

# Mekiya Outini

[Website](#)

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## 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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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2022 – Present**            **Co-Founder & Content Editor – The DateKeepers**  
Offering manuscript analysis and comprehensive editorial services to novelists, memoirists, students, and scholars as they refine their manuscripts, research and apply for opportunities and funding, generate book proposals, and develop industry-critical skills.
- 2015 – Present**            **Author – Self-Employed**  
Writing short-form and book-length literary fiction and creative nonfiction, solo and in partnership with my wife, Itto Outini.
- 2015 – 2022**              **Freelance Editor – Self-Employed**  
Offered comprehensive editorial services to novelists, memoirists, journalists, students, and scholars.
- 2021 – 2022**              **Writer & Copyeditor – ABILITY Magazine**  
Interviewed subjects, copyedited content, drafted profiles, and managed communications.
- 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 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 supporting clients using English as a foreign language.
- 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.

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### **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.

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**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS**

May 2014	CRLA (College Reading & Learning Association) Master Tutor Certification
December 2013	CRLA (College Reading & Learning Association) Tutor Certification

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**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

*Fiction & Creative Nonfiction*

- Forthcoming “Incomplete Nurture.” Essay. *Fourth Genre*. 27.1.
- Forthcoming “Chapter 9: English.” Memoir excerpt co-authored with Itto Outini. *The North American Review*. 310.1.
- July 2023 “Baptism by Earth.” Short story. *New Millennium Writings*. First place winner of the 55<sup>th</sup> *New Millennium Writings* Award in Fiction. <https://tinyurl.com/4thwu2tk>
- June 2023 “Still Life with Stalk Eyes.” Short story. *The Coachella Review*. Summer 2023 Issue. <http://thecoachellareview.com/2023/06/02/still-life-with-stalk-eyes-by-mekiya-outini/>
- November 2022 “The Red Herring.” Short story. *The Madison Review Extended Cut*. 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.” Short story. *Chautauqua Literary Journal*. Water Issue (18).
- July 2020 “Shibboleth.” Short story. *The Write Launch*. Long Short Story. 39.
- June 2020 “The Man Who Misspelled God.” Short story. *Sunspot Literary Magazine*. 2:1.

### ***Interviews & Profiles***

- December 2022 “Couchsurfing While Deafblind.” *ABILITY Magazine*. Pg. 58 – 63. <https://abilitymagazine.com/maria-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/maria-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.

### **Academic Papers**

- 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/>

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## PRIZES & AWARDS

August 2024 Finalist for the 2024 *Fourth Genre* Steinberg Memorial Essay Prize (“Incomplete Nurture”)

June 2024 Finalist for the 2024 *Arts & Letters* Prize in Creative Nonfiction (“0 | 1”)

March 2024 Finalist for the 2024 Disquiet Prize & Denis Johnson “Stagaya” Memorial Fellowship (“0 | 1”)

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

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

## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, & RESIDENCIES

- Mar – Apr 2024**      **MacDowell Fellowship (Spring/Summer Residency)**  
While in residence at MacDowell, I completed a memoir in essays.
- 2023 – 2024**      **Steinbeck Fellows Program**  
My work with Itto Outini on her memoir received support from the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies at San José University.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2015 – 2019**      **Distinguished MFA Fellowship – University of Arkansas**  
Merit-based award of additional funding for promising MFA candidates
- 2015 – 2019**      **Graduate Fellowship – University of Arkansas**  
Stipend for graduate assistant instructors in good academic standing
- 2018**      **Study Abroad Grant – African American Studies Department**  
Award to participate in a three-week educational trip to Ghana
- 2013**      **Stella Doran International Student Travel Award – UNCW**  
Award to study for one semester at the University of Hyderabad, India

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2017 – Present      Golden Key Society  
2013 – Present      Phi Eta Sigma

2012 – Present      Honors Society  
2011 – Present      Phi Beta Kappa

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## VOLUNTEER

- 2024**                      **Reader – *The Harvard Review***  
Reading fiction and nonfiction submissions to *The Harvard Review*, contributing comments, voting to accept or reject submissions.
- 2022 – 2023**              **Communications Specialist – Fulbrighters with Disabilities**  
Wrote and copyedited blogs, newsletters, web content, and promotional materials and made recommendations for the chapter’s digital content strategy.
- 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.