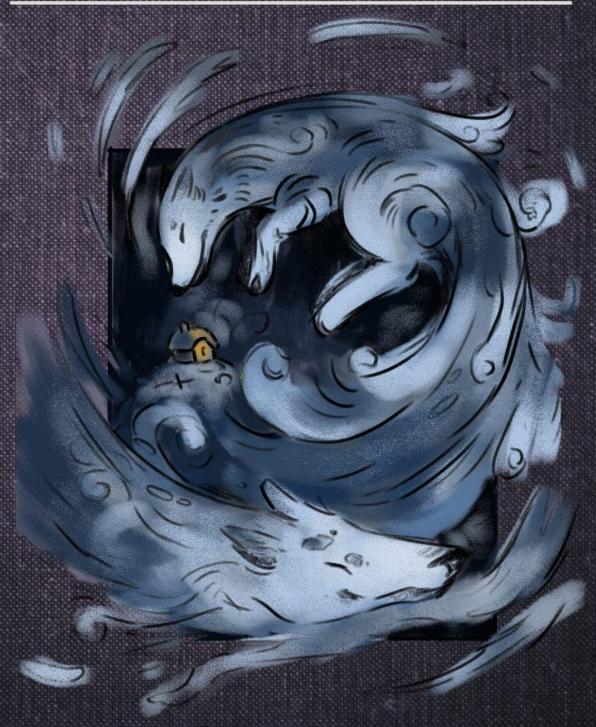
THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

MHIRLING MINDS





About the Cover Artist Joey Fletcher

Joey Fletcher is an aspiring storyteller and hobbyist illustrator (meaning he likes to doodle). He grew up in his backyard, being told stories and making up his own. He grew up utilizing his imagination to the fullest. This sparked a lifelong joy of stories and images that accompany them. He also loves his cat.

-Instagram-

Submit your art to storybeasteditor@gmail.com to be featured in the next issue.

The Story Beast 2025 Themes

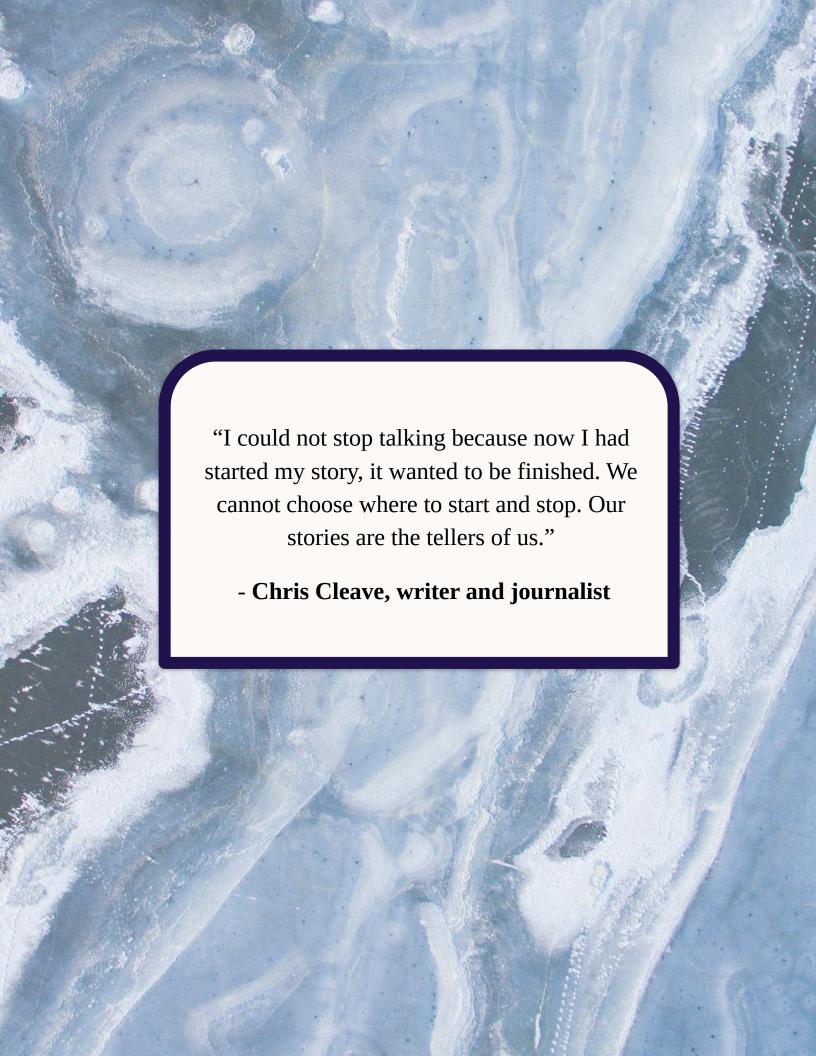
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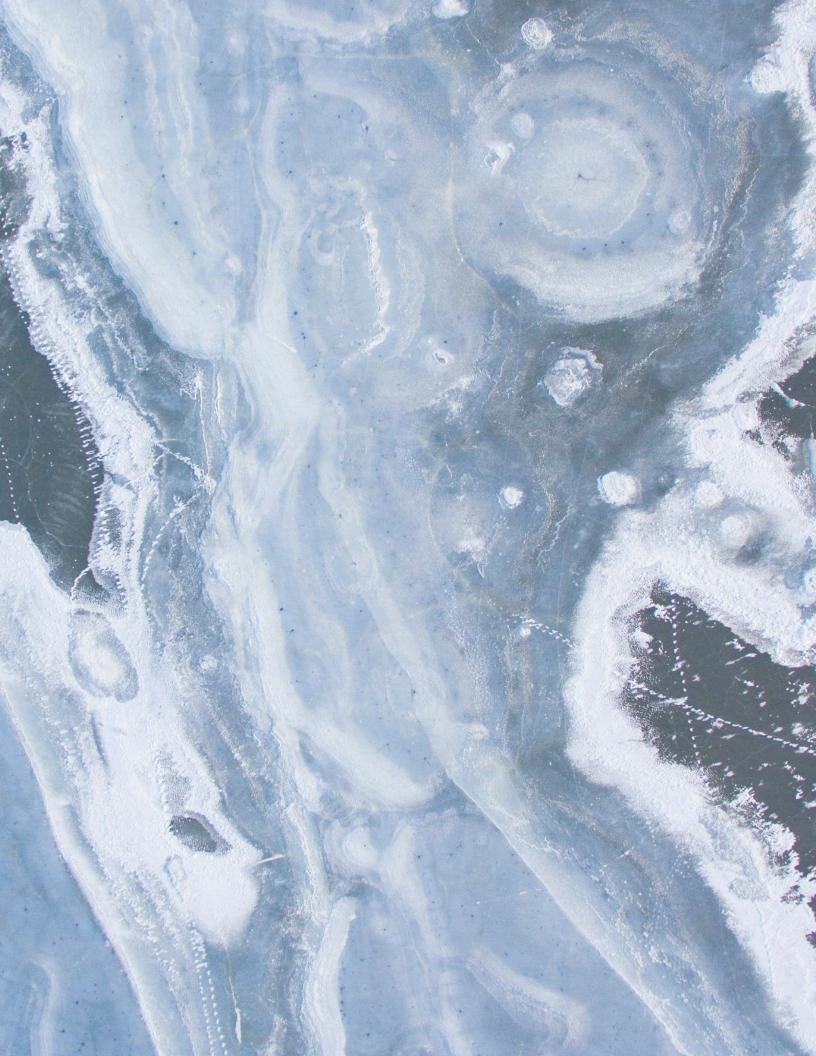
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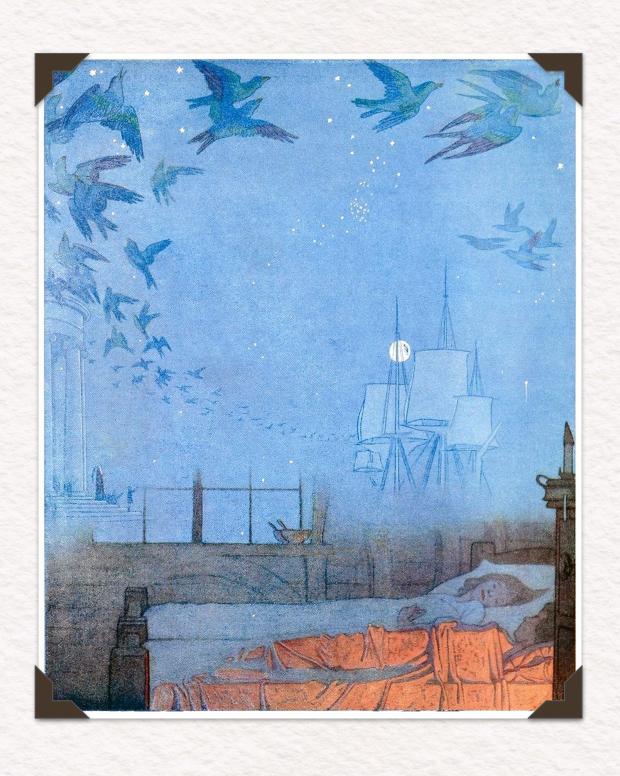






THE STORY BEAST

Whirling Winds
Vol. 3 ♦ Issue 4
Winter 2024



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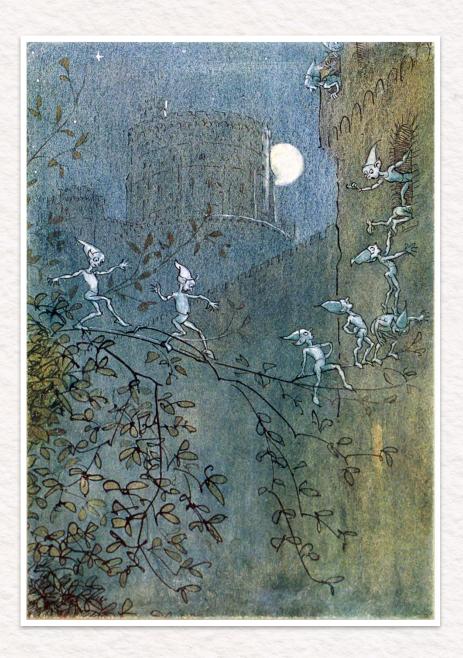
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Sing and



WELCOME

It is that time of year when we all become children again. It is that chill in the air, the scent of cinnamon and nutmeg, the shimmering lights, and giddy excitement of the Holidays. There is that exquisite anticipation of opening presents and seeing relatives and old friends.

In these divisive times, when it might not be so easy to bridge gaps and connect with folks, there is an even greater need for stories and storytellers. In traditional cultures, cultural wisdom and expectations were passed down through stories. These stories told people who they were, what they valued, and their relationship to each other and the world around them. Today, there is so much information, so many stories coming at us, that it may be difficult to determine what is true and what to believe. Over time that which is true will persist, but what do we do in the meanwhile?

