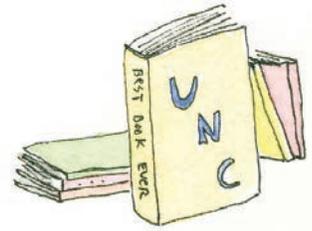


FALL 2018

Chapter & Verse



NEWSLETTER OF THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM AT UNC CHAPEL HILL

Julia Alvarez and Kevin Young Highlight a Stellar Year

Julia Alvarez, our 2018 Frank B. Hanes Writer-in-Residence, drew appreciative fans across the age spectrum. From the enthusiastic crowd of students and townspeople who relished her public reading on February 27, to the creative writing students motivated by the story of her writing life, to the N.C. Sli Scholars Program whose Latinx high school students she challenged to

become their best selves, to the youngest fans of the *Tia Lola* stories who gathered to hear her accounts of coming to American as a young girl from the Dominican Republic and to bask in her encouragement, her audiences found her generous and inspiring. She gave freely of her talents while at Carolina, providing our literary community with an exceptional few days.

Alvarez's versatility is evident in her array of publications including novels *iYo!*, *In the Name of Salomé*, and *Saving the World*, and poetry collections *The Other Side*, *Homecoming*, and *The Woman I Kept to Myself*. In recognition of her profound impact upon literature, she received the 2013 National Medal of Arts, awarded by President Obama.

Photos by Graham Terhune



Professor Marianne Gingher, Chair of the English Department
Mary Floyd-Wilson, Julia Alvarez, and Professor Daniel Wallace



Julia Alvarez

2018–2019

Faculty and Alumni News, Prize-Winning Authors, and More!

Chapter & Verse is published yearly by the Creative Writing Program.

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Kevin Young

2017 Thomas Wolfe Prize Recipient

Photos by Graham Terhune



Kevin Young, with
Thomas Wolfe
Scholar Samuel Gee

With a new book coming out and his new position as poetry editor of the *New Yorker* waiting, poet and essayist Kevin Young found time to stop in Chapel Hill to receive the 2017 Thomas Wolfe Prize and to deliver the annual Thomas Wolfe Lecture on October 3 to an eager audience in the Genome Sciences Auditorium. Young's reading offered a representative cross-section of his work, showcasing both his humor and his capacity to provoke serious thought, especially with regard to what it might mean to cultivate honest and meaningful relationships between our present and past.



Young is the author of ten books of poetry, including *Blue Laws: Selected & Uncollected Poems 1995-2015* and *Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels* (2011).

Part of his reading included an excerpt from his new book of essays, titled *Bunk: The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts, and Fake News* (Graywolf, 2017).

Hello There, Pals of the Program

Thank you for taking a look at this issue of *Chapter and Verse*. So much stays the same. The Creative Writing Program continues to serve all comers. This year we taught 606 creative writers, many at the beginning of their college careers, some at the very end of it. They took classes in fiction, poetry, travel, song, the essay, grammar, and editing/publishing. All of this was made possible by the Department of English and Comparative Literature, a superb and supportive administration, and perhaps most of all by Anita Braxton. If you call or write in to us, Anita is the person you will usually make first contact with. There are a dozen of us teaching, and hundreds of young writers learning, but we would not be in the same rooms were it not for Anita.

So much is the same. But changes are afoot: beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, students who wish to will be able to either minor or take a major concentration in Creative Writing. Within that major, they can follow a track in fiction, poetry, non-fiction or musical theater, or a combination of all four. Details on how this can be accomplished will be available from Anita Braxton in Greenlaw 207A, and on the Creative Writing website.

Back to that number: over 600 students availed themselves of what we have to offer in the Program. Still, the value of creative writing — teaching it and studying it — is a subject of honest debate. Is it important? Can it be taught? Will it help me get a job after I graduate? I can end the debate now

