Eula Biss’s Notes from No Man’s Land: American Essays won the 2009 National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism. Her most recent book, On Immunity: An Inoculation, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction and chosen by Mark Zuckerberg for Facebook’s Year of Books.

Salon calls Notes From No Man’s Land, “the most accomplished book of essays anyone has written or published so far in the 21st century.... It provokes, troubles, charms, challenges, and occasionally hectors the reader, and it raises more questions than it answers. It is strident and brave in its unwillingness to offer comfort, and, unlike all but a handful of the best books I have ever read, it is unimpeachably great.”

Biss’s work has been supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Howard Foundation Fellowship, an NEA Literature Fellowship, and a Jaffe Writers’ Award. Her essays have recently appeared in The Best American Nonrequired Reading and the Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Nonfiction, as well as in The Believer, Gulf Coast, Denver Quarterly, and Harper’s.

Gina Frangello is the author of Slut Lullabies, a collection of short stories, and My Sister’s Continent, a novel. Vanity Fair writes, Gino Frangello’s Slut Lullabies will seduce you.” The Chicago Tribune calls My Sister’s Continent, “A refreshing rebuttal to the canard that feminism is humorless.” A recipient of an Illinois Arts Council literary award, Frangello’s short fiction has appeared in Swink, StoryQuarterly, Prairie Schooner, and other journals and anthologies. She has been a freelance journalist for the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Reader. Currently, she is the Sunday editor for The Rumpus and the fiction editor for The Nervous Breakdown; and, she now runs Other Voices Querétaro, an international writing program.

TJ Jarrett’s newest collection of poetry, Zion, won of the 2013 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry’s Open Competition. Of Zion, acclaimed author Rodney Jones writes, “TJ Jarrett maps a new language for reconciling racial and cultural tensions that few poets would have the courage to approach, much less subvert and transform into a conversation of equals.” The Rumpus calls Zion, “an elegy and an act of union. Her poems stitch and solder: individual to collective, life to death, past to present to transcendent afterlife.” Jarrett’s debut collection, Ain’t No Grave, was a finalist for the 2013 Balcones Prize. Her recent work has appeared in Poetry, African American Review, Boston Review, and The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2015. Jarrett has earned fellowships from Sewanee Writers’ Conference and the Summer Literary Seminars.

Jonathan Marcantoni is a graduate of The University of Tampa. His novels Traveler’s Rest, The Feast of San Sebastian, and Kings of 7th Avenue deal with issues of identity and corruption in both the Puerto Rican diaspora and on the island. Along with his solo novels, he also co-wrote, with Jean Blasiar, the WWII-fantasy Communion. He is co-founder (with Chris Campanioni) of the YouNiversity Project, which provides mentors for new writers. His work has appeared in Warscapes, Across the Margin, and the news outlet Latino Rebels. He has been featured in articles in the Huffington Post, El Nuevo Dia (Puerto Rico), El Post Antillano, and the Los Angeles Times. He has also appeared in several radio programs, including NPR’s Fronteras series, Show Biz Weekly with Taylor Kelsaw, Nuestra Palabra: Latino Writers Have Their Say, Boricuas of the World Social Club, and Wordier than Thou.
Joe Oestreich’s recently-released Lines of Scrimmage: A Story of Football Race and Redemption (co-written with Scott Pleasant) chronicles the 1989 high school football season in Conway, SC, when sports, against the backdrop of bitter racial conflict, divided the small southern town. Jeff MacGregor, senior writer at ESPN, calls the book, “Wonderfully reported and written; a perfect miniature of an entire America.”

Of Oestreich’s debut, Hitless Wonder: A Life in Minor League Rock and Roll, Publisher’s Weekly writes, “This insightful and entertaining story of a band that almost-but-didn’t-quite make it big in the 1990s is equal parts fascinating autobiography and a hilarious and savvy look at the harsh realities of the music industry.” Oestreich’s essays have appeared in Esquire, Sports Illustrated, Ninth Letter, Fourth Genre, and many other magazines and journals. He serves as the nonfiction editor of Waccamaw, Coastal Carolina University’s literary journal.

Patricia Smith, lauded by critics as “a testament to the power of words to change lives,” is the author of six acclaimed poetry volumes, including Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah, winner of the 2013 Lenore Marshall Prize from the Academy of American Poets and the 2014 Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry from the Library of Congress, and was a finalist for the William Carlos William Award from the Poetry Society of America.

Her collection Blood Dazzler, which chronicles the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, was a finalist for the 2008 National Book Award. In naming the book one of NPR’s Top 5 books of 2008, John Freeman called Blood Dazzler “a fierce, blood-in-the-mouth collection,” which “already has the whiff and feel of folklore.”

Smith’s work has been published in Poetry, The Paris Review, and numerous literary journals and anthologies, including Best American Poetry and Best American Essays. She has performed around the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Poets Stage in Stockholm, and the Sorbonne in Paris. Smith has also been a featured poet on HBO’s Def Poetry Jam.

In addition to her poetic works, Smith edited the crime fiction anthology, Staten Island Noir; her contribution to the collection, the story “When They Are Done With Us,” won the Robert L. Fish Award from the Mystery Writers of America for best debut in the genre and was chosen for Best American Mystery Stories.

Lidia Yuknavitch is the author of The Chronology of Water: A Memoir and three works of short fiction: Her Other Mouths, Liberty’s Excess, and Real to Reel, as well as a book of literary criticism, Allegories of Violence. The Chronology of Water won the Oregon Book Award Reader’s Choice 2012 and the PNBA Award 2012, and was a finalist for the 2012 PEN Center USA creative nonfiction award.

Yuknavitch’s work has appeared in The Iowa Review, Another Chicago Magazine, and numerous journals and anthologies.