

Interview with Jennifer Yates of [jennifersrandommusing.wordpress.com](http://jennifersrandommusing.wordpress.com)

## Interview questions

-Welcome. Can you please tell us about your book(s)?

My current book, *Jennifer's Plan*, a novel came to me on a hike. I promptly put together 95 pages, but then the work sat for a couple of years while I worked on other stuff and had a life. Once I got back into it, I was able to complete the story, filling in the blanks, bringing the characters to life and setting the scenes, then off to a session with my editor, before it ever saw the light of day. My first book is a Vietnam Memoir, *The Protected Will Never Know*, which I originally wrote some thirty years ago. That work sat in a box for over twenty years, which I eventually "pounded" into the computer, passed by my editor and finally got that work out the door.

-What inspired the story?

The Vietnam Memoir is a collection of "my stories" from the time I spent in Vietnam War, which ultimately became a bond between my daughter and me as she served in the Air Force and wound up in Afghanistan. It was at her insistence that I get it out there! Jennifer's Plan is a story, based on characters I experienced and events I knew of that had been kicking around in my head for some time and after that initial thrust of 95 pages I let it sit, but once I got back into it, the words flowed and I finished the story rather quickly. I liked my characters and "had a good time" living with them for that time we had together.

-Who has inspired you as a writer?

I always liked fast page turners and read a lot of different things; early Stephen King, John Grisham, a lot of the "Ladies", throw in some oldies, Hemingway, Hammet. I always did read a lot and a good part of my career I spent traveling so I read and read. Based on the number of books that had gathered, I estimated that I would read between 30-40 books a year, so I had a lot of influence. Of course I have read an extensive amount of Vietnam related books, fiction and non-fiction.

-What advice do you have for aspiring writers?

Wow, where to start. First off, keep writing. Edit your work. Be Patient. I don't subscribe to any "rules" as they tend to stifle you as a writer, but I will champion practicing your craft. Keep polishing. Start with short stories, then work your way up. No one sits down to write a novel. A (fiction) writer sits down to write a story, whether that turns out to be one paragraph or 400 pages. Whatever the size, make sure it is the best you can do, then decide what to do with it. Don't write for the market, write for you, then figure out how to market what you wrote.

The last thing I will say is that you can read every book, attend every conference, get degrees, whatever, but at the end of the day you need to write. Without practicing your craft you will not be a writer. Keep writing, it is the only way.

-What do you like to read?

Stories. I love stories. Even though I have read a lot of non-fiction, I still like a good story. I want to enjoy the characters, the plot and the ending, good bad or otherwise. Give me a good story and I can't put the book down (Yes I have read a book in one day!)

-If you had a time capsule to be opened 50 years in the future, what would you include in it?

A book (or two or three). As the industry turns toward ePublishing (and readers) the memory of the printed book should be preserved. Even as I contemplate buying my first "reader" for various uses, I still need the feel of a book in my hands that I can turn the page and focus on the next set of words. I also buy a lot of used copies of books that have gone out of print that I missed when they were around. So I would definitely put a favorite book or two in that capsule.

-What is next for you?

Well a bunch of things. I have a book on writing (nonfiction) that is languishing with a publisher, accepted but somewhere in the process... I also have two books of a three book trilogy completed, the first in submission stage, the second with my editor and the third in outline form. While these can stand alone, they are new stories with the same characters, friends of mine, that I liked staying with. I also have the research material gathered for my epic (don't we all have an epic in us?). Seriously I am focusing on the trilogy that I hope to get out there one day.

-Where can readers learn more about you and your books?

The best place is my web site: [www.dpmeyer.com](http://www.dpmeyer.com) for info and ordering, as well as getting updates and coming events.

-Do you have any questions for my blog readers?

Yes I do. Why do you write? Is it because you have a computer so it is easy, or is it because you need to get this stuff out of your head, regardless of what you do with it, or how you get it down on paper? (I wrote my Vietnam Memoir on a manual typewriter.) I think if you answer that question for yourself, you will have all you need to know about writing, but I still would like to hear your answer. Computers have made it too easy to put words on paper, but writing is about putting stories on paper, however it gets there. And if you have any questions for me, just drop me a line at: [don@dpmeyer.com](mailto:don@dpmeyer.com).

Jennifer, thank you for the opportunity to post my thoughts and thank you readers, for listening. Remember keep writing.