

INTERNING AT WISING UP PRESS

Matthew Bishop

Having graduated last year with a degree in English, I decided to take a gap year before applying to MFA programs in Creative Writing. I knew the field was competitive, and hoped to use my time to mature and gain applicable experience. Soon after graduating, I was forwarded an e-mail from my writing professor telling me that Wising Up Press was advertising an internship opportunity. I was excited; interning with a publishing press would be advantageous for me as a budding writer, and it offered an opportunity to familiarize myself with the industry. I was also excited to see their commitment to social pluralism.

I was raised in a small town in rural south Georgia, a place both industrially and educationally stagnant. My upbringing never offered a glance into different worldviews, which is one reason reading and writing intrigued me: it offered insight into another's consciousness. For this reason, I majored in English and minored in Writing at Georgia Southern University. It also spurred me to move to Atlanta, where I volunteered as an afterschool tutor at Refugee Family Services, helping promote literacy in refugee children. This underscores my attraction to Wising Up and its ability to present a voice to those generally overlooked or disregarded.

The Wising Up internship experience is an unusual and refreshing one. Usually, I meet up weekly with Dr. Tosteson and work primarily from home. This gives me a fairly structured schedule with the freedom to work at my own pace. It is also an exercise in motivation by working towards a deadline without direct supervision. Dr. Tosteson and Dr. Brockett work from their home office, which is much more informal and relaxed than corporate jobs. Indeed, several sculptures, paintings, and interesting statues ornament their walls and shelves. It's more like an art gallery, not a workplace involving strict dress-codes and cubicles. Even their attitudes towards publishing are vastly different than I first imagined. I always envisioned the grumpy editor stamping rejection letters at a desk brimming with loose paper. But Wising Up views publishing as more of a relationship; they print books that fit their Universal Table view, not books that only serve to grow their purses. This communal attitude is what, I believe, sets Wising Up Press apart.

This does not mean Wising Up is lax. Before starting my internship, I had a very fuzzy view of publishing; I envisioned grumpy editors and some magical materialization of book. Not only have I seen the helpful demeanor of Dr. Tosteson and Dr. Brockett, but the specifics, like artist contracts and the many hours and many tasks that go into the making of a book. In my internship, I've helped proofread and copy edit poetry, anthologies, novels, and nonfiction works. I have also worked closely with Dr. Tosteson with her poetry manuscript, learning about all stages of the process from its first compilation through designing the cover. I have also learned about web publishing, and helped with our first attempt at audio recordings (which may be forms of publishing more

highly valued than print in the changing world of publishing). Truly, my experience with Wising Up has offered me insight into the operations of publishing, and my experience with web anthologies ensure my skills will stay relevant in the fast changing world of online publishing.

Currently, my professional goals are shaky. While I do foresee myself earning an MFA in Creative Writing, I am also researching teaching English abroad either through the Peace Corps or through programs offered by foreign governments, both options which were suggested by Dr. Tosteson and Dr. Brockett. I believe these experiences abroad will afford me an opportunity to enrich my life experiences (which may also enrich my writing, making me a better candidate for graduate school. . .). Whatever my fate, by providing marketable skills and an improved understanding of publishing, my experience Wising Up Press has been an invaluable first step into to my future.