



We asked the authors two questions:

1. What other writer has most strongly influenced you as a writer?
2. How do you discover your inner voice-that genuine self that you strive to express?

Below, read excerpts from their answers:

JAN GODOWN ANNINO

1. Many thanks are due a grove of writers-from Aesop to Gloria Jahoda to Zora Neale Hurston. To sing about one author and title I say: gift yourself with *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*, by Harry Crews (1978). The humility, purity, and veracity of perfect sentences about his father's connection to the Tamiami Trail, about his own child years in South Georgia, are my template for storytelling.

CARLENE FREDERICKA BRENNEN

1. Mark Twain was my favorite author. As a teenager I read Ernest Hemingway's novella, *The Old Man and The Sea*. His portrait of Santiago engaged in the last struggle of his life deeply moved me. I wanted to know more about the author, more about the man, the writer who has most strongly influenced my work.

2. I have to feel passionate about the subject, almost an obsession. When that happens the words flow. It is this energy that drives the story

HENRY COLE

1. My favorite book as a child (maybe still today!) is *Charlotte's Web*. I love the way such a significant story can revolve around something as insignificant as a pig, or a spider. It is about friendship and kindness, something kids need to be reminded of every day, and sweet without being sticky...

PATRICIA ENGEL

1. My greatest literary hero is Albert Camus...His voice is remarkably clear, free of artifice, and his philosophical integrity is evident in everything he writes. I admired him as a man, but adore him as an artist of utmost conviction in examining the human struggle to understand love, loneliness, and one's place within a troubled, aching world.

2. Authentic voice comes about when a character's psychology is thoroughly investigated, their emotional history has been excavated, their deepest desires and whims are known and understood by

the author. The character's natural voice will then begin to emerge and it's up to the author to listen to that voice, remain compassionate, and not obfuscate it.

CHRISTINA DIAZ GONZALEZ

1. One writer that heavily influenced me as a child, when I was just beginning to dream about being a writer, was Madeleine L'Engle. Her novel, *A Wrinkle in Time*, opened up a brand new world for me and I've been fascinated with the blending of science fiction and realistic fiction ever since.

2. I try not to focus on my voice, but rather on the voice of my character. It is their story that I am telling so it is important for me to delve into their world and let my imagination run wild.

JAMES GRIPPANDO

2. In high school I read the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *A Man for All Seasons*. It's the story of Sir Thomas Moore, who was beheaded after he refused on principle to sign an oath approving the marriage of King Henry VIII to Ann Boleyn. That story stays with me. It kept me from getting too cynical as a young lawyer, when I was appalled to discover how many witnesses lied under oath. As a writer, I'm reminded how important it is to be honest with my readers. Honesty is the key to finding your inner voice.

WILLIAM CULYER HALL

1. Since I've had little formal training in creative writing, established writers have taught me virtually all that I know-writers such as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, James Dickey, Patrick Smith, Joseph Conrad, Jack London and Cormac McCarthy...

2. As for finding that genuine self we all desire to express, for me it simply takes time. Time and repetition. When I first begin a story, nothing seems to work, to flow. But with patience and perseverance, I eventually am able to hear myself, to compose sentences that feel right for me. I have to be stubborn. Stubbornness is my strongest asset when trying to find my inner voice.

LOLA HASKINS

1. For me it's not writers but poems. If I hadn't happened to memorize "The Highwayman" when I was in sixth grade, my life would have been different. Since then, I've had epiphanies from sources as diverse as Greek drama, Dickinson, Whitman, Yeats, Herbert (Zbigniew), Neruda and Lorca. Recently I've been drawn to Asian poetry. "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden and "The West Wall" by W.S. Merwin are two among the many poems that leave me in awe.

HARRY A. KERSEY, JR.

1. In the 1970s I became identified with that first generation of scholars to call ourselves ethnohistorians. We blended the techniques of history, anthropology, and other social sciences to present a unique perspective on American Indians. The movement took its lead from the late Tewa anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz's call for a new history presenting Indians as sentient beings who played a major role in shaping their own destiny. This challenge was met brilliantly by writers such as James Axtell, Theda Perdue, and R. David Edmunds, to name but a few. It is from this peer group that I have constantly drawn inspiration.