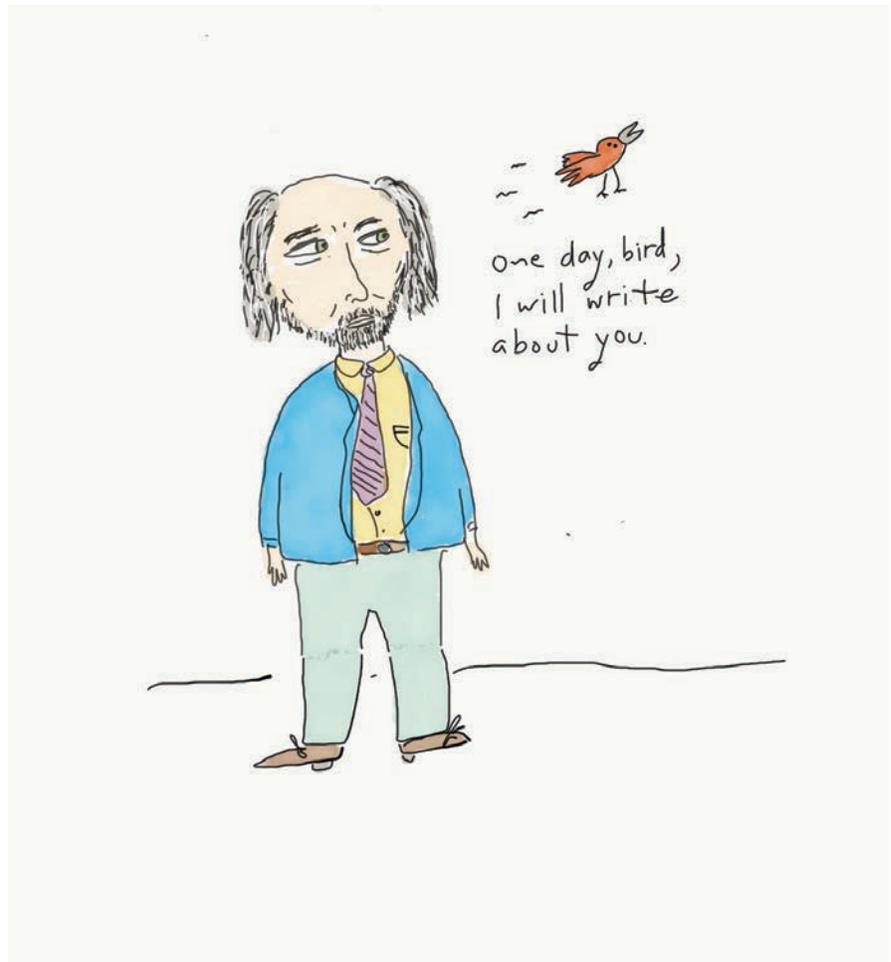
with the answer to all of these questions: yes, yes, and yes.

But there is another question: What does creative writing have to do with the Real World? This question in some ways is more difficult to answer, because I've never been completely sure what people mean by "the real world." I've always believed that there are many worlds out there, as many as there are people; and that we create the world we live in through our own experience of it. I keep hoping someone will tell me — or even show

me — what the actual one and only real world is, but until they do I am going to have to pass on answering this one.

One of the many real worlds out there is on the southern border of the United States. This is a world that has been much in the news this year, both inside and outside of the Creative Writing Program.

Most writers, whether they do so expressly or not, are writing about borders and borderlines, or writing



because of them. It's one of the only ways we can understand who we are — by reflexively comparing and contrasting ourselves with someone else, from somewhere else. The South — as in the Southern United States — has produced some of this country's greatest literature by engaging with differences, real or imagined, between this part of the country and the rest of it. Moving even farther south, we see a similar impulse with writers from Mexico, Central and South America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Julia Alvarez, who was the Hanes Distinguished Writer-in-Residence for 2018, each year holds a gathering at the border of Haiti and the DR called "The Border of Lights," promoting peace between two countries who have historically been in conflict. Much of her work deals with borders within the Americas and self-imposed borders within us all. Of course, race is its own border, which Kevin Young, who gave this year's Wolfe Lecture, writes about so powerfully in his poetry. It's the desire many of us have to erase or eradicate borders that leads to confrontation and conflict, just as the desire to create them does.

The professors in the Creative Writing Program all tend to write about borders, real, metaphorical and imagined, because that's where the story is, or where the poem is waiting to be found. Some of us write about it directly, as Stephanie Elizondo Griest does in her phenomenal new book, from UNC Press, *All the Agents and Saints: Dispatches from the U.S. Borderlands*. I can't imagine a book

with better timing, one that seems to have been written to clarify the historical moment we find ourselves in, when the truth is that it has been over seven years in the making, proving the Poundian maxim, "Literature is news that stays news." Bland Simpson writes about the borders between man and nature in all his work, and Gabrielle Calvocoressi addresses borders in self and sexuality in poem after poem.

