

# Edward McPherson

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Department of English  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Campus Box 1122  
One Brookings Drive  
Saint Louis, MO 63130

## EDUCATION:

M.F.A., Creative Writing (fiction), University of Minnesota/Twin Cities, 2011

B.A., English (*Summa Cum Laude*, Phi Beta Kappa), Williams College, 1999

## PUBLICATION – BOOKS:

*The History of the Future: American Essays*, Coffee House Press, 2017

Selected reviews: *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, *Booklist*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Star Tribune*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Georgia Review*, *Los Angeles Review*, *Arkansas Times*, *Rain Taxi Review of Books*, *NewPages*, *Lively Arts*, and *Heavy Feather Review*. Winner of the 2017 PEN Southwest Book Award in Creative Nonfiction. Finalist for the 2018 New Mexico-Arizona Book Award in Nonfiction. Featured on NPR show “To the Best of Our Knowledge,” radio show “St. Louis on the Air,” the *Guardian* best of 2017 pick, Iowa Public Radio/Prairie Lights Books best of 2017 pick, *fields magazine* best of 2017 pick, *Austin American-Statesman* Texas Book Festival Pick, Milkweed Books Subscription Pick for June 2017, *Kenyon Review* 2017 Summer Reading List, *Salon* interview, *Essay Daily* interview, *Midwestern Gothic* interview, *St. Louis Magazine* 2017 “Year in Culture,” and 2018 Williams College Book Award Selection. Excerpted in *Guernica*, *True Story*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Literary Hub*, and the *Dallas Morning News*.

*The Backwash Squeeze and Other Improbable Feats: A Newcomer’s Journey into the World of Bridge*, HarperCollins, 2007 (hardcover), 2008 (paperback)

Selected reviews: *The New Yorker*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Bloomberg News*, *Kirkus*, *Booklist*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *New York Times* bridge column.

*Buster Keaton: Tempest in a Flat Hat*, UK: Faber and Faber, 2004 (hardcover), 2005 (paperback); reprint, US: Newmarket Press, 2005 (hardcover), 2007 (paperback)

Selected U.S. reviews: *New York Times Book Review*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *New York Sun*, *Providence Journal*, *Hartford Courant*, *Library Journal*, *BKLYN*, and Turner Classic Movies “Book Corner” (selection of the month). Selected U.K./Canadian reviews: *Sunday Times* (London), *The Times* (London), *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Film Review*, *The Scotsman*, *Empire*, *The Week*, *The Irish Times*, *Independent on Sunday*, *Mail on Sunday*, and *The Edmonton Journal* (Alberta).

## PUBLICATION – CREATIVE NONFICTION (essays/journalism):

“Turtles All the Way Down,” *The Common Reader*, Issue 8, Winter 2017

“Visiting the Sixth Floor, Living in the Echo Pattern,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 23, 2017

