

The Seventh Week

clarion west writers workshop · fall 2011

INTERVIEW

Hiromi Goto: Interrupting Expectations

BY NISI SHAWL '92



HIROMI GOTO

*Hiromi Goto, a Japanese-Canadian writer, won the James Tiptree, Jr. Award for her 2001 novel, *The Kappa Child*, and the Carl Brandon Parallax Award for her 2009 YA novel, *Half World*. A former writer-in-residence with the University of Alberta, Simon Fraser University, and the Vancouver Public Library, Goto will teach the second week of the 2012 Clarion West Writing Workshop.*

What do you like about your life as a writer? Is it what you imagined it would be?

I came to writing because I loved to read and thought it would be most remarkable to actually make something that I loved. As it turns out, I am very grateful for all the world travel that has come with my publications. I've been to five continents; I don't think I would have ever gone to

all of these places without my writing. I also get to meet so many amazing and wonderful people, and my circle of friends

range of people than I'll ever meet in my lifetime. This is a kind of magic.

resolution in narrative fiction is overprescribed

and peers expands beyond the local to the global. Being a writer also means that I can work from home and have a lot of solitary time to think, read, research, and imagine—I really need and value this time alone. I am also so thrilled that my words and thoughts are moving around in the world beyond my physical self, communicating with a broader

You're active on Twitter, with the handle @hinganai. What does "hinganai" mean?

Hahahahahaaaa! It's Japanese for someone who is coarse or vulgar (there are class implications as well!)....When my sisters and I were young, my mother and grandmother tried very hard to raise us as "proper young ladies." They often told us how we were "hinganai." I think it's hilarious. And I'm a proud hinganai adult!

What effect does tweeting have on your professional writing? You also blog—is there a relationship between blogging and writing professionally?

Photo by Kiley Ramos

► I joined Twitter recently in order to have an online presence. I like how it links me to sites I wouldn't have found on my own. I can also interact with folks easily and lightly. I began blogging just two years ago. I'm a total noob, not like someone like Liz Henry (<http://badgermama.com>). Having a website and blogging has brought work my way—workshop gigs, readings, etc. So totally beneficial professionally.

I don't spend as much time styling the work as I would fiction that is going to publication. It's a different kind of expression—I'm a little more casual. I think there're tons of fabulous things to be done with new media venues. I'm looking forward to the next gen of young writers really exploring the elastic possibilities of creative expression unbound by physical limitations (like my brain).

In a recent Twitter exchange, you wrote, "I feel that resolution in narrative fiction is overprescribed. Find that uber-concluded stories highly consumable, but contained." Would you care to elaborate using more than 140 characters?

I think there are two broad modes of engagement with a text. The more popular one is a mode of consumption. The second mode is of interactive engagement. A highly consumable text follows strongly identifiable features and does not stray from the form—stylistically and structurally, the text does not disturb. Nor does the content. Readers can comfortably engage with this familiar text, their curiosity engaged via causality and plot. It is satisfying. It is entertaining. But very, very rarely does it require the reader to actively and intellectually stretch from their place of comfort. One of my sisters exclaimed, "I don't want to read to think. I think enough at work. I want to read to relax." Many people may feel this way. Tightly shaped and concluded stories fit nicely into consumer reading.

There are times when I seek "a relaxing read," but for the most part I'm not that interested in reading narratives that re-establish normative idea(s/l)s. A tightly constructed, plot-based story is a highly consumable art form. It exists as a mini-life with its arc of challenges, outcomes,

both successful and failed. Then there is a kind of death. The story is over. Where is the reader's place in this? Purely as spectator? What of the author/reader relationship? What of the narrator/reader relationship? What has been your part in the experience of the text?

It is important, I think, that readers have space to have agency in their reading, even if they are also, simultaneously, implicated. Therefore, I feel that stories that have ragged ends or bumpy beginnings, or missing finales or a hole in the middle... these things can interrupt expectations, and something else must be placed in the space that is left unwritten. People may read stories/texts like these as, perhaps, "unfinished" or having missing pieces. Or they may have a form or shape that is truly unfamiliar. Sesshu Foster's *Atomik Aztex* includes an author's note before the story, telling the readers looking for plot to, instead, go to Huck Finn!

Jillian Tamaki's many gorgeous illustrations of *Half World* give your book a sort of comic or graphic novel feel. What was it like to see drawings of your world and characters?

My editor at Penguin Canada asked me if I'd like to have illustrations in the novel. I was thrilled with the idea. I am a very visual writer—I can "see" the stories in my mind much like I view films. So it seems a very natural extension to see illustrations of the novel. It's funny—when I first saw Jillian's depiction of Melanie I was a little startled. "That's not what she looks like," I thought. Now it's as if Melanie has always looked like Jillian's illustrations of her.

Online summaries of *Darkest Light*, the companion book to *Half World*, suggests that it's an even darker tale than its predecessor. Is it?

I am always fascinated by how different story venues choose to depict a character or person who "is evil." As social animals, we have a lot invested in identifying potentially dangerous persons around us. But I find that we tend to flatten their identities. What gets me is that when we

fall into this kind of binary thinking, we imagine ourselves as not like them. I think of "good" and "evil" (if we set aside moral value) in a way similar to Kinsey's approach to sexuality. There is a spectrum, we move around it. In writing *Darkest Light*, I was drawn to the challenge of really getting into the head of someone who could be very bad....Someone like you and me. A human and a monster.

Your first session as a Clarion West instructor is coming up in 2012, but you've taught at several other writing workshops. What can they do? How do you teach them?

When workshops are working, participants can boost their skill level and learn something new. At their worst, workshops can make you feel really bad, and/or you learn very little. Or they make you feel good and you've also not learned anything new. I believe we learn by doing. I encourage the development of the poetics of language/sound as an effective tool for writing fiction and playing with content and form. Instead of focusing on crafting "the perfect story," I like to encourage independent thinking, risk-taking, and play.

You talk in other interviews and on your blog about Octavia E. Butler. What was her importance to you?

She serves as a role model. She was an African-American writer writing SF stories with African-American characters with complex/complicated lives. Her integration of the scientific speculative seemed highly believable, interesting, and plausible rather than mere window dressing, and she deftly included elements of race and diversity in her novels in a normative way. I admire how she handled race—on her terms.

How many stories are there in the universe?

