

R u F r e e m a n

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E d u c a t i o n

Rutgers University, NJ (MFA) Completed poetry manuscript and the draft of a new work of creative non-fiction that explores the mal/functioning of human memory even in the most intimate domestic realms, and the implications for how we examine larger political histories. The work unfolds from the point of view of a single narrator who moves backward and forward in time as they parse the beginning and end of a marriage within the context of migration, nationality, cultural and gender differences, and war from the vantage of American citizenship.

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka (MA Labor Studies) Completed landmark thesis on the rights of female migrant workers in the political and cultural context of the Middle East, specifically in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Conducted primary research with diplomats, policy-makers, and workers. Thesis used by the Ministry of Finance in Sri Lanka to guide bi-lateral trade negotiations.

Bates College, Lewiston, Maine (BA High Honors, Cum Laude) Major: International Relations. Awarded Mellon Grant for Honors Research on international development initiatives in South Asia. Semester intensive at American University, studying conflict resolution. Internship at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC. Thesis: USAID in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia. One year of course-work on a not-for-credit basis in communications, sociology, and political movements

Bandaranaike Center for International Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Diploma in international relations and diplomacy.

Major Publications

Fiction & Non-Fiction

Bon Courage: Essays on Inheritance, Citizenship, and a Creative Life (August, 2023)

From the editor: *Bon Courage* is a fierce, eclectic, and intimate collection that encompasses the big questions of our time: what we mean by courage, how we define our world, how we choose to exist in it. An exhilarating journey through a layered intellectual landscape textured with a range of political and personal enthusiasms, and emboldened by a passionate defense of the disregarded. Wide ranging and inclusive in the essay mode, deep and revealing as a memoir, with the dynamics and layering of great fiction. It brings global perspectives to subjects as diverse as Bowie and Dylan, Palestine, 9/11, hairstyles, personal and cultural identity, motherhood and #MeToo. A resplendent and compendious exploration of great empathy, insight, and bon courage indeed.

Sleeping Alone: Stories (2022)

In a collection of rich and textured stories about crossing borders, both real and imagined, *Sleeping Alone* asks one of the fundamental questions of our times: What is the toll of feeling foreign in one's land, to others, or even to oneself? A cast of misfits, young and old, single and coupled, even entire family units, confront startling changes wrought by difficult circumstances or harrowing choices. These stories span the world, moving from Maine to Sri Lanka, from Dublin to Philadelphia, paying exquisite attention to the dance between the intimate details of our lives and our public selves.

On Sal Mal Lane (2013)

Set in Sri Lanka in the years leading up to civil war, this novel places the innocence of children against the petty prejudices and fatal negligence of the adults charged with their care. Translated into multiple languages including French and Italian, and available in audio. "I don't know that I've seen children more opulently depicted in fiction since Dickens," (NYT Book Review). "There is something positively Russian in the feel of this book," (The Globe & Mail). A NY Times Editor's Choice in hard-cover and paperback. Long-listed for the Impac Dublin Literary Prize.

A Disobedient Girl (2009)

Told in alternating chapters, this novel is an intricately imagined immersion in the lives of two women, a spirited young girl and a proud mother, each determined to be mistress of her own fate. Published in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and India by Viking, in multiple translation, including Hebrew and Chinese, and in audio. “Freeman has created two women who can stand shoulder to shoulder with the best of fiction’s feminist protagonists” (The Wall Street Journal). “A dense, involving read” (UK Guardian).

A n t h o l o g i e s

Indivisible: Global Leaders on Shared Security (2018)

Forty global leaders and activists reflect on the state of the world, and the indivisibility of lasting peace and security. From renowned peacemaker Archbishop Desmond Tutu to the twenty-eight year old UN Secretary General’s Envoy for Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, from New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to Impac Dublin Literary Award winner and creator of Story4, Colum McCann, a world-renowned cast of writers disavow the notion of security as stemming from walls, x-ray machines, armed security forces, and other militarized means of separating one population or group from another, refuse to identify particular groups or demographics as threats to other groups, and redefine security as being inclusive and egalitarian.