- “How Dallas Changed the Way Americans Watch History,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 22, 2017
- “How Dallas Became ‘Dallas,’” *Dallas Morning News*, May 21, 2017
- “Three Minutes to Midnight,” *Guernica*, May 1, 2017
- “How to Survive an Atomic Bomb,” *True Story*, Issue #5, Spring 2017
- “Picking Bones in the Badlands,” *The Gettysburg Review*, Spring 2017  
(republished on *Literary Hub*, February 22, 2017)
- “End of the Line,” *Catapult*, September 14, 2015
- “Actions Louder Than Words,” *The Common Reader*, Issue 1, Fall 2014
- “Open Ye Gates! Swing Wide Ye Portals! Part 2,” *The Paris Review Daily*, February 16, 2014  
(republished December 24, 2014)
- “Open Ye Gates! Swing Wide Ye Portals!”, *The Paris Review Daily*, February 14, 2014  
(republished December 24, 2014)
- “Lost and Found,” *The American Scholar*, Autumn 2013
- “Bridge: End Play,” *Tin House* blog, February 6, 2013
- “Dallas, Part 2: Up Close,” *The Paris Review Daily*, December 21, 2012  
(republished November 22, 2013)
- “Dallas, Part 1: From Afar,” *The Paris Review Daily*, December 20, 2012  
(republished November 22, 2013)
- “New York’s East Side,” *The Home Observer*, Spring 2008
- “When the Going Was Good,” *Absolute*, September 2007
- “My Other, Older Woman,” *Salon*, August 4, 2007
- “Counter Culture,” *I.D.*, June 2007
- “Kid Stays in the Picture,” *New York Observer*, February 6, 2006
- “Safe Design,” *T: New York Times Style Magazine*, October 9, 2005
- “A Roof With a View,” *Absolute*, October 2005
- “Freedom Rock,” *I.D.*, May 2005
- “Supreme Court,” *Absolute*, May 2005
- “The Long Goodbye,” *Absolute*, April 2005
- “One Man Show,” *New York Observer*, December 12, 2004
- “Lives: Young and Very Inventive,” *New York Times Magazine*, November 28, 2004
- “Thoughtful Gifts,” *T: New York Times Style Magazine*, October 10, 2004
- “Stop Making Scents,” *I.D.*, September 2004
- “Noguchi’s Loyal Mistress,” *New York Observer*, July 18, 2004
- “Ten Rivers to Cross,” *Esopus*, Spring 2004
- “Hollywood Bratt,” *Talk*, February 2002
- “Easy Rider,” *Talk*, December 2001
- “Lynch Pin,” *Talk*, November 2001
- “New York Lives,” *Talk*, November 2001
- “Almost Famous,” *Talk*, October 2001
- “Psycho Case,” *Talk*, September 2001
- “Leelee’s Double Life,” *Talk*, September 2001
- “American Graffiti,” *Talk*, August 2001
- “James Dean Returns,” *Talk*, August 2001
- “Not Your Average Joe,” *Talk*, June 2001
- “Cranberry Queen,” *Talk*, June 2001
- “Robert Rodriguez,” *Talk*, April 2001
- “Off the Map,” *Talk*, March 2001
- “Warm and Wired,” *Talk*, March 2001
- “The Return of the Punk Ballerina,” *Talk*, February 2001
- “Bar None,” *Talk*, February 2001
- “The Ocean Club,” *Talk*, February 2001

**PUBLICATION – FICTION (short stories):**

“Sky-Stormers of the Llano Estacado,” *The Southern Review*, Summer 2017

“The Electric Battlefield Map,” *The Southern Review*, Winter 2015

“Kansas, America, 1899,” *Gulf Coast*, Winter/Spring 2015

\*Winner of the 2014 *Gulf Coast* Prize in Fiction (judged by Andrea Barrett)

“Punk,” *Epoch*, Volume 63, Number 3, Winter 2014/2015

“Telref,” *The Gettysburg Review*, Spring 2014

\*Awarded a Pushcart Prize, 2015

\*Selected by the New York Public Library for publication in its “Subway Library” program and included in the NYPL’s permanent digital collection, 2018

“Reunion, 1938,” *Epoch*, Volume 62, Number 2, Fall 2013

**PUBLICATION – ANTHOLOGIES (essays/short stories):**

“Ten Rivers to Cross” in *The Esopus Reader*, Esopus Books, February 2022

“Telref” in *Pushcart Prize XL: Best of the Small Presses 2016*, Pushcart Press, November 2015

“Telref” in *Love Stories for Turbulent Times: Loving Through the Apocalypse*, Pushcart Press, February 2018

**WORKS IN PROGRESS:**

*Look Out: the Delight and Danger of Taking the Long View* (forthcoming, Astra House, 2025)

An investigation of long-distance mapping, aerial photography, and top-down and far-ranging perspectives from pre-Civil War America to our vexed modern times (of drone warfare, of surveillance both home and abroad, of our recent days of quarantine and protest). The book will question our fetishization of distance (as a path to truth) and consider the delights and dangers of taking the long view.

*Behold, the One True Thing*

This short story collection explores both historical and contemporary worlds, including stories about government weathermen trying to make it rain in Texas in 1891, an itinerant cyclorama painter in 1899, a reunion of Civil War veterans in 1938, a monster living and working in midtown Manhattan in 1954, paranoid spies serving the CIA in 1976, fourth-graders growing up in Dallas in 1986, runaways trying to make it in pre-9/11 New York City, and high school punks operating a Fourth of July fireworks stand in Nowhere, Texas.

**TEACHING:**

**Associate Professor, Washington University in St. Louis**, St. Louis, Missouri, 2018-current

**Assistant Professor, Washington University in St. Louis**, St. Louis, Missouri, 2012-2018

Graduate courses:

Creative Nonfiction Prose Workshop (Spring 2013, Fall 2014, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Fall 2022, Fall 2024)

Micro-Prose Forms (Fall 2015, Fall 2017)

Craft of Creative Nonfiction: On Place (Spring 2017, Spring 2019, Fall 2021)

Craft of Creative Nonfiction: Flash Nonfiction (Spring 2021, Spring 2023)

Undergraduate courses:

Creative Nonfiction 1 (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2016, Spring 2021)

Creative Nonfiction 2: Literary Journalism (Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2020, Fall 2021)

Advanced Creative Nonfiction (Spring 2014, Spring 2016, Spring 2018, Spring 2020, Spring 2022)

**Lecturer, University of Minnesota**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2012

Creative Writing Senior Seminar: Fiction/Nonfiction (Fall 2012)

Requirement for honors certification (*magna cum laude* or *cum laude*).

