

An Interview with Carol Roach. M.Ed, B.A.

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopes

About the Author: Carol Roach. M.Ed, B.A. is a freelance writer and a columnist. She is the author of "*Picking up the Pieces: A Woman's Journey*" www.publishamerica.com and "*Angels Watching Over Me.*" <http://www.lulu.com/content/644485>. She holds a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from McGill University in Montreal. She is the publisher of the online newsletter, "*Storytime Tapestry,*" showcasing the short stories and poems of over 450 Internet writers. Champion of the underdog, Carol's signature writing is about poverty and the ability to rise about it; giving women a voice through writing. Her writing is poignant and inspirational as she encourages everyone to "let their true heart sing" through the words that they write.



Tell us about yourself

I am a 52 year old grandmother from Montreal, Quebec, Canada. I grew up poor in the slums of Saint Henri. I come from a dysfunctional family. I lived with my grandmother all my life. Despite it all, I always had a passion to learn. At the age of 37, I returned to university and obtained a bachelor's in psychology and a master's degree in counseling psychology.

It wasn't easy; I was a single parent to a 16 year old juvenile delinquent. I remember one day spending 4 hours in the police station until 4 o'clock in the morning waiting for my son, and then having to go to school for 9:am to write an exam. But I did it.

I got through university with the help of people who believed in me. Much of my life struggles and ultimate successes can be found in my first book, "*Picking up the Pieces: A Woman's Journey*" which can be purchased through the publisher - Publish America, www.publishamerica.com or online bookstores such as Amazon.com and your local bookstore. I just completed my second book, a novel: "*Angels Watching Over Me*". I also run a daily e-zine, Storytime Tapestry: <http://subs.zinester.com/98907>

When did your writing evolve from hobby to profession?

I started writing after I finished university in 1997. I began by answering a question in an online newsletter about telemarketers, as I was one myself at the time. I received so much feedback that it spurred me on to writing more. I began to write stories on the internet for free, and developed quite a following because of it. If you Google my name, Carol Roach, you will be able to see quite a bit of my published work.

I write about my personal life experiences and my friends encouraged me to put some of these stories into a book. In 2004, my hobby writing evolved into professional writing with the publishing of my first book, "*Picking up the Pieces: A Woman's Journey*."

How many books have you published and with which publishing house?

My first book, "*Picking up the Pieces: A Woman's Journey*" was published on 2004 with Publishing America at www.publishamerica.com. ISBN Number: 1-4137-1921-X.

My second book, "*Angels Watching Over Me*": Has just been released and it was published with www.lulu.com. Direct link: <http://www.lulu.com/content/644485>

Give us a brief description of your books. What did you want to accomplish by publishing them?

As I said before, "*Picking up the Pieces: A Woman's Journey*," is a collection of my life stories. It chronicles my humble beginnings as a child practically abandoned on my grandmother's doorstep, living in poverty, and trying to survive. The book shows my failures and my successes. It shows how I succeeded in life and found my own true voice. I wrote this book as an inspiration for all who seek to better themselves in life, and to show that even the smallest voice can truly count.

My second book; "*Angels Watching Over Me*" is a novel based loosely on the life of one of my very best friends. Her story is so compelling that I knew in my heart it just had to be told. She too was a woman who grew up poor and blossomed into a strong yet genteel, woman who never compromised her principles or her love of God no matter what life handed her. She is truly one of my real life heroes. Again, I wanted to inspire my readers and remind them that you don't have to be rich and famous to make a difference in this world.

Did you have any mentors? If yes, how they influenced your writing and your life? Have you mentored anyone? If yes, who, why, and how long?

I was a person with low self esteem, the ghetto and poverty can do that do you. It can rob you of your very soul. I was intelligent and my best friend Dr. Dorothy Williams recognized that. We had been friends since elementary school. Dorothy encouraged me to go to university and volunteered to help me for the first year. She taught me how to write. She is a historian by profession. Her specialty is black history in Montreal.

Dorothy spent hours teaching me the art of writing and as you know it paid off. Later I paid it forward by mentoring two other friends; editing their papers for them during their first year of university as well.

When I started my e-zine, "*Storytime Tapestry in 2003*," I also helped many a fledgling writers with the editing of their work until the e-zine grew too big and I just could not physically handle it anymore.

**Tell us about "*Storytime Tapestry Newsletter*" How long have you done it?
How can people subscribe to it?**

"*Storytime Tapestry Newsletter*" started with a membership of 300 in 2003, and today it is read by over 2,400 subscribers. It is an e-zine that was born out of the frustration of me being a creative writer and not given the medium of expressing myself the way I felt I should be able to. I was sending my work to various online publications but many had restrictions which did not support my writing. Some found my work too long, others felt it didn't fit with their pre-set theme. After talking to various peers, I found that other writer friends of mine were having the same issues.

