

# Disappointed Literary Authors

by **Richard Kostelanetz** (January 2016)

A few years ago I drafted an inventory that, though it has profound truths worth sharing, I could not figure out how to publish appropriately. My initial aim was identifying how smart, mostly well-intentioned people fail in a hyper-competitive business—more specifically, American literary contemporaries who finally didn't succeed as writers, even though others thought they would or the writers themselves thought they should, usually because they had in passing some publishing leverage or a position offering professional advantage, sometimes as the protégé of a declining patron or clique, other times with good fortune, such as commercial publication or a prominent “prize,” that would not become permanent. Others were strangled by their old-school tie, while a few couldn't accept that they were simply lucky one-shots. [more>>>](#)