

Mekiya Outini

[Website](#)

(828) 275-2373

mekiya@me.com

EDUCATION

- 2019** **Master's of Fine Arts in English – Fiction**
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville – Distinguished MFA Fellow
- 2015** **Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Minor in Psychology, Certificate in Publishing**
University of North Carolina, Wilmington
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EMPLOYMENT

- 2022 – Present** **Co-Founder | Managing Editor | Writer – The DateKeepers**
Co-founded an international media platform dedicated to telling untold stories, promoting nuanced journalism, and spotlighting well-lived lives. Duties include writing profiles, op-eds, commentaries, essays, and articles; soliciting content from contributing writers; managing web content; and conducting outreach and social media marketing campaigns.
- 2015 – Present** **Freelance Editor – Self-Employed**
Offering developmental and structural editing, copyediting, and proofreading for book-length manuscripts in multiple genres, academic articles, resumes, CVs, application essays, and other professional documents.
- 2021 – 2022** **Writer & Copyeditor – *ABILITY Magazine***
Interviewed persons with disabilities, advocates, and allies, editing interview transcripts, drafted profiles, copyedited content, and conducted other tasks (fact-checking, communications, etc.) as needed.
- 2016 – 2021** **Special Programs Staffer – Spring International Language Center**
Served as a cultural ambassador and chaperone for students and scholars with diverse degrees of English proficiency from over forty countries.
- 2018 – 2019** **Instructor – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute**
Developed two stand-alone lectures on the *Ramayana* and the *Thousand and One Nights*, respectively, and delivered these to small groups of senior citizens.
- 2015 – 2019** **Graduate Student Instructor – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville**

Department of English

Taught fifteen undergraduate sections across four years as the instructor of record. Created original reading lists, lectures, exercises, and activities; conferenced with and mentored students; graded all assignments and papers.

2017 – 2018

Research Instructor's Assistant – Mullin's Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Assisted the research librarian for the English and Communications Departments at the U of A with special projects, data collection, analysis of library holdings, and development of supplemental instruction materials.

2015 – 2017

Writing Tutor – CLASS+ Writing Support, University of Arkansas

Helped students brainstorm, outline, draft, revise, and proofread a variety of documents, face-to-face and online. Gained experience with ESL and international students. Trained to tutor clients who are blind/visually impaired.

2013 – 2015

Writing Tutor – University Writing Center, UNC Wilmington

Helped students brainstorm, outline, draft, revise, and proofread academic papers, face-to-face and online. Mentored new tutors and offered pedagogical feedback.

2013 – 2015

Poetry Editor – *Atlantis Magazine*, UNCW Student Media Center

Reviewed all poetry submissions, selected poems for publication, solicited revisions, and offered feedback to poets. Organized events and fundraisers. Trained a replacement poetry editor before departure.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2019

Creative Nonfiction Essay Writing (1 Section) – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville Department of English

Introduction to writing creative nonfiction: students read contemporary essays and analyzed them from a craft perspective, completed regular journaling assignments and writing exercises, and learned the workshop format for exchanging feedback. Major writing assignments: memoir, braided essay, collage/hermit crab essay, new journalism.

2018

World Literature II: 1650 – Present (2 Sections) – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville Department of English

Students read selected poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and drama with an emphasis on the literary legacies of racial ideology, European imperialism, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Lectures synthesized historical,

cultural, and literary perspectives. Students led discussions, maintained reading journals, and performed role-playing exercises to deepen their understanding of the texts. Major writing assignments: translation comparison/adaptation comparison, research paper/closing arguments.

2017 – 2018

World Literature I: Antiquity – 1650 (3 Sections) – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville Department of English

Students read selected poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and drama with an emphasis on literary articulations of sex, gender, and heroic archetypes in long-form narratives. Original lectures introduced dominant and marginal perspectives to enrich student-led discussions. Students engaged with texts through a variety of interactive exercises. Major writing assignments: translation comparison/adaptation comparison, research paper/closing arguments.

2016 – 2017

Composition II (3 Sections) – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville Department of English

Introduction to meta-writing and ethnographic research: students read peer-reviewed articles, learned about rhetorical theory and procedures for ethnographic research, analyzed popular and academic texts, conducted interviews and field research, and presented their findings in oral and written formats. Major writing assignments: literacy critique, literacy study, rhetorical analysis, and analysis of a discourse community.

