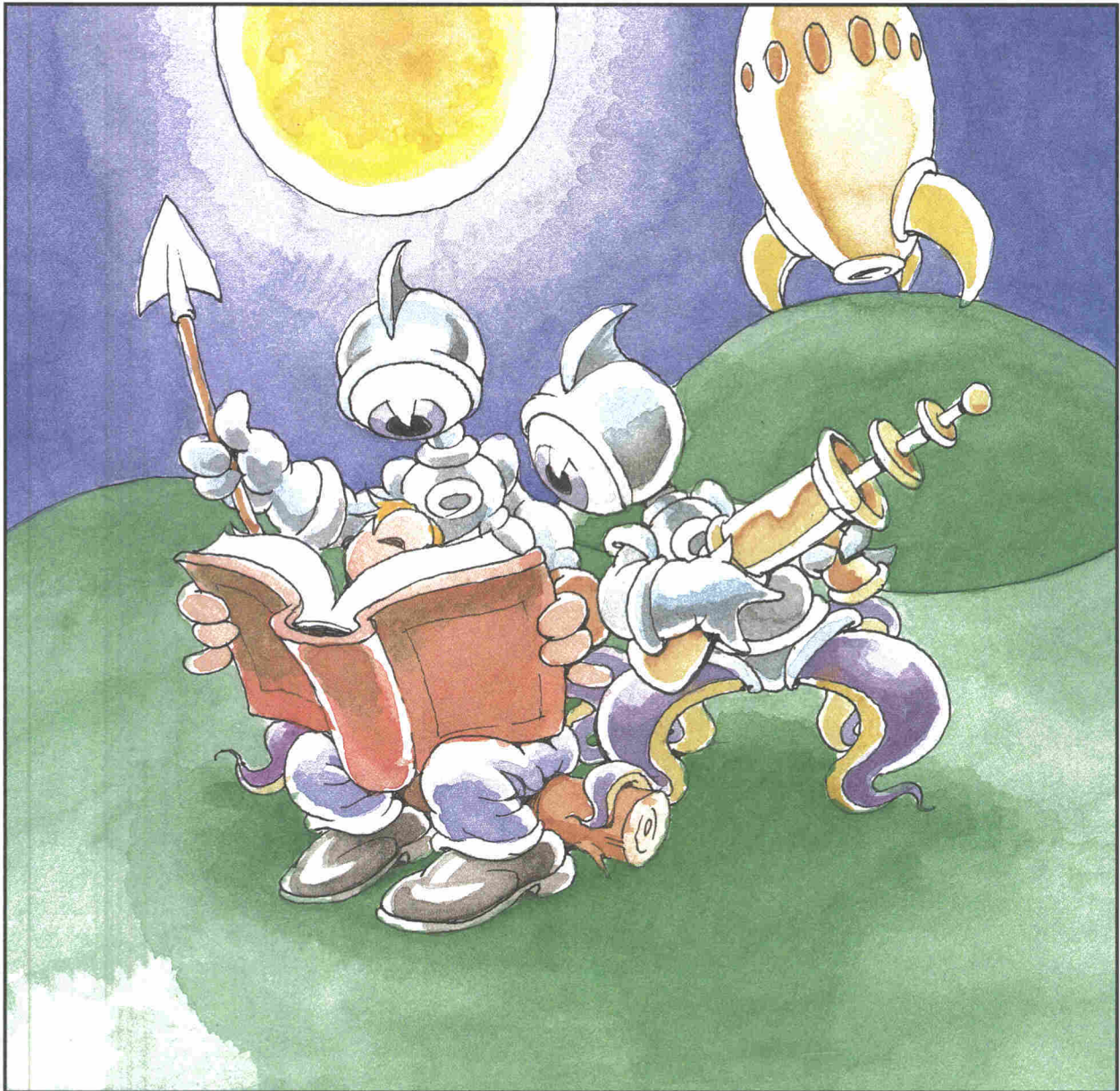


# AUTHORS GUILD

Fall 2005 **BULLETIN**



*Foundation Symposium:*  
Nonfiction Page Turners

Opening Lines: Beam by Beam

The Authors Guild Interview: Oscar Hijuelos

The Case Against Google

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Robert Creeley was one of our finest poets and deserved at the very least to have his name spelled correctly in the "Deaths" section of the Authors Guild Bulletin (Summer 2005).

William Hjortsberg  
McLeod, Montana

*We certainly agree with you, and regret having missed the typo. Ed.*

Years ago, in the late 1960s, most of my life, like Mr. Sammler, "unable to get a handle on things," I was on a bus outside D.C. with *The Bellow I Didn't Know*. I was a student, part-time, working three jobs in the District, and I missed my stop in Fairfax, Virginia. Outside, it was late, cold, and too cloudy for stars. Inside, on the bus, I was in the adventures of Saul Bellow, page after page, in the sea of his mind when suddenly—an epiphany! Like Emily Dickinson when she read a good poem and Ann Birstein on The Cape reading *Augie*, the top of my

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head whooshed open and in came the light. Soon I was back at GW, Bellow in my book bag with the Romantics, my favorite guys as an undergraduate. *The Bellow I Didn't Know* helped me write a paper on Coleridge's *Fancy & Imagination*, its title, a Bellow quote, *Sudden Intrusion of Beauty, That's What Life Is*. In the 1970s, married—blessedly!—on a train outside Chicago with my young daughter, I recalled the Bellow quote that brought tears when I read it as a student: "There will always be children with dirty faces, and there will always be mother's spittle to wipe them with. Either these things matter, or they don't."

Dear Saul Bellow—how *very much* you mattered to those of us who didn't know you!

Laurie Newendorp  
Houston, TX

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## ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

**C**hristopher Booker said he spent 34 years writing *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. Booker is a British newspaper columnist. The plots, with a few examples, are the following:

Overcoming the Monster: *Beowulf, Jaws, Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Rags to Riches: *David Copperfield, Jane Eyre, Cinderella, Superman, Pygmalion*.

The Quest: *Odyssey, Divine Comedy, Watership Down, Don Quixote, Babar and Father Christmas, Moby Dick*.

Voyage and Return: *Alice in Wonderland, Gone With the Wind, The Wizard of Oz, Robinson Crusoe, Candide*.

Comedy: *Crocodile Dundee, The Importance of Being Earnest, Private Lives, The Inimitable Jeeves, A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Tragedy: *Macbeth, The Picture of Dorian Gray, Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, King Lear*.

Rebirth: *Sleeping Beauty, A Christmas Carol, Silas Marner, The Secret Garden*.

The author observed: "The most important thing we recognize from looking at the hidden structure of the basic plots is the extent to which they all revolve

around the same fundamental conflict." He spent 728 pages explaining this.

SAMPLE: **A. O. Scott**, a critic for The New York Times, wrote, "The pervasive suspicion that serious reading is becoming a marginal pursuit contributes to the anxious, timid, supportive tone of much of what passes for literary criticism these days, and the timorousness of the enterprise is part of what makes [Joyce Carol] Oates's robust, painstaking and self-assured essays both exemplary and somewhat anomalous. Among novelists of large reputations, only she and John Updike seem to possess the confidence (in themselves and in the novel as a form), not to mention the stamina, to pass frequent judgment on the proliferating work of their precursors, contemporaries and junior colleagues."

A sample of Oates's criticism is to be found in a recently published collection: *Uncensored: Views and (Re)views*.

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