Many writers felt that their work should not be limited to a word count or special theme. They felt that the integrity of their work was compromised by some of these sites and so they just stopped writing for them. It was then that I got the idea to open my own online publication where the true voice of the writer would be heard. I don't have word count restrictions or special themes. My newsletter is an eclectic one. All I ask is that a writer writes from the heart on issues that are important to him or her; whether it be personal life stories, poems, or a view on social issues. In turn, each writer must be respectful of others. The mandate of my newsletter is to spread culture awareness throughout the world. It is to open up my readers to the beauty and wonder of other cultures as well as exploring their own. To subscribe to Storytime Tapestry: <http://subs.zinester.com/98907>

Do you also write for other magazines, periodicals, or newsletters?

Throughout the years I have written for many. Most recently I freelance write for several paying markets such as, Medhunters, Fate Magazine, and Dovetail Magazine.

I also write for Hot Psychology, Starfish, Inspired Buffalo, the Cat's Meoux, Storytime Tapestry, Inspirit Magazine and more. Although I do not receive payment from the latter publications, they are still very near and dear to my heart.

What are your hobbies?

I am addicted the internet, I spend most of my day online, if I am not writing or preparing my e-zine, I am emailing, or playing scrabble. It comes as no surprise to the people who know me, that as writer I love words so I would love online scrabble. I am always looking for new words and a new way to express myself.

I love dinners out with my fiancé as well. Hey, I even love just playing with my four beautiful cats.

What type of books do you read?

With all the work I do reading the submissions for Storytime Tapestry, I am afraid that I really do not have much time to read books anymore. My own writing has been inspired by such authors as Charles Dickens and John Steinbeck who wrote about poverty albeit, a century apart.

When is the best time for you to write? Do you have your own “Carol’s Corner” at home?

My house is very small. My son and I both have our own computers which are set up in the living room while the TV is blaring full blast. I do not have a “Carol’s Corner” per se unless you consider the corner of the living room one. When I write, I shut out all noise around me and I can write anytime of the day. A professor once told me, “the only way to write is write.” You can find me writing something in the morning, in the afternoon, or in the middle of the night.

In addition to fiction and freelancing work, have you experimented with other genres? If yes, which ones. If no, why not?

My freelance work is eclectic. I write non-fiction, fiction, I do creative stream of consciousness writing, poetry, journalistic writing, essays and commentaries. I can do advertisement/marketing writing, but I am not really interested in going in that direction. Much of my writing for paid sources centers on medical and psychological issues which besides poverty, is my forte as well. About the only kind of writing that I have not tried is technical writing. I am technically challenged and really not interested in that area of writing whatsoever.

Publishing house or Self-Publishing – what do you recommend to new writers and why?

Just about every new writer's dream is to make a million dollars and be the next top best selling writer. I do not discourage this dream, but I do encourage that you research the industry before setting out on a road that leads to disappointment. The industry is tough. Less than one per cent of every book published in the USA is accepted by the big publishing houses and when they are, it is by the big names. Keep your dream, don't give up, but in the meantime publish with small press or self publish. The more you build your writing resume, the more you open the window to big time agents and publishing houses publishing your work.

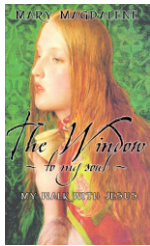
Are you working on new projects?

I have started my third book, the sequel to *Angels Watching Over me*. I am calling it *Forgotten Angel*. It deals with Jean Forbes the sister of the protagonist, Carissa Forbes, in *Angels Watching Over Me*.

A word of advice to new writers

Do not ignore the words of seasoned writers and editors. They have been in the business far longer than you have and they know what publishers want. If you feel that your work is perfect and beyond editing, you will not get published. I would be the first person to tell you not to compromise the integrity of your work and, I would also be the first person to tell you to clean it up. Even the biggest name writers have editors; never forget that. If you cannot put your ego in your pocket and accept at least some of the criticism and make the necessary changes to your work, then you are in the wrong business. However, if you can put your ego aside, and learn from the masters, you will have a great future ahead of you. Remember life is about learning and writing is about life.

About Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés is a writer by profession, a mother by choice, and a wife by the covenant of marriage. She was born in Guayama, Puerto Rico and currently lives in Germany with her husband and two sons. In 2004, she published her first free-style inspirational poetry book, *The Window to my soul, My Walk with Jesus*, (Tate Publishing) and under the pen name of Mary Magdalene. On March 2006, the book was voted “**Best Poetry Book**” by www.christianstoryteller.com. The book could be purchase directly from the publisher at www.tatepublishing.com and at all major online stores.



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