As many as the stars.... ♦



From the Chair

BY KELLEY ESKRIDGE

It's personal.

I'm here to talk on behalf of Clarion West about being grateful and excited. It's part of my role as board chair to thank you for your support, and it's always a pleasure because CW matters to me. I believe the work we do transforms writers' lives and expands the landscape of speculative fiction. I believe that our graduates have created some of the best work in the field, that our instructors are gods and goddesses of the art, that our staff and volunteers are the most passionate and hardworking people I've ever met, and that our donors are unparalleled in their generosity.

And so I show up here a couple of times a year to thank you. But I also want you to know that it's personal.

Why? Well, let's talk about the Write-a-thon.

Please read Davis Fox's article in this newsletter (*Page 4*) to learn more about the great success of this year's Write-a-thon. Thank you so much to all of our participants!

**to help writers
grow, expand,
write better,
write more**

ing writers, and all of their generous sponsors. We are deeply excited by the results, and deeply grateful for your support.

But the Write-a-thon is more than a fundraising activity for the workshop. It also reflects a core value of CW: to help writers grow, expand, write better, write more. And they did! By our estimate, hundreds of thousands of words of fiction came out of writers' heads in the six weeks of the Write-a-thon. Imagine the energy, the struggle, the determination, and the joy in every single one of those words!

I was one of those writers. I had that struggle and that joy. CW inspired me—the way it inspires so many people—to do my best work. I had a personal breakthrough as a writer this summer, and the work I did has changed me forever.

Your support of Clarion West made

that possible. Each dollar helps make that happen, every year—not just for the eighteen students of the workshop, but for hundreds of other writers as well. When you support Clarion West, you help us make that kind of difference.

Your support changed my life this summer. That matters to me. It's personal. And I thank you with all my heart.

And now let's talk about excitement!

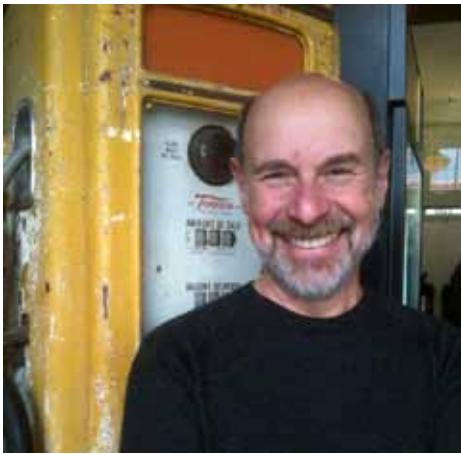
We have a stellar set of instructors in place for the 2012 workshop: Mary Rosenblum, Hiromi Goto, George R.R. Martin, Connie Willis, Gavin Grant and Kelly Link, and Chuck Palahniuk. Imagine those days of workshopping and nights of writing and conversation! If you've always wanted to apply to Clarion West, make this the year you throw your hat in the arena. We'd love to have you.

We're also excited about a new series of programs that launched with great success this fall: one-day writing workshops that deliver the high-quality instruction that is one of our values, but in a focused experience that is more accessible to many writers whose schedules don't currently permit a six-week immersive experience. Thank you to Molly Gloss, Mark Teppo, and Nancy Kress for leading the first three sessions. Please check our website (http://clarionwest.org/one_day_writing_workshops) for upcoming workshops in 2012.

We're delighted to welcome three new members to the Clarion West Board of Directors: Vicki N. Saunders '09, Edd Vick, and Felicia R. Gonzalez. We're grateful to them for their passion for our mission and the variety of skill and experience they offer us.

We're also very grateful to Kij Johnson for her work as vice chair. Other commitments make it necessary for her to step down, and we now welcome Karen G. Anderson into the role. Kij remains on the board. Thank you both so much! We're lucky to have such committed and talented people in CW.

And to all of you reading this: We're lucky to have you as part of the Clarion West community. Thank you for everything you do. ♦



Developing News

By DAVIS B. FOX

Helping writers write—that's what Clarion West's Write-a-thon is all about. This past summer's Write-a-thon was the most successful ever, with 142 writers from fifteen countries participating, making this a truly international effort. Many of the writers wrote on a daily basis, turning out short stories, making progress on novels, and creating new poetry. Some works produced in July and August have been submitted and accepted for publication already.

Not only did writers create new work, but they recruited some 420 generous sponsors who contributed more than \$22,000 to CW. This amount is more than twice that raised in 2010 and represents more than 90 percent growth in sponsorship. This tremendous outpouring of support will help CW to conduct next summer's workshop, provide financial aid for students, and put on our Tuesday night reading series at University Book Store.

We've heard from many writers who were happy to be Write-a-thon participants. Philip Suggars told us he "managed to get a 4000-word story ("Automatic Diamanté") thought up, written, edited, rewritten, and then submitted. Sharing the deadline with the real-life Clarioners was a wonderful incentive." Erin Wilcox wrote, "I launched my writing website, which has been half a year in the building, and got a solid start on my epic fantasy novel. It felt great to contribute to the education of writers whose work transcends the boundaries of traditional literary fiction." LC Hu shared, "I'll admit I got a little tired towards the end of the six weeks, but I made my goal of writing 5000 words a week (a lot for me) and even surpassed that goal during three of the weeks....I got nearly halfway through the first draft of a novel (even with two false starts!) and wrote almost ten shorter pieces/exercises." Nisi Shawl '92 shared this success: "The 2011 Clarion West Write-a-thon was a Grand Experiment for me in seeing what I could really pull off in terms of writing. I wrote three stories in six weeks—wrote them and finished them and sold them. All of them. Without the Write-a-thon I would not have even thought of trying."

Erin Cashier '07 attended a standing-room-only event in July at Borderlands Books in San Francisco, which hosted their third reading in conjunction with the 2011 Write-a-thon. CW graduates (and Write-a-thon participants) Rachel Swirsky '05, Vylar Kaftan '04, and Dan Marcus '92 read, along with Tim Pratt, a Clarion graduate. Rachel and Vylar were both Nebula Award nominees this year; Rachel won the award for Best Novella, and was nominated for a Hugo Award as well. Vylar's Nebula-nominated story, "I'm Alive, I Love You, I'll See You in Reno", was written during a previous year's Write-a-thon.

