



Boston Authors Club

September 2021 Newsletter

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Julia Ward Howe Awards

WE ARE CELEBRATING TWO YEARS OF OUTSTANDING WRITING BY BOSTON AREA AUTHORS!

PLEASE JOIN US ON **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 AT 3PM**
LIVE ON ZOOM TO HONOR THE WINNERS OF THE 2019 AND
2020 JULIA WARD HOWE PRIZES

AND

THE WINNERS OF BAC'S NEW DISCOVERY AWARD
COMPETITION

*If you haven't received a zoom link to access this event, please email
bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com for your invitation.*

The Blog Tour Starts Here: Nancy Tupper Ling



Nancy Tupper Ling, well known children's author and a mainstay of the Boston Authors Club Board, awards programs, and committee roster is launching her latest book, For Every Little Thing, an anthology for children, with a Blog Tour. The BAC newsletter is excited to be her very first tour stop. Here's the inside story on her new book.

Congratulations on your latest book co-authored with June Cotner called For Every Little Thing: Poems and Prayers to Celebrate the Day. (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers), and thanks for sharing some background on your path to publishing it.

Q: How did your poetry and picture books lead you to co-authoring an anthology?

A: It's thanks to my co-author, June Cotner. June is the Queen of Anthologies. She has 35 to her name and those books have sold over a million copies. Over the years June accepted several of my poems for publication, but you might wonder how I became a co-author? As I often say, sometimes one question can make a world of difference. Several years ago when I learned that June's assistant was moving away, I asked: "Is there anything I can help you with?" Her answer shocked me: "Well Nancy, how would you like to co-author a book with me?" If I'd never asked that simple question, I wouldn't have had the privilege of creating anthologies like FAMILY CELEBRATIONS (Andrews McMeel Publishing), TOASTS (Viva Publishing), and our just-announced BLESS THE EARTH: A CHILDREN'S BOOK OF PRAYERS AND POEMS FOR HONORING THE EARTH (Penguin/ Convergent).

Q: What inspired the idea of an anthology about gratitude designed for children?

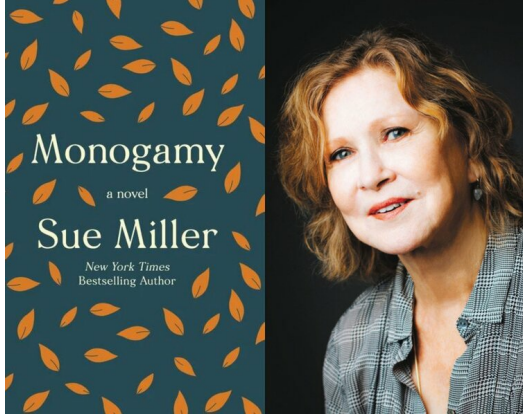
A: As I'm sure BAC members know, it can be a long time between the initial spark of an idea until a book's publication. In the case of FOR EVERY LITTLE THING, June was the mastermind behind the initial idea, but in 2014 she invited me to join along. At first we thought the book might be called Counting Blessings, based on a poem by a long-time contributor, Barbara Younger. Soon we began to gather poems to inspire gratitude in a child's day, from falling snow to pets, from bedtime hugs to train-filled dreams. Along the way, I wrote a poem called "For Every Little Thing," and that became the new title poem of our book. It wasn't until March of 2018 that we signed with Eerdmans and they hired the fabulous illustrator, Helen Cann <https://helencann.co.uk/>

Q: How does co-authoring an anthology compare to your other books?

A: The process is a completely different ballgame. When I create a picture book, it is my own creative writing and story. Yes, I'll reach out to critique partners and my agent for edits and suggestions, but otherwise it's me, myself, and I until it sells to a publisher. With an anthology, there are so many moving parts. First I had to learn the art of crafting a proposal (a thing unto itself). Then there are lots of administrative duties (keeping track of submissions, editing, accepting, and sometimes rejecting) submissions, sending preliminary acceptances, and gathering permissions. Only when I create a poem for an anthology does it feel similar to the lyrical aspect of writing a picture book.

CURRENTLY READING: Interview with Sue Miller

Sue Miller, acclaimed American novelist and short story writer, is the winner of the 2020 JWH award for her novel, Monogamy. In this interview, Miller talks about why she is exploring the work of British women writers, and describes the pleasures and challenges



of A Wreath of Roses.

Q: What are you reading right now?

I'm currently reading *A Wreath of Roses* by Elizabeth Taylor, inspired to explore her work by my sense that there is a whole group of British women writers I don't know well enough. For the most part these women produced their fiction in the years after the Second World War, and that post-war experience, with the sense of impending changes – sometimes unrealized – that seemed about to happen in the lives of women are part of what they're interested in. Among these writers are Elizabeth Jane Howard, Beryl Bainbridge, Elizabeth Bowen, and yes, Elizabeth Taylor.

I admire *A Wreath of Roses*, but I find it so emotionally muted as to be sometimes inaccessible, to me anyway. (Here I have to confess that one of the reviews for the first book of mine published in England called me "emotionally prolix" so perhaps my response to Taylor's work was inevitable.)

It does have an extraordinary opening -- a slow scene at a nearly empty train station, two people waiting there on a sunstruck, still afternoon -- a man and a woman. They are carefully avoiding acknowledging each other until a third man, idly watched by the female character, mounts a pedestrian bridge that spans the tracks and halfway across, climbs the railing and throws himself down in front of the oncoming train.

