



Katherine Vermette

## FAQ

### **You have a life full of family obligations, how do you actually get to work on your writing?**

I'm a "typical" writer in the way I work – a recluse. I usually work in my sunroom, or reclining on the couch, and I don't do any work until I get everyone out of the house. Then, when it's just me and my dogs, I write. I need lots of space and to be physically away from people. Back in the before times, I used to love writing in coffee shops or on airplanes, too - I have done some great work on airplanes! I work in the morning, so I always give myself that time then, before getting distracted by life, or emails.. I try to be really precious about my time.

### **Other than writing what takes up the majority of your working activities?**

Promo stuff like interviews, and teaching. I like it, for the most part, but it's a whole other part of the brain. I am lucky to have spent lots of years hustling so I sort of know what I am doing and I do less of it so it seems easy. When I was younger, I was very involved in the writing world, organized writing groups and events. Back then my only time to actually write was on the weekends and I had to fight for it. It is all about making time to do your art. It is so easy to do everything except your art. So my advice is, always, make the time.

### **What challenges you most about the writing process, from conception to published book?**

Copy editing takes so much time. There are always typos! They seem to crop up overnight. They are everywhere!

### **Did you plan to write a series of novels?**

I didn't plan to write *The Break* as a series, but I couldn't get the characters out of my head. I wanted

to do a lot of projects after that book came out, like my graphic novel, a picture book and a poetry book. I didn't want to do another novel right away. *The Break* almost broke me! All the touring that happened after it was so unexpected and I was very busy, so I had at least 3 years away from that story. But it didn't feel like it was done. When I sat back down to write, they were all still there.

### **Have you ever experienced market pressure to rush to write a book?**

Not really. I write very slow and I like a lot of space. Generally, in life, if people try to rush me, I shut down and seem to move even slower. I have a really great manager who has been very adamant about not pushing me at all. For the *Echo* series, for instance, I deliberately made it so we made one per year. That way, I could have the time to do the research for each of the timeframe and learn as I went. It worked great for me.

### **Do you have inspirational advice for aspiring writers to encourage them?**

I always say to people that want to write, "Just write." When I was younger, I always carried around a journal and was constantly writing things down. You really need to just write. The more you write, the better you get. The more you write, the more you build those muscles, actual hand muscles and the brain muscles that learn to express things in words. The only difference between a person that has a book out and those that don't is that the first person actually puts in the time and effort to write. Also, you have to like it! That helps. If you don't like typing or writing things out and making words on pages, then you really shouldn't be a writer because that's all it is, over and over.

### **How do you develop your characters?**

Fiction didn't come first for me. It felt too daunting for a long time. That's why I started writing poetry which,

the way I write it, is very autobiographical. Fiction came slowly, after I worked my poetry muscles for a while.

Everyone is made up of infinite stories. When I finally started writing fiction, it was still very much like journaling, but I started writing different versions of myself. It was a really easy way to start. Not daunting at all. More like playing "what if." I think I have found all my characters that way. They are just alternative versions of myself, people like me who took a different path and/or have different life experiences. I would never take from another person's story without permission, and keep far away from the stories that don't belong to me.

### **Do you have a particular genre or style of writing that inspires you?**

I really love multiple point of view novels. Despite them being different people they are all related, as we all are related. The not-so-secret is that I am always writing about myself. I think all writers are writing about themselves over and over. Writing is about asking questions and getting answers for ourselves. I once heard that every author is always asking one key question over and over, and the job, over the course of a career, I guess, is to figure out what that question is.

### **What key question are you answering with your work?**

Haha should have expected that. Honestly I don't know. Not yet. For these novels, [*The Break*, *The Strangers*] I am thinking about how can family love can overcome family trauma? How can two people have the same experience and react completely differently? And as much as I focus on the difficult stuff of life, I try to cram in a lot of good stuff too, so I guess another question is how can I do that?

**Some of your work deals with heavy subject matter such as sexual trauma and violence. How do you respond to the variety of reactions your readers have to your work?**

I have heard every kind of reaction to my novel, *The Break*. I think people read themselves into what they are reading - their life, experiences, beliefs lead to their interpretations. I remember being at an event one time, and someone came up to me and said, "I am so glad you didn't make it about culture because it's not just about that." And literally the very next person came up and said, "I am so glad you made it about culture because that is so important."

*The Break* was really hard because it was about the legacy of sexual violence in a marginalized community. I was convinced that it would get a horrible reception, and I'd be run out of town with pitchforks and torches and everything, but on the whole, it was received really well. I witnessed a lot of beautiful understanding.

**Do you love your job?**

It's such a great job to have. Writing is my dream job. That I get to do this for a living is amazing to me. I think there is a big appetite for stories and different types of books. I think there are a lot of genres out there like graphic novels that are literally exploding in all the good ways. During the past year, especially with the pandemic, I for one, have realized how much I appreciate creative content like TV. and books.

**When is your next book coming out?**

Well, Volume 4 of *A Girl Called Echo* just was released this Spring 2021, and in the fall the companion novel to *The Break* will be released. It is called *The Strangers*. It is sort of a continuation but only of one of the characters along with a bunch of whole new characters. I'm all about more characters. More characters seems to be my answer to everything.

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