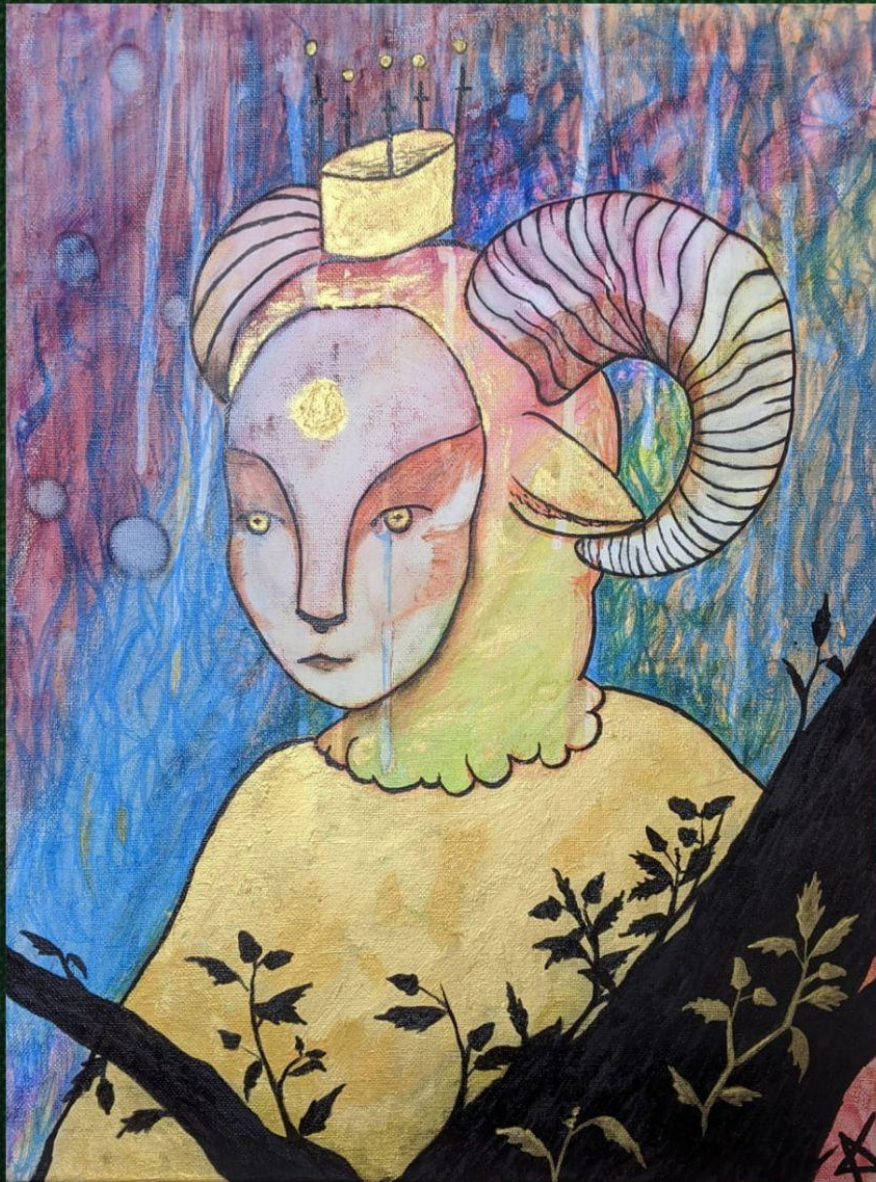


THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

QUIRKY QUANDARIES



Cover Art

Crius Chrysomallus, The Golden Ram
by Asia Starr. Multimedia



About the Cover Artist

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 Mentor Award](#). You can usually find her telling her stories to an audience of children ranging from preschool to high school. She hopes to bring that childlike wonder and magic to all that have a chance to stay awhile and listen.

mamastarrstorytelling.com/

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

The Story Beast 2025-26 Themes

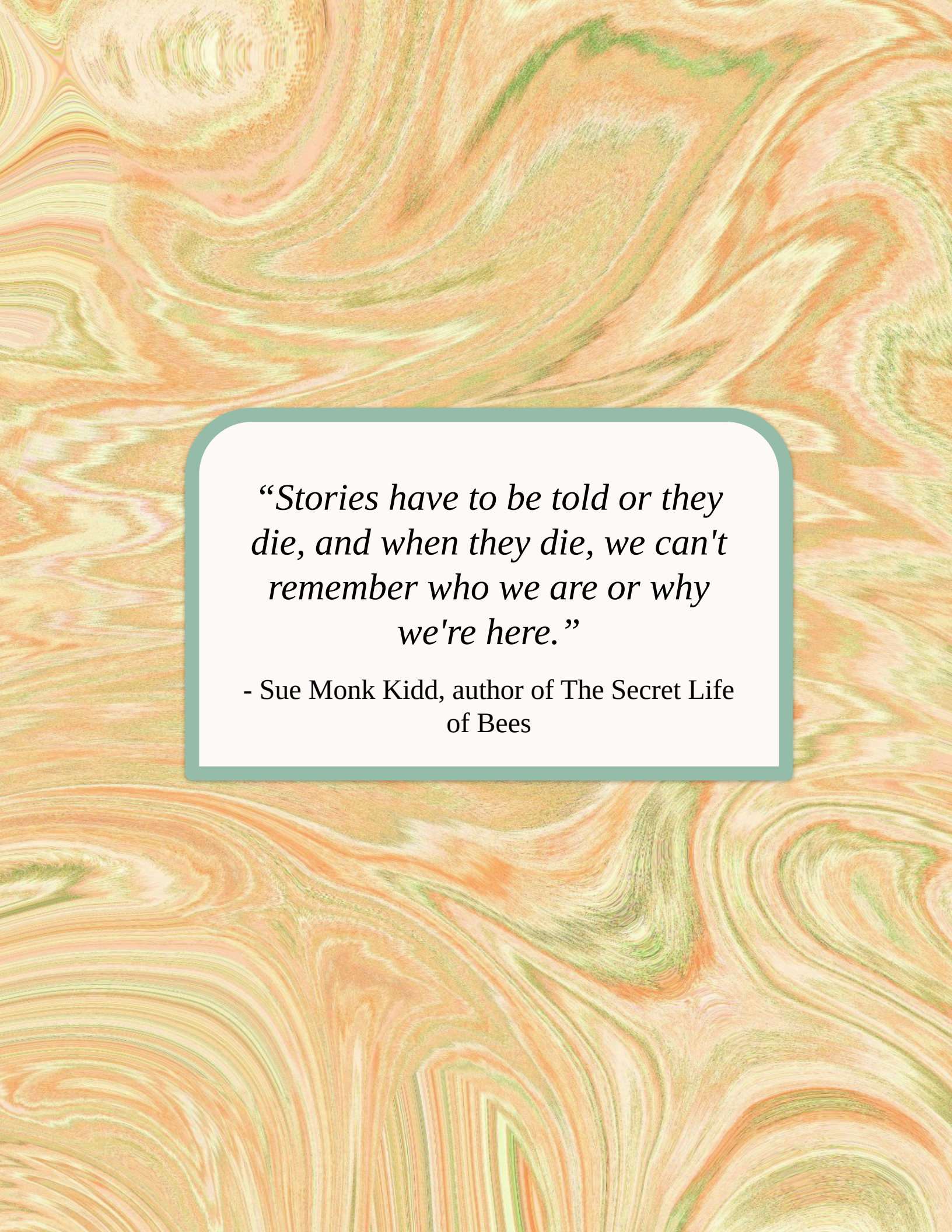
Winter - Frosted Glass - Due Nov 15

Spring - Boisterous Blooms - Due Feb 15

Summer - Cerulean Sighs - Due May 15

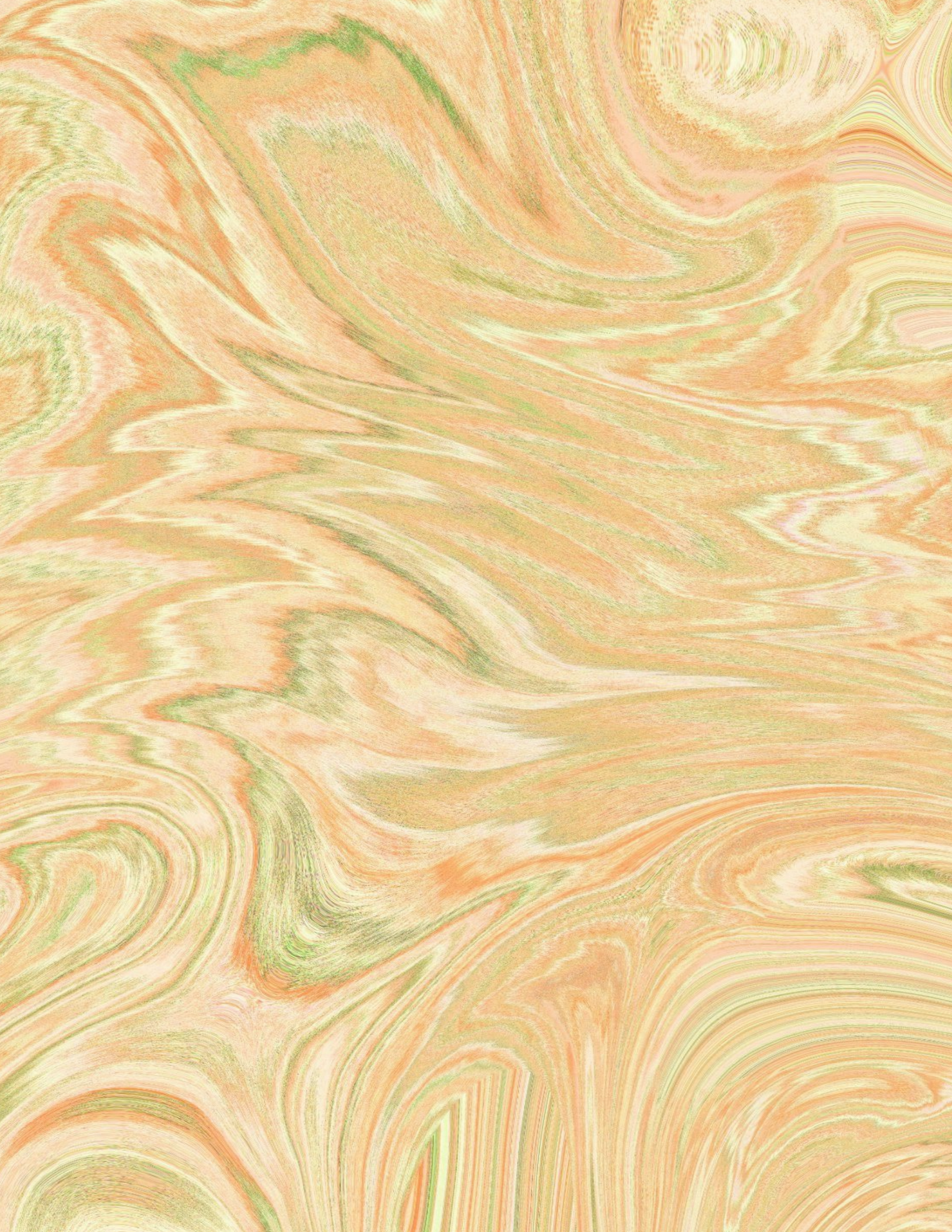
Fall - Cascading Colors - August 15





“Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here.”

- Sue Monk Kidd, author of *The Secret Life of Bees*

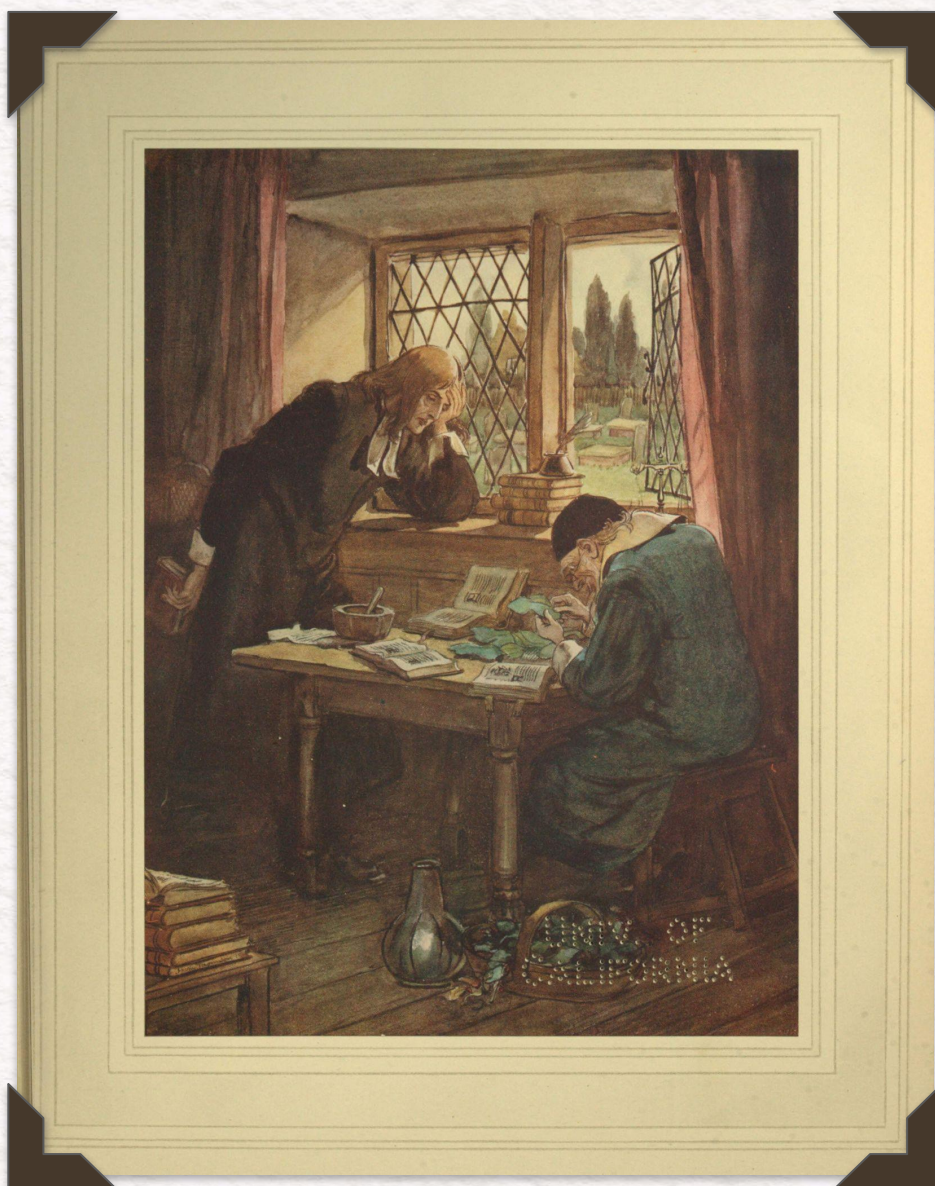


THE STORY BEAST

Quirky Quandaries

Vol. 4 ♦ Issue 3

Fall 2025



The Story Beast
Vol. 4 ♦ Issue 3 ♦ Quirky Quandaries
Fall 2025

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WELCOME

Autumn is here, but the twilight lingers, and it is still warm enough to take leisurely evening walks. Someone asked me recently why I became a storyteller. I wish that I had a snappy answer, but I had to think about this one. I turned it over in my mind during an evening stroll. It wasn't for the money, although I am still tickled that folks pay me to tell stories. It wasn't for the fame, as most folks look at me funny when I say that I am storyteller. Maybe it was a higher calling? I drank heavily and awaited divine inspiration, but nothing came to me, so that wasn't it. Then like a Cosmic Dope Slap, it hit me. Sort of like when in a Roadrunner cartoon, Coyote steps on a hoe, it smacks him in the forehead, and he sees stars. It dawned on me that it might have something to do with connecting with others.


I believe that in our modern, busy electronic-filled lives, we do not experience a lot of 100% present human presence and connection. If you get five minutes of your spouse's undivided attention a day, I feel that you may be blessed. (Some may not want that kind of attention, but that's another story.) We are often too preoccupied with what to say next, or contemplating what to have for dinner, or wondering if it is garbage day, to stop and be fully present with someone.

