At the end of my first year as director, and Holly’s first year as coordinator, I speak for both of us when I say that we are genuinely thrilled with the good news of this past year—evident in the fellowships, residencies, publications, and emerging book manuscripts that our students have to their names. Congratulations are due to this year’s fellowship and award winners. Please check out the 2013-14 Award Winners section later in the newsletter for a full list of names and awards.

Our alumni have also been busy, with too many publications and accomplishments to list here—it’s a great problem for a program to have! Read all about the publications in our “New Pages” section.

We also scored two spectacular faculty hires. Kim Todd will join us this fall, and Vasugi Ganeshanathan will come on board in the fall of 2015 after her fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute. We could not be happier with these two world-class writers, or with the growth in our program, especially as we look forward to the coming year.

The next installment of our annual Creative Writing calendar will bring the John Berryman Centenary Celebration in October, the Minneapolis A.W.P Conference in April of 2015, and some exciting new developments in our literary journal. So, please stay tuned.

We have a fantastic line-up of visiting writers for the fall—Jeffrey Sharlet, Jamaal May, Stacey D’Erasmo, and James McBride. We also have a brand new crop of twelve talented MFAs joining us, even as we bid farewell to the class of 2014.

Most important, though, I’m happy to report that our program has continued to do its everyday job, supporting and guiding emerging writers, at one of the most crucial moments in their development—what could be more thrilling than that?

Last, but certainly not least, I’d like to thank the interns who worked tirelessly in the office over the year: Nicky Tiso, Kendra Atliework, Su Hwang, and Alexandra Watson. And I would especially like to thank the donors who have made our fellowships, awards, and literary magazine possible: Adam Lerner, Michael O’Rourke, the Gesell Family, and Michael Dennis Browne.

I look forward to all the stimulating conversations to be had between our students and faculty alike. I feel lucky to work with such excellent writers and people. Here’s to a productive and enjoyable summer!

Creative Writing Program
creawrit@umn.edu
http://creativewriting.umn.edu/
After a long search, the MFA program is excited to welcome two new faculty members into its fold: Kim Todd and Vasugi Ganeshananthan! Vasugi, who’ll be teaching fiction, is scheduled to join us in Minnesota in Fall 2015, while Kim will begin teaching creative nonfiction in Fall 2014. Kim, who received her BA in English from Yale and her MFA in creative nonfiction and MS in environmental studies from the University of Montana, currently teaches at Penn State’s Behrend College. She’s published three books: *Tinkering with Eden: A Natural History of Exotics in America*, *Chrysalis: Maria Sibylla Merian and the Secrets of Metamorphosis*, and *Sparrow*. We reached out to Kim to ask her some questions about her work, her hobbies, and what she’s looking forward to doing and teaching in Minneapolis.

**How did you come to CNF in general and nature/science writing in particular?**
Right after college, I worked at a newspaper just outside of Seattle. Because it was so small, I got the opportunity to write about everything—crime, the school board, food, politics. After two years, I realized that I liked writing, but I wanted to develop longer pieces and that those I liked most were about science and the environment. When people were talking about the environment, they were fundamentally talking about the way they thought the world should work and how they saw those values reflected in the landscape outside their windows. The conversations were captivating.

So I went back to school and got an MFA in creative nonfiction at the University of Montana and an MS in environmental studies. William Kittredge was in his last year teaching there when I was in my first year as a student. He, and other professors there, showed me all that it was possible to do with nonfiction.

**What are you most looking forward to about teaching and interacting with grad students?**
Before my current job—assistant professor in charge of the nonfiction track at Penn State Erie’s BFA program—I worked with graduate students quite a bit. While I love talking with undergraduates and others who are just discovering their passions, I’m looking forward to having discussions with graduate students about their longer, more ambitious projects. The focus, drive, and creativity of the students at the University of Minnesota was one of the things I was most impressed with during my interview.

**Is there anything about the Twin Cities that you’re particularly looking forward to discovering/experiencing?**
I love to hike, backpack, and kayak, and can’t wait to learn some new trails and lakes and rivers.
Michael Alberti was awarded one of the three 2014 CLA Travel/Research Fellowships this summer.

Kendra Atlework’s essay “Charade” was selected as a winner for the 2014 AWP Intro Journals Award, and is forthcoming in Hayden’s Ferry Review. She was also awarded one of the three 2014 CLA Travel/Research Fellowships this summer.

