

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

## Harvey Stanbrough



**SLWG Member Since 2008**

**2009 SLWG Member of Distinction**

Poet and author Harvey Stanbrough has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, the Frankfurt eBook Award, the *ForeWord Magazine* Book of the Year Award and the National Book Award. Born in New Mexico, seasoned in Texas and baked in Arizona, he is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and graduate of Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.

Harvey's latest poetry collection, *Beyond the Masks*, was nominated for the National Book Award. Having published several short stories in various venues, he is now writing two novels: one a contemporary western/horror story and the second a work of post-apocalyptic, sociological science fiction. His current nonfiction titles include the recently-released second edition of *Punctuation for Writers*, as well as *Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction* and *The Craft of Poetry: Structure & Sound*.

In addition to his own projects, Harvey is a freelance editor and writing instructor. After many years on the conference circuit – speaking to writers in Toronto, Tulsa, St. Louis, Houston, Kansas City, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Austin, San Diego, Tucson, among other locales – he is now based close to Whetstone, Arizona and teaches his Writing the World™ writing seminars in nearby Huachuca City and Tucson. He is available to speak to groups of writers and other interested parties. Contact him at [h\\_stanbrough@yahoo.com](mailto:h_stanbrough@yahoo.com).

## What's New?

Harvey Stanbrough's Writing the World™ seminars will soon be available on DVD! These two-to-four-hour seminars are offered for private, non-commercial use or can be licensed for commercial group use. For the latest information and pricing, please visit <http://StoneThread.com>.

## Check out these great books by Harvey Stanbrough:

### *Beyond the Masks*

Publisher: Central Avenue Press

Pub. Date: April 2006

ISBN-13: 9780971534445

175pp

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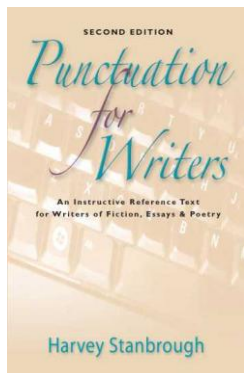
### *Punctuation for Writers, 2nd Edition*

Publisher: BookLocker

Pub. Date: November 2009

ISBN-13: 9781609100063

104pp



### *Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction*

Publisher: Central Avenue Press

Pub. Date: March 2005

ISBN-13: 9780971534452

148pp

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## Read our interview with Harvey Stanbrough:

**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 held many occupations but I was, and am, a writer through all of them.

**SLWG: How has your writing been colored by your upbringing and physical environment?**

HS: As a child, I escaped into my own mind. I spent a great deal of time imagining "What if?" That, of course, is the basis for extrapolation and formulating fiction. As an adult, I put off college until I'd completed my Marine Corps career, opting instead for a vast array of real-world experiences that both ground me and lend a certain reality to my writing. Finally, I take the time to observe everything around me very closely. I try to sense how the symbiosis of life affects me and how I affect it. That attention to detail both provides me with an inexhaustible supply of story ideas and lends an intimacy to my writing that the reader can sense and share.

**SLWG: Who were the major influences in your writing style?**

HS: Poets include William Butler Yeats, Robert Frost, Howard Nemerov, William Baer, Anthony Hecht and several others. Fictionists include Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, Franz Kafka, Elmore Leonard, Elie Wiesel, George Orwell, Jack Williamson, Ray Bradbury, John Steinbeck, Edgar Allen Poe and others. I've also been influenced by Oscar Wilde, Robert Benchley, Dorothy Parker, Stephen King, Louis L'Amour, Edith Wharton and many more.

**SLWG: In which genre are you most comfortable writing?**

HS: It isn't so much about comfort as about the exciting *discomfort* of exploration. In fiction, I'm most interested in writing about psychological or sociological issues and magic realism. For me, the event or catalyst in the story is important only in how it forces or causes the characters to react toward it and toward each other. With magic realism, I enjoy the intimate strain of trying to write seamless transitions from the ethereal to the physical and back. I've noticed that many writers seem not to like the process of writing, preferring instead to "have written," to have it over and done with. For me, in every case, the actual process of writing itself is more exciting and important than having written.

**SLWG: What are your current writing projects?**

HS: I'm actively working on a post-apocalyptic novel in which survivors from all walks of life gravitate to various groups. More important than the actual apocalyptic event itself, I hope this will be a study of how those diverse people work together (or not) and treat each other on their way to forming a new society. The idea for the novel

came from my poem, “Snubbing the Gods, 2312.” I also post writing advice weekly on my personal blog (<http://stanbrough.wordpress.com>) and every other Wednesday on Eliot (<http://eliot.stlwritersguild.org/wordpress/>).

**SLWG: What advice do you have for those who are marketing their first book-length manuscript?**

HS: Seek out a good freelance editor to help you polish the manuscript. Once it is in its best possible form, find a guide to editors, publishers and literary agents. You should consider this an important part of the writing process, no less important than writing the work in the first place.

After making a list of those who publish work in your genre, create a submission packet consisting of a cover or query letter, a synopsis, and the first three chapters of the book. A dear friend of mine did just that with her first book. She mailed out 50 individual packets. Within a few weeks she had 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: How can a writer most effectively work with an editor or negotiate the terms of the contract?**

HS: If an author has placed a first book directly with a publisher, I strongly recommend that they also have an agent. If the publisher calls before you have an agent in place, run - do not walk - to the nearest library. Select a few agents you like and call them. Tell them your book has been accepted for publication and that you need an agent to negotiate the contract. The agent will be happy to do so for their usual 15 percent cut, and you will have an agent for your next book as well.

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

HS: Write is an active verb. Thinking is not writing. Saying “someday” or “when I get time” is not writing. If you want to be a successful writer, you have to write.