**Teaching Artist, The Loft Literary Center**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2009-2011

Writing Historical Fiction (Summer 2009, Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Fall 2011)

Both a one-day seminar and an eight-week course.

**Teaching Assistant, University of Minnesota**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2009-2011

Introduction to Creative Writing (Fall 2009)

Introduction to Fiction Writing (Summer 2010, Spring 2011)

Delivered in an accelerated one-month summer term and in a full semester.

Intermediate Fiction Writing (Fall 2010)

Survey of American Literatures and Cultures II (Spring 2010, two discussion sections)

**Instructor, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute**, University of Minnesota College of Continuing Education, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2010

Classic Silent Films (Fall 2010)

**Workshop Leader, Minnesota Correctional Facility**, Red Wing, Minnesota, July 2010

Developed and taught a fiction writing workshop for juvenile offenders, ages 17 to 20.

**Mentor, InkTank, The Loft Literary Center**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2009-2010

Mentored a high school writing student.

**OTHER ACADEMIC SERVICE:**

Director of Undergraduate Studies, English Department, Washington University in St. Louis, 2021-2023, 2024-current

Chair, English Department Curriculum Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, 2021-2023, 2024-current

Advisory Board, Public Scholarship Strategic Initiative, Washington University in St. Louis, 2022-2023, 2024-current

Contributing Editor, *The Common Reader*, a nationally distributed interdisciplinary journal published by Washington University in St. Louis, 2013-current

Executive Committee, English Department, Washington University in St. Louis, 2015-2017, 2018-2019, 2022-2023

Rhodes Scholarship Nominating Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, 2014-2019, 2020-2022

Reviewer, NEA Grants for Art Projects internal selection competition, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, Washington University in St. Louis, 2023

Executive Editor, *The Spectacle*, a literary journal created by graduate students in the English Department at Washington University in St. Louis, 2014-2022

Hurst and Visiting Writers and Speakers Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, 2012-2014, 2015-2019, 2020-2021

Co-chair, English Department Search Committee, Nonfiction writer (part of campus-wide cluster hire of faculty whose work addresses race and ethnicity), 2020-2021

Faculty Moderator, Sigma Tau Delta Honors Society, Washington University in St. Louis, 2018-2019

Judge, Carl Neureuther Student Book Collection Essay Competition, Washington University in St. Louis, 2018

Mentor, The Jeff Applebaum/Merle Kling Undergraduate Honors Research Fellowship, Washington University in St. Louis, 2012-2016. Mentored two students through a two-year undergraduate independent research and writing fellowship in literary journalism.

## **PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT/ACTIVITIES:**

**Member, St. Louis Literary Award Selection Committee, Saint Louis University Libraries, 2019-current**

•Invited to serve on the selection committee for the St. Louis Literary Award, a national award conferred annually on “the most important writers of our time.”

**Contributing Editor, *The Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses* anthology, 2015-current**

•Invited to nominate pieces for the national prize.

**Judge, Hal Prize in Creative Nonfiction, presented by the *Peninsula Pulse*, Write On, Door County, and the Peninsula School of Art, 2023**

•Invited to judge the annual nonfiction writing contest open to all writers.

**Judge, Gesell Award for Excellence in Creative Writing, University of Minnesota, 2019**

•Invited to judge the nonfiction writing contest for students in the University of Minnesota’s Creative Writing MFA program.

**Prose Editor, *The Pushcart Prize XLI: Best of the Small Presses 2017 Edition*, 2016**

•Invited to be one of five Prose Editors charged with reading and selecting submissions.

**Interim Education Director, The Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2011-2012**

•Directed the education operations of the country’s largest literary center, including 400 creative writing classes a year—involving 200 teaching artists and 4,500 students—as well as various

community reading and writing programs and events. Also analyzed budgets, course offerings, and enrollment trends.

**Screener, Association of Writers & Writing Programs Award Series, 2009**

• Chosen by 2009 AWP “Prize for the Novel” judge, Jim Shepard, to select manuscript submissions for his consideration.

