

C.S. Fuqua

Contact: fuqua.cs@gmail.com

Website: <http://csfuqua.com>

Biography

C.S. (Christopher Steven) Fuqua is a professional writer, editor, and musician. A native Alabamian who grew up in Pensacola, Florida, Fuqua began his writing career while in college in the late 1970s by freelancing for trade journals, spending much of his free time teaching himself to play various instruments, including guitar and banjo. Following graduation, he worked as a newspaper reporter and magazine staff writer and editor before becoming a full-time freelance writer in the mid-1980s, developing fiction and poetry skills while continuing to write nonfiction articles and books.

As a multi-instrumentalist with an interest in indigenous instruments, he began researching, crafting, and playing the Native American flute in the early 1990s. His flutes now sell worldwide, and he has issued four albums of meditative Native American flute music. He has written two books on the history, mythology, and crafting of the Native American flute—*The Native American Flute: Myth, History, Craft* and *Native American Flute Craft*—that are popular sellers worldwide.

His literary work has appeared widely in small and large press publications as diverse as *Main Street Rag*, *Slipstream*, *Pearl*, *Chiron Review*, *The Year's Best Horror Stories*, *Cemetery Dance*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Honolulu Magazine*, *Naval History*, *The Writer*, *Best of the Net 2006*, and many others. His published books include the definitive *Native American Flute: Myth, History, Craft*, *Muscle Shoals ~ The Hit Capital's Heyday & Beyond*, *White Trash & Southern ~ Collected Poems*, *Walking after Midnight*, *Cancer*, *Big Daddy's Fast-Past Gadget*, *Notes to My Becca*, and *Divorced Dads*, among others.

Fuqua is a University of West Florida graduate. He has worked as a newspaper reporter, magazine editor, book editor, publisher, English tutor, substitute teacher, janitor, respiratory therapist, gas station attendant (when such things existed), salesclerk, and writing instructor. He continues to write books and create music full-time. His Native American flutes are sold through his website at <http://csfuqua.com>. He is married and the father of a daughter. He now resides in Las Cruces, NM.

Gives readings: Yes

Conducts workshops: Yes

Available for interviews: Yes

Sample interview

QUESTION: Who, or what, is your inspiration to write?

C.S. Fuqua (CSF): The basic inspiration is a desire to create a story or poem that is entertaining and, if I'm lucky, has meaning beyond the words on the page, touching the reader on a deeper level. Further, I enjoy exploring motivation and reaction through the characters, putting myself into other personas perhaps to learn something about why other people react the way they do and why I react the way I do. The authors whose work has inspired me most include Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Raymond Carver, Shel Silverstein, J.D. Salinger, Nikki Giovanni, and Walter M. Miller, Jr., among others.

QUESTION: When did you start writing?

CSF: In high school, but I would not want to read now any of the drivel that originated back then. I began to write seriously in college, but, again, I would not want to read now what I wrote then.

QUESTION: When did you realize that you wanted to become an author?

CSF: I had an inkling in grade school as I read novels and stories that transported me to other worlds and dimensions, that provided a method to escape my circumstances. I admired the men and women who were able to provide that escape with simple words arranged on a page. I did not make the conscious decision, however, until college, but even then I took a more circuitous route to creative writing than many of my contemporaries may have, working for newspapers and nonfiction magazines before applying myself to fiction.

QUESTION: What is your advice for aspiring authors?

CSF: Find and do whatever works for you. For me, it's read, write, revise, revise, revise, submit, play. Read, write, revise, revise, revise, submit, play. Read, write, revise, revise, revise, submit, play. And drink a beer.

QUESTION: Do you do research for your books/stories? What kind of research do you do?

CSF: The research varies. Nonfiction obviously requires extensive research and fact verification (contrary to what you see from TV news sources). For fiction, I research as required to make the stories feel real, at least enough (I hope) for the reader to suspend disbelief. For example, I'm finishing a book that a friend who died two years ago and I have been co-writing for the last 16 years. Much of the final revision requires extensive research of the science involved in the plot, such as surviving deep-space travel -- prolonged exposure to weightlessness and radiation and a feasible process for stasis. That research must provide reasonable theories based on current science that will support the fictional science of the future. For stories based on faeries or other beings, I research the accepted histories, cultures, and behaviors of the beings to retain much of their traditional character while adapting them to the story's needs and modern settings in which they're placed.

QUESTION: Do you outline before you start writing?

CSF: Only roughly for short fiction. I usually get an idea, jot down a few notes, and "cook" it for as long it takes, then start writing, attempting to get the first draft down in one sitting. Novels take more planning, more traditional outlining. I have a broad overview of what will transpire from beginning to end, but I jot down the details from chapter to chapter as each preceding chapter dictates the events of the next.

