

getting it right

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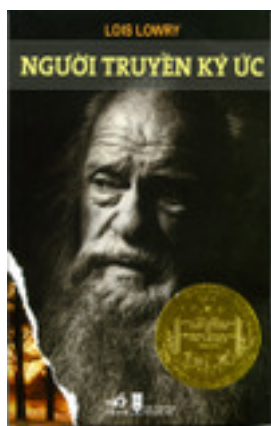
This is a banyan tree, one of several, at Selby Gardens in Sarasota, where I spent the past almost-a-week. Strictly vacation, visiting good friends who winter there, and a much-needed vacation after a lot of travel...and more to come: Detroit next weekend, then Baltimore, Washington DC, Philadelphia, and finally, Los Angeles.

Today was the PEN Hemingway event at the Kennedy Library (such a gorgeous location on a clear day with blue sky). I remember speaking of that event on this blog a year ago, when Joyce Carol Oates was the keynote speaker. This year it was Alice Hoffman, and I was the one to introduce her, a real privilege, since Alice has been a friend for many years...but also daunting, wanting to get it right and do her justice. I remember that last year it surprised me that JCO was funny; I hadn't expected that. No surprises with Alice, that she was articulate and smart and political.

Patrick Hemingway, Ernest Hemingway's son, read the opening passage of "A Farewell to Arms" and read it well. I haven't re-read that book in years but the opening pages...and the ending...have stayed with me; I could almost recite the words as he read. The Kennedy Library houses the Hemingway archives and papers, including the 44 versions of the last page of "A Farewell to Arms." I remember reading once that when asked why he rewrote and rewrote it, EH replied: "To get the words right."

An email today from my German daughter-in-law tells me that my granddaughter and her good friend, Annika, have just received the book "The Willoughbys," which I dedicated to the two of them. Annika will have to wait until it is translated into German because she is not proficient yet in English, but Nadine, my granddaughter, reads (and speaks) both languages.

IN the waiting mail when I returned from Florida, incidentally, were several copies of THE GIVER in Vietnamese, plus other copies in a language I am uncertain of...perhaps Serbo-Croatian?...with my name spelled Luis Lauri. Click these to enlarge.



Tags: Untagged