

Contributors



Marcia Aldrich on fame: My birth family was never famous nor did they know anyone famous. In my own right, I haven't done anything much of note. But I've known successful people—my life has been touched by an array of substantially successful people. For example in the month of January during my freshman year in college I studied with a famous poet, Denise Levertov. I had been one of seven students she admitted into this once-in-a-lifetime class, but a few days before the class began I had an accident with my contact lenses. The temperature was below zero in Ithaca and when the wind chill was added in, well, it was beyond freezing. I had put my contacts in early that morning and had walked around the big campus all day. That evening I went to see Charlie Chaplin's "The Gold Rush" and laughed

so hard that my face hurt. I remember putting my hands to my face as if to hold it still because it ached. Then after the movie I had drinks with friends and when I got home and tried to take my contacts out, I couldn't. They were stuck to my eyeballs. I had to go to the hospital to have them removed and it turned out I had burned the nerve endings on my corneas. For most of January I couldn't see very well. I thought I'd have to drop the class but when Denise heard of my accident, she called and said she wanted me to stay. At the end of the class she asked me for one of the poems I had written for an anthology she was editing. It was my first publication. I saw her once after that, about six years later, at a reading she was giving. I said hello, but she didn't remember me. Then she died.

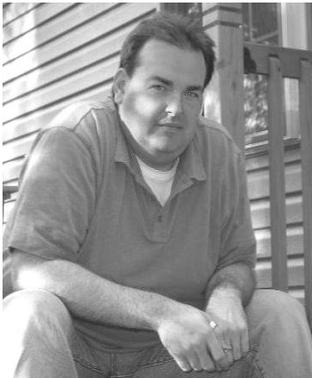
Eleanor Leonne Bennett is a 14-year-old award-winning mixed media artist and photographer from Stockport, England. She has been exhibited in places from Environ in Ireland to the Oxo gallery in London and was the only person in the UK to be placed with *National Geographic* in their See the Bigger Picture biodiversity photography competition. Recently she's exhibited in Canada, Paris (at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), Hamburg and Madrid as part of the international year of biodiversity. Winner of the UK Butterflies under 16 competition, twice the winner of the Big Issue monthly photo competition, winner of the Wrexham Science Festival under 17 category, and three times winner of the bi-annual Nature Detectives art contest.





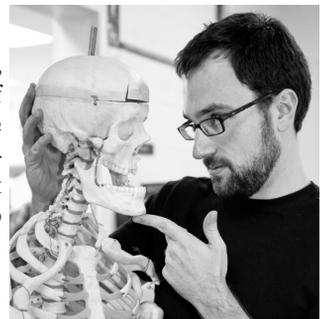
Bond Benton recently returned to the United States after years of blissfully residing in Guntramsdorf, Austria. During that time he worked with the U.S. State Department in helping staff at various embassies tell (or at least try to explain) the American story to the world community. His travels have taken him to places like Kigali, Beirut, Baku, and Pristina where he learned a lot about the best and worst of the world, his culture, and himself. His most recent publication was a short story entitled “Anti-American Me” in the Austrian anthology *Vienna Views*. He’s currently a communication professor at SUNY-Fredonia in upstate New York where he enjoys movies of all kinds, video games, the trashiest of reality TV programs, Rammstein, reading unexpected things, comic books, and passionately following the sorry lot that is the Kansas City Royals. He writes with the goal of convincing commas to occasionally give way to periods.

Patricia Bjorklund didn’t have a high school equivalency diploma until she was 35. When she got her BA from Southern Connecticut State University, she walked (literally) with her eldest son. When she completed her MS, also from SCSU, her younger son graduated high school and decided to go Navy (spec ops). The very same month she completed her MFA, her baby girl graduated high school and took early admission at UCONN. It’s always about them—but obviously there are other forces at work here. Her MFA in Creative Writing is from UNC Wilmington, where an early draft of her memoir won the Outstanding Thesis Award for Nonfiction, 2008. Her work has appeared in the *Connecticut Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *Post Road*, *American Writing*, *Big Tex[t]*, *Wilma!* and other small journals. She currently teaches English/literature at Southeastern Community College and lives in Wilmington, North Carolina.