We can look to touchstone stories like Dickens' Christmas Carol, which pluck at universal chords of human existence. Be kind and treat others with respect. There is something satisfying and reassuring in such stories, especially in midst of change. Truth is best accepted clothed in story. No one wants to see the naked truth or to be lectured. Story allows us to take in truth in a non-threatening way.

For those who do not like the truth that they perceive, there is also the story of King Solomon's Ring. Folks noticed that whenever Solomon was very happy, he would look at the inscription in his ring and become somber. Whenever in despair, he would look at the inscription and find solace. When he died, folks looked at the inscription in the ring and it simply said, "This too shall pass."

Do you ever notice that when little kids fight, they are direct, blunt, make up quickly, and go back to playing? They live in the present, the here and now. As grownups we live in the past nursing old wounds, holding grudges, or worrying about the future. We spend very little time in the present. Perhaps, in this festive season, we can consider going back to being little kids again, live in the here and now, and breathe.

The Story Beast is your quarterly e-Pub forum and is a place of community. Please share your creative works--poems, stories, artwork, or articles with us and tell your friends about us. Let us know what you think and sent your contributed works to storybeasteditor@gmail.com.

The deadline for contributions for the next issue of *The Story Beast* is February 15 for the Spring 2025 issue. The Spring issue's theme is Growing Gab. Thanks for reading and remember that truth wrapped in story is a beautiful thing easy to accept and love. That's the way it is and the way it will always be.

Happy Holidays, The Spirits of the Beast storybeasteditor@gmail.com



Dear Quiet Contemplations & Cautious Souls:

Ah, the eternal question — when is it the right time? The answer, of course, depends on whether you want to give wisdom or receive it. Many people carry around knowledge like it's an unwanted, heavy stone they must drop at the feet of others. But true wisdom isn't like that. It's more like a seed. It waits for the right soil, the right season, and most importantly, the right hands to nurture it. You see, wisdom doesn't want to be blown about, blustering someone's mind when it's a delicate time for that young plant. It wants to grow, flourish, and be ready for harvest when the time is ripe."

Here's the deal: I'm not a fool who flings my pearls at just anyone. I wait for that moment, that beautiful, perfect moment when I see a glint in someone's eye or a deep sigh in the air, begging for insight. It's all about timing, darling. You think it's about spitting out advice? Bah! No, it's about knowing when to hold back, when to let that silent wisdom sit and cool to the right temperature. If wisdom were like a piece of cake, you wouldn't offer it to someone who's already stuffed full of cookies, now would you? No, you wait for that moment when they hunger for something deeper.

And you'll know when it's time.

Sometimes, the wisdom will come as a whisper, like a leaf falling from a tree. Other times, it may come with the force of a storm, but always, it's wrapped in the quiet of understanding. Wisdom isn't the loud, grating sound of "I told you so," it's the calm realization of "Ah, that's what I needed to hear." If you find yourself wondering when to share, perhaps first, you should ask if the receiver is ready to listen. There's no shame in holding your wisdom close until the right moment arrives. After all, if they aren't paying attention, it's like trying to tell a rock how to roll. Wisdom demands respect, not just from the giver, but also from the receiver.

So my advice to you, dear one? Wait for that moment where all the stars align, where the winds of fate and the inner stirrings of curiosity converge. Then, share with confidence. A well-timed word can change the course of a day, a life, or even the world. But never forget that sometimes it's just as powerful to not speak. There's magic in silence. After all, the most magical crones are often the quietest ones. We've lived long enough to know that silence holds its own wisdom.

And for those seeking more, the Dewey Decimal for Wisdom? It's 153.8 — where the art of thinking clearly and wisely is taught. But be warned, even the best books can't teach you timing. That comes from within. Still, if you seek more guidance, might I suggest a few books? First, The Art of Stillness by Pico Iyer, where you'll learn the profound power of patience and listening. Next, take a look at The Wisdom of Insecurity by Alan Watts, a true crone's guide to understanding how timing unfolds naturally when we stop forcing things. Lastly, dive into Radical Acceptance by Tara Brach, where you'll find out how to accept the moment for what it is, not what we wish it could be. These books will guide you but remember — timing is something you'll need to feel in your bones, like the knowing of a storm before the first raindrop falls.

Yours on the Road
- The Crone of All Crones

WANTED



Content for THE STORY BEAST

Looking for Story in all its exciting forms: traditional, modern or melded!

-Short Stories -Articles on Storytelling

-Art -Story Based Activities -Poems

Themes for Upcoming Issues:

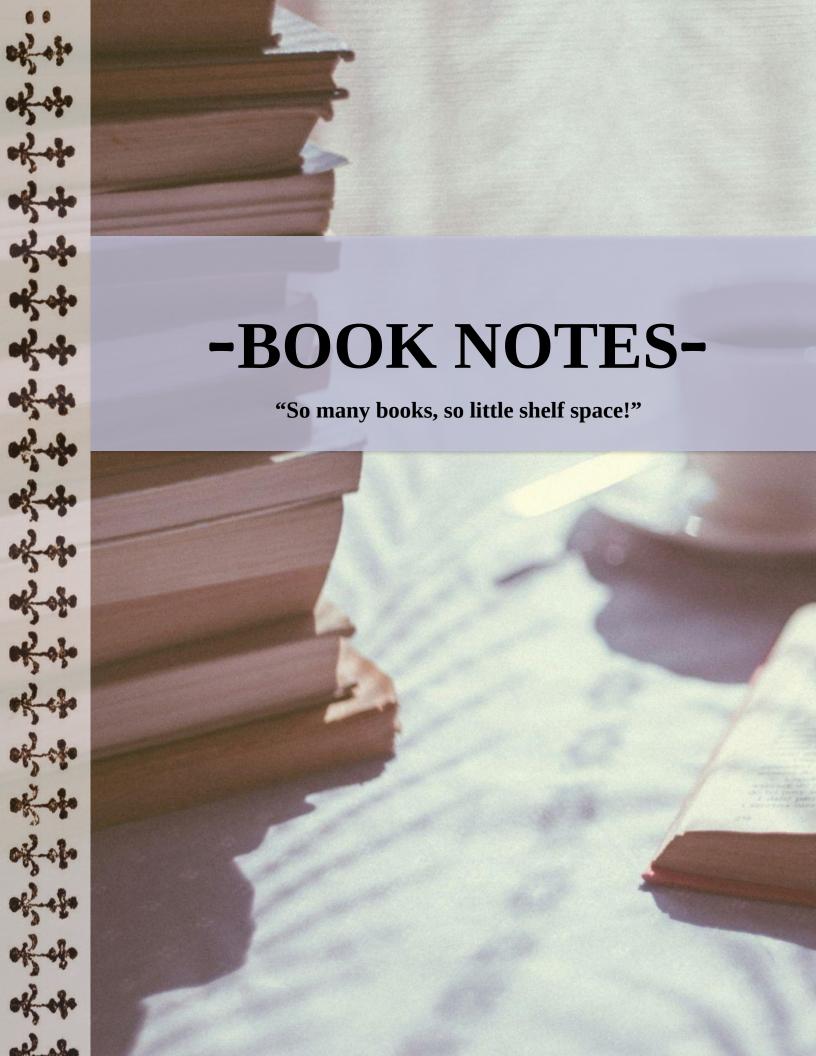
Spring - March 2025 - Growing Gab - Due February 15

Summer - June 2025 - Sizzling Splendor - Due May 15

Fall - September 2025 - Quirky Quandaries - Due August 15

Winter - December 2025 - Frosted Glass - Due November 15

For Submission Guidelines go to <u>storybeast.org/submissions</u> **Submit to <u>storybeasteditor@gmail.com</u>**



BOOK NOTES

An interesting array, this quarter. Extending the theme of migrant workers' stories begun in the last issue with The Most Costly Journey, we have Mary Grace Ketner's gathering of the moving stories of volunteers welcoming migrants in San Antonio. Texas stories are on the table from another angle in Forty Years of Texas Storytelling, a joyful celebration of the history of the Texas Storytelling Festival, packed with some of the best tales told over the years at that event. And then we tap into a rich vein of Jewish narrative tradition, with the latest addition to Mark Binder's Village Life novels, built around time-honored conventions of the wise fools of Chelm, and with Steve Zeitlin's extraordinary, brilliant collection of JEWels. You don't have to be Jewish to dive into these delights.

My usual promise: I will give any book marked with an asterisk (*), 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! 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.

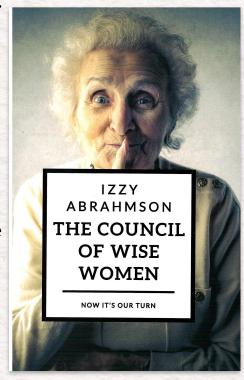
Wishing you many glorious stories, Jo Radner

(<u>iradner@american.edu</u>)

*Izzy Abrahmson (AKA Mark Binder), The Council of Wise Women. Providence, RI: Light Publications, 2024. \$24.99.

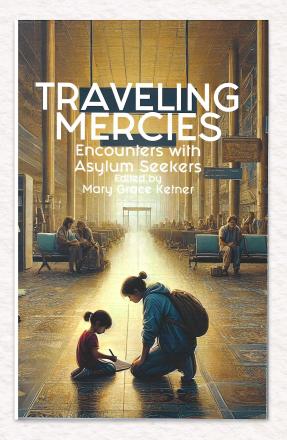
Aficionados of Jewish folklore and humor know well the legendary village of Chelm, the archetypal, semi-fictitious Polish village whose residents are the butt of a seemingly endless series of numskull jokes. Chelmers in these traditional anecdotes are sometimes goofy (trying to trap the moon in a barrel), but sometimes they are wise fools who come to the truth by oblique and nonsensical paths. Many of the Chelm jokes poke fun specifically at rabbinical customs in the shtetl. A young housewife drops a piece of bread she has buttered, and it falls butter-side up! Frightened by this anomaly (one knows, after all, that buttered bread always falls butter-side down), she brings the matter to the rabbis, who pray and study for days and finally solve the conundrum: the woman has buttered the wrong side of the bread!

Since the nineteenth century, literary authors have incorporated Chelm stories into their works. (Isaac Bashevis Singer's The Fools of Chelm and Their History may be the best-known work.) Here in American storytelling, Mark Binder has been reveling in the Chelmers for many years, drawing on the themes of the oral tradition to create a whole village of distinct characters and institutions....



His series of playful Village Life novels (all published under the nom de plume Izzy Abrahmson) now includes six books; The Council of Wise Women is the most recent, and weaves together beautifully Binder's classic cast of characters. Women control the town, whether or not the men are aware of it. Mrs. Chaipul, midwife and owner of the only restaurant in the village, is a prime strategist and leader of the Council of Wise Women who meet surreptitiously in a nearby cave. Young Rachel Cohen blends old and new ways, inheriting the gift of preparing Oma Levitsky's magical chicken soup, but also taking her place as the first girl ever admitted to the religious school. Conventional Rabbi Kibbitz is cleverly challenged by his forward-thinking young assistant Rabbi Abrahms. The whole village seethes with lively events and surprising occurrences. I laughed my way through it. Storytelling feeds right into this fiction.

