

Gail Sidonie Sobat....

Photo by Geoff McMaster

is a witch at heart, a pirate in her dreams, and a gypsy in practice. She has assumed any number of disguises in her lifetime, including that of teacher, adjunct professor, woman-in-black, professional actor and singer, grounds keeper, flag girl, parimutuel seller and flower seller. She is the creator/ coordinator of YouthWrite, a camp for kids who love to write, a teacher at the University of Alberta Hospital School, an instructor in the University of Alberta Faculty of Education, and the Canadian Authors Association (Alberta Chapter) Writer-in-Residence. She has moved twenty-seven times in her life from Badlands to Siksika Nation Reserve to hideous suburbs to Istanbul to the Sunshine Coast to her writer's garret in a near-century-old temperamental house. Gail completed a Master's degree in English at the University of Alberta in Children's Literature, specializing in fantasy.

She is also an award-winning teacher. For the Legacy Project, a high school program addressing the gulf between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students, Gail and her co-creators (Wally Diefenthaler and Kaye Steward) were named finalists for the Governor General Excellence in Teaching History Award and garnered national recognition and international attention.



Her dedication to mentoring youth through the provincial arts summer camp, YouthWrite, was celebrated in a half-hour documentary that aired on BookTV in December 2007. Gail's vision was to create a retreat-like setting where young writers could participate in an interdisciplinary exploration of words, including songwriting, cartooning, dance and text, drumming and text, hip hop, storytelling, playwriting, screenwriting, photojournalism, interwoven with fiction, creative non-fiction and poetry. For twelve years, YouthWrite workshops, presented by a group of dynamic and established Canadian artists under Gail's direction, have helped young would-be authors develop confidence and a sense of place in the world.

Experience in professional theatre and singing make Gail at ease in performance and with any age group. Described as vivacious and lively, Gail is frequently sought after as a speaker, workshop presenter and writer-in-residence. She has toured across Canada, including Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Banff, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal (with the TD Canadian Children's Book Week 2004), through Northern Saskatchewan with the Pakkisonon Nuye?ah Library System, to Doha, Qatar with the Qatar Reading Association, and has presented at conferences throughout Alberta, in Cincinnati, Ohio; Monteagle, Tennessee; and New Orleans, Louisiana. Gail has been writer-in-residence in several Edmonton schools and at Queens' University. Edward Karek of the Toronto Public Library noted that "Gail was very well received by the audience. Energetic and friendly, she is a warm and engaging speaker with a great sense of humour. She gave excellent, in-depth answers to all questions throughout her talk and demonstrated her passion for writing for youth. Her visit was excellent and a highlight for library programming."

Gail's work has been published in academic and literary journals, anthologies, and has been broadcast on radio and performed on stage. In addition to her most recent novel, *Gravity Journal*, she is the author of the YA fantasy series *Ingamald*, *A Winter's Tale* (a White Pine Award nominee) and *A Glass Darkly*, a novel for adults, the award-winning *The Book of Mary*, and a collection of poetry, *Aortic Caprice*. Her picturebook, *In the Graveyard*, illustrated by Spyder Yardley-Jones is forthcoming.

Gail Sidonie Sobat – Bibliography

- Ingamald* - Spotted Cow Press, Edmonton, AB, 2001 (ISBN 0-9688977-6-2)
- A Winter's Tale* - Great Plains Publications, Winnipeg, MB, 2004 (ISBN 1-894283-45-7)
- A Glass Darkly* - Great Plains Publications, Winnipeg, MB, 2004 (ISBN 1-894283-69-4)
- Aortic Caprice* - River Books, Edmonton, AB, 2003/2004 (ISBN 1-895836-97-2)
- The Book of Mary* - Sumach Press, Toronto, ON, 2006 (ISBN 1-894549-54-6)
- Gravity Journal* - Great Plains Publications, Winnipeg, MB, 2008 (ISBN 1894283783)