



MFA in Creative and Professional Writing Alumni Achievements, Awards, and Employment

Lisa Acerbo published her “Hell in a Handbag” trilogy with DLG in 2021. She also contributed a flash fiction story, “Out of the Box,” for *Stand for Ukraine*, a charity anthology benefiting Save the Children’s efforts to provide Ukrainian children with food, warmth, shelter, and psychological support. The anthology has raised more than \$10,000.

Gina Atanasoff – Associate Development Manager, Children’s Learning Centers of Fairfield County, 2021-present.

Carolyn Baccaro – Freelance Senior Copywriter, 2017-present. Copywriter and Content Marketing Specialist, Beacon Digital Marketing, 2017-2022.

Kyra Berkheiser - Communications Specialist, Institute for American Indian Studies, 2016-2018. Certification Coordinator, WBEC Metro NY, 2019-present.

John Bonanni published his memoir, *Just Off Stage Right* (Adelaide Books, 2021).

Jason Bussman hired as marketing and event planning intern for the Highlights Foundation in 2022. Currently on the editorial board of Woodhall Press in Fairfield, CT.

Matt Caputo – freelance writer for *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *The Village Voice*, *Men’s Journal*, and *Connecticut Magazine*. 2016-present.

Ben Chase – poet and teacher. *Here to See It* (Kelsay Books, 2022) and winner of the Trumbull Arts Festival in Poetry, 2017. He currently chairs the English department at Christian Heritage School.

Molly Clark – short story “After Her Daughter’s Suicide” published in *Microfiction Monday Magazine*, 2021. Writing Instructor, WCSU, 2021-present.

Jane K. Cleland - author of the Josie Prescott Antiques Mysteries and Agatha-award winning books on the craft of writing. Contributing Editor, *Writer’s Digest Magazine*. Tenured professor and director of professional writing program at Lehman College, City University of New York.

Anna Denisch – Freelance Writer, Denisch Enterprises, LLC. Ghostwriter on various topics, including photography, astronomy, cooking, and children’s books. 2014-present.

Kristine Donahue hired as full-time technical writer for Medtronic, Inc., the world's largest medical device manufacturer. 2021-present.

Frances Dorris – Writing Instructor, WCSU. 2019-present.

Hannah Echardt – English Teacher, Cumberland School District, 2022-present.

Thomas Evans hired as Public Relations Writer and Editor for the Edward R. Murrow College of Communications at Washington State University, in Pullman Washington. 2021.

Ron Farina - author of "Sacrifice," a nonfiction trilogy focused on the post-war lives of American veterans, published by LaGrange Books. *Who Will Have My Back* (2020), *Out of the Shadows* (2022), and the third book forthcoming in 2024. Ron is also the author of the novel, *At the Altar of the Past* (RoseDog Books, 2022).

Alexis Fedorjaczenko – poet, essayist, and medical writer. Town Clerk of Ashfield, MA (2020-present).

Mark Ferry – Agent, Murmur Marketing Group, 2017-present.

Marc E. Fitch published his novel, *Boy in the Box* (Flame Tree Press, 2020).

Walter Frank hired as an associate copywriter at IMS Investor Relations, 2019.

Gabbie Frulla published a flash fiction piece in *Twisted Anatomy*, 2021.

Lauren Gallo – Marketing Manager, Social Media, Sephora, 2018-present.

David Hayes – Senior Compliance Specialist, The Hartford, 2007-present.

Mattea Heller's short story "The Latching" was developed into an episode of the horror podcast *Thirteen* (Apple and Spotify, 2021).

William Henry – Writing Instructor, Quinnipiac, 2021-present.

Alyssa Johnson – Vice President, Strategy and Communications (Montanya Distillers, 2018-2021). Communications Manager (Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, 2022-present).

Melissa Johnson - Senior Writer, Connecticut College (2022-present).

Gwen Jones – Professor of English, Mercer County Community College, 2010-present. Author of three novels: *Wanted: Wife* (2013); *Kiss Me, Captain* (2014); and *The Last Seduction* (2014), all from Harper Collins.