If you haven't read any of Binder/Abrahmson's Village Life novels, it's fine to start with The Council of Wise Women. If you aren't familiar with Jewish traditions or elegant Yiddish expressions, Binder's useful glossary in the back will make you feel at home. Enjoy!



*Mary Grace Ketner, ed., Traveling Mercies: Encounters with Asylum Seekers. Pittsburgh, PA: Urban Press, 2024. \$14.99.

This is an unusual, engaging book, at once heartwarming and heartrending. Our storytelling colleague Mary Grace Ketner has for years also served as co-chair and newsletter editor for the Interfaith Welcome Center (IWC), a volunteer-based organization in San Antonio, Texas, that greets asylum seekers and gives them crucial help on their way to relatives or shelters in other parts of the country.

Many of the individuals and families apprehended and detained at the southern border have been released by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) in front of the San Antonio bus station with bus tickets, a plastic bag of their belongings, and little or no money. Speaking no English and knowing nothing of American geography or transportation systems, these traumatized travelers must make their way into our country. Over the past decade, clergy and other volunteers have stepped forward to welcome new arrivals, explain tickets and paperwork, and provide food, clothing, temporary shelter, and whatever other comfort they can.

In Traveling Mercies, Ketner presents dozens of memories from IWC volunteers. They describe how they encountered people, what was said, what they learned, how they were able to provide help. Their stories become a mosaic of the experiences of migrants. Often the IWC volunteers bring joy and safety to travel-worn and long-suffering people. Some victories are small, but powerful. A mother and two young sons have no idea where the father of the family has been taken; just before the family has to board their bus, the volunteer manages to locate him in a detention center in Georgia and lends her phone so the family can hear one another's voices. Some actions are life-changing: a girl is rescued from a trafficker, a pregnant rape victim is taken to Planned Parenthood for help. And sometimes – many times – not enough can be done.

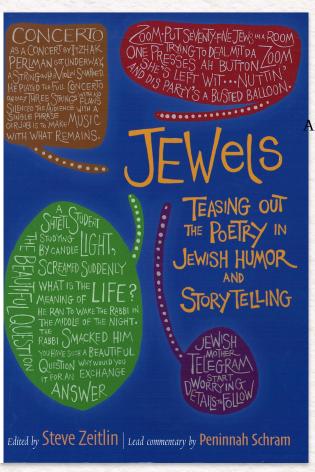
Traveling Mercies is rich in insights into lives not often seen. You will be joyful in its panoply of selfless, caring and ingenious helpers, and heart-scalded that so many innocent people have to go through so much torment to come to the United States.

Steve Zeitlin, ed., JEWels: Teasing out the Poetry in Jewish Humor and Storytelling. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2023. \$29.95.

Steve Zeitlin quotes a telling statement by anthropologist Harold Scheub: "There never was a story without a poem.... It is in the nature of storytelling that the narrative is constructed around a poetic interior." Hence the mission of JEWels: finding the poems within the living traditions of Jewish stories and jokes.

Zeitlin himself is a folklorist-poet, and many of the pieces in JEWels are his creation; he often transforms stories by lining out their essences into poetic form. He is joined by several other commentators and creators — writers, storytellers, folklorists, a cartoonist, a therapist, a rabbi. Prominent among his collaborators is master storyteller Peninnah Schram, whose profound knowledge of the Jewish narrative tradition enriches the whole. These poems and transmuted stories are not left to stand alone on the page; almost all are accompanied by small, fascinating commentaries, detailing not only sources but also interpretations mined from diverse veins of Jewish experience, history, and philosophy.

This is such a rich collection that it's hard to describe adequately. Some 180 poems are presented in ten thematic groups: "In Stories" (the poetry of everyday kitchen-table Jewish conversation), "On a Journey" (the Jews as travelers, our life as journey), "From the Old Country" (the shtetl tradition), "In Jokes" (ah! Jewish humor), "From Torah" (the Biblical tradition), "Shaped by the Holocaust," "In Glimpses of Jewish American Lives," "In Jewish Foods," "In Conversations with God," and finally, a glorious funny and profound collection, "On the Meaning of Life." For a tiny taste of the flavor of the book I quote two poems. The first, by Carol Klenfner:



True Story

Grandpa, a child asks, is the glass half empty or half full?

What does it matter? he answers. It's such a beautiful glass.

And the second, the book's last poem, adapted by Steve Zeitlin from a traditional tale:

Concerto

As a concert by Itzhak Perlman got underway,

a string on his violin snapped. His playing came to a halt.

The crowd expected him to restring it. Instead, he motioned to the conductor to begin the movement again.

He played the full concerto on only three strings – with no flaws.

The audience, awed by the magnificent strains, rose in spontaneous applause.

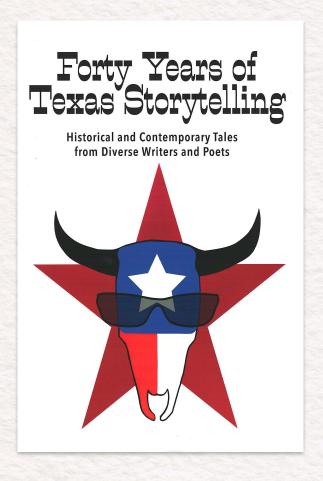
He silenced them with a single phrase:

Our job is to make music with what remains.

The best portrayal of this extraordinary gathering of story-poems is Zeitlin's own final statement: "My wish is that, having experienced the poetry, philosophy, protest, and promise in these jewels of Jewish humor and storytelling, you will more deeply appreciate the endlessly rich and unique Jewish perspective on the world. I hope you will nestle in your consciousness and heart the vast range of tragedy and joy, mysticism and materialism, confoundment and wisdom that offers us all, Jews and non-Jews, a creative, engaged, joyful, and – ultimately – spiritual way of being in the world."

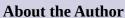
*Ted Parkhurst, ed., Forty Years of Texas Storytelling: Historical and Contemporary Tales from Diverse Writers and Poets. Marion, MI: Parkhurst Brothers, 2024. \$21.95.

What a treat! If you have never attended the Texas Storytelling Festival, this collection will make you yearn to go next spring. And if you have been lucky enough to attend already, Forty Years will flood your heart with memories and laughter. This book is not just a collection of 33 variegated and splendid stories told by tellers from the Festival – though it is that. Forty Years is a comprehensive history and celebration. Elizabeth Ellis's opening essay brings to life Festival history from its founding, through dramatic years of dodging runaway sprinkler systems and ominous tornadoes and the threat of bankruptcy, through the Covid years, down to the return to face-to-face performances in 2023. A series of sparkling accounts pays tribute to twenty-two of the Festival's most significant tellers and supporters. Finally, forty years of featured tellers are listed, year by year, followed by the naming of awardees including those who have been honored with the annual John Henry Faulk Award ("to a person who has made a significant contribution to the art of storytelling in the Southwest"), and an album of photos of memorable moments and artists.



Indeed, Forty Years is not just a bunch of stories — it's a collector's item. But don't leave it on the shelf. Read those stories and hear them in the voices of the Southwest and its visitors. You'll find comic classics like Jay Stailey's "The Blow-Dried Cat" next to DeeCee Cornish's painful memories of the Little Rock Nine, Fran Stallings' ghostly tale "The Osage Diamond Ring," Gayle Ross's Cherokee-style trickster tale "Tseg'Sgin' Gets a Job," and many well-crafted personal stories that will take you into the heart of the region. You'll find tellers old and young, tellers hilarious and heart-deep, and even a few tellers who have brought stories from elsewhere to share in Texas. Pick this book up, and try to put it down. Just try.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work





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



The Moon is my Guiding Metaphor When I Think about Narrative Poetry

by Joan Leotta

When Celestine, the North Carolina Poetry Society president at that time, asked me to speak on narrative poetry, I was simply overwhelmed, knowing that I would be appearing in front of such a talented group of poets. I was unsure of what I could share that would be of value. She dismissed my doubts by explaining that she had invited me to speak because of my varied experience in the art of narrative, on stage as a story performer, as an essayist, and a writer of short and novel-length fiction — not just my work in poetry. The relationship between poetry and performance is natural since poetry is an art that lives in the ear as well as the eye, some have even said that it should never just remain "dead" on a page, that poems should always be read aloud.

I firmly believe that every form of communication is a story. Conventional definitions of story say that there are five basic elements in a story — beginning, middle (usually with three parts) and the end. Not all stories contain all five of these. For me, narrative poetry goes far beyond the long, often complex, lyrical, often rhyming ballads we learned in school. Even a simple haiku can tell a story. My mind runs far beyond what is ordinarily considered narrative poetry, a poetic form that includes a narrative arc, a beginning, middle, end, action -- deftly drawn, albeit briefly sketched -- characters, and even dialog to move the tale along.

How does the moon fit in? The moon is always there in the sky, but she does not present her whole self to us at all times. She follows a cycle. Likewise, some stories do not work out an entire arc with all five elements of story, but still stun us with their beauty as poems, immerse us in the world, their "Story" giving only what I call a sliver or crescent moon approach to the storytelling. As a poet, I'm obsessed with the moon, so it is only fair, I think that I think of narrative poetry in the form of a metaphor involving the moon.

So, what I want to do today is present you with a way of thinking about narrative that will, hopefully, help you look at your own written and spoken work more analytically, to see where it falls on what I call the full moon spectrum of narrative. This sort of thinking will aid when you can approach other forms of writing -- essay, news articles -- and to refine your performances. You can make more informed decisions about what you leave out, what you put into each story if you think of the tale in this way. By looking at how each bit of your work conforms to narrative's five basic building blocks you are in a position to better control how to make your effort to branch out or decide to tell only part of the story. For example, you might want to concentrate on a lyrical description, give an anecdote, leave more space for the reader or listener to fill in the missing elements of the story. It is the part of the arc that is in the dark places of the moon as the sun hits it -- hidden, but still there – that completes the story in our being in the way negative space in a painting highlights and completes the scene the artist sets out to create.



About the **Author** Joan Leotta plays with words on page and stage. She performs folk and personal tales of food, family, and strong women, and also presents Louisa May Alcott. Widely published, she has been twice nominated for Best of the Net and twice for the Pushcart Award. She's been a runner-up in the Robert Frost Foundation Competition, Her latest chapbook, Feathers on Stone. is out from Main Street Rag. Contact her at Joanleotta@gmail. com



I see all poetry as at least partly narrative, even that which is all emotion. I see it existing on as a continuum of form that does not include all of the arc, but some -- in the actual writing/speaking, the listener or reader fills in the rest of the arc. As I said earlier, even a haiku can tell a story — albeit one that the reader must engage with to complete the arc:

From the July 29, 2022, Haiku Universe, my haiku offered this story:

an owl continually questions my identity as I watch the stars

Novelist Ernest Hemingway answered a story-making challenge with six words:

"For Sale: baby shoes, never worn."

