

Hello/Hola/Salut from the Department of Language, Literature, & Cultural Studies!

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**1) MA STUDENT STEPHANI MCDOW PUBLISHES CREATIVE WRITING IN *STILL POINT QUARTERLY***

MA student **Stephani E. D. McDow's** creative non-fiction piece "Ode to Majestic Matriarchs" was published in *Still Point Quarterly's* Winter 2019 edition. The theme for this 36th issue of the journal is "Phenomenal Women."



**Ode to Majestic Matriarchs**  
by Stephani E. D. McDow

**R**EMEMBERING POUND CAKES, CARE MICHAEL, AND OUBI IS SAFE. Being able to close your eyes and go back to that place in time when your eyes were the most vivid that I ever knew and memory-laced fragrances possessed you with unformable joy. When you embraced you so tightly that you could breathe, down in the opaque stockings, what it looked like, what she looked like when she stole your heart the way only a grandmother could—the matriarch of your family. When she reached in you those bits of herself that her own children, your parents, may have forgotten or overlooked. When she pointed into you her experiences and wisdom, her heritage and culture, her joys and desires. When her cheeks were as thin as lilies, smiling down on you with the most biased belief that you were the greatest thing that ever was. Remembering is easy. "When I grow up, I want to be an old woman!"

And when such games, it's like missing and losing that's hard. While you know in your heart of hearts that she is in or heading to alter grief, peace, and pain-free joy, you can't help but acknowledge your need for her to still be here in the way you remember her being: doing the things that helped shape who you are, assisting you through life's low-ups and let-downs, cheering you through your successes, being that irreplaceable matriarch that was such a solid constant in your life. Everyone wants Grandma to live forever.

It'd be like this that I wish Grandma Lisa were still here. When I was younger, whether she knew was all right or not, I'd have loved, she could always comfort me. To know her way through DC, city streets, heading home from school carrying books and the burdens and demons of urban city life. To find

her laid across the bed watching Oprah or the news that followed thereafter. To look off my shoes, climb up on the bed, and lay next to her with my head resting just beside her torso. And that's not her honey, aged, hand-wringing, Mama, North Carolina-rind, chubby but lit, and dimming her eyes long, weighty, ever-ready, loving smiles. As I, with the true mission of her head moving from the ribs at the crown of my head to the strands' ends, she grasped whatever I was that was on my mind or grasping my heart and pulled it away from me with her love and strength. Then let it go and kept it away from me. Remember? Remember when Grandma could just make everything right?

Sometimes the car will stop so infrequently make us feel as though we're standing on the edge of a cliff. The depths at the cliff's edge are unknown—scudless, perhaps. We're wearing platform, high-heeled shoes—Grandma's, worn—with our toes, writing just into the cliff's edge, pressing firmly down into the rock's base to steady ourselves. Pressing so firmly that the toe prints have gone white and numb. The earth beneath the shoes is gritty, pebbles, sand, and dirt make for a foundation less than firm. But not to standing.

In our hands are many things, bags, bit of eggs—overcooked, highly seasoned, cooked eggs. So many and so full are they that the weight of the bags makes her hands set into the flesh of our palms and fingers so they are purple, bleeding members now. The bags are so heavy, and we can't just leave alone because the eggs will crack, and it's somehow our responsibility to make sure that doesn't happen. If that isn't enough, on our shoulders are books stacked high. Ancient books, forgotten books. Thick and heavy in size. Can't let them hit, we must then, need them. We've told that the knowledge in these books

is ours to have if only we can pull them down and open them to realize it. But how? Without letting the eggs go? How? Without neglecting our responsibilities. How? When any movement we make may cause one of the books to fall off the cliff or worse—cause us to fall off the cliff itself? Our spine but like they're going to break is her from the pressure of all. But we're still standing. How can I desperately need the wisdom of Grandma Lisa's hand in my hand when it's what has walked me out. Should be in—sometimes Grandma have that power. But the more fact that in spite of all that—the imagery of this's bearing—the still, standing, and walking upon the memory of her taking my pain away is a testament to the experience and grandeur of the matriarch. She matters. And when she's gone, we long for her.