This seemed brilliant and shocking at the same time to me; I was reminded of the start of Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*, the scene in which a helium balloon rises with a small boy alone in it, the picnickers watching from the field below it, unable to act enough in time or in concert to rescue him.

As that scene does in McEwan's book, the scene at the railway station seems to be intended to reverberate through the rest of what happens to the various characters Taylor takes up. But the writing here is so restrained that I haven't been able fully to understand exactly how or why in every case. But I admire the sense I have of the parallel to the inability of England to recover from what had befallen it in the war; and the feeling of watching the female characters -- there are three -- struggling with what their lives should be, might be, in the new order of things brought about by historical events.

We shall see how it ends. Or I shall.

I really hate the notion of giving any book a rating with a number of stars, either while I'm reading it or after I've finished, so I'm going to decline to do that.

Interview by Kate Farrell

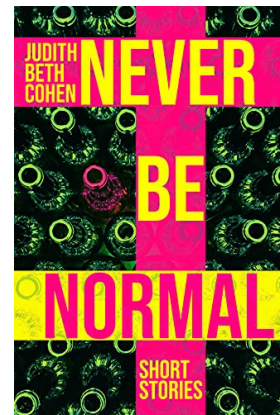
authors!
AUTHORS!

For inclusion in the October Newsletter, send your events, news, and publications by 9/28/21 to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com THANKS!

BAC Author News



Patricia Striar Rohner received her MFA in creative writing from Lesley University in June of 2021 (virtual) and will receive her actual diploma by mail in September. This is her second masters degree. The first one was from Simmons School of Social Work, MSW, in 1996.



Congratulations to Judith Beth Cohen whose story collection **Never Be Normal** will be available from Atmosphere Press in September 2021.

President's Note

September Musings on Re-Reading

Sometimes I like to re-read books. I feel a little guilty when I do – after all, there are SO many great new books out there. But ever since I was a little girl, I've derived a certain comfort from re-reading. You already know the characters, the plot, the narrative arc. In re-reading, you can relax, knowing how it will all unfold, how it will all end, even if you hope, somehow, that it would turn out just a little differently this time.

Re-reading can be ritualistic or cathartic. Sometimes I chose to re-read a book because it's a time of year when I've read it in the past or because it's a book that's been important to me in the past.

Sometimes I find that in re-reading I can find new things about a book to appreciate. I can be captivated by an author's phrasing, fascinated by the way a writer subtly develops character, entranced by a sub-structure in plot I somehow hadn't noticed the last time I read the book, or the time before that.

Right now I'm re-reading Theodore Dreiser's classic *An American Tragedy*. I've read this book maybe a dozen times. I'm not entirely sure what inspired me to pick it up yet again, but I find myself easily re-drawn in. I already know who dunnit and I know why he did; I know why and how it's a tragedy for the families of Clyde Griffiths and Roberta Alden and I know why Dreiser thought it was a larger story, an American tale. But once again I find myself marveling at this novel, masterful in so many ways. At a time when the season will soon change, when the school year will soon start and when so many of us feel a sense of renewal, I'd like to recommend to my fellow BAC members that the excitement and the uncertainty of this time of change can be nicely tempered by picking up a familiar book and allowing yourself the luxury of a re-read.



Julie Dobrow
BAC President

Yesteryear at the BAC: How a Controversial Preacher Plot Propelled an 1888 Best Selling Debut Novel

"It would be a sour curmudgeon indeed who would not wish to read the true story of a happy married life...." So sayeth Booth Tarkington about a book written by his next-door neighbor, Boston Authors Club member Margaretta Wade Deland. The book Tarkington was referring to was Golden Yesterdays, Deland's last book, published by Harper & Brothers in 1941 when she was 84 years old. Her first novel, described below, was more controversial and considerably more popular.

The manuscript and a draft of *Golden Yesterdays* are in the Philadelphia Area Archives Research Portal. There are also collections of Deland memorabilia at the University of New England ("fascinating hand made gift book"), the University of Pittsburgh (letters), Washington State University (letter), UMassAmherst (letter to W.E.B Du Bois), Colby College (letters, photographs, and clippings) and the Boston Athenaeum ("a copy of Deland's 'The Old Garden' decorated by the renowned English artist Walter Crane").



The scattering of one's personal artifacts goes on throughout one's life as well as at one's death. Their later reassembly into archives depends at least in some cases on the level of one's posthumous fame. For example, the donation to your local library of a package of letters by Rodney P. Random would undoubtedly be politely refused, but a letter from Calvin Coolidge to Mr. Random probably wouldn't, although it would probably be put in Calvin's archive rather than Rodney's.

DeLand started her literary career writing poetry and short stories, but her fame rests primarily on her first novel, John Ward, Preacher, published by Houghton, Mifflin, in 1888. The publisher had such scant faith in the book's market potential that the first print run was only seven hundred copies. John Ward, Preacher went on to sell over a hundred thousand copies and enjoyed at least nine editions. It tells the story of a Calvinist minister who cannot accept the doctrine of eternal damnation and that topic caused quite a kerfuffle at the time.

In her thumbnail biography in Notable Boston Authors, Deland says of her move to Boston, "we rented a house out in Dorchester where we kept chickens and a horse and where we went without a stair carpet in order to buy a cow."

I never realized that nineteenth-century stair carpets cost that much. Maybe she got a bargain on the cow.

Become a member for 2021!

Membership dues are \$50 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online by [clicking here](#). If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:

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