The one thing that unites both of these tiny creative expressions is narrative, and as a writer or performer I have to decide just how much of the story, its emotion, its characters am I going to express on paper or reveal on stage. How much of the arc will I leave unfinished for the reader/listener to complete? What is or will be the impact of doing that?

Two of the people I contacted for this article were Jennifer Poteet, Poet, and Finalist for the inaugural Laura Boss Narrative Poetry Award, and Sara DeBeer, storyteller, and poet.

Jennifer said, "The narrative poem is the oldest form of poetry and is used to tell a story and usually utilizes form, meter, and sometimes rhyme. Long before the written word and the invention of mass publishing, storytellers told their stories in verse, and have done so since (at least) 2,100 B.C. Today, the narrative poem has evolved to accommodate the storytelling needs of poets, without (necessarily) the constraints of meter and rhyme scheme. No longer epic, narrative poems still tell a story -- faster than fiction!

"For me though, to write in many types of writing and many genres within those types of writing, I take a broader view of narrative in poetry, I see narrative even where the story arc of narrative -- a beginning, middle, and end, with characters, evocative and musical even descriptions of the area and dialogue, meter and rhyme, wonderful imagery -- fall along a continuum. "

Sara DeBeer a fellow story performer who, while stating a preference for narrative poems in the traditional style, contributed this: "All written and spoken art should have a depth of wisdom that makes listeners/readers want to experience it. Story deals with human motivation and emotion, conflict, and resolution, and speaks from teller's/writer's heart to the heart of listeners/readers."

There are two things to consider when making the choices on how to apply these elements to other writing, and if in your prose writing or if in performance you want to include the entire arc or judiciously leave a part out — it's not simply leaving out details or starting in the middle which as tellers we often do , for impact. For example, fables like Aesop's, while they seem to follow a full narrative really often come into the scene at the middle — we see only a piece of what might be a larger narrative arc. The fox leaves the grapes he cannot reach declaring the grapes to be bitter since he cannot get to them, but does he ever find something to eat? Sometimes we fill those in as background before we tell the tale, but the story itself leaves part of its "moon" dark so what we and the audience supply from our own imaginations.

On stage pieces, props, gestures, expressions, and variation in voice do some of the work that is done with words in poems.

I challenge myself in each form of narrative I attempt, and with each revision. I find that narrative improves the more I employ techniques learned and practiced in poetry in writing forms that are considered prose.

I have made these forms a part of myself over the past thirty years, not just by writing, but by continual, obsessive reading. When I came back to poetry after a long absence of working at it as an art I had to broaden my reading of poetry, so I joined communities of poets. Even now, I belong to writer groups and take workshops in writing flash fiction, short stories, plus poetry workshops on a variety of skill sets, in particular forms. For example, I was privileged to take a haiku workshop with Lenard Moore. Jacinta White helped me reach deeper inside myself — and write in a way that would relate to readers. I belong to several communities of writers online who encourage each other — and of course the North Carolina Poetry Society has been wonderfully encouraging not only with the resources offered and by setting up opportunities where I and others can improve our work, but also in the way individuals have reached out to encourage my work through readings. I belong to a group of storyteller poets run by Sharon Knutson and we celebrate all things narrative, in as many styles as there are group members.

I encouraged everyone to see where on the arc of moon's fullness their piece stands and if that was where they wanted it. Some pieces need to be more of a full moon. I would say that the poem I have submitted with this article is a half-moon. We meet the boy as he waits, watches for his father to come up the path from the steel mills. But is it really a boy? Could it be a girl? How much of my own time watching at the window for my Dad to get home is in this poem? I'm not even sure, myself. But although the poem has a beginning, middle, and end, the arc is not really complete because critical elements of a beginning (e.g., the character's name) are left out. The setting takes center stage. Then the action — the girls on the barge. Then the end and the probable disapproval of the never-seen mother figure. And of course we never do see the reunion of the father and child. Yet, this is a narrative poem. Reading it aloud confirms that. My work is to give you enough so that you can insert yourself in the experience in spite of the turn-of- the-twentieth-century details in the poem and imagine yourself waiting for your father. Were there things you did not know about his travels home? His time at work? How much are you reading into it?

The ballads of old are wonderful — full moon arcs indeed -- and full of musical lines which made them easier to memorize; full length plays are the same. But there is plenty of room on paper and on stage for the other phases of the moon — bits of story arc that let the reader fill in details.

I hope this helps you understand your own work, enabling you to craft your performances with more precision.

SWWW. SWWW. MyArt

SIDEBAR

This poem tells the story of a time when a small child climbed up on stage with me and remained there for my entire set with no intervention from her parents. It reflects on the complicated state of the current storytelling industry in which the largely child-dependent market drives newer tellers into personal-telling spaces and makes it difficult for new traditional tellers to find their place. [The poem] closes with a hope that the next form of the industry continues to celebrate those who are already active and includes new venues for the next generation. -- Ursa Miles

I Look to the Winter

By Ursa Miles

There was a time when fairies frightened fallen soldiers, battered battalions, grizzled gore-spinners. Now the promise of pitter patter, pitter patter, pitter patter is the passion of the passing latter. The younger blood is drenched in spirits that drown parents and abandon children. Marinating at 11:00 p.m., the new guard filet their flesh to season suffering into palatable bites.

Yet, one Halloween, I found myself at the vertex of a stone amphitheater, calling ancient ghosts to commune with beer-battered-chicken-filled latecomers hoping to escape the horrors of home, to replace them with nightmares, that will be explained away by rationality and experience.

She must have been six, or seven, or eight — I've never been one who could differentiate between the heights and ages of microsages — but she should have been old enough to know that seats are for sitting and stages are for speaking. Her father's phone was fascinating, and so was I.

The tug at my hem was unmistakable. Like the heroes of my stories, I was home, but not alone. How do you shake off a haunting? You do not fight apparition; you appease the aberration. In The Wolf of French Creek, I asked her to howl; in Humans Lick Too, I asked her to prowl.

I felt an hour pass before I placed her in her parent's lap, "praised" them for their dull passivity. I cannot fathom a single activity more draining to someone who longs for the campfire in the days before glowing boxes were sirens, luring children to chairs after the resting retire. I mourn the sacred spaces that married tradition and terror and gave birth to order.

And so, I look to the winter. I dream of the days when hot tea and reverie bring a circle around a new light in a home where fright causes no harm, brings no alarm, settles the bones in a mist of utopia. I will be there when the new ancients are scribed, and we too shall pass.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work

The Twelve Days of Stories

A parody on The Twelve Days of Christmas.

Sing out everyone!

By Karen Chace

On the first day of stories, My audience gave to me A fly buzzing all around me.

On the second day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the third day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the fourth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the fifth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the sixth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the seventh day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Seven copters whirling
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvis
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the eighth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Eight birds a squawking
Seven copters whirling
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the ninth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Nine bats a soaring
Eight birds a squawking
Seven copters whirling
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

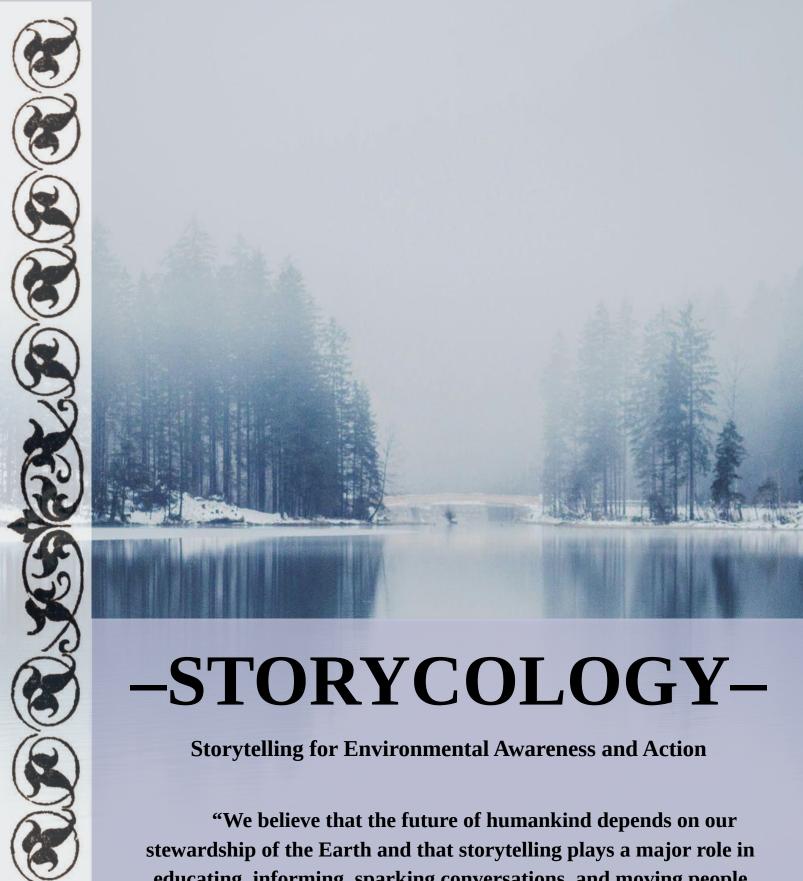
On the tenth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Ten ponies riding
Nine bats a soaring
Eight birds a squawking
Seven copters whirling
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the eleventh day of stories, My audience gave to me Eleven pipers piping (I get to reuse this one because of my friend's bagpipers :)

Ten ponies riding
Nine bats a soaring
Eight birds a squawking
Seven copters whirling
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me.

On the twelfth day of stories,
My audience gave to me
Twelve bands a playing
Eleven pipers piping
Ten ponies riding
Nine bats a soaring
Eight birds a squawking
Seven copters whirling
Six fire drills
Five toppling trees
Four flying Elvises
Three topless women
Two mating turtles
And a fly buzzing all around me!





educating, informing, sparking conversations, and moving people towards taking actions for a more sustainable world."



Two Frogs

By Bowen Lee

One summer the lakes and ponds had mostly dried up. Two frogs decided to travel together to find a new place to live. They came to a deep well and debated whether to leap in or not.

"This place is great!" said one frog. "There is plenty of water."

But the other frog held back. "This is true, but if we jump in, and the water dries up, how will we get out again?" -- Aesop's Tales





I took some of my California native plants with me when I moved to Washington, not sure if they would make the journey. A long ride in a UHaul truck is not ideal for plants that have been struggling in a drought. Most of them had lost leaves and were browning, and one was just a stick that I kept in case it would come back to life. It rains in the Pacific Northwest, and my water-frugal habits from California are unnecessary. All the plants I brought with me from my old home are thriving. Even the stick has branched into lush green leaves and lavender flowers.

Moving from one place lacking in resources to a place with more abundance is what migration is all about, and nature has been doing it for a long time. I have always lived within the Pacific Flyway and looked forward to the birds traveling on their way to better climates and resources in the fall and spring. Just outside my door here in Washington, the creek has hosted scores of ducks, geese, and a wayward swan, as well as small flocks of songbirds on their way to somewhere.