QUESTION: Do you plan ahead before you sit down to write, or do you let the story take you where it wants to go?

CSF: A little of both. As I said, I allow the idea to "cook" before I begin to write, but sometimes what I have in mind when I begin writing doesn't always materialize on the page. An event or a character can and will change what I originally had in mind, taking me and the story in another direction.

QUESTION: Do you write at a desk, or do you have a laptop that you drag around the house with you?

CSF: Both. I love the old desk I found at a rescue mission thrift store and refinished -- a monstrous secretarial desk from the early 1960s. But I also like mobility, especially when I'm working on a project that takes a lot of time. I like to be outside on occasion or in a room with other people. I prefer to have noise -- music or conversation -- around me when I'm working. When the family's home, I work in the room where everyone gathers

QUESTION: Besides a pen/pencil/notepad/computer, what is a must-have while writing?

CSF: Proper references, such as Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*, as well as a thorough guide to grammar and punctuation. Self-publishing is becoming increasingly easy, with traditional publishing headed in the same direction that the music industry has gone, toward independent production, cutting out the middleman, including the editor. The trend may be both good and bad -- good for those who can be both writer and objective editor and can function on all other levels of writing and marketing; bad for those who desperately need the services of an editor, if for nothing more than correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The use of good reference materials is essential.

QUESTION: How did it feel to sign your first publishing contract?

CSF: I felt elated that publication lay ahead, but also rather powerless and at the mercy of those who make the big decisions. Even after three decades of writing, from working as a journalist at the beginning of my career, through freelance nonfiction writing, to writing/publishing primarily fiction and poetry, I still feel rather powerless against the machine because talent is not always the determinant factor in having one's work selected for publication.

QUESTION: What is your favorite genre to write? Your least favorite?

CSF: Dark fantasy is my favorite because the laws of science are pretty much up in the air, and it's a great genre for exploring human motivation. My least favorite of the genres in which I like to write is hard science fiction because I'm not a scientist and feel hopelessly inadequate if the story's plot requires deep understanding and explanation of certain hard science. The use or misuse of science can make or break an otherwise great story. As for other genres, if I don't like to read them, I don't write in them.

QUESTION: Is there a genre that you haven't written yet, but you want to try?

CSF: No. I have written and published in the nonfiction, SF, horror, dark fantasy, mainstream, literary, and poetry genres, and I enjoy each. I write in only genres that I enjoy reading.

QUESTION: Tell me a bit about your books? What do you think makes them stand out from the rest?

CSF: Like other authors, I strive to entertain while providing a deeper message in the writing, exploring good and evil, life and death, hatred and love. What makes my stories different? Other than the presentation from my own skewed take on reality, I'm not sure. They are simply stories about hope in the face of desperate loss and futility, even in my novel *Big Daddy's Gadgets*, a satirically comical SF tale of humankind's penchant for self-destruction. I do not view myself as the writer creating this or that universe, dictating what happens there, but rather as the reader's companion, attempting to understand what motivates humankind (even when it isn't human) through the action and characters of the stories. I'm there to explore and discover, and I hope the companions who join me enjoy the ride as much as I do during the writing. I tend not to explain everything in the stories or wrap them up neatly in the end, and that irritates some editors, causing many rejections over the years, but I believe that readers don't want to be told everything, that they want to make independent conclusions about parts of the story, that telling the reader everything is insulting. I also enjoy diversity in genre and in characters, twisting the conventional into what I hope is something new or at least fresh. My latest book from Mundania Press, *Trust Walk*, which gathers a sampling of my stories from over the last 25 years, isn't the typical collection of sf/df/h that one might expect from a writer of my background. Instead, it collects stories from not only the sf/df/h genres, but also mainstream and literary genres, providing a more complete sampling of my writing career so far.

QUESTION: There are many fascinating historical places in Charleston, South Carolina. Are there any within your books?

CSF: I usually don't define settings by name and tend to stay away from recognizable places such as cities or well-known destinations. Most of my fiction, but not all, is set in the South, so many of the places in my stories may feel familiar to someone from South Carolina or Georgia or other southern locale, but they may not actually be located in a specific state. For example, "Rise Up," which appears in the debut issue of *Bull Spec*, is a dark fantasy story set on the Gulf Coast, but a primary character is from the Appalachian region from where most of the magic in the story originated, so the setting, thanks to the action and characters, might "feel" more Appalachian than Gulf Coast while readers familiar with Pensacola or Mobile might feel the story's setting as more Gulf Coast than Appalachian.

