

## Origins: An Irish Girl Named Maggie

In 1968 the state of Missouri was blessed with the arrival of a baby girl, a one-year-old lifted from the arms of nuns in the west of Ireland. Her name was Maggie, and her adoptive parents—strict Catholics—wanted her to be perfect. But Maggie Black was not perfect, she was merely human—an earthy, feral child who one day realized she would never earn their love. Drifting into drugs, con artists and petty crime, she becomes a single mother stuck in the gritty world of door-to-door sales—dangerously tied to a bad man.

One muggy evening—while home in Saint Joe preparing for a sales jump—she endures an incident that changes her life. This incident opens my novel, *The Sins of Maggie Black*, the story of one woman's attempt to escape her past and dream of a better life. As she informs her little boy, "*From now on it's gonna be me and you—we're gonna be a team.*" Her journey will pit a fierce determination to succeed against a battered ego, a heart struggling to accept love and companionship, and a past that threatens everything.

I began this post with some backstory to introduce one theme of my

novel—the mysterious and profound nature of origins. Starting with the fragile innocence of youth, we bear both the blessings and sins of the world throughout our lives. Origins can also refer to any turning point in a character’s life, such as the incident that opens my story. Maggie doesn’t dwell much on the circumstances of her birth or upbringing, but they have deeply affected her. Though she doesn’t seek her mother, she does possess a vestigial memory of her, expressed as an attraction to water. In a vision that turns prophetic, Maggie sinks deep into a river—a symbolic return to the womb.

The river also serves as metaphor for a fundamental aspect of nature—the surface and what lies below. The surface is what we can “see” with our basic senses, while what lies beneath is the nearly inexpressible, underlying reality—the murky depths from which everything originates. I once read a book about men’s issues—more specifically, fathers and sons in modern and primitive societies. I didn’t particularly connect with all the metaphorical language (the author was a poet) but it was very intriguing. I was living in a boarding house the night I finished the book—alone in a room without a TV or phone. That night I had seven vivid dreams, nearly all about myself and my father. They were rich in symbolic meaning. What had happened? How had mere words triggered such startling dreams?

For me, writing is an exploration—an attempt to understand, to feel, to connect with others. That night in my room a connection was made—the personal stories and myths expressed by that author triggered things deep inside me, obviously important issues lurking in the unconscious mind. These issues flow powerfully below the surface in all of us, manifesting themselves in who we are and how we behave. Just as a river follows the truest way downstream, our souls seek a path toward harmony and peace. Though Maggie and the other characters in my novel are highly flawed, they share a fierce determination to heal themselves, to become whole.

I hope I've dramatized a compelling story, and if lucky, revealed a few things that lie below. In my next post I'll discuss the inspiration for this novel from a brief occurrence in Deadwood, South Dakota, and why my heroine is a door-to-door saleswoman.

News alert! **THE SINS OF MAGGIE BLACK** will be available for purchase mid-February on Amazon Books, in paperback and eBook versions.

The following authors were kind enough to post my blog to their site. They can be found at: [www.authorkfrancoeur.com](http://www.authorkfrancoeur.com), [www.annrichardson.co.uk](http://www.annrichardson.co.uk), [www.stephenbentley.info](http://www.stephenbentley.info), [www.nesiesplace.wordpress.com](http://www.nesiesplace.wordpress.com), [www.grantleishman.com](http://www.grantleishman.com), [www.kaylatourweebly.com](http://www.kaylatourweebly.com), [www.mariannesciucco.blogspot.com](http://www.mariannesciucco.blogspot.com), [www.jamesrcallan.com](http://www.jamesrcallan.com), [www.themilitantnegro.com](http://www.themilitantnegro.com)