



News, Views & Thoughts from Sally Wiener  
Grotta

December, 2018

## Storytelling: Our Humanity Illuminated

Hello,

As we approach the winter solstice — the darkest day of the year — my thoughts turn to the season's long evenings. I imagine sitting with friends and family, perhaps in the glow of a fireplace, sharing tales and a glass of wine, reading a good book, remembering the past and wondering about what new adventures will unfold in 2019. The perfect storytelling setting.

Storytelling. It's more than the pleasure of reading or the fun of good conversations. In many ways, the ability and need to create, hold onto and share stories defines what it is to be human. Without narrative's impact on how we think, observe and remember, could we have learned and evolved as a species? What's more, our histories — personal, communal, global — are expressions of what we choose to believe about our roots, our purpose, the meaning of our lives. And our internal narratives — those that we replay in our minds about others, about ourselves — shape who we are and how we function within our communities and relationships. Stories illuminate humanity, helping us see into what we think of as hidden crevices, teasing out truths that are far richer than mere facts.

These are the kind of thoughts that come to me late at night, when I wonder why I'm so driven to create stories, write them down, then rework them over and over again, to sculpt my words into something that might make a connection with readers whom I may never know personally. I return to these thoughts and similar questions frequently, and explore them in many of my essays and presentations.

Below are links to a video and to two essays about the nature of storytelling. Plus, as my holiday gift to you, I'm providing a free download of one of my short stories. Perhaps you'll share it with friends and family as you gather around a roaring fireplace, banishing the winter chill with companionship, and a round of storytelling. And please I tell me where your mind goes when you read this newsletter and click through to the links; discuss with me your thoughts about the roots and impact of storytelling.

I hope your holiday season is warm,  
filled with friends, family, and lots of good stories.  
Sally Wiener Grotta

Scroll down for my holiday gift to you: a free copy of [The Broken Bottle](#), a short story that originally appeared in [The North Atlantic Review](#).

*"There isn't anyone  
you couldn't love,  
once you've heard  
their story."*

~ Mary Lou Kownacki

## Tell Me Your Story

"According to rumor, Mr. Rogers carried this quote from the author Mary Lou Kownacki in his wallet: "There isn't anyone you couldn't love, once you've heard their story." Whether or not he did, it's a lovely thought that reflects an important pillar of my life's work....."

[Click to read this essay](#)

## Our Creativity Gene

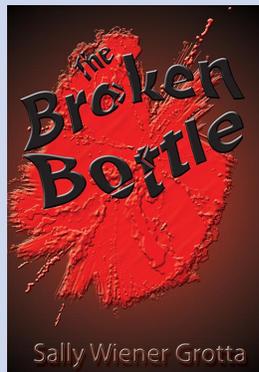
Storytelling is hard-wired into the human psyche. It's how we learn, how we communicate, and how we evolved as a species. In this video, you can view excerpts from a reading I did of my essay *Our Creativity Gene*.

[Click to view this video](#)



Do you know an organization, school, conference or company that is looking for a Speaker for a Meeting, Workshop, Keynote or Fundraiser? Please share my [contact](#) info with them. Thank you.

## My Holiday Gift to You: a Free Short Story



***The Broken Bottle*** was originally published in *The North Atlantic Review*.

### *The Broken Bottle*

"...A turn in the road. That's all it was. And we ended up in Chinatown for a late Sunday night supper on our way home from visiting family upstate. On such turnings, a life can be changed..."

[Click to read \*The Broken Bottle\*](#)

[Click](#) to read an essay -- ***Haunting Questions*** -- about the genesis of this story and how it relates to all my storytelling.

Curious about what I'm doing these days?  
Please click the buttons below.

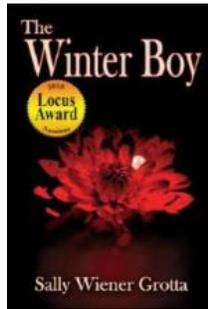
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## Read excerpts of my novels... then buy them

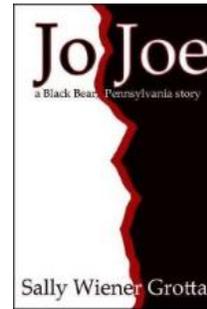


Reminiscent of Margaret Atwood, Mary Doria Russell and Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Winter Boy* explores important political and social issues within a dynamic, character-driven otherworld, wrapped up in masterful storytelling.

Locus Award nominee  
Bookwatch Reviewers Choice

Read an Excerpt

Buy *The Winter Boy* in hardcover, paperback or eBook at all bookstores, including [Amazon](#), [Apple iBookstore](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), or an [independent bookstore](#) near you.



On returning to her childhood village, a multi-racial Jewish woman confronts the white boy who broke her heart, is menaced by an old enemy who threatens worse, and uncovers a secret that makes her question the nature of the prejudice that formed who she is as a woman.

Jewish Book Council Network Book

Read an Excerpt

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