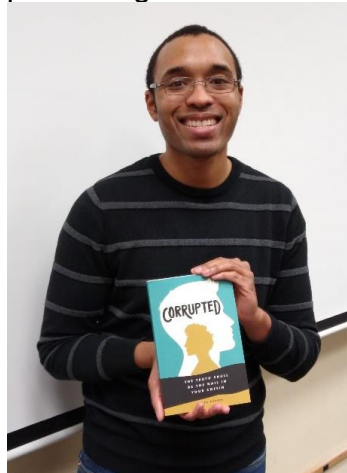
So how is it that we find that place—that "happy" middle—between the easy and the hard? How do we cope with missing our matriarch in life when she can't be there in that same way anymore? Here's what we do: remember her story and her way, all that she taught you directly and indirectly. Remember and laugh at her faces that are perfectly imperfect. Remember everything that resides in our hearts. Close our eyes and remember the smell of ground cake baking in the oven, or hear her humming some tune we never knew the name of. She's still there, living in what she gave to us and our memories.

And, I'm sure that if I close my eyes and separate them and just hard enough—I'll find Grandma Lisa's hand in my hand. For the Betty and Madeline still have to feed us that love and wisdom, and for the Ruth, Loretta, Lorraine, Elvira, Marlene who've gone on ahead and are waiting to hold us tight. I want to be like you when I grow up—matriarch, respectfully. ♡

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**2) AUTHOR JARED DIXON MEETS WITH CREATIVE WRITING STUDENTS**

Professor Jenise Williamson's ENGL 455: Advanced Creative Writing class hosted a visit by author Jared Dixon last week. Dixon's novel *Corrupted: The Truth Shall Be The Nail in Your Coffin* was recently published by Full Circle Press. Dixon spoke with students about the process of writing and publishing a novel.



### 3) DR. HORACIO SIERRA PUBLISHES POEM IN *PEREGRINE*

Dr. Horacio Sierra's poem "Haikus on Hyphens" was published in Volume 33 of the creative writing journal *Peregrine*.



### 4) GRADUATION CELEBRATION AND SIGMA TAU DELTA CEREMONY – DECEMBER 10

The Department of Language, Literature, & Cultural Studies will hold its Graduation Celebration on Tuesday, December 10, in MLK 253 from 12:00-1:30. Lunch will be provided. All are welcome.

Please join us as we celebrate the following students who will graduate this month:

**Deja Butler – BA, Creative Writing**  
**Krystal Daniel – BA, Creative Writing**  
**Monique Johnson – MA, English**

We will also honor the following students who earned a spot on the Spring 2019 Dean's List:

**Haley White**  
**Rosa Suarez**  
**Romelo Palmer**  
**Mahuwena Goito**  
**Keva Colbert**  
**Michaela Taylor**  
**Connell Reese**  
**Krystal Daniel**  
**Yusuff Yusuff**  
**Zenobia Fenrick**  
**Deja Butler**  
**Grant Collins**

We will also induct the following students into the Nu Nu Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta:

**Rhonda Brown**  
**Keva Colbert**  
**Grant Collins**  
**Kassiah Drummond**  
**Mahuwena Goito**  
**Connell Reese**  
**Yusuff Yusuff**

## 5) NEW INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: MARYLAND PUBLIC SERVICE



**PURSUE YOUR PASSION  
FIND YOUR PURPOSE**

**GOVERNOR'S SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**  
MAY 26- AUG 7  
RISING JUNIORS & SENIORS

**SONDHEIM NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**  
MAY 26-AUG 7  
RISING JUNIORS, SENIORS, & CURRENT GRAD. STUDENTS

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FELLOWS**  
MAY 26-JULY 31  
RISING JUNIORS & SENIORS

**MARYLAND PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAMS**  
PAID SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND NONPROFIT SECTORS, FOCUSED ON CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE

Click here for more information and to apply: <https://publicservicescholars.umbc.edu/apply/>

## 6) JOB OPPORTUNITY: BSU WRITING CENTER

### We're Hiring!

**The BSU Writing Center**  
Smith Vidal Literacy and Language Center

If interested in becoming a writing consultant, apply by sending in a **cover letter, resume, previously written essay** (4-6 pages for undergraduates, 8-20 pages for graduates), and name and contact information for **at least one reference** (preferably a BSU professor but a current/former employer is also acceptable). Undergraduate applicants should have completed ENGL 102 (or be currently enrolled in the class).