This place, the border, is where we teach our students to look as they seek to write their own stories, poems, and personal narratives. Writers don't create borders, or destroy them, but they do shine a light on them so the rest of us can see them for what they are. It's a very real job in a very real world.

Daniel Wallace,
Director

CREATIVE WRITING AWARDS FOR 2018

*Department of English
and Comparative Literature*

BLANCHE ARMFIELD PRIZE IN POETRY

Aisling Henihan

SUZANNE BOLCH LITERARY AWARD

Emily Grace Lowe
Cole del Charco

ROBERT B. HOUSE MEMORIAL PRIZE IN POETRY

Evana Kaelyn Bodiker

ROBERT RUARK SOCIETY PRIZE IN NON-FICTION

Diana Mellow

LOUIS D. RUBIN, JR., PRIZE IN CREATIVE WRITING

Jacqueline Kenny

BLAND SIMPSON PRIZE IN CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Ramishah Maruf — 1st Place
Ellie Teller — 2nd Place

MAX STEELE PRIZE IN FICTION

Larissa Lynn Wood
Diana Mellow

GEORGE B. WYNNE AWARD IN FICTION

Hayley Sigmon

ANN WILLIAMS BURRUS PRIZE

Shannon Leigh Grand

MINI-MAX SHORT-SHORT FICTION PRIZE

Curtis Coltharp — 1st place
Sydney Ponthier — 2nd Place
Kacey Thigpen — 3rd Place

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Maya Chari, Jacqueline Kenny
and Jack Green

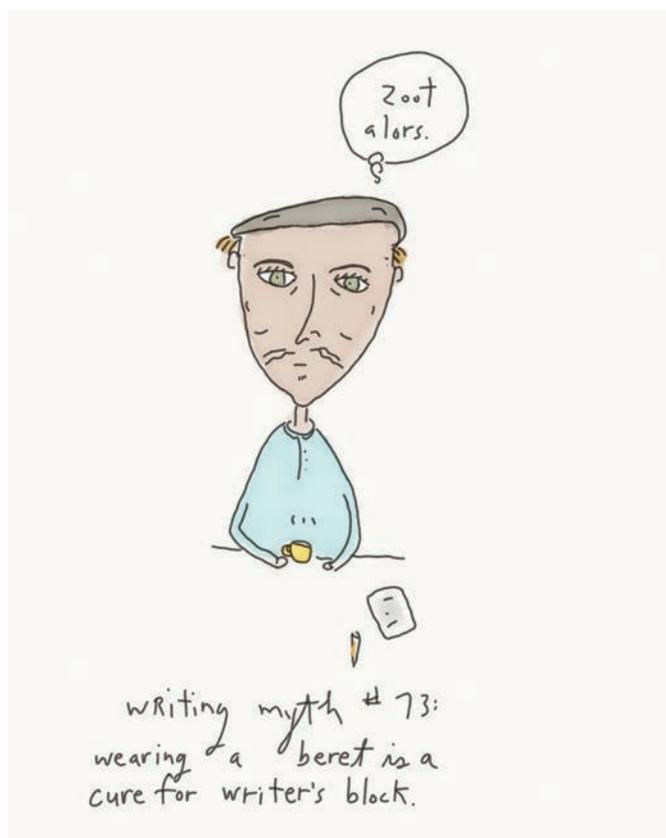
Our friends at UNC are helpful in too many ways to name, but we are grateful to them all. First and foremost, **Department of English and Comparative Literature Chair Mary Floyd-Wilson**. She has just completed her first year as chair, but you wouldn't know it: it's as if she's been doing it all her life. Thanks too to our allies and counselors in **South Building**, particularly **Chancellor Carol Folt**, **College of Arts & Sciences Dean Kevin Guskiewicz**, **Senior Associate Dean Terry Rhodes**, and **Director of Communications Geneva Collins**.

As always, we recognize the other private funds supporting Creative Writing activities, including the **Rankin Faculty Support Fund**, established by **Alex Rankin** (class of 1977); the **Burrus Fund**, established by **Ann Williams Burrus** (class of 1952); and our **Gift Fund**, which is supported and supplemented by so many of our friends and associates. **The Walker Percy** (class of 1937) **Fund**, an endowment to help underwrite our lecturers, was set in motion several years ago by **Frank Borden Hanes, Sr.** (class of 1942). And the **Robert Ruark Award**, for student non-fiction writing about North Carolina's natural world, receives support from the **Ruark Society of Chapel Hill**, led by retired attorney and author **James T. Cheatham III** (class of 1957, 1961 LLBJD). We deeply appreciate the support of these friends of Creative Writing.