Jonathan Escoffery’s short story “The Pickle” was published in Middle Gray Magazine, along with an interview. Abriana Jetté reviewed Jonathan as an emerging poet of 2013 at Stay Thirsty Media. He was also selected as a 2014 AWP Intro Award Nominee. Three of his poems were featured in Stay Thirsty Publishing’s anthology, The Best Emerging Poets of 2013.

J. Fossenbell’s hybrid fiction series, “Ziggy and the Infinites,” was published in Moonshot Magazine. She was also a runner-up for the 2013 Gesell Award in creative nonfiction for her essay “Windward.”


Su Hwang will have three poems published in the upcoming Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland, by Ice Cube Press in Iowa, and was awarded one of two 2014 GRPP Travel/Research Fellowships this summer.

Trevor Dane Ketner was awarded an Honorable Mention in Glimmer Train’s November 2013 Short Story Award for New Writers, and will have three poems published in the upcoming Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland, by Ice Cube Press in Iowa.

Janna Knittel was awarded the 2013 Academy of American Poets James Wright Prize for Poetry, judged by Garrison Keillor, selected as a 2014 AWP Intro Award Nominee, and received one of the three 2014 CLA Research/Travel Fellowships this summer.

Carrie Lorig co-authored the chapbook Roots with Russ Woods, which won Radioactive Moat’s Poetry Contest. She also published a poem in TYPO 19. Carrie’s chapbook NODS has also been reviewed by Lucy Biederman on Coldfront and by Nathan Kemp in the new issue of DIAGRAM, and a review by Nate Pritts in the Southeast Review. An essay, “Myung Mi Kim, Poetic Circulatory Systems, and the Un-binding of Sense-Making / Sense Forcing,” will be included in Despite the Possible: Fifteen Women Poets (University of Akron Press). A poem is forthcoming from Big Lucks and has a poem with Russ Woods in the new issue of The Destroyer, as well as a video poem up at The Continental Review.

Elizabeth O’Brien was awarded the 2013 Academy of American Poets James Wright Prize for Poetry, judged by Garrison Keillor. Her poem was also published in DIAGRAM.

Scott Parker’s chapbook In Here won the Monkey Puzzle Press Prose Chapbook Prize and is out now from Monkey Puzzle Press. He has also published Conversations with Ken Kesey (University Press of Mississippi), and essays “Colored White” in Sport Literate, and “Cougar Dreams” in Clackamas Literary Review.

Anna Rasmussen was awarded both the 2013 Gesell Award in poetry and the 2014 Michael Denis Browne Fellowship. Her poem also placed first in the Art + Text competition through the Weisman Art Museum.

Katie Rensch collaborated with U of M graduate film artist Jes Reyes to co-produce the video essay “A Mind of Winter.” The moving image and essay will debut at The Southern Theater in Minneapolis in a July film festival.

Nicky Tiso reviewed Siglio Press’ It Is Almost That: A Collection of Image+Text Work by Women Artists & Writers, at HTMLGiant. He also had poems in TYPO, Revolver, and three poems in SCUD. He reviewed MFA alumni Sarah Fox’s new poetry book, First Flag, at The Volta blog, and reviewed ARK by Ronald Johnson at Galatea Resurrects. His chapbook manuscript was a top five finalist for Grey Book Press’ 2014 contest.

Alexandra Watson was awarded one of two 2014 GRPP Travel/Research Fellowships this summer.

Elisabeth Workman’s ULTRAMEGA-PRAIRIELAND, her first full-length book was published by Bloof Books. TERRORISM IS WHAT WHALE, a poetry collaboration with Michael Sikelskem, was released by Grey Book Press in March, and a new chapbook ANY RIP A THRESHOLD is out with Shirt Pocket Press.

Jason Zencka was awarded one of two 2014 Scribe for Human Rights Fellowships this summer.


Victoria Blanco was the recipient of the Judd Fellowship from the Global Programs Strategic Alliance. This fellowship supported summer travel to Chihuahua City, Mexico for her continued research on the Tarahumaras. She will also teach a class at the Loft titled “Travel Writer” in summer 2014.

