

# BOOKMARK



*Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland*

Volume 3 • Issue 4  
October 2008

## Potpourri

Winner of July's "Name the Structure" contest is Scott Gifford of Tallahassee, FL. The answer is: **The Tower of London**, where Anne Boleyn and other wives of Henry VIII lost their heads! There is no structure to name in this newsletter; rather, I'm showing you an interesting photo that I snapped in Ireland on the Ring of Kerry. It is a private home on which the owner has painted pictures of famous Irish writers: W.B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett, James Joyce and others.



Here 'tis:

One of the paintings (shown here) is labeled, "Pure Genius," an apt label for that particular Irish writer. Since this newsletter is about writers and writing, here is your question: To whom does "Pure Genius" refer? The first person to guess correctly via e-mail (address

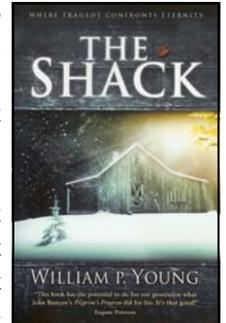


**All of Janet's books  
are available at:**

Amazon.com  
BarnesAndNoble.com  
BooksAMillion.com

## This Year's Buzz Book

*The Shack* (William P. Young, 2007). I believe folks who read this book are either going to love it or hate it, with no "in between." So why am I sitting on the fence, contradicting myself? This is the current "buzz" book, meaning that interest in it has spread by word of mouth rather than publicity and promotion. It's a self-published book that recently buzzed its way to Number 1 on the *NY Times* Best Sellers List. Christian publishers had rejected it, finding it too controversial; secular publishers rejected it because it was too Christian. So the author and two of his friends published it themselves. What is it? It's fiction with a spiritual theme. The author says that the shack represents "the house you build out of your own pain." Mack Philips' young daughter, Missy, was abducted and evidence of her murder is found in an abandoned shack in the woods. Four years later Mack, still burdened with sorrow, receives a note inviting him to the shack. It's signed "Papa" and appears to be from God. I did not like that God was presented as a female (I'm an old fogey), but I did like some of the things she told Mack: "Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is about letting go of another person's throat." And, regarding Jesus, Papa says, "They still play us off like good cop/bad cop most of the time, especially the religious folk. When they want people to do what they think is right, they need a stern God. When they need forgiveness, they run to Jesus." In the end, the world as Mack knows it is changed forever. Some reviewers have called this book "heresy," "a theological mess," and worse; others found it full of "wonder and wisdom," and "an excellent read for someone who has gone through a terrible loss." One popular recording artist said that it opened the door to her soul. As I said, I'm on the fence—I love some of it and I hate some of it. You decide for yourselves.



## Reader Recommendations

*The Same Kind of Different As Me* (Ron Hall & Denver Moore, 2008)  
*Rhett Butler's People* (Donald McCraig, 2007)  
*The Analyst* (John Katzenbach, 2003)  
*The Madman's Tale* (John Katzenbach, 2005)

## Language: What's Bugging You?

The use of *I'm like* for *I said*:

He asked me to go bungee-jumping and I said, "No thanks!"

He asked me to go bungee-jumping and I'm like, "No thanks!"

**Upcoming Events:** This fall/winter, I'll be participating in "Author Month" at the Thomas County Public Library and in a writers' project at The Bookshelf, Thomasville, GA. See you back in these pages in January! *Janet*

## About Titles and My Next Novel

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM  
JANET LITHERLAND



I love to hear from my readers!

Send me an e-mail:  
janet@janetlitherland.com

---

**BOOKMARK ON THE WEB!**  
WWW.JANETLITHERLAND.COM

---

Here's an update on my latest novel, *The Locket*, which will not be the actual published title. As I said in an earlier *Bookmark*, my titles (we call them "working" titles) seldom stick. Publishers know their markets and choose titles they believe will attract readers. My novel, *The Lost Years*, was published as *Vanished*. Even waaaay back, when I wrote stories for the old romance magazines, titles often got changed. Here's how some of them ended up: "How Lucky I Am To Have Him," "The Life I Saved Was My Own," and "My Wife and Kids Will Be Better Off Without Me." Yes that was mine, written from a male perspective (*True Experience*, October 1980). Back to *The Locket*, now titled *Song of the Heart* :

What would it be like to reconnect with a high school sweetheart after more than two decades? It's certainly different from falling in love with someone new. I know, because it happened to me. It also happens to Susan Evans, the heroine of my novel. Her story, however, bears no resemblance to mine! Susan must travel to Wales and eventually London to find her lost love, who disappeared many years ago. Backstory reveals that young Susan, after being separated from her sweetheart, was the victim of a violent crime. Now, 21 years later, the perpetrator is once again stalking her. Can he destroy the happy ending she has so long desired and now has within reach? Wales and England are two countries I like very much. I have traveled within them and believe they offer an interesting setting for this kind of story. I hope you'll enjoy reading *Song of the Heart* as much as I've enjoyed writing it! Look for it in early 2009.

---

## Reviews

*The Portable Obituary* (Michael Largo, 2007). The jacket of this nonfiction book reads, "A luridly compelling and hilariously macabre look at how the famous took their final bows—from Socrates to Anna Nicole." That statement is misleading, probably intentionally, to entice people to buy the book. Actually, the entries are straightforward and respectful, and each includes an interesting mini-biography. My only objection—and it's a big one—is that there is no index! Sections are labeled alphabetically, but many entries are grouped in sections where they don't belong. Don Knotts appears under "G" as part of the report on Eva Gabor; Mussolini is filed under "H" in a little group titled "Dead Dictators." And, how could I ever have found Buddy Holly and Patsy Cline under "N" unless I just happened to stumble over them? The book needs an index!

*Tell Me, Pretty Maiden* (Rhys Bowen, 2008). Bowen's Molly Murphy mystery series is one of my favorites. I own all of them: *Murphy's Law*, *Death of Riley*, *For the Love of Mike*, *In Like Flynn*, *Oh Danny Boy*, *In Dublin's Fair City*, and this newest entry. By the titles, you can tell they reflect Ireland in some way, the country dearest to my heart after the U.S.A. Molly is a young woman who left Ireland to make a new life for herself in New York City in the early 1900s. She becomes a private detective by default and has to learn as she goes. She stumbles and bumbles but, in the end, always manages to make order out of chaos. Molly is delightful, and her independence (which often gets her in trouble) keeps me cheering for her! If you try these books, read them in order, beginning with *Murphy's Law*.

*Hit and Run* (Lawrence Block, 2008). Keller is a hit man ... and he's the *sympathetic* character in this book! Fascinating premise. The ending "felt" right. Lawrence Block, one of my former teachers, is a great writer!



**Bookmark**  
Janet's Book News

**Janet's Ratings:** Scaled 1 - 5 ★=OK, ★★★★★=Fantastic!

*Without Fail* (Lee Child, 2002) ★★★★★  
*A Darkness More Than Night* (Michael Connelly, 2001) ★★★★★  
*Fearless Fourteen* (Janet Evanovich, 2008) ★★★  
*Intent to Kill* (James Grippando, 2008) ★★★★★

Janet Litherland, author of 10 nonfiction books and three novels, also is editor emeritus and former owner of Write-Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company that aspiring authors can find at: [www.write-choiceservices.com](http://www.write-choiceservices.com).