

## Larry McMurtry, Joyce Carol Oates entertain at Miami Book Fair

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11/20/2014 9:48 PM | Updated: 11/21/2014 8:01 AM



Author Joyce Carol Oates reads from her book, 'Lovely, Dark, Deep' at the Miami Book Fair International, Thursday night, Nov. 20, 2014. EMILY MICHOT / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

The street fair was in the air at Miami Book Fair International Thursday. Or maybe that was just the gale force winds, testing the limits of everybody's hair care products.

Still, all the signs were there that the fair's big weekend is upon us. The C-Span van sat outside the Chapman Conference Center at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus. The tents, empty and forlorn earlier in the week, are filling up. The wind – did I mention the wind? – was knocking over potted trees, just in time to drive the vendors crazy.

Yes, the street fair opens Friday. But fiction ruled Thursday night, with two big names in the literary world making appearances: Larry McMurtry and Joyce Carol Oates, who have each written so many novels that to try and type all the titles could cause a potentially fatal case of carpal tunnel syndrome.

McMurtry took the stage first, with his writing partner Diana Ossana and editor Robert Weil, who joked about McMurtry's "slightly curmudgeonly exterior."

The description was apt, but McMurtry – author of the Pulitzer Prize winner *Lonesome Dove*, *The Last Picture Show*, *Terms of Endearment* and, most recently, *The Last Kind Words Saloon* – offered plenty of intriguing tidbits for his fans. He wrote his showgirl novel, *The Desert Rose*, in three weeks. These days he likes writing screenplays more than novels because of the money (who wouldn't?). He's fascinated with disappearing cultures (cowboys, showgirls).

And he has never seen the miniseries production of *Lonesome Dove* with Robert Duvall and Tommy Lee Jones.

"I never think of my books after I publish them," he said, "unless I need to write a screenplay."

He and Ossana also talked about their screenplay for *Brokeback Mountain*, adapted from Annie Proulx's short story, which earned them a Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar. Ossana read it in the *New Yorker* and passed it along to McMurtry.

"I was stunned by the story," McMurtry said. So they optioned it for \$10,000.

Like several literary visitors this week, Oates said she was happy to be in Miami.

"We are so happy not to be in the snow belt," she said. "It's enough to make you skip around."

Oates read the title story from her latest short story collection, *Lovely, Dark, Deep*. She described the works as "stories about love relationships" that were "slantwise in an erotic sense."

The Swamp stayed busy, with The Poem Depot poets churning out verse on request, story readings about Miami and Buika performing with Cajon player Ramon Porrina.