Emily Strasser’s essay “Signal Fires on the Tibetan Plateau” was published with Guernica. She was also awarded one of two 2014 Scribe for Human Rights Fellowships this summer.

Current student news
Aaron Apps (2013) is a first-year PhD English candidate at Brown University. His second book, Intersex, is forthcoming from Tarpaulin Sky Press. His manuscript Dear Herculine was an honorable mention for Ahsahta Press’ 2013 open reading period. Aaron’s work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in LIT, Denver Quarterly, The Los Angeles Review, PANK, Spork, Caliban, House Fire, The Doctor TJ Eckleberg Review, Carolina Quarterly, and Sleeping Fish. He will be reading this October at Eugene Lang College in NYC for the launch of LIT issue #24.

Haddayr Copley-Woods (1999) had short stories published in “Perfect” in April’s Apex Magazine and “Belly” in Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine.

Swati Avasthi’s (2010) Chasing Shadows came out in September 2013 to three starred reviews from Publisher’s Weekly, Kirkus and School Library Journal. It was a Junior Library Guild Selection and made several “best of 2013” lists, including YALSA, Kirkus, and CBC/Bank Street. It was also nominated for a MN book award.


Kathleen Glasgow (2002), former CW Program Coordinator and Poetry alum, is working as a writer and researcher for The Writer’s Almanac with Garrison Keillor.

Amanda Fields (2005) wrote a guest post about motherhood and writing on the Superstition Review blog. She also co-edited the collection In, Around, and Away From Tahrir: Emerging Expressions of Egyptian Identity, which will be published in 2014 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Kristin Fitzsimmons (2013) has her first chapbook out from Dancing Girl Press, called all these empty bone bowls. She and Sally Franson have started an educational YouTube series you should watch called What Did You Look Up On Wikipedia.

Sally Franson’s (2013) story “Row Your Boat” was published by the Great River Review, and “Good Cause,” published by The Examined Life Journal. She also attended the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for a residency. She and Kristin Fitzsimmons have started an educational YouTube series you should watch called What Did You Look Up On Wikipedia.

Congrats to our 2013-14 AWARD WINNERS

Academy of American Poets James Wright Prize for Poetry
Janna Knittel & Elizabeth O’Brien

Gesell Award for Excellence in Fiction
Katherine Lee & Jesus de la Torre

Gesell Award for Excellence in Literary Nonfiction
Elena Carter

Gesell Award for Excellence in Poetry
Anna Rasmussen

ArtWords: Writing at the Weisman
Anna Rasmussen, Isabel Harding, Scott Long

Michael Dennis Browne Fellowship
Anna Rasmussen

Amanda Coplin (2006), author of the novel The Orchardist, won the Whiting Writers Award, given annually to 10 writers who show “exceptional talent and promise in early career.” She was also named one of the National Book Awards’ “5 under 35.”


Scribble for Human Rights Fellowship
Emily Strasser, Jason Zencka

Gesell Summer Writing Fellowship at the Anderson Center
John Costello, Jonathan Escoffery

College of Liberal Arts Research Fellowship
Mike Alberti, Kendra Atleework, Janna Knittel

Graduate Research Partnership Program Fellowships
Alexandra Watson, Su Hwang

MFA Alumni NEWS

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Welcoming our Fall 2014 Incoming MFAs...

**POETRY**
- D. Allen
- Megan Gette
- Roy Guzman
- Wei Chung Hsu

**FICTION**
- Jonathan Atkinson
- Carolyn Byrne
- Matthew Taylor
- Tim Zila

**NONFICTION**
- Jonathan Damery
- Jackie Hilgert
- Veronica Kavass
- Jordan Thomas

Kate Hopper (2005)’s memoir Ready for Air, was published by University of Minnesota Press October 2013. It is a finalist in two categories for the Midwest Book Awards.

Patrick Hueller (2010) using the pen name Paul Hoblin--has published two YA novels: The Beast and Archenemy. The Beast was a Junior Library Guild Selection. Archenemy was a Rainbow Award Selection.

Alex Jones (1991)’s essay “Matinee,” published in the Santa Monica Review, has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His essay “The Big Breakfast” has been published in issue 45 of the Harvard Review, and his essay “The Giant” will appear in the Summer issue of the Three-penny Review.

Molly Sutton Kiefer (2012), author of PINE was a finalist for the 2013 Noemi Book Award for Poetry.