Extraordinary Rendition: (American) Writers On Palestine (2015)

A ground-breaking anthology that collects the work of 65 American poets and writers across every cultural divide, on the question of global justice in the context of Palestine. With compassion and intelligence, these writers articulate how artists can address the pressing political questions of our time. Contributors include Cristina García, Alice Walker, Teju Cole, Dwayne Betts, Tess Gallagher, George Saunders, Diego Vázquez Jr , Leslie Jamieson, Tomás Q. Morín, Jane Hirshfield, Kazim Ali, Kiese Laymon, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Chana Bloch. “This is a book that Americans who believe they’re interested in a ‘just peace’ between Palestinians and Israelis should read. It’s a wide, and diverse and eloquent book of witness” (Richard Ford) “These varied writings combine to produce a uniquely complex and powerful testimony. This is an extraordinary political-literary intervention.” (Joseph O’Neill). New edition: Interlink Press (2016)

P o e t r y

- *Poetry Northwest* (Spring, 2023) “The Japanese Maple has Reached Maturity but I am Still a Child”
- *Michigan Quarterly Review* (Fall, 2022) “The Last Laugh” and “The Citizen”
- *Poetry* (April, 2019) “Bride Price” and “The Heart Shows No Signs”
- *American Poetry Review* (April, 2019) “Open Carry”
- *Words Without Borders* (April, 2019) “At Sea”
- *Flash Frontier* (April, 2019) “The Old Poet,” “Tristesse,” “Let Us Then See,” and “Thoughts for the Unborn”
- *Adirondack Review* (Winter, 2019) “Loose Change” and “Years Later”
- *The Petersburg Review* (Winter 2018/19) “Incandescence,” “Escargot,” & “Mise En Abyme.”
- *Springhouse Journal* (Winter 2018/19) “Two Fathers”
- *Post Road* (Fall, 2018) “America Is Having a Revolution,” “Solitary” and “Double Bluff”
- *Consequence Magazine* (Fall, 2017, 10th Anniversary Issue on Women Writing About War) “To Do List”
- *Zyzzyva* (Summer, 2017) “For Ali,” and “High”
- *Resist Much/Obey Little: Inaugural Poems to the Resistance* (Spuyten Duyvil Press, 2017) “1936 - 2016”
- *The Normal School* (Fall, 2016) “Love, Philadelphia,” “Say My Name,” “Learning Their Letters,” and “Listening to Ishmael Reed”
- *Narrative Magazine* (Spring, 2013, Poems of the Week) “In Your Hour of Need, God,” “Humanitarian Crisis,” “At Sea,” and “The Planning Stage”

N o n - F i c t i o n E s s a y s

- “Many Rights, Few Responsibilities” *VQR* (Fall, 2020)
- “Memory, Loss” *Ninth Letter* (Summer, 2017)
- “Everything But The Ranch” in *Panorama: The Journal of Intelligent Travel* (September, 2016)
- “This Brown, This Green,” in *The House That Made Me*, an anthology on writers looking at their childhood homes using Google Earth (Grant Jarrett, Ed.) Spark Press (Spring, 2016)
- “Pineapple & Roasted Nuts,” part of a series on writers speaking of the literary cultures in their nations of origin. *The UK Guardian* (October, 2015)

- “Glory,” in *Me, My Hair and I: Twenty-Seven Women Untangle an Obsession* (Elizabeth Benedict, Ed.) Algonquin Press (Spring, 2015)
- “Worth It,” in *Spent* (Kerry Cohen, Ed.) Seal Publishing (September, 2014)
- “When in Doubt, Climb the Roof,” in *Shaping the World: Women Writers on Themselves* (Manju Kapur, Ed.) Hay House (Fall, 2014)
- “Home Spun,” On immigration. Nominated for a Pushcart Prize. *Ocean State Review* (July, 2014)
- “The City and the Writer: Colombo” *Words Without Borders* (June, 2014)
- “The Folks at Uncle Moe’s Diner” *The Reader’s Digest* (June, 2014)
- “In Passing” *Narrative Magazine* Story of the Week (Fall, 2013)
- “Staying Hungry on Enid Blyton” *Pebble Lake Review* (Winter, 2010)
- “In All Things, Absent” *R.k.v.r.y Journal* (Summer, 2010)
- Essay on Half & Half: Growing up Biracial-Bicultural (Pantheon, 1998) *Post Road* (Summer, 2010)
- Essays for forum on Asian American literature, along with David Mura and Alexander Chee. *Asian American Literary Review* (Spring, 2010)
- “I Am Not Now, Nor Have I Ever Been, An Adolescent,” essay in *Crab Orchard Review, v.12.no.2* special issue on The In-Between Age: Writers on Adolescence. (Summer/Fall 2008)

