

I am a student teacher. By day, my enthusiasm lights up trailer four at Highland Springs High School, where I rap about Beowulf, masquerade as Chaucer, and play the part of resident SAT guru. By night, I steal moments to work on the English honors thesis I have fought to integrate with my teaching commitment. These diverse joys fire my ambitions to be not just a good teacher but also a content area expert, to be not just a good student but also an adept and inventive researcher. I have become a student teacher in a way which transcends my title: without teaching, my studies feel insular; without research, my teaching feels facile, but together they define my goals. My diverse experiences have lent me the courage and the impetus to pursue an elusive balance between teaching and learning, work which justly capitalizes on all my passions and talents, a life I can only imagine in one place: academia.

The potentials that literature and education share have drawn me to both: human connection, communal construction of knowledge, dismantling of preconceptions, the creation of ourselves. My current research concerning Ellen Glasgow's transformation of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* in *The Sheltered Life* connects to critical issues in the third field in my interdisciplinary life: women's studies. This research has sparked my interest in a female literary tradition and in what Sandra Gilbert and Professor Gubar call "the anxiety of authorship" which faces the female writer. I am fascinated by texts produced at moments, particularly in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American history, when the meaning of "woman" was in serious question, texts which deal with women who were sensed as "new." Such texts especially, I believe, reveal how reading makes us feel gender, and offer unexpected and problematic characters, reactions to which reveal the operation of gender as an organizing principle of our lives.

It is with these interests in mind, and the belief that they will both deepen and diversify, that I offer myself as potential English M.A./Ph.D. student. The strength of Indiana's Americanists, particularly in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century literature, as well as the expertise of Professors Fleissner and Gubar in my specific interests, assures me that I could benefit from the proficiency of multiple experts in my field. The opportunity to complete a doctoral minor in women's studies is also attractive. I look forward to honing the teaching skills I have developed as an education minor and I admire Indiana's system of incorporating a seminar on teaching composition, internships with faculty members, and crafting one's own courses into the graduate school experience. Graduate school will also be an opportunity for me to expand my foreign language skills which my three fields of study have heretofore made difficult.

My path to this application, winding through the high school classroom, the English West Country, and the humanities research room at the New York Public Library, has been a circuitous one. For me, it has been the right one. My experiences as a high school teacher have made me a skilled educator, my experiences as an international student strengthened my resolve to seek a rigorous curriculum, and my experiences as a researcher have forged the interdisciplinary links that provide the impetus for my studies. My co-curricular commitments and intellectual triumphs are evidence that my greatest achievement as an undergraduate has been balance, much like that which I seek as a graduate student. To me, an English Ph.D. represents the meaningful convergence of my passions into a coherent pattern which some might call an education. I choose to call it a life.