

Erin Slaughter, M.F.A.
Creative Writing, 2017

By Heather Neidlinger

Visiting Assistant Professor of
Creative Writing,
Coastal Carolina University

"In my mind, the biggest benefit of WKU's MFA over other programs is the opportunity to work across genres, and to have a supporting, unpretentious but challenging environment to experiment as a writer."



Erin Slaughter graduated from WKU in 2017 as part of the inaugural MFA cohort that began in 2015. After graduating from WKU with her masters, she went on to receive her PhD in Creative Writing from Florida State University.

As a senior in her undergrad, Erin decided to apply to MFA programs. "I knew that writing was my passion," she said. "I wanted to make a life out of it in whatever sense I could be allowed to."

She initially applied to 15 programs, but WKU was the only school that accepted her. "That felt like evidence of my lack of promise as a writer," she stated. "I now understand it was the right path opening for me with absolute clarity."

Erin was welcomed by faculty and colleagues alike, and was excited to be part of a new program that needed students to help shape it into what it has become now. "It was a profound experience for me," she stated, "and has changed the course of my life in all the best ways."

It was during her time at WKU that she met some of her "dearest friends", and she started a literary journal with one of her cohort members, Lena Ziegler. They started *The Hunger* in the summer of 2017 after finishing the MFA program. She said they launched it because they "saw a lack in the literary magazine market for the kind of visceral, emotionally-driven, stylistically inventive writing" they enjoyed, but also as

way to stay close after leaving WKU. The magazine has put out 12 issues, which led to the creation of The Hunger Press.

Erin has also served as a Nonfiction Editor of the national literary journal *Southeast Review*, faculty advisor to FSU's undergraduate publication *The Kudzu Review*, and has been awarded the Edward H. and Marie C. Kingsbury Fellowship. Her works include *A Manual for How to Love Us* (Harper Perennial, 2023), *The Sorrow Festival* (CLASH Books, 2022), and *I Will Tell This Story to the Sun Until You Remember That You Are the Sun* (New Rivers Press, 2019). She has also been published in *Literary Hub*, *Electric Literature*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Rumpus*, *CRAFT*, and others.

Erin sees WKU as the starting point of all of it. "Not only did I meet many of my dearest friends in the MFA program," she stated, "but it's where my life as a writer really began, and the professors I worked with have been supportive even years after I finished the program."