QUESTION: And, for fun, if you could be anyone for a day - real or fictional - who would you be?

CSF: Given the opportunity to be someone else, at this stage in my life, I'd probably pass it by. I have a hard time dealing with my own weirdness without adding someone else's to it. It's best that I stick to territory I'm already familiar with.

QUESTION: What's up next for you?

CSF: I'm currently completing a book on the history of Alabama's contributions to music, due out from South Carolina-based The History Press in October 2011. Music is a passion of mine, and it's been fun researching this book, of course including the usual artists found in similar projects, such as Hank Williams and W.C. Handy, but also and particularly including those artists not usually associated with Alabama, native Alabama artists such as Hugh Martin, Ward Swingle, Wilson Pickett, Urbie Green, and so many others. I'm also working on the SF novel mentioned above. My friend and I completed the first good working draft three days before he died two years ago, with the plot coming together for a touching resolution. It's one of the most exciting projects I've worked on, incorporating cutting-edge science and dark fantasy elements based in the mythologies of Native American beliefs, Buddhism, and Christianity. I only wish Rob, my co-writer who developed the basic idea and plot for the book, were still here to experience its completion. I think he'd be happy with the result. After that, I plan to return to a character I developed early in my career. He'll be the subject of a series of connected short stories appropriate for adults and young adults, stories that may be considered both fantasy and mainstream since they'll be told from the viewpoint of a boy with a vivid and rather warped imagination. Other projects are underway as well, including a collaboration with an artist on a children's book. And then there are the short stories and poetry. I certainly have enough to stay busy for a good while to come.

For more information about the work of C.S. Fuqua, please visit <http://csfuqua.com>. Thank you very much for your interest. If I can be of further assistance, please email me at fuqua.cs@gmail.com.

Christopher S. Fuqua

fuqua.cs@gmail.com • www.csfuqua.com

Publications

- Nine books of fiction, 1997-2016, including *Walking After Midnight ~ Collected Stories*, *Big Daddy's Gadgets*, *Hush Puppy!*, *Rise Up*, *Trust Walk*, *Butterflies Die*, *Flight of the Omni*, *Deadlines*, and *Death in Service*
- Four collections of poetry, 2008-2015, including *Cancer*, *White Trash & Southern*, *If I Were I Would!*, and *The Swing: Poems of Fatherhood*
- Eight books of nonfiction, 1991-2018, including *Native American Flute: A Comprehensive Guide*, *Native American Flute Craft ~ Ancient to Modern*, *Muscle Shoals ~ The Hit Capital's Heyday & Beyond*, *Notes to My Becca*, *The Native American Flute: Myth ~ History ~ Craft*, *Alabama Musicians: Musical Heritage from the Heart of Dixie*, *Divorced Dads*, and *Music Fell on Alabama*
- Dozens of short stories in publications such as *The Big Book of Erotic Ghost Stories*, *Gothic*, *Bull Spec*, and *Year's Best Horror Stories*
- Hundreds of poems in publications such as *Boston Poetry*, *Rattle*, *Main Street Rag*, *The Chiron Review*, *Poet*, *Abbey*, *Pearl*, *The MacGuffin*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*
- Seven music albums, including *WindPoem I - VI ~ Native American Flute Meditations* and *Sinner's Suite*

Awards

- New Mexico Music Awards Finalist, 2019, *Infinite ~ WindPoem V ~ Native American Flute Meditations*
- EPIC *Best Poetry Collection* Winner, 2008, *The Swing: Poems of Fatherhood*, Uncial Press
- *Year's Best Fantasy & Horror 19* Honorable Mention, "Contact is Everything"
- *Best of the Net*, 2006, "Magic"
- *Year's Best Fantasy & Horror 6* Honorable Mention, "Mama's Boy"
- *Year's Best Horror Stories XXI*, "Mama's Boy"
- *Year's Best Horror & Fantasy* Honorable Mention, 1990, "Old Lady Campbell, She is Dead"
- *Year's Best Horror Stories XX*, "The Sharps and Flats Guarantee"
- *Quick Chills II* Year's Best Collection, 1992, "The Sharps and Flats Guarantee"
- *Year's Best Fantasy & Horror 7* Honorable Mention, "Undertaker II: Drowning"
- *Year's Best Horror Stories XIX*, "Walking After Midnight"

Specializations

- Four decades of creative and journalistic writing, including freelance and staff work for newspapers, magazines, and book publishers, specializing in journalistic nonfiction, historical nonfiction, fiction, and poetry
- Journalistic and commercial photography
- TESOL/TEFL certified for tutoring English as a second language
- Recording musician (multiple instruments, specializing in guitar and Native American flute)
- Craftsman of custom Native American flutes

