

An Interview with Lori Ann Watson

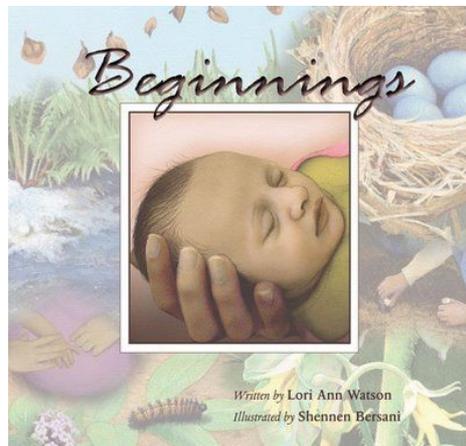
November 2009 Featured Author
at

Time with Tannia

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

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés



1. Tell us about yourself.

I have been married for eleven years and am a stay-home mother of three (cute and energetic) children. I have been a teacher, an editor, a typist for a private investigations company, and (now) an author.

2. Your first big writing job was as an editor of your high school newspaper. What part of the job did you like the most, the least, and why? Share with us the most valuable lesson you learned while wearing the editor's hat.

This was a great experience. I really enjoyed the writing. I really *didn't* enjoy critiquing other writers' work and telling people what to do...so I didn't do those things very much. I think the rest of our team had a busy time that year taking up my slack! I learned a lot about meeting deadlines there, and I also learned how to work as part of an editing team—we had an editor-in-chief, two co-editors, and a teacher sponsor, as well as writers for all the different areas.

3. After your high school graduation, you went to study education and earned a degree in elementary education with a specialization in early childhood education. Based on your experience as a teacher, what is the cornerstone in early childhood formation? Have you applied your knowledge in the upbringing of your children? If yes, how did they benefit from it?

As a teacher, I found three things that almost always were in place with the children who did really well in school: the strength of the family's faith, the strength of the parents' marriage, and the strength of the child's relationship with his or her parents. In my experience, these things were the best indicators of each child's success in school and influenced both academic achievement and social skills. This is one of the main reasons why I wanted to be home with our children to raise them. I know really terrific parents in families in which both parents work full-time, so I know it can be done. But I also felt God calling me to be home and I knew that with our particular personalities and in our situation, our chances of raising really good kids and having a strong family were better if I stayed home.

4. Do you consider your university degree the foundation to your writing career? What would you like to accomplish with your gift of the word?

I met some wonderful people during college who influence me even now, but I don't feel that the degree itself is the foundation for my writing. When I was searching for a way to be home and still bring in an income, I often *wished* I had studied journalism, because so many of the work-from-home writing and editing jobs required a journalism degree! But God worked it all out for our good. He is so good to us!

What would I like to accomplish? I am quiet, but I still feel called to share the Gospel, so that is my main goal through writing. Since I've been back in the Church, I have been blessed to be taught so much about my dignity—as a person, as a woman, as a mother, as a child of God—and I want everyone to understand the dignity they have by nature of the fact that God created them. If everyone could just read Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae* and really absorb the message there, I think we would see a shift in society toward greater happiness and goodwill. If I see someone who is engaging in harmful behavior, I think, "If only that person *knew* how special and precious each of us is to God!" Through writing, I hope to help spread the message of the dignity of the human person and the love God has for each of us. I especially hope to help reach children. I hope, I hope!

5. You taught in TX for two years, moved to FL, married your husband and after the birth of your first son you became a full-time stay-home mom. These life changes gave you the opportunity to further polish your writing skills. Which one of these events do you consider the most important in your development as a writer and why?

The birth of our first son—and my husband's willingness to take a "leap of faith" and let me quit teaching—were both very important. Wanting to be a stay-home wife and mother, and knowing I would still have to bring in some income, really pushed me to write, and being home also gave me the time I needed to write. The most important event in my development as a writer, though, came in 2002, when I was brought back to the Church. Learning about the beauty of the Faith formed a message inside me that I wanted to share with everyone in the world—and I felt as if I owed it to Christ to reach as many people as

possible. When that message became more fully formed in my heart, things started to fall into place with the writing. God really had His hand on us the whole time, and I am very grateful now that He didn't let anything I wrote be published in those first few years, before that message was better-formed. He really knew what He was doing when He sent me those publishers' rejection letters!

6. Do you gather strength and courage from your daily life? Have your children inspired any of your stories?

Yes, I do gather strength and courage from daily life—the little everyday trials and duties do much to help us to grow, thank goodness. Our oldest son inspired my first story...one of the ones no one has accepted yet! My children also inspire many of the little daily funny stories that I sometimes write down in a journal. I started a blog just for these cute little stories, but my quietness and our need for privacy (and our busy family life) keep me from blogging much about daily life.

7. In 2002 you experienced a spiritual awakening that prepared you to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and brought you back to the loving arms of your beloved Jesus. Looking back at those events in your life, did you ever feel like a piece of clay waiting for the hands of the experienced Potter to mold you in His image? If yes, which scripture lifted you up and prepared you to pick up your cross and follow Him?

I did feel like that. I remember, before that (very trying) year came, I was praying so often, *“Lord, how do you want to use me? What can I do for You? Please show me. Please use me. Please help me to be the person You want me to be so You can use me.”* He had to—still has to!—change a lot of things about me. There were so many scriptures that lifted me up. *“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—plans for your welfare and not for woe, plans to give you a future full of hope,”* from Jeremiah is the one I kept going back to (and being given) over and over. I hung onto it during those times, memorizing it and repeating it over and over during the rough spots. I am so grateful now that He tried me that way and helped to form me more through those times.

