

Damned Writers

by Mathew Paust

Real writers they were, I think. One of them, anyway. I thought at first they might be the ghosts of D.H. Lawrence and Frieda. Walking across the courthouse green, holding hands. Dressed old fashioned European: he in an Irish flat cap and coffee tweed jacket, she a brunette with long Middlesmarch hair and a brown pants suit.

I walked around the circle and they came out just behind me, talking earnestly. I heard only him: "Well, you need the entire manuscript...(mumble mumble)." I didn't hear her, but she undoubtedly said something. Him again: "For example, you can take...you would look at..." I'd gotten too far ahead to hear anything else.

A writer and his editor or agent, maybe? Which was the writer, he or she?

Excuse me. This is not The Village or Humboldt Park or Haight Ashbury. It's Gloucester, Virginia, for chrissakes. We catch fish here and plot the South's rahhhhhhzing agin. We don't write litterchure. We don't wear flat caps or tweeds, or use words like "manuscript." What in hell's going on here? Global warming? The Apocalypse? Obama? Didn't Max Perkins die, like they said?

Happy New Year.