I believe that it is a true need and that we all hunger for true connection. When I tell a story, I am 100% present and am in the story with the audience. When I perform in schools, kids may not be able to name it, but they feel that difference and they want more of it. We may not even be aware that we are longing for connection in our own way. When we truly connect with someone, even for a moment, it is like a soothing balm to our hectic lives, and we want more of it. When I open up and connect with the audience, we both get to experience the other, and we are all nurtured. Connection is why I tell stories.

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

The deadline for contributions for the next issue of *The Story Beast* is November 15 for the Winter 2025 issue. The Winter issue's theme is *Frosted Glass*. Thanks for reading. Have a Spooktacular Fall!

**Respectfully,
The Spirits of the Beast
storybeasteditor@gmail.com**

A piece of light brown paper is centered on a light-colored wooden surface. The paper is surrounded by various autumn leaves in shades of red, orange, and yellow, along with green pine needles. The leaves are scattered around the paper, some overlapping it. The text on the paper is in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

Dearest Crone,

Is there a secret to thriving amid contradictions, curiosities, and chaos? Some days I feel like the world is a carnival of rubber chickens, squawking at unexpected moments. Other days, it's more like trying to balance gracefully on a wobbling three-legged stool—never quite steady, yet impossible to look away from. Do I try to make sense of it all, or lean into the offbeat rhythm and let the absurdities guide me?

Seeker of Peculiar Wisdom

Dear Seeker,

Ah, contradictions, curiosities, and chaos — the triumvirate that keeps our lives wobbling like that three-legged stool. Here's the truth: thriving in such times does not mean silencing the rubber chickens, nor does it mean gluing on a fourth leg to steady the seat. It means laughing with the chickens, wobbling with intention, and recognizing that sense often hides inside nonsense. The world will always tilt, clatter, and spin; your task is not to tame it but to twirl with it.

When contradictions pull you in opposite directions, treat them as dance partners, not rivals. When curiosities beckon, follow them as if you're chasing fireflies, even if they lead you into unexpected dark corners. And when chaos comes knocking — as it always does — open the door, offer it some toad-eye tea, and learn its favorite song. For the secret is not in choosing order over absurdity, but in discovering the wisdom tucked inside life's quirks.

If you need companions for this curious path, the following volumes may delight and steady you — even as they, too, wobble with charm:

Book Recommendations for This Quirky Path:

- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams — Chaos with a towel in hand and wit sharper than any blade.
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll — Contradictions dressed as riddles, with rabbits, queens, and tea parties that make nonsense the new normal.
- *Still Life with Woodpecker* by Tom Robbins — A playful exploration of love, anarchy, and redheads with dynamite hearts.
- *Get in Trouble* by Kelly Link — Short stories where the ordinary collides with the bizarre, revealing the marvelous in the messy.
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks — Real-life quirks of the mind, reminding us that humanity is stitched together with strangeness.

And remember, you can always explore nonfiction shelves for further inspiration:

- **001.9** for mysteries and curiosities,
- **130s** for parapsychology and odd beliefs,
- **390s** for folklore and cultural quirks.

So, dear one, wobble bravely. Squawk loudly. Thrive in the carnival — because the greatest wisdom is often tucked inside the oddest feathers.



**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:

Winter - December 2025 - Frosted Glass - Due November 15

Spring - March 2026 - Boisterous Blooms - Due February 15

Summer - June 2026 - Cerulean Sighs - Due May 15

Fall - September 2026 - Cascading Colors - Due August 15

For Submission Guidelines go to storybeast.org/submissions

Submit to storybeasteditor@gmail.com



-BOOK NOTES-

“So many books, so little shelf space!”

BOOK NOTES

An uncommon variety of books this time -- a young adult fantasy novel built around Norse mythology, two collections of tales about early inventors in industrial American history, and a how-to book on corporate storytelling. What do they have in common? I think that each, in its own way, offers inspiration for creative storytellers. Enjoy!

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.)

Book Notes in the December issue of Story Beast will take off in a new direction, presenting our colleagues' recommendations of the best books -- of any date -- about storytelling. I depend on your input for this! See my note elsewhere in this issue.

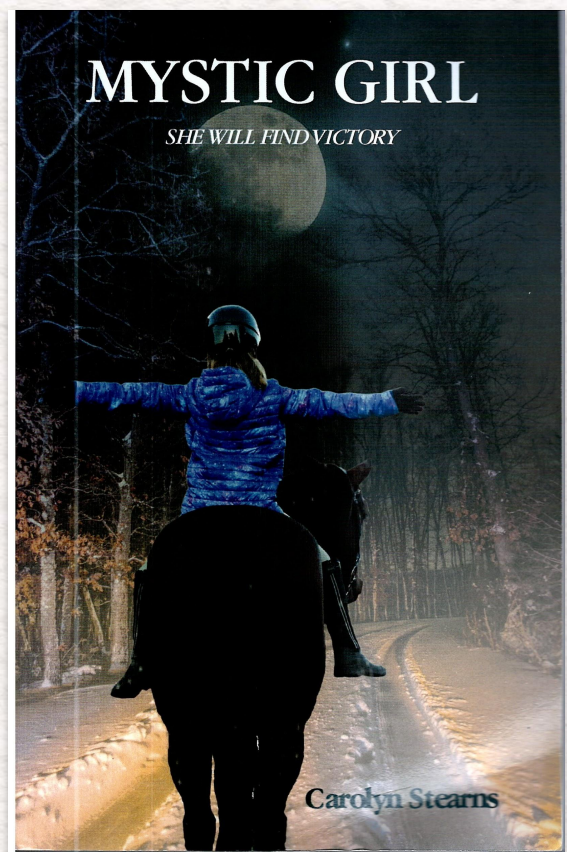
**Wishing you many glorious stories,
Jo**

***Carolyn Stearns, *Mystic Girl: She Will Find Victory*. Storrs, CT: Storybook Farm Press, 2022. \$15.00.**

Although I do not normally review works of fiction, I make an exception for *Mystic Girl*. Storytellers who write fiction may find Carolyn Stearns' young adult novel an interesting and suggestive model for their own work. And -- it's a fun read.

Mystic Girl introduces us to a young Connecticut girl, Gaea, whose refuge from her bullying peers drives her to hours of reading in the library. A battered old collection of Norse mythology serves as a magical portal to Asgard, where the ancient Norse gods, Odin, Loki, the Valkyries, and Thor and his devastating hammer Mjolnir convey the power Gaea needs in her own life. As Gaea moves back and forth between her Connecticut world and the era of Viking mythology, her own strength grows in gymnastics and in horse riding. Her heroic acts bring her admiration in Connecticut; her retelling of the Norse myths not only inspires her schoolmates to visit the library and read, but also reinvigorates Asgard by reviving attention to the ancient mythology.

Carolyn Stearns has brought together a riveting combination of ingredients in *Mystic Girl*: Ancient mythology, the social and personal challenges of contemporary young people, Morgan horses, the power of telling stories, and a compelling interweave of fantasy and the everyday.

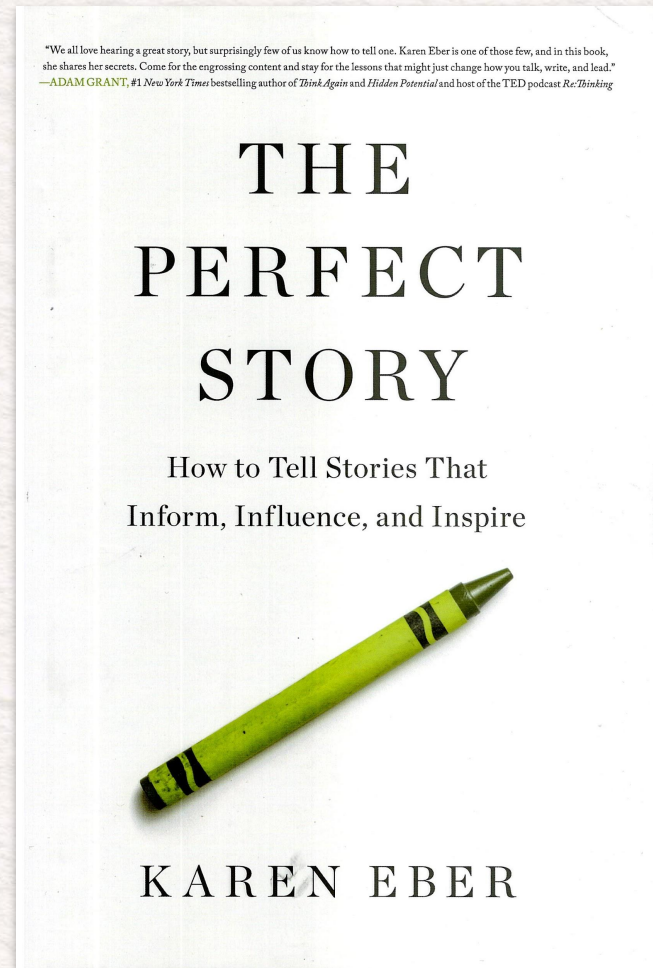


***Karen Eber, *The Perfect Story: How to Tell Stories That Inform, Influence, and Inspire*. Harper Horizon, 2023. \$28.99.**

"This book teaches where to find stories, how to tell stories, and how to perfect your stories so that you can build ideas, influence decisions, and inspire action." So Karen Eber launches her book, aimed primarily at business people looking to wield an extraordinarily effective tool. She is far from the first author to present storytelling as key to sales, persuasion, and leadership; Stephen Denning and Annette Simmons were among the pioneers of such training, and many have followed in their path. By now, as well, a considerable pile of scientific evidence has shown how stories affect brain chemistry and work as effective persuasive tools -- see Kendall Haven's wonderful summaries in *Story Proof* (2007) and *Story Smart* (2014). Although Eber does not cite Haven's work, she draws on many other writers who discuss scientific evidence for storytelling as an effective executive tool.

It is not easy for storytellers focused on artistic performance to see across the divide into other areas that claim storytelling as their practice. Eber's book is seeded with interview vignettes with "great storytellers," including "an executive producer at The Moth, a founding director of Sundance Institute, an advertising executive, a former Pixar creative director, a television correspondent, a CEO, a physician, an improv comedian, a museum director, a news journalist, the host of the TED Radio Hour Podcast, a neuroscientist, a video game writer, and a data analyst." Not one performance storyteller! A few professional tellers have indeed made the crossover to wider contexts, using their artistic experience to coach and train executives, scientists, and others (and, not incidentally, to augment their incomes). But by and large, artistic tellers have been content to maintain a sense of separation and even to deplore the widespread use of "storytelling" to describe other activities.

The Perfect Story is a popularly-written, practical manual, rich in checklists and anecdotes, proposing a systematic approach to developing purposeful storytelling skills. Eber's instructions about shaping a story, relating to various audiences, and engaging the senses will not surprise experienced readers of *Story Beast*. Nevertheless, I recommend this book to performance tellers who would like a better understanding of how their own skills can be relevant in wider contexts.



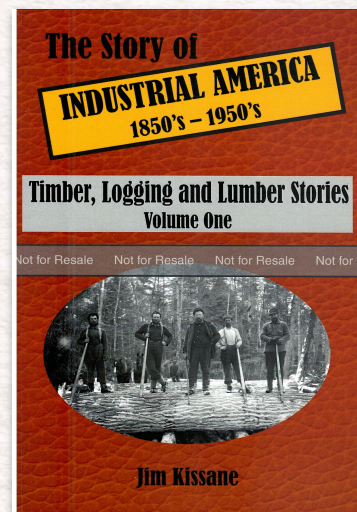
***Jim Kissane, *Timber, Logging, and Lumber Stories, Volume One*. Lutz, FL: Fruition Press, 2024. \$15.00.**

***-----, *Automobile Stories, Volume One*. Lutz, FL: Fruition Press, 2025. \$15.00.**

Jim Kissane has embarked on a book series, *The Story of Industrial America 1850's-1950's*, that explores the early years of industry in this country, taking us back to the era of westward expansion. The series already includes volumes on railroads, mining, and (in various places and aspects of American culture) the celebration of Christmas. Two new volumes are mentioned here.

The chapters in *Timber, Logging, and Lumber Stories* give a valuable overview of the development of the American timber industry, opening with "The Journey from Forest to Merchant," the imaginary life story of a Ponderosa Pine tree, harvested from the western Montana mountains, trimmed, dragged from the forest to the landing, floated downriver to the sawmill, processed, sold through Chicago, and finally providing flooring for a home in North Dakota. Subsequent stories narrate the development of different machines that progressively modernized the logging industry: Dolbeer's "steam donkey," Silas Overpack's Big Wheel that eased the movement of massive logs as the primary forests were cut, the Shay Locomotive adapted to transporting heavy loads of logs by rail in mountainous regions, the Wirkkala engine whose cables and pulleys enabled extraction of logs from otherwise inaccessible terrain, and many more.

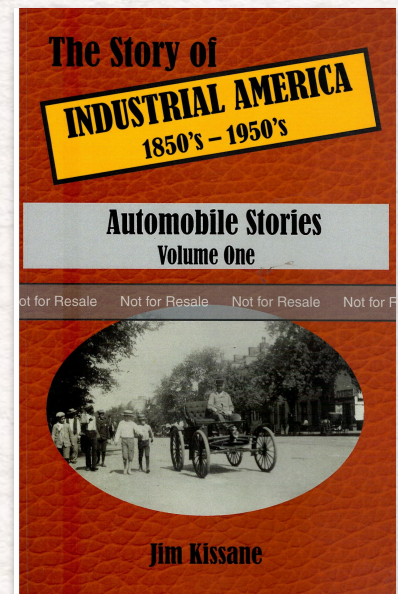
The book's stories constitute, as Kissane notes, "a testament to American ingenuity and the seemingly boundless bounty of the land." Although he mentions the emerging awareness of the need for conservation as the national forest cover shrank, there are no stories reflecting on the depletion or restoration of timber resources -- or on the cultural and ecological consequences of America's longtime harvesting of its forests. Those stories are hard to find within the century covered in *The Story of Industrial America*. Instead, these stories are celebrations of individual men whose perceptions and persistence have led them to invent machines to make timber harvesting more efficient. Ingenuity rules!



As in *Timber, Logging, and Lumber Stories*, Jim Kissane has unearthed for *Automobile Stories* a fascinating panoply of ingenious developments. We take so much for granted, in our era of mobile travel. But how did our automobile culture begin? Who produced the first horseless carriage? When did cars start without a crank that endangered drivers? What did drivers do before gas stations, and how did gas pumps come about? Whose ingenuity came up with drive-in movies? tow trucks? auto racing? All of these questions lead to interesting stories in this newest volume of the series. "I invite you on a journey -- a road trip through the most innovative period of automotive history," Kissane begins. And readers are off through a succession of stories of inspired, persistent, and ultimately successful inventors and adventurers.

Among the riches of these collections are the accessory pages at the back of each. In addition to the welcome historical photos and diagrams throughout the books, exhaustive final glossaries identify each technical and cultural term used in the book. Even more valuable are the Resources -- extensive lists of books, journal articles, and online sources relating to the topic of each individual chapter..

These will enable readers to create their own stories, in their own styles, about the inventions Kissane has called to our attention. Kissane's distinctive storytelling style emphasizes the personalities of the inventors and creates imaginative dialogue and situations to flesh out their lives and such significant moments as their first insights or their conversations with encouraging and supportive wives (On occasion stories are even told from non-human perspectives! -- a logging mule named Maude in 1870 Georgia, a carriage horse in pre-automotive Ohio, even "an early motor car" named Chester.) Readers who, for instance, might seek to narrate more detailed information about the actual mechanics of early inventions will find ample material in the Resources. Kissane has launched not only an interesting series, but also many inspirations for his storytelling colleagues. Thank you, Jim!



BOOK NOTES in December: OUR MOST VALUED CLASSICS

I'm planning a new kind of column for the next issue -- a round-up of notes about the classic books on storytelling that our readers recommend most highly. I want your input!

If an emerging storyteller were to ask you, "What books about the art form should be on my shelf?" -- what would you say? What are your go-to volumes, those with enduring value for storytellers? Let's make a community list!

Please send me (jradner@american.edu) the titles and authors of your favorite books about storytelling. For each title, write two or three sentences about what you like most about it. I'll publish your recommendations along with your name!

Thank you,
Jo



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

Being a Joyful Storyteller Entrepreneur

by Carol McCormick

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So, you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future." Steve Jobs

Working as a professional entrepreneurial storyteller for over forty years is a quirky way to make a living. It's taught me to embrace uncertainty, take risks, pivot from my planned path, embrace unforeseen opportunities, and try financially to keep my head above the water.

