



What If? Why Not? How?

News, Views & Thoughts from Sally Wiener
Grotta

January, 2020

Looking Back, Dreaming Forward...

Hello,

This past year, I chose to live outside my comfort zone, as a way to jump-start my creativity. I can't say it was a conscious decision. In fact, I pretty much accidentally slid into the process (as you can read in my essay "[Living the Creative Life: Embracing Reciprocity Failure](#)," linked below.) But it worked. By the end of the year, I had written a number of stories, in a variety of genres. Several were published; one received a substantial award. And I started a new novel unlike anything I've ever written.

Looking back on the year, I realize now that discomfort is essential to my creativity. The sense of imbalance that comes from accepting new kinds of challenges can be a dizzying pirouette, because I have no idea where I might land. Nor can I depend on the tried and true. Instead, I need to embrace new ideas, new styles, and a frequently changing self-image as an artist. Sure, I might fall flat on my face. But the alternative is to stay rooted in the past, repeating what has already been said or done.

Who knows where all this will take me in this new decade? That's the nature of venturing into the unknown. I have dreams of what might come, not just for me but for anyone who is willing to take the chance of breaking the old templates. Perhaps together we can reshape the future with out-of-the-box creative thinking. All you need do is take that first step beyond your comfort zone. Initially, the experience might be disquieting, but the rich, fertile soil feels so good once you take off your shoes.

What do you think? Can we apply this idea of living beyond our comfort zone to things other than creating art?

I'll look forward to hearing from you, Sally

In this newsletter are the following:

- The essay I mentioned about living beyond my comfort zone
- A report from my reading at the Philadelphia Museum of Art
- "Yikes! I have an Awards Eligibility Post" which includes links to read a couple of my recent short stories.

*"On the razor-edged border
between the
possible and the impossible,
creativity flourishes."*

~ Sally Wiener Grotta

[Living the Creative Life: Embracing Reciprocity Failure](#)

an essay by Sally Wiener Grotta

When I was a young photographer, I enjoyed experimenting with reciprocity failure. In other words, I purposely pushed color film beyond what was "possible" to seek new creative visions. My memories of that experience became an important point of reference during the year I just spent as a writer living beyond my comfort zone.

[Click here](#) to read how I rediscovered my creative soul in 2019 by writing stories that were well beyond my comfort zone.

[My Reading at the Philadelphia Museum of Art](#)

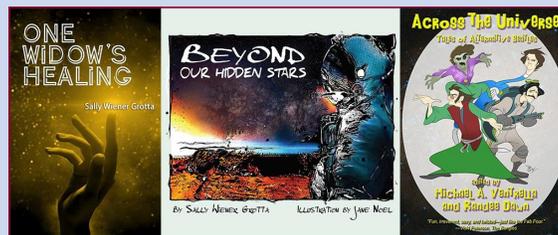
I was honored (and thrilled) to be invited to read one of my science fiction short stories at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, in conjunction with their fascinating Designs for Different Futures exhibit. The event, which also included a reading by David Walton, was hosted by Lawrence M. Schoen.



Photo by Carol Gyzander

[[Please [click through](#) to read about the event, the stories we read and to view the pictures]]

Interested in writing a guest blog? Read these [guidelines](#) before querying.



[Yikes! I have an Awards Eligibility Post](#)

Friends and fellow authors pushed me even further outside my comfort zone, telling me that it was time to get the word out about some of my 2019 published stories. And, yes, they said, that included creating an [Awards Eligibility blog post](#).

Of this year's work, one novelette and two short stories are in the [post](#). Below

are links to the stories (two links are public, three are on the private SFWA Nebulas Reading List).

- "One Widow's Healing" - Published in the 2100 Health Odyssey anthology of award winners. In the year 2100, an isolated nanophysician has to fight corporate powers to improve the health care system. (SFWA members, please [click here](#) to read the story. All others, [click here](#).)
- "Beyond Our Hidden Stars" - published in DreamForge Magazine of Science & Fantasy Fiction. Set in a space mining future when people have become cogs in the inescapable corporate machine, one woman plants the seeds of revolution by relearning how to dream and to share her dreams through storytelling. ([SFWA members](#); [others](#))
- "The Truth Within" - published in the [Across the Universe: an Alternative Beatles Anthology](#). "George Harrison's plan for World Peace involves teaching transcendental meditation to President Richard Nixon. ([SFWA members](#))

Are you looking for a [Speaker](#) for a Meeting, Workshop, Keynote or Fundraiser?

Let's talk about how I might help you achieve your goals.

Thank you.

Please click the buttons below to read about what I'm doing these days.

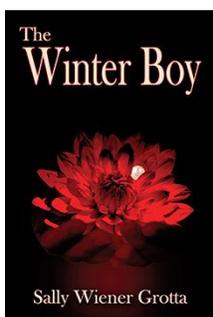
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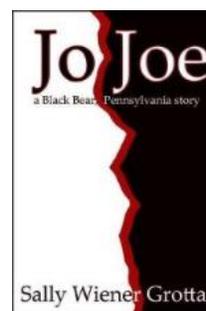
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