Christian Bloomfield lives in Northwest Ohio, where he works for a local university during the day as a secretary; however, in the evening he can be found at home lounging about in his comfy clothes, thinking of writing until inspiration and imagination get engaged; or he could be found reading, looking over the top of the book to watch a few moments of his favorite reality shows *Dirty Jobs* and *Cake Boss*. If he’s not home, he can be found at the gym trying to lighten himself while observing the other gym members, making up their life stories; or he’d be hanging out with his friends, sipping on water or margaritas or both as he tries to listen to other people’s conversations, seeing if there is a nugget of gold that can be polished into a poem.

Lucas Church has published in *Carolina Quarterly*, *dislocate*, and *Hobart*. He is working on various comics and a book of short stories. He lives in Atlanta, where he won the Creative Loafing Fiction Contest two years running. Internet-equipped individuals can find more stories and links at www.lucaschurch.com, which he should really get around to updating.





Kelly Cockerham believes strongly that Anakin Skywalker is not a villain; he's just a misunderstood good bad-boy. She carries drafts of her poems in her pocket and has ever since she was nine. When she was 24, she decided there was no going back and had the Chinese symbol for POET tattooed on her back. Ten years later, Robert Frost wound around her ankle. Currently, she lives in Maryland with her husband and two younglings, adores sparring hummingbirds, and makes a mean blueberry cobbler.

Kathleen Cole is a student at the Fine Arts Center in South Carolina. She enjoys making multiple trips to Waffle House a day and watching infomercials. She once lived in a house with no doors and hopes to one day learn to snap with her right hand.



Erika Donald recently self-published a collection of short stories, *Ravenous*, which can be found online at Amazon.com. The books can also be found in a large box in her bedroom closet.

Her girlfriend who gave her the money to publish the books would very much like Oprah to invite Erika on her show, or have Nora Ephron make a movie out of one the stories. Erika would be okay with either option.

Erika holds an MA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. Her writing has appeared in *Faultline*, *The East Bay Express*, *The Haas Business Reader*, and *Nibble*. Her essay "Let Me Speak to a Supervisor" was voted one of the top ten stories of the year by AlterNet.

Joanna Eleftheriou started her first book project at the age of six, but was stymied when her attempt to begin with the cover led to a frustrating encounter with glitter glue. After that, she learned to skip straight to the words, and managed to complete a dozen or so poems during high school. Having just moved from New York to Cyprus, she composed these verses half in English and half in the Greek that she was swiftly learning, and learning to love. Her love affair with poetry remained a secret until her second semester at Cornell, when she abandoned an unwisely chosen façade (being a physics major in college is much harder than acing high school science tests). Coming out as a wannabe writer led her to Lydia Fakundiny's "The Art of the Essay," the course that eventually led to an MFA in nonfiction, essays in *Chautauqua* and *Crab Orchard Review* and an appetite for more critical and creative work. She's now pursuing a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Missouri. She's interested in the lyric essay, in getting paragraphs to work like stanzas and sentences like verse—as a result, perhaps, she's had poems stripped of their line breaks and published as fiction, while "Deserters," which started as an exercise for a fiction workshop, turned into poetry.

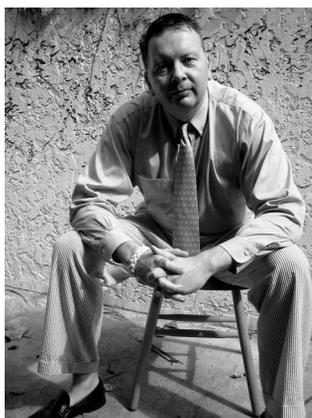


Michael Fisher lives in Worcester, MA. His first collection of poetry, *The Wolf Spider*, is available through Plan B press.



Jonny Gray wanted to be a wizard when he was a kid, long before Harry Potter convinced the world this was a viable career option for modern youth. Absent an actual Hogwarts, Gray instead pursued the magic of the stage, page and graphics pad. Earning a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in Speech Communication, Gray now teaches at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where he specializes in Performance Studies and Rhetoric. He uses his arcane talents particularly in the service of environmental advocacy, investigating how humans argue about environmental issues and discursively (er, “magically”) construct their relationships with nature. His published academic writings have appeared in *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *The Drama Review*, and *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, among other professional scrolls. He is also an active performer and director, currently with two solo-performances in his repertoire: “Trail Mix: A Sojourn on the Muddy Divide between Nature and Culture” and “Cross/Walking.” These performances address environmental issues and attempt to conjure more sustainable human/nature relationships. Gray self-publishes short comics regularly for family and friends on his blog (<http://bungynotes.blogspot.com>). “Vacation on the Moon” is his first professionally published comic and incants a recent visit home to increasingly infirm parents and the shifting dimensions of decaying memory they now inhabit.

