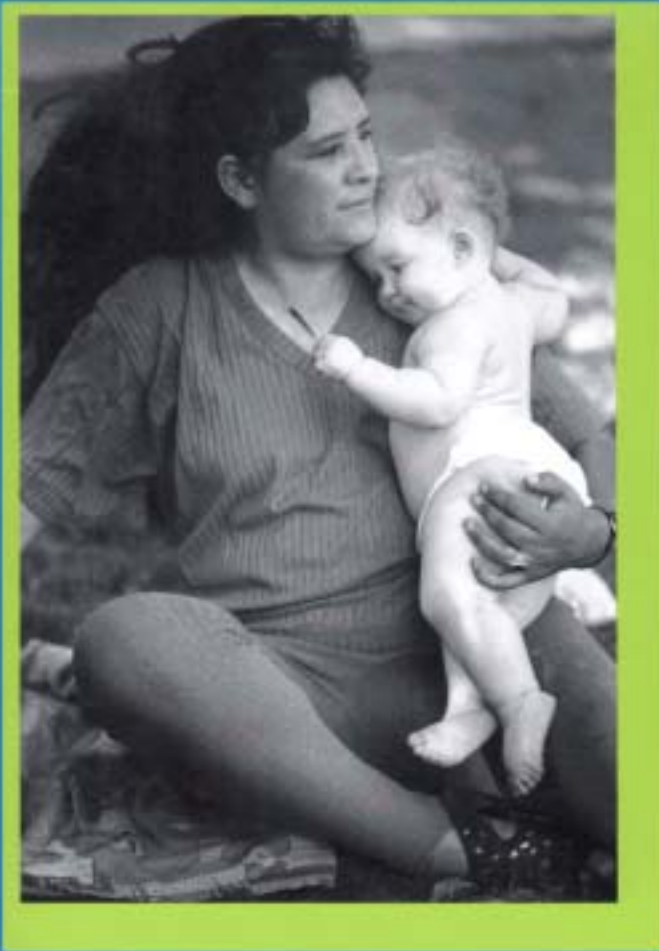


## PGR BOOK REVIEWS, TABLE OF CONTENTS 2003

Decisions, Time, Value, and Unjust Salaries, Martha-Victoria Vega	2
Escape into Poetry: Mentally Getting Away, Vanessa Aispuro	7
Introducing Screenplays, Chris Dykmans	10
The Poorly-made Book, Joanne Toth	14
The True Test, Mellissa Santé	17
Astrophysics Lite, Vin Rideout	20
Clea & Zeus Make No Sense, Eric Wallace	23
Countdown to Armageddon, Jeffery J Phillips	25
A Girl's First Primer in Feminism, Chloe La Fortuna	28
The Questionable Piece, Jeff Harper	30
A Flagrant Misuse of Paper: A Book..., Jessica Baker	32
Roots: To Find or To Forget, Erica Scott	36
When the Writer is on Fire, Rita Jones	39
Awakening, Nicole Frager	42
The Devil's Dictionary: An Insult to Lucifer, Nate Kotila	44
Hearfelt Tales Lost Amid Dull Narrative, German Estada	46
The Right to Feel Deprived, Sonya Gonzalez	48
Former Street Urchin Tells All..., Janet Thelen	51
Nothing Can Be Take For Granted..., Clare Hayford	56
Breath o fHaiti, Maureen Quinn	58
Movies: A Piece of Everything, Kelly Galli	61

# Doméstica

Immigrant Workers Cleaning and  
Caring in the Shadows of Affluence



*Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo*

Cover photograph © 2000 Pamela Duffy

# Decisions, Time, Value, and Unjust Salaries in our Society

Martha Victoria Vega

Doméstica

Immigrant Workers Clearing and  
Caring in the Shadow of Affluence

by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo

University of California Press

\$ 19.95

You walk in to the bookstore, library, or surf the web to either purchase a book or checkout material to read. Maybe you have to do research and/or gain knowledge on a new subject so you can have an intellectual conversation at your new cocktail party. For whatever reason it maybe, you are standing around in the bookstore picking up a book here or there, deciding and thinking, "Which one should I get?" You pick up a book, read the book reviews that are printed on the back cover and you are somewhat convinced that you should read the book. You then pick up another book, skim or glance at the preface, acknowledgments, table of contents, through the chapters, check out the illustrations, footnotes, references, index and finally your reach you decision that you are going to invest your time and read this book. Yes, I do mean *invest* your time, because I consider my time valuable. The clock ticks, time passes and you can't regain any time back. For that reason alone, you need to evaluate if the book is worth reading or if you should find an alternative to reading.

