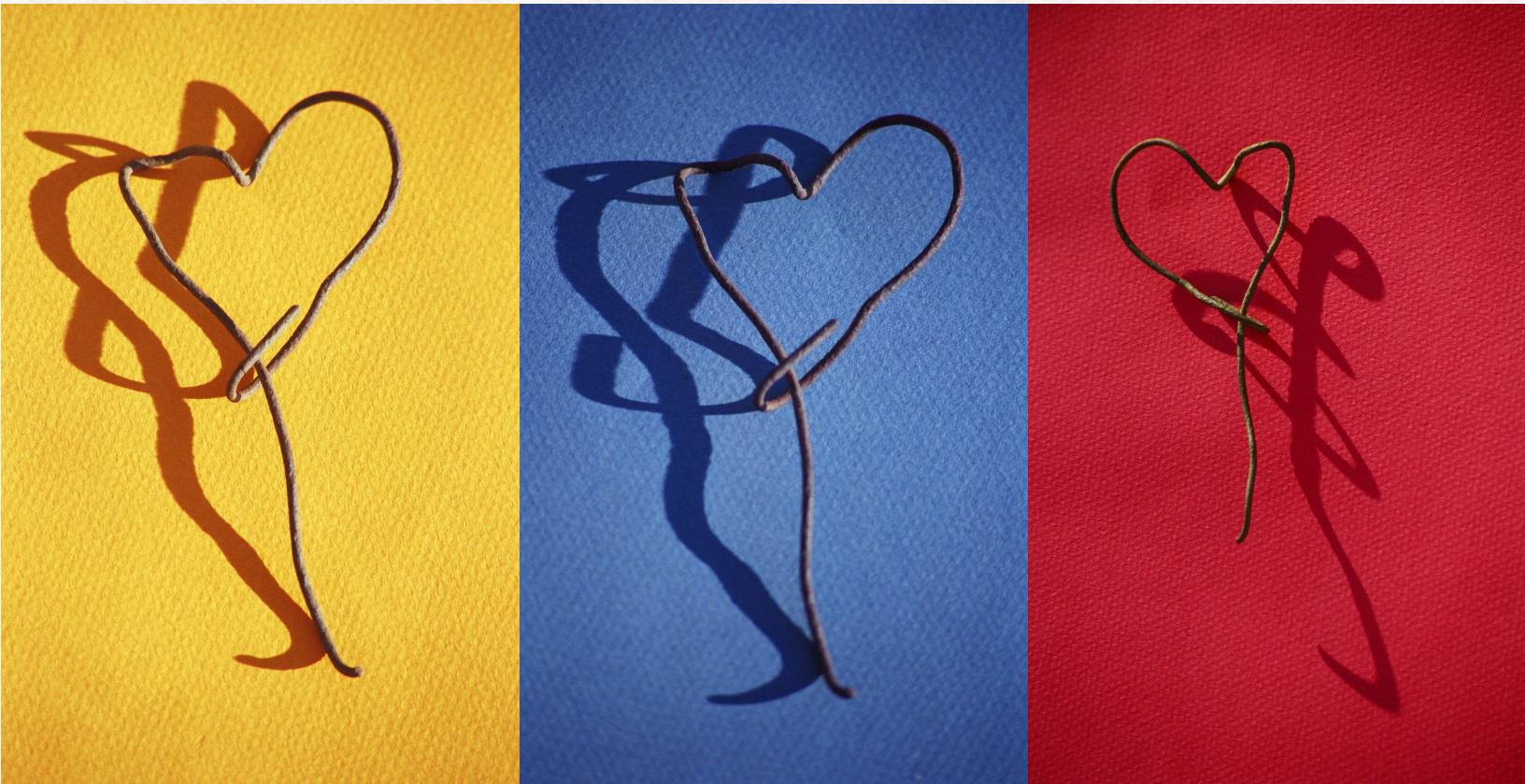


About the Author

Sara's great love is telling folktales from world cultures. A listener said, "Sara is a captivating storyteller, sensitive to her audience and their interests. Her extensive repertoire enables her to present programs on a wide variety of themes." Sara is a published poet who also teaches poetry-writing classes. Website: storydebeer.com