**Freelance Editor, 2003-2008**

• Provided editing, copyediting, and editorial consulting for websites, publications, and publishers including Howcast.com, Newmarket Press, *The New York Observer*, and Miramax/Hyperion books.

**Assistant Editor, *Talk* magazine, New York, New York, 2000-2002**

• Wrote articles on art and culture. Supplied research and reporting for features and oral histories.

**Editorial Assistant to novelist John Irving, Dorset, Vermont, 1999-2000**

• Provided editorial suggestions, line editing, and proofreading for the novel *The Fourth Hand* and the screenplay of *A Son of the Circus*; oversaw the publication of the memoir, *My Movie Business*, and the Oscar-winning screenplay and movie tie-in edition of *The Cider House Rules*.

**SELECTED CONFERENCES/APPEARANCES:**

Left Bank Books, “In conversation with Daniel Handler,” St. Louis, Missouri, May 2024

Left Bank Books, “In conversation with Curtis Sittenfeld,” St. Louis, Missouri, April 2023

Furman University, Department of English: Reading & Craft Talk, Greenville, South Carolina, October 2022

Saint Louis University Library Associates, Evenings at Home, St. Louis, Missouri, March 2019

All Write Festival, Opening Session, Webster Groves, Missouri, March 2019

Gettysburg College, *Gettysburg Review* and Department of English Reading Series, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, March 2018

Trinity College, Allan K. Smith Reading Series, Hartford, Connecticut, February 2018

Texas Book Festival, Austin, Texas, November 2017  
Panel presenter: “New Approaches to Nonfiction”

Washington University in St. Louis, Library Faculty Book Talk, St. Louis, Missouri, November 2017

Washington University in St. Louis, Creative Writing Program Reading Series, St. Louis, Missouri, October 2017

Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., February 2017  
Panel presenter: “I’ll Take You There: Place in Poetry, Fiction, and Nonfiction” (with Paul Yoon, Ethan Rutherford, and Francine Harris) (accepted but canceled due to weather)

Washington University in St. Louis, Summer Writers Institute, St. Louis, Missouri, July 2016  
Keynote speaker

Saint Louis University, Sheila Nolan Whalen Reading Series, St. Louis, Missouri, November 2015

Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 2015

Panel presenter: "Mentor/Mentee: Paying It Forward" (with Patricia Hampl, Stephanie Vaughn, Julie Schumacher, and Yuko Taniguchi)

Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference, Seattle, Washington, February 2014

Panel presenter, moderator, and organizer: "Not What I Was Looking For, But What I Found: Deploying Research in Creative Writing" (with Jim Shepard, Ethan Rutherford, Amy Leach, and Sandra Lim)

Novel Writing Conference, The Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 2011

Breakout session leader: "Historical Fiction"

Panel moderator: "The Realities of Novel Writing"

St. Mark's Literary Festival, St. Mark's School of Texas, Dallas, TX, January 2008

Invited participant, panel presenter, literary judge

American Library Association Annual Conference, Washington, DC, June 2007

Panel presenter: "First Author, First Book"

The Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, Virginia, March 2006

Panel presenter: "That's Showbiz: Lives Up in Lights"

Lecture and film commentary: Buster Keaton's *Sherlock, Jr.* and *The Playhouse*

The National Press Club, Annual Book Fair and Authors' Night, Washington, DC, November 2005

Invited participant, book signing/appearance

Art @ Cinema City, Hartford, Connecticut, November 2005

Lecture and film commentary: Buster Keaton's *The General*

BAMcinématek, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York, July 2005

Lecture and film commentary: Buster Keaton's *Sherlock, Jr.* and *Cops*

BookExpo America, New York, New York, June 2005

Book signing/appearance in the Autographing Area

## SELECTED INTERVIEWS:

*Peninsula Pulse*, "Edward McPherson Explores Passions Through Writing," August 2023 (Q&A and podcast)

St. Louis University Libraries, "Craft Talks," November 2020 (video and podcast)

*Midwestern Gothic*, "Interview: Edward McPherson," November 2017

*Essay Daily*, "It Starts with Curiosity: a Conversation," September 2017

St. Louis Public Radio, "St. Louis on the Air," June 2017 (radio interview)

