

NORTHWEST REAL ESTATE

WRITERS

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story I've ever written. Perhaps the story was chosen [for the book] for the risks it takes in its structure. It is a series of images, rather than a linear plot, and the rhythm of the images reflects the beat of a popular dance in Puerto Rico, a salsa rhythm that intensifies up to the end of the story."

Casey's "Pheromones" started as an exercise in writing an encyclopedia definition of a word related to sex. The associate professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park, wrote the story as if it were an entry in a reference book, complete with the pronunciation and etymology.

"I ended up with a story about a young

'tween-aged girl in the throes of adolescent angst and smells," said Casey, who published her first story in 1995 and has published two novels. As the story unravels, best friends Myrna and Angelica have their first dalliances into sexuality with the help of Angelica's brother and his friend.

Edited by Arlington resident Richard Peabody, "Gravity Dancers" is the fourth collection of works by Washington women that he's put together.

Between the covers, established authors are published alongside first-time writers. To qualify to be in one of Peabody's anthologies, a writer must simply live in the D.C. area at the time he invites them to submit a story.

"I compile a list of authors and ask them for original work," said Peabody, founder and co-editor of Gargoyle magazine. "We've run stories and novel

excerpts. I'm not looking for the same old thing or something safe. I generally ask for the story the women love that everybody else seems to hate, or the one that's been rejected a million times, or the one that scares them the most. Those stories get to the heart of something you don't normally encounter."

His appreciation for their work is not lost on the women he publishes. "This is an act of love for him," Winslow said. "This is really his homage to maintaining the arts."

The respect is mutual. "The best part for me is meeting all of these incredible

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— "Gravity Dancers" publisher Richard Peabody

women. Plus I get to introduce them to each other," Peabody said. "I also get to familiarize myself with women writers who used to live in D.C. ... And my Facebook pages get the added boost of 160 women writers," who've been published in his four books.

That network could come in handy. For instance, perhaps someone among them can help him with towels.

HEART

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about that night to anyone.

"To a certain extent, it was somewhat therapeutic for him," Price said. "I just happened to be the guy who happened to get him at the right time."

Later, for the book, Price visited Sanchez's family in Puerto Rico and talked to Coolbaugh's family in San Antonio, where his wife and three children live. He also walked the field in Arkansas where Coolbaugh died.

Price's other books, "Pitching for Fidel" and "Far Afield," have dealt with international topics, but he wanted to explore an American subject with his latest work. Aside from telling of the tragedy on the field, Price also explores life in the minor leagues from the perspectives of those involved.

Price became especially fascinated by the story when he learned there were several others present in the North Little Rock, Ark., stadium when Coolbaugh was hit who had experienced their own close calls with baseballs.

The Drillers' pitching coach, Bo McLaughlin, had his pitching career ended by a shot to the mound. Travelers general manager Bill Valentine was the home plate

umpire during the famous 1967 beaming of the Boston Red Sox's Tony Conigliaro. A Tulsa player, Jon Asahina, was back on the field for the first time since being struck in the face, and the father of Warren Stephens, who helped finance the ballpark, was knocked out by a line drive.

"I just thought there were all these characters involved in this, coincidentally brought together for this one, horrible moment," Price said. "I thought it would be a way to tell the story."

Only one Major League player has ever been killed during a game, but many more have been injured. Just this month a line drive broke Rockies reliever Alan Embree's leg.

"I'm stunned that a pitcher has not been hurt fatally," Price said. "They finish their deliveries in an incredibly vulnerable position — closer than any first- or third-base coach, probably about 50 feet away from the plate when the bat is swung. It really is an accident waiting to happen, on the Major League level at least."

Major League Baseball has taken some steps to improve player safety, requiring earflaps on helmets since 1983 and helmets for field coaches since last season. That change was a response to Coolbaugh's death, even though a

helmet wouldn't have saved him.

Price said players and coaches are more concerned with fan safety than their own. The size of safety netting behind home plate is up to individual clubs, but Price said leagues should require that it extend to the outfield walls, as is done in Japan. Baseball officials told Price they aren't currently considering this.

"I would just hate to see another accident has to happen before anything gets done, but that's usually the way things are done in sports," Price said. "Only when there's an extreme action is there a reaction that actually tries to adjust and protect from it ever happening again."

Price acknowledges the subject matter is grim and that it's now on his mind whenever he watches his son play with Northwest Washington Little League or attends Washington Nationals games with his family.

Yet exploring the story also renewed his appreciation for baseball, Price said. The emotion and honesty of his sources, especially in Sanchez's anguish and his reconciliation with Coolbaugh's family, made the story especially powerful.

"Even though I'm more aware of the dangers than I've ever been," Price said, "it's actually made me love the game even more than I did before I started the project."

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