*Contributor to be
contacted regarding
permission to tell this
work*

ART for the HEART



Yellow Shadow Dancer, Blue Shadow Dancer, and Red Shadow Dancer
Photography By Angela Lloyd



About the Artist

One of the unique performers on the national storytelling circuit today. A virtuosa on Washboard, her performances are a whimsical braid of poetry, story and song played on Autoharp, Tenor Guitar, Spoon and Bell. Based in Victorville, CA Angela is seeking connections with high desert schools for Pre-K- 8th grade. angelalloyd.com

Have art you want to share? Share at storybeasteditor@gmail.com



Rhythms of Life

By Robin L. Reichert



As he walked through the front door of the store, the expression on the young man's face displayed vague familiarity and eagerness to learn more about the weavings, sand paintings, drums, and pottery. He sauntered to the counter where I stood, hands in pockets.

"Hello!" I said.

"Umm. Hi. I'm Eric. Is Lisa here?"

"Hi, Eric! Sorry. Lisa will be back the day after tomorrow. Is there something I can help you with?"

"Uh. No. Uh. Maybe."

His eyes darted, scanning the room. His long, black hair and chiseled features told me he belonged to the arts and crafts made in tune with the rhythms of the earth. I had worked at the Native American store in New Jersey for two years, met many indigenous artists from North and South America, and felt a close connection with the depth and heart of their spiritual, earth-centered ways.

After a long pause, Eric poured out his story. . . .

"I live in this big house with seven people. They do drugs and drink too much. They party all the time. I've been part of that too, but I don't want that life anymore. I have to find a way out. I want to contact my father. He's Apache – still out west somewhere. I think connecting with my roots will help me get out of the bad place I'm in."

The mostly one-sided conversation lasted twenty minutes until he stopped mid-sentence, "Oh! I don't know you and I don't know why I'm telling you this personal stuff. I'm so sorry!"

"It's okay!" I assured him. "I think it's wonderful that you want to give yourself a better life. I'm glad you feel safe with me!"

I pointed toward a few, select books, and together we lit a sage stick, a sacred ritual of purification and healing for the physical and spiritual bodies. Eric's smile broadened as I spoke of past experiences at powwows, and of festive gatherings where he could be among people of many nations and learn about various customs and ceremonial dances as profound cultural expressions. I felt honored when past visiting artists had entrusted me with some of their most treasured traditions, inviting me to pass them on when appropriate.

"One more thing," I said. I remembered a small vial in my pocket, a recent gift from a Native friend as I faced a difficult divorce, filled with sacred earth from a place called Chimayo, a sanctuary in New Mexico known for healing and miracles.

I asked Eric to hold out his hand, and I rubbed a small amount of earth in his palm.

"Carry this sacred earth with you to aid your healing intentions."

"Thank you!" he said. I hugged him like the son I never had. He turned and I watched him disappear out onto the crowded street.

One year later, sage smoke filled the air as I stood among hundreds of onlookers waiting for the powwow's Grand Entry Dance. The drummer's voices mingled with the smoke, chanting rhythmically

with the steady drumbeat. Traditional flag carriers danced out onto the field, followed by war veterans. Letting the veterans lead honors them for risking their lives for all.

A man sporting long, black hair stood with his back to me and just a few people between us. It is not unusual for a man with long, black hair to attend a powwow, but somehow the back of this head seemed familiar.

When they introduced the Sobriety dance, honoring those who have quit drinking, this familiar young man stepped out to the dance ring with a strong, steady pace. My eyes followed him around the circle until I saw his face. It was Eric from the store! My heart swelled as he placed his feet reverently in time with the drumbeat, knowing what that dance stood for. In my heart I imagined him soaring like an eagle around that ring and I soared along with him! When he returned to the sidelines, I pushed through the crowd toward him.

“Eric, do you remember me?”

“Yes! How great you could be here for this! How did you know?” He reached out for a hug. Eric told me this was his first powwow dance, the first time he showed the world he had chosen sobriety. Something beyond our understanding reunited us that day so I would know he had followed the call to fly toward a better life and to show us both that a mysterious force is always there to guide, connect, and support us.

*Contributor to be contacted regarding
permission to tell this work*



About the Author

Writer, speaker, storyteller, artist, poet, Robin Reichert has written in some form or another since childhood and fell in love with storytelling while working at a Native American store. Her 3 published books and a CD speak to her love and respect for nature and the mysteries of this beautiful world.