Nancy White and **Robin Hanes** have been our staunch allies for

many years; they continue to support the **Hanes Distinguished Visiting Writer** series, and for that we will be forever grateful. We'd also like to thank **John Skipper** for his avid and unwavering support of the Thomas Wolfe Lecture. Thank you all.

We are also fortunate to enjoy two **Armfield Poetry Readings** every year, sponsored by the Armfield Fund for Poetry, a bequest to us from the late poet **Blanche Britt Armfield** (MA 1928). Our distinguished poets and readers for 2017-2018 were **Jennifer Chang**, whose most recent book is *Some Say the Lark*, and **Gabriel Fried**, author most recently of *The Children Are Reading*.



Support the Creative Writing Program at Carolina

Please consider making a gift to the Creative Writing Program to support our superlative students and first-rate faculty. You can make a contribution online via our secure website at giving.unc.edu/gift and search for "Creative Writing Program" or "101165," or by mailing a check to the UNC Arts and Sciences Foundation, 134 East Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 (please note in the memo section of your check that your gift is intended for the Creative Writing Program). For more information about giving opportunities within the program, please contact Angela O'Neill, Assistant Director of Development, at 919-843-2745 or angela.oneill@unc.edu.



Linnie Green ('12)

Foraging

I HAVE NEVER TAUGHT WRITING, BUT I BEGAN LEARNING IT BEFORE I KNEW MUCH OF ANYTHING ELSE.

How strange that you can author a political poem about crayons before you know how to cook a box of spaghetti; how bizarre that you can write an honors thesis in fiction before you've ever really been in love, been fired from a job, or lived outside a 9 mile radius, sheltered as you were beneath the pine trees and the gentle, college town demeanors. No wonder my characters spent their time drinking, kissing, and feeling restless—that's all I knew.

I was hankering to leave before I even realized I'd never gotten my diploma in the mail (did I really graduate, then?), and finally, a couple of years later, I set off for San Francisco alone, jobless and two weeks married. What does it mean to be a young writer? My twenty-three year-old self wouldn't believe what my twenty-five-year-old self told her; it would sound too unglamorous, too

trite. If the yardstick is paying work, I'm eight years into this fool's errand, and the easiest way to summarize my shaky footing is to quote former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld: "...as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns — the ones we don't know we don't know." One *New York Times* byline and a smattering of book reviews under my belt and I'm still quoting a failed war profiteer. The first lesson is humility.

I think often of the difficulty of teaching teens and twenty-somethings, the ones who don't appreciate their mild hangovers and resilient skin. There are the exceptions, whose maturity grants them entrance into the world of authentic adulthood, but 2012's crop of writers were mostly like me: making out in station wagons, and

missing early classes, trying desperately to render characters that were worldlier or harder than ourselves. I miss that softness, especially in New York, where, since July, I've dabbled in readings and classes and found a different world, one that asks more of a nervous young artist than Chapel Hill did of me.

Across a town and two cities, across six years, the reality of writing has emerged as an unsexy comfort, like a ragged nightgown worn soft in the wash: you simply write. You write terribly, you write long, maybe you try to write like Faulkner. You kill sixty darlings before you polish one real gem. You read prose that startles you and go back to the drawing board. You heave a mass of stone onto the table and winnow it until it resembles something not itself, maybe a known thing, maybe a new one.

A visiting writer once urged us all to "travel," and it rankled. Tell that to our student loans. What I'd urge, instead, is to go ravenous into the world and forage whatever you can, wherever that might be. When you return, sated or hungry, the work will be waiting for you.

Linnie Greene is a writer in Brooklyn with a publishing day-job. She's written for *The New York Times*, the *LA Review of Books*, *Pacific Standard*, *The Nervous Breakdown*, and *Hobart* (where her essay was nominated for *Best American Essays 2015*), and she's at work on a novel. She's a Capricorn sun, Gemini rising, and graduated with honors in Creative Writing in 2012.