I chose this work because I love telling stories. I think storytelling at its most powerful is discovery learning. The storyteller doesn't tell someone what to do. Instead, you plant seeds in their imagination. Later they remember the story and it guides their behavior.

Running a solo storytelling business requires you to wear many hats: Artist, Researcher, Imagineer, Author, Marketer, Teacher, Social Media Specialist, Public Relations Advisor, Accountant, Travel Agent, and Business/Tax Advisor. There's the stress of it not being a monetary slam dunk career or providing a service that people think they need or should pay for. It's a 24/7 job with no health insurance or paid personal time off. You're always thinking about marketing and creating new stories and programs even while you're delivering booked gigs. On vacation you're expected to respond to clients and potential customers.

The quandary of this career is how do you remain joyful, excited, and healthy? How do you avoid Burnout -- exhaustion, cynicism, or inability to be productive?

Here are some signs you are experiencing or approaching creative burnout:

- Struggling to get started on even small tasks
- Frequent lack of energy and motivation
- Lack of daily joy
- Decision fatigue
- Feeling constantly overwhelmed by your workload
- Physical symptoms such as weight gain or loss, hair loss, elevated blood pressure, insomnia, back pain, headaches

There are things you can do that may help you overcome burnout.

When you feel there is too much to do:

- Let it go. Think about what you can delegate or take off your To Do List. Recognize that you cannot do everything all the time. There will be periods when your house is a disaster, and you have PB&Js for dinner. Maybe you can adjust deadlines? Be honest about your needs and limitations. Take time for self-care.

When you feel you lack autonomy and have no power over your life and decisions:

- Allow yourself more creative freedom over your time. Maybe make more space for passion projects? Take a break from your routine work and try something new. Give yourself freedom of location, work hours, and process. Take control of as much as you can.

When you feel lack of support:

- Explain to your loved ones why storytelling is important to you, and why it would mean a lot to have their support. If they seem amenable, ask them to babysit, help with housework and meals, or help with yardwork and shopping.
- Look for other storytellers who can become friends, confidantes, and champions of your work. Find or create a storytelling group to meet regularly to listen and give appreciations and suggestions about your work.

When you feel stressed-out by deadlines, rejections, internal self-criticism, or impostor syndrome:

- Take. A. Break. Stop and smell the roses. Count your blessings. Read past favorable reviews of your work. Go for an outdoor walk, preferably through a space with water or greenery, and practice mindfulness, focusing on your surroundings and all five senses. Take a leisurely bath. Curl up with a good book. Take a nap. Exercise. Dance. Meet up with or telephone a friend. Watch a movie. Go on a political social media diet. Disconnect from work at the end of your day. Take off to do something fun for a few hours or a whole day. Take some vacation time.
- Do deep breathing for two or three minutes. Inhale slowly and hold for four seconds. Exhale slowly and hold for four seconds.
- Relax your muscles. Clench then release muscle groups. Begin at your feet. Tighten all the muscles of your toes at once, hold for three seconds, then release. Proceed to your feet, your calves and so on all the way to your jaw and brow.

If I'd stayed in teaching or corporate training I could have made more money. I've no regrets. Those careers would never have brought me the joy and wisdom of storytelling.



While teaching in an impoverished school district, Carol McCormick discovered that storytelling helped students of all abilities learn. As a corporate trainer and interfaith minister, she uses storytelling to introduce change, instill values, build connections between people, inspire action, and keep listeners engaged. She shares a wide variety of storytelling programs and workshops. Carol is the author of *A BRIDGE FOR GRANDMA*, a picture book to help lessen the fear of death. www.carolmccormick.net

Open to being retold in the reteller's own words in educational or professional settings with attribution

Adopting and Adapting Aesop for Today's Audiences

By Joan Leotta

Do you perform some Aesop stories as part of your repertoire for children and/or adults? Or do you think they are outmoded, have become clichés, and adults will not want to listen to them?

I tell them often, especially when I am looking for a short tale with impact. In fact, many of these fables are stories I heard or read in grade school seventy years ago and they still resonate — not only in my mind, but also with listeners today for relevance and for story elegance. Making them interesting for my audience, bringing them up out of cliché is done with the adaptations —changing the setting, adding metaphors with modern resonance, and pushing on the humor with slapstick (especially for younger listeners) or a smirk or gesture for emphasis on the dry wit that infuses many of these fables.

Still, at their core they remain the same simple but striking tales I fell in love with starting in third and fourth grade. They go straight to the essence of the human heart and experience. They are short, easy for the audience to remember and because they are imbued with more understanding of us — with more understanding than even the best Jungians or Freudians could possibly muster, they resonate and likely will remain so.

It could be said that my love for these tales reputed to be told by a Greek man enslaved by Roman conquerors is a part of me because Aesop fables are “own” stories for me — my genes include people on both sides of Aesop’s era. My people come from the area of Italy known in his times as Magna Grecia — what we now know as Naples/Campania, Calabria, and Sicily. On the other side are my previously-made-Roman-through-conquest Abruzzese relatives. So, my history contains contributions of both the conquered and the conquerors. (And yes, I find that this is likely why both Greek and Roman myths entrance and enmesh me so fully. But that’s another tale.)

Adaptation and careful selection are how I use Aesop to delight modern audiences, both children and adult. My process is this:

Choose tales with a “message” that applies to the audience that will be before me.

Present the stories so that the audience can identify with them right away — this imbues the stories with a sense of immediacy. Sometimes this calls for a prologue to set scene and characters, and the addition of contemporary metaphors.

For example, when telling the story of sun and wind to elementary age, I usually set the scene with a reference to weather. Then I establish my characters — wind and sun, who they are and with the tag that in ancient times they could speak. Wind is jealous of sun because everyone seems to love sun, and no one seems to appreciate him. Wind is sure that if he can be shown as most powerful force in universe everyone will like him.

Contest proposal (getting a man seen below them to remove his coat).

Wind tries three times (act it out).

Wind thinks contest should be different because — how could he lose?

Sun says he needs to try.

Sun’s three tries — described as smiles by me, are given images relatable to my listeners, such as “It was a popsicle kind of day.”

At the end of the story, wind is upset when the man takes off his coat after sun's efforts, and the children nod in agreement when Sun declares, "Sometimes a smile is the most powerful force of all." This story puts forth kindness; shows the false message of bullying.

Remake the tale with human characters, or if a tale is about humans, set it in a local place but different historical period:

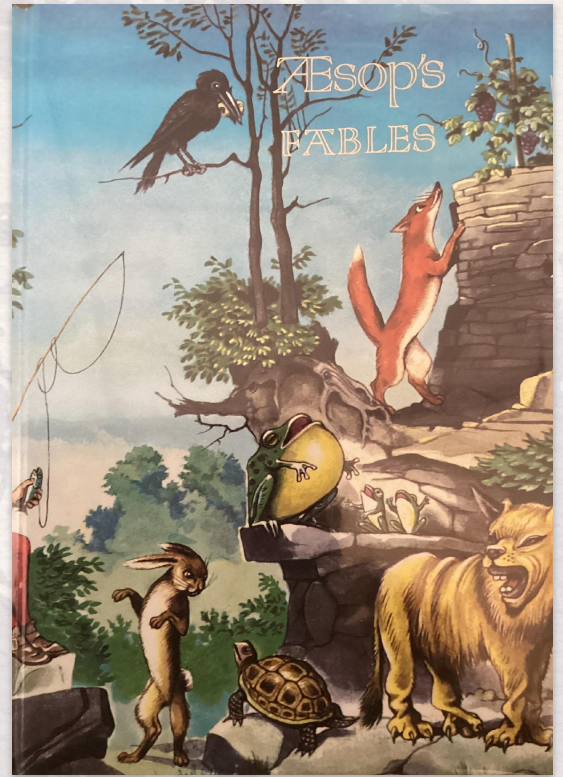
Examples: Fox and Grapes, or the man and his son and the donkey's load story.

When adapting these for the youngest, I add/use anthropomorphic histrionics — slapstick and allusions and images that will appeal. When telling to an adult audience that likely has heard these fables often, I change the setting, including telling the story as if I saw it happen, perhaps in a vineyard I visited or placing it in a "nearer" historic period, but in the audience's town, perhaps a time that still used horses, perhaps 19th century, will help the audience relate to the tale as "new" for at least a few minutes, and increase its impact.

I'm careful never to take credit and always attribute the tale to Aesop — with children, before the tales — with adults, after, so some shred of surprise remains.

Adapting the framework of a familiar tale to make it more relatable is a tactic that works well for any tale but is particularly well-suited to refreshing and adopting Aesop into your family of tales to tell.

Enjoy!



Aesop's Fables Online Collection:

<https://www.aesopfables.com/>

The Aesop for Children: A List of the Fables:

<https://read.gov/aesop/001.html>

Project Gutenberg: Aesop's Fables

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11339/11339-h/11339-h.htm>

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



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

SURVIVING MY ART

Quirky Quandary SOLVED!

We were deep into a storytelling tour of Sabah, reaching our northernmost town on the island of Borneo. Eunice and Tina, two delightful Kadazandusun librarians, were driving and hosting me. A long drive and running late for our 2 pm show. The library room was upstairs above a shop house. We raced up the stairs and flung open the door -- a room packed with kids and moms sitting on the floor. Hardly room for us to squeeze in. But they were waiting patiently.

And I really needed to use the loo. Where was the bathroom? Oh no! The bathroom door was right at the front of the audience. Well, I walked to the front of the room, smiled at the audience, and disappeared into the bathroom. Embarrassing, but we'd start the show in a minute.

Although when I went to open the door, the little metal rotating lock fell off in my hand. No way to get out! I scanned the ceiling and window for possible exits. Maybe I could get the door off its hinges.

"Eunice!" I called through the door. "Get me a screwdriver! The door lock broke."

A moment of panicked fuss outside the door. Then Eunice shouted, "Stand back! Stand back! Tina is a GREENBELT!"

"What...?" I jumped aside. Tina shook off her sandals and WHOAPPP!!! That door flew right open!

The audience gasped. I came out. We three smiled at the audience. And the stories began. Let me tell you those children sat up straight and paid attention!

---Margaret Read MacDonald

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



Margaret Read MacDonald has been a pillar of the storytelling community in the United States and around the world for more than forty years. Storyteller, librarian, folklorist, her storytelling reference books and handbooks, her folktale collections, and her folklore studies have nourished storytellers, and her own storytelling and published stories have spread the pleasures of telling into myriad libraries and households. Enjoy her website: <http://www.margaretreadmacdonald.com/index.cfm>.

An aerial photograph of a dense forest. The trees are in various stages of autumn, with some showing vibrant reds and oranges, while others remain green. The forest is spread across a hilly landscape, with some areas appearing more densely wooded than others. The sky is visible in the upper part of the image, showing soft, diffused light.

–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.”



Sun Day

by Bowen Lee

Sun Day was designated in 1978 as an environmental awareness day to advocate for solar power. It was decreed by Jimmy Carter, the nice-guy president, who tried, way back in the '70s, to model for Americans what we needed to do to keep our planet healthy. According to President Carter, we should drive no faster than 55 mph, turn our thermostats down to 60, eat home-cooked meals rather than fast food, and invest in forms of energy other than fossil fuels. The man lived to be 100. Surely a man who sustained himself for that long knows something about sustainability. His son says Carter wanted to live long enough to vote for Kamala Harris, and he did.

Sun Day in 2025 is an international event, celebrated on September 25, as a day to celebrate the power of clean energy. The sun does, after all, provide the energy for all life on earth. Without the sun, living things cannot exist. So, we should acknowledge the sun with a special day, as many cultures have throughout history, and we ought to harness the clean energy of solar and wind to show our gratitude.

The NSN Ecotellers and the Healing Stories Alliance will be joining Third Act!, an organization of elders dedicated to a more sustainable future. Yes, the Tree Huggers and the Kind Folks will be getting together with the Boomers to have a Sun Love-In. Woodstock lives! And what will they do? Or, because I'll be one of them, perhaps I should say, what will we do? We'll tell stories about the sun.

Now, if you are skeptical and wondering if this will have any real effect on the world and wondering about the ability of aging hippies in tie-dye, blowing soap bubbles to change the world for the better, you do not understand the power of story. Just as sunlight is the energy generator of our planet, stories are the driving force for our souls, shaping our behavior and causing us to act the way we do. For everything that you believe and do, there is a story that has shaped that belief or behavior. That's why all those people can stand up on the stage of The Moth and be acknowledged. It's the stories of our lives that inform us of where we came from, where we are, and what we will become. The more we realize that we are in charge of creating those stories, the more we understand our responsibilities to ourselves, others, and our planet.

So, come listen to stories about the sun. And if you would like to celebrate clean energy in another way, please do. I have a set of solar panels hooked to a generator that I use for my e-bike and even for my electric car. I use it during a power outage or on days of severe weather (hot or cold) when I help to prevent an outage in my neighborhood. Someday, I'd like to cover my roof with solar panels. But for now, I get a percentage of my electricity from solar farms around the state. Sun Day is an opportunity for you to discover how you can get clean energy, as well as all the other ways you can be a positive change for the health of the planet and our continued existence as a species. A species that tells stories.

To register for Sun Day Virtual Worldwide Storytelling:

<https://www.simpletix.com/e/sun-day-virtual-worldwide-storytelling-con-tickets-226248>

Here's a story video about the sun: Ten Suns, Old and New

<https://youtu.be/CJiWtrRT9i4?si=lUGF11PpY8s3KRYW>



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

To be told in educational and professional settings with attribution.

-TEACHER TALES & TENTACLES-



Persistence and the Power of Riddles

by Jen and Nat Whitman

Quirky Quandaries abound in the classroom! Every day is a new learning adventure filled with fresh challenges and unexpected twists and turns. We want our learners to develop adaptive mindsets that will help them meet the unknown. In the education community, we often use descriptors like grit, determination, and persistence to describe the skills we want students to use when they face challenges in daily life. Fortunately, we can harness a powerful tool from the oral tradition to develop persistence and encourage creativity: **THE RIDDLE!**

What is more useful when broken?

Do you know the answer?

What do you find yourself doing as you try to solve the riddle?

Is there one “correct” answer?

Riddles offer our students an opportunity for productive struggle. In this age of instant AI answers, one of the best things we can do for our students is to give them time to sit with a problem. Think time. Wait time. Whatever we call it, we all need time and space to reflect on life’s challenges. Riddles are a great tool to help us stretch these thinking muscles.

When we share riddles with students, we try to give them plenty of time to think through the possibilities. There are usually several blurters out there in every classroom – you know the ones! Riddles help these enthusiastic communicators practice giving their classmates time to think. We’ll often say, “If you have an answer in your head, give us a thumbs up or a wave! Great! If you have an answer, can you think of another answer that could also work? How many other answers might fit that riddle?”

If you are in a classroom with students all day, you could start the day with the riddle and close the day with a riddle wrap-up discussion. If you are with students for a short set of stories, you might open with a riddle and circle back to it at the end of the session. If we offer a riddle challenge in the morning, we’ll invite students to whisper their ideas to us throughout the day or write them down on slips of paper and tuck them in a special spot for us to talk about later. The conversation is always rich and varied!



About the Authors

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 teamed with Margaret Read MacDonald to write a “How-To” guide for 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 sharing stories of political cooperation across the 50 States with a series of social media shorts called “Purple Minutes” for the Purple Points Project. You can learn more about the Whitmans at www.whitmantellers.com.

To be told in educational and professional settings with attribution.

And now that YOU have had a little time to sit with a riddle and reflect, what do YOU think is **more useful when broken?**

The answer we were thinking of is EGG, but did you think of others?

Broken silence can be useful when we learn something important. And what about a glow stick? Not too useful until it is broken!

Here's one more riddle for fun.

I'm the beginning of the end...and the end of time and space? What am I?

(Read to the end for an answer!)

Folklore is rich with riddle tales that capture the imagination. When a riddle enters the narrative, it often elevates the stakes. Finding the correct answer is sometimes a matter of life or death! If you're looking for quick riddle tales to incorporate into your work with students, we love George Shannon's classic "Stories to Solve" series. Each collection contains folktales that are carefully shaped with a question at the end.

We also love challenging our students to write their own riddles. This is a great activity for any age and the results can be truly astonishing with older students. Writing riddles is a great way to build those metaphor muscles!

What are YOUR favorite riddle tales? Let us know!

We'll leave you with our retelling of an old favorite for this time of year.



