

# An Interview with Kathleen George

author of *The Man in the Buick*

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Interview by Mei-Lynn Destouche

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*Q. You've been teaching theatre for a number of years. How did you come to write a work of fiction?*

A. I've always had a passion for fiction. Always. I have cousins who tell me they never visited me as a child when I wasn't writing a story. I lost the thread for a while, but I began to write again in the eighties. I started publishing stories and the old love of it all came back.

*Q. How long did it take to write *The Man In The Buick*?*

A. About ten years altogether. The collection evolved. At first only about half these stories were in there with a bunch of others which I've split off and used to begin other collections. They're different. One group is light and comic. The other is a series of childhood stories. These in *The Man In The Buick* are cohesive in that they are all about adults wrestling with relationship issues.

*Q. Do you have degrees in both theatre and writing?*

A. Yes, but in a backward sort of way. I got a B.A. in creative writing and then an M.A. and Ph.D in theatre and much later I went back and got an M.F.A. in writing. I just wanted to.

*Q. Does your theatre background affect your writing at all?*

A. Oh, yes. It can't help but affect it. I'm very aware, as a theatre director, of movement and gesture and intonation. And I think I often write scenes in stories that have that theatre sense--interpersonal interaction is heightened.

*Q. Your field in theatre is directing? Anything else?*

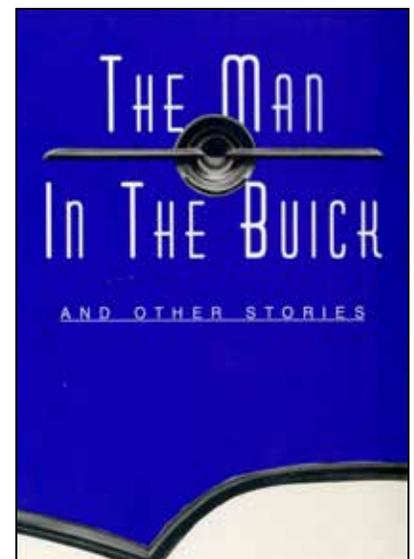
A. My fields within theatre are dramatic literature and playwriting and directing. I would have to say that writing fiction form way back has affected me in theatre—I've always been very tuned into interior life on the stage and my students' new plays--just as theatre has also affected the dramas that my characters get themselves into.

*Q. You also write plays and screenplays?*

A. No, although I did write a few plays as a student. The thing is, the ideas which come to me keep being ideas for fiction. Words following words. Characters working out something interior, covering lots of time and space to do it, all that stuff of fiction.

*Q. What do you see as the basic differences and similarities between the two fields?*

A. In a way, I see them as one field. Storytelling. One is very social and extroverted. The other is private and interior. One features confrontation and expression while the other tends to feature reflection. Of course we all have both



ways of being in us. In our lives we might favor one or the other. In my writing life, I favor the interior. Inner life. Quiet, private people pretty much forced into confrontations.

*Q. Do you like both?*

A. I love both. I can't imagine not being open to different forms of storytelling. I got into theatre falling in love with the great plays and I've been lucky enough to direct many of them. Those big ones with lots of characters. *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* and *The Country Wife* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Lysistrata*.

*Q. Your characters do some wild things in their quiet ways. They get obsessed. Is it love that they're after?*

A. Love and a sense of completion. I think I tend to catch them when they're just at the point of being surprised by something about themselves.

*Q. Do you like blue shirts? I noticed a number of blue shirts as I was reading.*

A. I've just noticed that too. I do seem to like them, don't I?

*Q. Do you have any idea why?*

A. Opposites attract? I'm dark-haired and brown-eyed, and so I've had mostly blue-eyed men in my life. My husband has blue eyes and looks good in blue shirts.



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