You see a book with a spine, pull it down from the shelf, and make the conscious decision that you will take time out to read this book. So, you didn't want to feel like a couch potato and flick through the movie channels? The newspaper movie listing didn't look appealing. It was too cold to drive out, rent a movie to make it a blockbuster night and for that matter, get all dressed up to go out on the town with friends or family. Whatever the cause, you make the decision to stay, crack the book and you begin to read. You find out that Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo is Sociology Instructor at the University of Southern California, who conducted various studies in the Los Angeles area. She wrote this book because she wants to inform her audience about the struggles, challenges, injustices that occur with women working as a "Live-in nanny/housekeeper", "Live-out nanny/housekeeper" and/or "Housecleaner". Hondagneu-Sotelo voices her concerns, thoughts and gives good stories from an employee, direct employer, agencies and/or other people in the community such as the Domestic Workers'

Association (DWA), a division of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA).

This book is aimed for a person interested in social change and womens rights in a work force. You will definitely gain some knowledge on the inequalities that occur with immigrant (legal or illegal residents) women working under injustice conditions in America. I had no idea that the demand for nannies and housekeepers were in such high demand. I thought parents took their children to day care centers or to relatives while they went to work. I had no idea that this activity was occurring. I assumed that all workingwomen that gave birth to their baby would rather stay home to raise their child but because of economic reasons, they are forced to return to the work. As a result, the parents are not able to give their undivided attention to their children.

Instead, I learned that the modern professional business woman today in Southern California would rather pay someone else to clean their house and raise there children while they either work, shop, and/or get their hair and nails done. Hondagneu-Sotelo interviewed Patricia Paredes and I quote, "What they prefer is to go to the salon, get their nails done, you know, go shopping, things like that. Even if they're home all day, they don't want to spend time with the kids because they're paying somebody to do that for them" (40). I was appalled to learn that cold-hearted women actually exist. I was under the impression a mother develops a special bond with their unborn child and when the child is born, that the bond is even stronger, even preventing a mother from having such terrible feelings and neglecting to spend time with their infant. As a consequence of not spending time, the children to not receive love and attention from there parents and can have detrimental results.

Another shocking and unpleasant incident I read was Hondagneu-Sotelo stating, "Some nanny/housekeepers are instructed to give Ritalin and Prozac to children as young as five or six" (42). I strongly disagree that these children should be consuming drugs at such a young age. I could just imagine what other drugs they will be expected to consume by the time they reach adolescence. Ritalin and Prozac are prescription drugs. Ritalin is classified as an anti-attention-deficit-disorder drug and Prozac as an antidepressant. The children would not have to consume these drugs if the parents prioritized their values. I feel that parents can replace the drugs with love and attention towards their children. The children are in serious need for love. The parents should value their children and give more undivided attention towards them. After all, the children are the ones that will end up choosing their parents retirement home. Unfortunately, the nannies/housekeepers are the ones that are playing the parents roll and the maid. The nannies become multi-task oriented.

Nannies/Housekeepers have ample of responsibilities. Along with cleaning the house, doing the laundry, running errands around town, picking up the kids from school and taking them to soccer practice they have to make sure that the child's safety comes first. Most nannies apparently feel that they might lose their job, get deported or go to jail if the child gets hurt. They make sure the child does get a knee scrap or something to that nature. The nannies sometimes can be disgusted but still have to attend the dog, cat, lizard or rodent that is looked upon as the house pet. Being a live-in nanny/housekeeper comes with abundance of pressure, responsibility and in most cases they are over worked, underpaid, not paid at all, even receives lack of sleep and nutrition. It is a job that is not well recognized between their employer and our society. For instance, the job as a domestic worker does not come with health benefits, retirement package and other kudos like other jobs in our society.