2015

Composition I (1 Section) – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville Department of English

Introduction to academic writing, research, and critical thinking: students read articles from newspapers, magazines, and blogs, analyzed them rhetorically, and presented their findings in oral and written formats. Exercises familiarized them with MLA guidelines and basic grammatical principles as well as stylistic, organizational, and persuasive strategies. Major writing assignments: summary, synthesis, rhetorical analysis, and argumentative synthesis.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

May 2014	CRLA Master Tutor Certification
December 2013	CRLA Tutor Certification

PUBLICATIONS

Fiction

- July 2023 “Baptism by Earth.” *New Millennium Writings*. First place winner of the 55th *New Millennium Writings* Award in Fiction. <https://tinyurl.com/4thwu2tk>.
- June 2023 “Still Life with Stalk Eyes.” *The Coachella Review*. Summer 2023 Issue.
- November 2022 “The Red Herring.” *The Madison Review Extended Cut*. 18. <https://www.themadisonrevw.com/single-post/the-madison-review-extended-cut-no-18>.
- September 2022 Chapters I & II of *Ashes, Ashes: A Novel*. *West Trade Review*. 13 (Fall Edition). <https://westtradereview.com/onlineexclusivef22walters.html>.
- June 2021 “Lorelei’s Worm.” *Chautauqua Literary Journal*. Water Issue (18).
- July 2020 “Shibboleth.” *The Write Launch*. Long Short Story. 39. <https://thewritelaunch.com/2020/07/shibboleth/>.
- June 2020 “The Man Who Misspelled God.” *Sunspot Literary Magazine*. 2:1. <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/02648e54-da59-4f41-9110-a5be25d4dace/downloads/V2%20I2%20Rev%208-24-20.pdf?ver=1641831664174>
- April 2013 “They Named Her Blue.” *Atlantis Magazine*. 64.
- June 2020 “Stall.” *Diverse Voices Quarterly*. 13:4.

Essays, Op-Eds, & Commentaries

- June 2023 “ChatGPT is Here, and We are Not Afraid.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/chatgpt-is-here-and-we-are-not-afraid>.
- July 2023 “No News is Good News.” *The DateKeepers*. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/no-news-is-good-news>.
- June 2023 “Banking on a Myth.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/banking-on-myths>.
- April 2023 “It Just Gets Butter and Butter.” *The DateKeepers*. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/it-just-gets-butter-and-butter>
- March 2023 “Left to My Own Devices.” *The DateKeepers*. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/left-to-my-own-devices>
- February 2023 “But Your Heart Can See for Miles...” *The DateKeepers*.

<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/but-your-heart-can-see-for-miles>.

December 2022 “A Christmas Krachel.” *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/a-christmas-krachel>.

July 2022 “The Title is Your Name.” *Michigan Quarterly Review*. 61:3.

May 2022 “Ouroboros – An Anxious Person’s Guide.” *ABILITY Magazine*.
<https://abilitymagazine.com/ouroboros-an-anxious-persons-guide/>.

April 2014 “Goa.” *Atlantis Magazine*. 67.

Interviews & Profiles

September 2023 “The Chorus: Through Literature and Dramaturgy, Alan Robinson Unchains Himself.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/the-chorus-through-literature-and-dramaturgy-alan-robinson-unchains-himself>.

July 2023 “Soukra: An E-Commerce Platform Showcases Tunisian Artists and Artisans Post-Arab Spring.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/soukra-an-e-commerce-platform-showcases-tunisian-artists-and-artisans-post-arab-spring>.

June 2023 “To Make a Difference in This Life: A Mother is Outlived by Her Investment in Her Son.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/to-make-a-difference-in-this-life-a-mother-is-survived-by-her-investment-in-her-son>.

May 2023 “Thinker, Toiler, Sportsman Spry: Blind Cricketer Sonu Golkar is Changing India and the World.” Co-authored with Mekiya Outini. *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/thinker-toiler-sportsman-spry-blind-cricketer-sonu-golkar-is-changing-india-and-the-world>.

March 2023 “At the Nexus: Helen Burge Incorporates Accessibility Across Her Life.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/at-the-nexus-helen-burge-incorporates-accessibility-across-her-life>.

February 2023 “Advocacy in the Balance: Ben VanHook Gives Gratitude its Due without Denying Loss.” Co-authored with Itto Outini. *The DateKeepers*.
<https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/advocacy-in-the-balance-ben-vanhook-gives-gratitude-its-due-without-denying-loss>.

