

HYGIENISTS IN PRINT=MORE RDH'S PLUS=FICTION & NON-FICTION- November 2011

[[AUTHORS'S ANSWERS]]

THE COLUMBO COLLECTION—William Link = Columbo travels outside LA to NY & in another story up north. There're 12 stories that work out like the TV show.

COLLECTED TIDBITS: 1. **THE CRIMINAL ATTORNEY** story- “The **DDS**'s office was in a pristine building on Spaulding Drive. He sat in the waiting room, looking over the display of magazines & selected *The DuPont Registry of Fine Automobiles* because it looked like the closest one to *Sports Illustrated*. He paged through it until the receptionist said he could go in. The **DDS**, **Ruth Buckman**, was an attractive woman in her early 40s, dark-haired, pale makeup, relatively sexless in a white coat & colored slacks. He showed her his ID & remained standing, not wanting to occupy the **DDS**'s chair, the only available seat in the room. ‘I want to ask you about your ex-husband,’ he said, still eyeing the **DDS**'s chair. (The conversation continues for a while about her ex) “She gave it some thought, looked at her watch. ‘I have another patient in 5 minutes.’” 2. **THE BLACKEST MAIL** —“Columbo wasn't used to dealing with movie stars. He knew they were just people like everybody else, but they weren't neighbors or somebody you'd see walking down the street or buying a toothbrush at Rite Aid.” 3. **REQUIEM FOR A HITMAN**—“How about tomorrow evening? Are you busy? she added with another smile, brighter this time. You never knew about hitmen, she thought humorously, they might have a **DDS**'s appointment when a client wanted it done.”

[[“I have no idea why I selected a **DDS** in both stories. When you are writing, ideas & professions just pop into your head seemingly from nowhere. Personally I've always had wonderful **DDS**s. One even assured me that a pending root canal was not a painful procedure. I believed him & he was right. I even remember my first **DDS** when I was a child in Philadelphia. He was Chuck Barris's father. He was an extremely nice man which was a great introduction to dentistry for a young boy. I even remember coming home & telling my father that maybe I'd be a **DDS** when I grew up, but then my writing ability took over. With my periodontist here in Beverly Hills, we would discuss the food at some of L.A. finest restaurants. In fact my wife would always call our primary **DDS** to find out if it was going to be a rainy season. His hobby was deep sea fishing & he understood the mysteries of the tides. She could then plan when to get the roof fixed. Thank you for your interest.”]]

HOW TO WASH A CAT—Rebecca M. Hale- ==We have a no-name female protagonist. [[. “The name of the narrator: Yes, I kept that tidbit hidden until the end of the first book. Incidentally, there are only a few places in the entire series where the narrator's name is given. I know it's unusual in modern literature, but the nameless narrator technique was quite common among several early 19th century writers, including Mark Twain. I thought that style fit the character - she's somewhat shy & introverted. She's just not the type to announce her name to people...”]] She inherited her Uncle Oscar's antique store, the Green Vase, with an apartment on top, in SF that carries gold rush objects. [[“As an aside, the Uncle Oscar character is based on my real life grand father, who I always called Bill. Bill wore dentures, &, particularly after a meal, when he was contemplating something, he would lean back & gum them in & out of his mouth. All of my cousins & other family members who knew him recognized his character immediately.”]] Once he rescued 2 stray kittens that she ended up keeping. She questions whether Oscar died of a heart attack or was murdered. There're numerous weird things about the shop including a secret tunnel that leads to another store & other places. Oscar did deposit clues about what was going on. Other store owners seem to want to help her find the answers. Monty, a store owner, thinks she gave up her accounting profession & the store & will turn it into a fancy cat salon. It's then we discover the protagonist name, or do we?