In most cases that were conducted in the Los Angeles, the live in nannies are earning below minimum salary. In actuality, an immigrant woman is better of living on her own, not with the family and coming to work as a housecleaner instead of a nanny. Hondagneu-Sotelo wrote, "At the other end of the spectrum are the housecleaners, who earn higher wages than live-ins (averaging \$ 9.50 an hour vs. \$ 3.80) and who work fewer house per week than live-ins (twenty-three vs. sixty-four)" (51). This book educated me that the immigrant employee has better chances of negotiating her salary and schedule as housecleaner verses a nanny/housekeeper because she has multiple employers. A housecleaner is better of having multiple jobs in order to have a stable salary just in case something were to happen like a argument or misunderstanding. If the housecleaner becomes uncomfortable with a confrontation, she can easy terminate her employer without feeling a monetary trapped to the same employer like a live-in nanny would. In Chapter 5, Hondagneu-Sotelo covers this topic and gives particulars of how employee and employers can have disagreement and fights. She covers that an employee can easy leave one job without having a whole salary be affected.

On the other hand, it was good to learn that these women have legal rights even if they are undocumented and working as a live-in nanny/housekeeper. CHIRLA is an organization that is educating immigrant women on the importance of monitoring the hours they work and how much they have gone paid. That means from the time they begin (waking up the infants screaming and warming up the bottle) till the end of the day (sometimes being 9:00 p.m.). Chapter 8 covers what vital facts are needed in court in order to prove a case against your employer. The simplest details such as having copies of your paychecks can be useful in retrieving \$5,000.00 or less in a Small Claims lawsuit and/or over \$5,000.00 in a Civil Suit against the employer for

unpaid wages. In fact, there is a great illustration in page 223 along with some quick reminders what is necessary to help win a case and I quote "the more information you have, the greater chance of getting your money". Sadly, not all the lawsuits filed are necessarily won against an employer for unpaid wages. Many factors such as discrimination and prejudice can affect a case.

Lastly, I recommend this book to those who are genuinely interested and care about social change and inequalities that occur in our civilization through domestic work realm. The author presents the effects of domestic house workers who are marginalized in our contemporary society; when employers, in order to maximize their profit, pay the smallest amount in salary to an employee it affects the employee in various ways. Therefore, I do not recommend this book to those who are interested in reading a love, non-fiction, thriller, suspense, comedy or multiple short story kind of book; consequently, if that is what you are looking for, this book is not it. Turn elsewhere for that kind of entertainment. If you are looking to improve yourself or widen your horizons purchase this book. This book will give you a compassionate perspective and educate you on the intensive research that was conducted in order to provide good facts to the reader. Your support by purchasing this book will contribute to help of domestic workers by having all proceeds be donated to the Domestic Workers' Association.

### **Work Cited**

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Zinn, Maxine Bacca. Social Problems. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon, 1997.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierette. Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence. Berkeley: Regents of the University of California Press, 2001.

Rybacki, James J. Pharm. D., and Long, James W. M.D. The Essential Guide To Prescription Drugs 2001. New York: HarperCollins Publisher Inc., 2000.

## Escape into Poetry: Mentally Getting Away

Vanessa Aispuro

In the Next Galaxy  
Ruth Stone  
Copper Canyon Press  
\$20.00

Do you know what poetry is? I used to think I did, until I read Ruth Stone's book, *In the Next Galaxy*. This book is a collection of some of Ruth Stone's surrealist poetry. After reading her poems I noticed a pattern, some were stories, and some were expressions of her emotions making it hard for me, to understand their meaning. Therefore, I liked some, hated others, and loved a few. In reading this collection of poems, I felt like a traveler lacking a key to his map, it was up to me to pull whatever meaning I wanted from each poem, while keeping in mind such meaning might not be what Ruth Stone intended. Non-the-less I both hated and loved this book.

One of the emotions that I found myself feeling was frustration because some of her poems read like passionate drivel with a meaning and point only known to Ruth Stone. For example, the poem "Shapes" confused me with all the images she brought up that didn't seem to fit together. Such as,

In the longer view it doesn't matter. / However, it's that hav-  
ing lived, it matters. So that every death breaks you apart. /  
You find yourself weeping at the door / of your own kitchen,  
overwhelmed / by loss... like stopped film, or a line of Vallejo  
or a sketch of the mechanics of a wing / by Leonardo. (18)

The only way to describe my bewilderment is to compare it to a traveler without a map. Each phrase has its own meaning, each one speaks something completely different from the last. While reading the first two sentences, I thought of all the minor details in life, like wearing mismatched pairs of socks while on a date or religiously picking up the mail everyday. Such things are forgotten and later understood not to matter all that much. The next sentence got me thinking about life itself, which matters greatly, and is made up of these little meaningless activities. Next came, "So that every death breaks you apart", which made me recall my grandfather's death, and all the sorrow that accompanied it. Next she speaks of stopped film, which reminds me of when the DVD player sticks ruining the flow of the movie. As you can see I take the images she paints literally, making it hard for me to critique a poet's work, knowing that they obviously were feeling some-

thing when they wrote it. Not that Ruth Stone lets comments from critics like me get to her anyway.

