

NIGHT STORIES

Posted on May 20, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

I said in an earlier post that I would write about an event in New York...it has now happened, and was as interesting and successful as I had hoped it would be.

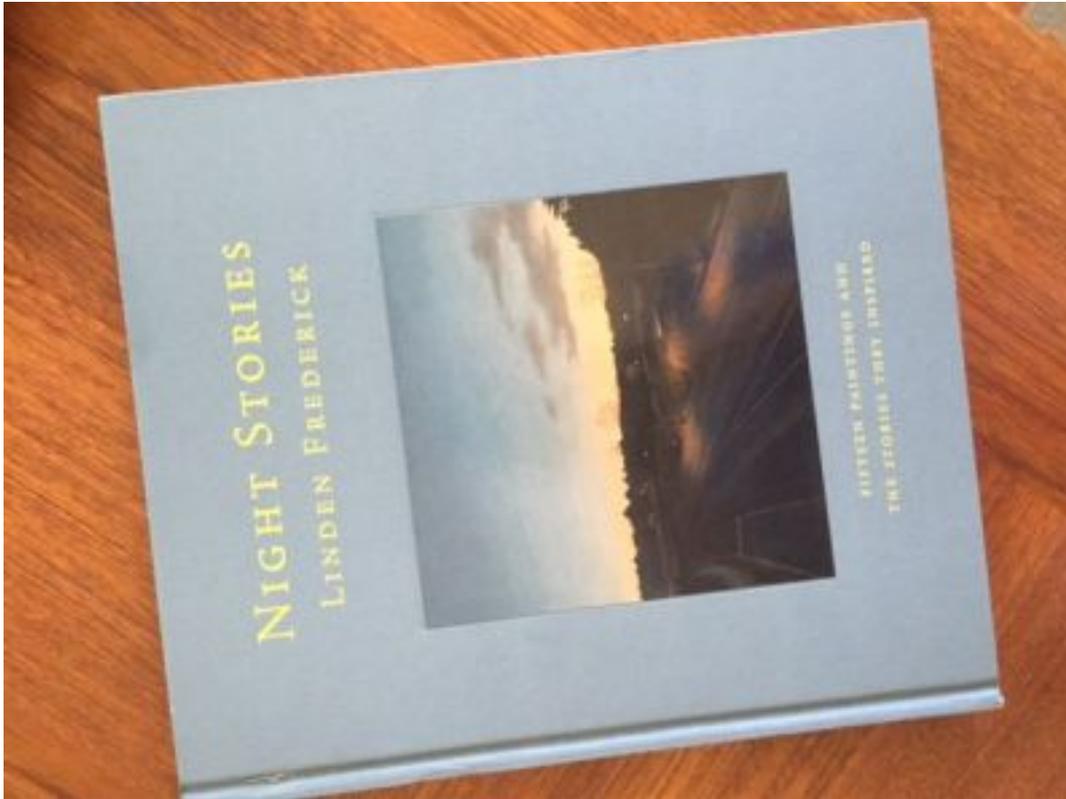
Last summer, a painter named Linden Frederick asked fifteen writers to embark on a project with him. I was one of them. He gave each of us a preliminary study of a painting he had yet to complete, and we were each to write a short story based on the painting.

I was pleased to do so. But I found it surprisingly difficult at first. Linden's paintings (each of them in a nighttime setting, hence the title of the project: NIGHT STORIES) are very evocative. It appears that something has just happened...or is about to happen. (Think: Edward Hopper.) But what? I looked at my painting for a long time and finally, eventually, a story began to appear. No, wait. Not a story, actually. But a situation. And a group of men...men in a small Maine coastal town...men past their prime, men who have regrets, men who don't articulate feelings.

This is most often the way any piece of fiction begins for me. With a person, or perhaps more than one. With vague feelings of unease, of something that needs to be adjusted, fixed.

And so I created my story, which I titled VITAL SIGNS, and fourteen other writers: Dennis Lehane, Ann Patchett, Tess Gerritsen, Lawrence Kasdan, Louise Erdrich, Andre Dubus, Lily King, Richard Russo, Daniell Woodrell, Tom Talley, Elizabeth Strout, Anthony Doerr, Luanne Rice, and Joshua Ferris...created theirs. Last week, at the Forum Gallery in NYC, there was an opening that displayed the fifteen paintings (each 36" x 36")...and also shown was the beautiful book containing both the paintings and the stories. (It won't be available until October but can be re-ordered from Amazon)

It is the first such collaboration that I know of, and I am proud to be part of it.



And now I am turning my attention to other writing, to preparing for summer (I will move soon to my farm in western Maine, where flowers are blooming and my crabapple tree at the farm is bursting with blossoms and once again the porcupines are out there trying to destroy whatever they can. My son and grandson are there this weekend, cleaning the garage), to getting over a cold, to going next week to the Harvard Medical School "Last Lecture" where Howard will speak briefly.. His class at HMS sponsors this event each year, a final lecture at which the graduating new MDs will hear from an older doctor about the importance, in this age of science and technology, of remembering that the patient-doctor relationship is the thing to be valued and nurtured.

Tags: Untagged