Norah Labiner (1996)’s novel Let the Dark Flower Blossom (Coffee House Press, 2013) was nominated for a 2014 Minnesota Book Award.

Brian Laidlaw (2011) will have his first poetry collection, Narcissus the Stuntman, published by Milkweed Editions in 2015, along with a companion album of original music.


Alex Lemon (2004)’s The Wish Book was named to The Library Journals’ list of “Ten Essential Poetry Titles for 2014.”


Edward McPherson (2011) has a story in the Gettysburg Review. His story, “Kansas, America, 1899,” won the 2014 Gulf Coast Prize in Fiction.


Kate Petersen’s (2013) story “The Phoenix Labs” has been published at FiveChapters. She is currently a Stegner Fellow at Stanford University.

Mike Rollin (2007) has recent poems published or forthcoming in Water~Stone, POOL, and On the Commons. He also had a poem selected for “Arrivals & Departures at St Paul’s Union Depot,” a 3D poetry film installation that will be projected on the facade of the Union Depot during this fall’s St. Paul Art Crawl.

Ethan Rutherford (2009) won a Minnesota Book Award for his collection The Peripatetic Coffin and Other Stories, which was also a finalist for the L.A. First Book Award.

Amy Shearn’s (2005) second novel, The Mermaid of Brooklyn, was published by Simon & Schuster, which has been chosen by Target for their Emerging Authors set, and by Hudson News airport book sellers for its Summer Reading Program.

Francine Marie Tolf (2006) has recently published a prose chapbook with Green Fuse Poetic Arts Press of Loveland, Colorado entitled “Shadow Town: Essays on Growing Up in Joliet, Illinois.” She has also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize for her essay, “Sheeba at Twenty.”

Holly Vanderhaar (2010)’s essay, Surrender,” is a finalist for Creative Nonfiction’s upcoming anthology of nonfiction Oh, Baby: True Stories About Tiny Humans.

Ryo Yamaguchi (2008), author of The Refusal of Suitors was a finalist for the 2013 Noemi Book Award for Poetry.

Peter Campion’s third collection of poetry, El Dorado, is now out from the University of Chicago Press.

Julie Schumacher published a short story in Volume 62 (No. 1) of Epoch magazine. Her essay “The Gristmill of Praise” was published by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Charlie Baxter just sold his new book, There’s Something I Want You to Do, to Pantheon/Vintage. The book is a kind of decalogue, with five stories about virtues (Bravery, Loyalty, Chastity, Charity, and Forbearance) and five about vices (Lust, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, and Vanity). His story “Sloth” appears in the current issue of The New England Review, while another story “Charity,” which appeared in McSweeney’s, will be included in the next Best American Short Stories anthology, edited by Jennifer Egan.


Madelon Sprengnether’s review of Alison Bechdel’s Are You My Mother: A Comic Drama is in press at the International Journal of Psychoanalysis. Her essay “Literature and Psychoanalysis” is forthcoming in the Routledge Handbook for Psychoanalysis in the Humanities and Social Sciences (2014). She served as a discussant for a paper by Gloria Levin titled “Haunted by Absence: The Transgenerational Roots of a Mother’s Projection, for the Minnesota Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, and co-organized a public lecture by Professor Jeffrey Prager, UCLA, titled “The Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma: Recovering Humanity, Repairing Generations.” Her memoir Great River Road: Memory, Aging and Reconciliation will be published by New Rivers Press in Fall 2014.

faculty NEWS
**Summer Research Fellowships**

**Nicky Tiso**

I was a recipient of the 2013 Graduate Research Partnership Program Stipend to finance a poetic investigation into the Bakken oil fields of Williston, North Dakota, where the technique of hydraulic fracturing is rapidly transforming the wetland prairie landscape. I road-tripped there for a week over the summer to conduct numerous interviews and photograph industry and nature in conflict. Through firsthand experience and documentary materials (such as studies on the environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing), my project blurs genre to allow for a variant sense of place. I am still in the process of publishing it. I am still in the process of revising it. The stipend was great in allowing me the space to travel and perform research towards the realization of this longish docu-poem. I’m grateful for the opportunity and hope this manuscript functions effectively as a piece of creative writing and as a kind of social/environmental criticism. In order to put it in the public sphere before waiting to get published, I will soon upload it as a free pdf. using Issuu. I will also be giving a reading from it sometime in Minneapolis at a date TBA.