The Little Red House

An American Folk Story

Retold by Jen and Nat Whitman

One fall afternoon, Little Girl was bored.

She had played with **all** her toys.

She had read **all** her books.

"What can I **DO?**" she asked Grandmother.

"You're **bored?**" said Grandmother.

"When you are bored, the best solution is a **RIDDLE!**

Here's one for you...

A little red house. No doors. No windows. A star inside.

You will find it somewhere on our farm.

And when you find it, we will celebrate by making a pie together!"

Little Girl loved a riddle challenge! She repeated the riddle...

"A little red house. No doors. No windows. A star inside."

What could it be? She walked down the path and soon she met Cat.

"Cat! Cat! Can you help me solve this riddle?"

A little red house. No doors. No windows. A star inside."

Cat shook his head.

"Meow-Meow-Meow and Fiddle-Dee-Dee!

An impossible riddle! How could that BE?"

"Nothing is impossible!" said Little Girl and she kept walking and thinking.

Soon she met Cow.
 “Cow! Cow! Can you help me solve this riddle?
A little red house. No doors. No windows. A star inside.”
 Cow shook her head.
 “*Moo-Moo-Moo and Fiddle-Dee-Dee!*
An impossible riddle! How could that BE?”
 “Nothing is impossible!” said Little Girl and she kept walking and thinking.
(Carry on for as many animals as you would like to include...)
 Little Girl had been walking and thinking a long time.
 She sat down under the shade of an apple tree to rest.
 The wind shook the branches, and an apple fell at Little Girl’s feet.
 She thought she heard the wind whisper–
 “*Whoosh-Whoosh-Whoosh and Fiddle-Dee-Dee!*
Nothing is impossible–what do you SEE?”
 Little Girl looked carefully at the apple.
 A tiny worm poked its head out.
 This apple was home to a worm!
 It was a little red house with no doors or windows!
 But what about the star inside?
 Little Girl picked up the apple and ran home to Grandmother.
 “Grandmother! Grandmother!
 Here is a little red house with no doors or windows!
 Do you think there is a star inside?”
 “Hmmm...I wonder...let’s see!”
 Grandmother took out her kitchen knife and carefully cut the apple in half.
What do you think they saw?
(If possible, take an apple and cut it in half to show your students!)
 “A STAR!” shouted Little Girl. “An APPLE is a little red house with no doors or windows and a
 star inside!”
 “YES!” cried Grandmother. “You solved the riddle! Great thinking! You thought and thought, and
 you didn’t give up. Nothing is impossible when you try and try and try... and now we’re ready to
 make that pie!”
 So Little Girl and Grandmother spent the rest of the afternoon baking the most delicious pie made
 of
A little red house. No doors. No windows. And a star inside.



Okay–now you’ve had plenty of wait time for that last riddle and we’re at the END of the article,
 so here’s an answer...

I’m the beginning of the end...and the end of time and space?

What am I? The letter “e”!

Can you think of other answers? What a Quirky Quandary!

Adaptation

by Marge Pellegrino

“In the time before the Creator gifted Snake its rattle, Snake had a difficult time. He was teased and pestered, sometimes even thrown around by some of the less-than-kind creatures.”

This Tohono O’odham creation story was the basis of a workshop with an expressive arts program designed for refugee youth who had lived through a traumatic dislocation before arriving in Tucson, AZ. Many of the youth were indigenous or had indigenous roots in their homelands of Guatemala and El Salvador. Both countries were experiencing civil strife. The youth and their families were welcomed here on the ancestral land of the Tohono O’odham.

One evening in early 2000, the group took part in a dramatic interactive performance of *Soft Child: How Rattlesnake Got Its Fangs*, retold by Joe Hayes. Because the youth were responsible for creating the sound of the snake's rattle (with either a practiced rapid knee slapping or cardboard-tube maracas), they had more reason to listen carefully for their cues to rattle, or to jump up into the air to demonstrate Skunk's and Rabbit's mistreatment.

After their performance, we brainstormed other elements of Snake's adaptation, which weren't limited to the gift of the rattle. The youth discussed color, shape, motion, fangs, scales, and poison as other features that made it possible for Snake to survive here in the desert. We collected these ideas on the board.

Now it was their turn to write a creation story. They needed to consider how their snake could overcome threats. What adaptations might they use?

Their stories were written firsthand or with the help of a volunteer secretary.

When each story was shared in the group, I was struck by how the tales the kids told mirrored who they had shown themselves to be in the group. In Flor's story, her snake called all the animals together and addressed them in a way that displayed her own outgoing personality. A shy middle-schooler, Juana, who would have pulled her head between her shoulders like a turtle if she could, created a story about a snake who found her power while alone in a cave.

That evening, it became evident to me that storytelling about something outside of one's self could be a way for youth, for us all, to gain insight and help us build confidence and develop our center in ways that storytelling invites.

The next week, the youth were asked to choose from pictures of other desert animals with their adaptations printed on the back of the photo. Each student shared their chosen creature and explained the ways they adapted. Skunk's coloring warned of its stink. Owl created nests in cavities of the tall saguaro cacti that were initially made by woodpeckers (which demonstrated inadvertent cooperation). The coloring of the Gila Monster warned away possible predators, and it had a poisonous bite for the foolish who didn't take notice. Jackrabbit had powerful hearing to warn of the approach of others, and strong legs to leap away from danger.

We brainstormed: What about you? What do you need to adapt to this new life? Again, their initial thoughts were gathered on the board. Their answers were illustrated using the medium of their choice: pencil, watercolor, collage, or a combination. The art could provide an entrance into the writing, or the writing could be the portal to the art.

The sharing gave the youth other ideas to consider for themselves. "Good education," was Walter's caption. His stick figure sported a big thought bubble over its head, with a group of people representing this weekly group, and words in the four languages that he knew or aspired to know better. Reyes said he could set his alarm clock so he wouldn't be late for school. We could hear the alarm, see the clock face in our mind's eye -- he had drilled an adaptation down to something tangible, an action he had agency over.

I worked with refugee youth and their families for 19 years in the Owl & Panther project. The name of the group came from a Cherokee creation story. Owl and Panther were given the gift to see in the dark because they had obeyed the Creator's request that all the creatures stay awake for seven days and nights. This was a reward we embraced. Owl & Panther youth wrote through their darkness.

Then, as now, I continue to be in awe of the power of storytelling. Fifteen years into my tenure, there was a year-long study by the University of Arizona's Bureau of Applied Anthropology that found that through this program, these youth developed tools and skills to help them adapt. The longer they stayed in the program, the more positive outcomes were recorded. The program also included community service, time in nature, and other expressive arts experiences, including art, music, dance, poetry, and puppetry. In my mind, the foundational factor of the youth's success that was woven into everything we did was storytelling!

To be told in educational and professional settings with attribution.



About the Author. Marge Pellegrino is a writer and teaching artist who has worked with diverse audiences for more than thirty-five years in rural and urban communities. Her writing has appeared in publications including *Anthropology Now*, and *Critical Multilingualism Studies*. Her children's book *Too Nice* is available in five languages. *Journey of Dreams*, her middle-grade novel, about a Guatemalan family who fled war, was a Smithsonian Notable and Southwest Best Book. And her co-written book with Kay Sather, *Neon Words: 10 Brilliant Ways to Light Up Your Writing* inspires students to empower themselves on the page. All proceeds from her co-written book *The Sculpture Speaks: A Refugee's Story of Survival* benefits the nonprofit Owl & Panther.



-STORY FEAST-

A bounty to share





STORY FEAST

by Karen Chace



Resources Provided By Karen Chace

Karen Chace is 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 ORACLE Service and Leadership Award.
storybug.net

The theme for this issue is Quirky Quandaries so I have gathered riddle tales to keep your audience guessing!

[The Blacksmith's Dilemma – Nigeria](#)

[A Bride for Khan Turali – Azerbaijan](#)

[Clever Manka – Czechoslovakia](#)

[The Clever Wife – China](#)

[The Devil and His Grandmother - German](#)

[The Enchanted Princess – Russia](#)

[King John and the Abbot of Canterbury - England](#)

[The Pumpkin in the Jar – Philippines](#)

[Rachel the Clever - Poland](#)

[The Riddle – Grimm](#)

[The Riddle – Romania](#)

[The Riddle of the Ox – Mongolia](#)

[The Three Dolls - Iran](#)

[Weighing the Elephant - China](#)



October 6 begins the celebration of the Chinese Moon Festival. You won't have to search the stars for folktales celebrating the beautiful moon!

[The Bamboo Cutter and the Moon Child - Japan](#)

[How the Moon Became Beautiful – China](#) – Found in The Gold Path Reader, 1912 available through Google books to download for free. It begins on page 274 in the text, but .at 295 in the slider.

[The Lady Who Lives on the Moon – China](#)

[Sun, Moon and Talia – Italy](#)

[Why the Sun and the Stars Receive Their Light from the Sun – Africa](#)

Since the Chinese Moon Festival is being celebrated, I thought it was fitting to offer some folktales from China as well.

[The Ancestor of Tea](#)

[The Blue Rose](#) – The tenth story in the book, The Art of the Storyteller, by Marie L. Shedlock, circa 1915.

[The Butterfly Lovers](#)

[The Clever Wife – China](#)

[The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl](#)

[The Dragon Princess](#)

[The Golden Beetle or Why Dog Hates Cat](#)

[Grandmother Tiger](#)

[How Three Heroes Came By Their Deaths Because of Two Peaches](#)

[The Ladle That Fell From the Moon](#)

[The Magic Brocade](#)

[The Story of Salt](#)

[The Nodding Tiger](#)

[The Old Woman and the Tiger](#)

[The Princess Kwan-Yin](#)

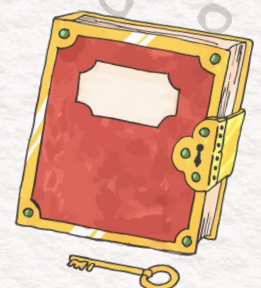
[The Queen Mother of the West](#)

[The Snake and Frog](#)

[The Story of Niu Land and Zhi Nu](#)

[The Talking Fish](#)

[The Two Jugglers](#)



October 26 is Howl at the Moon Day. Below you will find wolf tales to keep you howling!

[The Fox and the Wolf - Basque](#)

[The Hungry Wolf – Russia](#)

This link will take you to a pdf download of the story. Imbedded in the story is a way to fold an origami wolf while you are telling the tale.

[The Jackal and the Wolf – South Africa](#)

[The She-Wolf - Slavic](#)

[Twenty-six wolf tales from Aesop](#)

[The Wolf and the Man - Grimm](#)

And of course, Halloween is just around the corner as well so we must have some tales to fright and delight!

[Funny Ghost Stories](#) – Fourteen ghost tales to tickle your funny bone.

[The Hunters & the Haunted: Ghost Stories and Tales of the Supernatural](#) by Ernest Rhys, 1921. Ghost stories from literary sources, folklore, legends, and omens. You may download the book for free.

November 15 is National Drummer Day. Feel the beat with the tales below.

[The Drum – Hindu](#)

[The Drum That Sang – Bengal](#)

[How Beast and Serpents First Came into the World – West Africa](#)

You find this story on page 89 of this public domain book. Click on the name of the story in the table of contents to go directly to the story.

[The King and the Drum – India](#)

[The King's Magical Drum – Nigeria](#)

[The Pear Drum \(The New Mother\) – Traditional Tale](#)

[The Tortoise and the Magic Drum – Nigeria](#)

November 17 is Homemade Bread Day. I offer you some delicious stories to feast upon.

[As Bread Loves Salt - Greece](#)

[The Baker's Daughter - England](#)

[The Dream Bread](#) – Seven stories on the theme by D.L. Ashliman.

[Five Loaves - Romania](#)

[The Icon's Warm Bread – Greece](#)

[The Sweetest Bread – Greece](#)

[Legend of the Bread-Fruit Tree – Pacific Island](#)

[The Little Round Bun - Russia](#)

[Sivka-Burka – Russian](#)

[The Wonder-Working Lock – Croatia](#)



*A Teasing Riddle by
Augustus Leopold Egg
1816-1863*

The image is a vertical collage. The top half features a cityscape with several multi-story apartment buildings. On the left, a building has prominent orange balconies. In the center and right, other buildings in shades of beige and white are visible. Dark, silhouetted tree branches frame the top and right sides of this section. A semi-transparent teal band across the middle contains the title and a quote. The bottom half of the image shows a dense, green tree in the foreground, with a building and a tiled roof visible behind it. On the far right, a vertical strip of white fabric with a black floral and geometric pattern runs the full height of the image.

-JOURNEYS-

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

Who sees them?

Don't you ever wonder?”



COLUMBIA RIVER: Tillamook Bay

By Eric Johnson

I was wet, tired, hungry, and talking on the radio, as if I didn't have a care in the world. I was scared shitless, but couldn't let the rest of the world listening on the radio know it. My crew and I were soaking wet. We left Station Cape Disappointment, on the Washington or north side of the Columbia River and crossed the Columbia River Bar that morning on an ebb (falling) tide. A bar is where the ocean meets a river and traveling over it can be a nasty or a calm ride, depending on the sea conditions. This morning it wasn't bad with only the occasional ten-to-fifteen-foot breaking wave.

We were about ten to twenty miles south of the Cape, on the 30-fathom curve (180' of water) before we felt we were finally clear of the influence of the Columbia River. Tillamook Rock loomed in the distance. Twelve hours later, as we passed the entrance of the Nehalem River, I contacted the watch stander in the tower at Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay for a bar report. I was told that the other 44' Motor Life Boat (MLB) and the 36' MLB would meet me at the Alpha Buoy. The Alpha Buoy is the entrance marker of most harbors along the West Coast of the US. The white lights on the buoy flash the Morse code for "alpha" (a short and then a long pulse for the letter "a") indicating the beginning of the navigation channel. Entering a harbor, the red buoys should be on the right and the green buoy on the left.

It was getting dark. The stars were bright. The normal procedure was to call before attempting to cross the bar, especially at night. It is normal to plan your arrival to coincide with the stand between tides or at least during a flood (rising) tide. The stand is when the ebb (falling) or flood (rising) tide have reached their peak and the water is technically not moving.

This was my first voyage as coxswain, the leader of a small boat and crew. There are duties, which a coxswain is supposed to complete before and during a long trip. I had spaced them. There is supposed to be trust between the boat crew and the coxswain. I had sailed many times with this crew as a trainee. On this trip, I was the green horn. I was supposed to navigate, let someone else drive, and get us to the entrance of Tillamook Bay in the middle of an ebb tide. Unfortunately, I didn't check the charts, nor did I do the math.

The sun went down, and my ass was grass. The tower watch stander said that crossing the Tillamook bar was going to be rough. The waves could be from 5 to 30'. We had come south in our wet suits in preparation for what was to come. Although the trip down the coast from the Columbia River had been long, wet, and uneventful, all hell was about to break loose.

The day before, I awoke at 3 AM from a troubled sleep, dressed, got into a government vehicle, and made the three-hour drive from Tillamook Bay to the Coast Guard Station in Portland. My orders were to bring back the CG44409, a 44' MLB, which had been in the yards for the past four months.

We left the shipyards in Portland, OR, on an outgoing tide at 4 AM that morning without a radar, as the boat was needed in the rotation. The radar from another 44' MLB, which was yard bound could be used in the short term. To install the radar from this other boat, however, would have taken another day. I contacted the Officer of the Day, BM1 (Boatswain's Mate First Class) Whilhelm, a senior non-commissioned officer, and he asked, "Well, what do you think should be done?" This was part of my training. In hindsight, there were circumstances and information available, which could have and should have been considered to make a safe and workable decision.

I talked it over with the rest of my crew, Seaman Dan White, a bearded, salty, freckled-faced, red-headed, kind, old soul who always gave an honest opinion, and MK3 (Machinery Technician Petty Officer Third Class) Barney, who always took the information given and would calculate a decision based on probabilities. He was the boat engineer. He knew the mechanical capabilities of the boat and that it could "take a beating and keep on ticking." The issue was that I was in charge and the final decision was mine.

I should have known that I had missed a few things, when I heard BM1 Whilhelm on the radio getting underway, stating that he would be waiting for me at the entrance to Tillamook Bay. A vessel usually gets underway as an escort for a vessel in trouble or a difficult bar crossing. It is better to cross the bar in the daytime. If you had to cross at night, escorts are a must. Why would we need an escort?

