

SOMEWHERE UPRIVER, A NEW INDIE NOVEL

Can a grown man be toppled with a straw and a newt? Has evolution made humans into big babies? Is salamander spit the newest weapon of mass destruction? The answers lie *Somewhere Upriver*, a novel by Patrick Loafman.

Somewhere Upriver, published by Event Horizon Press in 2013, is the story of Douglas Mortimer who is just beginning graduate school, but when he hires an eccentric old herpetologist as a research assistant, he enters a world of toxic salamanders, eccentric characters and government conspiracies.

Loafman weaves a humorous plot around biologists searching for rare amphibians in Olympic National Park of Washington State. Interesting facts of amphibian toxicology play a fundamental role in the storyline, linking together ancient Haiti's mythologies, newts and herpetologists.

In the summer Loafman works as a seasonal wildlife biologist studying amphibians, spotted owls, trees and even moss; in the winter he writes and creates gourd art.

Loafman is also an artist who works with gourds, carving and woodburning them into bowls, vases, masks and even musical instruments. He has made gourd banjos, mandolins and koras (West African 21-string harp-lutes) and plays them all. His art studio is a cob cabin made of clay, sand and straw on the Dandelion Farm in Washington State.

Loafman's fiction and poetry have been published in two chapbooks and over twenty literary journals, and he edits *The Dandelion Farm Review*, a quarterly journal of poetry. Follow Loafman's writing, art and musical endeavors at <http://patrickloafman.weebly.com>

What other authors are saying about Patrick's novel, *Somewhere Upriver*:

"A memorable mind-altering venture of wildlife biologists, revealing secrets hidden beneath the skin of salamanders." - Diana Somerville, author of *Inside Out Down Under*.

"I love writers who put a sense of themselves into their work, and this book definitely had that. I've also got a soft spot for environmental fiction, and this hit that spot." - Nicholas Wilson, author of *Homeless*.

"...wonderful characters, action, humor, a little sex, and a vivid picture of one of the last American rainforests." - Terence Kuch, author of *See/Saw*.

"With this novel, the author delivers what could be defined as a comic-scientific thriller in the new category of environmental fiction. If not only managing to entertain it also manages to raise environmental issues, and in these times, it is a message not to be neglected." - From The Online Book Club's Review

Interview of Patrick Loafman on Feb 8th, 2014 from Virtual Writers, Inc:

What are the main themes of your book?

It's about newts and salamanders and their toxins. It's a humorous look at what it means to grow up, become mature, or better yet, our refusal to grow up, how we all wish to remain young forever. It's also about science and how we glorify scientists, put them on pedestals, when in reality, scientists are normal everyday flawed human beings. It's about gourds. It's about government conspiracies, homemade tofu and dark stout. It's about stupendous white-man Afros.

Who or what inspired your story?

I have a foggy recollection of eggs and toast and bacon and a discussion with a fellow wildlife biologist years ago. We talked about Bigfoot, giant salamanders and human evolution. He said I should write a book about all that and make it a love story. Well, I didn't make it a love story.

What do you like best about your primary characters?

They're quirky, opinioned neo-hippies. The kind of people I'd love to have as friends, so I made them my friends in a fictional world.

What are their worst peculiarities?

Douglas worships science like a religion, gets engaged way too young and has weakness for dark beer. Peter is obsessive/compulsive and can turn any discussion into a lecture about herpetology, gourd banjos, homebrew or tofu. Spock sees the PBS oil painting instructor Bob Ross as a guru, uses medical marijuana and firmly believes in UFOs and Bigfoot.

How does your main character evolve?

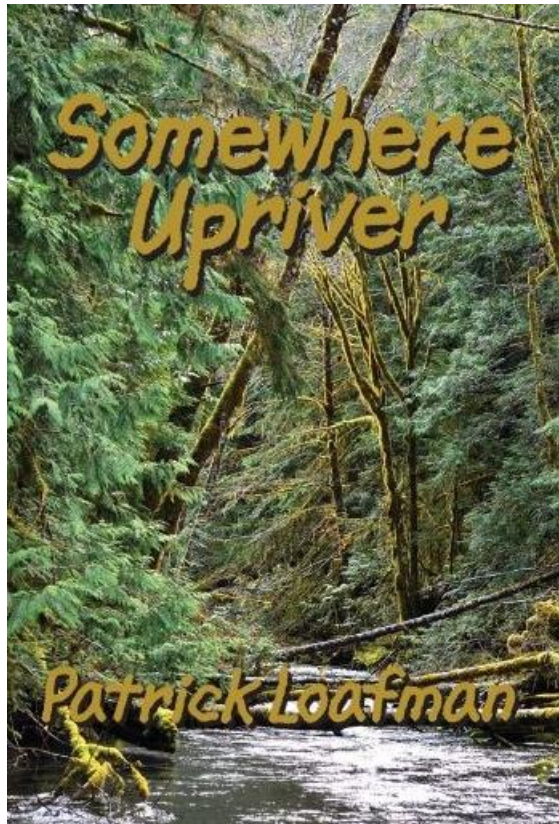
Douglas is drawn away from his sane world as a graduate student with a fiancée into Peter Vernon's counter-culture world of peaceniks who are all obsessed with Peter's dark stout and chasing salamanders. In the end, Douglas' life is forever changed from his brief friendship with Peter.

What's the principal message you want to send to your audience?

The secret of aging is no one really ever grows up – we're all like Peter Vernon, remaining childlike until death.

What's the nicest thing anyone has said about your book?

A man emailed me saying he couldn't put the book down, a woman said my book is the best she's ever read, and another woman approached me when I was at a fruit show and thanked me for writing my book because she enjoyed it so much – I don't know who she was but I smiled the rest of the day.





Patrick Loafman Author of "Somewhere Upriver."



Patrick Loafman with his homemade gourd musical instruments



Patrick Loafman playing his homemade kora – a 21 string West African Harp.



Patrick Loafman's art studio made of cob, which is clay, sand and straw.