

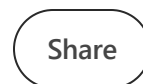
INTERVIEWS

Meet Matias Travieso-Diaz - dipity Community Spotlight Q&A Interview no. 5

learn more about writer Matias Travieso-Diaz's work through dipity's global interview monthly spotlight feature



DIPITY LITERARY MAGAZINE
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Introduction @matias_traviesodiaz

Born in Cuba, Matias Travieso-Diaz migrated to the United States as a young man. He became an engineer and lawyer and practiced for nearly fifty years. After retirement, he took up creative writing. Over ninety of his short stories have been published or accepted for publication in anthologies and paying magazines, blogs, audiobooks, and

podcasts. Some of his unpublished works have also received "honorable mentions" from several paying publications. A first collection of his stories, "The Satchel and Other Terrors" has recently been released and is available on Amazon and other book outlets.

1 Short Story by Matias Travieso-Diaz:

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!

For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Act 1

Romeo and Julieta Get Married

Romeo squeezed forward and came to the spot where Julieta was watching, horrified, the knife fight in the Bogota square. Taking her by the hand, he wrestled her away from her nanny and led her into the cathedral, dragging her along the nave into a side altar and, through a small door, to an adjacent office. There, out of breath, he stopped and greeted the old cleric who sat at a desk.

"Fray Lorenzo, this is my fiancée, Julieta."

"Happy to know you, my child," said the priest in a dulcet tone.

Romeo was not finished. "Father, we want to get married."

The priest turned to Julieta. "How old are you?"

"Just turned fifteen" replied the girl.

Fray Lorenzo started to voice an objection but Romeo cut in: "She's pregnant!"

There was a collective intake of breath. Julieta readied to deliver a stern response to Romeo's calumny, but an altar boy ran into the room, wringing his hands in distress and shouting: "Father, there are dead people in the square. You have to come out and help!"

“I have business to conclude, then I’ll go out. Go fetch Andresito, and both of you return here. I have use for you.” The boy rushed out.

“Do you know what’s going on outside?” Fray Lorenzo’s question, directed at Romeo, had an undercurrent of suspicion.

“Well, some of my friends and people from the Capoleto household are having an altercation.”

At that point, Julieta’s nanny barged into the office. “Here you are, my child. I’ve been looking all over for you.” The old lady was breathing rapidly and was pale as if she had seen a ghost.

“What’s happening outside, Matilde? Is everybody ok?” questioned Julieta, wringing her hands.

“Two of our servants are hurt, and a curly blond fellow that I remember seeing at your party is gravely injured.”

“How are my parents?”

“They are unhurt, but your father saw this boy (she looked contemptuously at Romeo) carry you away and is on his way here. He is in a rage.”

Romeo blanched at the news of his cousin Chuchó’s injury. “Chucho. . . I’m coming!!” he cried and got up. The priest stopped him: “Wait a second, Romeo. If you go out you may get hurt. We have business to finish here. You must correct the damage you have inflicted on this child’s honor. I’ll marry you, then you can go out and get yourself in trouble if you want.”

“This fellow, marry my Julieta?” cut in Matilda, horrified. “I just heard Don Francisco vow he’ll have his head.”

Fray Lorenzo continued: “We need witnesses to the marriage. Two of my altar boys are on their way back and they will ...”

Young men, panting with excitement, came in. The small office was all of a sudden very crowded.

“Well, as I was saying, we are ready to proceed.”

Moments after completion of an abbreviated marriage ceremony there were loud noises outside the office, and a screaming Francisco Javier Capuleto crashed through the door, heading for Romeo’s throat. “Bastard! I’m going to kill you!!”

Fray Lorenzo interposed himself between Capuleto and his victim. “Don Francisco! Is that a way to greet your son-in-law?”

Capuleto ground to a halt as if struck by an iron fist. “Son-in-law? Married to my daughter? My Julieta? It can’t be!!!”

“It is, Father” replied Julieta coolly. “You threw me a big quinceañera ball hoping to hook in a marriage prospect. Well, you succeeded.”

“Impossible! Marry the son of my worst enemy? I’ll never accept this!”

“Yes, Paco, you will.” At the threshold of the office – there was no room for anyone else to come in – stood Julieta’s mother.

