



JOAN DEMPSEY

Author & Writing Teacher

EDUCATION

- Post-Graduate Certificate, Creative Writing Pedagogy, Antioch University Los Angeles, Dec 2005
- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Antioch University Los Angeles, June 2005
- Master of Science in Management, Lesley University, *summa cum laude*, 1995
- Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, with a concentration in the Study of Faith, Peace and Justice, Boston College, *cum laude*, 1985

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Advanced Fiction Workshop, Lee Smith, The Key West Literary Seminars, 2008
- Advanced Learning Design, Global Learning Partners, 2007
- Foundations of Dialogue Education: From Principles to Practice, Global Learning Partners, 2006
- Fiction Workshop, Melissa Pritchard, Vermont College Post-Graduate Writer's Conference, 2002
- Private Writing Instruction, Bruce Machart, 2002
- Three Fiction Workshops, Manuel Munoz & Bruce Machart - Grub Street Writers, Boston 2000-01

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Poets & Writers Maureen
Egen Writers Exchange
Award Winner, 2017

One of "5 more over 50"
writers to watch, *Poets &
Writers*, Nov/Dec 2017

**PRAISE FOR THE NOVEL
"THIS IS HOW IT BEGINS"**

Bronze Medalist, 2018
Independent Publisher
Award

Finalist, 2018 Lambda
Literary Award

Finalist, Foreword Indies 2017
Book of the Year Award

Finalist, Sarton Women's
Book Award 2017

"... an extraordinarily pertinent novel dripping in suspense and powerful scenes of political discourse ... a must-read ..."

—FOREWORD (starred review)

"... [Dempsey's] talent is evident ... a fast-paced, entertaining read."

—MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM

"... timely, suspenseful and powerful exploration of the very real conflict between religious freedom and civil rights ... a provocative hit."

—KENNEBEC JOURNAL

"Beautifully written ... an ambitious and moving debut novel."

—LILY KING, author of the award-winning national bestseller, *Euphoria*

PUBLISHED WORKS

- *This Is How It Begins*, a novel, She Writes Press, Berkeley, CA, October 3, 2017 ISBN : 978-1-63152-308-3
- "By Next Dusk," short memoir, *Plenitude Magazine*, 2014
- "The Lennon Room," flash fiction, *The Citron Review*, Spring, 2013
- "Waiting for You: Beauford Delaney as James Baldwin's Inspiration for the Character Creole in *Sonny's Blues*," literary criticism, *Obsidian: Literature of the African Diaspora Issue 12:1, Spring 2011*
- "Leaving the Ledges," short story, *Alligator Juniper*, Summer 2009
- "Wild Swan," short story, *The Adirondack Review*, Fall 2007; finalist for the Fulton Prize
- "The Silver Bullets," personal essay, National Public Radio's *Only a Game*, WBUR, Boston, 1995

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- *Bronze Medalist*, 2018 Independent Publisher Award for *This Is How It Begins*
- *Finalist*, 2018 Lambda Literary Award for *This Is How It Begins*
- *Finalist*, Foreword Indies 2017 Book of the Year Award for *This Is How It Begins*
- *Finalist*, Sarton Women's Book Award 2017 for *This Is How It Begins*
- *Winner*, Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award from Poets & Writers, 2017
- *Finalist*, The Great Novel Contest, Columbus Creative Cooperative, 2013, for *Vigilant : A Novel* (unpublished)
- *Recipient*, \$13,300 research grant, the Elizabeth George Foundation, for research in Warsaw at the Jewish Historical Institute and in Washington, D.C. at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Library, for work on *This Is How It Begins*, 2012
- *Finalist*, *Vigilant*, Unboxed Books Prize in Fiction, 2012 for *Vigilant : A Novel* (unpublished)
- *Finalist*, New England History Writing Contest, The Salem Literary Festival, 2010
- *Finalist*, Orlando Nonfiction Prize, A Room of Her Own Foundation, 2009
- *Finalist*, Arthur Edelstein Prize for Short Fiction, 2009
- *Finalist*, the 2008 Alligator Juniper Fiction Contest
- *Winner*, Maine Literary Award for Unpublished Fiction, 2008
- *Scholarship Recipient*, The 2008 Key West Literary Seminars and Workshops
- *Finalist*, Reynolds Price Fiction Award, Salem College Center for Women Writers, 2007
- *Finalist*, Writers at Work Fellowship Competition in Fiction, 2007
- *Recipient*, Artist Opportunity Grant, NH State Council on the Arts, 2006
- *Noted Writer*, The Boston Fiction Festival, 2006
- *Recipient*, The Eloise Klein Healy Scholarship, Antioch University Los Angeles, 2003

