



GIRAMONDO PUBLISHING

## COLLECTED SHORT FICTION

**An extract from ‘The Still Breathing Author’, a talk delivered by Gerald Murnane at the symposium *Another World in This One*, Goroke, 5 December 2017**

Every one of my books *had* to be written. I was always a part-time writer with no need to earn money from my books. This left me free to write what I *chose* when I chose. But the word chose is misleading. I never felt as though I was choosing my subject-matter. Rather, my subject-matter, sometimes clear and compelling and sometimes vague and elusive, always sought me out: took my eye; winked at me; disturbed me; lodged itself painfully in the heart of me and gave me no rest until I had turned it into sentences.

Here’s something I wrote recently for a friend of mine. ‘Don’t think I was able to write my books because I was wise. No, I wrote my books because I was ignorant. I’ve never truly understood the meaning of my experience. I’ve never understood people, least of all females. I’ve spent much of my life *speculating* about the real world, as it’s usually called. My books are a partial record of my speculations’.

And yet ... (almost everything I’ve written has deserved to be qualified by that phrase) and yet my books, when I stand them side by side or pile them on top of one another, seem to demand some sort of categorisation. At such times, being unable to think in abstractions and always inclined to conceive of thought as occupying space, I consider my collected works as a map of one of the outer regions of my mind, a region that I was driven to explore in search of the racecourses that provided to lie even further off.

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