“But how about us?” protested Capuleto.

Otilia Capuleto had an answer ready: “We’ll just have to sit down with Augusto Montesco and have a business discussion. Now that we’re family, I’m sure we’ll come to an understanding.”

Days later, Romeo and his bride were chatting after a dinner attended by members of both families. “I’m glad we didn’t have to elope,” said Julieta. “I’m only sorry for your poor cousin Chucho. How's he doing?”

“The wound nearly hit his heart, but I hope his constitution will allow a full recovery.”

Julieta’s face broke into a smile, so mirthful that it made her seem almost pretty. “I’m proud of our culture. Here, people seldom kill each other over affairs of the heart.”

“Of course, politics is another matter,” she added.

They laughed.

Q: What is the backstory of this short story?

The classic “Romeo and Juliet” tragic theme lends well to parody and begs for a happy ending. This story seeks to provide both.

Q: What was your most recent publication?

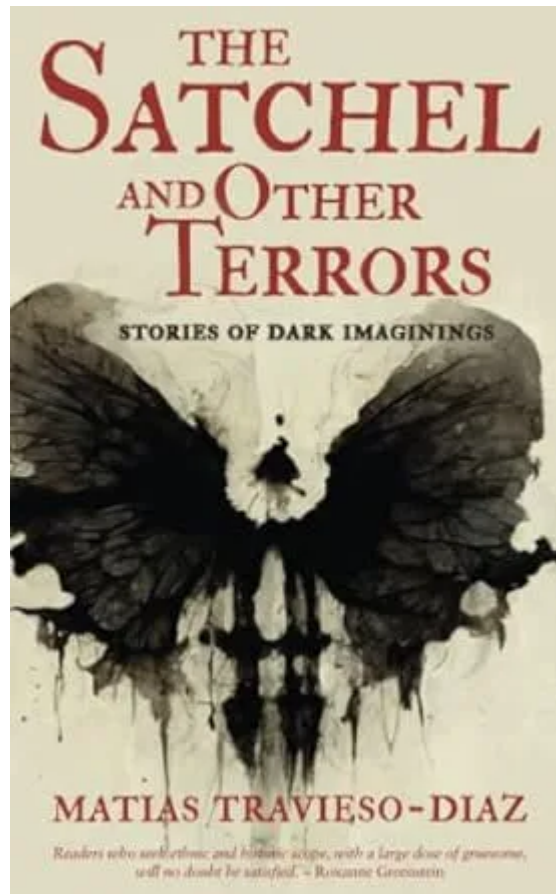
“The Gift from the Goddess” (my 90th published story), which is available as a podcast on YouTube.

Tall Tale TV - A deal with a genie is never as simple as it seems: "The Gift from the Goddess": Fantasy Short Story

A deal with a genie is never as simple as it seems 🎤 "The Gift from the Godde



Q: What are some of your fave publications (could be one of your own or a recommended read elsewhere?)



The Satchel and Other Terrors — Amazon

ABOUT: “We have to be careful when we walk in the open.”

So begins the title story, and so begins this ominous collection of tales from settings around the world and times both close and long past. We are taken into realms of terror, dragged by the hand into haunted places and minds, meeting characters whose fates could be our own if we aren't careful.

A lonely woman on a cruise will not find what she's looking for until she realizes why she is on this ocean voyage.