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-PUZZLES and GAMES-

"Curiouser and curiouser!"



A Riddle For You

What is the longest and yet the shortest thing in the world; the swiftest and yet the slowest; the most divisible and the most extended; the least valued and the most regretted; without which nothing can be done; which devours everything, however small, and yet gives life and spirits to every object, however great?

-SB

Last Month's Answer: Heroine.

LOST WORD SOCIETY

by Carmen Agra Deedy

Once again, it's time again to play along with Carmen Agra Deedy's LOST WORD SOCIETY.

The seasons are a changing and it's time to once again step into the Way Back Machine to a time before this to find yet another rarely used word in modern English.

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. This time we have a word for you, so put on your thinking caps and away we go!

SINAPISTIC (adj.) Archaic

- 1) He could not fathom how effortlessly she was able to meld her voice, gestures, and movements into such sensuous and sinapistic forms, which stir such deep emotions within him.
- 2) The jester cringed, as the Duke raged, "Thou varlet, thou disreputable rogue, doth thou take me for a sinapistic fool, with no eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor a brain greater than that of a squirrel?"
- 3) "It is glorious, creative, sinapistic, innovative, and just plain gorgeous!" gushed the art critic when asked about the new modern dance performance opening at the Orpheum Theater.

Last Month's Lost Word:

DEOCH AN DORIS (n.) (däk-ən-'dôr-əs)

Gaelic phrase from Scotland that means a drink at the door, that is, a drink given to a guest before leaving.



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

SOLUTIONS FOR DECEMBER 2022

PUZZLES

11 Upstairs and Down

"Let's hear your story," said Inspector Kelley to Policeman Kirk, as Fordney dropped into a comfortable chair at Headquarters.

"The neighbors were worried because they hadn't seen old lady Brill about for a couple of days and asked me to investigate.

"Getting no answer to my ring, I broke open the front door, ran upstairs, and, not seeing her, ran down and through the hall, unlocked the kitchen door, and found her on the floor, a bullet through her heart and a gun beside her. The windows and the doors to the porch and cellar were locked on the inside and nothing seemed to be disturbed.

"Looked like suicide to me. However, I learned her nephew was at the house yesterday about the time the doctor said she died, so I brought him in," concluded Kirk.

"Why did you run upstairs before examining the lower floor?" asked Kelley.

"Thought I heard a noise up there, sir," replied the policeman.

"Any finger-prints on the gun?" inquired Fordney.

"Just those of the old lady," answered Kelley.

"I have a key to the house," interrupted the nephew. "I went in yesterday, called to her, but she didn't answer, so I thought she'd gone out."

"Did you go upstairs?" asked the Professor.

"Yes, I ran up there, calling her name, but came right down again and left immediately."

"Well, Kelley, of course it's murder—as you probably know. I suppose you'll hold this fellow?"

"I certainly intend to," replied the Inspector.

How did Fordney know the old lady had been murdered?

SOLUTION: The policeman ran through the hall and unlocked the kitchen door. The doors to the porch and cellar were locked on the inside. Had the old lady committed suicide, she could not have locked the door leading to the hall from the outside. The murderer, in leaving, locked this door and forgot to remove the key. The inevitable slip!

The Christmas Eve Tragedy

"Professor Fordney," said Sheriff Brown, of Lake Dalton, "I came to New York to ask your help in clearing up the murder of Horace Perkins at Luckley Lodge."

"Sit down and tell me about it," invited Fordney.

"The family chauffeur, returning from the station at ten o'clock on Christmas Eve, found Perkins lying in a field, five yards off the Lodge drive, with his skull bashed in."

"He telephoned me immediately and I instructed him to see that nothing was disturbed. Arriving fifteen minutes later, I personally examined the ground so no clues would be destroyed.

"The only footprints to be found were six of Perkins's leading from the drive to the spot where he lay. Around the body were a number of deep impressions about two inches square. It had been snowing all day until half an hour before the discovery of Perkins.

"Leading away from the body and ending at the main road, two hundred yards distant, were four lines of these same impressions, about three and a half feet apart in length and about fourteen inches in width. In some places, however, they were badly run together.

