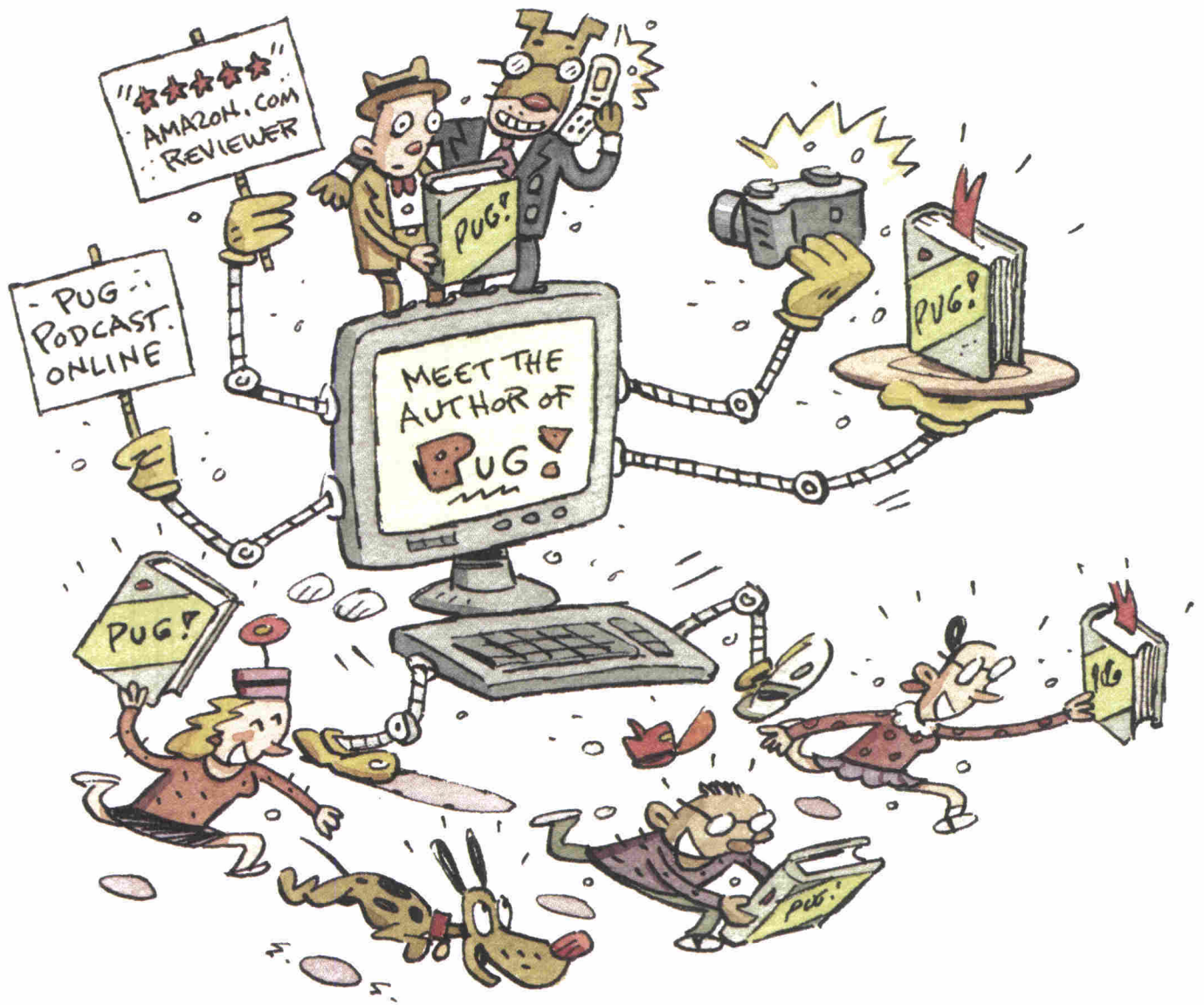


# AUTHORS GUID

Spring 2007 **BULLETIN**



## BOOK PUBLICITY

Home Made & High Tech: Doing It Yourself Online

Roy Blount on Tie-Ins and Krispy Kremes

Quality Time at Princeton with Robert Stone

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In the Overheard section of the Guild's Winter 2007 Bulletin, Junot Diaz comments that reading *Moby Dick* is "like a pro football player being like, 'Lemme tackle you.'"

I would like to add to that opinion. Even though I'm not Catholic, I decided to participate in Lent this year when a pro-Lent friend informed me that one can take on burdens for Lent as well as renounce the usual coffee or booze (which felt like unnecessary torture to a coffee shop-addicted writer who often reads novels at the end of bars). In the spirit of burdens, I chose to take on all 600+ pages of *Moby Dick* and finish it by the end of Lent. Admittedly, reading *Moby Dick* as a burden was to invite a Cleveland Brown to tackle me black and blue. However, it was also an extremely enjoyable burden, both luxurious and deranged. I often sensed the beautiful, bizarre poetry in lines such as "Let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness . . . . In thoughts of blue visions of night, I saw long rows of

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angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti." But I also decided Melville was more than a bit crazy to have one entire chapter devoted to "Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales" but then still another chapter entitled "Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales." Perhaps it was these latter exhaustive details that inspired Mr. Diaz's comments, and I must admit I agreed somewhat with his sentiment—one more sperm whale anatomy lesson or another bloody scene in the blubber room and I might have given myself a self-inflicted concussion with the blunt end of a harpoon. But yet there was something archetypically and mythically satisfying to allow one's self to be run over by a blached, multi-ton linebacker named Moby Dick.

Jefferson Navicky  
Portland, ME

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## ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

Imagine my pleasure when four copies of my most recent picture book for children turned up on my doorstep: one each in French, Spanish, Danish and Swedish. A version in Japanese had arrived weeks ago, but neither publisher nor agent had told me that the rights had been sold in four more countries.

My French is a poor memory from college days, but **Francoise Rose's** translation struck me as lilting, nicer than the English. The Danish and Swedish will remain mysteries. It was the Spanish version that caused shooting pains. The book's title was changed from *Elena's Serenade* to *Elenita*. Why?

The original opening page has 19 words: "In Mexico the sun is called *el sol*, and the moon is called *la luna*. I am called Elena."

The Spanish version has 49 words. My wife knows Spanish. She also knows gnashing teeth when she hears mine. She translated the opening passage into English:

"The little girl's name is Elena. She likes to blow glass. The Mexican sun is the color of molten glass, and the moon, when it rises, looks like cold glass. She looks

like both of them. The three are good friends. This is the story of Elena. Listen carefully to what she did."

Why was the first-person narration changed to third person? Why was a military march changed to rock music? Why was my magical ending changed into moralizing clichés?

I am jealous of **Ana Juan**, the book's illustrator. Nobody added beards to the characters in her wonderful pictures.

**TOUGH BUSINESS:** While **Ralph Waldo Emerson** was working on his first book, *Nature*, he wrote to a friend: "To write a very little takes a great deal of time. So shall a man weary himself . . . in vain attempts to carve Apollos which all turn out to be scarecrows." The quote is from *Emerson Among the Eccentrics: A Group Portrait*, by **Carlos Baker**.

**HELPERS:** The American Heritage Dictionary has a panel of 200 writers, artists and thinkers who define

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