Faculty News

CABRIELLE CALVOCORESSI won the Publishing Triangle’s Audre Lorde Award for best Book of Poetry by a Lesbian in 2017, for her new collection *Rocket Fantastic*. She has poems forthcoming in *The New Yorker* and *Tin House*.

MICHAEL CHITWOOD’s *Search and Rescue* came out in March and he received the L.E. Phillabaum Poetry Award from LSU Press.

MARIANNE GINGHER has two personal essays forthcoming in anthologies (one about Ringo Starr). She performed puppetry at the Greensboro Bound Literary Festival and was a featured speaker at UNC-G’s Friends of Jackson Library 60th Anniversary celebration.

STEPHANIE ELIZONDO GRIEST has been named a finalist for an International Latino Book Award for her 2017 book, *All the Agents and Saints: Dispatches from the U.S. Borderlands*. She spent much of the spring on book tour and traveled to Iceland in June for a story about Sagas.

RANDALL KENAN is to be inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame in October 2018.

APRIL AYERS LAWSON’s *Virgin and Other Stories* came out in Germany and Spain, and her essay “Abuse, Silence and the Light That Virginia Woolf Switched on” came out in *Granta* and *Der Spiegel*. Another essay, “After” is forthcoming from “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” (the magazine of the paper of record of Switzerland).

MICHAEL MCFEE published his sixteenth book, *Appointed Rounds: Essays* (Mercer University Press), in February 2018.

BLAND SIMPSON helped fashion Creative Writing’s new minor concentration in Music/Musical Theatre Writing. With The Red Clay Ramblers, Simpson headlined the Ol’ Porch Festival in Oriental, NC (October 2017), and with The Coastal Cohorts, he performed *King Mackerel & The Blues Are Running* at New York City’s Laurie Beechman Theatre. The Ramblers released Jack Herrick’s and his song “Charlottesville/Walk Together” in November 2017 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z28hG_fZc1M], and in Dec. 2017, he published “A Feast of Brick: Elizabeth City” in *Our State* magazine. On October 27th, 2017, Simpson received the North Carolina Humanities Council’s John Tyler Caldwell Award for the Humanities.

ROSS WHITE has recent poems appearing or forthcoming in *Tin House*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Thrush Poetry Journal*, *Texas Review*, and elsewhere. He recently joined the board of *Beloit Poetry Journal* and was awarded a 2017-2018 Ella Fountain Pratt Emerging Artists Grant from the Durham Arts Council.

DANIEL WALLACE had stories in *Tin House* and *Longshot Island*, essays in *The Bitter Southerner* and *Poets and Writers*, and he blurbed three novels. He continues to direct the Creative Writing Program at Carolina.



Gabrielle Calvocoressi



Michael Chitwood



Marianne Gingher



Stephanie Griest



April Ayers Lawson



Randall Kenan



Michael McFee



Bland Simpson



Daniel Wallace



Ross White

MIRIAM BERKLEY

IMAN WOODS

Alumni News



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

At Carolina, we realize writing is a pursuit that takes place over the course of a lifetime. We want to hear about it. If you have some news you'd like to share with your Carolina friends, family, and former teachers, please send it our way, at C&V@unc.edu. Whether you're making books, making babies, or simply making a life, we'd love to hear from you.

CLASS OF 1977

Warren Rochelle's latest publications are "Luck." *Fae Wings and Hidden Things*. Ed. A. Thomas. Las Vegas, NV: Wolf Pack Publishing, 2017: 1-18 and "Feathers." Read by Jim Szabo. Audio blogpost. *Second Hand Stories*. *Second Hand Stories* podcast, 23 March 2017. Web. And a review, "Light and Dark, Dark, and Light: A Review of *A Shadow All of Light*, by Fred Chappell. *NCLR Online* 26 (2017): 62-63. Invited review. He also served on the following panels: Invited Literary Guest and Panelist, Outlantacon/Gaylaxicon, Atlanta, Ga, May 2018, Invited Literary Guest and Panelist, Marscon, Williamsburg, VA, January 2018 and *The Werewolf and His Boy*, A Creative Writing Reading, Popular Culture Association, San Diego, April 2017.

CLASS OF 1988

Scott Martin is living in Aspen, Colorado and is direct response copywriter working for a variety of clients in health, financial, golf, and information marketing. He is working on a 17th book; this one is about direct response copywriting. He is also a ski instructor with the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass and has just started working on his second novel.

