

Spotlight on: Walter Williams

December 2016



Biography

Walt Williams, who has an advanced degree in anthropology, is an avid historian, mystic, poet, and author who manages an information security program at a prominent New England start-up. He is noted for his bad puns, and willingness to argue from any perspective. He is endured by his beloved wife and two daughters, and lives in Sharon Massachusetts. When he is not at home or at his computer, he can often be found haunting the various used bookstores of Boston. He is the author of *The Garden at the Roof of the World*, Dragonwell Publishing, a historical fantasy set in the 13th century, and *Security for Service Oriented Architectures*, CRC Press, a guide to the integration of information security into globally distributed applications.

[Find Walter's work at the Sharon Public Library!](#)

Interview

1. Your bio notes that you reside here in Sharon. How long have you lived in the area?

I've lived in Sharon 15 ½ years.

2. Fifteen-odd years is a pretty long time. What's your favorite thing about Sharon (or its nearby environs)?

Our favorite thing about Sharon is how welcome diversity is, and how welcome interfaith couples are in all the Sharon houses of worship. Margo and I are of different faiths, and our children grew up knowing many others whose parents were also of different faiths. This provided them with a strength and a comfort in who they are.

3. It looks like you write both fiction and non-fiction. Do you have a preference for one over the other?

I love writing both fiction and non-fiction. I'm currently trying to find an agent for a completed novel, while simultaneously writing another novel, and a technical article on how to create a process to effectively perform information security intelligence operations for the Information Security Management Handbook.

4. When you sit down to start writing something new, how do you decide what to write about? For example, what sparked your interest in information security intelligence?

When I look to write non-fiction I look for gaps in the literature. I wrote about creating procedures to manage information security intelligence because most of the literature on the subject was how to gather intelligence, not about what to do with it once you had it. I wrote about the security architecture of distributed applications because most of the literature about information security architecture is focused on infrastructure, and most of the literature on application security is on testing rather than design and architecture.

When I write fiction, I look for stories that can support strong themes. The Garden at the Roof of the World is about reconciliation, something that people struggle with especially in this day and age. The Hacker of Guantanamo Bay is about when is it more ethical to break the law instead of uphold it. Science fiction and fantasy are the perfect genres to write thematically strong stories, especially fantasy, as myth is the oldest and most effective way to convey the nuances of truth.

5. As a used bookstore-aficionado, are there any particular spots you would recommend?

I love the Brattle Book Shop and Commonwealth Books in the downtown of Boston, and Raven Used Books when I venture to the dark side and go to Cambridge. I highly recommend all three, but especially the Brattle Book Shop on a day when it is not raining. Their expansion into the alley next door with carts filled with books is the best use of space imaginable. I could spend hours there.

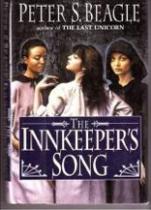
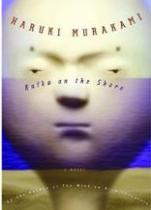
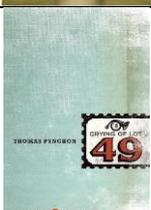
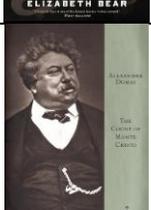
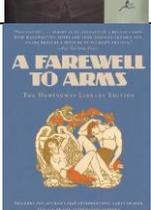
6. Thank you for the recommendations! What has been your most interesting used bookstore find so far?

Probably the most interesting things I've found in used book stores are the 1936 edition of the Oxford Book of Modern Verse edited by William Butler Yeats; volumes 1-3 of Medieval Indian Literature: An Anthology, edited by K. Ayyappa Paniker from Sahitya Akademi Press of India (which was very useful in writing The Garden at the Roof of the World); and the Walter James Miller translation of Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne which both properly and accurately translates all the scientific language found in the original, but provides annotations and illustrations. Most translations of this story into English omit Verne's amazing command of both biology and ecology.

7. Speaking of finding things, where can we find your books and other writings?

You can find a copy of both Security for Service Oriented Architectures and The Garden at the Roof of the World on the shelves of the Sharon Public Library. They are available for purchase on the publisher's web sites (www.crcpress.com, www.dragonwellpublishing.com), on www.amazon.com, and can be ordered through Barnes and Noble or online at www.barnesandnoble.com. My articles can be found in the sixth edition of The Information Security Management Handbook, and in the forthcoming seventh edition.

6 Books Walter Recommends

 The cover of 'The Innkeeper's Song' by Peter S. Beagle features three young women in a dark, atmospheric setting. The title is written in a stylized, gothic font.	<p>The Innkeeper's Song by Peter S. Beagle</p>
 The cover of 'Kafka on the Shore' by Haruki Murakami shows a close-up of a person's face with a yellowish tint, set against a dark background.	<p>Kafka on the Shore by Haruki Murakami</p>
 The cover of 'The Crying of Lot 49' by Thomas Pynchon features a greenish, textured background with a small, dark, rectangular object in the center.	<p>The Crying of Lot 49 by Thomas Pynchon</p>
 The cover of 'Karen Memory' by Elizabeth Bear depicts a woman in a dark, futuristic or military-style outfit, holding a rifle, against a background of a cloudy sky.	<p>Karen Memory by Elizabeth Bear</p>
 The cover of 'The Count of Monte Cristo' by Alexandre Dumas features a portrait of a man in a dark suit and white shirt, with a small illustration of a man in a top hat below.	<p>The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas</p>
 The cover of 'A Farewell to Arms' by Ernest Hemingway has a blue background with a central illustration of a man and a woman in a romantic embrace.	<p>A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway</p>