

October 5, 20--

Fiction Editor
The Saranac Review
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Dear Fiction Editor,

I am submitting under cover of this letter a short story called "Triangulation." It is part of a collection of short fiction and personal narrative set in my home region of Appalachia. I am a novelist, short story writer, and occasional writer of personal essays like this one. I have published thirteen books, including *Dwight's House and Other Stories* (Hamilton Stone Editions, 2004), *Oradell at Sea* (West Virginia University Press 2002) and a new edition of one of my books about writing, *Personal Fiction Writing* (Teachers & Writers Press, 2000). For more information about me and my work, please see my website at <http://www.meredithsuewillis.com>.

Please recycle the pages if you can't use them.

Finally, thank you very much for your time reading this. I have worked on small magazines and know what a daunting task this can be.

Sincerely,
Meredith Sue Willis

October 18, 20--

G- B- , Senior Editor
University Press

Dear G- B--,

We met last month at the 25th Annual Appalachian Literary Festival at Emory & Henry College. You heard me read and kindly expressed interest in my work and invited me to get in touch with you. I assume you must know that writers jump at such invitations, and this letter is my leap.

I'm enclosing with this letter a table of contents and two samples from a new book of Appalachian-related stories, *Old Loves and Home Places: New and Selected Stories*. The collection runs just under 200 pages and has in it some stories from previous collections, but more than half would be appearing in book form for the first time. I believe at this point that all, or almost all, have been published in literary magazines or are due out momentarily. The one you heard me read, "Triangulations," will be published shortly in *The Saranac Review*.

I'm enclosing "On the Road With C.T. Savage," which is in the latest issue of *Appalachian Heritage*, in which I'm the featured author. I've also included "Quilt Pieces," one of the older stories. My previous collection of short work set in the Appalachian region, *In the Mountains of America*, was praised by the *New York Times Book Review*, which said, "Ms. Willis...provides a[n]...important lesson on the nature and function of literature itself," and by *The Nation*, which called it "pure, twangy bewitching entertainment." If you would like to read more commentary on my work, please see my web site, especially the page <http://www.meredithsuewillis.com/commentary.html>. I'd also be happy to send hard copies of reviews and commentary. I would especially appreciate the opportunity to send you the whole manuscript.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,
Meredith Sue Willis

August 12, 20--

R- T-
R- T- Literary Agency, Inc.
New York , NY 10011

Dear R- T- ,

I have just finished the final draft of a new novel called *Love Palace*, and I am looking for an agent after many years of placing books on my own. I was drawn to your agency because you appear to consider the full range of publishing houses, including smaller, independent presses like Other Press.

My book is literary fiction and has as its narrator a woman who reluctantly takes a job in the nonprofit sector where she finds herself attracted both to a charismatic religious leader and to a very young man with gender ambivalence. Martha, the narrator, is a wry, mildly agoraphobic under-achiever, half Jewish and half Appalachian.

A brief outline of my publishing history is as follows: a well-respected agent placed my first novel with Charles Scribner's Sons, and Scribner's then published three of my novels. Recently, I've been placing my books myself. Among the books I placed were two children's novels at HarperCollins, republished as paperbacks and in print now with Montemayor Press (<http://www.montemayorpress.com>); three popular books about writing with Teachers and Writers Press (<http://www.twc.org/pubs/fiction.php?ID=790a7>) – all still in print, one since 1984; and novels and short story collections from Mercury House, West Virginia University Press, and Hamilton Stone Editions (also all in print). For more information about my work, including excellent reviews of past books, please take a look at my web site at <http://www.meredithsuewillis.com>, especially the review page at <http://www.meredithsuewillis.com/commentary.html>.

Included with this letter are a one page synopsis of *Love Palace*, some pertinent pages of my CV, and an SASE for your reply. Please recycle the materials when you are through with them.

Thank you very much for your time in reviewing these materials.

Sincerely,

Meredith Sue Willis