Much of the credit for our success goes to Write-a-thon Chair Erin Cashier, Director of Communications Nisi Shawl, and volunteers extraordinaire Kate Schaefer, Chris Sumption, Stephanie Denise Brown, Lauren Dixon, Ann Kelly, Jocelyn Paige Kelly, Deb Taber, and Jude-Marie Green, all of whom worked tirelessly to make the 2011 Write-a-thon the best yet. ♦

Clarion West Writers Workshop

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Going the Distance

BY LESLIE HOWLE '85

Clarion West's 28th workshop tipped us into the new decade with six weeks of writing, reading, critiquing, strategizing, discussing, and more. This summer featured all the usual CW elements, but the talented, passionate writers and instructors of 2011 made it new and engaging all over again.

Some trends continued from previous workshops: We printed manuscripts in-house; CW tattoos emerged on at least a few students towards the end of the workshop; and, once again, the end of that exhilarating first week found many of us at the Locus Awards, where Connie Willis presented awards to Neil Gaiman, Gardner Dozois, and others. In fact, the students' first glimpse of their week two instructor, Nancy Kress, was her dressing Gardner in a coconut bra and hula dancing in a grass skirt at the Awards!

Most of the class also attended the SF Hall of Fame ceremony at the EMP Museum and Science Fiction Hall of Fame, at which emcee Terry Bisson inducted Gardner Dozois, artists Vincent Di Fate and Jean "Moebius" Giraud, and Harlan Ellison. It was a good day for the students as they met some of the greats in the SF/F field and were inspired by the work and memory of those who came before us.

CW alumni blogs provide a general outline of what the workshop is like from year to year, but each and every workshop is unique because of the students, instructors, guest speakers, and the culture they create. Every summer, the overall flow and structure of the workshop changes slightly as we fine-tune the experience based on feedback from the previous year. For instance, one of our guests this year was an agent and another works on an interactive storytelling site with Neal Stephenson. One student was from Amsterdam, another from Australia, and a third was a Welshman who had been living and working in Japan. Our instructors came from all over the U.S., including Seattle, and as far away as Australia and Scotland.

The CW workshop is a vibrant, living entity that grows and evolves; when people come from around the world to live, breathe, and talk writing, something magical happens to make each workshop an experience like no other before or after it.

I can recall some vivid fragments from

this summer: I hear Paul Park's voice reading stories out loud, clearly, beautifully—the prose pouring over me and turning into three-dimensional visions before my closed eyes.

There's Nancy Kress, deconstructing the anatomy of a scene with brilliant clarity, followed by a ripple of "ah-has." Margo Lanagan has everyone's complete attention as she discusses the art of titles and how important they are. I hear Minister Faust's warm laugh as he challenges students to post a story for sale on Amazon.com. (And several people did!) I see Timmi Duchamp quietly delivering a spot-on critique of a story and students leaning in to hear her. And there's Charlie Stross, arriving with more energy than any three of us who had been there for five weeks; his vivacity, stories, and sharp critiques revved everybody up in the last week despite their exhaustion.

Last summer's class is so memorable. I only have to close my eyes to see students at work and play in the house. I wish I had the space here to tell anecdotes about Guys Growing Beards, the designing of the Bananagram T-shirt, and some of the stories written during the workshop. It was enriching to have two students who were second or third generation writers in the genre as part of our group.

Thank you, Paul Park, Nancy Kress, Margo Lanagan, L. Timmel Duchamp, Minister Faust, and Charles Stross, for bringing your best to the table, working so hard, and sharing your knowledge, talent, and experience. It's so good of our instructors to take time away from their own writing.

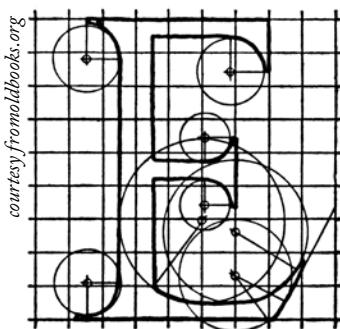
Many thanks also to our guest speakers who volunteered to come to the classroom as "Mystery Muses," the community members who hosted parties, and everyone who participated in this year's amazing Write-a-thon or donated time, energy, or resources in other ways. Special thanks to my wonderful co-administrator, Neile Graham. And finally, I want to thank our seriously talented student writers who traveled so far in both distance and writing ability and all who helped make Clarion West 2011 memorable, successful, and one of our best. ♦



BACK ROW: ANNE TOOLE, ALBERTO YÁÑEZ, JEREMY SIM, JEI D. MARCADE, MARIA ROMASCO-MOORE, CORINNE DUYVIS

MIDDLE ROW: NICHOLAS TRAMDACK, JACK NICHOLLS, ALISA ALERING, SARAH HIRSCH, CATHERINE KRAHE, DAVID REES-THOMAS, STEVE WILSON

FRONT ROW: ALEX BEAR, JENNIFER MOODY, MARGO LANAGAN (INSTRUCTOR), MARK PANTOJA, ERIK DAVID EVEN, JOHN COYNE



Executive Corner

BY DAVIS B. FOX

Clarion West is more than a summer workshop. It's also a large and diverse community of people committed to educating aspiring speculative fiction writers early in their careers. At the center of what we do are the students who attend our workshop in June and July; we just completed twenty-eight years of continuous operation, with more than 500 students coming to Seattle over that time to grow and mature as writers. This fall, our new Sunday one-day workshops are providing opportunities for writers to hone their skills, and we expect to reach scores of additional writers as we continue this offering in 2012.

But we're more than writers, too. We're instructors who live in and travel to Seattle to teach, encourage, and motivate our students. We're authors who share new

work at our Tuesday night readings. We're readers who look forward to the latest books to hit the stores and internet. We're editors and publishers who make these books available to the public. We're hundreds of individual, corporate, foundation, and government funders whose generosity allows us to keep going year after year on solid financial ground. We're a dedicated board of directors and a treasured group of volunteers who give thousands of hours a year to support all our efforts as a nonprofit organization. And finally, we're a skilled professional staff that I have the pleasure of working with on a daily basis.

To our entire Clarion West community, I thank you for making CW such an excellent and meaningful organization. We couldn't do it without you. ♦



How to Build a Good Author Website

BY PATRICK SAMPHIRE '01

Okay, you're a writer, and every writer seems to have a website. So now you want one too, because.... Well, because....