- January 2023 “The Heroine with a Thousand Interfaces: Amy Pedid Weaves a Story of a World that Can Work for Us All.” *The DateKeepers*. Co-authored with Mekiya Outini. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/the-heroine-with-a-thousand-interfaces-amy-pedid-weaves-a-story-of-a-world-that-can-work-for-us-all>. Republished in the *World Blind Herald*, April 2023.
- January 2023 “Osama Shamallakh Says ‘I-CAN’: Elevating the Lives of People with Disabilities in Occupied Palestine.” *The DateKeepers*. Co-authored with Itto Outini. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/osama-shamallakh-elevate>.
- December 2022 “The Accessible Revolution: Vashkar Bhattacharjee and the Birth of an Inclusive Digital Bangladesh.” *The DateKeepers*. Co-authored with Itto Outini. <https://www.thedatekeepers.com/post/the-accessible-revolution-vashkar-bhattacharjee-and-the-birth-of-an-inclusive-digital-bangladesh>.
- December 2022 “Couchsurfing While Deafblind.” *ABILITY Magazine*. Pg. 58 – 63. <https://abilitymagazine.com/aria-bamford-digital-issue/>.
- December 2022 “The Ball’s in Our Court Now: David Wantuck on Sports and COVID-Era Access for the Deaf Community.” *ABILITY Magazine*. Pg. 68 – 70. <https://abilitymagazine.com/aria-bamford-digital-issue/>.
- May 2022 “Offering New Tools.” *Ozark Farm & Neighbor*. <https://ozarksfn.com/2022/05/26/offering-new-tools/>.
- February 2022 Interview with Stephanie Ortoleva, Esq. *ABILITY Magazine*. <https://abilitymagazine.com/stephanie-ortoleva/>.
- February 2022 “Opening the Doors of Perception: A Young Deaf Woman Finds Her Calling through Technology, Community, and Education.” *ABILITY Magazine*. <https://abilitymagazine.com/opening-the-doors-of-perception/>.
- October 2021 “Deepening His Ag Knowledge.” *Ozark Farm & Neighbor*. <https://ozarksfn.com/2021/10/27/deepening-his-ag-knowledge/>.

Poetry

- March 2022 “Soon We’ll Sell Ourselves for Parts.” *Willow Springs Magazine*. 89.
- August 2014 “Alice.” “City of You.” *Actual Paper Magazine*.
- April 2014 “Impersonal Birds.” “The Jackhammers.” *Middle Gray Magazine*. 4.
- April 2014 “Wind Will Be Wind.” “The Jackhammers.” *Episodic Magazine*. 5.

- January 2014 “Subject Permanence.” “Personal Birds.” “Chariot.” *Howl*.
- April 2013 “Island Hoppers.” “Only One.” “Buoy.” “Remember.” “Imaginary Love.” *Atlantis Magazine*. 64.
- April 2012 “We Are from the Sea.” “Strange Kitchen.” *Gulf Stream Magazine*. 7.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- May 2016 “The Masala Complex: Rape-Revenge Cinema, Grassroots Feminism, and the Collision of Gazes in *Mardaani*.” *Film Matters*. 7:1.
- April 2014 “Revising Revisionist Herstory: Reconstructing Gender Narratives Before, During, and After the Partition of India.” *Palaver Interdisciplinary Journal*.

Blog Posts

- September 2022 “FORWARD: Fulbrighters with Disabilities Breaks New Ground, Leaves No One Behind.” Fulbright Association Blog.
<https://fulbright.org/2022/09/12/forward-fulbrighters-with-disabilities-breaks-new-ground-leaves-no-one-behind/>.
- August 2022 “Fulbrighters with Disabilities Launch.” Fulbright Association Blog.
<https://fulbright.org/2022/08/02/fulbrighters-with-disabilities-launch/>.

Book Reviews

- May 2019 Review of *Triangulum: A Novel*, by Masande Ntshanga. Published by Two Dollar Radio. *Arkansas International*.
- April 2019 Review of *Rough Magic: Riding the World’s Loneliest Horse Race*, by Lara Prior-Palmer. Published by Catapult. *Arkansas International*.
- March 2019 Review of *The Archive of Alternate Endings*, by Lindsey Drager. Published by Dzanc Books. *Arkansas International*.
- February 2019 Review of *Companions in Conflict: Animals in Occupied Palestine*, by Penny Johnson. Published by Melville House. *Arkansas International*.
- January 2019 Review of *Night School: A Reader for Grownups*, by Zsófia Bán, translated by Jim Tucker. Published by Open Letter. *Arkansas International*.
- November 2018 Review of *The Females: A Novel*, by Wolfgang Hilbig, translated by Isabel Fargo Cole. Published by Two Lines Press. *Arkansas International*.

September 2018 Review of *American Fictionary*, by Dubravka Ugrešić, translated by Celia Hawkesworth and Ellen Elias-Bursac. Published by Open Letter. *Arkansas International*.

GRANTS & AWARDS

April 2023 First place winner of the 55th *New Millennium Writings Award* in Fiction. (“Baptism by Earth.”) <https://tinyurl.com/4thwu2tk>.

2023 Elizabeth George Foundation Grant – currently accepted to Stage II of the application. (*Blindness is the Light of My Life*).

April 2023 Steinbeck Fellows Program. My work with Itto Outini on her memoir *Blindness is the Light of My Life* received support from the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies at San José University.

