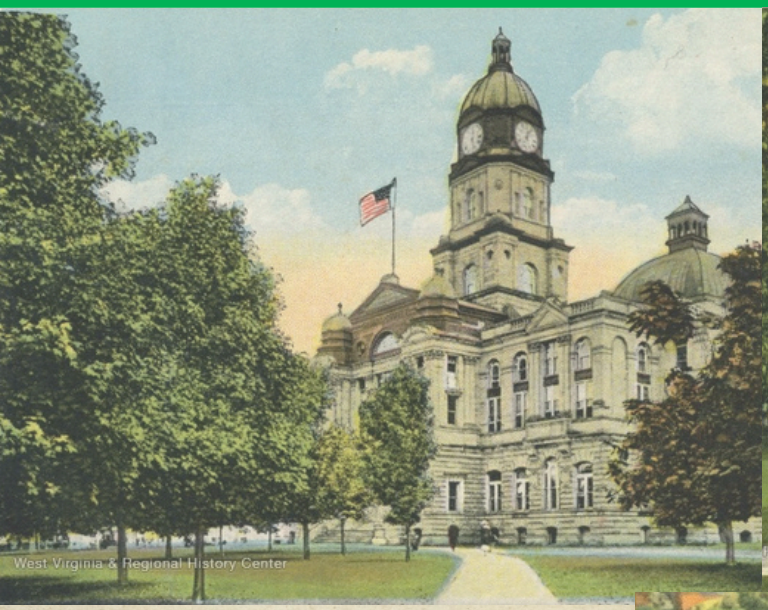
Volume 49, Issue 2, Fall 2026

GRADUATE HUMANITIES

A multidisciplinary program bringing together students and faculty from a variety of backgrounds to collaboratively explore the interdisciplinary intersections of the arts, historical, cultural, and literary studies within an open, exploratory, and experimental graduate-level educational environment













A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

As many of you may know, Trish Hatfield, long-time editor of the newsletter and Assistant Director of the Graduate Humanities Program, retired at the end of June. I want to congratulate her and wish her well as she transitions into retirement. As a graduate of the program myself, I know very well how integral she has been to the program and the newsletter. I certainly have big shoes to fill!

I want to take this opportunity to let our readers know a bit about me, the new editor of the newsletter and program assistant. My name is Brooke Hypes. I graduated from the Graduate Humanities Program in 2023 with an MA in the Humanities and a Certificate in Appalachian Studies. My time in the program was academically formative, helping me build the curiosity and confidence to pursue studying policy in Appalachia in the doctoral program in Planning, Governance, and Globalization at Virginia Tech.

Importantly, I know that the Graduate Humanities Program at Marshall is more than "just" a program, and this newsletter is more than "just" a newsletter: they're places where people curious about real, human issues in Appalachia come together, support each other, and dialogue about the things that matter. The students, whose work we feature in the newsletter, are just as integral to the social and intellectual life of the program as the faculty members.

I am excited to be back with the program again—this is truly a special community that I am proud to be part of.

Sincerely,

Brooke Hypes

WE ARE APPALACHIA! II

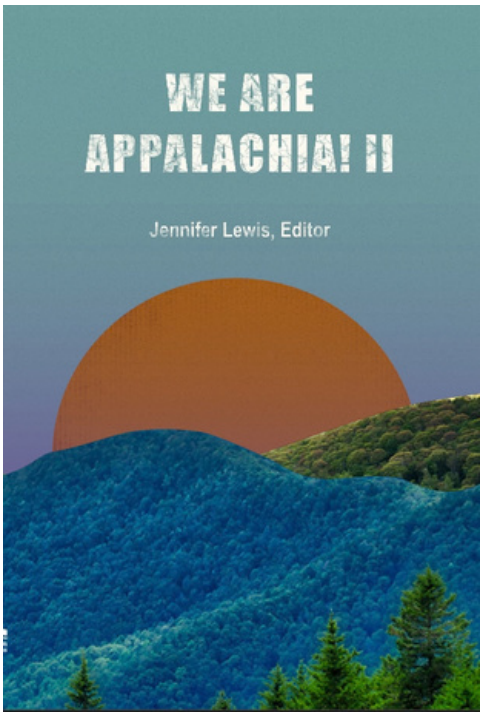
An anthology from Mountain State Press

In February 2026, Mountain State Press published the second installment of its *We Are Appalachia!* series, edited by Jennifer Lewis.

Description from Mountain State Press:

Anyone who knows Appalachia is familiar with its intricate beauty and struggles. This collection reflects this complexity with real stories of growing up in or discovering this gorgeous region, as well as tales of magic and cryptids beyond our reality. All of these pieces were written by Marshall students and faculty, each bringing their own unique perspective to the conversation. Inside, you will find homemade biscuits, generational love, a killer frog, issues with addiction, a kid's devil costume, and so much more. Experience Appalachia in all its colors, seasons, and mysteries in this second installment of the *We Are Appalachia!* series.

Read the editor's introduction on the next page!



Want to buy the book?

Scan the QR Code
or
Click here to go to the Mountain State Press website!

Introduction from *We Are Appalachia! II*

Edited by Jennifer Lewis

We Are Appalachia! started a dialogue on what it means to live in this region. It had the goal of sharing many otherwise unpublished voices and disposing of inaccurate stereotypes that run wild outside these mountains. In a world that has been divided for a while now, anthologies like this one are important to bring different perspectives and shared experiences together to remind us that we are all people with more in common than we realize. We Are Appalachia! II was created to continue and expand this much needed discussion on Appalachia and what it means to be human.