To be honest, it's possible you don't know exactly why you need a website. And even if you do, you may not know how to get a good one or what to do with it once you've got it. This is pretty normal, but stick with me and I'll see if I can help.

Let's start with an unpalatable truth: most writers' websites are awful. They may not be aesthetically displeasing (although most are), but they are terrible nonetheless. They're hard to read, difficult to navigate, frustratingly impossible to search, and often simply utterly confused in organization and intent.

This isn't surprising. There is no reason why writers should know how to put a website together, any more than they should be able to build a car engine from scratch. You might use both every day, but under the hood, websites and cars are a mystery; if you don't want to break down on a lonely, backwoods lane, you can't just wing it.

So, how do you go about ensuring that your website is good?

First of all, you need to know the point of your website. If you're working with a good designer, she will help you figure this out, but good web designers are rare and many of you will be doing this yourself. Ask yourself these questions before you start:

1. Who is the website for? It may be your website, but unless you plan to be the only visitor, it's not for you. Try to define your audience as clearly as you can. If they are readers, who are these people? What are their ages? Genders? Interests? Attitudes? Try to limit yourself to two or three specific audiences for your site, because if you try to please everyone, you'll end up pleasing no one.
2. What does your audience expect from your website? This isn't what you want to put on your website, but what your visitors are looking for. Most people have a particular reason for visiting a website, and you need to meet their expectations.
3. What do you want to achieve with the website? Are you trying to build a fanbase? Sell books

to readers? Encourage people to return to your website frequently? Whatever your goals are, try to focus on the few most important ones, so that your website doesn't lose focus.

When you can answer these questions clearly and explicitly, you should be able to identify what to include on your website and what type of website you need.

KILL BEAUTY

Beauty blinds us—all of us, even detached and cynical designers. It's very easy to see a beautiful website, probably with a gorgeous, artistic banner at the top, and think you're looking at a good website. The truth is you're probably not.

Ask yourself this: Are you spending all this time and money on a website to show off your web designer's artistic skills or to promote your writing?

It's not that a website has to be ugly (it shouldn't be), it's just that the aesthetic beauty should always take second place to the effectiveness of a website. The more graphically impressive the website is, the more likely a visitor is to be distracted from the point of it.

The design should draw your attention to the content. When you look at a website, what's the first thing you notice? Do you read the text, or do you admire the pretty artwork and then go somewhere else? What do you remember from the site after you're done?

Yes, a website should be attractive and it should look professional, but above all, it should do the job it has been set up to do.

If you want a website, you have three main options:

Hire a professional designer.

Your best option for a really effective website is to hire a professional web designer. He will work with you to figure out exactly what kind of site you need and how it should be structured, designed, and run. Of course, finding a good professional designer isn't easy.

Unfortunately, anyone can set himself up as a web designer. All he needs is a rudimentary grasp of websites and some cheap software, and he can sell his services. If you aren't a web professional yourself, it can be difficult to separate the professionals from the amateurs. Remember, ►►

- an attractive website is not necessarily a good website.

Look at the designer's experience. Has he been employed by a reputable agency, institution, or company as a designer? If so, he probably knows what he's doing. If not, be cautious.

Expect to pay at least a couple of thousand dollars, and be very wary of anyone charging significantly less.

He is likely to be churning out templates with little regard for your individual needs, and his sites will be ineffectual.

Buy a ready-made, professionally-designed template.

These are readily available, particularly for use with WordPress (<http://wordpress.com>), and you can get some great designs for less than \$100. The downside is, because these are templates, other people will have the same design, and templates are not easy to customize.

To use this option effectively, you need to plan very carefully and in great detail exactly what you need your website to do, what will go where on every page, and what image you are trying to project. Once you've done that, search out a template that matches as closely as possible. Don't make the mistake of choosing a template just because it's flashy; find one that fits your needs.

Lots of places sell templates. Try <http://themeforest.net>, <http://www.elegantthemes.com>, or <http://www.woothemes.com>, or google "Premium WordPress Themes." Some places offer free themes if you can't afford to buy one. You can find a few here: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/tag/wordpress>.

If you buy a theme, you'll have to install it and set up your website. This isn't difficult, but if you don't want to do it yourself, you can find a web developer who will do it for a reasonable fee.

Use a third-party system.

If you can't afford to pay for a website, then you can use a third-party system to host one. Again, WordPress is probably the best option for this. You don't have to have a blog as the front page of the site, and there are a variety of designs available. You might also

get away with a Facebook page or a blog on something like Blogger, but these latter options are only suitable if you're not pursuing a professional writing career.

If you go this route, you'll have little control over the appearance, structure or even types of content on your website. In general, avoid services that insert advertisements.

expect to pay at least a couple of thousand dollars...be wary of anyone charging significantly less

A FEW RANDOM POINTS...

- Whatever type of site you choose, make sure you keep it up to date. You do yourself no favors at all if your website doesn't list your latest three publications. (And, yes, there are plenty of author websites like that.)
- Don't put your blog as the front page of your website. Your front page should be focused on introducing you, your work, or whatever else your website is there to promote. If the first thing a new visitor sees is that journal entry about what you had for breakfast, they probably won't come back.
- Use your own name or a variation on it for the domain name: www.johnsmith.com is way better than www.sff.net/people/john.smith. If you have a common name, look for a meaningful variation, like www.john-smith-author.com.

Good luck!

Patrick Samphire '01 is a freelance web designer living in Wales, U.K., with his wife, Stephanie Burgis '01. If you have any questions or comments about his article or about websites in general, you can contact him through his website <http://www.50secondsnorth.com>.

We are always looking for interesting topics related to writing or the business of writing for feature articles in The Seventh Week. If you have an idea or would like to contribute an article, please contact the editor at eugene_myers@clarionwest.org. ♦

CW People

STUDENTS,
INSTRUCTORS, AND
VOLUNTEERS
CHECK IN

[Editor's note: For this issue, alumni were asked about their book buying, reading, and marketing habits as bookstores become scarcer. If you have a suggestion for a future newsletter topic, please send it to eugene_myers@clarionwest.org.]

