

Contributor Notes

Amanda Braun has lived in the Great Plains all her life, and spent much of her childhood swimming in a state park and reading under willow trees. She graduated from Southwest Minnesota State University with a B.A. in literature and creative writing, and obtained her M.A. in English at South Dakota State University. She lives in rural Minnesota with her fiancé and a menagerie of goats, chickens, dogs, and cats.

Betty L. Beer has been a resident of Brookings, SD, for 24 years. She is a retired attorney who practiced in Peoria and Aledo, Illinois. Her second career is that of a portrait painter and she has recently completed a 5-year project of painting 100 oil portraits, which is now the subject of a book entitled *Faces of Brookings*. She is on the Board of Directors of the South Dakota State Poetry Society. She is a member of the Brookings Sustainability Council and she also sits on the board of the Visual Arts Center of the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls. She has been a mentor in Brookings Drug Court since its inception. Although she has taken several poetry classes, she has only recently begun to write poetry and meets every other week with other poets for support and critique.

Roger Bommersbach's family lived in North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin before they landed in Flandreau, South Dakota when he was 10. A disinterested student at best, Roger's high school English teacher was Audrae Visser who managed to instill in Roger a lifelong love of poetry. So, he has enjoyed reading many issues of *Oakwood*. Roger and his wife have lived on Lake Oakwood for 48 years and as a retired chiropractor, he has spent many hours painting scenes from around the lakes. His son Andy was an *Oakwood* contributor in 1996.

Lin Marshall Brummels, a native Nebraskan and life-long resident, grew up at the edge of the Nebraska Sandhills. She feels a connection to the land her grandparents homesteaded, the sandy loam her parents farmed, and her ranch in the middle of yellow-clay corn country. Brummels earned a Psychology B.A. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling from Syracuse University, and is a licensed mental health counselor in private practice. Her poetry has appeared in journals, magazines, and anthologies. Her poetry chapbooks are *Cottonwood Strong* and *Hard*

Times, winner of a 2016 Nebraska Book Award.

Emily Cass, is originally from Huron, SD. She has lived in South Dakota all of her life and wouldn't want to reside anywhere else. Currently, Emily is a senior at South Dakota State University, majoring in Graphic Design and minoring in Studio Arts. Her love for art is what inspires her every day to create works that are meaningful and personal.

Ken Curtis moved to the Great Plains area in 2019 after accepting a teaching position at Peru State College in Nebraska. Prior to moving to Nebraska, he spent seven years in Dubai, UAE, and five years living throughout Asia, calling Taiwan, Malaysia, and India home. During the twelve years that he was abroad, he visited nearly sixty countries and has finished one book about his experiences and has started a second.

Christian Dames is currently a freshman studying at Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska. While originally born in Illinois, Christian has strong ties to the Great Plains region through his father. His father is a Nebraska native and, while Christian was in high school, they moved back to his hometown where Christian's family has remained. As a creative writer, Christian's goal is to write about various human themes such as love, loss, and perseverance that can resonate with a variety of individuals. There is nothing more satisfying than telling stories that can touch, heal, and inspire.

In regards to **Adrian Day**, there are no shortage of hilariously dark memories from South Dakota. He excels at telling stories that delight in the more nightmare-like parts of life, and having lived in the state for over twenty-one years, there is a lot to tell. From Sioux Falls to Brookings to study art, he found himself double-majoring in Studio Art and Graphic Design, extending his creative skills. Thanks to this experience, he has been able to create and run his own business, Adrian's Anomalies, where he continues tantalizing his fanbase and clients with illustrations.

Alyssa DeBough is a self-taught artist, who works primarily in oil paints, based in Brookings, SD. She was born in Texas, but grew up in Brookings. Alyssa began to paint full-time in 2019 after receiving a number of painting requests. Creating personalized paintings for clients allows her to build deeper connections within the community. DeBough recently had two paintings displayed in the Brookings Art Council's 44th Annual

Fine Arts Exhibit. She has contributed her art to a local fundraiser event for her friend's son's cleft palate surgery. Currently, she is working on commission pieces for family and friends.