OLD TIDBITS: [[“My tooth fixation began in the first book, *How to Wash a Cat*. When I was reading about the Gold Rush days, I was shocked & horrified to learn that people with perfectly functional teeth actually had them pulled so that they could be fitted with gold replacements. That anecdote, I thought, really captured a sense of the times. From there on, the gold teeth, the **DDS** recliner, that portion of the Green Vase showroom continued to build with each book. “The **DDS** chair & Gold Rush dental references: I covered some of this above, but I should add, the **DDS** chair has become one of my favorite pieces of furniture in the Green Vase showroom. I've had great fun maneuvering characters around, over & on top of it!”]] [[. “The significance of the gold teeth clue in *How to Wash a Cat*. This was the first book I'd ever written, so I may not have tied up the ends as neatly as I should have, but the teeth clenching the tulip petals was meant to be a clue to the antidote to the sleeping potion - the teeth being critical to the means by which it had to be ingested (orally) in order to be effective.”]] 1. “For example... Oscar had an extensive collection of teeth. Successful miners had been anxious to show off the results of their labors, & gold teeth had been a favored vanity. **DDS**s had been called on to sacrifice countless healthy teeth in order to make space for gold replacements. Some unfortunate chops had been stripped of every last bit of enamel so that their owner could showcase a solid gold smile. Oscar's display of gold teeth was complemented by a wide array of painful-looking dental instruments as well as a Gold Rush-era dental chair. (NOTE_ this chair is used & mentions throughout.) 2. “I was gone,” he said, mouthing his dentures contemplatively as he reflected.” 3. “Over the years, I'd lost a wide array of toothbrushes,....” 3. “A hissing fit of air whistled out through the gap between Harold's front teeth like a deflating balloon.” 4. “A piece of food had apparently wedged into the space between his dentures & gums.”...”Oscar gummed his dentures out then slid them back in.” 5. “It contained a used, scruffy-looking toothbrush.” “I leaned against the counter, staring at the ruffled kangaroo, wondering what to make of the toothbrush.” 6. “Gingerly carrying the toothbrush, I climbed the stairs to the kitchen,....” 7. “Oscar stared at me, gumming his dentures assessingly.” 8. “I watched, horrified, as the kangaroo's top row of teeth became visible.” 9. “I grimaced, reached my hand in, & pulled out a tarnished set of gold teeth.” “I hissed as I slipped the gold teeth into my pocket...” 10. “Signing, I pulled the tarnished gold teeth from my pocket, & studied them in the brighter outdoor light.” 11. “What do you think Oscar meant by the gold teeth?”

NINE LIVES LAST FOREVER—Roberta M. Hale –Rebecca & her dead Uncle Oscar's friends are still trying to unearth missing money/gold. The big question is why are there frogs in the apartment & antique shop which she has now opened up. Business is miserable. They're tracking the frogs that have appeared in the SF City Hall building, but why are they there & how did they get there?

LIVING TIDBITS: The antique dental chair is back through out. 1. "Harold gummed his teeth, pushing forward the bottom frame of his ill-fitting dentures." 2. "I'd found myself squashed onto a bench seat next to an elderly gentleman with a battered cane & a wide, toothless smile. "Every so often the animal inside emitted a loud, protesting squawk, causing the toothless man to burst into giggles at my disconcerted expression." 3. "Harold gummed his dentures." 4. "He flashed a solid fence of chalky white teeth & walked inside." ["The inspiration for that character is former San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. He's always impeccably dressed, his hair combed back and held in place with gel, & his teeth bright and shiny."]] 5. "Oscar had used the kangaroo's mouth cavity to hide a clue related to Napis's poison..." 6. "The horn emitted a panicked, tooth-shattering honk that echoed through the otherwise quiet neighborhood," 7. "She, herself, had spent the afternoon at an excruciatingly painful **DDS** appointment having a root canal done on 1 of her molars." "2 days later, she was still unable to chew anything more resilient than a mound of Jell-O on the right side of her mouth." 8. "She had returned from the **DDS**'s office to find the reception desk a cluttered, disorganized mess." ["First off, the Mayor's receptionist. I needed to create a reason why she'd been out of the office, so I decided on a dental appointment. As it turns out, my mother has had to have extensive dental work done over the years - many a painful root canal, etc. For that reason, she was very strict with me growing up about my dental care. Coming home from the dentist with a cavity was almost worse than a bad report card :) So, I supposed a little bit of my mother transferred into this character."]] 9. "He had recently turned in his pipe for a nicotine patch, but his teeth were permanently etched with tobacco stains from his years of smoking." 10. "Monty, flashed her a tooth smile, 1 that had been artificially brightened hours before."