CLASS OF 1994

Andy Young teaches at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. She is thrilled that her student, Gracie Morse, was chosen as a Thomas Wolfe scholar this year. Her work has appeared recently, or will appear soon, in *Waxwing*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and *Ecotone*. Her fourth chapbook, *John Swenson Dynamicron*, is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press, and her full length poetry collection, *All Night It Is Morning*, was published in 2014 by Diálogos Press.

Her prose and poetry have recently been named finalists in contests by *Black Warrior Review*, the Women's National Book Association, the Auburn Witness Poetry Award, and *Consequence Magazine's* Women Writing War.

CLASS OF 1995

Renee Wolcott is happy to report that a monograph that she edited has been published: "Art, Science, Invention: Conservation and the Peale-Sellers Family Collection." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 108, part 1, 2018. The book serves as an exhibition catalog for two American Philosophical Society exhibitions focusing on Charles Willson Peale and his extended family. She contributed an introduction to the history of art conservation in the United States as well as case studies of conservation treatments on books and documents included in the exhibitions.

CLASS OF 1996

Dan Kois visited Chapel Hill's Flyleaf Books this spring for a reading from the book he co-wrote, *The World Only Spins Forward: The Ascent of "Angels in America"*. He was joined by Creative Writing's own Randall Kenan, as well as other writers and performers from the Triangle. Dan taught creative writing at N.C. State during the spring semester and is finishing his book *How to Be a Family*, to be published in 2019.

Matthew Vollmer has stories forthcoming this year in *Epoch* and *The Normal School*. His fourth book, *Permanent Exhibit*, a collection of essays, will be published in September by BOA Editions, Ltd. He is currently an Associate Professor of English at Virginia Tech.

CLASS OF 1998

Laura Emerson finished her book about the life stories of the 48 delegates to California's first Constitutional Convention held in 1849. It is presently under consideration with Heyday Publishers.

Phillip Locey is pleased to share that after 16 years of working in public libraries (currently as Adult Services Librarian at Durham County Library), he is finally preparing to launch his fantasy novel series *The Chain of Living Fire* in 2019. Book 1, *Shiver the Moon*, is set for release on January 1st, with Book 2, *The Name of the Beast*, to follow on March 1st. Book 3, *A World in Shadow*, should be released by the end of 2019. The books are heroic fantasy, with some epic cross-over, and a long time coming. The series is being published by Elisahd Books, and anyone interested can find out more at <https://elisahdbooks.com>. He says: "I absolutely cherish my years in the Creative Writing Program at Carolina, and am thrilled to have made my way back to the Triangle."

Sheryl Mebane has launched a voice acting business. She is writing and releasing her own work in a new fiction genre, erotic romance. One piece is already out and more are on the way! amazon.com/default/e/B07BYV116Z

Her poetry has won a *Gemini Magazine* award and been published in the *Atlanta Review* (as an International Publication Prize Winner). Her debut novel, *Lady Bird*, won the first Pearl Street Publishing fellowship. She and her husband live in the DC area.

CLASS OF 2003

Atinuke Driver's review of *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity In A World Made For Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown entitled #HopingWhileBlack was published in the *Englewood Review of Books*, Volume 08, Number 03. Atinuke is also currently a student in the Certificate in Documentary Arts program at Duke University, working on a documentary project about North Carolina State Highway 98.

CLASS OF 2005

Lucy Bryan is an assistant professor at James Madison University, where she teaches science and research writing and tutors in the Writing Center. She continues to write and publish creative nonfiction. Her essay "The Weight and Wonder of Everything We Do Not Know" appeared in *The Other*

Journal in March 2018 (<https://theotherjournal.com/2018/03/15/weight-wonder-everything-we-do-not-know/>), and her essay “Dirty Hands” was anthologized in *In Season: Stories of Discovery, Loss, Home, and Places In Between* (University Press of Florida, 2018). She also wrote the cover story for *Earth Island Journal*’s Summer 2018 issue about an environmental service trip she took to Joshua Tree National Park with a group of students (http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/eij/article/citizens_afield/). She and her husband, Nate Malenke, are expecting their first child in July.

Lauren Moseley is the marketing manager at Algonquin Books in Chapel Hill. Her debut poetry collection, *Big Windows*, was published by Carnegie Mellon University Press earlier this year. Visit her website for upcoming events and other news: laurenjmoseley.com.

Dianna (Calareso) Sawyer began nursing school this summer. She works as a freelance writer and editor, and continues writing creative nonfiction on her blog, diannacalareso.com.

