

The Never-Ending, Ever-After Story: Narrative, Healing, and Wholeness

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NARRATIVE WORKS
Issues, Investigations, & Interventions

The Never-Ending, Ever-After Story: Narrative, Healing, and Wholeness

Sheree Fitch

*In the doing and telling of the story or the poem
there is the creation of a safe place.*

"Tell me a story with your mouth talking," Sheree Fitch beseeched her dad when she was a child. The need for story is primal. Drawing on almost 25 years as a writer and storyteller in many genres, acclaimed Canadian author Sheree Fitch wove together story and poetry in 2010's John McKendy Memorial Lecture on Narrative. She shared anecdotes and insights from her experiences as an author, as a teacher, and, as she explained it, "being a midwife to others' stories."

Among the question she asked and addressed in her talk were:

- ◆ What happens in community when stories are shared?
- ◆ Why does healing happen through narrative?
- ◆ How do we adjust when the stories we have told ourselves about ourselves or others are shattered or changed?
- ◆ Will the power of the human voice ever be replaced?
- ◆ Will the bookstores of the future be replaced by Storytelling Cafés?
- ◆ How do we create a safe place for new and unheard narratives to be heard and everyone's story be honoured?

During her lecture, Dr Fitch also read from her novel *Pluto's Ghost* (Doubleday Canada), a story of an angry young man who struggles with reading and writing but who tries to tell his truth and, in doing so, accepts himself.

Watch lecture

Sheree Fitch is an author, educator, and literacy advocate. She grew up in New Brunswick, Canada, and graduated from St. Thomas University in 1987. That same year, her first book, *Toes in my Nose*, illustrated by Molly Lamb Bobak, was published. Since then, Fitch has written more than 25 books, ranging from playful children's verse to adult fiction. Her best-selling children's book, *Sleeping Dragons All Around*, won the Atlantic Booksellers Award in 1990. She has numerous other awards to her credit, including the Mr. Christie Award for *There Were Monkeys in My Kitchen*, the Anne Connor Brimer Award for *Mable Murple* and the Vicky Metcalf Award for a body of work inspirational to Canadian children. Her book of

adult poetry, *In This House Are Many Women*, was published by Goose Lane in 1992 and reissued in 2005. In 2009, her first adult novel, *Kiss the Joy as it Flies*, was shortlisted for the Stephen Leacock Award for literary humour.

Fitch is a tireless advocate for literacy. She worked in the Arctic with women in the literacy program, Somebody's Daughter, and taught writing to college students and teachers in Bhutan while participating in that country's first National Reading Week. She has worked in inner city schools in Antacostia with Turning the Page and was awarded their Founder's Award. She has travelled to Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, China, Belize, Mexico, Thailand, and Vietnam, and throughout the United States, for readings and workshops in schools and libraries. Fitch's multi-award-winning book, *If You Could Wear My Sneakers*, was commissioned by UNICEF and is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. She has taught children's literature at St. Thomas and is currently an honorary spokesperson for the New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy, which annually sponsors an adult learner scholarship in her name. Also a spokesperson for the Nova Scotia Read to Me Program, her baby board book, *Kisses Kisses Baby*, was translated into French and Miqma'. She holds three honorary doctorates, including one from St. Thomas University for her contribution to literature and issues affecting women and children. Fall 2010 saw the re-release of her classic tongue twister, *Mable Murple*, and a novel, *Pluto's Ghost*.