

The latest news from author Frances O'Roark Dowell.

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Spring 2014 Newsletter

Hello, friend!

I use the word “spring” advisedly in my newsletter title, because I no longer trust the weather. It could start snowing again any second. But looking out my window as I write, I see blooms on the redbud trees, and the grass is suggesting it might be time for a little trim. So who knows? Maybe we’ve made it through the Longest Winter Ever.

It’s been one of the busiest springs I can remember. I’ve had all sorts of wonderful school visits in 2014 so far. I’ve been to Creekside Elementary here in Durham, Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School in Raleigh, Mac Williams Middle School in Fayetteville, and South View Middle School in Hope Mills, North Carolina. I also spent a lovely morning at the Wayne County Library in Goldsboro, N.C., where I discussed *Shooting the Moon* as part of the “Wayne County Reads” program.

My biggest trip so far this year was to Kirksville, Missouri, where I participated in the Children’s Literature Festival at Truman State University. Over 1,000 students were bussed in to hear from such wonderful authors as [Sara Pennypacker](#) (the *Clementine* books), [Linda Urban](#) (*A Crooked Kind of Perfect*), Newbery Honor Book winner [Amy Timberlake](#) winner (*One Came Home*), U.S. Children’s Poet Laureate [Kenn Nesbitt](#),



and yours truly, me. What a thrill to meet so many great writers! And so many great kids!

I've also been teaching creative writing workshops this spring. I've always wanted to try this, and finally jumped in. I've been teaching Saturday morning workshops in Chapel Hill and am completely blown away by my very creative and talented students. This summer I'm teaching a weeklong writing camp. If you want more information, head over to my website, francesdowell.com.

Big news stuff:

- [*The Sound of Your Voice, Only Really Far Away*](#) received a prestigious 2013 Blue Ribbon Book award from the *Bulletin of the Center For Children's Books*. The novel follows the friendship of Marilyn and Kate from *The Secret Language of Girls* and *The Kind of Friends We Used to Be*.
- My next book, *Anybody Shining*, has a cover, which you can see above. Set in the early 1920s, *Anybody Shining* is the story of 12-year-old Arie Mae Sparks, who longs for her own true friend. When she finally meets her match, the two of them have all sorts of adventures. Hope you like a good ghost story! It has a publication date of August 26.
- I've started a podcast! It's called ***Word! The Writing Podcast for Kids***. Episodes 1 and 2 are up on [iTunes](#). You can also access episodes on francesdowell.com/podcasts. My hope is to help young writers learn the basics of story-building and develop the skills they need to bring out their innate creative genius.
- And finally ... (drum roll, please!) [*Phineas L. MacGuire ... Gets Cooking!*](#) is available in Cheerios boxes around the country! That's right: *Phineas* has been cerealized! Get it? Serialized? Cerealized? Um, okay. I'll stop now.

So it's been a good spring so far. I hope to get my garden beds dug this weekend because our last frost date is almost upon us. Time for tomatoes and green beans and maybe an eggplant or two. I can't wait!

I hope this finds you well and reading good books!

Best,

Frances

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