

Introduction

Stories live everywhere, but they rarely stay in one place. Despite our attempts to classify, codify, and construe them, stories keep moving too mercurially to fit intellectual categories. Stories also shape-change. They shrink or expand depending on the listener, the medium, the time, the place, and the teller. So a storytelling conference becomes an organic experience—and planning one is like lassoing an amoeba. What do you catch and how do you keep it? Or, less figuratively, what do you include and how do you preserve it? We decided on a program that incorporated both telling stories and telling about stories, both practical and theoretical approaches, both oral and literary forms, with some graphics thrown in for good measure. What's in this book is only partially what happened during the conference—a little more, a little less. The papers are revised, the tellings only described.

The first section emphasizes practical application. Anne Shimojima draws on her twenty-three years of creative experience incorporating storytelling into a school library media center. Karen Morgan describes storytellers going electronic. Susan Klein and Janice Del Negro give workshops on varied aspects of storytelling, Susan on young adult rites-of-passage tales and Janice on the adaptation of traditional tales. The second section focuses on theory. Joseph Sobol examines the storytelling revival of the 1970s and '80s. Betsy Hearne looks at women's role as midwife of stories for children in oral, print, and professional traditions. Malore Brown gives a multicultural perspective on storytelling. Meanwhile, Janice Harrington, Susan Klein, and Dan Keding balance these papers with vivid storytelling concerts. We can't recreate them, but we can tell you what they told.

The third and fourth sections move into the realm of story in book format, with Judy O'Malley book-linking thematically, Deborah Stevenson analyzing narrative in art, and Arthur Geisert storytelling the creation of a

picture book with personal and professional aspects interwoven. Since Arthur's slide show eludes representation in print, we show a few pig prints. Finally, Christine Jenkins looks at stories as commodities in the economics of popular culture, and Janice Del Negro considers the story dynamic of literature in library culture.

Good storytelling makes education an entertaining experience and entertainment an educational experience. Joseph Sobol's spontaneous balladry closed a conference that proved once again how much learning comes with playing, which is—come to think of it—what stories are all about.

Betsy Hearne

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September 1998