



Story Slam Participants:

Michele Elchlepp, *Southern Methodist University*

Story Title: Mama's Perfume - Darren returns to his childhood home, the place he swore he would never come back on the day he left. It had never been a happy place. His childhood memories resurfacing in nightmares more often than liked. There was only one person he would return for, and that person was dying. Darren would not let that death pass without being present. He shuts away his apprehension to return to say good bye to the one person who carries his blood that he loves.

Michele is married, with one son, and a herd of dogs. She teaches high school males in Texas and relaxes in Colorado. She earned a BA from SMU with a double major in history and anthropology. She graduated from the University of Dallas with a Masters in Theological Studies and she recently completed her graduate degree from SMU with a Masters in Liberal Studies. She loves learning ways of imagining the world, and finding patterns in the relationships of humans.

Rheagan Humphrey, *Southern Methodist University*

Story Title: The Portal - Trapped within her own mind, a girl must learn to navigate a mystical landscape with the aid of a mysterious guide. This story, and others in the larger collection, explores the limits of reality, fear, and human nature.

Rheagan earned a BA in English from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Master's in Liberal Studies from Southern Methodist University. She is an online ESL teacher and will soon be a certified yoga instructor. Rheagan spends most of her free time writing, reading, or practicing yoga. She is proudly owned by an overweight tabby cat.

Andrea O'Connor, *Dartmouth College*

Story Title: As low as life gets - My friend Coates and I had been hitchhiking from Albany N.Y. to Texas in January 1977 on semester break from college. Wet, freezing and broke, we'd spent nights huddled under highway overpasses. After ten days on the road, we were outside Oklahoma City, out of money. That day, I got a day job and shoveled toxic ash into tractor-trailers for \$50. Coates, too sick to work, sold blood for \$25. That was one step above whoring, in my opinion. On our way back to the interstate, a black Lincoln Continental stopped. The driver rolled open the window and we could see a young pregnant woman in the passenger seat. "You guys want a hooker?" he asked. I'm usually unmoved like a stone but I cried in front of the pimp and his pregnant whore. I realized on that trip that I could survive being broken down and this was a low as life gets.

Andrea is a Master of Liberal Arts Program student at Dartmouth College. She also studies leadership and meditation with the Monastic Academy in Lowell, Vermont. With 15 years experience, she is a yoga and mindfulness teacher and studio owner, along with her husband, Bill, in Burlington, Vermont. Previous to being a yoga teacher, she spent 20 years as a marketing manager.

E. Reff-Presco, *Georgetown University*

Story Title: One Bad Apple - This story explores the journey of a teacher and everyone impacted by his antics. David Stephens has people fooled. Especially the staff he works with at a high school in Washington, DC. He comes off as a helpful, energetic, people person. Yet what many around him don't know is David's "smidgen" for manipulation. He will do whatever it takes to hide his true intentions by playing mind games with people who find him out. He is the perfect sociopath who works in the classroom with vulnerable inner-city youth. Will he ever be exposed?

E. Reff-Presco is currently a 4th-year Doctor of Liberal Studies student at Georgetown University. Using creative outlets such as writing, visual art, and music, Reff-Presco explores subjects of identity, race, and privilege as artistic themes. Reff-Presco is currently an art educator of eighteen years and the founder of Global ArtSpeak Alliance (GASA).