Lawrence Diggs views the world from the unique position of having lived and worked with people around the globe. He has created the first emergency medical system in Burkina Faso for which he was awarded a medal of honor. He founded the International Vinegar Museum in Roslyn South Dakota. He is a South Dakota Humanities Scholar and South Dakota Artist in Residence focused on helping people wrestle with complex issues. He volunteers in the South Dakota State Prison system where he facilitates a Knowledge Group, a Lifers Group, a Poetry Group, an Art Group and the Compassionate Outreach Group.

Sarah Elizabeth is a poet, artist, explorer, a child of the Light, and daughter of the King. Sarah was born and raised in Eastern South Dakota and attended SDSU from 2009-2013. In 2015 she moved out to the Black Hills of South Dakota, where she still resides.

Will Engelmann was born in Huron, SD and now lives Rapid City, SD. He is an avid admirer of the Black Hills, with its beautiful landscapes and interesting creatures. The artist is studying to become a biology teacher to spread his appreciation for the natural world. *E.O. Wilson* is a monochrome depiction of Will's favorite biologist, who bears the same name.

Jerrold Fedorchik was born in Western Nebraska; he has spent his entire life within the Great Plains. After graduating high school, he remained in the region by attending South Dakota State University to pursue a degree in biochemistry. He was fortunate enough to serve as a wildland firefighter with the Forest Service stationed out of Sundance, WY for a fire season, where he found himself fighting fires in the west and seeing the country. He has also worked as an EMT and volunteer firefighter within his communities as he continues to pursue his education.

Eve Fisher has been writing since elementary school, and her mystery stories have appeared regularly in *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine* and other publications. Her stories have also been accepted to both science fiction and mystery anthologies, the latest being "Pentecost" in *Me Too Short Stories - an Anthology*, edited by Elizabeth Zelvin. She is part of a mystery writers'

blog, www.sleuthsayers.org, and her website is <https://www.evefishermysteries.com/>. A retired university history professor, she still writes historical articles, and she volunteers at the local penitentiary with the Lifer's Group. She lives in Sioux Falls, SD with her husband and 5,000 books.

Jacob Ford is a graduate of South Dakota State University's English program. He is currently a resident of Brookings and has lived in South Dakota for fourteen years. His film reviews have been published in *The Equalizer* in Vermillion, South Dakota for more than five years.

Lauren Franken grew up in Hartford, South Dakota and is currently a senior English major at SDSU. She hopes to pursue a master's degree in English with a specialization in rhetoric and social change. Though her studies may eventually take her out of South Dakota, she will always be proud to call the Mount Rushmore State her home.

Paul Gaillard came to Brookings from France on January 19th, 2016 and since then he keeps falling in love with it. Clouds, landscapes, smiles of strangers and even the snow, he loves it all. Here Paul has found beautiful and powerful lights that have revealed his heart to itself. Paul is sincerely honored to live in the ancestral territory of the Oceti Sakowin and his artwork is a tribute to its beauty.

Symmone Gauer is a sophomore at SDSU majoring in both Journalism and French. Growing up in South Dakota, Symmone found early on that writing was her passion. She loves all types of writing, from poetry to research papers, news stories to fiction. Her piece "Murphy's Law: Modeled After Me?" was written for a creative nonfiction class in which she spent the entire semester complaining about gluten. She is a lover of traveling, astronomy, music, and photography, and when she's not writing she can be found daydreaming about writing – because that's the same thing, right?

Corinna German writes creative nonfiction and poetry with the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness of Wyoming and Montana over her shoulder. Her work has appeared in anthologies and journals such as *Blood, Water, Wind, and Stone: An Anthology of Wyoming Writers* (Sastrugi Press), *Manifest West: Women of the West* (Western Press Books), and *High Plains Register*. Find her at corinnagerman.weebly.com.