STUDENTS

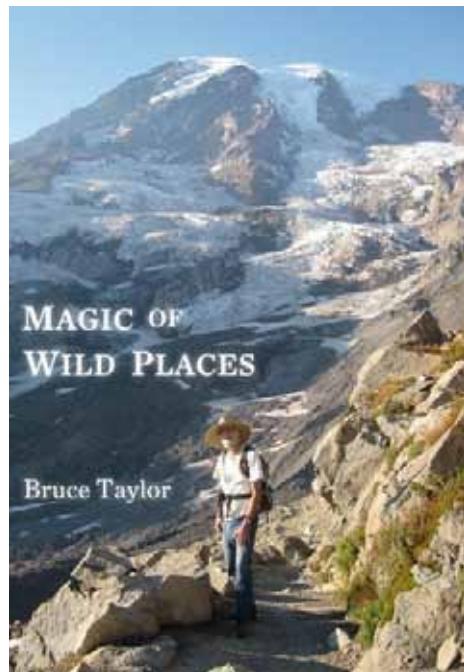
1972

I just turned in my novella "Industrial Carpet Drag" to Eraserhead Press. Been a busy eight months with another five books edited/re-edited/published. Recently, *Metamorphosis Blues* came out (July), published by Eraserhead Press. The second of a "spiritual" trilogy, *Magic of Wild Places*, was published in July as well. The final book in the trilogy, *Majesty of the World*, will be written this autumn. *Mr. Magic Realism* will be re-released sometime this autumn. *Mountains of the Night* is available on Barnes & Noble Nook. And thanks to all who had such kind words (as well as great interest) about *Like Water for Quarks*.

Bruce Taylor

1984

After juggling two books at once, I am now out from under my deadlines for a while. My *Warehouse 13* novel came out in June and I have two more novels creeping towards publication: a new *Star Trek* novel



in January and *Riese: Kingdom Falling*, a young adult steampunk novel based on a web series, due out next summer. At the moment, I'm between books (gulp!), but keeping busy by writing copy for a line of collectible *Star Trek* postage stamps. Yes, postage stamps. This is turning out to be a

browsing at bookstores scratches an itch

big project, but it's given me an excuse to rewatch the original TV series from beginning to end.

On the personal front, Karen and I had a pretty good summer. No big trips, although I did make my usual pilgrimage to the Shore Leave convention in Baltimore... and I'm hoping to make it to Norwescon again this year.

As for the loss of brick-and-mortar stores, I don't think there's any way to put a positive spin on that. I'll fess to shopping online sometimes, especially now that I'm living out here in the sticks, but you

can't really browse and find new titles that way. And picking out children's books for birthdays and holidays is really hard to do online. You really need to look at and handle the books. Browsing at bookstores has always been one of my favorite ways of killing time; it scratches an itch that no amount of online shopping can take care of.

Greg Cox

1986

I attended Clarion West in 1986. Twenty-five years? How did that happen?

My teachers were Ed Bryant, Suzy McKee Charnas, Patricia McKillip, David Hartwell, Norman Spinrad, and Joan Vinge. All credit to Linda Jordan-Eichner, Donna Davis, and the rest of that crew who heroically put on a workshop with no money and only six students at the start.

My news: Wordstock (www.wordstockfestival.com) is our annual celebration of words and reading. This year, I submitted a story to the Wordstock short fiction competition. There were 400 entries from as far away as Ireland, and I finished second. If you eliminate everyone from outside of Oregon, including Ireland, I'm on top. The final judge was Aimee Bender. The top ten finishers will appear in an anthology published by Wordstock. I'll be giving these out as

shopping for books online deprives you of the thrill of the hunt

birthday presents for years, I'm sure.

Regarding bookstores: There are few better ways to spend an afternoon than inside a bookstore. My favorite place is Eclipse Books in Bellingham, Washington. ►



STEVE BIELER

►The glass doors at the back open on San Juan Island vistas and the salt breezes from Bellingham Bay. Shopping for books online is not only a lot less scenic, it deprives you of the thrill of the hunt and the pleasures of finding books you never knew existed. But it's hard to resist Half.com and all their 75-cent books and all the free books on BookMooch. Let's face it, if you really wanted to support actual bookstores, you wouldn't just stay off the internet, you wouldn't set foot in a library, either. I'm not willing to go that far. I'll do the best I can, in person, online, and in the library.

Steve Bieler

1989

I am now an editor at Baen Books. I started last June.

Tony Daniel

In August, my latest novel, *Isles of the Forsaken*, came out from CZP Publications, an up-and-coming, class-act small press in Toronto. The book is a fantasy about culture clash and revolution in an

enchantment-shrouded island nation. It is the first of two. The second volume, *Ison of the Isles*, comes out next year.

Also look for my newest SF novelette, "The Ice Owl", scheduled to be the cover issue of the Nov/Dec issue of *Fantasy & Science Fiction*.

In the real world, I'm working on a new history of the American Revolution on the frontier for Yale University Press.

I switched to online bookstores... years ago

Never a dull moment.

I admit I am one of the people blamed for killing the independent bookstores, because I switched to online bookstores for most of my purchases years ago; however, it seems the independents didn't stay dead. Here in St. Louis, at least, we have at least four choices of independent bookstores to go to. They are small, but perky. I find I go to them mostly for readings and other gatherings they host, and when I'm

there I often make an impulse purchase. That is how I would characterize the way the change in the bookstore ecosystem has affected my habits: my deliberate bookbuying, in response to reviews, recommendations, or (for nonfiction) citations is from Amazon.com. My impulse buying is from the small bookstores. I can't remember when I last set foot in a chain store, so I don't miss 'em when they fold.

Carolyn Ives Gilman

1990

I have a lot of new work coming out this quarter. I'm the lead writer at Kerberos Productions, an independent PC game development studio, and we have a new game coming out before Christmas. *Sword of the Stars 2: Lords of Winter* is the sequel to our popular science fiction strategy game, *Sword of the Stars*. Since I am the creator of the *Sword of the Stars* universe (in the sense that I'm the author of all the background fiction), this is a fun time for me.

The Deacon's Tale, my first novel set in the *Sword of the Stars* universe, will also be re-released at the end of September. My first collection of short fiction and other apocrypha is slated for late November: *Monsoon and Other Divine Encounters* collects all of the short fiction and poetry I have published since 1996 along with a couple of never-before-seen stories. If all goes well, it will feature an introduction from Lucius Shepard.