HOW TO MOON A CAT: Rebecca M. Hale- There're clues leading to some treasure Uncle Oscar hid. This time the protagonist & her cats, who play a part, travel with her neighbor Monty to Nevada City & Sacramento treasure hunting. Throw in Oscar's enemy at the same place, & there's trouble.

TRAVELING TIDBITS: There's a frog named Smiley. [][["The frog named Smiley in the Moon book was actually a reference to a character in Mark Twain's famous essay, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."

<http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/projects/price/frog.htm> The man who owned the famous frog featured in the story was named Jim Smiley. Now, of course, I realize that the Smiley reference has a whole different meaning :)"] [][When I wrote the scene in How to Moon a Cat, I needed to create a character to come in off the street & be interested in something in the store, so a **RDH** immediately came to mind.]] 1. "Rupert's front incisors moved up & down." 2. "The containers had been filled with an odd assortment of my uncle's collected trinkets. There were broken lamps, splintered walking canes, rusted-out mining pans, a wide variety of gold teeth & inexplicably, a full-sized stuffed kangaroo." 3. talking about customers- "Mrs. Dempsey," I signed as I remembered our last such visitor. "**The tooth lady.**" The mere mention of Megan Dempsey's name still filled him, the cat, with dread. The bustling matriarch of a family of 5 had made quite an impression." "I'd been sitting on the stool behind the cashier counter when a big-bosomed woman with bright lipstick & unnaturally white teeth opened the front door & asked for directions to N. Beach. Midway through my hand-waving attempt to point her toward the corner up the street, she spied the antique leather **DDS** recliner in the back of the store." "Oh, what do you have here?" she asked, stepping into the shop..."It turned out Mrs. Dempsey had worked her entire adult life as a **RDH**. After years of propping open people's mouths & peering inside, she had developed a deep fascination with all things tooth-related." "...The 3 children were already bouncing on the DDS recliner by the time I caught up to them. Oblivious to her offspring's antics, Mrs.. Dempsey bent over a display of rudimentary tooth removal devices from the Gold Rush-era." "It's horrifying to think what people went through in those days," she said with a shudder as she pulled out her camera & began taking pictures to show her **coworkers** back home." "...His wife set down her camera & picked up a pair of rusted metal pliers." "Can you imagine what would happen if I tried to use this on 1 of my patients?" she asked her husband with an evil leer. She mashed the handles back & forth over his head as she aimed the pinchers at his mouth. Mr Dempsey flattened himself against the back of the recliner, his expression 1 of genuine terror." "I didn't have time to worry about the torture **Mrs. Dempsey** was contemplating for her husband." "It took almost 30 minutes to get Mrs. Dempsey & her brood out the door." 4. "The machine's lettered keys pronged out from the keyboard like fangs..." 5. "The bulging contents strained against the teeth of the zipper that ran down the duffel's length." 6. "Carrying my toothbrush & shower kit,..." 7. "I reached into my coat pocket & twisted my fingers around the toothpick handle held by the most recent toy bear." 8. "Harold clamped down on his dentures as his wrinkled hands gripped the steering wheel,..."

DEATH ASSEMBLAGE Susan Cummins Miller. Protagonist is geologist Frankie MacFarlane. (thanatocoenoisi in paleontology, a group of fossils brought together after death.) She's in Pair-a-Dice, NV, & had very little time to finish up her dissertation. Hunting a special death assemblage in the mountains, she discovers a human tooth, a left shoe, a glass button, & an ancient button top. Polishing off for the day, she spots 2 guys she knows, hot wiring her jeep & taking off. While walking, a guy stops, offering her a ride. He asks if she heard about the Utah killer. Being out of town the last couple of days, she hasn't. In town, she learns about a serial killer. The town's teacher is also the Saturday night hooker, who's written most of a novel, & is having Frankie read it. (So do we.) One of the town's newcomers is a woman, with a young son, who's waitressing. She's hiding from an ex-husband & wonders if he's the serial killer on his way to find her. There's 1 man who owns lots of property & is thinking of running for congress. ((He would fit in because of his running around on his wife plus that makes his prime for blackmail.)) Frankie's determined to go back into the mountain to complete her work.