**J. Fossenbell**

A couple years ago, I hatched this idea for a project that would delve into my family’s history in Hawaii pre- and post-statehood, and my own complex relationship with the place, real and imagined. It took the urging of some fellow writers to turn this idea into a proposal to travel to Oahu to collect stories and images, and explore the island’s past and present through different eyes. I received a CLA Travel/Research Fellowship last summer and from there it ballooned into a collaborative, inter-generational family research project. My 90-year-old grandmother and mother accompanied me as official storytellers and guides. We circled the island while I gathered family lore and gathered images and artifacts. I visited the state historic archives to locate records and photos from the army base where my grandfather was stationed. I talked to long-time residents and tourists. The nature of my project has shifted in essential ways as I braid the pieces together into my MFA thesis. But without the chance to physically occupy those spaces, my project would never have moved beyond a flat idea on paper.

**Jonathan Escoffery**

In the summer of 2013, aided by a DOVE Summer Research Fellowship, I traveled to Europe to continue researching the breadth of the Jamaican Diaspora. This research runs in conjunction with research I began the previous summer during a month-long travel throughout Jamaica. This summer’s travels took me to the Jamaican enclaves in South London, and as far as Amsterdam. This ongoing exploration is in support of various creative projects I am working on, including my thesis manuscript, a collection of stories entitled All That I Can’t Say to You, which I will defend on May 12, 2014.

**Laline Suon Bell**

Writers are the voices of the world—a great power—also a great responsibility. The Scribe for Human Rights Fellowship provided that platform of power and responsibility to show a largely missed injustice—genocide. The art and culture of centuries-old Kampuchea paled to nothing next to genocide. Khmers became shaped and defined by genocide instead of the proud people who built one of the greatest civilizations in Southeast Asia, who built a Seven Wonder of the world, Angkor Wat. I bring awareness to their horrific past, yet want to be proud of my heritage for its achievement not its cruelty.
Students & Alumni

Ethan Rutherford (2009)
The Peripatetic Coffin (Ecco, 2013)

Sarah Fox (2012)
The First Flag (Coffee House, 2013)

Aaron Apps (2013)
Compos(t)ments (BlazeVox, 2012)

Liana Liu (2011)
The Memory Key (Harper Collins, 2015)

Amy Shearn (2005)
The Mermaid of Brooklyn (Simon and Schuster, 2013)

Rachel Moritz (2008)
Borrowed Wave (Kore Press, 2013)

Meryl Depasquale (2010)
Dreams of a Perfect Interface (Dancing Girl Press, 2013)

Kevin Fenton (2005)
Leaving Rollingstone (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2013)

Molly Sutton Kiefer (2012)
Nestuary (Gold Line Press, 2014)

Carrie Lorig (2014)
Being Stone (Big Lucks, 2014)
Labor Day (with Nick Sturm, Forklift, 2014)
rootpoems (with Russ Woods, Radioactive Moat, 2013)

Francine Marie Tolf (2006)

Elisabeth Workman (2014)
TERRORISM IS WHAT WHALE (with Michael Sikkema, Grey Book Press, 2014)
ANY RIP A THRESHOLD (Shirt Pocket Press, 2013)
YELLOWPAGES (Dusie, 2014)

Swati Avasthi (2010)
Chasing Shadows (Knopf BFYR, 2013)

Shana Youngdahl (2006)
Winter/Windows (Miel Books, 2013)

The Synthesis (AKA Scott F. Parker, 2014)
in here (Monkey Puzzle Press, 2013)

Scott F. Parker (2014)
Editor: Conversations with Ken Kesey (University Press of Mississippi, 2014)

Joshua Ostergaard (2011)
The Devil’s Curve: A Fan’s Notes from Left Field (Coffee House Press, 2014)

Kate Hopper (2005)
Ready for Air (University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

Eireann Lorsung (2006)
Her Book: Poems (Milkweed Editions 2013)
Fall 2014 EVENTS

Faculty

Charles Baxter
*Gryphon: New and Selected Stories*
(Random House, 2011)

Patricia Hampl
Editor, *Ploughshares* (Ploughshares 2012)

