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Jesus Was a Carpenter, and so is Jim Savio

by [BLOGGER Jill_Dearman](#) on 07-15-2009 02:53 PM - last edited on 07-15-2009 02:53 PM

The characters in Jim Savio's book



The Fairy Flag, and Other Stories ramble through many cities and towns in the United States, and the author himself is a mixture of peacefulness and restlessness. Savio is a carpenter, a longtime student of transcendental meditation, and a writing teacher at Parsons School of Design. He has also been published in <http://www.brooklynrail.org> The Promethean and other literary magazines. Jim shares a commitment to the craft and a strong sense of self-deprecating angst that any writer can relate to. Here's what he had to say to "Writer to Writer" about his process:

JD: How has your writing practice evolved over the years?

JS: Writing first drafts is still as painful as ever. But not writing at all is pure torture. Not much has changed on that score. Revision I have come to realize is not only about tweaking; it's often about re-visioning my ideas entirely and not being afraid to do so. One of the gifts the computer offers is the ability to compare multiple drafts. The morning is my ideal time to write but I find that I can drop into a writing spell at most anytime when I have the time. I'm fairly worthless late at night.

JD: Is there one thing in particular that stops you up, throws you off course with the writing?

JS: Anything has the potential to throw me off course. Answering these questions during a designated writing time is a good example. Imagining an e-mail of uber importance, sitting there in cyberspace. Strapping myself to a chair can help ground me, but I've been seen walking around looking for snacks with a chair lashed to my body.

JD: When you were putting your story collection together, how did you choose which ones to include/leave out? How did you come up with the order?

JS: At the time, they were the only stories I thought were complete. I've realized since, most of them weren't.

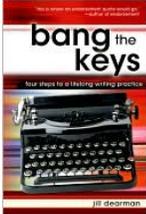
JD: What's the main difference for you in terms of working on stories vs. a novel?

JS: Really the form and structure is the same for me: stories are really little novels and novels are long stories. I've only completed one novel in my writing life. It sits in a drawer next to the first short story I wrote. They are perhaps the most important work of my life. Not because they are any good; but they were the start.

So what about you, writers?

What's the piece of writing that is most important to you? Why?

And for more writerly tips and wisdom, stop by the salon at <http://www.bangthekeys.com> and check out my new book, Bang the Keys



And for today, just start!

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Categories: [writer to writer](#)

6 Comments (6 New) [Permalink](#)

0

[« Back to Blog](#) [« Newer Article](#) [Older Article »](#)

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by [oiloncanvas](#) on 07-15-2009 03:56 PM

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A fantasy world where people's souls go down a spirit stream and end up on Earth when they

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great advice about viewing revision as just that--a re envisioning. will keep it in mind.

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1

by [Heather_Rolland](#) on 07-15-2009 09:15 PM

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Getting thrown off course is such a constant problem, and a reality, being that I am a wearer of many hats: mother, therapist, chauffeur, writer of novels, marketer of said novels... there are always tasks beckoning of varying degrees of importance. Carving out that sacred time and space to write (emotional/psychic and literal) has been key for me. It loads up the time I do steal away from everything else: The pressure to write NOW can be tough. I love the image of wandering around the house with a chair strapped onto one's derriere - that will stay with me as a nice reminder to play with staying focused.

Thank you, Jill and Jim!
Heather

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1

by [BLOGGER Jill_Dearman](#) on 07-16-2009 10:11 AM

Options

I'm glad you mentioned playing chauffeur, Heather -- all of us have so many mundane things we must do to keep our lives rolling -- literally find ing the hours to write is a lot like stealing! but I think it makes us good thieves (you know like Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid?). Strapping on chair (and toy pistol) now...

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by [Shotmonster](#) on 07-16-2009 08:44 PM

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I love that Jim's not afraid to acknowledge the struggle, and, like many of us, is always working to improve and better. It's funny how a story or novel you thought was "finished" appears anything but a few months to a year later. Jim's interview hits home at a central point that is crucial - you have to keep growing.

Cudos!

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by [starrXX](#) on 07-19-2009 03:02 PM

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I too love that Jim admits his vulnerability- and what a vivid image; distracting himself from the page by looking for snacks with a chair strapped to his body! Ah somehow, to get the inner team working together in the service of our desires.

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by [deshea](#) on 07-21-2009 03:40 PM

Options

Funny how hungry we can get when it comes time to write. I like what Jim says about "writing a rough draft is painful, but not writing is torture". For me starting is the hardest part.

Congratulations on your book Jim!

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article (1)
book explorers (2)
caption the cover (3)
current events (14)
current events news (1)
decoding the lost symbol (9)
fantasy and science fiction (1)
for what it's worth (17)
guest author (9)
historical fiction (1)
history (8)
history and historical fiction (2)
internet (1)
literary history (31)
literature & life (30)
max syntax (27)
modern and future english (4)
news (4)
pop culture (1)
romance (30)
romance fiction (27)
Science (1)
science fiction & fantasy (29)
science fiction and fantasy (1)
sports (1)
tagged (1)
tagged! (8)
the friday five (9)
the reader's advocate (16)
the readers' advocate (1)
the readers' advocate (25)
writer to writer (21)

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