



Detroit Working Writers

DWW Member Profile

Bob Tell is a writer and retired health care executive with degrees in English and Public Health from Columbia and Long Island Universities. He resides in Farmington Hills, Mich.

When did you first know the writing life was for you?

As an undergraduate English major--I did some (writing) work during the years that I had to make a living, mostly professional articles, but since I retired, I've been able to focus on poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction.

How do you jumpstart your writing when you feel less than inspired?

I write in my journal using the "hot pen" technique, where I write for a set amount of time about anything and everything that comes to mind. Usually, it only takes a couple of sessions to get me going.

What is your writing goal for 2006?

I want to get back to my second novel which is off to a good start, but which has been "resting" for the past few months while I do some commercial work and promote "Dementia Diary," my memoir about being a caregiver to my mother as she sank into the fog of multi-infarct dementia. My first novel "Thirsty Planet," is shopping for a publisher. Based upon a hypothesis suggested by a colleague of Albert Einstein. the 84,000 word science fiction novel tells the story of a 22nd century physicist who is shocked when his wife is brutally murdered during the theft of the couple's drinking water. He plans a journey to the previous century where he hopes to undo personal and ecological tragedies by altering the flow of events.

Where do you look for examples of good writing?

I turn to the classics because they all share great storytelling, precise word usage appropriate to the nature of the work, imaginative thinking beyond the ordinary and expected, fabulous craftsmanship, and unique observation of various aspects of the human condition understood and presented in depth. In short, this is art.

My list of favorites includes:

Poe: Short Stories

Arthur Conan Doyle: Sherlock Holmes adventures

Dostoevsky: Crime and Punishment

Steven Crane: Red Badge of Courage, The Blue Hotel, etc.

H.G. Wells: Seven Famous Novels

Walt Whitman: Leaves of Grass

Shakespeare's Sonnets

George Bernard Shaw: All his plays

Arthur Miller: All his plays

What quote best summarizes your attitude about writing?

"This morning I took out a comma and this afternoon I put it back in again." -- Oscar Wilde

What is your greatest writing challenge and how do you deal with it?

Finding blocks of time to write uninterrupted. I try to schedule it like an outside appointment. This doesn't always work. In fact, it hardly ever works.

What are you writing now?

Having just finished self-publishing "Dementia Diary," much of my time is going into developing a marketing plan for this book. Those interested in learning more about the memoir can go to my online storefront at: <http://www.lulu.com/DEMENTIA-DIARY>

Also, I'm always in the middle of a poem.

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