

Spotlight: *We're pleased to present...*

Harvey Stanbrough



Poet, author, freelance editor
Nominee: Pulitzer Prize, the Frankfurt Award,
the ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award, and the National Book Award

**SPECIAL 4-HOUR WORKSHOP:
"The Nature of Poetry: Structure and Sound"**

**Saturday, April 5, 2008
from 10 AM until 2 PM
at Barnes & Noble-Crestwood
9618 Watson Road, Crestwood, MO 63126**

FEE: \$5 for SLWG members; \$10 for non-members

Get [map and directions](#). For workshop details, visit our [Workshops](#) page.

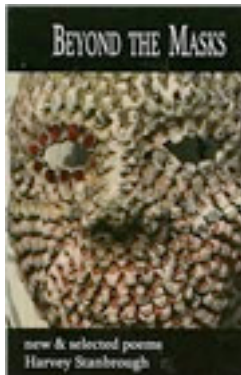
Please [register in advance](#).

HARVEY STANBROUGH was born in New Mexico and spent most of his life in Arizona. After graduating from a 21-year civilian appreciation course in the U.S. Marine Corps, Harvey attended Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM, where he managed to sneak up on a bachelors degree. Now he is a freelance editor, writer, and poet who works from his home outside Huachuca City, Arizona. His works have been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, the Frankfurt Award, the ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award, and the National Book Award. His current nonfiction titles include *Punctuation for Writers*, *Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction*, and *The Craft of Poetry: Structure & Sound*.

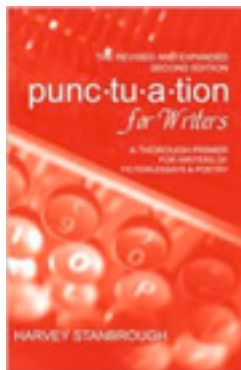
Harvey's poetry collections include *On Love & War & Other Fallacies*, *Residua*, *Lessons for a Barren Population* (the first-ever book-length poetry collection published as an e-book), *Intimations of the Shapes of Things*, and the recently released comprehensive collection, *Beyond the Masks*, which was nominated for the National Book Award.

Harvey is a sought-after speaker at writers' conferences around the nation, where he presents sessions on Observation for Writers, Writing Realistic Dialogue, Writing Flash Fiction, and Writing Poetry. Complete course descriptions, references, and other information are available on his website at StoneThread.com. You can contact him directly at h_stanbrough@yahoo.com.

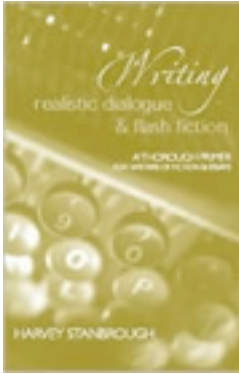
Check out these great books by Harvey Stanbrough:



Beyond the Masks
Publisher: Central Avenue Press
Pub. Date: April 2006
ISBN-13: 9780971534445
175pp



Punctuation for Writers
Publisher: Central Avenue Press
Pub. Date: March 2005
ISBN-13: 9780971534414
73pp



Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction
Publisher: Central Avenue Press
Pub. Date: March 2005
ISBN-13: 9780971534452
148pp

Read our interview with Harvey Stanbrough:

SLWG: Where are you from originally?

HS: I was born in Alamogordo NM and remained in southeast New Mexico until I entered the USMC in 1970. For promo purposes, I like to say I was born in New Mexico, seasoned in Texas, and baked in Arizona—so I’m done. :-)

SLWG: How has your environment/upbringing colored your writing?

HS: I escaped a lot into my own mind as a child. As a result, I enjoy writing about what I know, whether “what I know” has happened in real life or in my imagination. I learned at an early age to observe everything around me very closely and to sense how the intimate interconnection—the symbiosis of life—affects me and how I affect it.

SLWG: When and why did you begin writing?

HS: I wrote my first short story at age 6. It was a story about how the capitol dome had come to sit on the capitol of the US and how Capitol Hill itself was formed when the dome toppled off the capitol building one day. Something like that. And why? I don’t have a clue.

SLWG: When did you first consider yourself a writer?

HS: There is a distinctive difference between what we do and who we are. I first considered myself a writer when I realized it was the one thing that permeated every other aspect of my life. I’ve “done” many things in my life, held many occupations, but I’ve “been” a writer through all of them.

SLWG: Who or what inspired you to pen your first book or major work?

HS: I've had many influences, and each has affected me in different ways. Contemporary poet William Baer's collection, *The Unfortunates*, specifically inspired me to write a collection of my own, *Residua*, but I can't think of any other specific instances.

SLWG: How long did it take you to complete *Beyond the Masks*—from idea to acceptance by a publisher?

HS: Many of the poems in *Beyond the Masks* were written long before the collection was assembled, but it probably took a year to put this particular collection together, write several new poems specifically for it, and have it accepted by Central Ave Press.

SLWG: How long did it take for you to actually hold the published work in your hands—from acceptance by the publisher to release of the final product? Was it worth it?