Public Radio International, "To the Best of Our Knowledge," June 2017 (essay/radio broadcast)  
*Salon*, "Author Questionnaire: 5 authors break down the secret lives of their new books," May 2017  
The Loft Literary Center, "The Loft Podcast: an Interview with Edward McPherson," May 2017  
Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, "Hold That Thought," July 2013 (podcast)  
WNYC, "The Leonard Lopate Show," August 2007 (radio interview)  
Sony Pictures, *Buster Keaton: The 65th Anniversary Collection*, March 2006 (interview for DVD documentary feature)  
National Public Radio, "Weekend All Things Considered," July 2005 (radio interview)  
KNX 1070 AM, Los Angeles, July 2005 (radio interview)  
WJR 760 AM, Detroit, June 2005 (radio interview)  
Channel 4, *The 100 Greatest War Films*, United Kingdom, May 2005 (interview for TV special)  
BBC Radio 4, "The Film Programme," United Kingdom, September 2004 (radio interview)

### **SELECTED READINGS:**

Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, October 2020 (virtual)  
Argenta Reading Series, North Little Rock, Arkansas, October 2018  
Prairie Lights Books (a reading with Mary Jo Bang), Iowa City, Iowa, October 2017  
A Public Space (reading and conversation with Rebecca Traister), Brooklyn, New York, June 2017  
Interabang Books/J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, Dallas, Texas, May 2017  
Magers & Quinn, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 2017  
Left Bank Books, St. Louis, Missouri, May 2017  
*River Styx* Reading Series, St. Louis, Missouri, February 2017  
Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center, Bonne Terre, Missouri, September 2015  
The Hinge Gallery Reading Series, St. Louis, Missouri, September 2013  
Micawber's Books, St. Paul, Minnesota, October 2011  
*dislocate* reading, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 2011  
Bermuda Regional, Southampton, Bermuda, January 2008  
NABC, San Francisco, California, November 2007  
The Bridge Table, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, November 2007  
Barnes & Noble, Dallas, Texas, September 2007  
Regency Whist Club, New York, New York, September 2007  
Barnes & Noble, Brooklyn, New York, September 2007  
McNally Jackson, New York, New York, August 2007  
Barnes & Noble, Kansas City, Missouri, August 2007  
Barnes & Noble, Brooklyn, New York, August 2005  
Bookcourt, Brooklyn, New York, June 2005  
Barnes & Noble, New York, New York, June 2005  
KGB Bar Reading Series, New York, New York, May 2005

### **AWARDS/HONORS:**

John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, General Nonfiction, 2023-2024

Maxwell C. Weiner Humanities Research Grant, Washington University in St. Louis, 2019, Grant award: \$2,000/year for five years

Finalist for the 2018 New Mexico-Arizona Book Award in Nonfiction for *The History of the Future: American Essays*



Winner of the 2017 PEN Southwest Book Award in Creative Nonfiction for *The History of the Future: American Essays*

Artist Fellowship (literature), Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis, 2018, Grant award: \$20,000

Pushcart Prize for short story, "Telref," reprinted in *Pushcart Prize XL: Best of the Small Presses 2016* anthology, November 2015

\*Also selected for inclusion in the Pushcart Press anthology, *Love Stories for Turbulent Times*, a "best-of" the previous 25 years of the Pushcart Prize, February 2018

*Gulf Coast* Prize in Fiction for short story, "Kansas, America, 1899," judged by Andrea Barrett, published in Winter/Spring 2015 issue, Prize: \$1,500

Short story, "Reunion, 1938" (published in *Epoch*, Fall 2013), selected as a finalist for the Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story from the Texas Institute of Letters, 2014

Special recognition for going "above and beyond" in teaching and service to Washington University, nominated anonymously by students and awarded by one of the undergraduate honorary societies, 2013

Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant (prose), 2011, Grant award: \$5,800

Gesell Award in Fiction, University of Minnesota, 2011, Prize: \$500

Artist in Residence, Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, Red Wing, MN, 2010

Gesell Summer Residency Prize, University of Minnesota, 2010

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Scholar, University of Minnesota, 2010, Stipend: \$1,000

Graduate Research Partnership Program Fellowship, University of Minnesota, 2009, Stipend: \$4,000

Graduate School Fellowship, University of Minnesota, 2008-2009, Stipend: \$22,000. Highly competitive university-wide competition for incoming graduate students nominated by each program.

Alan Truscott Memorial Award, The International Bridge Press Association, 2007. Awarded for making a significant contribution to bridge and bridge journalism.

Texas Rhodes Scholar Finalist, 1999

Michael Davitt Bell Prize, Williams College, 1999

Arthur Kaufmann Prize in English, Williams College, 1999

Class of 1960s Scholar in English, Williams College, 1998-1999