"A stranger in our parts is quickly noted and investigation failed to reveal a recent one. There were absolutely no other clues and I could find no motive for the crime. It has me stumped, Professor," concluded Brown.

"Give me a little time," said Fordney. "Perhaps I can help. I'll call you at your hotel."

An hour later, he said over the telephone, "Sheriff, look for a man who.... Such a person only could possibly have committed the murder."

What did Fordney say to Brown?

SOLUTION: The Professor said to Brown, "Sheriff, look for a man in your community, who is skilled or adept in the use of stilts. Only a man on stilts could have made the marks in the snow you described."

Have Puzzles and riddles you want to share? Share them at storybeasteditor@gmail.com

-STORY SIGHTINGS-

What's going on?



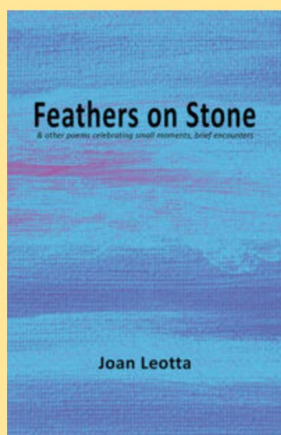


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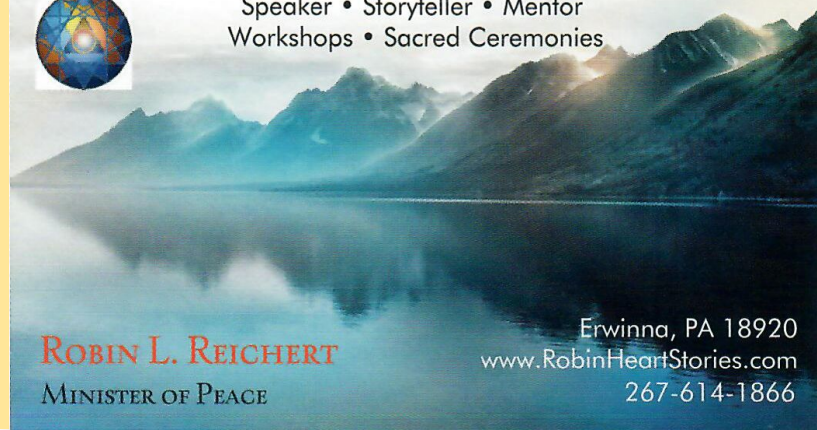
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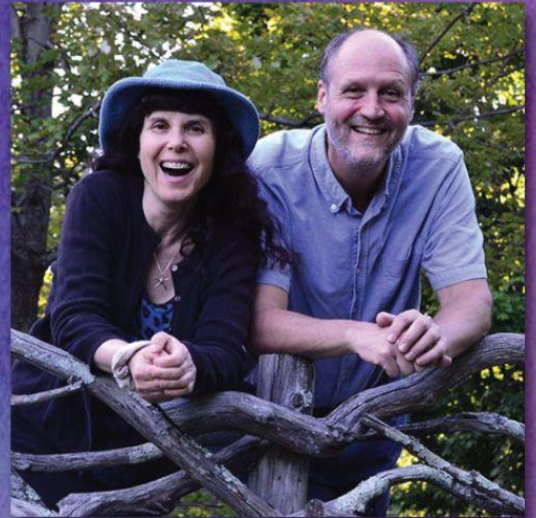
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Jeri Burns, Ph.D. and Barry Marshall, The Storycrafters, perform and teach nationally and internationally as The Storycrafters. In addition to their work in schools, libraries, conferences and festivals, they are healing storytellers at Stamford Hospital Psychiatric Unit and former adjunct college faculty at Southern Ct. State University. Jeri is adjunct faculty at the State University of New York at New Paltz, communication coach for public defenders at New York State Defenders' Institute, and public radio essayist. Barry is sound engineer/producer of various storytellers' recordings, including those of The Storycrafters.

In addition to their award-winning recordings and radio show, The Storycrafters have been recognized with The National Storytelling Network's Circle of Excellence Oracle Award and the Cayman Islands' Gold Star Award for Creativity in the Arts. They live in New York's Hudson Valley with their son Zack, their most treasured creation.

