

***My Brother's Basement* by Joy Huebert.  
Quadra Books, Victoria, 2016.**

*Reviewed by Sheila Martindale in Island Writer*

This is a gritty book. On the edge. Tongue-in-cheek humorous. It meanders idly between fiction, memoir and stage aside whispers. It is about writing, the idea of writing, the strange things which happen when one writes. Or not.

Joy Huebert pokes fun. And swears a considerable amount. She writes about the agonizing disappointments of childhood – for instance, being trapped in an evangelical revival tent while the rest of the family goes for ice cream. And never being allowed more than one Coca Cola a week, until one day she has an unlimited amount and throws up.

She writes fictitiously about being a failed writer, living in the basement of the title, and writing a few perfect sentences which never expand into a story, much less a novel. There is also mention of the true horror of an unfinished basement she remembers, with all the nastiness of dirt floors and spiders. And ice inside the windows.

There are some bizarre letters to unlikely people, and some equally odd replies. We are taken to the weird underbelly of society, and find we can empathize. Sometimes we are not surprised by what we find there. It is definitely worth finding out.