



ESL MiniConference

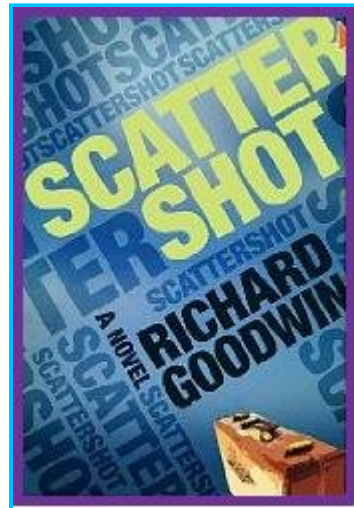
ESL Teacher Makes Good Review of Richard Goodwin's "Scattershot"

Late Summer 2011

Achievement Profile: Ashley Green

New Book by Richard Goodwin

Thesis Defense



Scattershot, by Richard Goodwin (Seedpod Publishing, 2011)

- [/Index/](#)
- [/Letters/](#)
- [/Profiles/](#)
- [/Search/](#)
- [/Podcasts/](#)

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I just got through reading Richard Goodwin's "Scattershot," a novel that is available only in electronic format. It is his first novel and it's nice to be able to say that I "knew him when" he was "just" an ESL instructor during the three years he spent in Manhattan, Kansas, teaching at K-State's English Language Program.

Richard is a very organized teacher and his writing is also well thought out. I never saw any of the early versions of his novel while he was working at it during his Kansas period, but he would always tell me that he woke up at 4:00 a.m. in the morning to get several hours of writing in before bicycling half an hour to the office and starting his day promptly at 8:00 a.m.



Richard spent considerable time teaching English in Japan prior to relocating to Kansas, and he continued some Japanese traditions, including wearing a tie at work every day. He kept an orderly desk and had the opportunity once to conduct an observation of his teaching, which was business-like and fun-loving at the same time. When Richard Goodwin and his wife, Miyuki, elected to move out to the Pacific Northwest, they were greatly missed, and many of his students told me that he had been their very best teacher at K-State.

I am not going to ruin the prospect any reader might have of experiencing the novel first-hand, so I will give only a cursory report here. There are two main plot lines: the primary one is the developing relationship between a young man and an older woman; the secondary plot line is kind of an emotional journey taken by the woman's son in his efforts to locate her.

Goodwin has a very light touch as an author, and the reader will appreciate how he allows the story to tell itself. Some of the subject matter that arises would not be appropriate for younger readers or for anyone with Victorian sensibilities or conservative religious beliefs. Yet each situation is handled delicately and gracefully by this very accomplished author.

Taken as a whole, this is a story about the difference a positive relationship can make in a person's life, and the opportunity to learn and develop in response to thoughtful, caring indirect instruction by way of example. Richard Goodwin, the author, has demonstrated a mastery of the elusive art of weaving together a good tale. I look forward to his next novel, and I predict that one day he may rise to the level of great storytellers of our modern era, such as Leslie Marmon Silko and Thomas Hardy.

Article by Robb Scott

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