Short Stories

- “Retaining Walls” *Michigan Quarterly Review* (Spring, 2021)
- “Anonymous” *Asterix Journal Ferrente Project* (Fall, 2020)
- “Fault Lines” in *Tales of Two Countries: Stories of Inequality In a Divided Nation* (John Freeman, Ed.) Grove Press (Spring, 2017)
- “Beauty Treatments.” *Kiweli Journal* (October, 2014)
- “The Irish Girl.” *Story Quarterly* (Spring, 2014)
- “Departure.” *The Delmarva Review, v. 6* (Fall, 2013)
- “Siege” *Guernica Magazine* (PEN/Guernica Series, April 2013)
- “The Musician.” *Narrative Magazine*, Story of the Week (Summer, 2013)
- “Sleeping Alone.” *VQR* (Spring, 2012)
- “First Son.” (Alan Cheuse, Ed.) *World Literature Today* (September, 2010)
- “At the Dance” *Confessions: Fact or Fiction? A Collection of Short Stories & Memoir* (2010, Ed. Herta Feely)
- “Jesse’s Story.” *Guernica Magazine* (January, 2009)
- “What Could Be Said About Pedris Road.” *Writecorner* (Summer, 2008)

Interviews & Reviews

Boston Globe (2017—) Reviews of international fiction including Mohsin Hamid (*Exit West*, *The Last White Man*), Arvind Adiga (*Selection Day*), Javier Marias (*Thus Bad Begins*) Laila Lalami (*The Other Americans*)

New York Times Book Review (2016—) Anuk Arudpragasam (*The Story of a Brief Marriage*) and Sharon Bala (*The Boat People*)

Huffington Post (2009—) Interviews/reviews of prose include (Chang-rae Lee, Sunil Yapa, Jen Percy, etc.), and poetry (Roger Reeves, Dwayne Betts, John Freeman, etc.)

NPR, You Must Read This (2014) Alessandro Barrico's novel, *Silk*.

PEN Voices Issue 17 (2014) Interview with Jamaica Kincaid

AWP Writer (2014) "One Book to Rule Them All" Review of See Now Then (Jamaica Kincaid)

Colby Magazine (2007) "Selling Girls Short." Review of Lyn Mikel Brown's seminal non-fiction exposé of popular culture, *Packaging Girlhood* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2007)

Opinion

Virginia Quarterly Review (Fall, 2020) "Becoming A Citizen" opening essay for a new series, On Becoming, in VQR

LitHub (April, 2020) "We Owe More to Our Young Writers: on the Relevance of the Workshop"

The Chronicle of Higher Education (2018) "The Perils of Anonymity" part of the special issue on women and power in the academy

AWP Writer (Spring/Summer, 2014) Commissioned to write a five part series for writers on travel, honesty, influence, the writing community, and writing residencies.

