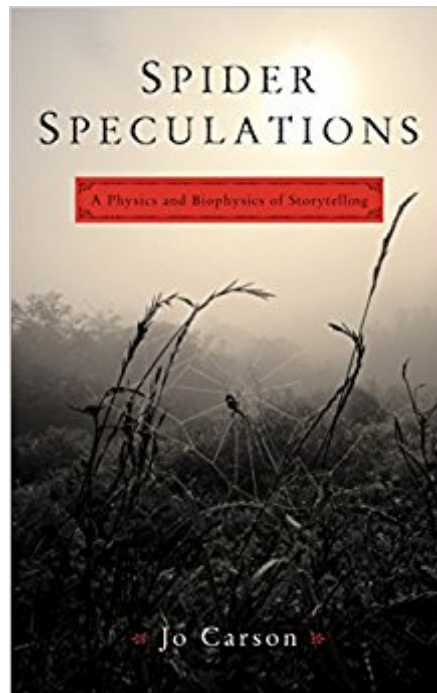




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# **Spider Speculations: A Physics And Biophysics Of Storytelling**



## Synopsis

“I’ve spent about 15 years plus some working with people’s stories in a series of communities in this country. I write plays from oral histories for those communities. Just finished my 30th. I’m watching people’s lives and communities literally change, sometimes drastically, for the work. Spider Speculations is the beginning of trying to understand the hows and whys of all the changes.”

• Author Jo Carson

Jo Carson lays bare her personal investigation into her own creative process after a spider bite on her back begins a series of life-altering events. Spider Speculations applies cutting edge mind-body science, quantum physics and ancient shamanistic techniques to describe how stories work in our bodies and our lives, and what happens when real stories are used in a public way. Carson, whose ability to capture the spoken word hallmarks her community-based work, sets down this story in her own distinctive voice, interspersing the journey with examples of her performance work. This truly original American book will speak to anyone thinking about art and community or engaging with people’s stories.

Jo Carson is a writer and performer living in John City, Tennessee. She has published award-winning plays, short stories, children’s books, essays, poems and other work. Her play *Whispering to Horses* and solo show *If God Came Down* premiered at Seven Stages in Atlanta. She currently performs *Liars, Thieves, and Other Sinners on the Bench*, made up of selected stories from her oral history plays, which will be published by TCG in 2007.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Jo Carson has distilled some decades of community-conscious story collecting and playmaking into a pungent blend of narrative psychology, neuroscience, and spirit. Her work should be essential reading for socially responsible artists of every kind." -- Joseph Sobol, PH.D. (Storyteller; Director of the Storytelling Graduate Program at East Tennessee State University)"I think this profound, engaging and funny book is the very best that has been written on the topic of generating theater in communities. I use it in all my classes. My students love it." -- Steve Kent (Director of Theatre at University of La Verne; Founder, The Institute for Conscious Acting)"Jo Carson understands the transformative power of storytelling on both a molecular and a community level. Her genius is to be able to link the micro and the macro, and you'll be astonished at how those links get made. If this book doesn't change how you think about your own stories and the stories you want to put onstage, then, to borrow from Atticus Finch, 'You've got another thing coming.'" -- Lisa Mount (Director of Artistic Logistics; Producer and Director of Headwaters :: Stories From a Goodly Portion of Beautiful Northeast Georgia)"Jo Carson has distilled some decades of community-conscious story collecting and playmaking into a pungent blend of narrative psychology, neuroscience, and spirit. Her work should be essential reading for socially responsible artists of every kind." -- Joseph Sobol, PH.D. (Storyteller; Director of the Storytelling Graduate Program at East Tennessee State University)"I think this profound, engaging and funny book is the very best that has been written on the topic of generating theater in communities. I use it in all my classes. My students love it." -- Steve Kent (Director of Theatre at University of La Verne; Founder, The Institute for Conscious Acting)"Jo Carson understands the transformative power of storytelling on both a molecular and a community level. Her genius is to be able to link the micro and the macro, and you'll be astonished at how those links get made. If this book doesn't change how you think about your own stories and the stories you want to put onstage, then, to borrow from Atticus Finch, 'You've got another thing coming.'" -- Lisa Mount (Director of Artistic Logistics; Producer and Director of Headwaters :: Stories From a Goodly Portion of Beautiful Northeast Georgia)

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This is a fantastic book. Unique look at human interaction and reaction. The spider story is quite something. Writers should read this book.

This book shipped very quickly and arrived perfectly. I am still reading this but have been told this is a great story.

IF you plan to learn how to tell stories to groups, this book is invaluable! Jo Carson is an amazing writer and has done incredible research for this book. Loads of help for our senior volunteer story telling group.

i bought this for a project paper i'm writing and it gave me an insight into my subject.it was great and helpful.

Spider Speculations provides excellent guidelines about how to collect personal stories from people, and the attitude that I should have in going about it. The attitude that I have in collecting is one of optimism and gratitude. I learned that my intention could affect the outcome of the story collecting process.I have been tasked to collect stories from the foster care population in Hawaii by Playbuilders Theater Company of Honolulu. I have been working with them in community plays since 2011. This is for a community based play that will be performed in 2017. Jo Carson touches upon the idea of finding memes in a personal story. A meme is anything with that has a cultural significance to a person. I have lived with cerebral palsy all my life, and I have been tasked to interview a young man with cerebral palsy for my upcoming play. Cerebral palsy is a congenital neurological condition that affects my balance, coordination and general movement. I can extrapolate from Jo Carson that living with and having the same disability as another person is a meme, because it is something we both have to deal with daily.The ability to reframe a story is something I also learned in this book. To reframe a story is to give a story a different perspective. Reframing is important when a story is painful. I will probably have to reframe the story that I will be told to give it some hopeful value.Jo Carson discusses the idea of agency. How agency relates to theater is insightful information. I have never heard this term used before, and I believe that it will be helpful to me in collecting stories. Giving agency to a character on the stage can be something as simple as expressing a personal opinion making a life altering decision. Giving agency simply means giving that person the freedom to act on their own behalf.I am motivated to collect stories and to try to craft them into a play because of this book. I have no established expectations about the story gathering and story telling process, but I think that having an attitude of gratitude is a great starting point. Having an attitude of gratitude will probably make it easier for people to share their

personal stories with me.

I have loved Jo Carson's work for some time -- uplifting, enriching, energizing, transformative. This latest book offers all of that -- and more.....much more! Here you are offered an opportunity to see INSIDE the story-weaving, to explore deeply what story means in your life, your family, your community, the world.....how we can learn from and be transformed through our stories. Plus, it's an absolutely engaging, entertaining, wonderful read....the kind of book where you're having so much fun reading it that the learning happens without effort!! I'd strongly recommend it to anyone who is interested in the following: storytelling, education, family and community dynamics, creative ways to promote peace and learning, writing, acting, building stronger communities, communication, parenting, enjoying life more deeply....

What really makes a good story? "Spider Speculations: A Physics and Biophysics of Storytelling" is a collection of writings from Jo Carson seeking to answer those questions and dive into the bare science of storytelling. The dissection will intrigue and inform readers, and grant them many a tip on improving their own writing, through understanding the audience, much like a cook would benefit from knowing who he is cooking for. "Spider Speculations" contains invaluable advice for writers, granting it an enthusiastic recommendation.

We all think we can tell a story. But Jo Carson not only TELLS a story, but also teaches us the how and why of it, as well. This book teaches and entertains and enlightens....shines a light on the magic that words can do. But be open to learning in other realms, as well. She gets right down to the ATOMS of the story!! I highly recommend this to anyone who loves words and magic and the crafting of stories.

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