MANUSCRIPT CONSULTATION, EDITING, COACHING

- Ongoing developmental editing with aspiring writers—worked with more than 300 writers on manuscripts from five- to 400-pages (fiction and non-fiction), 2008—present
- Sample of manuscript consultation and developmental editing of published works :
 - ◆ *I Know It In My Heart : Walking Through Grief with a Child, a memoir*, Mary E. Plouffe, PhD, She Writes Press, Berkeley, 2017
 - ◆ *From Trafficking to Terror*, Dr. Pardis Mahdavi, Routledge, 2014
 - ◆ *Eighty Days: Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland's History-Making Race Around the World*, Matthew Goodman, Random House, 2013
 - ◆ *Show Me Good Land*, Shonna Milliken Humphrey, Down East Press, 2011
 - ◆ *Nine Simple Patterns for Complicated Women*, Mary Rechner, Propeller Books, 2010
 - ◆ *Gridlock: Labor, Migration, and Human Trafficking in Dubai*, Dr. Pardis Mahdavi, Stanford University Press, 2010
 - ◆ *The Sun and the Moon : The Remarkable True Account of Hoaxers, Showmen, Dueling Journalists, and Lunar Man-Bats in Nineteenth-Century New York*, by Matthew Goodman, Basic Books 2008
 - ◆ *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution*, by Dr. Pardis Mahdavi (Pomona College), Stanford University Press, 2008
 - ◆ *Perley: The True Story of the Hermit of Taylor Pond*, by Sheila Swett, Cheshire County Historical Society, New Hampshire, 2008
 - ◆ *For Better or for Worse: Vietnamese International Marriages in the New Global Economy*, Dr. Hung Cam Thai, Rutgers University Press, March 2008

TEACHING & PUBLIC SPEAKING

- *Reading*, Local Writers @ The Local Buzz, with poet Jay Franzel, Cape Elizabeth, ME 2018
- *Reading*, Books in the 'Brook, with Poet Deb Cummins, Westbrook, ME 2018
- *Guest Author*, Creative Writing Class Discussion, two public readings, Northern Maine Community College, Presque Isle, ME 2018
- *Guest Author*, Creative Writing Class, Freeport High School, Freeport, ME 2017
- Community Conversation & Reading, Bear Pond Books, Montpelier, VT, 2017
- Literary Luncheon, Conversation with Frank O. Smith, book reviewer & author, Portland Public Library, Portland, ME, 2017
- Readings & Book Signings: Longfellow Books, Portland, ME; McNally-Jackson Books, NYC; Porter Square Books, Cambridge, MA; Toadstool Bookshops, Keene, NH , 2017
- *Panelist*, Writing About Current Events, Writers Day at Bay Path University, Longmeadow, MA, 2017
- *Panelist*, Writing Great Characters, Bangor Book Festival, ME, 2017
- *Teacher*, online revision courses for serious creative writers, 2014-present :
 - ◆ Revision Essentials: 15 Self-Editing Skills Every Creative Writer Needs to Master
 - ◆ Revise Your Writing: Where to Begin
 - ◆ Revise With Confidence: See Your Writing Like an Editor
 - ◆ Writing Great Dialogue
- *Keynote Speaker and Emcee*, The Maine Literary Awards Celebration, hosted by the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, 2009, 2010
- *Featured Reader*, Fulton Prize Finalist, New York Center for Independent Publishing, 2007

