

ONE BOOK for NEBRASKA TEENS 2010

Unwind by Neal Shusterman

What award winning young adult author wrote to E. B. White at the age of 8 and said that *Charlotte's Web* needed a sequel and offered to collaborate in its writing? That would be Neal Shusterman, born in 1962 in New York City, whose writing career has included screen and TV writer, playwright, and novelist. Among the books that influenced him as a child were *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Degrees in both psychology and drama give Neal a unique approach to writing.

In the *Seventh Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators*, Neal says about himself: "I am often asked why I write, and it's a hard question to answer. After a great deal of thought, I've come to the conclusion that writers are a lot like vampires. A vampire will never come into your house uninvited—and once you invite one in, he'll grab you by the throat, and won't let you go. A writer's much the same—feeding on the speed of your heart as it races; feeding on your tears and your sighs."

"I suppose that's why I write—because I want to affect people—somehow change them for the better. I think most writers, deep down, have some hidden desire to change the world. They want to paint a picture of the possibilities—to show people the many things that are possible out in the world, or just within ourselves—both the good and the bad."

Being an author of imaginative mysteries and thrillers as well as biographies and realistic fiction, Neal considers young adult fiction to be an important genre. On his website he explained, "I've always felt that stories aimed at adolescents and teens are the most important stories that can be written, because it's adolescence that defines who we are going to be. That's the time when we choose paths for ourselves that are going to shape and define the rest of our lives." One of his publishers, Little, Brown, and Company, said that his novels "deal with topics that appeal to adults as well as teens, weaving true-to-life characters into sensitive and riveting issues, and binding it all together with a unique and entertaining sense of humor."

For more information on Neal Shusterman and a list of books he has written, check his website www.storyman.com.