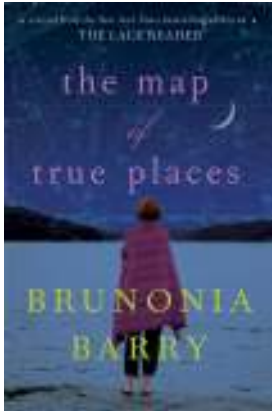


The 7 Question Interview with Brunonia Barry



Born and raised in Massachusetts, Brunonia Barry studied literature and creative writing at Green Mountain college in Vermont and at the University of New Hampshire and was one of the founding members of the Portland Stage Company. While still an undergraduate at UNH, Barry spent a year living in Dublin and auditing Trinity College classes on James Joyce's Ulysses. Barry's love of theater led to a first job in Chicago where she ran promotional campaigns for Second City, Ivanhoe, and Studebaker theaters. After a brief stint in Manhattan, where she studied screenwriting at NYU, Barry relocated to California because she had landed an agent and had an original script optioned. Working on a variety of projects for several studios, she continued to study screenwriting and story structure with Hollywood icon Robert McKee, becoming one of the nine writers in his Development Group. Brunonia's love for writing and storytelling has taken her all across the country but after nearly a decade in

Hollywood, Barry returned to Massachusetts where, along with her husband, she co-founded an innovative company that creates award-winning word, visual and logic puzzles. In recent years, she has written books for the Beacon Street Girls, a fictional series for 'tweens. Happily married, Barry lives with her husband and her only child that just happens to be a 12-year-old Golden Retriever named Byzantium. The Lace Reader was her first original novel. Barry is the first American Writer to win the Woman's International Fiction Festival's 2009 Baccante Award (for The Lace Reader.) Her second novel, The Map of True Places will be published On May 4, 2010.

Her debut novel is:

- The Lace Reader

Her official website can be accessed here: <http://www.brunoniabarry.com/blog>

The WritingRaw.com 7 Question Interview

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

I have defined myself as a writer for as long as I can remember. This had nothing to do with output or publication. It's just that it was all I ever wanted to do, a dream I held through a myriad of straight jobs ranging from sales and marketing and public relations to stained glass window restoration and demonstrating hair care products in a New York City department store. Much as I tried to kill the dream and find satisfaction doing something else, it would not leave me alone. At the same time, I found it difficult to finish my writing projects. Life had a way of interfering and demanding my attention. I like to say that I knew instinctively that writing is about process and not product, but



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I'm not certain that it's true. A few years back, I finally did finish a project, my first novel, *The Lace Reader*, which became a New York Times and international bestseller. Even more importantly (at least from my perspective), it was the first American novel to win the International Women's Fiction Festival's Baccante award. *The Lace Reader* has now been translated into 30 languages and will soon be a feature film. I live in and write about Salem, Massachusetts. My novels are contemporary but always hold quite a bit of history. I am happily married and have a 15 year old Golden Retriever named Byzy who sits beside me whenever I'm writing.

Any news you would like to share concerning upcoming projects:

My second novel, *The Map of True Places*, is coming out on May 4th. It's the story of a young psychologist whose life is thrown off course when one of her patients commits suicide. The map of life she has been charting fails her, and she has to learn to navigate her future by the few remaining things she knows to be true. The image system for the story is celestial navigation. The earth moves and changes, particularly in these uncertain times, but the stars are a constant. *The Map of True Places* is a contemporary story, but it is informed by Salem's history, not the witch trials as in my first book, but Salem's more significant history as a world trading port when celestial navigation was not only valued but essential for survival.

Thoughts concerning the current state of the literary world:

It's an interesting time to be starting a writing career. I spent yesterday afternoon talking to a bookstore owner about the number of stores that have closed in the last few years, and I have to admit it was shocking. As writers, I think we have a responsibility to keep this important sense of place alive. Bookstores have always been the places I go to for inspiration, to be surrounded by the work of others and to remind myself of what is possible. The tactile experience of holding a book is something I cannot do without. That said, I own a Kindle and purchase many books that way, particularly when I travel. I think new media levels the playing field and gives writers opportunities we have not seen in traditional publishing. Online literary sites are great for showcasing new writers. It was bloggers who really passed the word about my first book. I owe them a huge thanks. In the two years since *The Lace Reader* came out, the publishing world has undergone significant changes. Even so, I am quite optimistic.

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

I was a lit major in college. I took a year off and moved to Ireland when I was twenty to study James Joyce and to read *Ulysses*. I love Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf and John Milton. I also love Alice Munro and Edwidge Danticat. My enduring favorite book of



the last few years has been *Last Night at the Lobster* by Stewart O’Nan. Another all time favorite is Joan Didion’s *A Book of Common Prayer*. My tastes are a bit eclectic so explaining why I like something can be difficult. It has to do with the experience of reading the book. I want to lose my subjective judgment to something higher, and when a book does that for me, I will read it again and again.

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

I’ve started many books over the years, but the only two I have finished have been published, though the route to publication has been a circuitous one.

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

First of all, I’d like to say thank you. It says a lot, I think, that readers are willing to give new writers a chance. I don’t know where the publishing industry is going, but I am certain that readers will never disappear. It seems to me that reading is a stunning and almost spiritual collaboration between reader, author, and muse.

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

I think these sites are providing a great service for what is essentially a lonely endeavor. Writing requires solitude and extreme concentration. I don’t share my writing in the early draft stages, not even with my writing group, so I often feel isolated. These sites create a feeling of community and breaks that isolation. They also provide useful advice. I just tried a few of the writing exercises suggested on WritingRaw.com and found them quite helpful. I’ll definitely be revisiting the site on a regular basis.

WritingRaw.com would like to thank Brunonia Barry for taking the time out of her busy schedule for this interview.