I am truly inspired by the authors in this anthology. Many contributors are my close peers and colleagues, all incredibly talented and worth reading. I can now say the same for the writers I don't know as well, and I would love to have the privilege to get to know them more in the future. I feel incredibly lucky to be the one to put this anthology together, with special thanks to Professor Cat Pleska and the editorial board for their guidance and dedication that made this anthology possible.

Most of the content in this book came from Professor Pleska's "Publishing in Appalachia" course in Spring 2025 and her "We Are Appalachia" course in Fall 2025 at Marshall University. Therefore, the bulk of this anthology is the work of Marshall graduate students that are just beginning to have their voices heard. Other additions to this work include pieces by Marshall faculty and undergraduate students she felt were exceptional to include in this collection.

Due to the many perspectives in this anthology, there is something for everyone here. The writers in this anthology scoured their hearts for stories of home, childhood memories, and finding peace here in Appalachia—as well as stories of hard times, tragedy, and the not-so-pretty side of the region. I can find just as much reality in the depth and emotion of the fiction pieces as I can in the nonfiction pieces. So much truth is held within the pages of this book.

After reading this anthology, perhaps you will be inspired to tell your own stories about where you come from, Appalachia or otherwise, since stories are a bridge from person to person, soul to soul. Regardless, I hope you walk away from this collection feeling that you've learned something new about yourself and Appalachia. I know I have.

Jennifer Lewis

List of Contributors

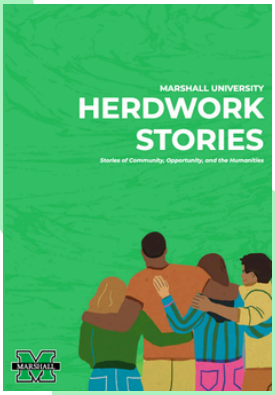
Arianna Baggett
Emily Blake
Jena Cordle
Jay-Leigh Crabtree
Courtney Danielson
Tanier Dutton
Robert H. Ellison
Lily Geiser
Abby Grim
Rachel Hampton
Dylan Haynes
Clara Jones
Kathaleen KuhnBook
Amy D. Lawson
Jennifer Lewis
Carson McKinney
David Powell
Paul Sepulveda
Zac Thabet
Clara Wehling
Amy Welch

Current and former Graduate Humanities Program Students are indicated in green

Interested in the first installment?
Read more about *We Are Appalachia!*
in the Fall 2024 Newsletter

HERDWORK STORIES: Stories of Community, Opportunity, and the Humanities

A new Graduate Humanities Program publication



The HerdWork Humanities Internship Program at Marshall University is funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation. It provides students a chance to gain professional experience, make a meaningful impact in Appalachian communities, and explore career paths that align with their passions.

Graduate Humanities Program students Emma Wyre, Kathaleen KuhnBook ('26), and Clara Jones interviewed three student interns and their mentors to tell their stories and highlight the impact the HerdWork Program has made on their lives and in their communities.

Published as a supplement to the Fall 2026 newsletter, the publication is available on our website here.

Interested in learning more about HerdWork?

Visit:

www.marshall.edu/herdwork/

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST GRADUATES!

Angela Erwin ‘25
MA in Humanities (Cultural Studies) and Certificate in Appalachian Studies
Project Title: “The Weight of Her: Fragments of a Memoir”

Abby Parks ‘26
MA in Humanities (Cultural Studies)
Project Title: “A Path Towards Healing: What Homer Tells Us About Posttraumatic Growth”

Lisa Hamm ‘26
MA in Humanities (Cultural Studies)
Project Title: “The Intersection of Humanities and the Experience of Homeless Women Veterans in Boise, Idaho”

Kathaleen KuhnBook ‘26
MA in Humanities (Cultural Studies) and Certificate in Appalachian Studies
Project Title: “See Life Through My Lens: An Intersection of Photography and The Humanities”

Lily Geiser ‘26
Certificate in Appalachian Studies
Project Title: “Free and Forced Labor in Post-Civil War Appalachia”

Rachel Hampton ‘26
Certificate in Appalachian Studies
Project Title: “Appalachia’s Past, Present, and Future through an Accessible, Student-Centered Introduction to Appalachian Studies”



Al Williams ‘26
MA in Humanities (Cultural Studies)
Project Title: “Thasunke Witko, Crazy Horse: Humanitarian, Rebel, and Revolutionary”

Notice the new look?

You may have noticed the newsletter looks a bit different. Assistant Director Trish Hatfield, long-time editor of the Graduate Humanities Program newsletter, retired last summer. The newsletter may look different, but we are still committed to sharing quality information from and stories about the students in our program. If you have questions about the changes, or suggestions for content or improvements, please contact the new editor, Brooke Hypes, at hypes21@marshall.edu.

Interested in contributing cover art?

We know there are many students in our program talented in the visual arts. For this issue, the collage on the cover was created by the editor to signal the change, but going forward, we would like to feature relevant student art. For more details, please contact the editor.

Spring 2027 Seminar Schedule Available Now!

To learn more about the Graduate Humanities Program at Marshall, visit https://www.marshall.edu/graduatehumanities/

Want to give to the program? Scan the QR Code or click here