Sue Grant's home is in Brookings. Her M.A. degree is from SDSU. The Brookings Public Library and Eastbank Gallery in Sioux Falls have held shows of Sue's work. Her photo of South Dakota won second place in the Washington Post Holiday Photo Contest and others placed in the photography shows at BAC. Sue's postcards are included at Iowa State University Print Show and the art museum of Copenhagen, Denmark. In 2014 her photograph appeared in the Biannual South Dakota Governor's Juried Art Show. Many are included in publications she produced for the College of Engineering at SDSU and for the South Dakota Resources Coalition.

John Gutierrez is a first generation Mexican-American and a native of Wyoming. He was born at home in Garland, Wyoming, a small town in the Northern Big Horn Basin. Working the irrigated lands in the beet and bean fields, he picked green beans, corn, and peas in the basin before graduating from the University of Wyoming. Taking a teaching job in a high school and a Jr. College. John writes fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry. He is a member of two Wyoming writing groups, Prairie Pens, and Bearlodge Writers. He loves cooking and playing guitar.

Linda M. Hasselstrom, a real South Dakota rancher with the scars to prove it, writes and conducts retreats in person and by email. Her seventeen published books include *Gathering from the Grassland: A Plains Journal* (High Plains Press), fifty new poems in *Dakota: Bones, Grass, Sky* (Spoon River Poetry Press) and *The Wheel of the Year: A Writer's Workbook*. Visit WindbreakHouse.com; [Facebook.com/WindbreakHouse](https://www.facebook.com/WindbreakHouse); [blog at WindbreakHouse.WordPress.com](http://blog.atWindbreakHouse.WordPress.com).

Bridget Henderson considers herself a Minnesota native, despite spending her adolescence in North Dakota. An SDSU graduate, she holds a degree in English Writing Specialization and learned French along the way. Currently working in the legal field, she resides in Minnesota with her two dogs, who would rather herd farm cats than cattle.

Sara Henning is the author of *View from True North* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2018), co-winner of the 2017 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry Open Competition Award. Winner of the 2019 High Plains Book Award, it has been short listed by Jacar Press for the 2018 Julie Suk Award. She was awarded the 2015 Crazyhorse Lynda Hull Memorial Poetry Prize, the 2019 Poetry Society of America's George Bogin Memorial

Award, and a Tennessee Williams Scholarship in poetry to the 2019 Sewanee Writers' Conference. Henning teaches writing at Stephen F. Austin State University, where she also serves as poetry editor for Stephen F. Austin State University Press.

Leah Hofer grew up as the daughter of first-generation farmers in eastern South Dakota, and attended SDSU from 2011-2014. Leah earned her degree in agriculture science believing she wanted to work in banking, but after marriage and the birth of her son, Leah's career choice shifted dramatically as she took a job teaching middle and high school English for Hitchcock-Tulare School. Four years later, she's realized that teaching was what she was meant to do all along, and it has afforded her the opportunity to effectively educate people about the topic of her Oakwood submission this year: autism.

Linda Hoffelt was born and educated in South Dakota and taught art in the public schools in South Dakota for 38 years. Since retiring, she has been involved in and doing art every day.

Rob Hunter married into South Dakota. His wife, Nancy Strain, grew up in Rapid City. She graduated from SDSU in 1987. Her father played basketball for SDSU, and with friends, began the Rodeo Club while he was an undergraduate. He graduated from SDSU in 1953. Rob's poetry has appeared in many journals over the years. His volume of poetry, *September Swim*, was published by the Spoon River Poetry Press. Nancy and Rob live in Manchester, Vermont.

Caitlin Irish is a sophomore nursing student at SDSU. She is originally from Mantorville, Minnesota, and has a special place in her heart for the Midwest region. She is a passionate advocate for mental health awareness, and is currently training to be a speaker for the NAMI "Ending the Silence" program. In her free time, she enjoys playing the flute, spending time with loved ones, and working on her first novel.

Michael Keller is Professor of English at SDSU.

Carey Kilmer grew up in Volga, SD and has lived and worked in Brookings for 18 years after a short stint in Sioux Falls. She completed her B.S. in Sociology through South Dakota State University and an M.S. in Adult, Occupational, and Continuing Education from Kansas State University. She remembers having a camera through much of her life. It was on an annual trip to McCrory Gardens to take pictures of her daughters that

she discovered a love for photographing things that did not talk back. She acquired her first DSLR camera in 2017 and spends her free time shooting.

