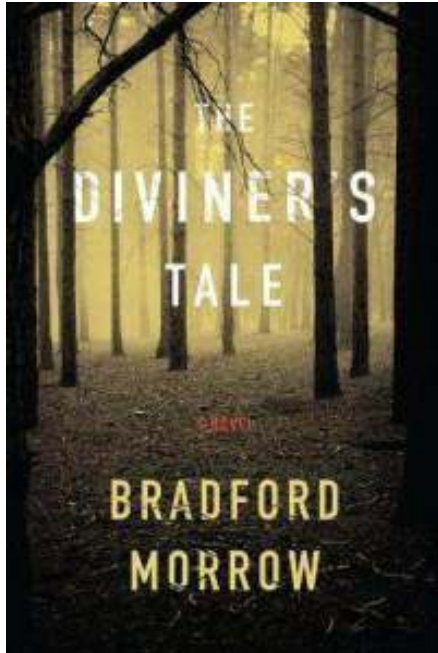


The 7 Question Interview with Bradford Morrow



Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Bradford Morrow grew up in Denver, Colorado, and has lived or worked in a variety of places. As a teenager, he traveled through rural Honduras as a member of the Amigos de las Americas program, serving as a medical volunteer in the summer of 1967. The following year he was awarded an American Field Service scholarship to finish his last year of high school as a foreign exchange student at a Liceo Scientifico in Cuneo, Italy. In 1973, he took time off from studying at the University of Colorado to live in Paris for a year. After doing graduate work at Yale University, he moved to Santa Barbara, California where he worked as a bookseller until relocating to New York City in 1981, where he founded the literary journal Conjunctions and began writing novels.

Some of his novels are:

- The Almanac Branch
- Trinity Fields
- Giovanni's Gift
- Ariel's Crossing
- The Diviner's Tale

His official website can be accessed here: www.bradfordmorrow.com

The WritingRaw.com 7 Question Interview

Please let us know who you are and how we might know you:

I am the author of six novels—Come Sunday, The Almanac Branch, Trinity Fields, Giovanni's Gift, Ariel's Crossing and The Diviner's Tale, my newest, which just came out yesterday with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. I founded and continue to edit the literary journal Conjunctions, which will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary this coming December. I've edited a number of books, including half a dozen by Kenneth Rexroth, who was a mentor to me in my twenties, but also one with fellow novelist Patrick McGrath, The New Gothic. My stories have been pretty widely anthologized, most recently in Best American Noir Stories of the Century—which included my tale of murderous brotherly mayhem, "The Hoarder"—as well as in the O. Henry and Pushcart prize anthologies.

Any news you would like to share concerning upcoming projects:

Well, besides this new novel I mentioned above, Open Road Media will be publishing my entire backlist of novels as e-books on February 15 (www.openroadmedia.com). I also

have another anthology coming out in February with Norton (a few days after the Open Roaders launch my backlist), co-edited with David Shields, called *The Inevitable: Contemporary Writers Confront Death*. Some amazing contributions to that anthology, which is as much about life as it is about death—Geoff Dyer, Joyce Carol Oates, Greg Bottoms, Annie Dillard, Sallie Tisdale, Melissa Pritchard, Robin Hemley, Diane Ackerman, Margo Jefferson, just to name a few. Also, my first collection of short stories, *The Uninnocent and Other Stories*, is forthcoming in late November from Pegasus Books. And I have some stories that will appear over the year, one of which—“The Enigma at Grover’s Mill”—is included in *New Jersey Noir*, coming in early November. Plus, as always, *Conjunctions*.

Thoughts concerning the current state of the literary world:

I know that the overall mood is dark, even dire, about the state of publishing, which of course has its corollary impact on literature and the literary world. But maybe I remain a foolish optimist (who would edit a literary journal for most of his adult life and not be a foolish optimist, eh?) in thinking that literature continues to prevail, to be read by so many people, and that there is no decline of the book, as such, but a branching out through other media. As an editor, I see incredibly wonderful and original manuscripts every week, by people from all over the country, indeed the world. Trust me, the state of the literary world is active, wildly engaged, sometimes fractious (nothing wrong with that), often supportive, and just kicking along.

Who is/are your favorite author/s and why?

This is a question one could write a whole book about, of course. My favorites are probably no different than those of many. I loved Cormac McCarthy’s first five books, when he was still basically a cult figure, before *All the Pretty Horses* broke him out. *Blood Meridian* is simply astonishing. Willa Cather is a writer people know about but rarely read. I recently read through every one of her novels and all her stories, and she’s pure genius when she’s on her game. I’m writing something for NPR about her right now. Try *Death Comes for the Archbishop* if you haven’t read her. *The Magus* by John Fowles I love, despite its awkward ending (art need not be perfect to be powerful). William Gaddis’s *The Recognitions*, *JR*, *Carpenter’s Gothic*, and *Frolic of His Own* are in and of themselves a stellar reason to learn English in the first place. I’m devoted to Thomas Bernhard. William Gass’s essays are among the best ever written by anyone in any century. Donne and Yeats are dear to me. Graham Greene is underread, Paul Bowles. I wouldn’t have become a writer if it weren’t for Thomas Hardy. I could go on and on. *The Tempest* by you-know-who is something I read often. Why is tougher. I love them all because they open up my head, gentle me into important worlds I wouldn’t otherwise have known.

Have you written a book you love that you have not been able to publish?

I wrote a twisted children’s book in collaboration with the legendary Gahan Wilson, one animal for each letter of the alphabet, and Gahan and I could never find a publisher for

it. It's a real drag, because I know people—especially children who paint their fingernails black at an early age—would love it.

Do you have anything specific that you want to say to your readers?

I just want to thank my readers for reading my work, is all. I wish I could sit down with every one of them and have a talk, maybe take a walk together, find out what interests them, look at my work through their eyes. Not possible, even a kind of maudlin response to a perfectly fair question. But that's the deal. I would honestly like to thank them for reading me.

How do you feel about what WritingRaw.com and other literary sharing sites are attempting to do for new writers?

New writers are the most vulnerable to being discouraged by rejection, so a site like this that might offer encouragement and insight is only for the best. But don't be deceived, you new writers out there, in thinking that it gets any easier as you go down the years, writing, publishing, working hard. I don't even need to tell you, you already know. The disappointments are just as freaking bitter, and the joys as wonderful but fleeting. Point is, if you're in this to write, to do it, then just do that. It's enough, in itself.

* Bonus Question – Required reading:

Read Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, the first postmodern novel (well, after Swift's 1704 *Tale of a Tub*) to see just how fresh and outrageously cool literature has been for a very, very long time. Then do Beckett's trilogy, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*, because you'll see that Swift and Sterne lead the way to Beckett and Bernhard. It's all a continuum. Ovid's *Metamorphosis* is one of the most luminous books ever written. It goes like that.

WritingRaw.com would like to thank Bradford Morrow for taking the time out of his busy schedule for this interview.