Honors & Service

From the Dark Tower Series in NYC, curator (ongoing)

Disquiet International Literary Prize for Non-Fiction & Grand Prize in all genres

Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize for Fiction by an American Woman. Previous winners include

Anne Patchett, Toni Morrison, and Ursula K. Le Guin

Sister Mariella Gable Award for Literature

Fellowships from the Corporation of Yaddo (2010, 2016, 2019, 2022)

Fellowship from the Lannan Foundation (2016)

Fellowship from Hedgebrook (2016)
Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. Four consecutive scholarships & teaching fellowship.
Impac Dublin Literary Award. On *Sal Mal Lane* (long-listed)
PEN Faulkner Award Judge in Fiction
Finalist for the Restless Books Prize in NF for *Another Language* (collection of essays)
DCS Prize for South Asian Literature *On Sal Mal Lane* and *A Disobedient Girl*. Long-listed

Work Experience

Teaching / Faculty

Columbia University, NY (Fall, 2013-present) Visiting Professor and thesis advisor in Creative Writing, teaching Advanced Fiction Workshop (undergraduate) and Master Classes (MFA) on special topics including writing devoted to the exploration of race, class, and gender, from a multiplicity of perspectives and genres, using work both in English and in translation.

Wilkes-Barre, PA (Fall, 2022-present) Adjunct Professor and thesis advisor in Creative Writing, teaching Advanced Poetry.

University of Oregon, Cascades MFA (2017-present) Core Faculty in Creative Writing (Fiction) leading classes and workshops around the Words in Action component of the program.

City College of New York, MFA (Spring, 2017) Distinguished Visiting Professor teaching Critical Practice course on turning the personal into fiction.

Colorado College (Fall, 2015) Distinguished MacLean Professor, teaching advanced course for seniors and juniors majoring in creative writing.

Journalism

Boston Globe, Correspondent at Large (Fall 2016–) Reviews of international fiction including Mohsin Hamid, Arvind Adiga, Javier Marias, & Laila Lalami

Huffington Post Books (2009—) Staff blogger, covering the American and international literary world including festivals and prizes, literary conferences and communities, literary organizations, booksellers and social media.

Huffington Post Politics (2009—) Staff blogger covering breaking news around American and international political events.

Common Dreams (2007—) Correspondent for critical analysis of international development, American election coverage, American and international popular movements, and popular culture, selected for inclusion by the progressive news-aggregating service.

V i s i t i n g W r i t e r / I n t e r n a t i o n a l

The Bread Loaf Writers Conference, Sicily, Italy

Summer Literary Seminars, Tbilisi, Georgia

The Disquiet International Literary Program, Lisbon, Portugal

S e l e c t e d S p e a k i n g E n g a g e m e n t s

- **Narrative 4** (August, 2020-present) “Migraré,” a 3-day story exchange on race and racial divides in the United States and around the world; National Day of Dialogue 2022 and 2023;
- **Cleveland, OH** (August, 2020) Literary Cleveland panel on rethinking problematic workshop assumptions on gender and race
- **Siem Reap, Cambodia.** Keynote speaker at international gathering of activists working on growing restrictions on civic space
- **Philadelphia, PA.** Modern Languages Association panel on “The Creative Writers Obligation in the Age Of ___”
- **Association of Writers & Writing Programs.** Multiple panels on feminism, gender, race, class, writing violence/war, and politics, with Ta-Nehisi Coates, Leslie Jamison, Cheryl Strayed, Luis Urrea, among others.
- **Richmond, VA** Speaker, Virginia Commonwealth University; **Blacksburg, VA.** Virginia Tech University Symposium on Writing & Reconciliation, Keynote.
- **Toronto Palestine Film Festival.** Panel on confronting censorship with Elle Flanders, John Greyson & Richard Fung
- **Santa Fe, NM. Lannan Conversations** with Anne Carson, Teju Cole, and Gideon Levy
- **Miami, FL. Brickell Avenue Literary Society & Miami Book Festival.** Headline events with John Freeman, Edwidge Danticat, Jane Hirshfield, Dwayne Betts, Daniel Alarcón etc.