Although this morning was the second time I had crossed the Columbia River Bar as a coxswain, it was the first time I had crossed it as the coxswain in charge. Four months ago, as part of my first underway as a small boat coxswain, I brought the boat to Portland from Tillamook Bay, up the thirty-fathom curve north to the Columbia River. The ride up to Portland was just that, a long ride. We crossed the Tillamook Bar at the beginning of an ebb tide. The waves hadn't become short and choppy yet. We were trying to beat the ebb tide on the Columbia River, and we were lucky. When we arrived at the Columbia River, the flood tide was starting. It was great and was like being in the middle of a bottle of water being filled lying on its side. The waves were long and rolling. As I was a new coxswain, the station commander made sure I was with an experienced crew. The crew knew I was a worrywart and failed (on purpose) to let me know that the aft compartment was leaking and had been leaking since before we arrived at the Columbia River. As we approached Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment, seaman White said, "Go look in the after compartment."



“Why?”

“Go look.”

A 44' MLB is made like that toy, which no matter how hard you punch it, it won't fall over. However, if the MLB is hit hard enough, it will roll over. A 44' MLB has nine watertight compartments, which keeps it buoyant. It also has the ability to roll over and re-right itself. When I looked into the rear compartment and saw a foot of water floating above the deck plates, I knew that there was at least four to five feet of water in the compartment.



All photos are from the US Coast Guard and are Public Domain.

The vessel was still floating, although listing from side to side with the waves. The sloshing weight of the water made the vessel harder to control and sluggish to respond as it wallowed in the seas. That was four months ago.

Now, I was sitting at the Tillamook Bay entrance buoy three miles out, talking to the tower watch stander about the wave series at the bar. The sun had gone down and the watch stander had shot off flares to see the breaking waves. From class, I remembered that a wave series had three to four waves. At the entrance buoy a series started and I counted the waves as they built under the vessel. The first wave of a series is usually the smallest and each wave thereafter gradually grows in height. There were four waves in this series. As I sat there on the 44' MLB, watching the waves roll in and break after passing under me, I was not watching the drift.

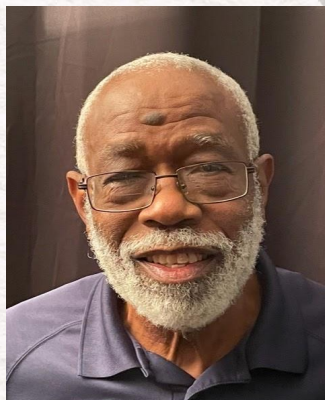
Along the Oregon coast during the spring there is a northern drift. Sitting at the entrance buoy watching the waves breaking toward the entrance to the Bay, I was not aware that we were drifting toward the beach on the north side of the jetty and that the waves I was watching were breaking on the jetty. I then heard the tower watch stander yelling over the radio, “You are on the wrong side of the jetty!”

Barney tapped me on the shoulder saying, “Straighten the ass end of this boat!”

We had drifted north of the entrance to the Bay and with huge waves pushing us onshore, I had to back us out into deeper water. Remembering my training from the National Motor Life Boat School (NMLBS) at Cape Disappointment Coxswain Training, I moved the throttles to maneuver the 44' MLB, looked behind me, and saw a bride's veil -- the foaming whitecap of a wave starting to break behind us. In school I was taught to back the stern toward the wave and just at the last minute to put the boat in neutral and let your momentum carry the vessel through the wave. If you hit it right, the wave will break just as you hit it, and the boat will absorb the impact. A six-foot wave has 30,000 pounds of pressure per square inch, and we were about to be hit by a fifteen-to-twenty-foot breaker. Because of the phosphorus in the water the Coxswain flat, the control center of the MLB, lit up as if we were in a spotlight. We took a couple of more waves, as we backed out into deeper water. We had our blue law enforcement light on as we were hit by the waves, so that the watch stander in the tower could see us. At last, he acknowledged that we were out of danger, in open water, and heading toward the Alpha buoy.

The night was clear. I remember that being out at sea on a small boat was one of the most relaxing feelings I have ever had, with the stars sparkling in the sky on a clear night. I called the station, and the chief stated that I had just told the whole west coast of America that we had been hit by a wave and survived. Now it was up to me to figure out what I needed to do to get in. Just then BM1 Wilhelm came on the radio and asked if I could see the blue light on his 44' MLB. I looked about and said that I could. He said that he was under the range markers and that meant he was in the middle of the Bay at the end of the buoy line. He said that if I could see him, I should run towards him. I waited for the next wave series and dropped down in front of it. Remembering what Chief Steed at the NMLB School taught us about keeping the boat in the middle of the wave, to keep your head on a swivel, watch for bridal veils, and keep the nose (bow) above water, we made it safely into Tillamook Bay and home.

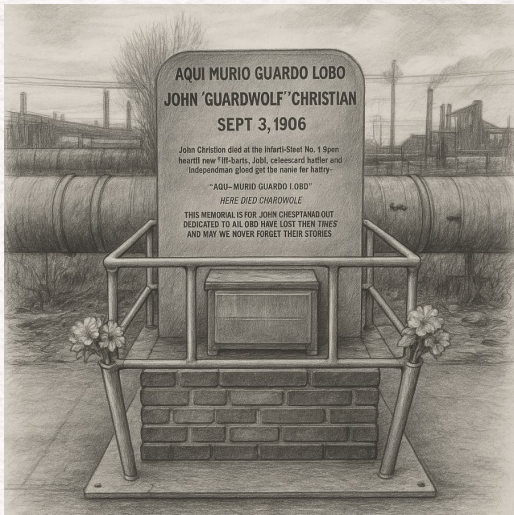
Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



About the Author- Born in 1948 at St. Maries Infirmary in St. Louis, MO, Eric grew up in East St. Louis, IL, and Compton CA in the 50s and 60s. He went on to become Surf man #122, during 25 years of service in the US Navy and US Coast Guard. Surfman is the highest qualification in the United States Coast Guard for small boat operations. They are a highly specialized and elite group with the United States Coast Guard who are trusted to operate lifeboats in the most challenging and treacherous rescue situations. He retired from the Coast Guard in 1991.

A Researcher's Pilgrimage: The Memory of Guardwolf

by Jim Kissane



The first November frost rimed the concrete and sent dirty leaves cartwheeling down Watling Street, East Chicago, Indiana. Thomas Reilly hunched his shoulders as he crossed the mill lot, the metallic wind already burning his lungs. Inland Steel's Indiana Harbor Works towered above, alive with a noise that was both threat and promise. His guide, Mr. Kowalski, a safety supervisor and union man, met him with a nod and a battered hard hat. But Thomas hardly noticed the weight of it as they wove through the plant. He'd come from Johns Hopkins to research the memory of labor for the university, but he was about to learn far more.

Kowalski slowed as they neared the open-hearth shop, a brooding cathedral of brick and steel. The air shimmered with heat distortion, though patches of ground outside their passage were slick with ice. Kowalski stopped, leaned close, and with a voice quiet as grave dirt, began:

"They say it happened on a day thick with heat and smoke, September 1906. The Number One Open Hearth was running hard, the floor baking underfoot, air shimmering as if the world itself would melt. Inside the bay, the ladle, a cauldron tall as a man and wider than a wagon, swirled with steel so hot it glowed nearly white, maybe three thousand degrees. When you get close, your mouth fills with metal and your breath comes short."

"There was a new kid, green, nervous, working the edge of the pour floor, where the only thing between him and death was a low steel rail and a line of hot slag. The noise deafened; dust and heat stung the eyes. That boy slipped—a quick, wide step into empty air. He windmilled, boots scraping along the stock rail, terror in his eyes. Every man in that mill saw it, but only one moved."

"John Christian, they called him Guardwolf, a union vet, known for teaching rookies and breaking up fights with the same bare hands. He dropped his tool, sprinted two strides, and lunged. There was a shout, maybe Christian's, maybe the boy's. He caught the kid's collar, yanked hard, whipping him back clear of the ladle's rim."

"But Christian's boots slid in the dust, and as the kid reeled backward, Christian tipped forward, right toward the roiling glare."

"You can't imagine it unless you've seen it: a man falling into molten steel. Bodies are mostly water. The instant he hit, steam exploded in a burst sharp as cannon fire. The heat was so fierce, so immediate, that it vaporized skin and blood, dissolved bone, filled the bay with a howling hiss and a stench no one ever forgot. The steel spat molten metal flying back, flecking the brickwork, burning anybody too close. Everything that was John Christian -- life, memory, voice -- was gone in a breath."

Kowalski's lips tightened.

"They had to carry the boy away, delirious. The men just stood, staring, their faces lit orange by the open fire. Nothing left but a raw ache in the gut and a story passed on across generations. They say for days after, men worked in silence, heads bowed every time they passed the ladle."

Thomas listened, breath fogging in the chill. He could see the scene — steel’s dull white fire, the blinding blast, the abrupt erasure. He understood now why every old-timer in the mill had the same distant look when telling the accident.

After a time, Kowalski led him across battered ground, out past the canal. Here, quietly proud, stood a simple memorial. Bricks mortared with precision, a shining slab of steel, and a bright yellow safety rail encircling it like a beacon. Around the base, carnations and mums—some new, others faded—lay as tokens of ongoing remembrance.

He paused to let Thomas take in the inscription.

AQUI MURIO GUARDO LOBO
JOHN "GUARDWOLF" CHRISTIAN
SEPT 3, 1906

John Christian fell into the ladle of Number 1 Open Hearth, and with no known family, his memorial languished as left behind. His fellow employees then provided a slab of concrete on site and inscribed:

“AQUI MURIO GUARDO LOBO”

"Here lies Guardwolf"

THIS MEMORIAL IS FOR JOHN CHRISTIAN BUT
MADE TO HONOR ALL WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES
AND MAY WE NEVER FORGET THEIR STORIES

Kowalski spoke again, reverence rolling through every syllable.

"John Christian died saving a young worker by falling into molten steel, an event so horrific that nothing remained of him. Though he had no family, his coworkers built this memorial on site, and have been maintaining it for generations as a continual act of remembrance and solidarity."

"Every man who works here knows his name. Every shift, we check the plaque, clean the steel, repaint the rail, set out flowers. Not because the company tells us. Because he was one of us. His story says this: You're never forgotten so long as someone cares to remember."

Back inside the mill breakroom, Thomas scribbled notes and watched men drift through, faces marked by heat and years. He realized that for all their pain, guilt, or pride, the heart of the mill beat in memories like this, a story retold with every hush passing that memorial.

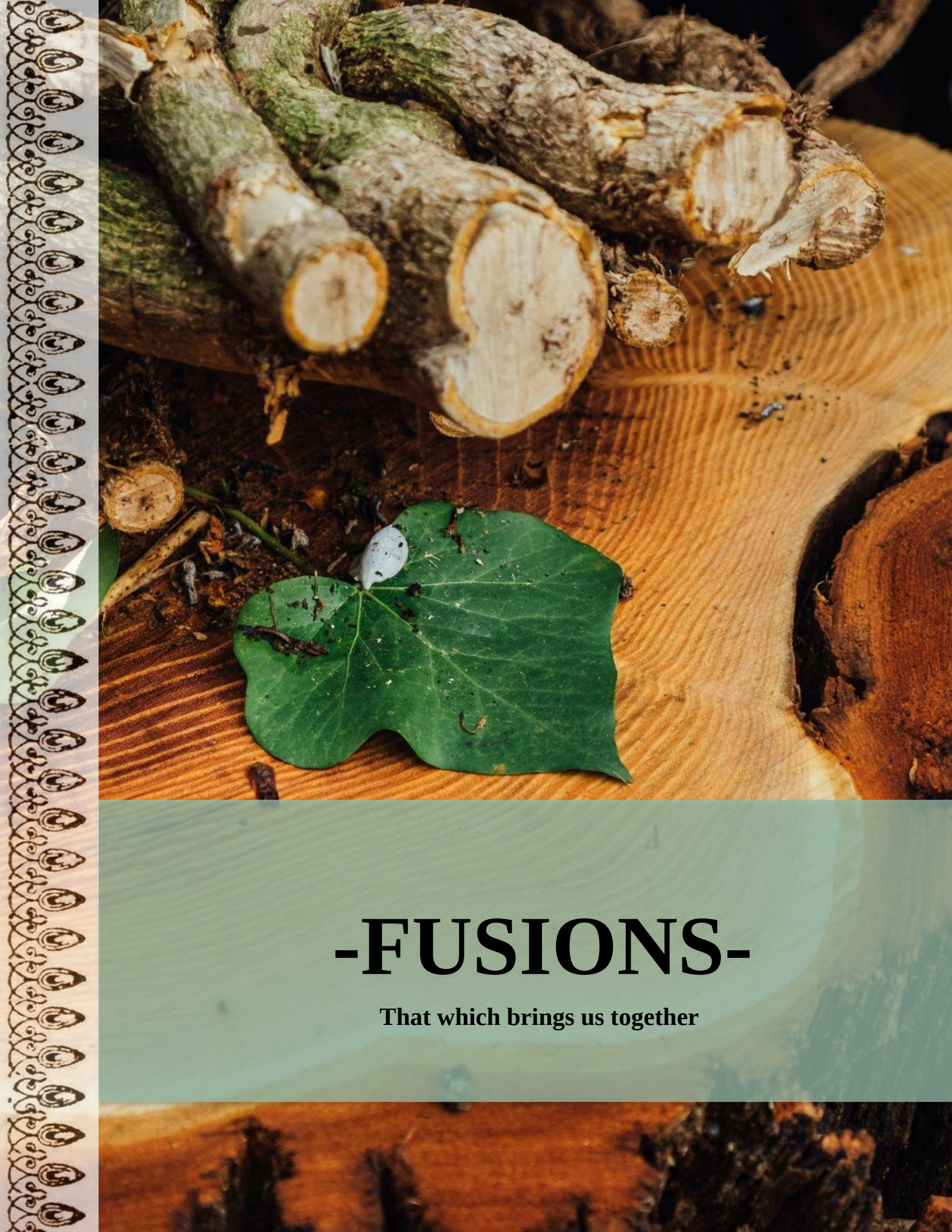
As dusk spread across the yard and Thomas headed out, he glanced back. The memorial glowed in the last golden light—a square of reflection in a hard, battered world. Here, sacrifice was not a legend but a still-living truth, a promise that no act of courage need ever vanish, as long as the story is told and the marker stands one more day.

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



-FUSIONS-

That which brings us together

Storytelling at the Hans Christian Andersen Statue

by Julia M. Morris

Each 'summer Saturday,' since 1956, New Yorkers of every age have gathered at 11AM at the Hans Christian Andersen statue at the Conservatory Water (also known as the 'miniature boat pond') in Central Park to hear stories! Children and adults alike are privy to the tales of Andersen as well as fairy and folk tales from around the world. From June to August, a variety of tellers take the stage next to Andersen's statue and his much-loved duckling. The series is presented by the non-profit organization, the Hans Chrisian Andersen Storytelling Center, with renowned Storyteller Laura Simms serving as Artistic Director.



He is always the same
This Danish story-teller:
Crouched and gangly,
Frozen as Medusa stone.
Stoically silent, but not always
Alone; for today it is a Saturday
And he invites us to climb
Upon his bony shoulders,
To lean against his side.
And read what he is reading there:
This book he clutches with gigantic hands,
Tales of lonely swans and icy lands.

As tellers, we join him in this literature.

And we know where to find him.
Living as he does
In Olmstead's grandest park,
Bordered by a pond filled
With miniature yachts, afloat;
A kind of royal moat.

Today, three of us are there;
Narrators in our shared oral trade.
We must sweat out our stories
On a stage without shade.

The tellers before me
Equipped with banjo and guitar;
Marvelous music,
They've earned their applause.



It's my turn now.
But instead of moving,
I freeze. I pause.
The children and their grownups
Lined in their steely chairs;
They're expecting something.
It's clear from their communal stares.

Yet, I am outside on the outside,
In this grassy court
Room of judgement
Where the audience wants more
And more...it's what

(The very best of folklore.)

That inner voice that is always quiet
Until it is not
Begins to shout:
'Quit, run away, you don't belong!
'Your tales are too long; you cannot begin with that
song...!'
And as I back away,
It is then that I see
What my logical self would never believe...
Did Hans Christian Andersen just wink at me?

"Young lady," he ventures with a whisper,
"You're more than welcome to share this perch.
You've carved, you've timed, you've ceaselessly
rehearsed."
"Beginning," he adds, "is half of the matter:
Then roar like a tiger, let your words scatter!"