The migrants are helping out the ecosystems they pass through. They don't just come to plunder the rest stops and their final landing spot when they overwinter. This is the time of berries and seeds, nuts and fruit. The small birds propagate the seeds and distribute them. The waterfowl snap up the duckweed and other aquatic plants that would otherwise choke a lake or stream. They churn and aerate waters that would otherwise lie stagnant. Movement stirs the energy in systems and migration is a movement that causes change as much as it responds to changes in the weather, the seasons, the environment.



Research is showing that increases in immigration from Mexico correlate to the long-running drought in that country. That means, to prevent people from Mexico crossing the border of the U.S., we need to reverse climate change so they will be able to stay in their home country without suffering economically due to drought. Immigration helps our country by providing agricultural labor and service workers. But if some people feel there are too many immigrants, we need to reduce global warming so people don't have to immigrate.

This may be difficult for some people to grasp. Connect to nature, folks.

As the rising temperatures that have plagued Mexico cross the border into this country, people are speculating about the migration that will occur within the United States as climate disasters increase. Many people are going to be fed up with living in a hurricane corridor, tornado alley, firestorm area, or desert zone. Homes will be lost, and people will move elsewhere. Where?

Like two frogs in Aesop's fable, how can you be sure this well won't also dry up?

The changing environment necessitates changes in us as well. How will we respond to these changes?

Anne Rutherford has created a story called "In the Aftertime," about a futuristic world where a stranger in a town asks for aid, and no one has anything to spare. But the stranger helps the townspeople discover that together they have what they need. When she leaves, she has shared a way of doing things that lets them sustain themselves. We all influence each other, even when we are just passing through.

Anne Rutherford video of "In the Afterlife."

https://youtu.be/34jmHdTwQMo

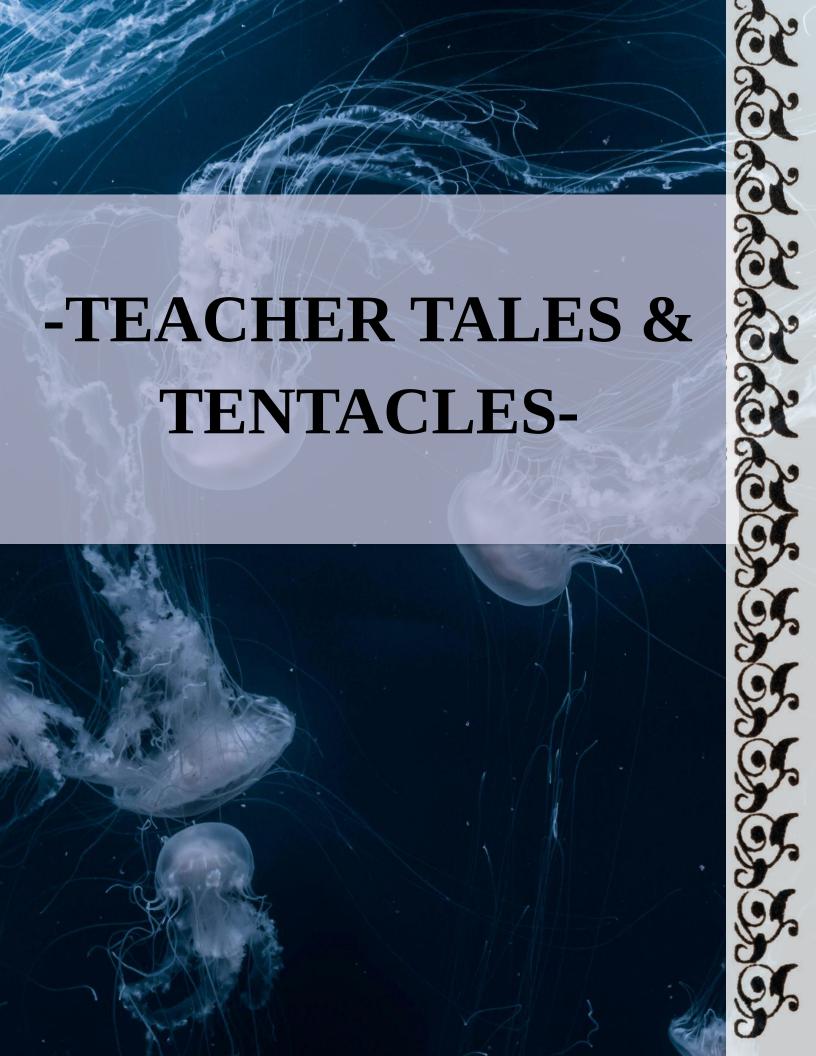
To be told in educational and professional settings with attribution.



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.

Website: storyrex.com



Kindling Kindness

By Jen and Nat Whitman

When societal winds whirl outside our classrooms, we must carefully curate stories for the children in our care. In the bleak midwinter, we can create light with the stories we choose to share. In this edition of Tales and Tentacles, let's step away from traditionally "academic" standards and benchmarks and light a fire together to warm ourselves with the essential outcomes of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Let's talk about kindling kindness with our storytelling practice.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a non-profit organization that has been working for 30 years to advocate for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in education. CASEL outlines five broad categories that form the core of Social Emotional Learning:

- **Self-awareness:** The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
- **Self-management:** The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
- **Social awareness:** The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.
- **Relationship skills:** The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
- **Responsible decision-making:** The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

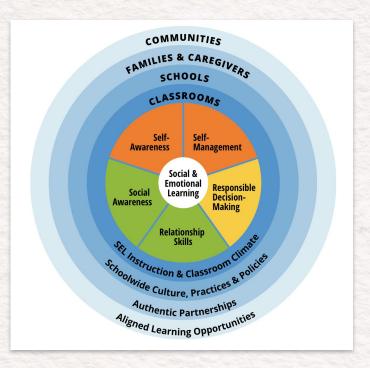


Teacher Tales & Tentacles Head Editors

Jen and Nat Whitman recently moved back to the United States after 23 years teaching and telling in international schools in Thailand, Germany, and Hong Kong. Jen is an Early Childhood teacher and Nat is an Elementary Librarian. They are passionate about the role of storytelling in the classroom and they teamed with Margaret Read MacDonald to write a "How-To" guide to using stories in the classroom called, **Teaching with Story: Classroom Connections to Storytelling.** Jen and Nat perform in tandem together as The Whitman Tellers. They are currently working on telling stories of congressional compromise across the 50 States!

Website: whitmantellers.com

CASEL's goal is to ensure that all students have access to quality, evidence-based SEL instruction. To that end, the organization helps synthesize research that supports the integration of SEL instruction in the classroom. They also review curricula and provide guidance for the implementation of quality SEL practices. In addition, CASEL works proactively with state legislatures to make sure that SEL has a prominent place in public policy conversations. CASEL created the Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) which lobbies state governments to adopt SEL competencies in their education standards. You can visit the CASEL website (www.casel.org) to see where each state currently stands in their SEL journey.



Link

The CASEL framework for SEL forms the foundation of many packaged social skills curricula used by districts around the country. Many schools also have a list of character traits or values that they use to center their community. Commitment, Respect, Integrity, Care, Resilience -- these are some of the many words that are often explicitly taught in school communities. If you are a visiting teaching artist, get to know the particular SEL vocabulary of the schools you visit. Speaking their version of SEL fluently can help you pitch your programs successfully.

Ask yourself how you can weave the SEL language from your school's culture into your stories.

Consider the stories you currently tell. Some of your tales probably require the central character to make a difficult choice: Responsible Decision Making! Many of your tales might focus on the friendship or enmity between two central characters: Relationship Skills! Almost all of your tales will likely help students build empathy by considering different perspectives: Social Awareness!

If you're a classroom teacher, you have the luxury of creating a collection of shared story experiences over time that help shape the way that your students interact on a daily basis. Carefully chosen tales can guide the Social Emotional Learning in your classroom. You might create a visual reminder of stories that you've shared that you can refer to throughout the year. In our classrooms, we keep a poster of the school values displayed prominently and have our students add illustrations of stories we have shared that connect to each of the values. When we are talking about a variety of situations throughout the year, students will refer to the poster and say, "Be like Gecko! Don't Give Up!" or "Remember we should share with our friends like in Stone Soup." The tales create cohesion in our classroom community and offer gentle reminders about how to work together cooperatively.

Let's close with a short folktale retold with permission from Margaret Read MacDonald's **Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk About**.

Holding Up the Sky

One day, while stomping through the forest, Elephant stopped suddenly.

There was a small creature in the path.

Elephant leaned down to see who it could be.

A set of tiny feet and wings were sticking straight up in the air.

It was Hummingbird!

"Hummingbird, why are you lying in the middle of the path like that? I almost stomped you into the ground!"

"Oh, Elephant! I'm glad you are here! I heard that the sky will fall today. I am ready to help!"

Elephant erupted in hearty laughter.

"HA HA HA, Hummingbird...YOU?!?
What could you possibly do with those tiny feet?

Hummingbird looked determined.

"Not just me! Not Alone! If the sky does fall, everyone must do their part to help hold up the sky. This is what I can do. What can you do?"

Elephant paused.

Elephant thought.

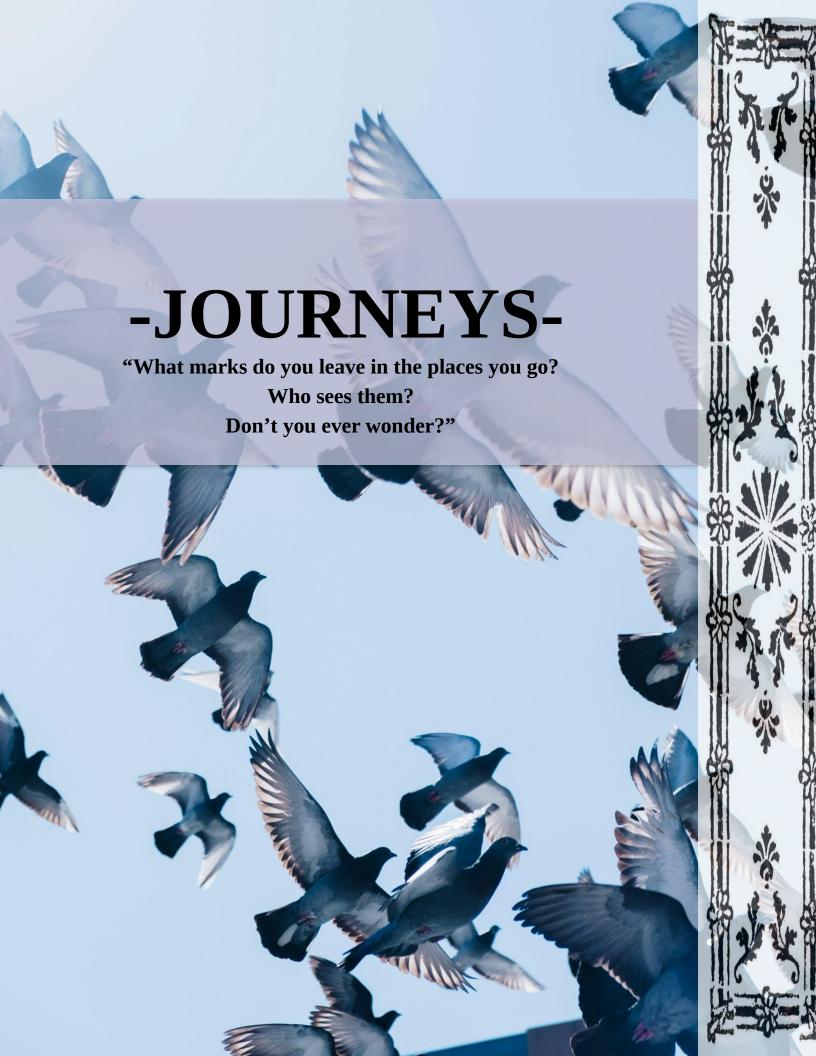
Slowly...carefully...