- **Palestine Festival of Literature.** Invited to represent the U.S.
- **Seattle, WA.** Keynote speaker at Search for Meaning Conference
- **New York. Words Without Borders Gala.** Opening speaker/reader
- **Jaipur Literary Festival.** Sponsored by the American embassy to represent the U.S. along with Jhumpa Lahiri, Cheryl Strayed, and Joseph O’Neill.
- **Brooklyn Book Festival.** Headline event discussing political conflict in fiction, with Colum McCann and Sinan Antoon, moderated by Rob Spillman
- **PEN World Voices Festival.** Headline event with Jamaica Kincaid
- **Chicago, MN. Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights** Keynote
- **Oakton Community College,** Keynote speaker for International Education Week.
- **Union, NJ.** Keynote speaker at annual gala for Manavi, the largest national organization dealing with the exploitation of South Asian Women in the U.S.
- **Galle International Literary Festival, Sri Lanka.** Featured guest with Gillian Slovo.
- **Smithsonian South Asian Literary & Theater Arts Festival.** Selected with Daniyal Mueenuddin, Kamila Shamsie, Kunal Basu, and Tania James.
- **Washington, DC.** United States State Department Guest speaker; Smithsonian South Asian Literary & Theater Arts Festival.

N o n - P r o f i t

Narrative4 (N4) Global

Director of the Artist Network (Fall, 2020—present) Recruited and developed long-term relationships with artists from around the world for international non-profit. Identified key strengths and shaped thinking around N4’s ground-breaking learning resources aimed at teaching and nurturing empathy in students from high school through college as well as within organizations. Represented the organization with agile diplomacy at public events globally with major individual donors, foundations, and corporates, as well as at public institutions of education in the US and abroad.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Philadelphia, PA

- **Writer & Editor** (2017—2020) Consultant writer and editor on AFSC's strategic priorities of addressing restricted spaces, including new political developments around the COVID-19 response, and shared global security. Produced two major publications around the work of activists and inter/national leaders in the field of human rights and social justice including *Indivisible: Global Leaders on Shared Security* co-edited with Associate General Secretary of International Programs, Kerri Kennedy

- **In-kind Gifts Officer/Corporate.** Helped draft overall strategy for engagement of corporate donors in the Emergency and Material Assistance Program (EMAP). Assessed needs and distribution of do- nations based on the cultural sensibilities of communities throughout the US and internationally.
- **Interim Grants Officer/Chicago.** Worked on strategic plan and guidelines for the Great Lakes Region grant-writing process. Researched foundations and fostered working organizational relationships with donors and regional offices. Coordinated the writing of grants specific to AFSC program initiatives.
- **Staff Assistant.** Researched and wrote on issues pertaining to the Peace Education Program in Youth & Militarism. Assisted in the nation-wide dissemination of information on program.

The Sahana Project, Maine

Director of tsunami-relief project for the state of Maine created to rebuild a village in Sri Lanka. Oversaw all fundraising, events supporting the project, organized print and visual media, managed budget with a resulting surplus available for additional work, and represented the state at the opening.

Colby College, Waterville, ME

- **Director, Colby Cares About Kids.** Recruited, trained, placed, and guided more than 340 college students as they mentored local kids. Managed budget, public relations, and event-planning.
- **Freelance Writer for Colby Magazine.** Covered issues relevant to the wider national/ international community of alum and parents, including on-campus speakers and forums.

Joint Action in Community Service, (JACS) Inc. Philadelphia and New York, NY

Consultant/Program Manager to the NY Regional Office, and Regional Director of Philadelphia office of national non-profit organization under Federal contract to serve disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16-24. Coordinated all components of The Big Apple Summit on Volunteerism for non-profits working with youth in NYC, including publicity.

Verité, Inc. (Verification in Trade & Export) Amherst, MA

Consultant Writer. Investigated grants from foundations and private sources for international non-profit operating in the arena of human and labor rights for workers in foreign countries. Chief writer of comprehensive Sri Lanka social-audit reports for US clients served by Verité.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

Consultant. Assisted the South Asia office of the international branch of the AFL-CIO with

extensive writing and editing of proposals, reports, and program evaluations in South Asia, reviewing of grant applications, and coordinating program development. Participated in public relations work presenting the organization and its objectives to the public through written material, provided feedback on national programs supporting migrant workers, and mediated between government and trade union representatives in a newly privatized economy.

Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, DC.

Research Intern. Conducted research on international finance for the Global Economy Project. Researched, edited and contributed to the final chapters of *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations & the New World Order*. (Simon & Schuster). Represented the institute at international press conference of NGOs.