Casey Jordan – criminologist, attorney, law professor, and award-winning journalist. Dr. Jordan has contributed to more than 1,000 television stories on crime and legal issues, serving as the in-house CNN Criminologist during the 2002 D.C. Sniper Event. Appearances include *NBC's The Today Show*, *CBS' The Early Show*, *ABC Good Morning America*, *48 Hours Mystery*, *ABC's 20/20*, *CNN American Morning*, *Larry King Live*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Anderson Cooper 360*, *Nancy Grace*, *Issues with Jane Velez Mitchell*, *The Joy Behar Show*, *Geraldo*, *Montel*, *Maury*, and *A Current Affair*. In 2023, she published articles in *Slate* on Bryan Kohberger.

Kate Katcher - award-winning playwright with multiple productions. Her 10-minute play *Scarsdale* was chosen for the Best 10-Minute Play anthology (Smith & Kraus, 2021). Theatre Arts Instructor, WCSU, 2021-present.

Molly Kenner – Professor of English, Berkley College, 2014-present. Freelance Writing Coach, 2012-present.

Christina Kinsella – Senior Editor, Digiday, 2020-present.

Peter Klick – Medical Editor, DWA Healthcare Communications Group, 2021-present. Production Editor, Westchester Publishing Services, 2018-2020.

Vincent Kmetz – published poet and writing instructor at WCSU and Naugatuck Community College (2012-present).

Alissa Kocer – Communications Strategist, Duke University, 2016-present.

Kateri Kosek – poet and essayist with work in numerous journals and magazines, including *Creative Nonfiction* and *Terrain*. Her poetry collection, *American Eclipse*, was named the recipient of the 2023 Three Mile Harbor Press book contest. Chapbook forthcoming in 2024.

Brian Lance – Chief of Staff, Main Grains, Inc. 2022-present.

Michaela Lawlor founder and owner of multimedia services company, New Sun Rising, LLC. Michaela hired in 2022 as full-time Court Monitor with the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch.

Nick Mamatas – author of a number of novels; *Move Under Ground* (Night Shade 2004, Prime 2006) and *Under My Roof* (Soft Skull Press, 2007), *Sensation* (PM Press, 2011), *The Damned Highway* (Dark Horse, with Brian Keene, 2011), *Bullettime* (CZP, 2012) *Love Is the Law* (Dark Horse, 2013), and *The Last Weekend* (PS Publishing, 2014, Skyhorse 2016), *I Am Providence* (Skyhorse) 2016, four collections; *3000MPH In Every Direction At Once* (Prime 2003), *You Might Sleep...* (Prime 2009), *The Nickronomicon* (Innsmouth Free Press, 2014), and *The People's Republic of Everything* (Tachyon Publications, 2018; and the novella *Northern Gothic* (Soft Skull, 2001).

Susan Mangiero hired as financial writer for ALM Media, a Canadian financial website, 2022.

Beth Man – full-time teacher at Forman School. Writer and Mindfulness Mediation Teacher, Evergreen Yoga.

Nick Manzolillo's dark crime novel, *Moon, Regardless* (World Castle Publishing, 2021).

Shannon Marzella - debut novel, *Girl in Shadows* (Nymeria Press, 2021).

Jessica McCadden hired as Director of Communications & Content Strategy at the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2022, accepted role as Senior Digital Writer, Global Marketing Strategy at Adobe, Inc.

Briana McGuckin – debut novel *On Good Authority* (Thomas and Mercer, 2022). Second novel forthcoming, Spring 2025.

Kate Meadows – Translation Project Manager, International Language Center & Brunetti Language, (2015-2018). Writer, Editor, and Workshop Instructor, Kate Meadows Writing and Editing, (2013-present).

Cara Miele published a chapter in *Women and Video Game Modding: Essays on Gender and the Digital Community* (McFarland, 2020). Practitioner in Residence, University of New Haven, 2016-2021. Web Production/Digital Magazine Producer, The Poetry Foundation, 2021-present. Web Writer, Red Hat. 2022-present.

E.K. Mortenson –author of a chapbook, *Dreamer or the Dream* (Last Automat Press, 2010), and a full-length collection, *What Wakes Us* (Cervena Barva Press, 2014). His first book, *The Fifteenth Station*, was Judge's Choice award in the Accents 2012 Poetry Chapbook Contest.

Camellia Mukherjee – Editorial and Production Manager, College of American Pathologists, 2022-present.

Sharmila Munver promoted to Research Project Manager at McInnis Inc, 2019.