Brittany Kopman is an SDSU alumni. Originally from northern Minnesota, she has lived in South Dakota for the past few years. Brittany works as a freelance writer/editor for the medical and engineering fields. When not writing technically, she also enjoys penning novels and short stories, training horses, and teaching her young son how to cowboy.

Cheyenne Marco holds a PhD in creative writing and enjoys writing about the challenges facing the Northern Plains. She grew up on a poultry farm in southwest Minnesota, and her rural upbringing has greatly influenced her writing. Marco currently serves as a Lecturer of English at the University of South Dakota. Her works have appeared in *Lake Region Review*, *Rathalla Review*, *Turk's Head Review*, *Prairie Winds*, and others.

Susan McMillan is a lifelong poet and writer. Originally from Michigan, she earned a Bachelor's degree in Scientific and Technical Communications from Michigan Technological University. She later moved to Rochester, Minnesota, where she has lived and worked for more than 40 years. She currently serves as the city's poet laureate. Susan enjoys the outdoors, where she gardens, hikes, canoes, snowshoes, and bicycles. Much of her writing is inspired by nature while walking her rural road to watch the seasons progress in her neighboring farmers' fields. Susan's work has frequently appeared in regional journals and anthologies.

Shelby Meyer is a lifelong resident of Brookings, SD where she is pursuing Studio Art degrees in Printmaking and Art Education from South Dakota State University. Her work explores the various layering of experiences and ideas regarding personhood and identity. She works as the gallery assistant at the Brookings Arts Council, where she also teaches various workshops in printmaking and Art Factory, a twice-weekly class for special needs adults.

Marsha Warren Mittman's humorous memoir, *You Know You Moved to South Dakota from New York City WHEN...* was released by Scurfpea Publishing. Poems/essays/short stories have appeared in American, British, German, and Australian literary journals and anthologies, including six *Chicken Soup for the Soul* tales. She's authored three chapbooks: *Patriarchal Chronicles - Women's Worldwide Tears* was accepted for publication,

and is being crafted into a readers' theater production. Mittman's received various poetry/prose distinctions in the US and Ireland, and a Writer's Residency at Alabama's Fairhope Center for Writing Arts. Her poem, "The Seed," appears in Amazon's #1 bestselling poetry anthology.

Rosemary Dunn Moeller has written poems and stories published in many journals and magazines. She's had two chapbooks published, a travel memoir of Antarctica and annual entries in Scurfpea Anthologies of South Dakota poets. She writes to appreciate the prairie, enjoy the people she loves, and protect the other species on this planet. Life is good.

Wren Murphy is a senior journalism major at South Dakota State University and was born in central Minnesota and moved to South Dakota at 13. Their current loves are their two cats, Nanachi and Jolyne, writing fiction and poetry, and advocating for South Dakota's LGBTQ+ community. In their free time, you can find them reading fantasy and science fiction books, watching Japanese anime, and taking long walks in warmer weather.

Lindy Obach was raised on a grain farm in North Dakota and has been writing, teaching, and living in South Dakota for nearly fifteen years. Her chapbook, *North of Zenith* (2015) is available from Finishing Line Press, and her poetry has appeared in *Midwestern Gothic*, *Pasque Petals*, *South Dakota Review*, *Scurfpea*, and in the upcoming *North Dakota Quarterly*. She is a board member of the SD State Poetry Society and teaches English and Citizenship at the Center for New Americans in Sioux Falls, where she lives with her family and hollyhocks.

Sogen Okami is a photographer, videographer, and digital illustrator. Born, raised, and currently roams in the prairie of South Dakota, appreciating its unforgiving beauty. Not a very social person, but always yearning for in-depth conversations.

Scott F. Parker is the author of *The Joy of Running Qua Running* and the editor of *Conversations with Joan Didion*, among other books. His "Morning Poem #3" appeared in *Oakwood* 2018. He lives in Bozeman and teaches writing at Montana State University.