- *Instructor*, Keene State College English Department, Women's Writing 203, 2005
- *Pedagogy Panel Participant*, Antioch University Los Angeles – *Who's in Your Classroom and How Might They Learn Best: The Learning Needs & Resource Assessment*, 2005
- *Lecturer*, Senior Seminar, Antioch University Los Angeles MFA in Creative Writing Program – *That's Implicit, Get Rid of It: Simple Tools to Streamline Your Prose*, 2005
- *Guest Host*, Free Speech, Keene State College Radio, WKNH – Produced and hosted a six-week series for a live, hour-long interview program featuring emerging artists, 2004
- *Speaker, Facilitator, and Workshop Instructor*, National Council for Animal Protection – At annual membership conference presented on prior year's accomplishments, facilitated large group dialogue and decision-making processes and ran seminars on diverse topics, 2002 – 2008
- *Spokesperson*, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) – Effective public speaker in print, radio, and television media, and before the state legislature, town and city selectmen meetings, and state regulatory hearings, 1997 – 2002
- *Workshop Instructor*, MSPCA – *Grassroots Lobbying for Animal Advocates; Implications of the 1996 Wildlife Protection Act: Explaining the Law and Its Implementation; Living With Wildlife* – Developed curriculum based on adult learning theory and facilitated workshops for MSPCA members, employees and the general public, 1999 – 2003
- *Guest Lecturer*, Introduction to Natural Resources, University of Massachusetts, Amherst – *Effective Public Advocacy*, 1999
- *Featured Speaker*, New England Federation of Humane Societies Annual Conference – *Walk Naked into the Land of Uncertainty*, 1998

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Author, 2017-present

Winner of the 2017 Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award from Poets & Writers and named by "Poets & Writers" magazine as one of "5 more over 50" writers to watch. Author of the novel, *This Is How It Begins*—won bronze medal for literary fiction in the Independent Publisher Book Awards (IPPY) and shortlisted for the 2018 Lambda Literary Award, the 2017 Foreword Reviews Book of the Year Award and the 2018 Sarton Women's Book Award. *This Is How It Begins* sold 2,500 copies within three months of publications—currently in a second printing.

Founder and President, JoanDempsey.com, LLC, 2010-present

Help serious creative writers master the craft and business of writing through free resources, online courses and one-on-one developmental feedback for fiction and nonfiction manuscripts. Manage all aspects of this start-up business, including the creation of strategic business and marketing plans, financial planning and securing of start-up capital, online platform production and maintenance, content development, and learning-centered curriculum design and online course facilitation.

Director, Dialogue Education Community, Global Learning Partners, Inc., Oct 2011 – March 2014

- Responsible for creation of new company branch with a focus on community-building through social media and professional development opportunities among people practicing Dialogue Education around the world.
- Directed company branding and web redesign projects.
- Oversaw development and implementation of new Dialogue Education Studies Program (a

professional certificate program) and the annual International Dialogue Education Institute (a professional conference).

- Responsible for all professional development offerings.
- Designed curricula and facilitated work sessions at bi-annual company retreats.

Programs Manager, Global Learning Partners, Inc., 2008 – 2011

- Worked with a team of seven expert adult education teachers and more than forty certified trainers, matching teachers with organizations and individuals around the world to facilitate learning and implement “train the trainers” programs using Dialogue Education, a method of teaching grounded in respect for and relevance to the adult learner.
- Wrote proposals and negotiated contracts with all new clients.
- Served on the Business Development Group for new products and services.
- Worked with a diverse group of clients (Canadian Red Cross, Academy for Educational Development, Habitat for Humanity, California Women, Infants and Children, Dorcas Aid International Romania) in a host of nations (Canada, United States, Jordan, Romania, Peru, Ethiopia, Thailand ...)

President, Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance Board of Trustees, 2009-2010

- As a volunteer, managed a 12-person board of trustees and supervised the executive director.
- Through carefully designed monthly meetings, personal attention and a strategic retreat, the board shifted from an inactive group of individuals to a more engaged community of active members.
- Through individual attention to donors and strategic partners, and careful design of the Maine Literary Awards Celebration in 2009 and 2010, created the “buzz” necessary for positioning the organization to become relevant once again to the full spectrum of Maine’s literary arts community.
- Led a successful, comprehensive national search process for a new executive director.