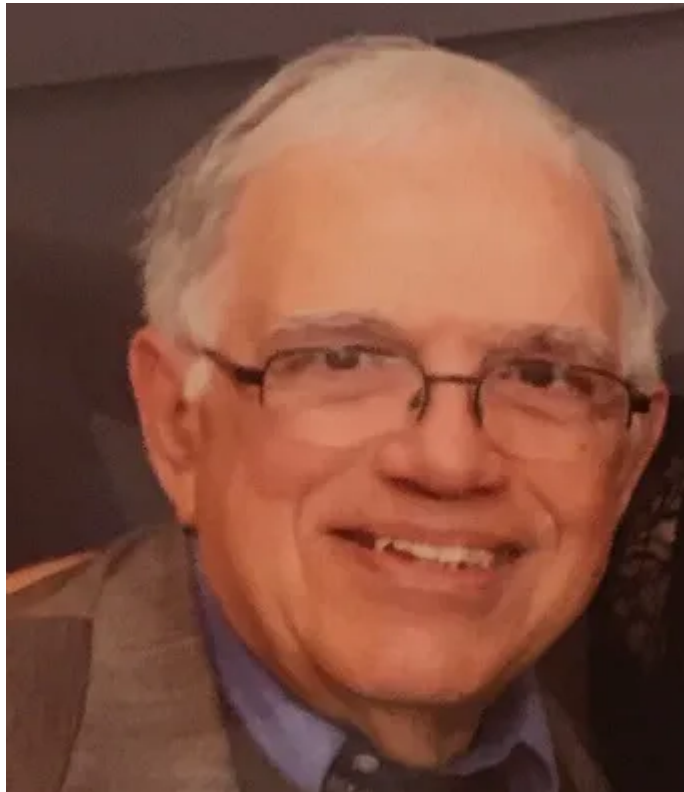
A man visits a remote village in Africa to learn that some monsters aren't quite what he expected them to be.

An unfinished opera becomes a man's obsession to find those lost notes, no matter the means by which they are found.

A clumsy but meaningful art piece by a blind girl becomes the bane of the art examiner who interviews candidates for a prestigious art school.

A portal is opened, a poker game is played, a mine is operated, and dolls are fabricated. Each story opens a new conflict, a new strife, a new view of both the extraordinary and the banal elements of our world. You will be mystified and intrigued, terrified and horrified, all as you turn the pages and discover these stories of dark imaginings.

Q: What else do you do outside of the writing or poetry community? or What else are you working on or excited about in the future? Any fun hobbies?



I worked as an engineer and lawyer for nearly fifty years before taking up creative writing. I am concentrating now on writing and am having fun doing so!

Q: When did you begin writing? OR What or who sparked and inspired your writing journey?

My interest in literature awakened around 1968 or 69, when I was living in Columbus, Ohio, attending Ohio State and working on my PhD in Electrical Engineering. There, I met a fellow Cuban who quickly became one of my closest friends and an important influence on my future life as a writer. Eloy and I discussed often our shared love for Latin American fiction and he encouraged me to audit a class he was taking on under an excellent Argentinian professor who was going over the works of many contemporary Latin American writers up to then unknown to me. Out of my auditing of that course came the writing of my first short story, “The Black Cat,” now lost. I do not remember the details of the story, but when I showed it to the professor, she very delicately suggested that it needed work. I am sure it did. I did some other writing while in Columbus, but virtually nothing is left of it except snippets in one or two of my stories.

More years passed. Engineering, law, marriage, family life occupied my time until March 2015, when I retired. For the first couple of years, I did little but become increasingly bored with life after full employment. Then, in 2017, I had a dream. In the dream, which I vividly recalled when I woke up, human life on Earth was being threatened by a subtle invasion by extra-terrestrials who were planning of extinguishing humanity by “poisoning the wells” with a substance that, when ingested by pregnant women in their drinking water, prevented them from giving birth to females. Through that ploy, the invaders expected, human life would come to an end in a generation or two without having to fire a shot. I turned my dream into my first short story, “Something in the Water.”

After writing “Something in the Water” and editing it several times (something I have always done since the days I was a lawyer) I sent it to Eloy for his comments; Eloy, at the time, was a full professor and Chair of the Department of Foreign