In her recent interview with Mary Ann Wehler, Ruth Stone comments, "...you just have to write and not worry about what the critics are going to say" (Wehler). I'm glad she thinks so because if she didn't than many poetry lovers wouldn't have her work to love, study, and learn from. Ruth Stone is also known as a "Mother Poet" and has been awarded many awards and honors including National Book Critics Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, and the Delmore Schwartz award for her poetry.

One of the poems I really enjoyed was "Returning to the City of Your Childhood". She speaks of places both familiar and unfamiliar, taking me back in time with the imagery she paints so creatively with words. For instance, "In this black-and-white photograph, the garden you imagine is beyond a narrow passageway between two buildings". I realize that many of my memories lose detail the more time goes by, beginning with color, turning each aging memory into a "black-and-white photograph" in my mind; much like the photographs many of our grandparents own. Take my Gramma for example, she has very few photographs from her past; some photos were stiff and craking others just smelled bad, and all where black and white. Much like the memories we carry within us.

How easy it is to forget myself as well as my surroundings while reading Ruth Stone's poetry. Each of her poems are so different from one another, they play with your senses while evoking old memories. Such as, "...you imagine a hidden garden of blue cornflowers...In this black-and-white photograph, the garden you imagine is beyond a narrow passageway between two buildings." Instantly I am taken to narrow streets in England where potted plants droop along windowsills, adding color to the shades of gray all around. I am also reminded of my Grama's narrow garden when I read, "the garden you imagine is beyond a narrow passageway between two buildings"(11). As a little girl my grandmother forbid me to enter her narrow garden between our house and the neighbor's house, but when she was busy or out, I would sneak in and enjoy the fragrances and the colors of the garden. I would sing fairytale melodies while pretending to be a princess walking along the narrow cement path littered with rose petals.

This lovely memory ends abruptly when I read Ruth Stone's closing sentence, which reads, "What are these things that draw toward us, these visitors who hide among us, who are as the air that enters, giving and taking away..." Ruth Stone must be speaking of our relatives. Living with my sick Gramma and old Grampa I realize now that I never truly knew them, yet I loved them. We (my brothers and sister) lived with our Grandparents but never talked about our day or the whether with them. We gave our Gramma new meaning to her life,

a purpose to wake up each morning to cook and farm. She gave us a place to live, rules, and taught us how to work. We gave our Grandparents white hair and my Gramma gave us tradition and culture, all the while remaining “strangers... giving and taking away” from one another. We think we know those who we call family, when in reality we only know what they allow us to know. This is what I enjoyed most about Ruth Stone’s poems, she closes with gentle thought provoking sentences, which makes the reader reevaluate what they thought they already knew.

If poetry is supposed to evoke emotion, take the reader for a ride, and play with our senses, than Ruth Stone delivers. Her poetry is like stars hanging out in the celestial galaxy, although black and white the emotions are immense. Even though some of the feelings evoked in me while reading Stone’s poetry where frustration and bewilderment I would still recommend this book to all who appreciate deep surreal poetry. All my life I believed poetry had to rhyme (like Dr. Seuss), thus making it hard to write, but in addition to this prejudice I have concluded that poetry is the expression of emotions, flowery word sequence, and—sometimes—even passionate drivel. Drivel to me, perhaps, but not to the poet who believes “Writing is the only interaction [they] have with the universe”. (Wehler)

### Works Cited

Wehler, Ann. “An Interview with Ruth Stone”. Paterson Literary Review. Maria Mazziotti Gillan. Poetry Center, 4/20/03 <[http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/s\\_z/stone/interview.htm](http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/s_z/stone/interview.htm)>



Bob Newick

## Introducing Screenplays

Chris Dykmans

Film Stories: Screenplays as Story

Michael Roemer

The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

One day, the professor had some students bring, from his office, towering stacks of books. "Alright, now pick one!". Everyone around me seemed to chose a book rather quickly, but I couldn't decide. "Hmmm, Film Stories....nahhh, I'll come back to that one." I continued on and found nothing of interest. Giving up, I went back to Film Stories: Screenplays as Story. Looking through it, I found it to be around 400 pages; more than enough to make me wince. I only thought of how tiring and uninteresting it would be. I thought wrong.

