

# EASY STREET

a magazine of books and culture



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## Take Five with Logen Cure

Dec 14, 2015 •

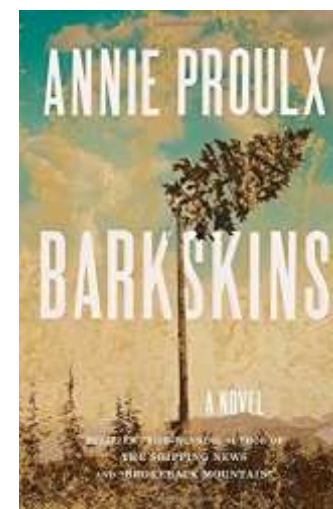
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### Hatchlings

Click on cover to visit Amazon page

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**A novel of dynasty building and cultural destruction**





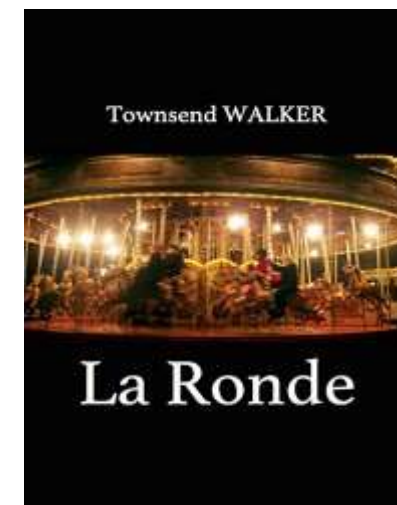
*Editor's Note: Today our December Poet in Residence, Logen Cure, participates in our Take Five feature, where we ask writers of various disciplines the same set of questions to ascertain where our commonalities converge and divide. Afterwards, enjoy her gorgeously succinct "Grey Fox," which we are honored to print for the first time here. —Camille Griep*

**Easy Street:** Thank you so much for joining us again this week for our traditional Take Five segment. Can you tell us about your writing environment? What are the essentials you need around you, if any?

*Lovely, dark, and deep —  
NPR*

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**A Park Avenue woman  
puts a price on her  
husband's head**



*A delicious afternoon-on-  
the-beach read —Jeanne  
C. Althouse*

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**A combination of thriller,  
fantasy, and historical  
novel**

In general, writing happens by whatever means it can. Sometimes poems strike me when I'm in the middle of doing something else. I've written poems within notes about other things, recorded my voice while driving, repeated lines to myself until I could get somewhere to write them down. I like to compose by hand then type drafts later.

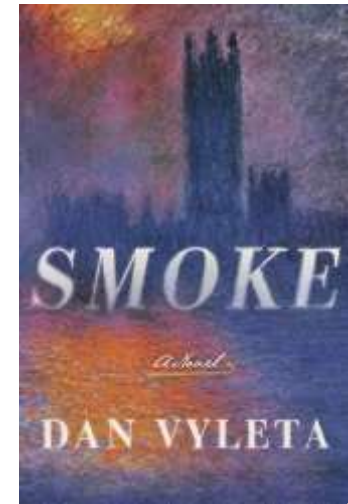
Ideally, I like a lot of space to spread out. I like to have my books around me. At the house, I've got my grandfather's old tanker desk. I tend to have a lot of feelings about my desk and this is the one I have loved the most in my life.

I also like quiet, which can be difficult to come by. In June 2015, I spent a week alone in a mountain cabin as a writer in residence at WildAcres Retreat in North Carolina. The solitude was such a contrast from my everyday life. It was bizarre and oddly empowering to have nothing specific I *needed* to be doing. I could eat and sleep when I felt like it. I read poems out loud because there was no one around to mind it. I'm a slow poet by nature but I really surprised myself with how productive I was in that single week. That experience changed my thinking about what I need as a poet. Making space for my work is essential. I have to be intentional about that.

**Easy Street:** Where are you from and where are you now? How (if at all) does sense of place factor into/inform your writing?

I'm a native Texan. Texans in general have a bit of an identity crisis. We are the South; we are the West; we never forget that we were briefly our own nation. It is at once a friendly and terrifying place. I was born in Midland, spent my childhood in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), then back to Midland for high school. Undergrad was Texas A&M College Station and grad school brought me to Greensboro, North Carolina. Right now, I'm back in DFW.

My work has always been informed by place. I don't think you see your home clearly until you leave it. Greensboro was a powerful experience for me because it



*A terrific, suspenseful tale*  
—Kirkus

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**An intense reimagining of  
the Trojan War**



put my Texan identity into perspective. What the hell does it mean to be a queer woman Texan? What do you do when home is at once welcoming and isolating? Right now, these are the questions I am asking in my work, specifically about Midland.

Midland is the hometown of George W. Bush and Friday Night Lights. It was a complicated place for me to be during those coming of age years. It was quite a shock for me to move from the massive metro of DFW to conservative West Texas. I'm not sure I ever got over that feeling. Returning to DFW as an adult feels right. It feels familiar without being so terribly fraught. All of these experiences affect my work.