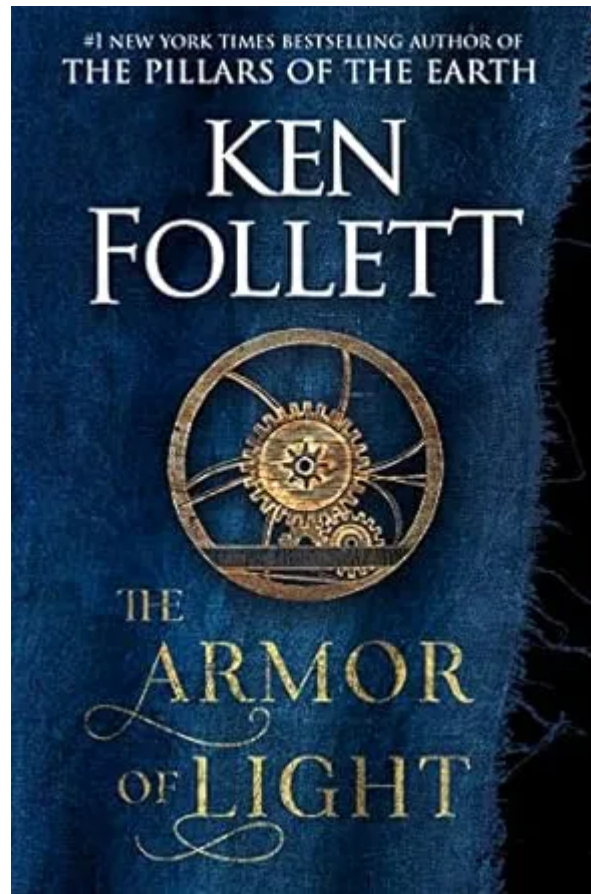
Languages at a Western university. Eloy had the students in a class he was teaching read the story and comment on it. The students' response was enthusiastic. Eloy concluded: "Your writing shows promise. Keep at it." He has continued to serve as the main critical reviewer and mentor of my literary efforts.

Q: What advice would you give aspiring poets, authors, or fellow writers in the community?

Keep at it. Don't be discouraged if there are negative reactions. Writing is a difficult field to get into, and rejection is the expected response to most publication efforts.

Q: What are you currently reading? OR What book(s) would you recommend to others right now?

I am reading (actually, listening) to Ken Follett's "The Armor of Light," the latest book in his "Pillars of the Earth" series. Follett's storytelling ability is marvelous and his novels have an ideal mixture of scholarship and drama.



Q: What was the last movie or TV show you watched or recommend others see in the community?

Lessons in Chemistry – Official Trailer | Apple TV+



Q: If you were stuck on the moon with anyone or could pick your space flight partner who would it be (it could be someone from the past or present time)?

interesting man to boot.

Blood Cultures - Glass



Q: What's one of your favorite poems in existence?

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

ma perche grammat di questo jonio

*Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels

And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question ...
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time

To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin —
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? ...

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it towards some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,

After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
 “That is not it at all,
 That is not what I meant, at all.”

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.
We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

~ T.S. Eliot

Source: (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/44212/the-love-song-of-j-alfred-prufrock>).

To Check Out More of Matias Travieso-Diaz's Work

Please Def Visit: Matias's Amazon author page, (<https://www.amazon.com/stores/Matias-Travieso-Diaz/author/>) to see more publications and visit his website (<https://mtravies.wixsite.com/mysite>). Also read or listen to some of his work linked above in this Q&A such as in audio, podcast, etc., and online via search engine — you'll come across more of course!

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[Interview Processed By VFORROW]

Note: We choose one song for fun to pair with each Substack submission similar to our website's online tank.

[Thank You Message From the Founder]:

Thank you so much Matias for taking the time to share about yourself through dipity's Substack community spotlight! It's awesome when we come into contact with others who inspire us or our path as writers again and always cool to see how our dreams or even nightmares end up turning into actual pieces or projects. We'll definitely have to

check out more of your short stories and “The Satchel and Other Terrors” looks fantastic!

~ Jazz Marie Kaur (Vevna Forrow)

We truly strive to share as many amazing writers of all ages as possible from around the world and carefully take the time to review all submissions. Please note it is incredibly hard to decline any. P.S. We may open this someday up to photographer and artist spotlights too — so stay tuned we have a few more release announcements, reminders, and updates coming your way very soon before the end of 2023 is the goal, and print issue no. 4 is at approximately 74% completion — we’re just waiting on a few more incoming items! A reminder that we’re undergoing staffing changes so response times will vary. To enter dipity’s fun community spotlight Q&A interviews and for more submission opportunities outside of our Substack visit:

<https://www.dipitylitmag.com/submit>

Thanks for your support and we look forward to reading your submissions! We appreciate anyone who takes the time to subscribe here, pledge support, or donate directly to dipity community projects at the bottom right-hand corner of our site’s new GiveButter footer campaign. Have awesome days ahead!



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