ANNA LILLIOS

2. The nature of my writing is critical scholarship. I take on a detached, analytical tone when I do my work. I'm afraid I dissipate my honest voice in the millions of words of electronic messages that I write every year. Now that I've finished my book, my mother wants me to write a novel. Maybe there's hope for me after all!

BRAD MELTZER

2. I don't think you can access your inner self for writing unless you can also access it when you're not writing. In other words, if you're honest with yourself and your own flaws, fears, dreams...the reader will feel that. Sounds a bit new-agey and silly, but it's true. Also, show me any novel, and I'll show you what the writer is dealing with at that time.

JOYCE ELSON MOORE

1. Two historical biographies, titled *Bloody Mary* and *Mistress Anne*, both written by Carolly Erickson, introduced me to the lives of monarchs and ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives.

2. Because my thoughts are the essence of my being, a reflection of what I have read and loved and lived and cared about, voice cannot be forced. And so, with plot in mind, I allow the characters to act out scenes, to fret and strut their "hour upon the stage," never revealing to them that their lines and lives may change when filtered through the lens of my experiences.

MARK MUSTIAN

1. I'm a big fan of some of the greats, and for differing reasons: William Styron for the smoothness of his prose and his willingness to take on difficult subjects; Graham Greene for the emotional and religious depths he explores; Philip Roth for his sheer inventiveness. But perhaps a friend and contemporary of mine, the writer Paul Shepherd, has influenced me more than anyone else...

2. Perhaps my legal education has helped here...because as a lawyer I've been trained to represent any client in any circumstance-to in effect walk in his shoes or hers. Likewise, in writing fiction, everyone has a story. My job as a writer is to tell it, and tell it well.

LAURA K. NEMMERS

1. As an author who wrote technical chapters on digitization and collections care in the 20th Anniversary catalog, I was most inspired by the teachings of Jean Gilmore and Rebecca Buck, who wrote *Registration Methods*, the "bible" for registrars and collections managers...

HARVEY E. OYER III

1. Initially, Florida writer Patrick Smith provided the inspiration for me to write narratives of Florida's unique history through the eyes of a multi-generational Florida family...More recently, I have been inspired by the many writings of Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who in my estimation is superb at arousing a reader's sense of place when describing the sights, sounds, and smells of even the most remote and distant historical locations.

2. I believe that I am constantly discovering and refining my inner voice. It is an evolution, not an event...I need several days alone with myself, with no distractions, to tap into this voice.

MARY JANE RYALS

1. I read voraciously, and still do-the Bronte sisters, Austen, Edgar Allen Poe...and Nancy Drew. Later Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor. Contemporary writers Louise Erdrich, P.D. James, A.S. Byatt, Maya Angelo. Reading Nanci Kincaid and Bailey White showed me how the Florida-Georgia border seethes with literary life.

2. I use a first-person narrator, so the writing feels like acting...I become that person on the page telling the story. Coming from a Deep South oral tradition makes me think like a story teller...

JASON STEUBER

1. [I] take inspiration as a writer and curator from 20th century curators and scholars in Asian art, particularly Laurence Sickman (1906-1988) and Roy C. Craven, Jr. (1924-1996). Sickman was an Asian art curator and Director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art while Craven was professor of Indian art at the University of Florida... Each of these authors was able to convey exceptional details to their writing while making the content accessible to readers.

LU VICKERS

1. I read constantly-everyone from Jayne Anne Phillips to Orhan Pamuk to Zora Neale Hurston. But the late Jerry Stern was the person who influenced my take on Florida history the most. Jerry loved Florida and he loved the odd detail, as evidenced in *Florida Dreams*, a travelogue he wrote documenting some of Florida's roadside attractions.

2. For fiction, accessing my inner honest voice means going native again-turning off the computer and picking up a pen and some paper and heading to the beach...For nonfiction it means listening carefully to what other people are saying to discover the nuances in their stories...