**Easy Street:** What are the basics of your process (if applicable)? Do you start with a word or idea? Do you write immediately or let it simmer for a bit? How do you edit? Do you ever give up on ideas?

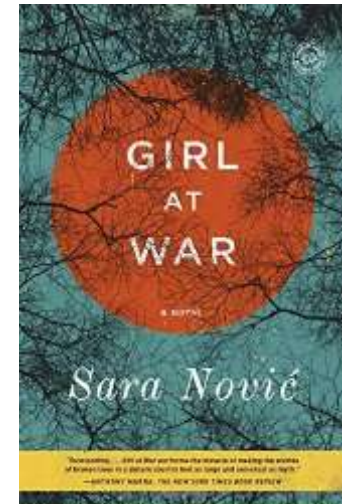
I feel like the process is different for every poem. My current project is part coming of age narrative, part meditation on desert creatures, weather, and history. Most poems start with a word or phrase, but how I build the poem from there varies. The narrative pieces just originate from a different place than the research-heavy desert poems.

*Most poems start with a word or phrase, but how I build the poem from there varies. The narrative pieces just originate from a different place than the research-heavy poems.*

I try to write things down immediately because I do risk losing the spark. But sometimes I turn over the same phrase in my mind for a few days before I get a line. I try to get a solid draft then I send it to a few trusted readers for feedback. I typically sit with a poem for a few days, reading out loud, trimming words,

*Brings new life to a classic epic* —Library Journal  
(starred review)

**A debut novel about a girl's coming of age**



*Powerful and vividly wrought* —San Francisco Chronicle

**A 16-year-old girl searches for her missing mother**

reworking line breaks. I'll reach a stopping point and move on to something else. I'll come back weeks or months later and edit again. Every piece gets another round of revision when I assemble a manuscript. The conversation between the poems always sheds new light.

I've definitely put some poems back in the drawer. Sometimes you just can't solve it. There are some poems I've written in different ways over years and never felt satisfied. We're all haunted by certain things, I suppose.

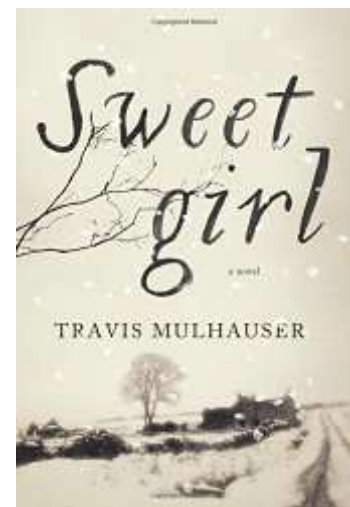
**Easy Street:** What other art forms factor into your work? From what and where do you draw inspiration?

My desert research has helped me interact with different types of visual art: photography, paintings, scientific drawings. My inspirations vary with every project. Researching the desert has been exciting and eye-opening. I enjoy engaging with a topic and just letting the poems unfold. I also seek out books of poems that have same concerns as my project: a sense of place, coming of age, queerness, etc. You have to read great poems to have any hope of writing great poems.

**Easy Street:** If you had to give a good friend three books to read while spending three months stranded in a bunker in Antarctica, which books would you give them and why?

Either volume of the *New and Selected* Mary Oliver. Reading Oliver feels like prayer to me, meditative and beautiful. Carrie Fountain's *Burn Lake*. Fountain has such a clear, incisive voice. It's a book I return to over and over. *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster for a little fantastical adventure.

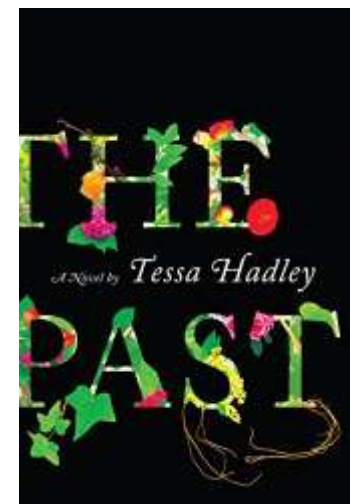
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*Hilarious, heartbreaking, and true.* —NPR

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**A dramatic family reunion, where simmering tensions come to a head**



*A big, brilliant novel* —Lily  
King

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## **Grey Fox** by Logen Cure

As earth swallows sun, the fox  
quicken. He knows darkness  
wakes the pack. Coyote  
is not brother. Blood  
is only blood.

The fox hears the jackrabbit  
tremble, knows how many  
fill his belly. The pack stirs.  
Hunger knows only itself.

Ω



**Logen Cure** is a poet and teacher. She is the author of three chapbooks: *Still* (Finishing Line Press 2015), *Letters to Petrarch* (Unicorn Press 2015), and *In Keeping* (Unicorn Press 2008). Her work also appears in *Word Riot*, *Radar Poetry*, *IndieFeed: Performance Poetry*, *The Boiler*, and elsewhere. She earned her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She lives in Texas with her wife.

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What do you think?