

# JIW Broadsheet

Journey in  
Words

May 12, 2017 \* Vol. 1, Issue 1

*"Because it is my name! Because I cannot  
have another in my life!"*

—John Proctor, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

## The Book with the Good Intentions\*

### The Young and the Desperate

"You asked me to help teach you. I long to."

This handwritten line is one of many in the book that Perry picks up in a thrift store on a estate sale trip to Stillwater.

*Good Intentions* by Ogden Nash, first edition, 1945, part of a 5-volume set. She has the full set in her bookstore.

She buys this one because someone wrote in it, lines like this one, all to a former lover, a boyfriend, never a husband, a man she was begging for.

People have always written in books, and Perry has always loved finding them, even this one, desperate with longing.

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\**The Book with the Good Intentions* is a detective story in verse, the 3<sup>rd</sup> book in a series. Used bookstore owner Perry Cassidy investigates the lives of people she reads about from scribbled notes and words in the margins of old books.

The 1<sup>st</sup> book in this series *The Book with the Beacon Lights* is forthcoming in June 2017 from Indian University Press. The 2<sup>nd</sup> book *The Book with the Broken Locket* is currently being reviewed by a variety of publishers.

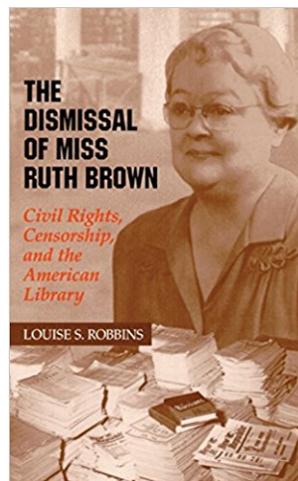
One poem will be printed in each edition of this paper. Follow the story, poem by poem!

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BEYOND!**

### IMPORTANT OKIE TO KNOW



I lived in Bartlesville for 17 years, and I got to know the public library really well. When I first moved there, the old library in the historic civic center was still being used. Will Rogers had played at this building. It was torn down a few years after I moved there.

In this old library, an incredible woman had worked. Her name was Ruth Brown. Though born in Kansas, Bartlesville was her home for most of her life. Brown lost her job in 1950, because of her support of desegregation and civil rights. According to the Oklahoma Library Legends website, "Miss Brown, along with two young African American teacher friends entered Bartlesville's largest drugstore that served food and seated themselves. They were refused service and left peaceably, but the trouble had begun for Brown."

Eventually, the Bartlesville Library board accused her of having subversive materials in the library, and she was fired shortly thereafter. Louise Robbins' book about Brown's life **The Dismissal of Ruth Brown** details this courageous woman's story.

I read the book many years ago and really enjoyed it.

#### Modern McTerry



#### Cosmopolitan?



## I AM NOT A SMITH: Chapter 1

“You are suspended for four weeks, which means you are going to miss the rest of this school year.”

Okay, I can live with that. Four weeks home alone before the summer starts. What a deal—a preview for the summer. The coming attractions. The prologue. Sweet.

“Your dad and I have decided that in that time a tutor will come and spend the day with you.”

Uh oh. The music on my coming attractions started to fade.

“We’ve contacted a former teacher. She’s coming over this afternoon to meet you and begin her lesson plans.”

*Flip. Flip. Flip.* That was the sound of my preview coming to the end of the reel. Fade to black.

Thus ended my ninth grade school year. Thus began the daily buzzkill known as Mrs. Derby, retired science teacher in her first career and retired accountant in her second. She was built like a closet door, all angles and vertical lines with brown hair in fine straight lines and squared off on the edges. If it was possible to use a ruler when cutting one’s hair, I’m sure she did it.

These were her favorite phrases:

“This is not a dialogue. Just say, ‘okay’ and do it.”

“Failure isn’t falling down. It’s staying down.”

“A jest that causes pain is no jest.”

“Success isn’t rising up. It’s staying up.”

“Be impatient and you’ll be a patient.”

Okay, so I made up the last one. And the next to the last one, too. But the other three . . . She chanted them like a cult leader hard at work on the indoctrination.

One more time we would get out the literature book, and I would gaze at the lines of poetry like a Scrabble game I was unequipped to play, and I would sigh and whine and protest, and she would cut me off with, “Miss Robbins.”

(I was always Miss Robbins to her, never Phoebe.)

“Miss Robbins, we will read this poem and analyze each line now.

“But Mrs. Derby, I”—

“Miss Robbins, this is not a dialogue. Just say, ‘okay,’ and do it.”

“Mrs. Derby, I can’t get this essay-writing stuff. I failed the last one I wrote over *Romeo and Juliet*. I just can’t imagine trying to”—

“Miss Robbins, failure isn’t falling down. It’s staying

down. We will learn to write an essay.”

“About this ‘we’ business. Do you really mean that? I mean, I won’t have to credit you as the ghost writer if you help me with it, will I? I might get in trouble for that. Do you believe in collaboration, Mrs. Derby? Because you and me putting this essay together must be the essence of collaboration. You and Me, Mrs. Derby. Now there’s some WE.”

I went on, not giving her a chance to open her mouth.

“I think Mrs. Thompson would understand. She’s an aging hippy, you know. I’m sure collaboration on this essay would make her day. Mrs. Derby, I imagine right now, she’s sitting at home smoking a joint and having some wine in praise of our meeting of the minds.”

“Miss Robbins, a jest that causes pain is no jest.”

“But Mrs. Thompson knows she’s a hippy.”

“And does she also know that you accuse her of alcohol and drug abuse?”

“Well . . . it all comes with the territory, doesn’t it? Mrs. Derby, did you ever see that movie with”—

“That’s enough!” she protested, silencing my digressions like the trap bar coming down on a hungry mouse.

“We’re not discussing movies now. Back to Robert Frost.”

And so it went with my suspended exile. I was not allowed to leave the house during the day. No TV, no computer games, no Playstation, no cell phone, no toaster, no electric pencil sharpener, no incandescent light. And Mrs. Derby was there from the time my parents left in the morning and my sister (a junior) came home each day. At night, I went nowhere unless accompanied by one parent or the other.

I might as well have been wearing an ankle bracelet attached to the Chicago PD’s switchboard.

All because I tried to help out a friend.

Okay, all because I had a nutball friend to begin with.

Okay, okay, because I’m a sucker for friends with crazy hair who eat nothing but finger foods and refuse to write in anything but purple ink.

Felicia. Felicia with the freckles and brown doe eyes, black shiny boots and pink skirts and multiple piercings in multiple places. Felicia has about twelve personalities. Most are harmless and fun or just sweet and nutty. But the one that got everything out of whack was the personality inhabiting her the day she decided to bring her mom’s prescription pain pills to school and proceed to pass them out to any stupid kid who happened to ask for them. . . . TO BE CONTINUED

**A chapter of this novel in progress will be included in each JIW Broadsheet. Get each issue to find out what happens to Phoebe!**

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