



AI: Artificial Intelligence or Artist Infringement?

In early May, the Writers Guild of America (WGA) went on strike. One of the issues that brought the writers to the picket line? The threat of being replaced by generative Artificial Intelligence in the creation of "artistic" content.

Nearly every day there is a yet another story on the rapid progression of artificial intelligence and its growing impact on society. Proponents argue that its application will improve our quality of life exponentially. Case-in-point, the machine-learning algorithm just recently identified a compound that kills a drug-resistant bacterium that lurks in many hospitals. Progress, right? Others, however, worry that unabated use of the technology poses an existential threat to life as we know it. In a recent interview, Elon Musk stated that AI "has the potential of civilization destruction." Musk, along with 1,000 other experts in the field, called for a "pause" on AI development to allow time to think through appropriate controls on its expansion.

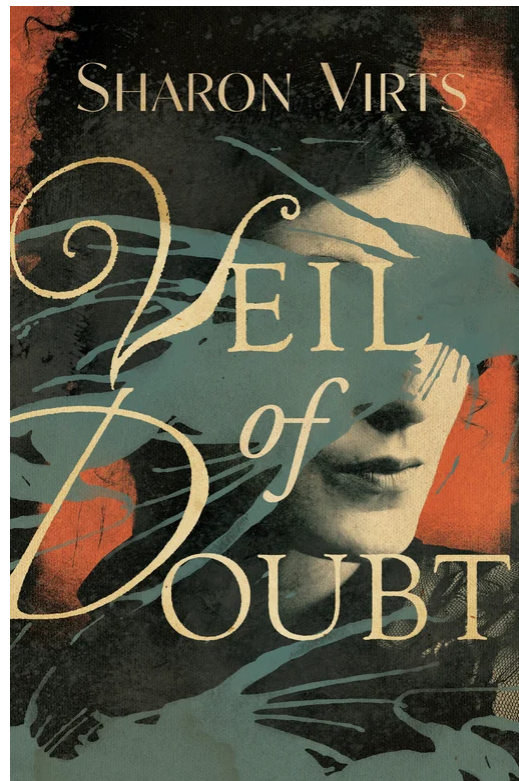
"Our rival today is a tireless unoriginal plagiarist who will work for free, a tutored parrot."

According to WGA grievances, if left unchecked, the technology will eliminate thousands of jobs in the film industry. What could that mean for other artistic professions? Like songwriters? Composers? Fashion designers? Artists? Authors like myself? How much do we, as a society, value original content and original thought? Will we find satisfaction in unimaginative, inauthentic and, often, inaccurate entertainment and information? Or will we, as living-beings, draw a line and say no?

From my perspective, we need to establish clear boundaries and controls on how and where generative AI is used. As my screenwriter friend Anthony McCarten points out in his [guest piece on Deadline.com](#), the AI genie cannot be returned to the bottle. There are, however, copyright infringement and trademark protection laws that safeguard our intellectual property and regulations that prevent others from plagiarizing our work. Artist, authors, and others in the creative space must demand that those laws, rules and regulations apply to AI generated content and hold accountable those who employ AI to violate them. While this might not keep corporations from replacing workers with chat bots, it gives those whose work is stolen some recourse.

Over the weekend, the WGA reached a tentative agreement with assurances that machines would not replace humans in the film industry. But that agreement only protects Hollywood. Hundreds of thousands of other creative positions are at risk. As concerned citizens, we can contact our elected officials and demand regulation. As content consumers, we can "speak with our feet" and refuse to engage in AI-generated entertainment. And we can pray that the Frankenstein we've created doesn't rob us of our authenticity as human-beings and, in the process, doesn't destroy all that we hold dear. Because the bots are indeed coming.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony McCarten', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



Coming October 10, 2023!

VEIL OF DOUBT

On October 10, *Veil of Doubt* will be released in FOUR formats: hardcover, paperback, eBook, and audio, and can be preordered through your favorite [retailer](#) now. A limited, author's-edition hardcover will be available on [my website](#). The special edition is autographed and will include a personalized bookplate and a commemorative bookmark. On July 10, the official 90-day Countdown begins with limited-offer, bonus awards for those who preorder.