Ray Gonzalez
*Cool Auditor: Prose Poems*
(BOA Editions, 2009)

Peter Campion
*El Dorado* (University of Chicago Press, 2013)

Julie Schumacher
*The Unbearable Book Club for Unsinkable Girls*
(Delacorte, 2012)

Edelstein-Keller Readings

October 2
Jeff Sharlet (creative nonfiction)

October 14
Stacey D’Erasmo (fiction)

November 13
Jamaal May (poetry)

Charles Baxter’s Annual Benefit for Hunger
November 3
Featuring Jess Row

John Berryman
Centenary
October 24-26
Andersen Library
222 21st Ave S,
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Alumni Update

Ethan Rutherford

Were some or most of the stories in “The Peripatetic Coffin” started during your MFA years? Most of the stories that ended up making the cut for the book were indeed drafted while I was at the program, and did make it into my thesis (though, for the most part, in much shabbier shape). There were a number of stories in my thesis that didn’t make it into the book, and the world has thankfully been spared those unformed things. I think that space between writing the stories, drafting them, and reading them a year or two later was incredibly important.

How did members of the faculty and cohort help shape or enrich your work? It’s impossible to say how much of an impact both Julie Schumacher and Charlie Baxter had on these stories, and on the way I have come to read literature, and on the way I’ve come to think about my next project, etc. This book would not be the book it is without the two of them, and they have my enduring gratitude, which will not diminish for, say, ever. As for my cohort, I got lucky there as well. Matt Burgess always was, and still is, my most trusted reader. And Libby Edelson is my editor at Ecco (or: was. She’s since left.). We had a great group and made what I feel are lifelong friends there.

What is one of your fondest memories of your time in the MFA program? Workshop with Julie and Charlie. I also really came to love the thesis-defense week, seeing, finally, what everyone had been working on, and how it came together. Other fond memories are not for a family newsletter.

Knowing now what you didn’t know then, what advice would you give to current MFA students? Enjoy your time, but work work work work. You’ll never have a concentration of time like this again, where your only job is to write, and read, and learn how to teach, and be around other people doing the same thing. Generate as much material as you can while you’re in the program.

Any other bits of advice/insight about surviving & thriving after the MFA? Make sure you’re having fun and enjoying the actual process of writing. Just get comfortable with the idea that what matters most is the work you are doing, and that it might take awhile for you to get it where you want it to be. Longer than you might expect. But if you’re having fun doing it, the time will go by quickly, and the rejection will sting a little less, and eventually things will turn in the right direction. Find a few early readers in the program that you will carry with you for the rest of your life, and be sure to nurture those relationships.

A conversation with Amanda Coplin

Amanda Coplin, who graduated from our MFA program in 2006, has seen stunning success in recent years. Coplin’s 2012 novel The Orchardist was a New York Times bestseller, a Publishers Weekly top 10 pick, a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection, a top 10 for fall ‘12 O Magazine selection, and a winner of the Barnes & Noble “Discover” Award for Fiction. Coplin also won a Whiting Writers Award, a $50,000 prize given annually to 10 writers emerging writers. She was a 2008-2009 Provincetown Arts Center Fellow in fiction, and in 2013 she was named one of the National Book Awards’ “5 under 35.”

Coplin chatted with the Creative Writing Program about craft, process, and the writing life.

What was your writing process like for The Orchardist? How much of the book did you complete while in the MFA program? It took me eight years to write the novel. I started writing it the summer after my first year in the MFA program. I had originally wanted to compose a short story collection, but really became captivated with the novel form after reading Faulkner’s Light In August. My writing process consisted of reading and falling in love with certain novels, and then trying out different structures and styles of these writers (Faulkner, Morrison, Woolf, John Berger, Patrick White) and determining what I could learn from them to tell my own story. It was an awesome learning process, with a lot of winding drafts that ultimately failed in one way or another. But I would take what I learned from one draft/attempt and set off in a new direction. Eventually I had a bunch of pages I felt hung together in an authentic way, and showed them to other people to see what they thought.