Founding Executive Director, National Council for Animal Protection, 2002 – 2008

- Led the development of a new national association for animal protection organizations, from national needs assessment to member retreat for strategic planning to organizational design and written business plan to transition from an informal coalition of groups to a formal, incorporated professional association.
- Regular speaker, facilitator, and workshop leader at annual meetings, typically making presentations on prior year’s accomplishments and facilitating dialogue and running workshops on topics as diverse as setting group priorities and debating ethical values.
- Managed a national, seven-member working executive board of animal protection leaders.
- Managed all aspects of daily operations from a home-based office, including membership recruitment & retention, supervision of volunteers, development, and financial management.

Director of Advocacy, Animal Protection Division, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA), 1997 – 2002

- Managed every aspect of the Department of Advocacy, including oversight of \$400,000 budget and five professional staff running five community programs.
- Led staff through a strategic planning process that culminated in comprehensive five-year program plans unparalleled within the organization. Process served as an inspiration and model

for other departments.

- Served as co-chair of major, organization-wide public advocacy campaign, the first in twelve years, and the first effort to involve all 650 MSPCA employees in a common vision and an intensive training program.
- As an effective spokesperson, addressed the public through print, radio, and television media, before the state legislature, and at town, city and state agency meetings and hearings.
- Served as member of MSPCA Policy Committee, examining ethical issues and deciding organizational positions on animal welfare issues.
- As an experienced lobbyist, successfully positioned the MSPCA as the “go-to” organization for state legislators on animal issues and was lead negotiator on major trapping legislation

Major Gifts Officer, Development & External Affairs Division, MSPCA, 1996 – 1997

- Cultivated, solicited, and managed first major planned gift of a \$3.85 million capital campaign.
- Maintained relationships with 170 prospects.
- Designed and implemented marketing program to promote to donors the tax benefits of making gifts of stock, resulting in gifts from 14 new donors.
- Developed and implemented strategic plan for the rejuvenation and reorganization of a defunct bequest and planned giving society, confirming 116 members.

Sole Proprietor, The Daily Walk, 1993 – 1995

Managed and operated all aspects of successful pet-sitting business while attending graduate school, including marketing, prospective client interviews, writing proposals for services, negotiating fees and securing contracts, completing accounts receivable and payable, and delivering services.

Manager, Richland Design Associates, 1991 – 1993

Managed graphic design projects from conception to finished product: wrote proposals and client contracts, maintained client relations, projected and monitored budgets, supervised scheduling, and ensured quality and delivery of finished product.

Program Director, Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control, 1987 – 1990

- Directed national "Right to Know" Litigation Project. Obtained volunteer legal counsel across country to represent individuals and organizations seeking information under the Freedom of Information Act. Researched potential cases, advised board committee about ongoing and potential litigation, and organized publicity and fundraising activities.
- Supervised all work-study and volunteer student interns.
- Assisted with planning and managing conferences: annual joint sessions with Association of Soviet Lawyers in Washington, DC, and Moscow, including seven-city U.S. tour; and semi-annual Board of Directors Conferences in Washington, DC, Boston, and San Francisco.
- Responsible for fundraising: annual fund, major donors, telemarketing, and grant writing.
- Designed, produced, and edited newsletters, brochures, conference papers, and legal briefs.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2008 – 2010	<i>Member</i> , Board of Trustees, Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance (<i>President</i> , 2009-2010)
2006	<i>Member</i> , Board of Directors, Great River Arts Institute
2001 – 2003	<i>Executive Committee Member</i> (2001); <i>Chair</i> (2002); <i>Chair Emeritus</i> (2003) Board of Directors, Summit for the Animals, a national coalition
1997 – 2002	<i>Registered Lobbyist</i> , Commonwealth of Massachusetts
1996 – 1997	<i>Member</i> , National Society for Fundraising Executives <i>Member</i> , Planned Giving Group of New England

CRITICAL PRAISE FOR *THIS IS HOW IT BEGINS*

“... an extraordinarily pertinent novel dripping in suspense and powerful scenes of political discourse ... a must-read ...” —FOREWORD (*starred review*)

“... Dempsey’s fine first novel [is] notable for the evenhanded way it addresses hot-button issues. The result is a timely and memorable story.” —BOOKLIST

“A gripping and sensitive portrait of ordinary people wrestling with ideological passions.” —KIRKUS