This book totally surprised my expectations. Initially I chose it as a last resort. I expected it to be mostly boring, focusing on writing techniques and telling me what to do; I was wrong to think this. In reality, the book is structured in a way that doesn't force the material. Instead, it looks at the key elements of screenplays, the ideas from which everything flows. This is a strength, but a weakness at the same time. For the most part, we can look at this book as a strong introduction to screenplays, writing them, and even the lifestyle behind it all. True, it doesn't have all the information you need to write a perfect screenplay, but it has enough to turn you on to the idea of writing one; this in itself is a rare gift. That's its value, it introduces us into the world of screenplays and makes us interested.

Its structure is what makes it easy to follow. It is composed of five of the author's personal screenplays. Before each screenplay comes a preface, and each one goes over what went into the screenplay. The author talks about the experience he had writing it; thus, we get a good representation of the lifestyle that comes with being an independent screenwriter/director. In the preface we are told what worked in the story and what didn't. These ideas revolve around the elements that make stories appealing.

Most of the time, the author is telling us why the story failed, or succeeded. Mostly, he considers a screenplay a success if the story is overall entertaining. What we learn is that situation is more important than character in a movie; it is from situation where character is derived. If nothing is happening to the character that is of interest, then he is of no greater importance than any other person.

Characters, or traces of them, may come to me early in the process but until they are caught up in a situation—until they are in a "fix"—they remain undefined and, have no reality...As long as Duff Anderson lives in a bunk car with other section

hands and is free to move from place to place, he is of no greater dramatic interest than Hamlet would be among his fellow students at Wittenberg, (Roemer, 69)

As we delve underneath, inside, the author gives much more ideas on creating interesting narrative. He even goes deeper, talking about society and behavior, and how we can best render this into a screenplay to give it more life. He uses his own screenplays, a couple of which were failures. But through these failures, we learn some of these important principles. So not only are we being introduced to important elements in storytelling, but also being shown that through failure, we can also learn a great deal.

The book follows a few important principles; it is a strength and a weakness. After reading it, I became interested in something I was not initially; I felt as if I could understand the forbidding narrative behind screenplays. Though, the book doesn't go in-depth into writing. In the end, I felt thoroughly entertained and interested, but sought more knowledge. The book had set me up, but it didn't say everything there was to say. Thus I picked up another book on screenplays, *Four Screenplays* by Syd Field.

The difference between the two is quite noticeable. While *Film Stories* eases us into the world of screenplays with only the basics, *Four Screenplays* bombards us with all the information we would ever need. It has it all: dissecting each screenplay, interviews with screenwriters, the important elements, what made each screenplay unique, etc. It does have much more information, but at that same time, it is much tougher to read through. You are getting told one idea after the next, and are slowly picking through each screenplay. There is so much going on that it becomes tiresome to read, though, I feel I learn a lot from it.

The real question, though, is whether I would be interested in it if I had not read *Film Stories* beforehand. *Four Screenplays* has more knowledge, but it lacks something that the other has. This quality is what allows an uninterested individual to become interested. If I had read *Four Screenplays* first, I would more than likely have been turned off in the way that it read; slow and demanding attention. *Film Stories* on the other hand, flowed and didn't strictly stay with the ideas and formula's. It's a simple, clean way to introduce a person to screenwriting, while entertaining him. It is the necessary introduction, and *Four Screenplays* should be the aftermath.

This is where *Film Stories: Screenplays as Story* has its value, and this is what separates it from the other books. It eases the reader into screenplays, without boring him to death. Someone who wouldn't be interested in screenplays wouldn't want to constantly read about every little detail; the way it is rendered in *Four Screenplays*.

Instead, the author uses his personal life as a guide, and lets us

in on his experiences with each screenplay. This way, we can easily connect and pay attention; thus, we are entertained as well as educated. We may also become somewhat enlightened when the author refers to society and the way we behave; you may learn a little about life as well as screenplays. We are not necessarily told what to do, but given advice from raw experience. We are not forced to pay attention to every minor detail, but rather focus on the big picture.