For this statue knows
How storytelling goes.
Has he not just told me so?
By his pond, near his boats,
He will forever be
Forever still
The kindest and wisest of hosts.



Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work

STORYTELLING AT THE STATUE:

An Interview with Artistic Director Laura Simms

by Julia M. Morris



As I sit in our agreed-upon East Village café for our afternoon meetup, I am nervous. I am about to interview the award-winning storyteller, author, and educator Laura Simms. Along with her work as a Senior Research Fellow at places like the International Peace Institute at Rutgers University, and Haiti, Katrina, and India after disasters, she is the artistic director for the Hans Christian Andersen Storytelling Center. It is this work, creating summer storytelling at the famous Hans Christian Andersen statue, that brings me here. I have my notebook of questions. But my second cup of coffee is only making me more anxious

As soon as I see her, my anxieties disappear. Laura is smiling and laughing, and soon I am doing the same. I know her, after all; we are friends and colleagues. I take a deep breath and our conversation begins.

JMM: Laura, thank you for agreeing to this interview AND for inviting me to tell stories at the statue this summer!

LS: It is my absolute delight.

JMM: How would you describe the storytelling sessions that happen each “summer Saturday” at the statue?

LS: Storytelling at the Hans Christian Andersen statue is unique. We offer audiences of all ages, including the passersby who stop and listen, a riveting experience of “live storytelling.” It is “live” in the sense that we facilitate direct, active engagement between the teller and audience. The event is reciprocal and on the spot. It is rife with a deep “feeling of being together,” and resonant with deep listening.

JMM: All of this can be difficult when the performances are outside, yes?

LS: Certainly. But this past summer, we did it!

JMM: How so? Can you say more?

LS: I invite two tellers for each session; people who I feel can be truly present, available, and dynamic outdoors. This summer I paid attention to what worked and didn't work. How, with certain storytelling, the audience became increasingly entranced by what they were experiencing. People said, "This is the best thing I have done in the park for years." Adults reported being actively and playfully part of it. Children, accustomed to visual entertainment, sat enraptured. I noticed that the more skillful and somewhat porous the teller, willing to be with the audience and the story, and less involved with themselves, the more the listeners were radiantly and joyfully present. Families and others did not wander off. They stayed! It was a magnificent occurrence in our world.

We hired a publicist to let people know we were back. And we rehired a wonderful tech person, purchased state of the art mics and speakers! By the end of the season we were featured in the NY Times and we were getting large audiences. The more alive the storyteller, and present for others, the more people were irresistibly magnetized to the event.

JMM: I know that you are the main emcee for the series. Do you get the chance tell an Andersen tale each week?

LS: It depends on time and what occurs. Storytellers are excited by the atmosphere of this event and they keep going. The emphasis is not on performance, but connection. It is electric. I did have a great time retelling a version of Andersen's "The Flying Trunk," "The Nightingale," which is so appropriate for these times, and a version of "The Ugly Duckling" for the last session. I have been telling stories for more than 50 years and I still feel excited when I am at the statue. I am always a beginner. That is part of the secret.

JMM: When did you first begin telling stories at the statue?

LS: April 1967. It was an "accidental telling."

JMM: What do you mean by an "accidental telling?"

LS: With no clear career plan in sight, having dropped out of graduate school "to find myself," and giving up my job as a roller-skating waitress to be in an experimental theater company, I found myself working with the children of actors on the Upper East Side. I did various forms of improvisational theatre with them, that they loved. I have never been able to memorize. So, mainly, I would tell them a fairytale and they would act out fragments of the story. The children, with the urging of their parents, wanted to perform. I walked around Central Park and came upon the statue of Andersen with the small duckling sculpture by his side. I thought the proscenium stage at the statue would be perfect for this type of thing, and the Parks Department agreed. The problem was that the show required an "intermission" of sorts. So, not having a monologue, I just stood up and told a Russian fairytale, "Alenushka and Ivanushka."

JMM: Was this the first time you performed a story in public?

LS: Yes! I discovered as I was telling the story that all we had searched for in experimental theater — the finding no form immediacy — occurred between myself and listeners. I was totally intrigued. And as it happened, the Danish Baroness, Alma Dahlerlap (who lived locally and had famously raised funds, in 1956, to erect the statue in honor of her co-patriot), was walking by. She stopped to listen to my story and stayed for the rest of the performances as well. Afterwards, she said to me, "You, my dear, are a storyteller." She invited me to tell stories at the statue for the entire month of June!

JMM: Amazing! I think I know your favorite story to tell at the statue?

LS: I love the Andersen story of "The Nightingale." And many others. However, now I am in love with this tale.

JMM: I knew it! And I've heard you tell it.

LS: The reason I love “The Nightingale” is the “death story” within it. Aligning ourselves with the mechanical rather than the natural brings on disease and discontentment. The story is so much about what is happening in our world today. The images are symbolic of our disconnection from the wild, the natural and spontaneous. I started going to the American Museum of Natural History’s library behind the library and delving into myth and ritual. I immersed myself in reading Ethnographic journals, and meeting the wonderful people. We can never forget that it is the real bird — not the artificial one — who saves the Emperor, and therefore all of us, in the end.



JMM: This story has always been one of my favorites as well — and I think your insights are right on. Laura, as we reach the end of our time together, what are some ideas or goals you have for the storytelling series going forward?

LS: Well, because of our increased publicity this year, we have received much more attention from the Danish Cultural Council. Happily, they came to our last session -- the annual birthday celebration for the duckling statue. My hope is that the Danish council might help us with fundraising efforts so that, among other things, we might hire a grant writer as well as build a partnership between us and the Hans Christian Andersen Museum in Odense, Denmark, where Andersen was born. There are so many other possibilities bubbling in my brain as well. I need to save these ideas for a future meetup when I might know if they will be possible. But definitely we want to have storytelling for three months again.

JMM: Please! Let’s definitely plan to do an “Interview Part 2!” But before I let you walk out the door, might you tell me, if you can, why storytelling at the statue is more important now than ever before?

(Laura leans forward at this point, and her eyes widen. She speaks slowly and intently, obviously passionate about what she needs to share.)

LS: In the middle of the most diverse city in the world — in Central Park — we have LIVE storytelling. So many people come to hear these tales. Our nook in the park becomes a village. It is the way storytelling used to be. Often, I meet parents and grandparents who say, “You know, I remember being taken here as a child to hear stories at the statue, and now I’m taking my own children here.” Even teenagers stop in their tracks on their way to somewhere else. They will take off their head phones and LISTEN! Immigrant parents who grew up learning through stories join us. They are seated next to business people and the wealthy of the city. Storytelling creates a non-hierarchical field of listening. All are invited. Storytelling is a secret weapon of peace making, uncovering inherent creativity and compassion, and is a way of sharing that can not be replicated by less immediate and direct means.

JMM: Beautiful, Laura. Thank you so much for speaking with me.

LS: And thank you for this interview, and for telling stories so beautifully this summer.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work

Green Lightning and Bone Guitars: An Excerpt from Root Song

By Jay Leeming

Clearly, I should have found a better way. Clearly, I should have gotten a ride, should have paid for Über, should have asked my wife to change her work schedule so that I could use our car. Because though the theater was only a mile away from our house it was a January night, and temperatures were well below freezing. Nevertheless, I decided to walk. Some romantic notion, maybe, of striding into the theater alone with guitar in hand, with a drum over my shoulder and my head filled with epics.

So I set out, walking to the end of my street and past the corporate pharmacy, then across the four-lane highway, past the Super 8 motel and the brightly-lit parking lot of the mega-supermarket; then past the bar for Veterans of Foreign Wars, across the railroad tracks, past the numbered self-storage units kitty-corner from the homeless encampment in the tangle of brush known locally as “the Jungle,” then past the scrap metal dealership, the section eight housing development and across a rutted parking lot to the theater.

Rough territory, you might say, and it’s true that if you were to walk for a mile in the opposite direction, you’d find a landscape more pleasing to the eyes -- a steep hill, larger and more expensive houses, and eventually a trail leading deep into a beautiful forest. But the theater is not in the forest among the trees but in the town crowded with buildings. So that’s where I go, walking a route I’ve walked for years though it’s taken me as many years to truly see it, to regard its noise and hurry not as an annoyance or an imposition, not as something peripheral to the stories but a part of them, even an extension of the stories if you followed them into the world, gave them a place and a voice.

Call it a Rorschach of our present American moment, call it a divination as when cowrie shells are tossed to the ground to be read by a diviner. Though in this case that reading requires no special knowledge but simply the presence of mind to look and to see, to take in the pharmacy that is a place of healing, the supermarket where the desires of the well-off find their satisfactions in sushi and beer and organic ice cream, the homeless encampment for those who have nothing; to look clearly at the bar where soldiers tell their stories with words or with silence, at the shadowy scrapyards across the street from the metal orange storage units rented by those who have too many possessions; to take in, finally, the rutted, frozen dirt of the parking lot like the honest talk of the ground itself.

A mythic territory, wild with energies crossing and flourishing up and lying in wait, an ecosystem of desires followed to their end in grease and sleep, rusty railroad spikes and the hubcap lying on its side in the exhaust-tortured grass. A good, hard, thirsty realm for story.



But on this occasion, it was all plunged in the freezing cold of absolute winter, the scouring wind going to work on me so that when I arrived at the theater it was already becoming difficult to feel my hands and feet. My way in was through the padlocked door at the back of the building, but when I got there, I found the lock frozen solid, shellacked in ice. For a grim minute or two I wrestled with it—my head filled with visions of warming my hands over the hot bar at the mega-supermarket, of calling my wife at her work to come rescue me, of a disappointed audience arriving to a locked box of a theater — before I remembered the hot tea in my backpack. With trembling hands, I poured it over the lock, the wet metal spun, and the door opened. In the warm darkness of the theater I panted like an exhausted swimmer, onshore at last.

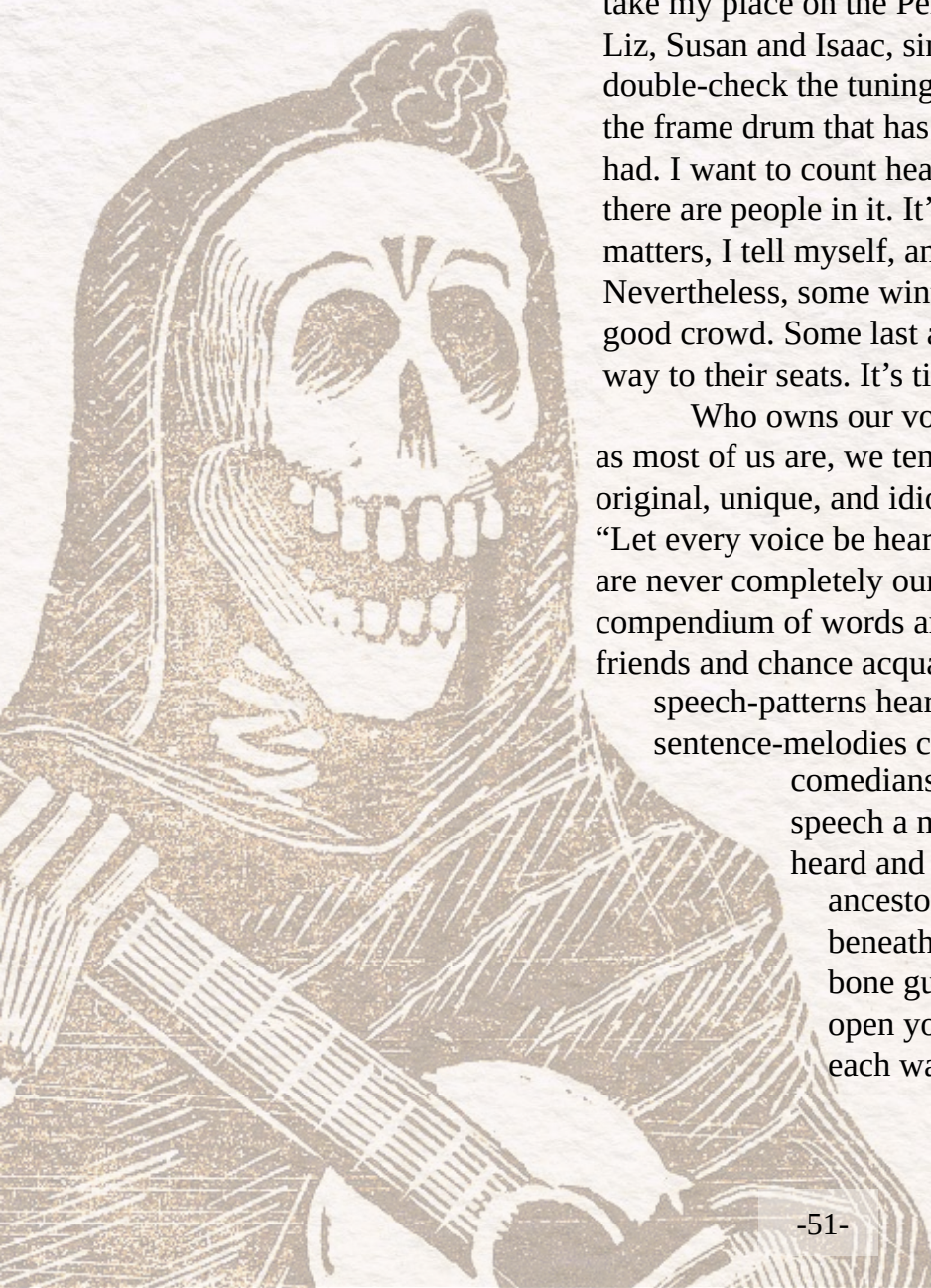
Have I had adventures as a storyteller, have I had fabulous journeys? I'd love to tell you of encounters with wise elders in distant jungles, of shamans who whispered to me secrets as old as the world, of the epic I pieced together from a shattered tablet dug up in the Moroccan desert. But instead, I have ludicrous yet vital adventures such as this -- tales of biting cold, and a frozen lock, and my walk across an urban cityscape, circa early 21st century. It's where I am; it's the landscape I chose, and that chose me.

And after all that it's a kind of paradise to walk onstage an hour later in that darkened theater to find it full of people, to take my place on the Persian rug between my friends Noah and Liz, Susan and Isaac, singers and accomplices in story. I double-check the tuning of the guitars, adjust the placement of the frame drum that has become a story-brother I didn't know I had. I want to count heads but there's no time; it's a theater and there are people in it. It's the depth of the gift you offer that matters, I tell myself, and not the size of the audience. Nevertheless, some wintertime craving for stories has brought a good crowd. Some last arrivals slip in the door, then find their way to their seats. It's time.

Who owns our voices? Members of the cult of originality as most of us are, we tend to think of voice as one of the most original, unique, and idiosyncratic qualities a person can have. "Let every voice be heard!" we cry, yet our ways of speaking are never completely our own. For anyone's voice is a compendium of words and phrases spoken by family and friends and chance acquaintances, of

speech-patterns heard in bus stops and classrooms, of sentence-melodies come from the mouths of comedians, rappers, singers and actors; our speech a multi-voiced creation of all we've ever heard and read with the

ancestors gathered around a fire somewhere beneath it all cradling green lightning in their bone guitars. To tell a story is, perhaps, to open your own voice to all those others, as each wave speaks for the whole sea.



I rattle a rice-filled shaker to bring silence to the room and then thank all the wide world and the audience and the story too. I invite the audience to thank the story as well, to offer their breath to its river of images, to those who have carried it in the past, to the land in which it was born. Then I tell a folktale, as introduction, the kind of story in which wisdom hides in plain sight beneath shenanigans and laughter. As I speak, Susan makes her way to the back of the theater and then up the stairs, finding the crucial light switches in the half-dark. When the folktale ends and the applause settles into silence she dims the lights down slowly, past normal stage-lighting and twilight into complete darkness.

I'd warned the audience about this, but still a nervous hush fills the room. Then Susan returns, navigating the crowded room by smartphone-light before finding her seat and dousing her phone.

We're in the sheer dark now, not even a candle. Truth be told I even blacked out the fire exit signs. An anxious cough, a few whispers. I can feel the listening in the room and how my own listening joins it, the journey already begun, all of us with our wings outstretched like birds in flight. I pick up my frame drum and start the rhythm with my fingers, its snap and wallop echoing off the back wall so that the building too becomes part of the rhythm, joists and drywall and the garbage can at the back of the room, all a part of the story now. It's all one heart, one ear, one breath.

