

## **Sabbatical Application/Jim Zukowski**

### **Relocating a Career in English: The Move from Traditional Scholarship to Creative Writing**

#### **Background:**

I came to Lake State in 1999 with a Ph.D. in Critical and Cultural Studies and a certificate in Composition from a nationally recognized and competitive graduate program. In 2005, I was awarded an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Warren Wilson College. Out of hundreds of applicants, only two other students were chosen for the track in poetry the year I was admitted. During the time I spent at Warren Wilson (over breaks in our academic calendar here at Lake State), I worked elbow-to-elbow with prominent American writers, a number of them Pulitzer Prize winners.

Since 2005, I've slowly been building a publication record. Some of my work now appears in *Provincetown Arts Magazine*, *Northwest Review*, *Water-Stone Review*, and *Nimrod*. I've purposely limited where I submit my poems because I want them to appear in prestigious publications as I move toward finishing and sending out my first full-length collection of poems for publication.

I have a manuscript that needs further work, and for which I have received encouragement from prominent writers and editors. To make a contribution to the field of creative writing, I also need to do other kinds of writing: book reviews, essays on the art and craft of writing, and interviews with famous writers concerning their work.

#### **Rationale:**

A sabbatical will allow me to make major progress toward accomplishment in creative writing and related scholarship, which will reflect credit on and increase recognition of LSSU. Also, as students most often choose creative writing programs based upon faculty who actually publish, this sabbatical and its products will help make our Creative Writing Program here at Lake State more credible.

#### **Sabbatical Goals:**

1. Three separate interviews with poets of national stature for three separate publications. Poets to be interviewed include Marie Howe, Lynn Emanuel, and Tony Hoagland. Targeted publications for interviews include *The Writer's Chronicle*, *Poets and Writers*, and *American Poetry Review*.
2. Essay/Book Review on three recent books by Marie Howe, Tony Hoagland, and Jason Shinder. Targeted publications include *Western Humanities Review*, *Southern Review*, and/or *Puerto del Sol*.
3. Essay on Louise Gluck ("Crafting Loss and Longing: On the Poetry of Louise

Gluck”) This essay is in progress, and *Reader* (a reader-oriented theory journal) has expressed interest in the piece.

4. Complete and arrange first-book manuscript (Outside of writing new poems for the manuscript, I’ll need to take two trips of varying lengths to have the manuscript evaluated and tinkered with by trustworthy readers.) One trip will take me to New York to work on the manuscript with Martha Rhodes (my mentor/teacher and Founding Editor of Four Way Books). The other trip will take me to Greenfield, MA to work with Joan Houlihan, Founding Director of the Concord Poetry Center and founder of the Colrain Poetry Manuscript Conference. Ms. Houlihan has agreed to evaluate the manuscript and recommend publishers.

## Sabbatical Report/Jim Zukowski

### Relocating a Career in English: The Move from Traditional Scholarship to Creative Writing

Given the work I wanted to accomplish, my sabbatical was a successful one. The highlight was having the manuscript of my first collection of poems nominated for a first book award by Four Way Books in New York City. Without the sabbatical, I would have been unable to get the manuscript into such good shape to receive this nomination.

In addition to the nomination, I was able to write and publish five book reviews, copies of which can be found at the following link: <http://therumpus.net/author/jim-zukowski/> I wrote these four reviews in lieu of my projected goal of interviewing three poets of national stature and writing one essay on Howe, Hoagland, and Shinder.

I wanted to finish an essay that the journal *Reader* is interested in, but I was unable to complete it during the four month period. However, I continue to work on it in my spare time and hope to have it to them by January 2013.

Below is a brief synopsis of what I did with my time from month to month:

**January:** Revised poems; read Macleish's *Poetry as Experience*; read a biography on Leonard Woolf.

**February:** Wrote review on book by Georg Trakl; started three new poems; sent different poems from manuscript to three different journals; read and responded to Richard Sime's draft of his poem "Tread Bare."

**March:** Wrote review on book by John Yau; queried University of Chicago Press regarding my manuscript; sent manuscript to Four Way Books contest.

**April:** Wrote review on book by Michael Collier; sent manuscript to three additional first book contests; read *In Search of Duende* (Lorca) and "A Case Against Courage in Creative Nonfiction" by Brenda Miller; started review of book by Tomas Tranströmer, which will be published in November of this year.

The time away was precious to me, and I tried to make every minute count. I thank the members of the Sabbatical Committee for believing in my project and supporting my time out of the classroom.