

Cathi LaMarche

Missouri Fiction Author



**Topic: So You've Written the Great American Novel--*Now What?*
Saturday, October 1, 2005**

Barnes & Noble, 9618 Watson Road, Crestwood 63126

For a map, driving directions, and more, visit Meetings
Meeting is FREE to members; \$5 for non-members
(credited toward membership for those who join!)

Note to SLWG MEMBERS: Cathi LaMarche has kindly agreed to provide books for purchase and autograph them for attendees.

Meet Cathi LaMarche:

In my childhood home, we didn't have books, take trips to the library, or subscribe to magazines. Reading was not encouraged, or even mentioned. While in college, however, I fell in love with the written word. Then life distracted me. Seventeen years passed before I dared try writing.

At thirty-five I began this new journey. After tucking the children into bed, I'd write into the early morning hours. Fatigue elbowed gourmet meals aside. The words, "Would

you like a lemon-basil marinade on your chicken?” soon turned to, “What would you like on your hotdog?” Scrapbook pictures piled up along with the laundry. Hairstyles and cosmetics became optional. I pecked at the keyboard night after night and soon had my first fifty pages in hand. They felt like the start of something real.

This new world beckoned and, surprisingly, writing came naturally. I looked at life through a writer’s eyes and listened with a writer’s ears. I pulled out threads from all of life’s experiences and wove them into a rich tapestry. In those late hours, my words opened windows and I flew into a long denied horizon.

Recently, I married a man who shares my passion for writing. My husband and I immerse ourselves in reality during the day, but each night escape to worlds we create. Afterwards, Michael and I sit on the porch drinking coffee and talking about literature, our novels, and our children. With our blended family, we’ve firmly planted ourselves in O’Fallon, Missouri.

I’d like to think of this as my final destination. It certainly feels like home.

Some Questions for Cathi LaMarche

***While the Daffodils Danced* portrays a story of adoption through the eyes of the birth mother. Are you adopted, have you placed a baby for adoption, or have you adopted a child?**

No, no, and no. The closest I’ve come to adoption in any form is when I adopted my greyhound from a rescue group and my collie mix from the SPCA.

How did you begin your writing career?

True story: my best friend, Judy Harrison, took me to a psychic on my 32nd birthday—girls’ night out, something different than the usual birthday celebration. I have to admit I was a bit nervous. We pulled up to the house and I remember thinking, this doesn’t look like the house of a psychic. I wasn’t sure what a psychic’s house looked like, but I thought I’d know it if I saw it.

Anyway, the psychic took me to the lower level of her home and offered me a seat at a card table. The sparse furnishings left me wondering, but I was immediately impressed when she started to tell me things about myself that were personal and true! Near the end of our consultation she said to me, “You should start writing again. Use your gift.” I laughed and told her I’d never written a thing in my life. She proceeded to tell me that I was an author in a former life and that I had several books published. Well, I thought it rude to contradict a psychic in her own home, so I just smiled and left.

I pushed her words aside for nearly three years. But there was something about what she said that intrigued me. So, I declared it a challenge and sat down to pull up my so-called gift for writing. Whether the woman was right or wrong, it started me writing and that's all that matters.

I'd love to see that psychic again. Perhaps, ask her the names of the other books I've written. It would save me a whole lot of time writing the next one.

What was your inspiration behind *While the Daffodils Danced*?

Although the story is fiction, my fascination with daffodils is true. Each spring, I'd visit a field of daffodils near my childhood home. Growing up in a challenging environment allowed for much time away, so I sought solace in this field and began to see the world in a different way.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time when you're not writing?

If I had any spare time, I'd tell you. No, I do carve out a little time for fun. Of course, I enjoy reading. I love women's fiction, now that's a surprise. Anne Tyler, Billie Letts, Elizabeth Berg, Barbara Kingsolver, Bobbi Smith, Elizabeth Bevarly, and Debbie Macomber are among a few of my favorite authors.

Gourmet cooking and gardening are passions of mine. My family and I planted 250 daffodil bulbs this past fall. We're a family who loves to play board games. I also devote time to my business as a beauty consultant for Mary Kay.

Are you working on any current projects?

I'm working on a second novel. It's also mainstream women's fiction. The working title is *Innside Out*, but that will probably change. The story takes place at a Bed & Breakfast set in a small town in Michigan. The protagonist, Tess Womack, is a naïve girl who is highly superstitious. My research on superstitions has been entertaining and enlightening.

What advice would you give to other writers?

Trust the process. Don't keep second guessing yourself. Stay with the idea and continue in the direction you're going, especially with first draft. Some of what you write, you will keep in the rewriting stages, and other stuff you'll end up pitching. But none of it is ever wasted. The scenes you end up cutting may have been for your benefit to strengthen your knowledge about your characters. Sometimes, you have to go around the barn a few times.

Secondly, let yourself go. Don't be worried about what other people are going to think about your writing. This creates surface writing. I've read books where the author took

me to the edge then pulled back, out of fear, I believe. Can you say frustrating? Go to that deeper level and take your reader with you. They don't want average, boring, and mundane, or they'd stick with their own life instead of escaping with a good read. If you promise them a journey, you have to deliver.

Lastly, join or start a good critique group. This is invaluable. Friends and family will tell you that your novel is wonderful because they still have to share holiday meals with you. Form a group with those writers whom you trust to give you honest feedback. It can be painful, even brutal, at times. But it's nothing compared to the editing process that goes along with publication. Get used to the idea that not every word you write is fantastic. Sometimes you write great stuff, but it doesn't fit into that particular story. Listen to others and you'll be amazed at how you can flourish as a writer.

While the Daffodils Danced

Looking back, Cara imagines her life as it could have been...

An unexpected pregnancy should have been the worst thing she had to face. Discovering the father was married and unwilling to claim their child, Cara offers her precious baby up for adoption. This ultimate sacrifice forces her to leave the hospital with a grieving heart, carrying nothing but an overnight bag.

An artist, haunted by the images of the unknown, Cara finds it impossible to heal. Seeking solace in a field of daffodils, she creates landscapes rich with color and beauty, painting over the grief that discolors her world. In the shadow of her angst, she finds a kindred spirit and forges an unbreakable friendship that sustains her through a broken heart and the betrayal of those she once held dear.

As life slips by, Cara wonders if she'll ever find peace or the ability to forgive herself the past. Will spring deliver on its promise of rebirth and renewal, or is it just a coincidence that Cara's beloved daffodils are the symbols of hope?

Check out www.cathilamarche.com to order your copy of *While the Daffodils Danced*.

Here's what people are saying about *While the Daffodils Danced*:



While the Daffodils Danced
Publisher--Echelon Press
www.echelonpress.com
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(trade paperback)

"A beautifully written book by a new voice in contemporary fiction."

~New York Times Best-selling Author Bobbi Smith~

"...a dazzling literary picture...heartrending emotion...stunning imagery. A starkly beautiful story and a truly remarkable debut."

~New York Times Best-selling Author Elizabeth Bevarly~

"While the Daffodils Danced is told with vivid and beautiful details...every scene and emotion is alive on the page...imaginative...an intense read for anyone."

~Roundtable Reviews

"If you love your stories with heart and soul, then I recommend While the Daffodils Danced. It will remain in your mind for a long time after reading it. Ms. LaMarche is an author who is a must read for me."

~Coffee Time Romance