Four Screenplays is quite different. Everything is straight to the point. It was made for the writer who was already interested in writing screenplays. You have to be, or else you would never be able to finish the book. Everything is put in front of you, and you have to be interested if you want to take it all in. It's strength is that it is a wealth of information; its weakness, it isn't all too gripping. It is a strong tool, but it reads slowly; especially when dissecting each part of the screenplays. It is strictly read as to acquire more knowledge, but we are rarely entertained.

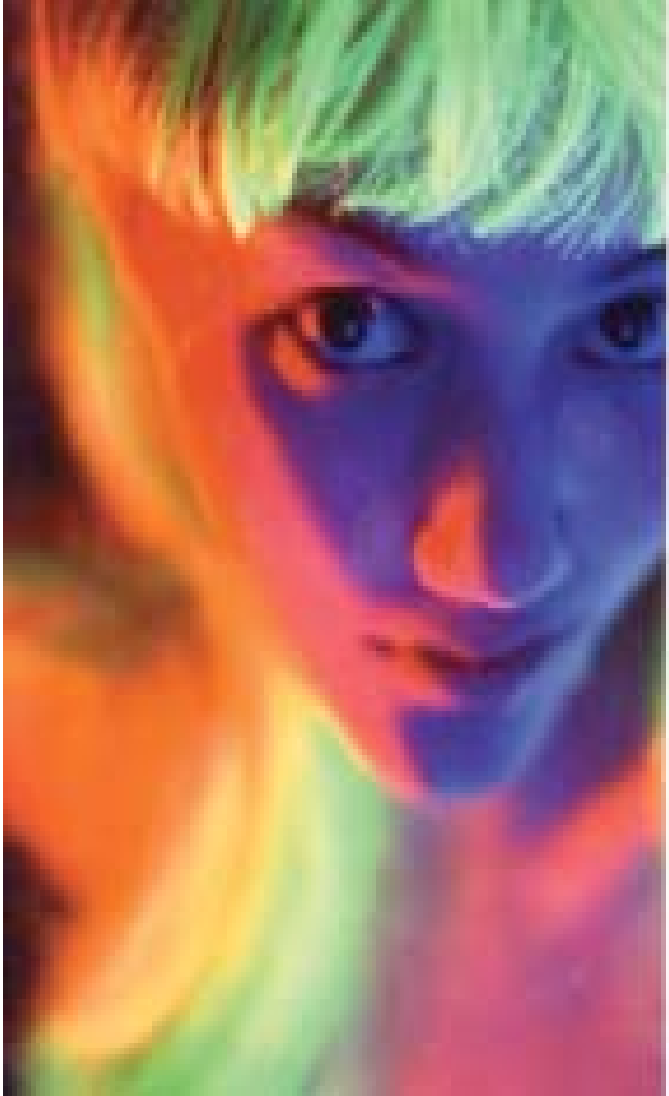
So when it comes down to it, both books are really quite different in the way they are composed, and both have different qualities which make them valuable. In my opinion, after reading both, the person who is slightly interested in writing screenplays may want to pick up a copy of *Film Stories: Screenplays as Story*.

Reading it will let you know if you are really interested in furthering your education of screenplays. For me, I was never really interested, but it showed me the view, and it was quite appealing. Then for the other person, the one who is already interested in screenplays and seeks to pursue them, pick up a copy of *Four Screenplays*. It has all the knowledge there for you, so you can sit there and pick it apart at your own pace. You cannot choose one over the other, both have what the other lacks. *Film Stories* is the beginning that *Four Screenplays* doesn't have, and the latter has the knowledge that the first doesn't focus on.

Today, many books on screenplays can be found. In it, *Film Stories* has its place. It focuses on situational driven stories, as well as rendering society and human behavior; all the while entertaining us. Michael Roemer uses his own experience as a teacher, so its easy to follow and connect to. The world of screenplays is complex, but this book introduces us into it with ease; that is its strength. The reading flows, and we are not lectured to death. We are allowed to feel entertained and curious, while at the same time, be taught the essentials. That's what separates this book from other screenplay guides. It doesn't force the material upon us, but rather, lets it seep in, drop by drop.

#### Works Cited/Consulted

- Roemer, Michael. *Film Stories: Screenplays as Story*. London, Maryland  
The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2001.
- Field, Syd. *Four Screenplays*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1994.



Color Blind, Kelly Woods & Jamie Uyematsu