Four enormous tree trunk legs joined two slender twig legs,

Ready to hold up the sky **TOGETHER**.

A tale from China retold with permission by the Whitman Tellers from Margaret Read MacDonald's **Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk About.**

There is a lot of work ahead of us to keep the fire of Social Emotional Learning burning brightly through this winter season. Shared stories will light a path forward for our students and keep our communities warm. Let's each do what we can to kindle kindness together!





By Red Howard

Probably the major vice in my life would be hang gliding. Started at age 25, and I have flown free for the last fifty years. It is my greatest joy, to cruise the sky at 25 mph, with an angel's eye view of the world below. The sky can be your nicest friend, but we still treat it with respect. Even the airliners have come to respect the power of the sky.

One day, I was having a nice flight on the Front Range. There was a storm sitting on the range, maybe five miles away, but it was not approaching, and the air where I flew was nice and smooth. There was a new pilot in the sky with me, fully capable of course, but lacking experience. We flew for more than an hour, just larking around, and going back to the steep Front Range foothills whenever we needed more altitude. I heard the guy singing for joy, now and then. Life was good.

With no warning, I was hit by a hard blast of wind, but not the smooth winds we had earlier. This wind came from a different direction, still okay for flying, but rough and strong. This new wind was suddenly cold. I had a jacket and heavy pants, so I was okay, but the new pilot had only a tee-shirt and shorts. Cold can be debilitating, but even worse, it can cloud your judgment.

I flew over to the new pilot to check on him and saw that he was commanding the highest speed from his glider. It was not enough. He was getting backed up by this stiff wind, and if the wind took him behind the Front Range, the air back there was like a washing machine.

There was little chance that he could land back there without serious injury, or worse. My glider was somewhat faster, so I had a few more options, but I knew he was in serious trouble. Even worse, all he knew was not enough to save himself. As I flew alongside of him, he yelled to me that he could not go forward. I yelled back to him, saying that when you can't go forward, go sideways. I lowered one wing, and began crabbing across the stiff wind, on a path that angled out toward flat ground, and some smoother air that we could land in safely.

When I looked back for him, he was still stuck where he had been, fighting the power of the wind, but still slowly losing ground. The wind had increased to our limits, and I had no confidence that it would not increase even more.

I looked out at the storm that was still five miles away; it had not come closer, but it had become bigger and stronger, covering much more of the landscape than before. The new pilot was already fighting a losing battle, and things could get far worse at any moment.

Against my own best judgment, I stopped flying away and went back for the new guy. I repeated what I yelled and did before, and this time, he copied my actions. We both crabbed across the stiff wind, still losing ground, but opening up distance from the Front Range as we went. The strong storm wind slacked off in velocity as we got farther away from the storm, and I called to the new pilot "Follow me!" as I turned downwind and made a run for safety. The new pilot stayed with me, and we were able to find a distant field where we landed safely in strong, smooth wind.

I talked to the new pilot then, He had some concern when the strong wind had hit us, but he did not know how extreme our danger had been. To him, this had been just a great flight, even though our cars were now a dozen miles away. It took some serious words to convince him that we had barely escaped a very unpleasant end to our adventure.

We packed up our gliders and left them hidden in some bushes. We took our helmets with us, to show passing drivers that we were not the average hitchhikers, and hitched rides back to our cars. The storm never came closer than five miles to us, for that day. Only fellow members of the hang-gliding club were aware of the danger that we had faced, and defeated by strategy, when the storm really had us out-gunned.



One-Eyed Charley: A Tale of Courage and Secrecy

By Jim Kissane

In the rugged Santa Cruz Mountains of 1851, Charley Parkhurst climbed onto his stagecoach, the creak of leather and wood punctuating the crisp morning air. He adjusted his eye patch—a constant reminder of a horse's kick years ago—feeling the rough fabric against his weathered skin. As the Gold Rush raged, Charley's calloused hands gripped the reins, the familiar texture grounding him as he prepared for another perilous journey from Santa Cruz to San Juan Bautista.

The pungent aroma of horse sweat mingled with the sweet scent of pine as Charley set off, the rhythmic clop of hooves echoing through the towering redwoods. Born Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst in 1812, Charley had fled New England's constraints, reinventing himself as a man in the West. The freedom of California allowed him to live authentically, away from judgmental eyes that might have seen through his disguise.

Charley's skill as a driver was unmatched. He navigated treacherous mountain roads with unwavering focus, the jolt of every rut and boulder reverberating through his body. His reputation grew with each successful trip, passengers marveling at his ability to guide the coach safely through fog-shrouded passes and along cliff edges where one misstep meant certain doom.

One fateful day, as the coach wound through a narrow canyon, the acrid smell of gunpowder filled the air as shots shattered the silence. Three masked figures emerged from the shadows, their voices rough as they demanded a holdup. The metallic taste of fear rose in Charley's throat, but he refused to yield.

With lightning speed, Charley reached for his hidden shotgun, the cool metal a comfort in his hands. "I reckon you boys picked the wrong coach today," he growled, his voice low and menacing. His bravery caught the bandits off guard, and a deafening warning shot sent them fleeing, the thunderous pounding of their horses' hooves fading into the distance.

Word of Charley's courage spread quickly, cementing his status as one of California's finest whips. Passengers sought out his coaches, comforted by the sight of his signature eye patch and the sound of his gruff, reassuring voice.

Years passed, and Charley's legend grew. He became known for his skill, punctuality, and bravery. But Charley had a secret. In 1868, he unknowingly became the first woman to vote in California, his secret still intact, the weight of the ballot in his hand a moment of quiet triumph.

As autumn approached in 1879, Charley sat on his cabin porch in Watsonville, the salt-tinged breeze from the distant Pacific ruffling his graying hair. He reflected on his extraordinary life, the memories as vivid as the vibrant sunset painting the sky. The weight of his secret pressed upon him, and he decided to record his story.

Through the night, the scratching of pen on paper filled the small cabin as Charley wrote of his childhood in New Hampshire, his decision to live as a man, and his adventures in the West. The flickering lamplight cast dancing shadows on the walls, a visual representation of the dual life he had led for so long.

In the early morning of December 18, 1879, the familiar chest tightness returned shortly after sealing the envelope to the paper. Charley Parkhurst drew his last breath, the silence in the cabin broken only by the soft rustle of wind through the trees outside.

The letter remained undelivered Charley was discovered dead in his cabin on December 28, 1879, by friends and neighbors who came to check on him. The undertaker's discovery the following day sent a shock throughout the community. Charlie's true identity—a woman who had lived as a man—emerged posthumously. Stunned by years of friendship, the local newspaper published his extraordinary story. Charley's long-guarded secret became a legend that would echo through California's history.

It sent shockwaves through the community. The revelation sparked a flurry of articles and gossip, but as years passed, Charley's story faded from public memory, like footprints washed away by time.

Charley Parkhurst's remarkable life remains a testament to courage and determination. He challenged societal norms and lived on his own terms, symbolizing the freedom the West represented. His grave in Watsonville bears a simple marker, but his true monument is the legacy he left behind—a reminder that the most extraordinary stories often hide in plain sight.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



About the Author

Imagine stepping back into a "time machine" transporting you to a bygone industrial era. That's what Jim is best known for. A historic storyteller and published author, he breathes new life into forgotten accounts, and obscure individuals of Industrial America [1850s-1950s], painting vivid portraits of a colorful bygone America. **Website:**JimKissane.com

Tell Me Why

by Julia M. Morris

If you can tell me why the cat
Scowls and growls her nighttime rant
Then I will tell you of my own nocturnal sounds:
Of floorboard stomping—words spoken out loud.
Staccato questions of "Why THIS now?"
When nothing, so far, has been found.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



About the Author- Julia M. Morris, Ph.D. is both a professional storyteller and an instructor in early childhood education at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, NY. She conducts workshops on active storytelling, imaginative play, and literacy through the arts. Her storytelling program, 'Stories that Move and Sing.' has been implemented throughout New York City and beyond.

Website: moveandsing.com

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My Conversation with Mr. Stevenson

by Julia M. Morris

"The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."
(Robert Louis Stevenson, "Happy Thoughts," The Child's Garden of Verse)

In your poetry for the child You talk of wonders, sweet and mild: Gardens versed with smiling kings, Soldiers on pillowed hills, kites, and swings.

Though' a wild wind is in one of your tales Blowing its breezes through picture-book vales, This whirling and swirling of Edwardian air Shows a girl set aloft—no cares, All dares, swinging towards an anywhere!

Is there something, however, that pulls her to earth?

Or lands her abruptly, bruised and in dirt? No, it would seem, your rhymes say the same: "All will be well if it's an innocent game."

Yet I ask you as one who is now quite full grown (A teller of stories not unlike your own)
How do we hold on to these idylls, this glaze?
The sense of the wild—the mystery—the maze

Of a traveler who know her supper awaits On a plate that's "still hot" after days and weeks away.

To know Sendak's beasts, or another writer's heaven

Is it not best, dear Sir, to remain the age of seven?

For unless we can adventure like the young, I assert,

The castles of sand are bound to revert Into the muckiest of mud where a moat once did stand

Defending its kingdom from the matters at hand.

"For that's where we live now," I shout at your grave,

In the "shoulds" of our transcripts and taxes we save.

But I'll re-read the language inside your great books

Equipped, like a fisherman, with the sharpest of hooks.

And ask: 'How can you keep us so delightedly caught?'

How best to imagine? What needs to be taught?

And there you are, on your porch – in that chair

The Adirondacks in the distance, your professorial stare.

Consumed by consumption – not long for to live

You lean in closer, and this advice you do give:

"Every once upon a time needs a satisfying end.

And anything worth doing is built on pretend.

So practice and rehearse; it need not take long

To relearn one's childhood, chant a verse, sing a song!"