When the words come, they are not mine, but wings borrowed from a bird I will never see, a landscape I get to inhabit briefly, a place older than my birth that will endure beyond my death.

I've been in this story before, I remember the snow at the start of it, the lodge filled with all the humans in the world, the wind of the storm roaring outside. And out of that wind another sound comes, a stomping and a snuffling sound, the pawing noise of two large but certain animals arriving to carry us away.

The theater hums and listens back. Perhaps those animals are approaching us too, walking their spirit-paths over the highway, past the jagged metals of the scrapyard, across the frozen dirt of the parking lot. Suddenly they're close, suddenly they're right outside.

I speak and we all drop down to the bottom of the sea.

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell this work



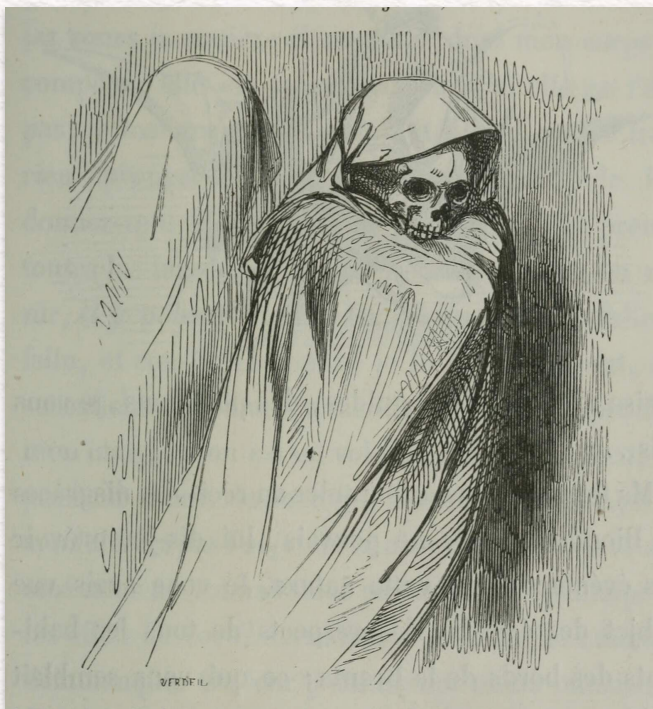
About the Author- Jay Leeming is a performance storyteller adept at bringing myths and stories alive through the power of the spoken word. His recordings of a wide variety of world stories as well as the *Odyssey*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Iliad* can be heard through his Crane Bag Podcast and at www.JayLeeming.com.



-THE HALL *of the* BARD-

LOOK AT MY TEETH!

A folktale from Cuba by Margaret Read MacDonald
From *Three Minute Tales* by Margaret Read MacDonald (August House, 2002)



There was a man who always told tall tales.
No one believed a thing he said.
“You should have seen the fish I caught!
It was THIS long!
It had GREEN fins!
With GOLDEN gills!”

“Sure. Sure.” People just ignored whatever he said.

One night this fellow was riding home alone late in the evening.
It happened to be a stormy night.
Lightning was crashing in the trees.
Thunder was rolling across the skies.

Suddenly his horse reared!

“What?”

There on the ground by the side of the road was a grey bundle.

The man got down from his horse and examined it.
It was a very tiny baby!

“Someone has abandoned a child so far from home?”

“Well, I will have to take it back to the village.”

He climbed back onto his horse and used his belt to strap the baby to his back.
Off he rode.

After a while he felt something tapping him on the shoulder.

“Tata! Tata! Look at my teeth!
Tata! Tata! Look at my teeth!”

He turned around.



“AAAAHHHH!” the baby opened its mouth wide.
There was a whole mouth full of child’s teeth.

“This baby must be much older than I realized.
It must be a small child I have picked up.”

The man kept on riding through the storm.

After a while he felt something poking him in the shoulder again.

“Tata! Tata! Look at my teeth!
Tata! Tata! Look at my teeth!”

The man turned.

“AAAHHHH!!” The baby opened its huge mouth!
Now it had teeth as large as those of a full-grown adult!

“What?”
The man spurred his horse faster.
“Something is not right with this child.”

And once more....

“Tata! Tata! Look at my teeth!
Tata! Tata! Look at my teeth!”

Dreading what he might see, the horseman turned.

The baby had teeth as big as a HORSE!

“AAAHHHH!” The man THREW the baby to the ground.

He galloped as fast as he could for the town.

At the inn no one believed his story at all.

“Sure. Sure. We know all about your tall tales.”

But in the morning when he was still trembling,
They agreed to go back with him to the place where he said this all had taken place.



They didn't find any baby thrown on the ground there, that is for sure.

But after looking around for a while, the man did notice a little black pig resting under a bush.

"Look at this little pig." He bent down to pet its sides.
The little pig looked up at him....and opened its MOUTH!

"Tata! Tata! Look at my TEETH!"

Everyone saw this happen.

They say that in that village the man was never again accused of telling tall tales.



*To be told in educational and professional settings
with attribution*



Margaret Read MacDonald has been a pillar of the storytelling community in the United States and around the world for more than forty years. Storyteller, librarian, folklorist, her storytelling reference books and handbooks, her folktale collections, and her folklore studies have nourished storytellers, and her own storytelling and published stories have spread the pleasures of telling into myriad libraries and households. Enjoy her website:

<http://www.margaretreadmacdonald.com/index.cfm>.



My Jon

An Icelandic folktale. Retold by Margaret Read MacDonald.

Found in many collections, including Jacqueline Simpson, Icelandic Folktales and Legends. Univ. of Calif Press, 1972.

There was once an old woman who loved her husband dearly.

Now her husband, Jon, was a wicked old man. So, she knew that when he died, he would be going down below.

She couldn't bear the thought of spending eternity without him. So, she planned a way to make sure her Jon got into heaven.

On the day that Jon was breathing his last breath, she prepared. She sewed a sturdy leather bag. And just as Jon breathed his last...she held the bag up and caught his soul as it left his body. Then she tied it tight and got ready to carry it up to heaven.

She arrived at the Pearly Gates and knocked.

Out came Saint Peter, guardian of the Pearly Gates.

"I've come to bring my dear Jon's soul to heaven, Sir," she said.

"My good woman, you cannot bring the soul of that Jon in here." He blocked her way.

"You know where he must go."

The old woman was incensed. "And who do you think YOU are, Peter, to be barring my way. You who denied Christ three times yourself!"

Saint Peter was shocked. He went inside and closed the gates.

The old woman knocked again.

Saint Paul opened the gate. "Dear woman, you must take your Jon's soul down below. He was such a sinner. He cannot be admitted here."

"And who do you think YOU are, PAUL! To be judging my Jon. You who treated Christians so cruelly before you were converted!"

Saint Paul gasped. He stepped back inside and slammed the gate shut.

The old woman just knocked again.

This time it was the Virgin Mary herself who opened the gates and stepped out.

"Oh, my good lady," cried the old woman. "I know that YOU will understand my situation. My dear Jon here needs to be admitted to heaven, please."

"Well, I am sorry to tell you," said Mary, "But everyone knows what a sinner your Jon was. He has to go down below for sure."

"I cannot BELIEVE this!" fumed the old woman. "You dare to judge my Jon! You who could not even find a father for your child!"

At that The Virgin Mary drew back inside with a gasp and slammed the gate.

But the old woman just kept on knocking.

At last Jesus himself came out to try to settle the matter.

“Dear woman, you **MUST** take your husband’s soul down below. He never once said he believed in me. There is no place for him here.”

“Well then tell, my lord. Is it true that once a soul is inside heaven it can never be expelled?”

“Oh yes, that is true.”

“Then have **THIS** one!” And the old woman drop kicked the bag with her Jon’s soul right over the head of Jesus and **INTO** heaven.

“See you later, Jon dear!” she called. And happily made her way back home.

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There's a Zoo in my Room

By Cris Riedel



THERE'S A ZOO IN MY ROOM.
Every night, a different animal.
IT IS MY FAULT, REALLY
I invited them all in.
All because I'm lazy.



The zoo on my wall always shows me an animal at night. It's always a different animal from any other night. Yesterday it was two porcupines nose-to-nose. The night before it was a baby mouse leaning up to his mama. Last week there was a beautiful flower-tree lined path (right, no animals that night). One time it was a huge head, with enormous ears. And once there were two folks getting ready for a kiss (well, humans are animals, too, right?) I've even had a crocodile arrive with his hookah. And a child having a conversation with a baby elephant.

Sometimes they are silly. Sometimes a wee bit scary -- I have to close my eyes. Once there was almost no one there, only the backside of an elephant. And sometimes just a cucumber.

All because I'm lazy.

Every night, I get ready to go to sleep in the same way. Wash, brush, change into nightgown. Light the candle on the bedside table. Get into bed, pull up the covers, turn out the light. Begin my calm-down breathing exercises.

The truth is, did you notice, I didn't mention putting clothes away? I have a bedside grab bar for safety. It's there, this nice little railing, empty. So I toss pants, shirts, sweater, dresses -- whatever I wore today -- over it. And yesterday's clothes make a wonderful layer for today's garments to land on. Which leaves a pile, a lump of stuff. Right between the candle and the wall.

Can you see what happens? See the animal shadow on the wall?

Sometimes I laugh. Sometimes it takes a look or two to figure out who showed up tonight.

They keep me company. I'd be sorry if they didn't come to visit. On the wall.

I really do hope they do not come crawl in bed with me....

This work is not to be retold or performed



About the Author- Cris has been telling professionally for more than thirty years, most often old folktales. Her workshop, Voice for the Storyteller, was offered at Sharing the Fire this year. She is the co-founder of the World-wide Virtual Storytelling Guild, and is at work on a novel for children.

website: www.storiesconnect.com

email: cris@storiesconnect.com



Steph Curry Delivers Chinese Food by Sara deBeer

The first complaints:
Wonton soup dribbling
onto my crispy egg rolls;
sweet and sour chicken mixing it up
with my hot and spicy shrimp.

The manager waved Steph over:
“In this business, carrying
is the name of the game.”
Those complaints subsided.

Others persisted:
The food Steph delivers
arrives cold, congealed.
The manager inquired,
discovered

Steph had been climbing
thirty, forty, fifty flights of stairs.
“You need to travel
as rapidly as possible.
Take the elevator.”

Eventually, the manager let Steph go.
True, he was hardworking.
True, the customers liked him –
but his last name was a problem.
So Steph switched to delivering food
for Dhaba Wala Indian Kitchen.

Zoom Gallery by Sara deBeer

The pictures never stay in place in the gallery;
they shift and slide from space to space in the gallery.

Ben, Jen, Ken, Stephanie, then Henry (finally!)
Up pops each and every face in the gallery.

But when Ken shuts off video, wanting privacy,
Frames exchange, all are replaced in the gallery.

Jen was the upper corner; now, where she used to be,
an unnamed stranger none can place. In the gallery,

Sara loses conversation’s thread, clicks on speaker
view.
Boxed friends vanish; there’s no trace of the gallery.

Quandary by Sara deBeer

quan-da-ry (origin unknown)
upstairs, downstairs, in my lady’s chamber /why did I
climb these stairs? /standing, staring /a desk, a bed, a chair
/Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep /I have lost my reason
/for being in the bedroom /fly back down the stairs/ the fly
and the flea in the flue were befuddled – oh, what should
they do?/ must re-enter that moment of clarity /your
mission, should you choose to accept it/ the brand of the
toothpaste, the pair of pearl earrings, the correct address/
the phone rings, a text pings/ might be one of any number
of things/ re-searching that spot of certainty/ passing the
past the future/ continuously in a quandary/ origin
unknown.

The Honeymoons Are Over

by Sara deBeer

I used to be in love with my pen.
I would repeatedly tap its clicking top,
Admire the ballpoint smoothness of its ink-blue line.
No felt-tip could tempt me.
But now I see.
It is just a pen.

I once was in love with my watch,
The way its silvery sinuous strap
Encircled my wrist.
When I would press its stem in the night,
Its face would glow
Like a moon in the darkness.
But now I know.
It is just a watch.

How could I help falling in love with my bagel slicer?
It rescued me from dangerous knives.
It gazed at me with the sweet mystery
Of a snowy owl:
Far apart eye-like screws,
Y-shaped bright face,
Metal peeking through the white.
High handle waiting
Until I needed to slide it up, then down.
Gifting me with another perfectly cut bagel.
Recalling its charms, I pause—
Is it now merely a bagel slicer?
Or does it still have the power
To make me smile at it across the kitchen?
(At least until a new love comes along)?



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*



-HEALING SPRINGS-



Insistence

by Patricia Coffie

White house, green grass, small heart-shaped leaves on the lilacs, smaller spring green leaves on the maples. Homemade white swing set with porch swing and a child's wooden swing, under one maple.

Shades of brown in the wet branches and tree trunks. Shades of black in the soft wet earth, smooth around the tree trunks and scuffed into velvet under the swings. Wet not of rain but of heavy dew.

Grass not yet mowed even once swishing against shoes as she walks to the car. Silver dew drops at the tip of heart-shaped lilac leaves; at the sharp points on the maple leaves; all along every bar of the swing set and at the tips of blades of grass. A silver sparkle in each drop from the pale light of the early sun.

The car door handle smooth and cool and wet — opened softly; slammed shut. Tears running down her face.

"Life is shit. What is this morning doing here?" Her voice and the engine breaking the silence at the same time.

The dog not outside yet. No walkers, no runners. No wind. No birds. No sound but her voice and the racing engine. Anger. Anger.

A look back at the swing set white against the rich browns and blacks and greens and all sparkling with silver drops. Stark pure beauty. Undeniable and painful.

No answer. No one to answer. No thing to answer. Alone and hurting. Alone and more alone.

Brown and black and gray of the gravel. Angry shift and out the driveway. Glass and glasses fogged by the moisture of the morning, including the tears.

No answer for months but no escaping that question; that morning.

Answers came. They flowed and changed then settled gradually until she knew. That morning was spring and beauty, hope and renewal, insistent upon recognition.



About the Author

Patricia Coffie was born interested and Iowan. She tells personal and family stories filled with love and laughter and sometimes tears from a heart that belongs to the Midwest. Previously published in *Hot Rod Magazine*, *Our Iowa*, *Storytelling Magazine*, and in "Stories from Home" Waverly Iowa Newspapers, print and digital.

maemaude@mac.com

To be told in educational settings with attribution

Evie and Frances

by Sharon Franklin

Evie and Frances were like twins. Strange to say that, but it's true. Even my ex-husband agrees. Evie reminded us both of Frances, his 88-year-old mother who passed away 18 months ago. Evie, the sweetest spirit I've ever known in an animal, died yesterday.

Evie came to me, or I got her, only about eight months ago, after she was left behind when her former owners moved. I must explain that I'm very busy. I have a dog already and don't need two. There was no practical reason why I should take a scroungy dog I didn't even know that well into my house. Except she was wandering the streets. She was a bag of bones, with that familiar arch to her backbone that you see in dinosaur skeletons.

There was no question. I invited her in, fed her, and gave her a warm place to sleep. She and Casey, my golden retriever, made friends. She was also terribly sick. Almost from the beginning, I got to know the carpet cleaners very well. They were invited in, too —sometimes once or twice a week.

Evie, I found out later, had liver failure. A sick dog? I didn't need another dog, much less a sick dog. But there I was, taking her to the vet many times, trying every kind of dog food for "special needs diets" to see if she would eat it — and keep it down. I could have opened a used pet food store. Finally, the vet said it was no use. I should just feed her human food.

Human food? Oh, but not protein, and not too much fat, either. Mostly carbohydrates. Undaunted by this new challenge, I began cooking for Evie. I barely cook for myself, but I cooked baked potatoes with various toppings, pancakes, waffles, soups -- anything I could think of for Evie. One time my red handheld Safeway basket was full of nothing but Possible Foods That Evie Might Like.

In the end, though, her body rejected all food. The last afternoon, she was still up for a walk. She trotted after Casey a couple of times as he chased tennis balls in the park, but that night she got violently ill. Later I found her, for the first time ever, lying on the bathmat, not on her pillow. Her eyes were glazed over. Frances's eyes had the same faraway look the afternoon before she died. She practically ushered us out, instead of asking why we had to leave so soon. She had some getting ready to do, it seemed, and she needed time to do it away from the three people she loved most in the world. She blew us a kiss, told us she loved us, and off we went. She died peacefully in her sleep that night.