Joe Havasy is an artist residing in Athens, GA. He has sold countless paintings and prints all over the world through etsy.com. He was a regular cartoonist for Flagpole weekly magazine, but is currently taking a break and contemplating new stories. He continues to produce artwork and there are few days where he is not working on a project. He has dubbed his subject matter as “cute-sturbing.” Typical paintings feature bright colors, and often cute cartoon creatures, but they are usually having something twisted or awful happening. His primary goal is to attract the viewer with the “cute” painting and then to repulse them with something horrifying. His hope is you will look at his work and though you might be stirred by it, that you will find beauty in it and not want to look away. More of his work can be viewed at www.joehavasy.com.



John King, an aficionado of college degrees, has just acquired his fourth, an MFA in creative writing from NYU. While his doppelganger proudly teaches composition and creative writing at the University of Central Florida, John currently resides at an undisclosed location and toils on his epic novel, *Guy Psycho* and *the Ziggurat of Shame*. He also reviews books for *The Literary Review* and theater for *Shakespeare Bulletin*.



Jim Miller, some might say, was born with a pencil in one hand and a book in the other. His writing career started in 6th grade when he wrote a science essay for someone he foolishly thought was the girl of his dreams. She got an A. He later earned an A for an 8th grade bully, sparing himself a beat-down of epic proportions. Through most of his adolescence, however, his writing career fell to secret angst-filled journals, silly revenge stories and trite song lyrics—all of which he promptly (and regretfully) destroyed upon finding them years later in a box under his bed. After a short career designing and copywriting for a super-big ad agency proved that corporate cube farms are *The Matrix*, Jim, joined by his wife and children, moved to Florida, where he received his MFA in Creative

Writing from the University of South Florida. His work has been published by *Prick of the Spindle*, *Stymie*, and *Alligator Juniper*, and is forthcoming in *Prime Number*. He is the Graphic Nonfiction editor for *Sweet: a Literary Confection* and holds editing positions with *The Mailer Review* and *Black Market Review*. He teaches creative writing at USF–Tampa, Eckerd College, and Florida Southern College.

Kelly Morris has published short fiction in *Battered Suitcase*, *Potomac Review*, and *5x5*. She is a night owl and writes to justify staying up odd hours. She has worked in Yellowstone National Park, at a bookstore in Portland, Oregon, and at a library. She currently lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



Devin Murphy used to work on ships at sea. In his off-time he would hide in his cabin writing stories. Once, during such a writing session, a wave pitched the ship at such a steep angle he flew out of his chair, across the room, and slammed into the cabin wall. That was the most painful sentence he has ever written. He has recently been a winner of *Glimmer Train's* Short Story Contest for New Writers, their Best Start Contest, as well as being selected for Honorable Mention in the *Atlantic Monthly's* 2010 student writing contest. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Missouri Review*, *The Greensboro Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *PANK*, and *Many Mountains Moving* and other journals and anthologies.

Jed Myers learned about the mid-twentieth-century awfulness from his grandmother when he was four, and ever since, he's been trying to write whatever might help unshatter the world. He studied poetry under the mysterious Robert Grenier at Tufts in the early '70s, wound up becoming a psychiatrist who spends his days listening as well as he can, and keeps writing. His work appears in *Prairie Schooner*, *Golden Handcuffs Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Nimrod*, *Spoon River*, *Fugue*, and elsewhere, including the new anthology of Northwest verse, *Many Trails to the Summit* (Rose Alley Press). Jed is also a singer-songwriter, and regularly hosts the Seattle poetry-and-music open-mic cabaret, NorthEndForum. Say 'hi' to him at medjyers@hotmail.com.