"Dempsey’s fine debut, set in 2009, explores how hate, fear, and intolerance cast a lifelong shadow. Current events have only made this gripping story more relevant." —LIBRARY JOURNAL

"... a thought-provoking and timely novel." —THE ADVOCATE

" ... [Dempsey's] talent is evident ... a fast-paced, entertaining read." —MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM

"... timely, suspenseful and powerful exploration of the very real conflict between religious freedom and civil rights ... a provocative hit." —KENNEBEC JOURNAL

"... [the novel] is nothing if not timely ... an enticing read." —MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

“Beautifully written ... An ambitious and moving debut novel.” —Lily King, author of the award-winning national bestseller, *Euphoria*

“A riveting, immensely satisfying read.” —Bill Lundgren, former bookseller, Longfellow Books, Portland, ME

“ ... a riveting tale ... an essential story for our time.” —Matthew Goodman, "New York Times" bestselling author of "Eighty Days: Nellie Bly and Elisabeth Bisland's History-Making Race Around the World"

“ ... this striking debut is essential reading for our times.” —Judith Frank, Author of "All I Love and Know," a Lambda Literary Award Finalist

“[A] spellbinding novel ... [a] moving adventure ...” —Eva Fogelman, Ph.D., Author of the Pulitzer Prize nominee "Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust"

TESTIMONIALS FROM WRITERS

“As a student and editing client of Joan Dempsey, I have always been appreciative and fully satisfied as the recipient of her knowledge, expertise, and dedication. Applying her teachings, my short stories were selected two years in a row (2016, 2017) for the Florida Writers Association Collection. I respectfully credit and thank Joan for sharing her ability to cut and polish manuscripts, create great dialogue, and produce quality work. I highly recommend Joan Dempsey as a mentor to help aspiring authors produce publishable writing pieces. I will always be in her debt.” —Cheryl Abney

“I recommend Joan Dempsey's writing courses to any writer wanting to better their craft. Designed for adult learners, her lessons and exercises are directly applicable to improving your writing today. As an instructor, Joan is present and active. Her online revision courses were well worth my time and money. They have been the best investment in strengthening my writing craft.” —Diana Rigor

“Working with Joan Dempsey, both in the online class (Revise with Confidence) and receiving individual editing feedback, has been invaluable for me. I was able to take a writing project that had been sitting dormant for several years off the shelf and look at it with fresh eyes and begin a whole new revision. The process of revising enabled me to dig deeper into the narrative and complete new chapters. And the individual editing feedback I received from Joan was sharp, perceptive and encouraging. I am now almost finished with the revision of what is now a complete manuscript that has grown from a project I had almost tossed away in frustration. I can't say enough about the value of this kind of support to a self-doubting but determined writer!” —Elena Schwolsky-Fitch

“There *can* be too much of a good thing! Joan showed me how an overabundance of detail can bog down my narrative. Thanks to her feedback, my chapters have become leaner and meaner—I've learned how to resist research fact overload and now my narrative has more energy and excitement.” —Elizabeth De Wolfe, Ph.D.

“Joan's insights and advice about the process of writing proved to be invaluable. I walked away with concrete, helpful suggestions about my manuscript and a sense of new direction. Learning from Joan was easy, too—she's fun and organized. I now feel better equipped to appraise my own writing in a more objective manner.” —Lynne Marino

“One of Joan's outstanding skills is she cuts to the heart of the issues in one's writing but does it in such a way that inspires and empowers you to get it right. For instance, I didn't know until I hired Joan that my characters were flat and sounded exactly alike! Joan helped me breathe life into my people by pointing out how each individual can be recognized by their speech patterns, and how written dialogue is different, and needs to be sharper, than the normal spoken word. Strong dialogue, along with her other suggestions for character development, helped me make huge improvements to my novel. Joan's input and advice has made me a far better writer. If you want an editor who is honest, superb at her job, and kind as well, I unhesitatingly recommend Joan. She's the best!” —Frances Barrett-Reed

“Joan's thoughtful and insightful editing challenged me and encouraged me to push myself even further. One thing that has already changed now that Joan's got my back is my willingness to try things out. I appreciate the genuine nature of our collaboration and the fact that Joan has created a safe environment for me as a writer. She has given me a priceless gift—validation.” —Lillianne Milgrom