Read the full interview online at the MFA blog: http://blog.lib.umn.edu/creawrit/main/

Any advice for folks trying to publish a first book? Keep your head down and work. I guess this goes for writers at any stage of their career. I wouldn’t worry too much about agents or publishers while you’re writing, just focus on the task at hand, which is to midwife your extraordinary story into being. Allow the book its own time. Some books take a long time to manifest, that’s just how it is. Be patient. That is hard to hear, especially in this sped-up world we live in. But books will take their own time, and it is your job to sit with them and honor them. Try to relish the process, if you can.
**Women in Publishing panel**

On Wednesday, April 23, dislocate hosted a Women in Publishing panel featuring Ann Regan of Minnesota Historical Society Press, Fiona McCrae of Graywolf, and Meghan Murphy and Jamie Millard of Paper Darts. Panelists provided practical advice, industry reflections, and anecdotes from the publishing world. dislocate editor Scott F. Parker, one of the event’s organizers, gives some insight into its origins and how he envisions it fueling the writing community here in our MFA.

**What inspired dislocate to organize this event, and were you happy with the results?**

We were lucky enough to receive an anonymous donation from one of the faculty members to bring in a few editors to meet with students. The way the timing worked out with our publication schedule, we thought it made more sense to open it up to the whole community rather than restrict it to dislocate staff. From there, we started brainstorming event ideas, came up with Women in Publishing, and then did our best to deal with the challenge of being able to invite only a few panelists. I thought it went really well. The panelists were wise and enthusiastic. My sense is that at the end of the hour everyone in the room wished it weren’t over, which is about the best complaint I can imagine having.

**What niche do you think it filled for our cohort?**

As Elizabeth O’Brien said in her introduction, we can tend to get isolated in the classroom/ivory towers here. It’s good to connect with editors/publishers doing exciting work in the “real world” and learn more about what kinds of opportunities might be available to us, whether as writers, interns, editors, or something else. One takeaway from the panel for me was the reminder of how much variety there is in the Twin Cities literary community and how much space there is to plug in or, like Paper Darts, start something new.

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**dislocate book reviews**

This semester, dislocate began publishing weekly book reviews online. You can check them out at dislocate.umn.edu. A word from dislocate’s review’s editor, Scott F. Parker:

Reviews can be such an important part of the conversation that happens around literature. I’m glad for dislocate to have this forum to join the conversation, and maybe in some cases help it along: as far as I know, I Am Not A Poet has not yet been reviewed anywhere else—and neither has McSweeney’s Furry Journal. Writing reviews also invites writers to engage and think critically about other contemporary works—always an important practice. Since dislocate’s reviews live online, we aren’t in the local community in the same way that Rain Taxi and the Strib are. But we do feel very connected to the Twin Cities. We’ve been putting on 1-2 events a year, our reviewers so far have all been from the Twin Cities (mostly UM grad students), and we’ve been paying attention to what the local publishers are up to—in addition to the well-known presses here, we’ve tried, for example, to review work from Button Poetry and Free Poets Press. There’s obviously tons going on here. We’re proud to play a part.

From MH Rowe’s review of McSweeney’s Furry Journal:

If you own a copy of Denis Johnson’s Train Dreams in hardcover, Furry Journal feels—when you’re holding it in your hand—almost exactly like that, at least in terms of weight and size. However, due to its being covered in fake fur, there is also a sense in which it feels nothing like Denis Johnson’s Train Dreams, which, to my knowledge, has never been released in any edition lined with fake fur that feels pleasant when drawn across one’s cheek or the back of one’s hand.

Read the full review here: [http://dislocate.umn.edu/reviews/mcsweeneys-furry-journal.html](http://dislocate.umn.edu/reviews/mcsweeneys-furry-journal.html)

From Anna Rasmussen’s review of I Am Not a Poet:

As the title suggests, I Am Not A Poet approaches craft not as occupation or vocation—but rather as the occasion for witness. Poetry is agency—it is a rare and beautiful kernel that transcends the spheres of public and private. Each of these poems spring from the generosity of the writer: flowering invitations. This collection takes personal pain and renders it with an art that feels both sacred and necessary—“Enter this magic,” Karen Goodyear writes, “Where the invisible vanish, honored guests appearing.”

Read the full review here: [http://dislocate.umn.edu/reviews/i-am-not-a-poet.html](http://dislocate.umn.edu/reviews/i-am-not-a-poet.html)

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creawrit@umn.edu

**Edited and produced by K. Atleework, S. Hwang, & A. Watson**