

Amanda Lund's journey as a University of Iowa undergraduate was a long one, and her wisdom shows. The 29-year old English Major graduated in December with a focus in Creative Writing, and during her time here she made it her mission to take advantage of every opportunity she could. She explored the diversity of the English Major to its fullest, taking classes on teaching writing, digital storytelling, and creative nonfiction. But the course she says was most pivotal of all: Introduction to the English Major. "I'd have to say the most eye-opening course was Introduction to the English Major—it was the very first class I took when I came to Iowa. I realized that I was able to pull out concepts that I was learning and apply them to other classes, so it made the other classes I was taking that semester all fit together."

Since then, Amanda has soared, both on campus and in the Iowa City literary community. Originally from Fort Madison, Iowa, Lund wrote her first novel in the 6th grade, a sci-fi novel that was born out of a computer-lab race with a classmate to see who could write the most pages. It was a natural progression from there, writing for her high school and then college newspaper and yearbook. Then, "life happened," she says, which for the ever-motivated Lund means that in the meantime she completed a young adult manuscript while also gathering college credit in journalism, graphic design, and even medical assisting along the way. But she always kept the University of Iowa in her sights, and arrived here in 2014. "I ended up coming to Iowa because I knew years ago that it was the best place for writing, and they produced the kind of writers that I wanted to write like."

In the English Department's Creative Writing track, Amanda found a focus in nonfiction writing. She was drawn to the way the nonfiction genre raises larger questions, and how people bring their personal experiences to their writing. This led her to participate in internships with *Little Village Magazine* and People's Weather Map, where she earned course credit and learned the value of collaborative effort, understanding your audience, and bringing your own experience to the team. Lund saw her first essay publication in the September 2014 issue of *Little Village*.

What's next for Lund? She applied for graduate school even as she was completing her senior project. Amanda's long-term vision for her education and writing career is an inspiration for students and writers alike. Her advice to those just starting out: "take every opportunity the moment that you get here."