DEADLY TIDBITS: [][["The first book in a mystery series requires more set-up and back story on the protagonist than do later books in the series. Having Frankie identify the tooth demonstrates ["shows"] that she's a trained observer & scientist. It's also a way of intimating her back story without stating it. I was able to be specific with regard to the tooth because I trained as a vertebrate paleontologist at UC Riverside."]] 1. p. 7. "& beside the button was a human tooth-upper right 2nd molar. ...I hesitated, unsure whether :to leave the tooth in place or take it to the sheriff. ...I quickly wrapped tooth & button in tissues & tucked them into a pocket of my red Filson field vest." [][Miller used a tooth "Because a tooth is a more intimate object than a nondescript fragment of broken, weathered, bone."]] 2. "When he smiled, the teeth were straight, unlike those of most of the local population who seemed to have avoided a **DDS** chair for 30 years or more." [][I included it for 2 reasons: I wanted to both demonstrate that the man wasn't native to the area--a stranger coming to town, in other words. The reader will construct a picture of the population of Pair-a-Dice from such small bits of information."]] 3. "Killeen, who'd watched me from the mountainside when I found the

tooth.” 4. “Is that a human tooth?” ... Can I touch it?” 5. “White, even, baby teeth showed bright against smooth skin...” 6. “When you see Buddy, will you ask him if he’s found out anything about that tooth I gave him last night?” 7. “More thickth,” signed John, who was missing 2 front teeth.” 8. “I found her tooth, with the button, among the roots of that piñon.” 9. “It took weeks to make the positive identification—they’d had to order his dental charts from England.” 10. “He smiled once more, the teeth beautiful, white & straight.” 11. “His teeth were perfect, except for 1 gray, dead canine.” [“The dead canine is a metaphor, like a worm in a perfect apple. I used metaphor instead of saying outright (as Shakespeare did): ‘Something’s rotten in the State of Denmark.’”] 12. “...as I pried open the blade with my teeth.” “Organized sports, our culture’s metaphors for war, paled against this fight with teeth, knees, head butts.” “Raef’s teeth showed in a rictus-like grimace as he tried to buck Killeen from his back.” 13. “And speaking of mysteries, Buddy gave me Bessie’s tooth & button.” 14. “Killeen cosigned Bessie’s tooth, the wind-worn green button, & a small cloth bag holding who knew what to the hole he’d dug under the thorns.”

NOTE : [“All my books mention teeth—in character description, metaphor, and aphorisms.”] [“One of my cousins, Lee E. Cummins, has been practicing dentistry in L.A. for 51 years. If you see him, please say hi from me.”]

QUARRY -Susan Cummins Miller – Except for a couple of times, student Dora Simpson was alone in the Mojave Desert working on a fossil quarry. When she hears rocks fall, she didn't worry until she sees a skull-like human grinning at her. She's captured. Frankie MacFarlane drives to meet Det. Leonard LaJoie to discuss a body believing they're going to talk about Geoff Travers, her former fiancé/geology grad student with her. He plagiarized some of her dissertation, got reprimanded, & disappeared. She brought Travers' hairbrush for DNA testing. His remains were given to a brother who evidently doesn't exist. Papers from Mexico show him alive there after he supposedly died., Frankie also will be defending her dissertation the next day. She's staying with Dr. Sarah Barstead, a friend & UC Del Rio geology department head. Frankie hears an engine rev up, & a thud when Sarah gets the mail. She finds her barely alive. Sarah getting hit may be tied to other or soon to be attacked victims according to a note in a box found in the mailbox, which at 1st the police thought may contain a bomb. The note contains a verse from Shakespeare. More of his works appear as hints in the murders that take place.

