

January 2015 - Fairbanks, AK

Dear friends in fiction—

My Novel Update list continues to grow. There are now 471 of you on it. If you know anyone who is a fan of my work, please invite them to sign up too.

Down to business. Here are the headlines in Marusek's Wonderful World of Writing:

- 1) I have just finished Draft 3.0 of the first volume of Novel #3.
- 2) Novel #3 has a working title and cover.
- 3) The first excerpt will be available free of charge in April of this year.

1) Remember that photo from the last update (NU#7, March 2014) depicting a wheelbarrow full of loose-leaf binders? The manuscript of Novel #3 was a 15-inch-tall stack of hand-inscribed paper. It wasn't until I started keystroking it into the computer that I knew how big a book it would be. Turns out—very big, about 350,000 words, or 1,150 printed pages. The standard sci-fi hardback has about 120,000 words and fills 336 pages. Yikes! No wonder the book took me so long to write.

At this point I need to decide whether to wait until I've revised the entire thing (taking about two more years) to release it or to chop the book into three volumes and have the first one ready to ship later this year. My inclination is to go with three volumes.

Almost immediately after deciding to divide the book, a title suggested itself, and on its heels came an idea for the cover.

On a side note: I would like to apologize to those of you waiting for another installment of the COUNTING HEADS series. In writing the first two books, I discovered I'm not suited to doing series. A good series writer needs to have all their ducks in a row before launching forth with the first book. At least I need to. But both COUNTING HEADS and MIND OVER SHIP were conceived independently, and by the end of MOS I had only vague inklings of a third book.

The take-away lesson for me was to never attempt a series again.

So what did I do? I tricked myself into writing another series (or more accurately a triptych). The big difference this time is I've got the whole book in the can (or at least the first two drafts). I know where the story is going. I know who the characters are and their story arcs. There's still a hell of a lot of things to imagine and reimagine, but the heavy lifting is already accomplished, and I feel confident I can actually bring all three books to you.

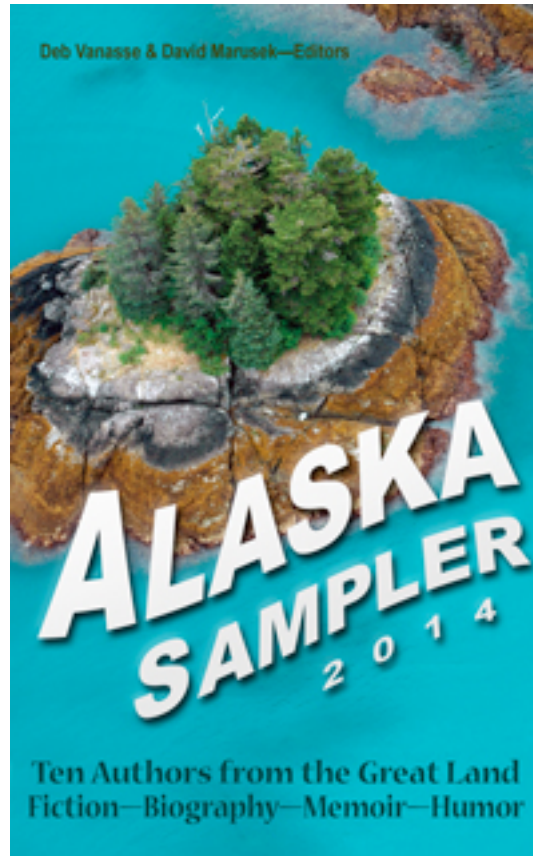
2) The title. For the last few years I've been jotting down every title idea that crossed my mind. I must have hundreds of them. A lot of near misses. At one point I thought I would have to list the top ten candidates here and see if any of them resonated with you.

But then, in one of those blazing epiphanies that artists sometimes have, the title came to me. And then the title suggested a possible cover. So I present to you . . .



I really like the title. Along with the subtitle, it contains both biblical and sci-fi references. And the cover pleases me. Of course if you hate either title or cover, tell me. I need to know. (Please tell me if you like them too.)

3) First excerpt. Last year, Alaska author Deb Vanasse and I co-produced the first volume of an annual ebook anthology called ALASKA SAMPLER. We collected new and reprinted Alaska-themed stories, essays, and novel excerpts from ten notable Alaskan authors (including ourselves). The ebook is free to readers. We conceived of it as a not-for-profit “author discovery” tool. That is, we authors are sharing each others’ fan bases as well as inviting readers who are interested in Alaska to check us all out.



If you haven't already seen it, feel free to grab a copy. <<http://runningfoxbooks.com/shop/alaska-sampler-2014/>> My own contribution was my non-science fiction short story, "She Was Good—She Was Funny," which I believe all 471 of you must have read by now. But there's more great stuff in there you might also enjoy.

Deb and I are currently assembling the 2015 edition of the ALASKA SAMPLER, and I am submitting a chapter from UPON THIS ROCK called "Sex on a Glacier." I'm pretty excited about this first public excursion of my new book—as well as terrified.

Anyway, I'll send you another update when AKS15 becomes available in April. In the meantime, keep me updated with any email address changes and stay in touch.

all best,
David Marusek