Kennedy Pirlet is a sophomore in college at SDSU. Kennedy is from Sioux Falls and attended Harrisburg

High School. She has lived in the Great Plains Region her entire life and chose to pursue her higher education close to home. English has always been her favorite subject and is what she's passionate about. Kennedy has always loved reading and writing, which is why she feels so excited about being published in this year's *Oakwood* journal.

Vickie Prussman is a hobby photographer who loves wildlife, the outdoors, and nature. Vickie has lived in the Volga area her whole life and works at SDSU. She has always had a passion for photography starting with a photography class in high school. She lives for vacations to National Parks in the US and Canada where her trusty canon camera will be found around her neck on every hike!

Erik Ritter earned his M.F.A. in 1994 from the San Francisco Art Institute. He has exhibited during Art Basel week in Miami, Scope International in New York, and most recently at the Diego Rivera Gallery in San Francisco. After a successful exhibition at the South Dakota Art Museum, his assemblage piece *Bird of Time* was purchased for the permanent collection. Ritter has taught at several colleges and universities while developing online curriculum as a subject matter expert focusing on *Art in the World* and the workplace. He is currently a visiting artist at South Dakota State University teaching drawing.

Jocelyn Rutten's connection to the Great Plains region lies within it being her home. Growing up she was constantly surrounded and captivated by the beautiful nature that the Great Plains has to offer. As her passion for photography emerged, Jocelyn began to try and capture this nature through her lens. For her the beauty of the Great Plains emerges from the details of each element and the perspective that one views it from.

Stephanie Schultz is a marketing professional by day, a clothing reseller by afternoon, a runner by evening, and a poet by night. She has most recently been published in *The Under Review* (Winter 19/20). Some of her poems can be found in *Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland* (Ice Cube Press, 2014) and *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America* (Ice Cube Press, 2015). She has an M.F.A. in creative writing from Hamline University and lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Alison Simon grew up on a farm in Potter County, South Dakota. Her family has been in the area for generations and she has always felt connected to the

Great Plains. Much of her art and photography focuses on ranching and rural life. The people and animals in her life have always inspired her by showing her the beauty in caring for animals and the land. She is passionate about sharing that mentality with others in a world that has distanced itself from agriculture. She is currently a senior, studying Agriculture Communication with a minor in Studio Art at South Dakota State University.

Pamela Sinicrope lives and works in Rochester, MN with her husband, one high school- and two college-aged sons and a pudelpointer who keeps her going outside, even when temps dip (or plummet) below zero. Her poetry has appeared in *3 Elements Review*, *Appalachian Journal*, and *The Talking Stick*, among others.

Richard Skorupski: After a twenty-one-year career in the Navy, Richard returned to his native state of New Jersey. He followed his passion for the open waters and started a second career in the marine parts business. He and his wife, Cheryl, now happily reside in Spink County, South Dakota. Richard's love for South Dakota and appreciation its people are portrayed through his third career as author of six books centering around the fictional town of Helen, South Dakota. All his novels and stories tell the story of Middle America and the rural lifestyle.

Destiny Soto was born and raised in Bellevue, Nebraska. She's studying Disease and Human Health at Peru State College. Destiny found photography at an early age as an expressive outlet that pushed her to be creative and brave. Her family is incredibly important to her and they are often the focus of her photography. This photo, for example, is of Destiny's 86-year-old foster-grandpa, Jim Brockhaus, remembering his wedding day with his late wife, Kay. This picture is especially important to Destiny because Jim encouraged her on her journey to Jesus, forever changing her life.

Chloé Speas was born and raised in Rapid City, South Dakota. She grew up in the foothills and had the best of both prairie farm life and Black Hills recreation. She currently attends SDSU and is pursuing a career in interior design studies.

Evan Sutherland is a student at South Dakota State University, where he studies English and Writing. His works have been seen in literary magazines throughout the Great Plains region of the U.S. He spends his days dreaming of the next while living in the present.

