

# An Interview with Denise Turney

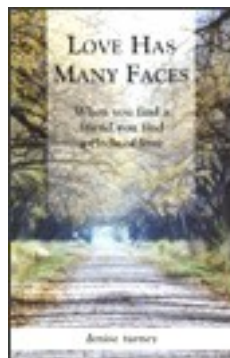
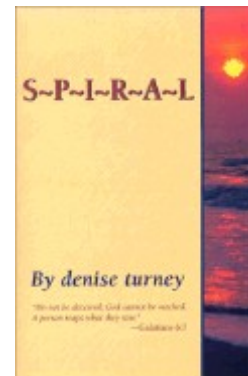
November 2008 Featured Author  
at

Time with Tannia

( <http://timewithtannia.tripod.com> )

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés



**1) Tell us about yourself.**

I am blessed-blessed-blessed to be a writer! It's a phenomenal gift! I started writing when I was 10 years old. I've been at it ever since! I have four published books: Love Has Many Faces, Portia, Spiral and my new book - Long Walk Up. Nearly 10 years ago, when my first book (Portia) came out, I started my web site (<http://www.chistell.com/>) which allows me to meet and connect with readers and writers from around the world!

**2) At age 10 you knew you were destined to be a writer. What aspect of Gwendoly Brook's poetry played a major role in your decision to become a writer. Do you remember the poem that awoken the muse?**

Great question! I love to share the impact Gwendolyn Brook's work had on me. Gwendolyn Brooks is one of America's poet laureates. As best as I recall, there wasn't a particular poem she wrote that struck me. Instead it was a series of poems Gwendolyn Brooks wrote that brought me to an awareness of my gift. My sister brought the small book of poetry home. Oddly enough she never read the book. It's as though she brought it home from the elementary school library just for me. Before I finished that book I knew I was a writer. It was a powerful, uncanny experience. The knowing didn't come from my head; it came from within.

**3) A cross-country runner and a successful writer have three things in common: commitment, determination, and self-disciplined. Share with us how the runner paved the way for the writer.**

You ask great questions and you do your homework (smile)! Cross-country running and writing taught me the impact of persistence -- even when it may appear or feel as if quitting is the best choice. I've seen races change simply because another runner (who didn't start out in front) kept giving it their best, kept believing and remained passionate about the race. They both taught / teach me the importance of joining passion with action. Doing so yields excellent results.

**4) You were a volunteer for the Big Brother/Big Sister program and Girls, Inc. What are the similarities and differences between these two programs? Which one will you recommend and why?**

Girls, Inc. is an organization that empowers young girls, lets them know that they are limited in what they can do by their gender. There are some mentoring programs in the organization that mirror Big Brothers / Big Sisters. However, Big Brothers / Big Sisters (from my experience) is solely a mentoring program. They pair positive adults with children who might be at risk of making regrettable choices or children who live in challenging home environments. My experience with Big Brothers / Big Sisters was life changing. Years after I mentored the 12 year old girl I was assigned to, I received correspondence from her telling me that she was graduating from Ball State University in Indiana. I was happy-happy-happy!!!!

**5) Your motto, "The greater person You will ever know is You" is encouraging and thought provoking. How can you convey this message to teens searching for an identity, battling peer pressure and, sometimes, even depression?**

I think an excellent way for writers to convey this is through the characters and plots we create in our stories. Without preaching or trying to tell anyone what to do, writers can create characters and put them in situations that encourage and inspire others. That's one of the ways I do this. I also speak publicly and encourage people in my everyday life. Experience presents each of us countless opportunities to teach, learn and inspire without trying to tell another person what they should do.

**6) In the 80's you got a breast cancer scare. How this experience played a pivotal role in your relationship with God, your family, and yourself?**

The experience taught me even more how valuable and fleeting life on this earth can be. It taught me to appreciate loving relationships. It taught me to more deeply value family, friends and loved ones. It showed me that I can always speak with and count on my Creator.

**7) While serving in the US Navy you had a spur of energy and inspiration leading you to pen 10 novels and earned two Navy Achievement Medals. What was the source of your productivity? Tell us about your medals, the novels and how you sorted out the manuscripts and chose Portia to be your first published novel.**

Wow. I wrote Portia as a result of the breast cancer scare I experienced. In my early twenties I didn't think I'd live another six months. Portia began as a series of love letters to my family. I couldn't think of a way to tell them that I might be leaving this earth without hurting them, something I did not want to do. So I began to write "thank you letters" to them for their love and care. Those letters morphed into Portia. I'm going off memory, but if I remember correctly I published Portia first because if I didn't pull through I wanted my family to have the book's message.

