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Tall tales

Lots of things I could have been.

When I was a pre-teen and while the other kids on the block were playing baseball, I was dissecting preserved specimens. I guess at that point I might have become a mass murderer but my life has been about nothing if not twists and turns. I just had to know how guts worked and so I had a collection of dead things in formaldehyde on one of the shelves in my room. Thought I'd grow up to be a doctor but it turned out I didn't have the right kind of studiousness for the formality of a medical education.

Wanted to be a singer at one point and actually thought it might work out but it turns out you have to have the fire in your gut and I was more interested in filling mine with tacos and chocolate. But I performed in a lot of shows and sang in small clubs with my high school buddy and later with my erstwhile girlfriend. She went on to actually make a moderately successful solo CD and sing with John Lee Hooker and I went on to the next thing.

I thought I might be a woodworker and actually ran a small business making items for children's bedrooms. Taught myself how to make dovetail joints and built a few sticks of furniture. But then being a dad and needing to actually make a living wage sort of put an end to that aspiration. As a job, not as a hobby. I kept on building things but never again as more than a hobby. You can see evidence of my woodworking in our mantelpiece, in our daughters' 'big girl beds,' and a few other items around our house. It was a fun diversion but as it turned out, only a diversion.

I was always interested in accommodating the needs of folks living with disabilities. Don't know if that came from my mother's polio or my own early leg deformity or the deaf friend of my early school years. I was just always comfortable around people living with differences and after decades of working small manufacturing startups, I settled comfortably into my current role as an advisor to nonprofits that train and provide jobs for people living with challenges. Love my job and I seem to be decent at it.

Tried taking up this and that over the years. But through it all, I've loved making up stories. Yarns. Tall tales. Charming fabrications and outright lies. It seems that no matter what else was going on in my life I've never been able to get by without pencil and paper. (Or typewriter or word processor or laptop, as both technology and the tremors in my hands progressed.) Wrote my first full length novel in my mid-twenties. Enjoyed the process of writing, loved making up stories. I became an accomplished fictionalizer, much to my chagrin at times when my tall tales were exposed as such, but that's another story.

While I could share a number of reasons why I like to make up fictions, I'm not sure I could explain why I need to do so. But I do.

To me, the two most promising and intriguing and exciting words in the English language are 'what if...'

So, I'm a writer. Not because I'm literary or brilliant or even sharp-witted.

I just like a good story. And I'm not above making up my own