Bonus award packages offered on my website will include tickets to the October [Launch Party at Selma](#), my exclusive [Graveside Readings](#) event, guided [Walking in Powell's Footsteps](#) tour in Leesburg Virginia, special SWAG bags, and more. And

speaking of SWAG, this month I am giving away a couple of SWAG bags filled with *Veil of Doubt*, #ReadWithSharon and Selma merchandise along with advance copies of *Veil of Doubt*. Only newsletter subscribers are eligible to enter. Click [here to register](#). I'll select the winners later this month.

First National "Decoration Day"

Last Monday, we honored those who made the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedoms. In researching my next book, I discovered that my real life protagonist attended the first national "memorial ceremony" at Arlington cemetery. Check out [my blog](#) to read more about that special day in May 1868.



"Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future."

— Elie Wiesel

Recipes for Reading

Strawberry Flatbread

I just love strawberries--especially this time of year when they are in season. Here's one of my favorite flatbread recipes. It can be made in the oven or on the grill. A great accompaniment to a good book and a porch swing!



Ingredients

2 flatbreads

½ c mozzarella

½ c brie or camembert cheese
1 c sliced strawberries
¼ c balsamic vinegar
Fresh basil

Instructions

Place strawberries, basil, and balsamic vinegar in a bowl to marinate while you prepare the flatbread.

Place ¼ cup of mozzarella and brie on each flatbread. Bake until slightly brown and remove from oven. Place marinated strawberries and basil on top of the flatbread.

Drizzle with aged balsamic vinegar if desired. Slice and enjoy!

"You are what you eat and read."

— *Maya Corrigan*

Book Talks and Book Fairs

I've got a couple interesting events scheduled this month. On June 20, I will be in Waterford VA discussing the political tension of the 19th century and the impact on the real-life characters in my books. On June 24, I am participating in a panel discussion at the Lansdowne Woods Book Fair. Between 2-4pm, autographed copies of *Masque of Honor* will be available for purchase and we'll have bookplates and bookmarks for those who preorder *Veil of Doubt*. If there is an upcoming event you'd like me to attend, shoot me a [message](#) and let me know!

From the Studio

Over the past few months, I managed to spend some time in my studio, painting everything from spring cherry blossoms to summer poppies. My canvases are layered and dimensional, filled with swaths of bright oil colors on textured backgrounds. Follow my gallery on [Facebook](#) or check out the artists and the paintings at [The Ordinary Art Gallery and Studio](#).

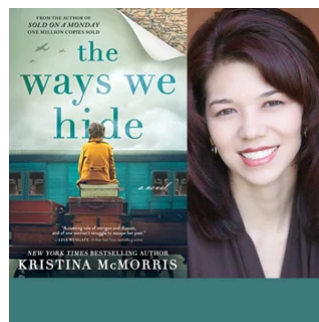
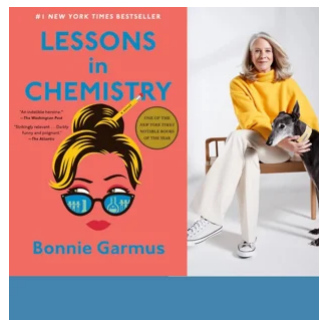


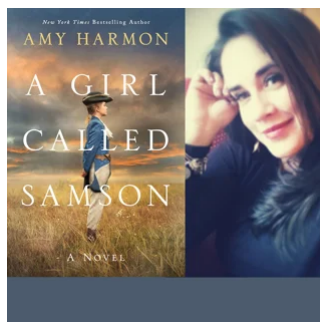
“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say
any other way—things I had no words for.”
– Georgia O’Keeffe



#READWITHSHARON

Get ready for an awesome line up of fabulous books in my #ReadWithSharon book club. In May, we read *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. In June, author **Kristina McMorris** will join us to discuss *The Ways We Hide*, and in July, I'll host **Amy Harmon** for a discussion about her latest *A Girl Called Samson*. Not a member of the book club? Sign up for free [HERE!](#)





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Sharon Virts, Selma Mansion, Leesburg, VA 20176, United States, www.sharonvirt.com

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