As to the bookstore issue: Although I will admit that I shed no tears for the closing of Borders, I do make an effort to support my local independent bookstores. Here in Vancouver, my buying energies are focused on White Dwarf Books, which carries a wonderful selection of genre material, and Pulpfiction Books, a local independent chain (they have a few locations). White Dwarf focuses entirely on new books, so far as I know, but Pulpfiction carries both new and used titles. Between these two stores I can get just about any book I want. The minimal extra effort it takes to have my local bookstore ►

► order something for me, rather than buy it straight from Amazon.com, is definitely worth it, not only to support the store but also to avoid shipping charges and extra fees. I highly recommend it!

Arinn Dembo

I do make an effort to support my local independent bookstores

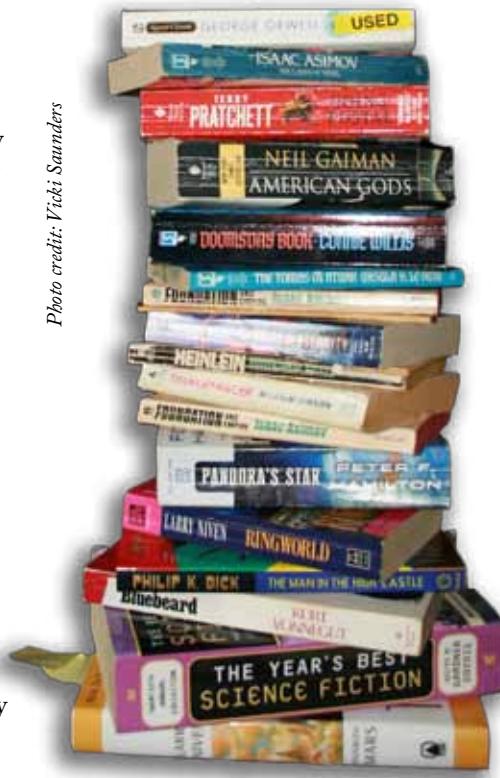
I continue to be delighted with, and nicely remunerated by, my recent connection to the spirited folks at Eraserhead Press in Portland. In September, they reintroduced *Walking Wounded*, my second novel with Dell Abyss (1996), as a trade paperback, following on the heels of a short story collection, *Baby's First Book of Seriously Fucked-up Shit*. November and December should see trade reissues plus e-books of *Santa Steps Out* and *Santa Claus Conquers the Homophobes*, and a new novel with the working title *Santa Claus Saves the World*. I'd call it a trilogy, but I can already sense a fourth Santa novel a-brewing in the background. This joy is alas intermixed with personal sorrows too involved to go into here, but we endure those and press on.

Robert Devereaux

I curated an exhibit that explores the technology and ideas behind the creation of the film *Avatar* for EMP, which opened last June. Next I'll be tackling a new science fiction gallery that will be home to the SF Hall of Fame. Meanwhile, my second film for Syfy, *Zombie Apocalypse*, co-written with Craig Engler, will most likely air the weekend of October 22. If you don't like me, here's your chance to see me get mowed down by a machine gun.

Brooks Peck

Photo credit: Vicki Saunders



1991

Strange Horizons has reached the 11th anniversary of our launch! That's eleven years of publishing new material every week (except a vacation week at the end of each year.) And in case anyone hasn't heard, we raised our rates for fiction this year, to 7¢ (US)/word. Stop by, read what we're publishing, and send us stories.

...switching over more and more to e-books

Not a lot of other news. I'm writing fiction intermittently, but haven't finished anything in a while.

Regarding books and bookstores: I'm lucky to have a nice brick-and-mortar bookstore a ten-minute walk from my house. When there's a book I want to buy, if they have it in stock I generally buy it there.

But these days I'm switching over more and more to e-books; I'm loving

iBooks on the iPad 2, and am finally reading a bunch of stuff that I never got around to finding in paper copies, as well as some newer stuff. E-books I've read this year include the *Chrestomanci* books (Jones), *Solitaire* (Eskridge), *Wild Ride* (Crusie/Mayer), *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (le Carré), *Pale Fire* (Nabokov), *Grand Sophy* (Heyer), and *Mary Ann in Autumn* (Maupin).

There are all sorts of difficult issues around e-books (including class-accessibility issues, as Seanan McGuire compellingly discussed on LJ recently), but I'm finding the convenience, annotation capability, and portability to be huge advantages over paper. I still like paper books fine, but I suspect by a year or two from now I'll almost never be buying them.

Jed Hartman

1992

I have two upcoming publications: "Mirror Test" in Intel's *Tomorrow Project Anthology* (<http://tomorrowproject.uw.edu>), coming out in hard and soft copy this fall, and "Romance with Mice" in the *Dadaism* anthology from Chomu Press (<http://chomupress.com>), coming out in hard and soft copy some time in 2012.

I've also been reviewing dark chocolate for a national online magazine (google "sonia lyris chocolate"), which means that chocolate factories let me in the back rooms and give me treats, which is kind of cool.

And I'm still dancing Argentine tango.

Sonia Lyris

My short story "Bright Moment" appears in the Sep/Oct 2011 issue of *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. My novel, *A Crack in Everything*, launched on 9/1 and will be reviewed in an upcoming *Realms of Fantasy*. It is available from Amazon.com, B&N online, and many independent bookstores.

Daniel Marcus





LOUISE MARLEY

►1993

My newest book, *The Brahms Deception*, was published August 1st by Kensington Books. There are fifteen of these now, including my short story collection, *Absalom's Mother & Other Stories*, and the omnibus edition of *The Singers of Nevyia*. *The Brahms Deception* is a time travel novel, based on a short story published in *Fast Forward I* by Pyr Books. My newest books are being marketed as historical, although they retain fantastic elements (*Mozart's Blood* features a vampire opera singer), and it's been interesting to have the experience

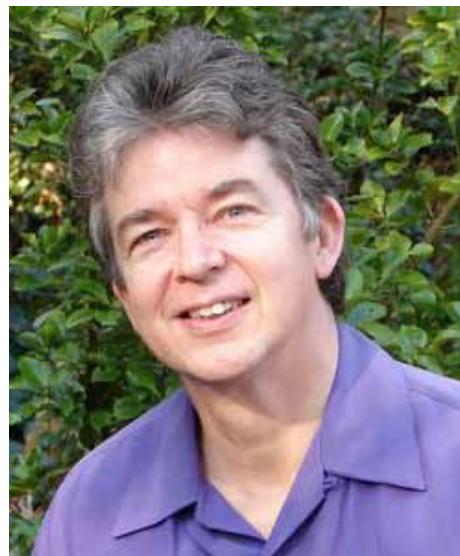
**The local
Borders here ...
is—or was—our
only bookstore.**

of stepping outside fantasy and science fiction in terms of marketing and audience.