Inner guidance directed me to write 10 novels while I was stationed at Crane, Indiana - a very isolated Navy station. As far as medals (and I appreciate the Navy Achievement Medals that I earned), the greatest accomplishment I had from the Navy are the people I met. That's true wherever I go!

**8) Your literary ezine, "The Book Lover's Haven" is brief, well organized, and very informative. What is the secret of its success? How can our readers subscribe to it?**

Thank you for asking. I started The Book Lover's Haven in 1998. At first I didn't think hardly anyone would subscribe, but before I knew it, I had 500 subscribers. Today the newsletter has over a thousand subscribers. Many subscribers have been with The Book Lover's Haven for 10 years. I appreciate that and each subscriber. I think the success of the newsletter are the changes I have made over the years. I also think subscribers love the interview features.

**9) For several years you were the host of the internet radio show, "Off The Shelf" aired on blakeradio.com. What were some of the challenges and rewards of doing the program? Why did you stop hosting it? Given the opportunity, would you do it again, maybe as a podcast?**

I loved hosting "Off The Shelf"! Sadly, the station owner ran into financial difficulties. All the hosts chipped in to help with that and then the station owner's mother crossed over. The owner did some soul searching and decided to make changes in his life. He loved the talk shows; said they were the back bone of the station, but this is a direction he decided to move in. I absolutely LOVED interviewing the different guests - people like you, Tannia! I learned so much doing the interviews! If I had the opportunity to host a radio show again, I would do it. I've looked into it and it either costs to host the shows I've come across or you need equipment to host a show. If you hear of something, I'm definitely interested!

**10) What makes your books stand out among the others? The theme, the characters, your personal approach to common day issues? Please share with us a blurb of all your books and where can our readers buy them.**

Readers tell me that my books are written from the soul. They also tell me that my books are unique in style and how subjects are addressed.

A blurb from my new book *Long Walk Up* reads: 'When she did Mulukan closed her eyes; the kiss felt like a butterfly had brushed her face. "I know you enjoy the comforts here, Mulukan, but you cannot stay here. You must keep moving.'" Just as Mulukan opened her eyes, her mother blended in with the yellow paint decorating the room, the air Mulukan and the other children breathed, the tree at the edge fo the house.'

You can purchase a copy of Long Walk Up (we're currently running a sale!) at <http://www.chistell.com/>. Thank you!

**11) You are a very talented woman. You are a professional novelist, journalist, book reviewer, mother, and community volunteer. How do you manage your time to keep your sanity and meet all your deadlines? Which is your favorite role? Least favorite? Why?**

Thank you. You're multi-talented yourself (smile)! I manage thru the grace of God. Things come easily when I do what I love which at times requires finding something to love in things I might like as readily as I do others. I also am organized. That's a big help! I meditate and I've learned to enjoy the experience of life itself!

**12) Are you working on new projects?**

I am writing on my fifth novel. It's finished. I'm editing it. It tells the story of a father and son. The father has had a deeply injurious drinking problem for years, all of the son's growing up years. Their relationship shapes the son, shapes them both in ways they don't imagine. Near the end of the story they learn that they have always loved each other. The son also opens his heart and allows an amazing woman to love him. It's a story of dichotomies, a story of great struggle and great triumph.

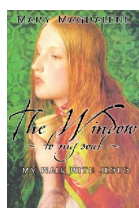
**13) How can our readers contact you?**

Readers can contact me thru my web site (<http://www.chistell.com/>) or via email at: rcampb3422@aol.com

Thank you!

**14) A word of advice for new writers.**

Trust your inner voice.



**Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés**, author of *The Window To My Soul; My Walk With Jesus*

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The author also has a blog at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## Readers Comments:

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**Comments:** I really enjoyed the interview. You seem like someone with a lot of energy and motivation. Your stories of how you realized you were called to be a writer and how you came to write Portia were very moving. Thanks!

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**Comments:** Denise and Tannia, Thank you for an interesting interview! God bless you both...