



What If? Why Not? How?

News, Views & Thoughts from Sally Wiener
Grotta

February, 2019

Gesundheit! Catching & Spreading the Creativity Bug

Hello!

Creativity is contagious, and one of my aims is to help spread the bug widely. I hope you'll join me in this. It's fun, meaningful, and an important key to our continued growth, well-being and success. Besides, it doesn't take much effort; creativity leaps easily from one person to the next, generating a feedback loop.

Have you noticed how inspiring it is to have an animated conversation with someone who has a new idea, an interesting story or a different perspective? I love facilitating that kind of interaction. A while ago, I taught a narrative art class to a group of high school students. The assigned project was for each of them to create a collage that told the story of their family heritage. The problem was that most of them thought they had no interest or ability in art. Through storytelling, questions and dialog, I was able to ignite the imagination of a few, then a few more. That's when a raucous chain reaction began to ripple through the room, with the students feeding off and building on each other's ideas, tearing through magazines, and sharing their family stories. Then suddenly, the room quieted. Each child was concentrating on making a collage.

I came away from that workshop so exhilarated by their newly discovered creativity that I stayed up all night writing a short story. The story had nothing to do with collaging or the kids, yet it was a direct result of the feedback loop we had shared, of being stimulated by their creative energy.

Similarly, creativity can spill over from one area of our lives to another. To put it another way, the more we use our creativity, the more creative we will be. For me, when I'm productive as a writer or speaker, I become more inventive as a photographer or problem solver (and vice versa). Perhaps, that's one of the reasons I particularly enjoy those projects that tap into both my storytelling and my photography, the way my [American Hands](#) narrative portrait project does. (More about *American Hands* below.)

I'd love to hear about any similar experiences that you've had. Once creativity is part of a single aspect of your life does it infect everything else, inspiring you to try novel solutions, or to attempt something that you might not have previously considered possible? What circumstance or person has caused you to catch a particularly fervent case of the creativity bug?

Thank you,

Please scroll down for links to an essay on how photography and writing inform each other; *American Hands* photos, video and poem -- plus an invitation to contribute your guest essay to my blog.



[Click to read this essay](#)

What Photography Has Taught Me About Writing ... and Vice Versa

"I am often asked what I mean when I say that my photography and writing inform each other. Photography, storytelling, and, yes, life... it's all about what we see, how we convey it to others and whether we can make it meaningful.

When I look at the world through the lens of my camera, I..."

American Hands

American Hands is my ongoing visual narrative of those individuals – blacksmiths, weavers, spinners, glassblowers, bookbinders, rug makers, etc. – who are keeping alive the traditional trades that built our country's diverse culture.

Read the poem

What is it about the human hand?

Buy *The American Hands Journal*

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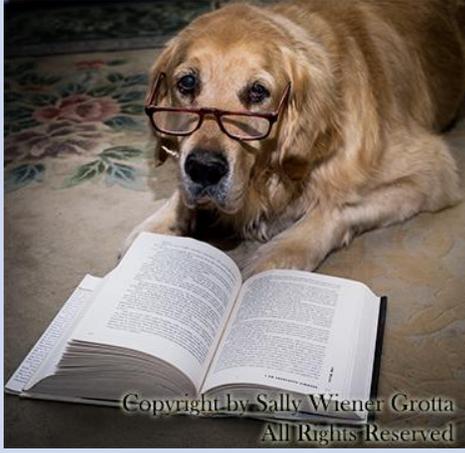
View this video about the American Hands Vision

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Do You Want to Write a Guest Blog?

I welcome intelligent and/or funny guest blogs that entertain, inform, enlighten and, most importantly, will be of interest to my readers. And yes, I am open to



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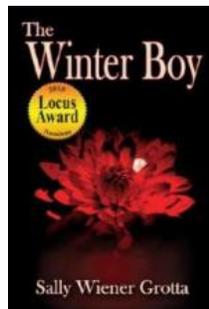
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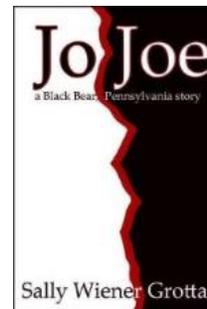


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Read an Excerpt

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

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