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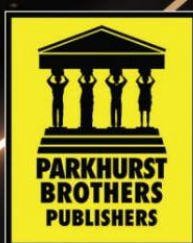
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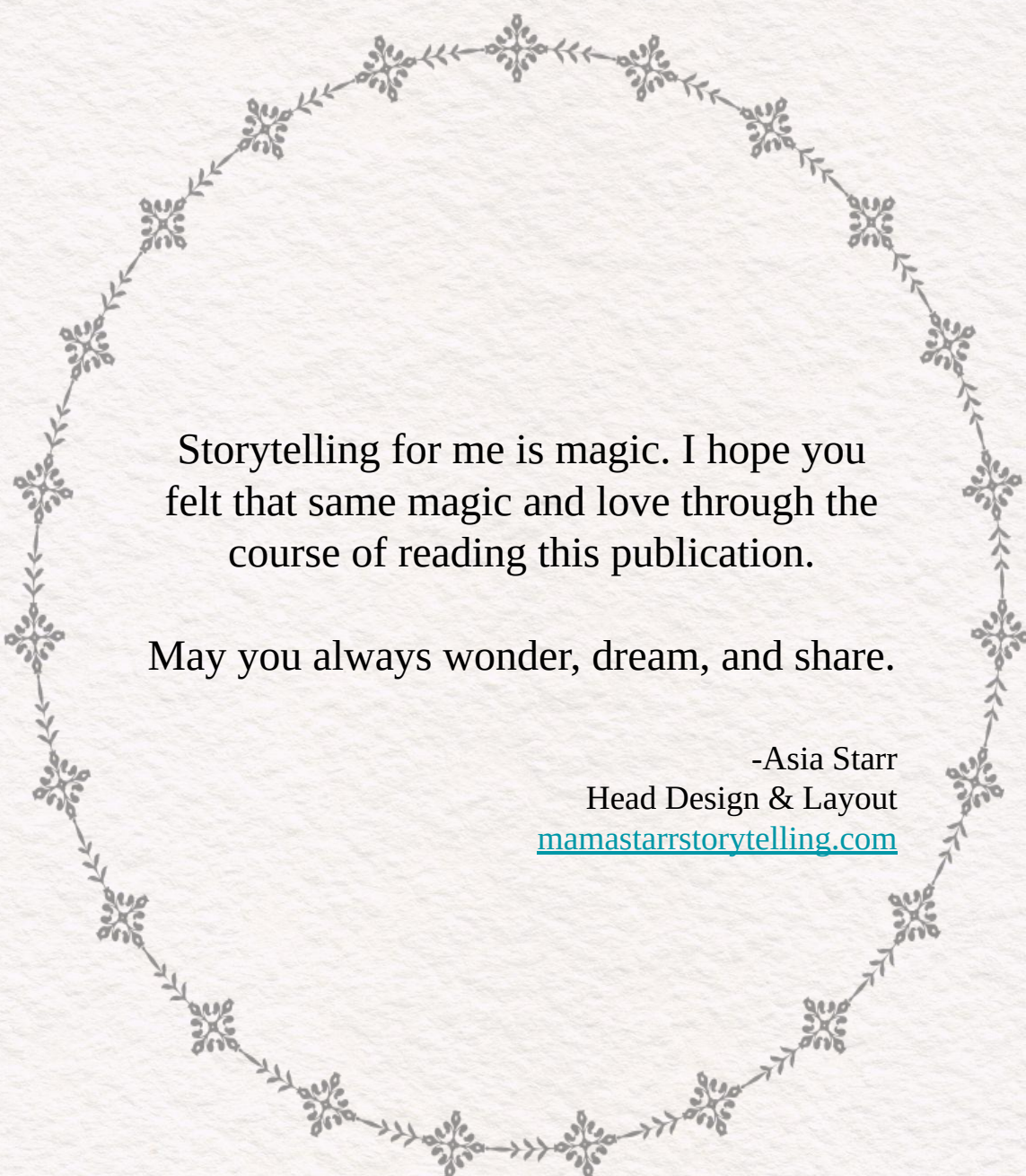
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Storytelling for me is magic. I hope you
felt that same magic and love through the
course of reading this publication.

May you always wonder, dream, and share.

-Asia Starr
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