April 2023 Finalist for the *North Carolina Literary Review’s* 2023 Alex Albright Creative Nonfiction Prize (“Fleche, Blood”).

March 2023 Finalist for the 2022 Chanticleer Awards for Collections and Novellas (*Cassandra Says*).

March 2023 Short-listed for the 2022 Chanticleer Awards for Short Stories and Essays (“The Cavemen”).

March 2023 Short-listed for the 2022 Chanticleer Awards for Short Stories and Essays (“The Man Who Misspelled God”).

November 2022 Honorable Mention for the 2022 Leapfrog Press Global Fiction Prize (*Bathwater, or, The Miseducation of Ness Chairmonte*)

September 2022 Semi-Finalist for the 2022 Marianne Russo Emerging Writer’s Awards (“The Red Herring”)

April 2022 Semi-Finalist for the 2021 Chanticleer Somerset Awards (*Ashes, Ashes: A Novel*)

May 2022 Finalist for the 2021 Chanticleer Awards for Short Stories, Novelettes, and Novellas (*Bathwater, or, The Miseducation of Ness Chairmonte*)

November 2021 Wait-Listed for the UCross Foundation 2022 Spring Residency Program

September 2021 Semi-Finalist for the 2021 Marianne Russo Emerging Writer’s Awards (*Ashes, Ashes: A Novel*)

December 2020 Winner of *Sunspot Literary Magazine’s* 2020 Editor’s Prize (“The Man Who Misspelled God”)

September 2020 Honorable Mention for the Miami Book Fair’s 2020 Emerging Writer’s Fellowship (*Ashes, Ashes: A Novel*)

March 2020 Finalist for the *Texas Review’s* 2020 George Garret Fiction Prize (*Shibboleth: Stories*)

2012 Chancellor’s List at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington

2011 – 2014 Dean’s List at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington

May 2011 Best Creative Writing Student Departmental Award from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

2015 – 2019 Graduate Fellowship – University of Arkansas
2018 Study Abroad Grant – African American Studies Department
3-week educational trip to Ghana in summer, 2018
2013 Stella Doran International Student Travel Award – UNCW
Studied at the University of Hyderabad, India in spring, 2013

MEDIA APPEARANCES

May 2023 **The Caring Economy Podcast with Toby Usnik.**
Interviewed by Toby Usnik for the episode “Itto & Mekiya Outini:
Disability Advocates, Journalists, Co-Founders of The DateKeepers.”

PUBLIC SPEAKING

August 2022 **Jenderal Soedirman University – Faculty of Humanities**
Delivered the Keynote Speech in the General Lecture for Freshmen, Faculty
of Humanities, Jenderal Soedirman University. Indonesia.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

March 2015 “Revising Revisionist Herstory: Reconstructing Gender Narratives Before,
During, and After the Partition of India.” The Southeast Women’s Studies
Association (SEWSA). Annual Conference: The Ebb and Flow of
Feminism. University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

March 2023 Finalsite University Conference. Orlando, Florida.
June 2022 15th Session of the Conference of State Parties to the United Nations
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New York City, New
York.
March 2022 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference & Book
Fair. Philadelphia, PA.
March 2018 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference & Book
Fair. Tampa, FL.
February 2017 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference & Book
Fair. Washington DC.
March 2016 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Annual Conference & Book
Fair. Los Angeles, CA.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2017 – Present Golden Key Society
2013 – Present Phi Eta Sigma
2012 – Present Honors Society

2011 – Present Phi Beta Kappa
2011 – Present National Society of High School Honors

VOLUNTEER

- 2022 – 2023 Communications Specialist – Fulbrighters with Disabilities**
Reviewing digital content (promotional materials, blogs, newsletters, etc.), copyediting written content, making recommendations for the chapter’s digital content strategy, and ensuring that digital content is accessible in accord with WCAG guidelines.
- 2020 Grocery Delivery Driver – Canopy Northwest Arkansas**
Delivered fresh produce from the local farmer’s market to refugee households.
- 2018 – 2020 Area Representative – Youth for Understanding**
Interviewed American families interested in hosting exchange students and students interested in going abroad. Monitored participating households, mediated conflicts, and assessed scholarship applications.
- 2018 Conversation Group Leader – University of Arkansas, Fayetteville’s International Students Office**
Led discussions with international students practicing their English speaking and listening skills.
- 2017 Ambassador – Afghan Fulbright Conference on Social Movements at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville**
Welcomed Afghan students to Fayetteville, shuttled them to and from the airport, engaged in discussions regarding cultural exchange, American-Afghan relations, and graduate student life with participants.
- 2016 – 2018 Conversation Partner – Spring International Language Center**
Met weekly with international students practicing their English speaking and listening skills.