Terese Svoboda, a Nebraska-born Guggenheim fellow, is the author of eighteen books. She has won the Bobst Prize in fiction, the Iowa Prize for poetry, an NEH grant for translation, the Graywolf Nonfiction Prize, a Jerome Foundation prize for video, the O. Henry award for the short story, a Bobst prize for the novel, and a Pushcart Prize for the essay. She is a three-time winner of the New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship, and has been awarded *Headlands*, *James Merrill*, *Hawthornden*, *Yaddo*, *McDowell*, and *Bellagio* residencies. Her opera WET premiered at L.A.'s Disney Hall in 2005.

Gracie Terrall is a Madison SD native and has lived in the Northern Great Plains all her life. She is double majoring in English and Journalism and pursuing a minor in Professional Writing at South Dakota State. Outside of creative writing, Terrall is a writer and editor for *The Collegian*, SDSU's campus newspaper.

Codi Vallery-Mills is an ag editor in South Dakota where she spends most of her time curating stories about the farm/ranch industry of the Great Plains. She also has a children's books series out called *Husker the Mule*. She ranches with her family near Nisland, SD.

Steven R. Vogel has been a Lumberjack (Bemidji High School) and a Beaver (Bemidji State University). He has lived and worked and written poetry on farms, in villages, in midsized cities, and in suburban and metropolitan areas. He is a Mayo Medical School alumnus and has served in medicine (Family Medicine and Geriatrics) and in the academy (Anatomy & Physiology) for decades. He spent much of his childhood in Kansas, and he has traveled extensively in each of the Great Plains states and provinces. Many of his family members live in Kansas and South Dakota. He currently resides in Rochester, Minnesota.

Matthew Weisberg is a sophomore at Midland University in Fremont Nebraska. He is attending Midland on a powerlifting scholarship while majoring in English and Criminal Justice, and minoring in Psychology. Matt plans on attending Law School upon graduating. When not at school, Matt lives in Sellersville, Pennsylvania with his family. He's always been a voracious reader with an interest in the art of articulating one's feelings so that others may relate; poetry was an immediate fascination. He wrote "Even When" amid a period of unrelenting high stress in his life.

Alan Weltzien is a retiring English professor in Montana and has published dozens of articles, two chapbooks, and ten books. These include three poetry collections, most recently *Rembrandt in the Stairwell* (FootHills Publishing, 2016). Weltzien likes nothing better than working on poems – except for occasional personal essays. He and his wife travel extensively, and he still skis in winter and scrambles peaks in summer.

Jeremy Yoder was raised on a farm and has spent his entire life in the Midwest, from Iowa, to Minnesota, and finally South Dakota. Though his profession is computer programming, he's dabbled in writing at various points, resulting in a few magazine and anthology publications, ranging from *Spider Magazine* for kids to *Star Trek* with Pocket Books. He's currently writing a novel (because, you know, who isn't) and lives in Sioux Falls with his wife, Sarah, and three children.

Rolf Yngve grew up in Plymouth, Minnesota when winters lasted longer than summer. He left home to enlist in the Navy in 1971 and spent thirty-five years on active duty. Now, he returns spring and fall to his family cabin in Mission Township for walleye, woods, and Scandinavian solitude. Yngve wrote stories from an early age about his Midwest upbringing and, later, his Navy experiences. Credits include *Best American Short Stories*, *ZZYZYVA*, *Kenyon Review*, *Glimmer Train*, and many others. He holds an M.F.A. from Warren Wilson and his story collection, *Dog Watches*, debuted in 2018 from *Saddle Road Press*.

Dana Yost was a state and national award-winning daily newspaper editor and writer for 29 years. Since 2008, he has authored five books and is at work on a sixth. He is a three-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize in poetry. A graduate of Southwest Minnesota State University, he has lived in the Midwest his entire life, currently in Sioux Falls. More information can be found at his website: danayostwriter.wordpress.com.

Sofiya Zybaylova is an international graduate student at South Dakota State University studying Communications with a specialization in journalism. She's been living in Brookings for the past seven years. During her free time Sofiya enjoys traveling, learning about new cultures, and capturing moments using her camera. She is passionate about telling stories through her photography and video work.