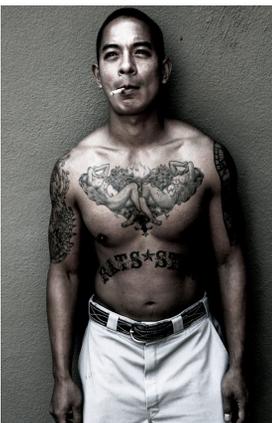
Francis Raven in his own words: When I first came to art I wanted it to be different. I wanted it to feel absolutely strange. I wanted it to make me feel completely different. I am 33 now, married, sober, about to have a son. I want art to be a little less strange now; a little more human. I have gone in for the human story, for masters of the modest poetic. I have started to welcome that human story. On my honeymoon, on Kauai, I read Updike's *Rabbit* books and was moved and understood why I was moved. That is, the story had prepared me to be moved in certain ways by character. While the earlier

work that I loved focused on the incomprehensibility of the moment, the later work seems to say that the world, our choices, our lives, are understandable under the lens of a narrative. Why has narrative become so much more important to me? I suppose because my own life has a narrative. I am, for better or worse, the self that made certain decisions, did certain things, read certain other things, etc. As a 33-year-old, I am no longer the sine qua non of my life. I am somebody who has been some places.

Scott Riley hails from San Jose, California, where he was born in 1985. He attended UC Berkeley, and graduated in 2008 with degrees in rhetoric and creative writing. He currently lives in Berkeley, where he studies systematic and philosophical theology at the Graduate Theological Union, and teaches literacy at an elementary school in Oakland.



The overarching theme for “Image and Narrative” is “tracing.” Just as a child traces dots to create an image, a writer traces his or her experiences into a particular form. This form can be cohesive or not, but the work of writing itself—and language as a whole—always moves toward this tracing of experience into images and/or narratives. The attempt of “Image and Narrative” is to provide accurate descriptions of particular experiences, and to juxtapose those experiences with other radically different experiences. The result is an amalgamation of images and narratives, which call for the reader to trace the experiences into form. Instead of providing easy associations between divergent experiences, this poem attempts to leave such associations up to the reader.



Wally Rudolph divides his time between Los Angeles, CA, and Portland, OR. To date, he's written for the television show, *Smallville*, and was recognized by The Ford Theatre Foundation's Emerging Voices Reading Series for his collection of short stories, *The World's Princess*. More of his work can be seen in the literary journals *Milk Money* and *Lines+Stars*. He recently completed his first novel, *Four Corners*, and hopes you will be giving it a read very, very soon. He can be reached at wallyrudolph@gmail.com



Kara Jean Searcy, while not being a native to Iowa, spent most of her life amidst its grassy prairies. Originally from Idaho, she first became interested in art when she was given the opportunity to watch an episode of *Barney*, where she witnessed cartoons being drawn on rather large sheets of paper. Being inspired, she quickly learned to draw stars, use finger-paints, and color inside the lines. Since then, Kara decided coloring outside of the lines isn't all that bad, and began pushing conventional limits when she painted in hopes of surprising herself as

well as her audience. She currently double majors in Creative Writing and English at Waldorf College, and when she isn't busy memorizing thousands of pages of literature being assigned to her, she can be found saving busloads of children from careening off cliffs, teaching the dog to play dead when she yells "Bang!" and exaggerating the truth from time to time. She also likes playgrounds, constellations, and the word "ricochet."

Sanjukta Shams (Sharna) is a mother of two girls, wife, children's activist, and writer of fiction and memoir. She was born and lived in Bangladesh until she was ten, when she moved with her family to Memphis, Tennessee. She now resides in Dallas, Texas. Much of her creativity stems from her childhood in Bangladesh. She has a master's degree in Women in Islam from Florida State University and plans to complete a memoir within the next two years.



Derek JG Williams is a student of America's shorthand history who grew up studying comic books and the backs of baseball cards. His writing has been featured at venues throughout the Northeast and published both in print and on the web. He is a proponent of handclaps in songs, thinks the designated hitter should be banned from baseball, and is currently shopping his first collection of poems to publishers. He's a busy guy, you can find him at www.derekjgwilliams.com.

Jake Wrenn is an MFA student in creative writing at Roosevelt University. His writing has been awarded by *Glimmer Train* in two contests. Jake has been writing since the second grade, when he wrote his first novel. It was five-hundred words long, about a mouse who goes AWOL from a mouse war. It remains unpublished. He currently resides in his parents' basement in Chicago.