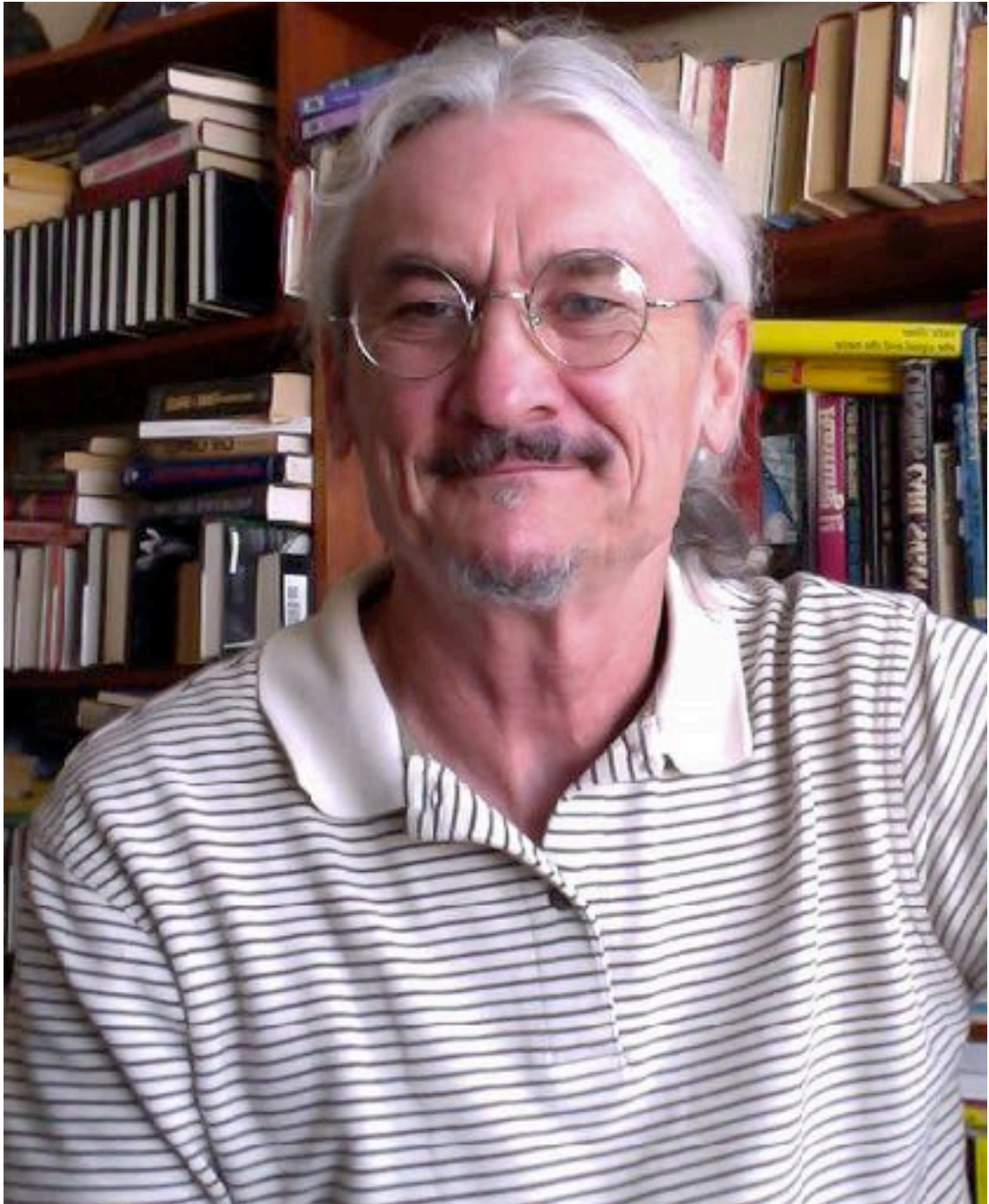
Education

- TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certification, GPA 4.0/4.0, University of California-Los Angeles, 2001
- TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certification, GPA 4.0/4.0, June 2002, University of California-Los Angeles, 2002
- BA, Communication Arts-Journalism, Sociology minor, GPA 3.5/4.0, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL, 1979

Author's Platform/Social Media Presence

- Website: <http://csfuqua.com>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/C.S.Fuqua.Author/>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/csfuqua>

References provided upon request





ANCESTORS

Native American Flute
Meditations

WindPoem IV

C.S. Fuqua

Hush, Puppy!



A Southern Fried Tale

C.S. Fuqua

Illustrated by Beth Young

White Trash & Southern

Collected Poems, Vol. I



C. S. Fuqua