DIGGING TIDBITS: There's a **DDS**, dentures, dental records, fangs. 1. Miller describes LaJoie's smile as “nice, full of bright, white, even teeth that glowed in his tanned face. I bet he flossed twice a day” Frankie believes. 2. Because there is a body involved, dental records, dentition, x-rays, baby teeth for DNA testing purposes appear. ((Frankie finds a tooth with the other items of the murdered woman)) [“Because a tooth is a more intimate object than a nondescript fragment of broken, weathered, bone.”] 3. “& beside the button was a human tooth-upper right 2nd molar. ...I hesitated, unsure whether to leave the tooth in place or take it to the sheriff. ...I quickly wrapped tooth & button in tissues & tucked them into a pocket of my red Filson field vest.” 4. “Killeen, who'd watched me from the mountainside when I found the tooth.” 5. “Is that a human tooth?” ... Can I touch it?” 6. “When you see Buddy, will you ask him if he’s found out anything about that tooth I gave him last night?” “I found her tooth, with the button, among the roots of that piñon.” 7. “And speaking of mysteries, Buddy gave me Bessie’s tooth & button.” 8. “Killeen cosigned Bessie’s tooth, the wind-worn green button, & a small cloth bag holding who knew what to the hole he’d dug under the thorns.”

FRACTURE- Susan Cummins Miller== Geologist Frankie MacFarland boyfriend Philo Dain materializes from Afghanistan. He gets a call from his Uncle Derek who is asking him to extract his \$10 million coin collection from his 4th wife Heather. Derek & his 1st wife Margaret took Philo in when his parents died & screwed around with his inheritance. As soon as he was old enough, Philo split. He & Frankie set out to find out what's going on with Heather. At Derek's house, he tells them Heather's body is on the kitchen floor, but no coin collection around. The hunt continues.

BROKEN TIDBITS: 1. “Papa said to tell you that ‘the wolf loses his teeth, but not his inclinations.” 2. “The boy has golden hands & a devil in his smile.” 3. “The eroded face resembled teeth, bared in defiance of the forces tearing them.”

THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST by Mohsin Hamid- - It features a young Pakistani male who comes to America to go to Yale, graduates, works for a NY firm & why he goes back to Pakistan. Part is written almost like a soliloquy & there's also other dialogue. It takes place around 9/11.

DENTAL TIDBITS: 1. “In fact, no sooner had we set sail on our ferry to the islands than did a young man—a tooth dangling on a string of leather in front of his bare, but meagerly muscled chest—begin to strum his guitar & serenade her from across the deck.”

THE SWAN THIEVES Elizabeth Kostova =Art professor/somewhat well-known artist Robert Oliver has been packed off to Goldengrove, a psychiatric hospital after being prevented from slashing a painting at the National Gallery of Art. His case is being overseen by psychiatrist Andrew Marlow, who's also an artist. After a couple of words on the 1st day, Oliver isn't talking, but is painting after Marlow has supplies sent to his room. He's reading letters from the 1870s, over 100 years old, in France & dealing with a family & a couple of artists. Oliver doesn't stop at talking to Kate, the recent ex-Mrs. Oliver or the recent ex-girlfriend teacher & artist Mary R. Bertison. The story is told through the letters, Marlow, Kate, & Mary's voices. What Marlow is trying to do is to figure out who's the lady in Oliver's paintings. He's willing to travel to Acapulco & Paris to do so.

RETURNED TIDBITS: 1, “I remembered, too, the 1 really beautiful model from my classes at the art League School at home-remote, balanced nude before the group, her mind far away & probably going over her college homework or her next dental appointment.” 2. “She would step out the front door to go to the grocery store, or to the **DDS**, or to volunteer at the library, & she would see the ice—& then she would go back inside & eventually call me.” 3. his teeth large & strong-looking but yellowing-middle age.....or even to know that his teeth were yellow.”