The local Borders here in Redmond, where I live, is—or was—our only bookstore. I visited to say goodbye to my favorite booksellers and to take advantage of the sales, and it was like going to a funeral! I wrote a blog post for the Redmond Patch about it which you might find

of interest: <http://tinyurl.com/marleyborders> My CW class seems to have fallen out of touch. If any of the '93ers are out there, I'd really like to hear from them!

Louise Marley



W. BRADFORD SWIFT

I became an avid reader of fantasy and science fiction as an eleven-year-old boy when my next-door neighbor, who was a children's librarian, took pity on my single-parent mom. Bored out of my gourd with no one to play with but good ol' mom, I drove her crazy until Mrs. Crabtree brought home a stack of books she knew would hook a young boy and give my mom some relief. It worked. I've been hooked ever since.

Of course, some dreams take longer to emerge than others. Such was the case with me and writing speculative fiction. This year I participated in the CW Write-a-thon, using its support to revise and polish a YA fantasy that I wrote shortly after I attended CW. I also made the decision to devote most of my non-writing efforts towards being an indie author rather than going the traditional publishing route.

The result of all this is that *Dominion Over All* is now available and out there in the world, entertaining while also enlightening and inspiring.

W. Bradford Swift

1996

My news is that my space history book, *When Biospheres Collide*, just came out. It tells the story of the great lengths that NASA goes to during its search for extra-terrestrial life to protect the environments of the worlds its spacecraft visit.

Michael Meltzer

1997

Nothing published in paper this year, but my novel *The Painting and the City* (print edition PS Publishing, 2009) came out from iambik audiobooks (<http://iambik.com>), available as

**nothing
published in
paper this year**

a digital download from their website and other sources, including audible.com. And my first novel, *Circus of the Grand Design* (print edition published by Prime Books in 2004), came out as an e-book from Infinity Plus (<http://tinyurl.com/rfwexler>).

Robert Freeman Wexler

1999

I'm currently an assistant professor of children's literature at Kansas State University.

I have two books coming out this year: *Disciplining Girls: Understanding the Origins of the Classic Orphan Girl Story* (Johns Hopkins University Press, expected publication November 2011) and *Frances Hodgson Burnett's The Secret Garden: A Children's Classic at 100* (co-edited with Jackie Horne, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011).

Joe Sutliff Sanders

► 2000

My husband, Paul Abell, and I have had a lot of changes in the last couple of years. He became an American citizen (he's British and Canadian) and was hired as a civil servant at NASA after years of soft grant funding. He's still working on analyzing the composition of near-Earth asteroids and the concept of a crewed mission to the same, and he travels an insane amount. We celebrated our 15th wedding anniversary this year. I left my job of four years as a librarian at Houston Community College and am now at the MD Anderson Cancer Center Research Medical Library. Best Job Change Ever. I am learning about a whole new universe. Interestingly, now that my day job is much more challenging, I'm feeling more creative than I have in years.

There are few things I'd rather spend my money on than books.

It doesn't hurt that I'm now taking public transportation to work, which translates into lots of reading time.

Writing-wise, my story "Patriot Girls" appeared in *End of an Eon* from Fairwood Press, edited by Bridget and Marti McKenna. I also recently sold "My Eyes Molly Brown" to *A Quiet Shelter There*, a charitable anthology about animal companions that will benefit Friends of Homeless Animals, edited by Gerri Leen and forthcoming in 2012 from Hadley Rille Books.

Regarding bookstores, I'm an equal-opportunity book buyer. I buy lots online from Amazon.com (and love their Prime shipping), as well as some books from online remainder sellers Bookcloseouts.com and Edward R. Hamilton Bookseller. But I also buy a lot of books in person from Barnes & Noble, (until recently) Borders, Half Price Books, convention dealers, and independent bookstores. If there's a book I'm anxiously awaiting (such as Lev Grossman's *The Magician King*), I'm likely to pre-order on Amazon.com, due to bad



Detail, Anselm Kiefer, Buch mit Flügeln

experiences with Barnes & Noble taking weeks longer to get the book in and not always having or being able to locate the stock they say they have on hand. But I still love to go there and browse, and we do a lot of our Christmas shopping there. There are few things I'd rather spend my money on than books.

Amy Sisson

2002

2011 has been a busy year for me and my micropress, Panverse Publishing.

In August I released *Aegean Dream*, the bittersweet travel/settling memoir of the year my wife, Linda, and I spent on the tiny Greek island of Skopelos (the actual *Mamma Mia!* island) back in 2007. The ms had been with my agent for sixteen months and, despite getting some nice comments, publishers weren't taking any chances on an unknown in what they unanimously refer to as "the crowded travel memoir category." Since many of the book's events foreshadow the Greek economic disaster that was to come, I felt the time was right and decided to publish the book myself. Despite being only available online, the book is starting to sell well and getting good reviews across the board.

A month later, I published *Panverse Three*, the third in my annual series of all-original SF/F novella anthologies. At the time of writing, several pro reviewers have said nice things about it in *Locus*, *Locus Online*, and *Tangent*, and sales are starting to pick up. I'm also delighted to announce that a story from *Panverse Two*,

Alan Smale's "A Clash of Eagles", won this year's short-form Sidewise Award for Alternate History!

As regards my own writing, I'm attempting to apply some of what I've learned in three years of editing novella anthologies to my own work. I've written a few shorts this year after a long fallow period, more as exercise than anything, and am currently outlining a long work, a magic-realist caper novel set in the present day but with its roots in the 1960s.

You can learn more about my efforts and the above titles at the Panverse website, www.panversepublishing.com.

Dario Ciriello

I'm still in the process of completing my dissertation in English at the University of Pennsylvania, but I am also now teaching at Grinnell College as a visiting assistant professor in English and creative writing! While I'm still adjusting to life in Iowa (and, as this is a temporary gig, I'm not sure how long I'll stay), I hope to get a lot more writing done, both creatively and scholarly. And I'm also gearing up for the AMAZING CW 2K2 10 YEAR REUNION this summer! MEDIA-READY!!!