You cough out this wisdom, light another cigarette,

And continue your lecture in the Saranac Gazette:



Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



About the Author- Julia M. Morris, Ph.D. is both a professional storyteller and an instructor in early childhood education at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, NY. She conducts workshops on active storytelling, imaginative play, and literacy through the arts. Her storytelling program, 'Stories that Move and Sing.' has been implemented throughout New York City and beyond.

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Contact Info.#: Julia.Morris@kbcc.cuny.edu

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Crude Awakening

By Jim Kissane

The Texas sun beat down mercilessly as Margaret "Maggie" Dawson wiped the sweat from her brow, the smell of crude oil permeating the air around her. The distant clang of drilling equipment provided a constant rhythm to her thoughts.

It was November 2, 1948, and despite the challenges she faced as one of the few female petroleum engineers in the state, Maggie was determined to cast her vote in the presidential election between Harry Truman and Thomas Dewey.

As a trailblazer in her field, Maggie had fought hard for her position at the oil company. She was acutely aware that many of her female colleagues who had worked during the war had already been pushed out and expected to return to domestic roles. Maggie herself had faced pressure to quit when she got engaged last year, but she had stubbornly held on to her job.

Now, she faced a new battle: exercising her right to vote in an industry and a state still dominated by men. The lack of legal protections against workplace discrimination weighed heavily on her mind as she prepared for what she knew was likely to happen.

She approached her boss, Mr. Jenkins, in his air-conditioned office. "Miss Dawson," he drawled, "I hope you're not thinking of leaving early. We've got a crisis at Well 7."

Maggie stood tall. "It's Election Day, Mr. Jenkins. I need to go vote," she replied, her voice steady despite her racing heart.

Jenkins' laugh was as dry as the Texas earth. "Vote? Surely you don't need to bother with that. Your daddy or husband can handle it for you. Besides, shouldn't you be thinking about starting a family soon? You can't expect to keep this job forever, especially once you have children."

Maggie's hands clenched into fists, but she kept her composure. "Sir, I'm an educated woman and a taxpayer. I have every right to vote, and I intend to do so. And my personal life doesn't affect my ability to do this job."

After a heated discussion, Maggie was allowed to leave, but she knew her journey was far from over. As she made her way through the oil field, a group of roughnecks blocked her path.

"Where you off to, Miz Engineer?" one called out, his tone mocking. "Thought you wanted to play with the big boys. Election's no place for a woman. Ain't you heard? The war's over. Time for you gals to head back to the kitchen."

Maggie stood her ground. "I'm going to vote," she declared. "Just like any other American. And I earned my place here, just like you."

The final hurdle awaited at the polling station in town. As Maggie approached, she saw men dominating the line. A poll worker eyed her suspiciously. "Ma'am, are you sure you're registered to vote?"

Maggie felt a surge of frustration. "Yes, I am," she replied firmly, producing her registration card.

The man scrutinized it closely. "Well, I'll need to see some additional identification. And your husband's permission, if you're married."

Maggie's heart raced, but she stood her ground. "Sir, that's not required by law. I have the right to vote independently."

After a tense standoff, and with other voters beginning to grumble about the delay, the poll worker reluctantly allowed Maggie to cast her ballot.

As she left the polling station, Maggie felt a mix of triumph and exhaustion. She had exercised her right, but the struggle was a stark reminder of the challenges women faced, even decades after gaining suffrage. The constant pressure to conform to traditional roles, the lack of legal protection against discrimination, and the expectation that her career was just a temporary diversion before marriage and motherhood all weighed heavily on her.

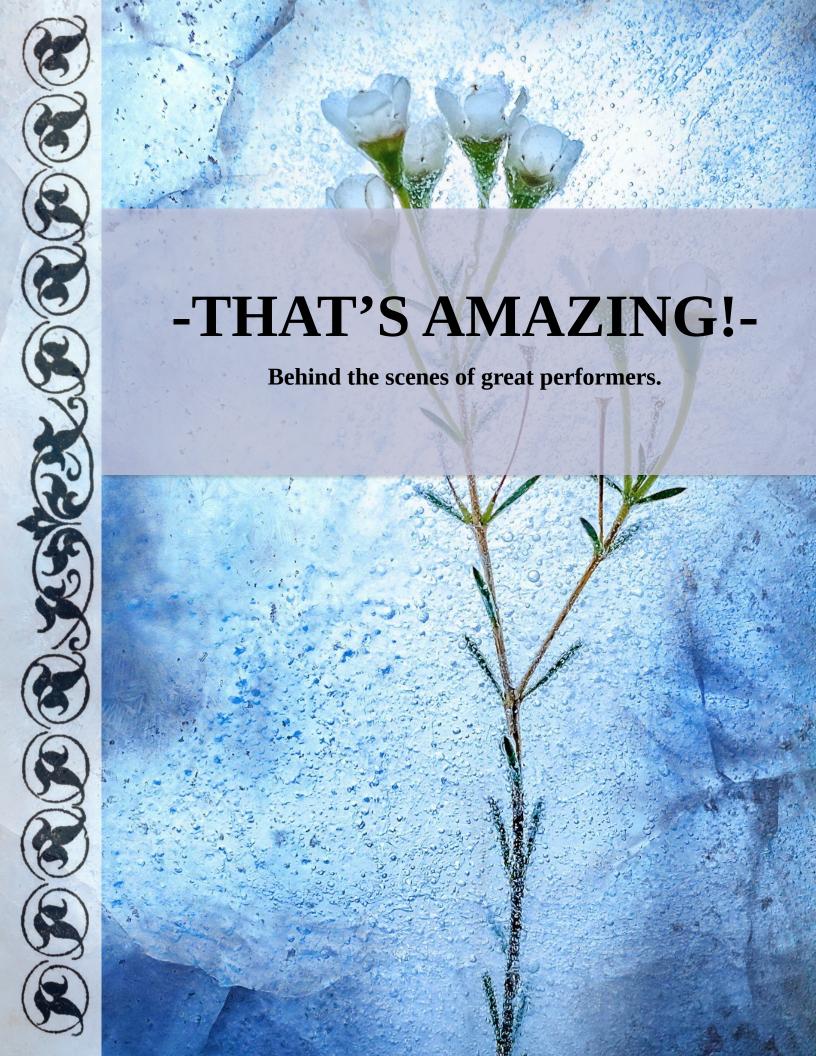
In the distance, she could hear the familiar sounds of the derricks – a reminder of the battles that still lay ahead, both in the workplace and at the ballot box. But for now, Margaret Dawson, petroleum engineer and voter, allowed herself a moment of victory. She had done her part to fuel the engine of democracy, despite the obstacles in her path. And she silently vowed to continue fighting, not just for her own right to work and vote, but for all women who would come after her.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



About the Author

Imagine stepping back into a "time machine" transporting you to a bygone industrial era. That's what Jim is best known for. A historic storyteller and published author, he breathes new life into forgotten accounts, and obscure individuals of Industrial America [1850s-1950s], painting vivid portraits of a colorful bygone America. **Website:**JimKissane.com



From Curiosity to Creation: The Story of Everything

By Kealoha

In 2011, I found out that I was going to be a father. What?! Surprise, excitement, anxiousness! I needed to make sense of it all, so I took a full day of solitude to reflect on the future of my budding family. I turned on some music, cracked open my journal, and let all the vulnerabilities and questions pour out. How would we be able to take care of a whole other human being? How do I even change a diaper? And then a recurring question: when this child asks me where we come from, what will I say? What will I tell my future child about the origin of the human species? I knew I wouldn't tell him any of the ancient creation stories that have been passed down from the many generations and the many cultures that have pondered the question, because I have never subscribed to them. I subscribe to science.

So I started to answer the question of where we come from through the lens of science, writing to my future child the story of the Big Bang. But that story of subatomic particles ended up becoming an *actual story* (based on true events) with heroes and villains, with conflict and resolution. The inanimate particles of the Big Bang ended up getting personified. Thus was born a premise! I continued writing, following our evolution story as we progressed from the primordial soup of the Big Bang to the elements forged within the Stars, then eventually zooming in to our solar system and the necessary conditions that were established to create life. There were more characters and more plot lines to follow. There was even a triangle love story between the Earth, Sun, and the Moon. Spoiler alert: she ended up getting pregnant. She ended up giving birth to a single-celled bacteria. And the story continued, following our evolution all the way to human beings and celebrating them as they migrated through the entire world, finally leading to us today!

By the end of that writing session, I realized that I had created something that might be of interest to my audiences. So I developed it and workshopped it. I received funding from The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation to keep working on it. Draft after draft eventually led me to *The Story of Everything*, a live theatrical show that employed 3 dancers, 6 musicians, a visual artist, and a Hawaiian chanter. It was the biggest and most ambitious project of my life, combining all the science I studied through my education as a Nuclear Engineer at MIT with every skill I had gained from the storytelling, poetry, and dance worlds that I was so deeply immersed in. We toured the show in various theaters and performing arts centers through the United States. After a few years of touring, we got the attention of the Engaging the Senses Foundation, who asked if they could film us and turn the theatrical show into a film. "Yes, please!"

We were given the Hollywood treatment, filming at a Smashbox Studios soundstage in Los Angeles and then returning to Honolulu to film in front of a sold-out 1,400 seat live audience at the historic Hawai'i Theatre! The producers obtained footage from NASA, National Geographic, and the BBC to illustrate the story. The video editors and special effects team worked their magic and took the project to levels that I could never have imagined. It was a true team effort! And to top it all off, our opening scene for the whole film ended up being a beach scene where my son (who was 7 at the time) finally gets to ask me the question that started it all off: "Dad, where do we come from?"

The Story of Everything film was selected for a number of Film Festivals in 2023, winning a handful of awards such as Best Feature Documentary Film, Best Male Actor, and Best Original Score. Along the way, we even got to screen our film at MIT, the university where I was formally trained as a scientist! Up next for the film is to figure out digital distribution and to build out an educational resource package, since we've always had the vision of teachers using the film to engage their students.