Ellen O'Donnell's essay, "An Unreliable Narrator," published in *Months to Years, Covid Flash*, Spring 2021. Writing Instructor, WCSU, 2021-present.

Justin O'Donnell published a novel in 2022: *Failed States* (Atmosphere Press). Communications Manager, BlueCrest, 2019-present.

Erik Ofgang – Senior Writer, *Future* (2021-present). Senior Writer, *Connecticut Magazine* (2014-present). Author of three books, *Buzzed: Beers, Booze, and Coffee Brews* (Islandport Press, 2016), *Gillette Castle: A History* (History Press Library Editions, 2017), and *The Good Vices: From Beer to Sex, the Surprising Truth About What's Actually Good for You* (co-authored with his father, Dr. Harry Ofgang, Penguin Random House, 2019).

Diana Payne promoted to associate professor in residence at the University of Connecticut.

Linda Peckel – Freelance Medical & Health Writer, 1999-present.

Lisa N. Peterson – award-winning journalist hired in 2021 as Senior Content Strategist at Embark Veterinary. Former Public Relations Consultant for Westminster Kennel Dog Club. Founder/Owner, Barn Girl Media.

Ian Peterkin – Assistant Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology, Dubai (2020-2021). Writer, *A Monastic Life* (2021-2023). Chief Executive Officer, 261 Ely Productions, 2023-present).

Michael Rayzer – Writer, Producer, and Editor, Luke Tech, 2017-present.

John Roche – Associate Professor, WCSU. Author of *Bronx Bound* (Black Opal Press, 2015).

Morgan Rondinelli awarded an honorable mention in the Midwest Writing Center 24-Hour Iron Pen Contest in the nonfiction category, 2021. Currently a full-time Library Technical Assistant, Normal Public Library 2020-present.

Ron Samul – *The Staff: A Novel* (Amazon, 2019). Director of Communications, Mitchell College (2012-present). Assistant Director, Thames at Mitchell College (2019-present).

Layla Schlack - Associate Managing Editor, *Wine Enthusiast* (2016-2022). Food Reporter, Hearst Connecticut Media Group (2023-present). Cookbook forthcoming from Chronicle Books, 2024.

Lisa Siedlarz – poetry collection, *What We Sign Up For* (Pecan Grove Press, 2011) and the chapbook, *I Dream My Brother Plays Baseball* (Clemson University, 2009). Winner of the 2006 John Holmes Poetry Prize, (New England Poetry Club) and the 2007 Leo Connellan Poetry Prize.

Becca Simas – In 2016, she earned a fellowship from the Japan Exchange and Teaching program (JET) through the Japanese Embassy to teach high school English in Amami Oshima. Currently the Marketing & Outreach Specialist at the YMCA, Boston.

Eric Steiner – Marketing Manager, Jellop & Freelance Copywriter, 2020-present.

Matt Stollman – Filmmaker and producer. Currently a Supervising Producer at Film45.

Brian Thiem – author of the Matt Sinclair Detective Trilogy: *Red Line* (2015), *Thrill Kill* (2016), and *Shallow Grave* (2017), all from Crooked Lane Books.

Daniel Trock – Writer/Editor/Copywriter, 3Blue Media. 2018-present.

Beth Turley – author of four novels, all from Simon & Schuster.

If This Were a Story (2018)

The Last Tree Town (2020)

The Flyers (2021)
This Close to Home (2023)

Karen Veazey – Contributing Writer, *Healthline Media*, *Medical News Today*, *The Mighty*, and Health Union. 2021-present.

Amanda Wontor – Manager, Policy and Procedure, Delta Airlines, 2018-present.

Colleen Wright – ESL Teacher (VIPKid, 2019-2021), Account Manager (ProfVal, LLC, 2020-present). Freelance Journalist (2008-present) - *Atlanta Parent*, *Baltimore's Child*, *Bay State Parent*, *Birmingham Parent*, *Carolina Parent*, *Connecticut Parent*, *Hawaii Parent*, *Ithaca Child*, *Kansas City Parent*, *Neapolitan Family*, *Palm Beach Parenting*, *San Diego Parent*, *Suburban Parent*, *Wilmington Parent*.

Ryan Yursha – *Misplace Grievances: The Self-Defeating Politics of the Trumpian White Working Class* (Amazon, 2021).