Evie died later the next morning in my arms.

Evie showed me the best part of myself. She reminded me that I am not too busy to help someone I love. She showed me that sacrifice means nothing. It's just what you do. Evie also was, I think, symbolic of some abandoned part of myself. I learned to love that part.

I miss Evie terribly. I miss the way she leaned into my body and let me stroke her bony little back. I miss the way she would throw her head back and look at me. I miss the way she put her paw on my foot as if to say, "I belong to YOU!" or snap her lips and teeth together in anticipation of a treat.

Evie and Frances would have liked each other a lot. They both had a certain fragility, yet toughness wrapped in thin little bodies. Perhaps they're together now, sharing stories and experiences. As for me, I am left, filled with the mystery of that line between life and death that is nothing more than the space of one small, inhaled breath.

At the same time, Evie got me thinking. It might not be bad to cook for myself a little more often. Who knows, maybe I'll whip up some waffles someday soon. With butter and syrup, just the way Evie liked them.




Sharon Franklin is a lifelong lover of words. She was an elementary school librarian and now writes fiction and nonfiction books for kids. Her latest, *No Bed for Jackson*, is a hilarious bedtime story for all ages with captivating illustrations. Sharon lives part time in Oregon and part time with her husband in Mexico. sharonfranklin01@gmail.com

Contributor to be contacted regarding permission to tell/reprint this work



-THAT'S AMAZING!-

Behind the scenes of great performers.



FIREFLIES:

A multilingual storytelling training and festival initiative

By Lillian Rodrigues-Pang

Fireflies are a burst of light that boosts the feeling of beauty and magic in any situation. In darkness, on still nights, their light can take your breath away.

In Australia they are very rare, and any sighting of those lights is a gift. When I lived with my family in El Salvador however, they were common. Nightly glowing lights that came out to remind me how fascinatingly beautiful the world can be. I never tired of them.

Twenty-five years ago, I began my storytelling journey in mental health in Australia and stories were like glimmers of connection and hope that sparked in a room. I became completely addicted to the connections that are possible and the shared starting point for conversation and understanding that stories offered. These storied beacons lead me to a path of self-discovery, a deeper understanding of myself and others, and a way to connect. What a gift!

I have always enjoyed the moment of sharing and connecting through a story, especially with families. Approximately 15 years ago I was working for SCARF (Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families), a community-based organisation that supported refugees to settle into our local area. I was telling bilingual and multilingual stories to newly arrived families.



Fireflies



From Left to right- Back row Alton Chung, Kaija Upenieks, Jodi Edwards, Kiran Shah, Dee Palanisamy, Nancy Wang Front row, Lillian Rodrigues-Pang, Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo

The best storyteller is the best listener — a mantra many of us follow. And these families taught me to listen with my body and heart. I found my storytelling style shifting and becoming more embodied, less word orientated with more gesture and facial expressions, and thankfully more integrated with music and percussion.

The adults asked to be trained in storytelling and the listening process, which led me to starting a storytelling course for refugee and newly arrived adults. We began the healing process of remembering stories. Stories that took us all back to times prior to displacement and survival mode; connecting to core memories and awakening our bodily knowledge.

Sometimes we remembered fragments and songs, other times whole stories that a grandparent used to tell. We remembered stories that we used to share in the classroom or told to a child nightly. The collection grew and each story remembered sparked another in someone else in the group. One of the Karenni people shared a story including fireflies which became the name of our group.

The first group in 2010 included four different distinct language groups and we stumbled our way to sharing as best as we could. We enjoyed listening to stories if they were in a language we spoke or not. We created support materials, songs, puppets, and more to facilitate our sharing. The members' English skills grew, confidence grew, the ability to be involved with children's schools and learning grew, and employment opportunities arose — as student support officers, as early years careers, and as paid storytellers.

Move forward 15 years and the Fireflies spark is still alive. I run irregular storytelling training in my own locality. Ten years ago, an organisation approximately 60kilometers away saw one of the tellers and commissioned me to train a new group of storytellers based in Fairfield. They already had a group called The Forked Tongues and needed a performing bilingual storyteller to make it a reality.



*Storyteller Bumeh (Karenni)
Photo by Caz of Exposure Arts*



*Storyteller Wafaa (Arabic)
Photo by Caz of Exposure Arts*



*Storyteller Ghada (Arabic)
Photo by Caz of Exposure Arts*

Over 10 years I have had the honour of training an incredible array of bilingual and multilingual storytellers with languages including Assyrian, Chaldean, Arabic, Dari, Bahasa Indonesian, Korean, Vietnamese, Laos, Persian, Chinese, Samoan, Spanish, and more. It is a gift to hear cultural stories from the tellers, from their grandparents, cousins, and teachers, and to share in the love of language and expression that storytelling can offer.

As a collective we are sponsored by The Think and Do Foundation. The Think and Do Foundation offers space to train and practise, and often to perform at regular Soirees or community celebrations that they hold. They also are the booking agent, implementing programs from one-off storytelling performances at community festivals and libraries to six-week language exposure programs run in various community centres.



Storyteller Bumeh (Karenni) at Sydney City Library – Surry Hills



*Fireflies storytellers at Lost in Books Community
Jeeva Raghunath, Lillian Rodrigues-Pang and Kiran
Shah*

The Forked Tongues collective is still in operation, still working, performing, and running regular training sessions when there are upcoming dates of performances. This sharing binds us in joy and achievement.

We train regularly as many of the storytellers have moved into more permanent employment situations, which means we celebrate stability in their lives and peoples' growing confidence in communication.

Training storytellers and being an internationally performing storyteller led to the dream of bringing International bilingual storytellers from around the world to Australia, to perform, exchange, and inspire the tellers here, and ignite audience understanding of what storytelling can be. I have been so fortunate that my dream completed its third iteration this year. Fireflies Multilingual Storytelling Festival began in 2020 — so we all know how that ended!



From left to right- Kaija Upenieks, Ann Lehmann-Kuit, Jeeva Raghunath, Lillian Rodrigues-Pang, Kiran Shah, Dr Jodi Edwards, Lajos Hamers

The second attempt was in 2022 when the exceptional Jeeva Raghunath agreed to come over and Jacyn DeSantis came from Tiwi Islands. In 2025 I hosted Eth-Noh-Tec and Alton Chung. What a joy it is when tellers get together to share and grow each other! The web of multilingual talent that shines and grows is something that I am very proud of. It is hard work that needs consistency and adaptability, and it is an act of love -- love of story and all it has to offer to the people that engage with it as tellers, as well as the audience.

That's how the extraordinary act of truly listening while storytelling and then responding has led to so much joy, love, and connection in my life and many others.

To be told in educational and professional settings with attribution



Lillian Rodrigues-Pang is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning storyteller. Her performances intertwine oral tradition with percussion, movement, and improvisation. She has performed and taught internationally and on Australian main stages, theatres, schools, and in community. When not on stage, she brings storytelling to communities as a connective, teaching, and healing art.

-PUZZLES and GAMES-

"Curiouser and curiouser!"

A Riddle For You

Take a look from where you stay!
I know a pretty sight
That you can see -- oh, miles away --
And may see best at night.

Sometimes 'tis round, sometimes 'tis
slim,
With two well-pointed ends,
Its size is vast. To distance dim,
Each sharpened point extends.

 -SB

Last Issue's Answer: Scissors



LOST WORD SOCIETY

by Carmen Agra Deedy

Fall is here and the cooler nights are welcomed as the Prodigal Son. Metaphors remind me of an episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation entitled, Darmok, in which the Tamarians communicated through references to their history and culture, rather than direct language. "Shaka, when the walls fell" was a metaphor used by the Tamarians to signify failure or a bad event. In their past, there was a city named Shaka where walls collapsed, and it has come to symbolize a setback or defeat.

In exploring mythological idioms, we pray not to Fly Too Close to the Sun. We will not dabble with Delphic Utterances, nor partake in a Cup of Lethe. We simply wish to beguile your time, not with Loki's Tricks or Set's Storms, but rather we offer to Open Yggdrasil's Door, to get caught up in Indra's Net, and embark upon the Odyssey of the Soul. Before we Sleep like Endymion and rest in the Elysian Fields with our Golden Fleece, known as The Lost Word Society, let us pursue the Runes of Truth, ignoring the Siren Song, enticing us to Scylla and Charybdis. It may feel as if Fenrir is Loose and the Gates of Hades have swung open, but as we Cross the Bifrost Bridge, let's take solace in Shiva's Dance. Let the Eye of Horus rest upon us as Anubis Walks with Us, that we may Ride Garuda like the Phoenix Rising, and gain Odin's Wisdom.

In each issue we will give you an archaic, obsolete, or otherwise "lost" word. We will make up three silly definitions for the word, mostly incorrect, to amuse ourselves and hopefully you, dear reader. Your job is to make up your own definition, sonnet, a myth, or even a one act play about the lost word, just for fun. Next month, we will publish the true definition of the "lost" word and provide you with another one. Enjoy!

PINGLE (v.) 18th - 19th century. Obsolete.

- 1) He pingles in the shower, she pingles in the hall, it pingles in the supermarket on top displays big and tall, and if we were to notice, they wouldn't care at all.
- 2) He stared out the window smiling at nothing, pingling through the day, doodling through meetings, and staring with amusement at the cold, unmoving spreadsheets on his screen. He was in love and that was all that mattered.
- 3) "Thy foul and corpulent corpuscle! Thy loathsome pimple on the hindmost quarter of a stout stoat! May you spend the remains of your lengthy and tiresome existence pingling about in your ramshackle office, adding up numbers that no one cares about and writing reports that no one will read."

Last Month's Lost Word:

FICULNEAN (adj.) obsolete.- worthless, weak, not fit for its purpose; literally, of fig tree wood.



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

Selling Eggs : A Puzzling Tale

By Marilyn McPhie

There once was a woman who had three daughters, Ann, Susan, and Elizabeth. They raised chickens and made their living by selling the eggs. One day the woman was talking to a neighbor and bragging about her daughters.

“Not only are they beautiful, but they are also hard-working and the cleverest girls in the county. They can figure out the most difficult problems.”

“Well,” said the friend, “Let’s test them to see if they are as clever as you say.”

So, on the next market day, the mother told her daughters to go to town and sell the eggs, as they did on every market day.

However, this time the doubting friend was there to test their cleverness, and the instructions they received were unusual.

“Here are 18 eggs for you, Ann; 28 eggs for you, Susan; and 38 eggs for you, Elizabeth. You must go to market and sell the eggs, but you must each sell them for the same price, and you must each return home with the same amount of money.”

“Can we give some of the eggs away, Mother?” asked Ann.

“No,” said their mother. “And be sure that you do not break any of the eggs.”

The girls began walking to market, talking about how they could follow their instructions. What a quandary. It seemed impossible. If they sold them for the same price, wouldn’t Elizabeth always make the most money since she had the most eggs?

As they walked and talked, they came up with a plan, and that night, when they returned home, their mother and her friend were waiting.

Sure enough, they had sold all the eggs. Each girl had sold them for the same price as the other two. No eggs had broken or been given away. And each girl came home with \$4.

Answer on Page 78



About the Author-Storyteller Marilyn McPhie lives in a San Diego, California area called “Little Bluffs” (Penasquitos), and her stories occasionally do include a little bluffing. Her ancestors are from England, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, and Scotland – where legends from the ancient Clan McPhie feature selkies, warriors, and one (in)famous black dog.



-STORY SIGHTINGS-

**What's going on?
Organizations, Events, People and Much More**



Bring Louisa May Alcott to your school, festival, book club! Through the magic of performance, the author of Little Woman will come, share how she developed as a writer and more! Did you know she was a nurse in the Civil War? Contact her at joanleotta@gmail.com



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Stages: My Life in Stories

by Jessica Piscitelli Robinson

Stages

My Life in Stories



Jessica Piscitelli Robinson

At first glance, *Stages* is a memoir, a collection of amusing, moving stories that follow the author through her life.

As you reach the end of the book, of course, you see the larger picture, like an image arising out of mosaics.

It's also a masterclass on storytelling, and Jessica Piscitelli Robinson a master storyteller.

-author, Anne Janzer

TUCKER



P R E S S

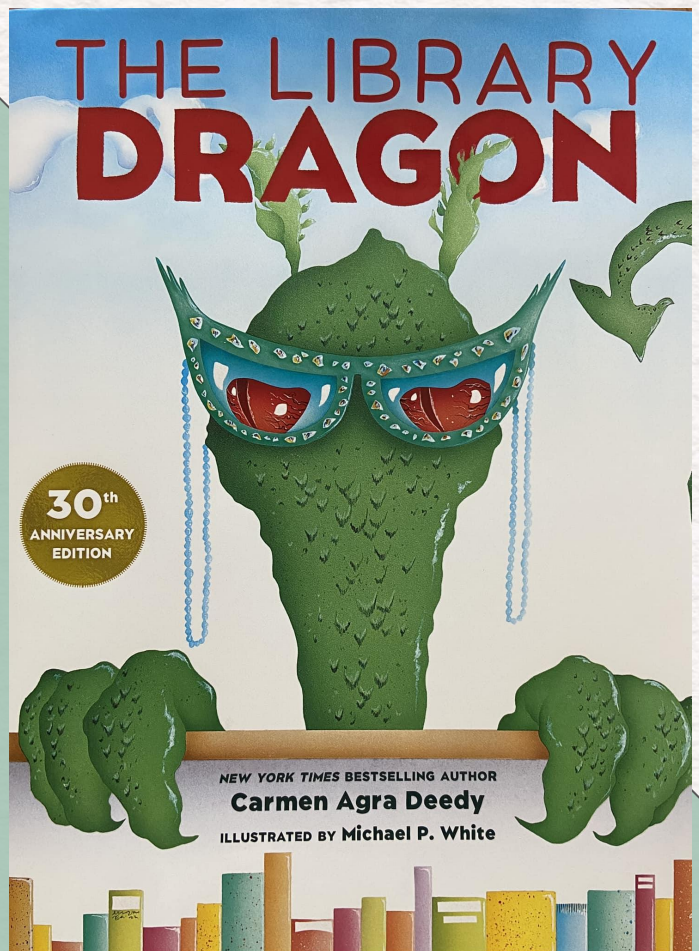
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Storytelling

"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."

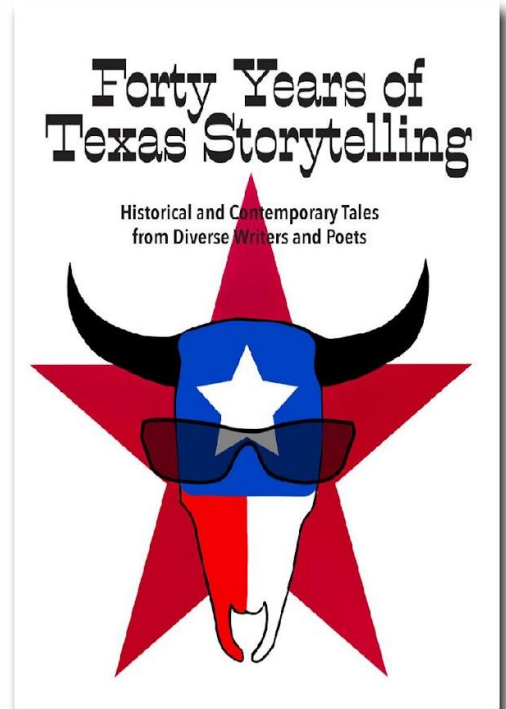
—**Alton Takiyama-Chung**, Storyteller (altonchung.com) and Editor-In-Chief of *The Story Beast*, a quarterly e-Publication dedicated to the art of storytelling (storybeast.org)

"**A gleaming 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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"**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.



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Credits



SELLING EGGS SOLUTION (from Page 72):

They sold the eggs for \$1 a dozen and \$.50 for single eggs. So, Ann made \$1 for one dozen and \$3 for six extra eggs; Susan made \$2 for two dozen eggs plus \$2 for four extra eggs; and Elizabeth made \$3 for three dozen and \$1 for two extra eggs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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With thanks to [Calaméo](#) 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 Roman™. Tinos offers improved on-screen readability characteristics and the pan-European WGL character set and solves the needs of developers looking for width-compatible fonts to address document portability across platforms.

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*Everyone has a story to
share.*

*May you always wonder,
dream, and share.*

-Asia Starr
Head Design & Layout
mamastarrstorytelling.com

Thoughts? Feedback? Feelings?
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