

Rx: stories

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After one of these events, a woman came up to me to have a book signed, and said: "I just loved listening to your antidotes."

She meant anecdotes, of course, and I didn't point that out because I didn't want to embarrass her. But I've been thinking about it ever since.

My anecdotes are simply the bits and pieces of my life: the things that went into the making of who I am, as well as the fiction I've written, and none of them important to the world in any way.

But I do like thinking of them, now, as antidotes. The whole process of telling our stories to one another is what makes us human, and is sometimes very healing. If you eat a little Drano by mistake, you call the Poison Control Center in Atlanta, and find out what the antidote is, and then you don't die. In the same way, if you have had caustic experiences in the past....you talk about them. Tell them to others. Listen to what they tell in return. And it neutralizes the Drano that might otherwise erode your being.

I'm in Dallas now, and will speak this afternoon at the Dallas Art Museum. They have housed me in a hotel suite roughly the size of a cattle ranch. Last night I sat in one of my several rooms, on a damask couch, all alone, sipped a glass of wine, and watched Helen Mirren as Queen Bess on HBO. They chopped Mary's head off extremely graphically. Full frontal chop. (Now there's a woman who needed antidotes.)

After all of this traveling subsides, I'll go back to Maine - and by then, mid-May, there should be some things in bloom. I'll attach a photo from last summer.

Gardens, dogs, children, and stories are the most restorative, antidotal things I know.



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