Resume and/or cover letter should indicate your **major(s)/minor(s)**, expected **graduation date**, **telephone number**, **desired number of hours per week** (max is 20 hours per week), and **familiarity with diverse cultures and/or languages** (if applicable).

When possible we hope to hire new consultants with diverse:

- major and minors (we're not just English students)
- cultural and linguistic knowledge and experiences (e.g. multilingual and ELL students)

Applications should be emailed to:  
[WritingCenter@BowieState.edu](mailto:WritingCenter@BowieState.edu)

With the email subject line:  
"LASTNAME Application for WC Consultant: Spring 2020"

Closing date:  
Midnight (ET) on Friday, Nov. 22nd

Qualified candidates will be contacted to schedule face-to-face interviews.

## 7) PAID INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The Library of Congress Junior Fellows Summer Intern Program enables undergraduate and graduate students to experience the integrated analog and digital collections and services of the world's largest, all-inclusive library. Working under the direction of library curators and specialists in various divisions, Junior Fellows explore digital initiatives and increase access to the institution's unparalleled collections and resources.

This summer internship runs from May 26, 2020 to July 31, 2020 and pays up to \$4,500. Applications are due December 20, 2019

Visit the following website for more information: <https://www.loc.gov/item/internships/junior-fellows-program/>

## 8) CEAMAG CONFERENCE CFP



The 62nd Annual College English Association-Middle Atlantic Group (CEAMAG) Conference will be held March 7, 2020, at Prince George's Community College. "Tides and Surges" is the theme for 2020's CEA-MAG Conference. This year's theme is a prompt for papers and panels investigating the scholarly and pedagogical ebb and flow in English, Modern Languages, Cultural Studies, the Humanities and STEM subjects, the Social Sciences, and interdisciplinary subjects. We therefore invite papers and panels from academics in higher education, AP instructors, and graduate students on any topic which is likely to be of interest to this organization. Although proposals may broadly interpret the conference theme along the following subtopics indicated below, we will also gladly review for possible inclusion thematically divergent proposals.

**Students:** Students are encouraged to submit proposals for short creative works to be read or performed at a closing reception at the end of the conference. Graduate students should identify themselves to be eligible to compete for the \$100 Christopher Bell prize for best grad student paper and should be prepared to submit a full copy of the accepted conference paper by Feb. 24 to the Program Committee Chair.

**Submissions:** Please email your paper abstracts (of 500 words or fewer) or panel proposals by 6 January 2020 to La Tanya Rogers, Program Committee Chair, at [ceamagconference@gmail.com](mailto:ceamagconference@gmail.com) or [Lrogers@fisk.edu](mailto:Lrogers@fisk.edu). Please include "CEA-MAG" in the subject line of all submissions. Acceptance letters will be sent out in late January.

Paper abstracts and panel proposals should include the following information: Name; institutional affiliation (if applicable); mailing address (including zip code); phone number and email address; title for the proposed presentation; abstract of no more than 500 words (papers at the conference will be limited to 15 minutes); A-V needs, if any; special needs, if any.

**Registration:** A conference registration/CEA-MAG membership fee of \$50 (\$35 for adjunct instructors and \$25 for graduate students) will be required when you submit your online registration for the conference (includes lunch and subscription to the CEAMAG Journal). Registration fees after the deadline will be adjusted to \$55/\$40/\$25 and onsite day-of registration will be available. The link to the online registration page is on the webpage for the CEA-MAG: <https://www.umes.edu/ceamag/>.

**Travel Grants:** Adjunct instructors are eligible to compete for a travel grant by submitting a full copy of the accepted paper to be presented at the conference by Feb. 24 to the Program Committee Chair; two such grants in the amount of \$100 each will be awarded. For both grad student and adjunct prizes, please submit only the conference-length papers.

Newsletters are archived on the following page for easy reference:

<https://bowiestate.edu/academics/colleges/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/language-literature-and-cultural-studies/newsletter.php>