I know it seems hyperbolic to say this since I will hopefully live many more years, but *The Story of Everything* is my life's work! I spent over a decade of my life dedicated to this project but have spent my whole life learning the lessons necessary to prepare for its creation. This was a dream collaboration between a group of dedicated artists to create a piece of work that we hope will affect people in a profound way. I would love for you to see this film or our live theatre show, so stay tuned! You can visit the film's website at www.storyofeverything.org or my personal touring website at www.storyofeverything.org or my personal touring website at www.storyofeverything.org or my personal touring

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



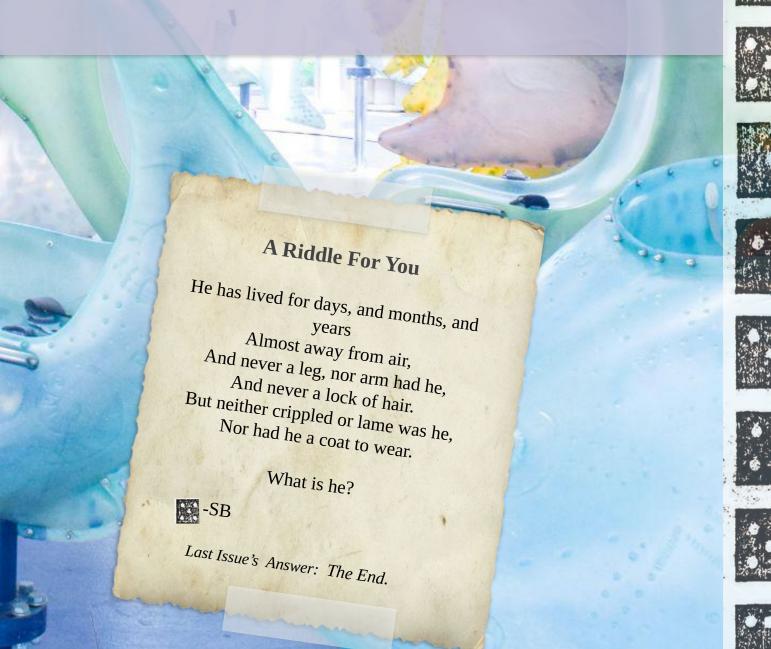
Photo by Malia Johnson

Kealoha is Hawai'i's first Poet Laureate Emeritus. As a poet and storyteller, he has performed throughout the world -- from the White House to the 'Iolani Palace, from Brazil to Switzerland. He was selected as a master artist for a National Endowment for the Arts program in 2010 and was named an American Academy of Poets Laureate Fellow in 2022. He graduated from MIT with a degree in Nuclear Engineering.

Website & Preferred Contact: www.KealohaPoetry.com
Website for The Story of Everything: www.storyofeverything.org
Social media: @WealohaPoetry for all following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (Twitter)



"Curiouser and curiouser!"



LOST WORD SOCIETY

by Carmen Agra Deedy

The Holidays are here! I love this time of year with the cool crispness in the air, the sparkling lights, and the gorgeous decorations. There is a blend of the familiar broadcasts of Charlie Brown, Ebeneezer, and Rudolph and the new specials destined to become new favorites. It is a time when we reflect upon memories from childhood, remember those who are no longer here, and make new memories for future generations. Stories can make memories come alive, evoke slumbering emotions, and bring us back to who we truly are. They can help us remember that we are more similar than different and that our differences are some of our greatest strengths. Stories can turn improbabilities into possibilities, if we have the courage to change and grow.

In each issue we will give you an archaic, obsolete, or otherwise "lost" word. We will make up three silly definitions of the word, mostly incorrect, to amuse ourselves and hopefully you, dear reader. Your job is to make up another definition, a haiku, a story, or even a five-person play about the lost word. The challenge, should you decide to accept it, is for you to use your new creation in a story, just for fun. Next month we will publish the true definition of the "lost" word and provide you with another one. Have fun!

AFFUAGE (n.) Archaic & obsolete.

- 1) Smoke, soot, or other gases coming out of a flue or chimney.
- 2) The rich and aristocratic elite; the affluent upper castes of society.
- 3) A dessert fashioned from a flourless chocolate torte, doused with rum and brandy, layered with chocolate ganache and meringue, topped with strawberries, blueberries, toasted almonds, and a chocolate covered coqui frog dusted with cocoa powder.

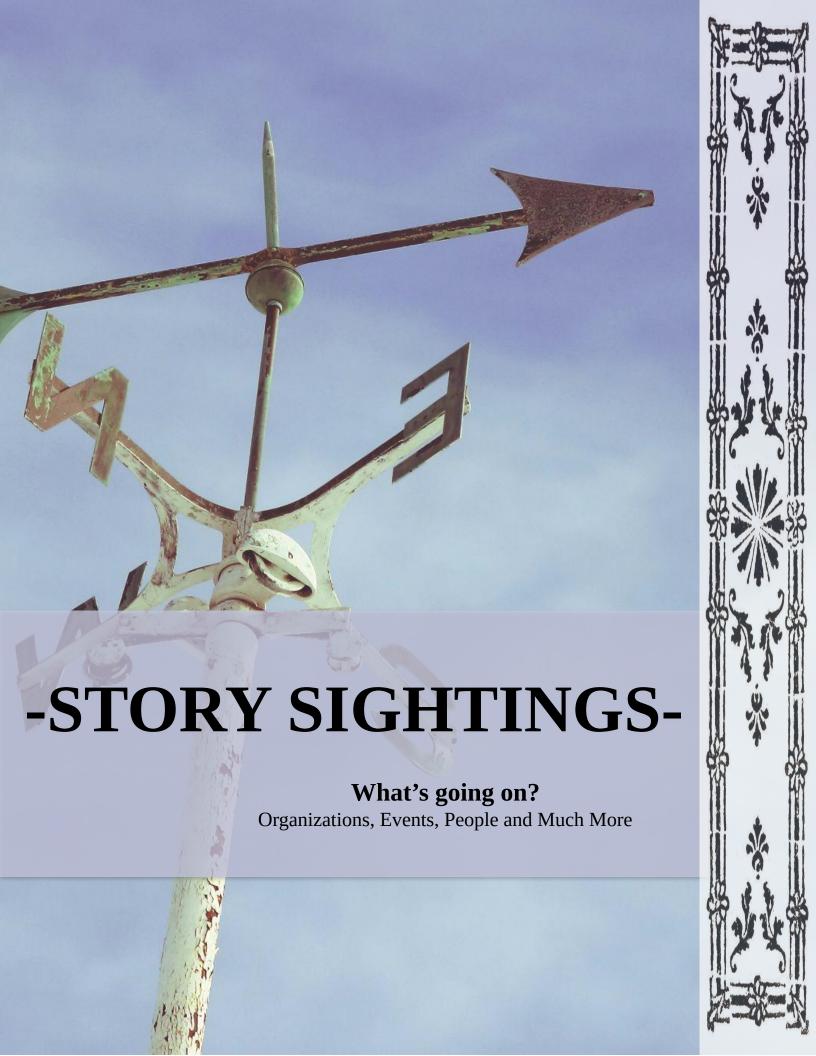
Last Month's Lost Word:

YWIS (adv.) Obsolete.- Pronounced: EE-wis Meaning: certainly; definitely. Word origin: from the Old English word, "gewiss," meaning "certain." Ex. Are we going to the fair? Ywis!



For more fun explore:
Carmen Agra Deedy's LOST WORD SOCIETY

at <u>facebook.com/carmenagradeedy</u> for new words every weekend!



THE NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK
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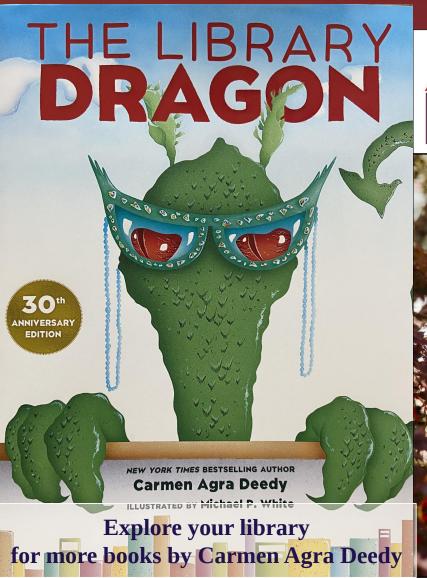
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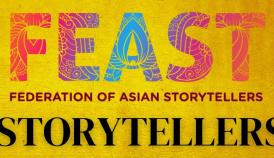


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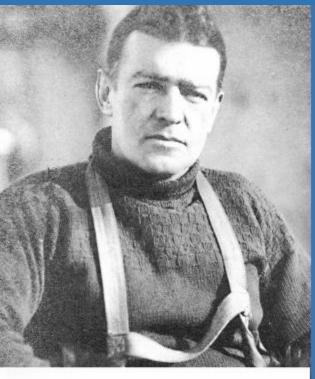
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Storytelling

"Brimming with heart, grace, and grit ...

... These stories from the Texas Storytelling Festival shimmer and sparkle like a radiant Texas sunset. Celebrate four decades of captivating storytelling, from true, heartfelt personal narratives resonating with raw honesty, to the rhythmic cadence of cowboy poetry echoing across the vast landscape, to tales taller than the towering Texas Sky and stretching wider than the expansive horizon. Each of these diverse stories reflects the gentle humor and generous spirit which define the Texan soul. Forty Years of Texas Storytelling is a celebration of tradition and the enduring legacy that is the Texas Storytelling Festival."

-Alton Takiyama-Chung, Storyteller (altonchung.com) and Editor-In-Chief of *The Story Beast,* a quarterly e-Publication dedicated to the art of storytelling (storybeast.org)

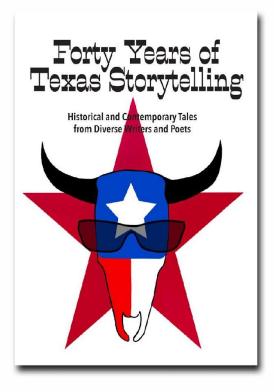
"A gleaning of engaging tales from the Texas Storytelling Festival that will leave you chuckling and, in some cases, weeping. I loved the chance to peek into the Texan lifestyle via tales of living in ... or moving to ... Texas."

-Margaret Read MacDonald, Folklorist, author, storyteller, and former librarian

"A love of oral storytelling imbues this celebratory book with the flavors of many cultural traditions that call Texas home. Share these stories with your family, your classroom, and faith community."

-Kiran Singh Sirah, past president, International Storytelling Center





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March 2024

"This book is a tour de force—a wonderful snapshot of storytelling in Texas. I didn't want it to end. The history of the Texas Storytelling Festival is fascinating and beautifully written. And the stories that follow, from a broad range of tellers, styles, and experiences, are each gems in their own right. "The stories range from educational to stirring, from humorous to mysterious. They are personal tales, folk tales, and historical stories, from a variety of different cultures, recognizing the fascinating quilt that is Texas.

"Many of the tellers have won a John Henry Faulk award. I smiled when I saw that, as I knew John Henry and his British-born wife Elizabeth when I first lived in Texas in my early twenties. I know that he would have loved these stories—many written for the ear and not the eyes, so you can almost hear them being told. He would have reveled in their charm, their variety, and poignancy. And so did I. I thoroughly recommend this marvelous book."

-Geraldine Buckley, storyteller and author



The TSA Fortieth Anniversary Book Committee of Jaye McLaughlin, Hank Roubicek, Peggy Helmick-Richardson, and Chester Weems would like to make a special tribute to Parkhurst Brothers Publishers, for its part in development of Forty Years of Texas Storytelling. To them, this was more than a business project.

Ted Parkhurst has been a longtime supporter of the Tejas Storytelling Association. He has provided exhibits, moderated sessions, and given overall support for many years, and not just to Tejas, but storytelling across the nation. Ted and his wife, Linda, the lead graphic designer on this project, have gone an extra mile to see this book through to completion. We appreciate them.



Credits



With thanks to <u>Issuu</u> for the ability to offer this e-publication.

About the Font

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

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

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