8. Many people underestimate the value and role of their guardian angels. For many it's a children's belief and nothing else. However, you seem to have a good understanding with your guardian angel. How did you develop your relationship with him/her? Would you recommend this to others?

My guardian angel helps me so much. He (or she) is very patient and persistent—and has a good eye for detail; he (or she) “picks up on” things that I miss. The times I didn't listen are the times I regret the most. It hasn't taken too much effort on my part; the main things I have done are that I have prayed the “Angel of God” prayer since childhood (and still do) and have asked my guardian angel to do little tasks and give me help frequently and then said thank you. Before I turn in a project or an assignment, I try to ask my guardian angel to read it and help me. I still make mistakes and sometimes write things I regret, but he or she also helps me to catch many mistakes. I would definitely suggest developing a relationship with one's guardian angel. Some of my friends name their guardian angels, and I think that is a wonderful idea, but I haven't found the perfect name for mine yet. (maybe Patience?)

9. Your book, *Beginnings*, is a simple and captivating children's picture book. I enjoyed reading it and writing the review, too. Share with our readers the process from creation to publication. Do you believe this story was inspired by God?

Thank you! Inspired by God?—Oh, I know it was; it happened too quickly to be all mine! My nicknames growing up, from the people who loved me the most, were an affectionate “Molasses” (as in “slow as...”) and “Christmas” (as in “Waiting for you is like waiting for...”) And thirty years later, I’m not much quicker! *Beginnings* was the answer to a short prayer I said for “an idea to write about” one afternoon as I was on my way home and knew I would have the house to myself for a few hours. It took me five minutes to get home, and by the time I got there, it was already almost finished in my head. I went home, typed it out, and tweaked it a little. Within two hours, it was pretty much ready to send off. I sent it to my friend Sussette, who suggested I send it to a homeschool publisher, who sent me a list of Catholic publishers who published children’s books. Pauline Books & Media was on the list, and they accepted it. They found Shennen Bersani to illustrate it (boy, is SHE amazing!), and everything just fell into place. No, it definitely happened with a huge dose of heavenly help. Had it been just me, I’d still be reworking the first three lines!

10. You published your book with Pauline Books & Media. What influenced your decision to publish with them? Would you recommend this publisher to others?

The reason I submitted the manuscript to Pauline Books & Media was that they were recommended by the homeschool publisher I originally sent the manuscript to. I feel so very blessed and grateful to have been able to work with the people there. What a faith-filled, professional group! And they are led by the Daughters of St. Paul, a group of nuns whose mission is to spread the Gospel to the world. I can’t think of anyone I would rather work with. They did (and are doing) a beautiful, beautiful job.

11. Where can your readers purchase your book?

Beginnings is available at Pauline Books and Media stores, by calling Pauline Books & Media at (800) 876-4463, at www.pauline.org, at www.amazon.com, and at some Catholic bookstores. Readers can link directly to it here:

<http://pauline.org/Beginnings/tabid/127/Default.aspx>

12. A word of advice to those experiencing a new Beginning in their life? Always remember that God loves you and that you are infinitely precious to Him. Seek His direction and will in your life, and hang onto Him.

His plans for us take us on a great adventure!



Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *The Window To My Soul; My Walk With Jesus* (2004 Tate Publishing;), *El Espejo de mi Alma* (2010 Pleasant Word) .

Author’s websites: timewithtannia.tripod.com, www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes, and www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes The author also has a blog at www.amazon.com

READERS' COMMENTS:

Date Received: November 4, 2009
Name: Wendy Jordan
Email Address: (optional) jwjwjordan@yahoo.com
Web site URL: (optional)
Where did you hear about this interview? Lori

Comments: Lori is an amazing gift from God. She has always been the kindest and most loving person that you could meet. I am so blessed to of had the chance to have her in my life. What an amazing gift she is, and it is so wonderful that the world can see her work.

Date Received: November 4, 2009
Name: Sherry Hayes-Luzader
Email Address: (optional)
Web site URL: (optional)
Where did you hear about this interview? Lori

Comments: Lori is such an asset to all those around her. She brings such joy and inspiration to me everytime I see her. Wherever it may be, in the hallway at school, in the parking lot, or a classroom, her glow is always there! May God bless you!

Date Received: November 5, 2009
Name: Patty Harbes (Lori's Mom)
Email Address: (optional) pharbes@yahoo.com
Web site URL: (optional)
Where did you hear about this interview? Lori

Comments: I cannot believe that I had a small part in raising this wonderful woman. She is a constant inspiration to me and I thank God he put her in my life. She is a beautiful person inside and out. I am so very proud of her.

Date Received: November 5, 2009
Name: Uncle Jim
Email Address: (optional) Jbpier@sbec.com
Web site URL: (optional)
Where did you hear about this interview? Email

Comments: What a wonderful surprise you have become. You have plenty of rounded experieces to relate to in your writings. I used to enjoy scaring the daylights out of you and Chandra as little tots!

Date Received: November 5, 2009
Name: Fr. Ed Murphy
Email Address: (optional) ewmurphy59@hotmail.com
Web site URL: (optional)
Where did you hear about this interview? From the author herself

Comments: Lori, You have a tremendous gift with writing. Keep to it! You are going to go somewhere soon in the future. We need good, solid pro-life writers.