She lives in the Boston area with her husband and soon-to-be-3-year-old daughter.

Joanna Volavka’s debut novel was published this past October. It’s a YA sci-fi novel called *Threadwalkers*, published by 50/50 Press. Here are links for more info:

www.joannavolavka.com/Threadwalkers

<http://www.5050press.com>

Goodreads for *Threadwalkers*:
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/36395191-threadwalkers>

CLASS OF 2006

Clay Thomas and his filmmaking partner have spent the last couple of years working on a short documentary that was released online. The film is a meditative look at a young man’s life working through everyday challenges in a small Haitian city. Here’s the logline:

A reflective young Haitian grapples with daily life in a country still shaken by its past. Should he stay in the Haiti he loves, or follow his friends abroad in search of a better life?

His film screened at festivals in New Orleans, Nashville, and Atlanta, and took home the Best Doc award at the Atlanta Independent Film Festival.

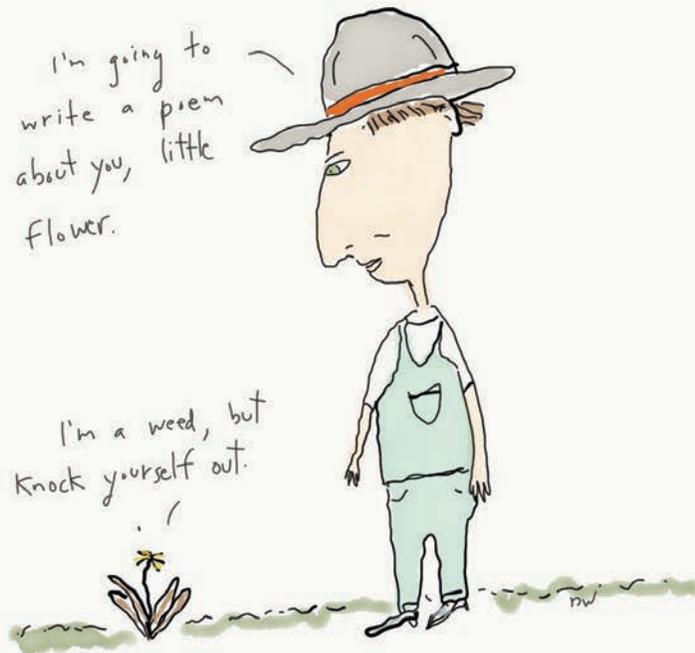
The full 34-minute film is available to watch for free at <https://www.coolbabyland.alevini>.

CLASS OF 2007

Lily Kuo is working as a journalist. She is currently the Beijing bureau chief for *The Guardian* and will be based in Beijing as of July. Before that she was with *Quartz*, reporting from Kenya and before that in Hong Kong and NYC.

CLASS OF 2008

Sean Honea is a graduate of Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine College (AIMC) in Berkeley, California. He received his Masters of Science in Oriental Medicine (MSOM) in 2015. Sean is Board Certified in Acupuncture by the NCCAOM and licensed by Virginia Board of Medicine. He and his wife, Erica Honea, opened Southside



Community Acupuncture, LLC in 2016 in Richmond, Virginia. Sean is also the office manager of SCA.

Sean is originally from Atlanta, Georgia, and served in the U.S. Army for 8 years. He has a Bachelors degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Sean's professional areas of interest include stress management and emotional well-being, non-insertion needling, orthopedics and sports medicine, and community outreach.

Kirk Francis hasn't become a journalist, or a novelist, but has ended up getting in the press fairly often for his cookie business, so that's something! Kirk wants to pass along some of the more recent news about Captain Cookie & the Milk Man:

• <https://wapo.st/foodtrucks>

• <https://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/news/article/13043840/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-milk-and-cookies>

• https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/style/2014/10/03/the-lunch-bunch/?utm_term=.9b35ff24353a

CLASS OF 2012

Rose Lambert-Sluder received her MFA in Fiction from the University of Oregon in 2016. A story is forthcoming in *The Kenyon Review Online* and another appeared in last fall's *Greensboro Review*. She was recently a fellow at Hawthornden Castle in Scotland.

Demi Marshall was recently promoted to Exhibits Manager at the University of Texas Press in Austin, TX. She lives in Austin with her exceptional one-eyed dog, Beatrice.