HS: Probably another six months to a year. And of course, it's always worth it. The publisher also nominated a few poems from *Beyond the Masks* for the Pushcart Prize, then nominated the entire collection for the National Book Award. Most recently, it was also a finalist in the Poetry Category of the New Mexico Book of the Year Awards.

SLWG: Please describe the research process that goes into the writing of your work.

HS: No great secret there. I just observe—everything, every day. Anything and everything is fodder for a poem or story. I don't generally do what most people call research, except as a catalyst for asking Why. Generally, everything that's written, because it's written from a particular viewpoint, is an opinion. Therefore, I accept nothing at face value. Information, whether it comes from a professor, the news media, or one expert or another, immediately creates within me the overpowering desire to ask Why or What If.

SLWG: What advice can you offer authors who have finished a first book-length manuscript and now seek to market it to a publisher?

HS: First I'd first most strongly recommend they seek out a good freelance editor to help them polish the manuscript. But once it's in its best possible form, they should find a Writers Digest Guide to Editors and Publishers and Literary Agents (or whatever it's called) or some other market guide. They should consider this an important part of the writing process, no less important than writing the work in the first place. They should pour over the entries, making a list of those who publish the type of work the author has written. Then they should put together a submission packet with, say, a cover or query letter, a synopsis, and the first three chapters of their book (this is for a novel) and send those packets out to every agent who has garnered their interest. A dear friend of mine, with her first book, did just that. She mailed out 50 individual packets and, within a few weeks, received a dozen requests for the entire manuscript. From those, she received letters of interest from five agents who wanted to represent her. At that point, she had only to interview each agent and select the one she thought was best suited to represent her work.

SLWG: What advice can you offer an author who has sold a first book—with respect to working with an editor or negotiating the terms of the contract?

HS: If an author has placed a first book directly with a publisher, I strongly recommend that when the publisher calls to say he wants the book, the author should say "I'll have my agent get in contact with you." At that point, the author should run, not walk, to the nearest library, select a few agents whom he likes, and call them. He should tell them his book has been accepted for publication, and that he needs an agent to negotiate the contract. The agent will be happy to do so for his/her usual 15% cut, and the author will have an agent for his next book as well.

SLWG: Who or what has most influenced your writing style, and in what way?

HS: Wish I could answer that for you, but I honestly don't know. An almost endless list of authors and poets have influenced my writing style.

SLWG: Which genre are you most comfortable writing?

HS: Poetry, then short fiction. No particular "commercial" genre, if that's what you mean, though I very much like the idea of writing magical realism in the style of Gabriel Garcia Marquez or Octavio Paz. I enjoy watching the reader's mind slip from scene to scene without realizing a transition has taken place.

SLWG: Have you written, or do you ever plan to write in other genres? Which ones?

HS: Ahh, so you did mean which “commercial” genres: horror, SF, mystery, etc. I enjoy writing sociological SF and psychological horror or suspense as well as the aforementioned magical realism. I can’t imagine writing a mystery, though, for example, or a romance, or a blood-and-gore horror story.

SLWG: What are your current writing projects?

HS: I’ve been toying with the idea of putting together another book-length poetry collection, but my agent is clamoring (bless her heart) for a novel, so I suppose I should focus on that. I’m also working on several short stories, a couple more instructional chapbooks on poetry, and of course, my “day job” as a freelance editor of other people’s novels and short stories and essays.

SLWG: What books or authors have most influenced your life? Did they also influence your writing style or goals?

HS: I’ll pass on this one as I can’t think of a good answer.

SLWG: What are you reading now?

HS: Mostly the manuscripts of other authors who hire me as a freelance editor. I’m also currently re-reading *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Marquez.

SLWG: What new author has captured your interest?

HS: Other than a few of my editing clients, whose work was so strong it caused me to refer them to my agent, I very much enjoy the work of Deborah LeBlanc. (www.deborahleblanc.com)

SLWG: Name one person that you feel supported your writing goals outside of your family members. Explain.

HS: I can’t think of anyone.

SLWG: How do your family and/or friends feel about your writing

pursuits in general?

HS: They don't always like it, but they realize it's where my passion lies and that it's who I am and what I'm going to do regardless.

SLWG: Do you regard your writing as a lifelong career?

HS: It's who I am. It is not a career; it is my life.

SLWG: What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone who seeks to be a successful writer?

HS: Everyone says "persevere," but they're right. On the other hand, if an aspiring writer does not persevere, it's because writing is not his/her passion. Everyone should find his or her passion, then pursue that, whatever it is... or rather, once they find their passion, they should avoid forcing themselves *not* to pursue it.

SLWG: If you had to do it all over again, would you change anything?

HS: Sure, I'd probably change a lot of things, but then, we don't get that chance do we?

SLWG: Tell us your latest news!

HS: I'll be teaching a brief poetry seminar for SLWG on April 5. :-)

SLWG: Is there anything we didn't ask that you would like to share?

HS: Check out my website at <http://StoneThread.com>.