Adrian Khactu





PREMIER BOOK SHOP, BANGALORE

► 2004

I've had two stories published so far in 2011: "The Mysterious Barricades" in *Daily Science Fiction*, February 25, 2011, and "The Adventure of the Hidden Lane" in *A Study in Lavender: Queering Sherlock Holmes*, ed. Joseph R. G. DeMarco (Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2011). I've also had my first poetry collection, *Dreaming of Days in Astophel*, released by Sam's Dot Publishing.

On the poetry front, I've had two poems ("Midnight Posture" and "Homecoming") nominated for the Rhysling Award of the Science Fiction Poetry Association and consequently reprinted in *The 2011 Rhysling Anthology: The Best SF, Fantasy, and Horror Poetry* of 2010, ed. by David Lunde (Covina, CA: SFPA/Raven Elec-trick Ink, 2011). My other most recent poetry publications include "Eureka" in *Mythic Delirium* Issue 24, Winter/Spring 2011; "Fusion Drive" in *Basement Stories* Issue 3, Jan. 2011; "The Dream Police" in *Strange Horizons*, Feb. 14, 2011; "Hymn" in *Indigo Rising Magazine*, March 22,

2011, Surreal Minimalist Poetry Contest Edition; and "Refreshment from Beyond the City's Grasp" in *Status Hat*, the Cities issue, March 2011.

I'd like to note about the last that it was published in conjunction with "Scenes in an Airport", a poem by my father, Delbert R. Gardner, in a special feature section called "Destination Home". Which brings me to my other major project: submitting my father's work as his literary executor. Dad's had two other recent publications, a story called "Dissection" in *The Copperfield Review: A Journal of History and Fiction*, Volume 9, Number 4, Autumn 2010, and a poem titled "Our Mother Tongue" in *Hazard Cat*, February 9, 2011.

Lyn C. A. Gardner

2009

My story "The Curse of the Were-Penis" is in this fall's issue of FLURB (www.flurb.net).

Emily C. Skafstun

2010

The anthology *Broken Time Blues: Fantastic Tales in the Roaring '20s* includes stories by me ("Der Graue Engel") and Clarion West 2010 alumni Frank Ard ("Chickadee"), John Remy ("Semele's Daughter"), and Andrew Penn Romine ("Nor the Moonlight").

Jack Graham

I have launched a new science fiction and fantasy press out of Seattle. Hydra House will publish Pacific Northwest writers, and the first book to be released is *Snapshots from a Black Hole & Other Oddities* by fellow '10 alum K.C. Ball. Hydra House can be found on Facebook, on Twitter, and at www.hydrahousebooks.com.

Tod McCoy





MICHAEL BISHOP

Send in your updates for the Alumni News section of the Clarion West website! Recent publications, upcoming readings, interviews—if you have writing-related news, we want to hear about it. E-mail your latest news to cwAlumniNews@gmail.com. Please use the subject “Alumni News,” and be sure to include the year you attended CW. ♦

► 2011

I just got my first professional sale, for a piece I wrote during the Workshop: “Houses”. I sold it to *Lightspeed Magazine*, and it’ll be out in their November issue.

Mark Pantoja

INSTRUCTORS

In December, Subterranean Press will publish my collection *The Door Gunner and Other Perilous Flights of Fancy: A Michael Bishop Retrospective*, edited by Michael H. Hutchins, with an introduction by Jack McDevitt. The book contains twenty-five stories from four decades in my career, (1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and the 2000s). There are 200,000 words of material, and almost all the stories have been revised to increase their readability without compromising their tone, atmospherics, or substance. The cover is by Lee Moyer.

In 2012, my novella “Twenty Lights to ‘The Land of Snow’” will appear in Jack McDevitt and NASA scientist Les

Johnson’s Baen Books anthology *Going Interstellar*. The story focuses on a group of ethnically diverse Tibetan Buddhists traveling from Moon orbit to the star system Gliese 581 to colonize a presumably habitable world there, Gliese 581 g, and of course to escape persecution on Earth. The protagonist is a female child selected during the voyage as the next Dalai Lama.

I’m currently working on a young adult novel, *Joel-Brock the Brave*, and hope to finish before the year is out. No publisher lined up yet, but that’s part of the (scary) excitement of the project.

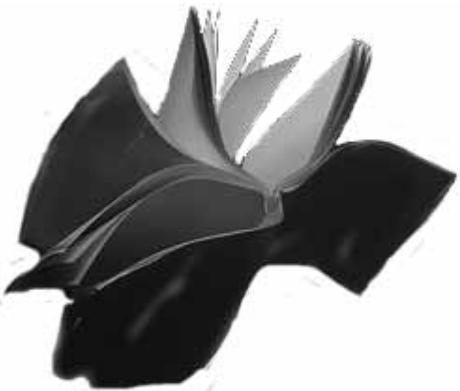
Michael Bishop, '97, '10

Blood and Other Cravings was published September 13th by Tor Books.

Terri Windling and I handed in *After*, our young adult dystopian/post-apocalyptic anthology to Hyperion for Fall 2012 publication.

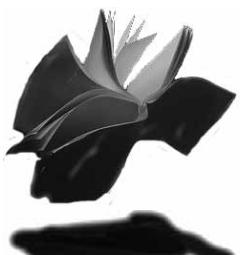
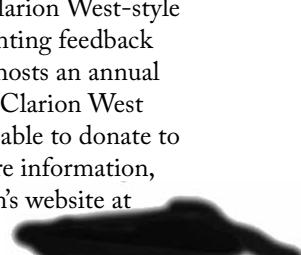
I was given the Life Achievement award by the Horror Writers Association.

Ellen Datlow, '91, '96, '01, '06



Potlatch 21 will be held February 24-26, 2012 in Seattle

Potlatch is a nonprofit literary event for readers and writers of speculative fiction. It's also an excellent opportunity to sample the workshop experience; Potlatch includes mini-Clarion West-style workshops for writers wanting feedback on their stories. Potlatch hosts an annual auction to raise funds for Clarion West scholarships, and is often able to donate to our general fund. For more information, please visit the convention's website at www.potlatch-sf.org.



CHARLES STROSS READING



LISTENING TO THE MYSTERY MUSE WITH MARGO LANAGAN

 **Clarion West 2011**
Writers Workshop

NANCY KRESS CLASS

