

NARRATIVE

“What’s the story on him?” my mother would ask me, say, after the one-legged guy in yellow shorts hopped out of the lineup in front of the kissing booth.

“Don’t know,” I rejoined. “I bowled a perfect game last night, Mum. When and where do I get my prize?”

“Don’t you be telling me any stories now,” she said.

“Aw, Mum, it’s a pretty sad story, the way you’ve been treating me lately. You used to be nicer by far.”

“Oh,” she said, “that’s a different story.”

When I told Mrs. Pickering about this conversation while I was helping her get her prune crop in, she squinched up her nose and eyes at me, the sun coming between leaves and onto her face.

“I don’t want to be hearing you telling any tales out of school,” is what she said.

The implication that school was a place for narrative really interested me. I decided then and there that narration would be my occupation in life, where, you might say, I would live. As for school, narration would be the way I handled English, Science, History, Phys. Ed., and even Mathematics. In Grade Eleven I wrote a piece called “The Story of the Young Amicable Number.”

My mother said she didn’t want to hear about it.

I went to Latin to get the story on narrative. Found out I’d rather *narräre* than *ignöräre*, so I kept writing and reading, which are basically the same thing.

“What’s the story on your friend the one-legged guy?”

“Well, it seems—”

“Yeah, I’ll bet.”