

Cloud of Witnesses

Jane Hertenstein

Bio (260 words)

Jane Hertenstein is a prolific author of fiction and creative non-fiction for adults and children. She enjoys long-distance bike touring, waking up early to work, running along the lakefront, and working with the homeless on the streets of Chicago.

Her latest book, *Cloud of Witnesses*, is based on her experiences substitute teaching in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in southern Ohio.

About her writing: “It all started a long time ago. Trees and poems. During my early years I would climb a tree and write a poem about trees. In 4th grade I dabbled in fiction—until my teacher complained to my parents I was “wasting time” writing stories instead of doing my schoolwork. An early activist, as a teen I wrote letters to the local newspaper trying to block an interstate roadway to protect my favorite oak tree.

“I always loved reading Newbery-award winners. Favorite books are the place-markers in my life. That time I read only mysteries or autobiographies of ingenious Americans (code for “men,” very few were about women). The summer I read Dickens or Louisa May Alcott, Austen and the Brontës. Then . . . I stumbled upon *The Outsiders*.

“*The Outsiders* switched on philosophical wondering and wandering. Next were *Catcher in the Rye*, *Animal Farm*, *Lord of the Flies*, the Old and New Testaments. Craving realism, I read *Grapes of Wrath* and *The Great Gatsby*. There was something out there that I wanted—not sure what, yet it wavered on the horizon like heat on hot pavement. I would write my way toward it.”

Bio (62 words)

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