

Seth Johnson, B.A. English Writing, 2005

By Sarah K. Miller

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Seth Johnson graduated from WKU with his bachelor's in English in 2005. The Louisville native spent some time working before he went on to obtain a Master of Fine Arts from Murray State. After graduation, Johnson says he started with [Humana Inc.](#) in the call center, then moved to their letter team, onto compliance, and now works as a tech writer. His degree from the English department helped him by giving him the skills needed to thrive after graduation. "This stuff is easy," he says in his answers to the Alumni Survey online. "It is common for professionals in the corporate world to have poor writing skills. I am paid well to write short sentences that tell people how to navigate a software program." Johnson went on to say that his English classes and degree honed his analytical skills and helped him become a forward-thinker in the corporate field. "A lot of the stuff I get is unclear and full of information that is unnecessary," he states. "There's a lot of editing and consulting. That's where the analytical skills come in."

Johnson also is an author of a short story collection called [The Things We Do For Women](#) (Whitepoint Press 2012). "I always thought it was cool to be published," Johnson said. "It's validating. It encourages you to write more." He said some of the personal challenges of being a writer come with finding time after marriage and kids. His MFA was "helpful but not necessary," he said, because it gave him great mentors and more time to write which together helped his abilities. Johnson concluded that overall good writing skills comes down to frequent reading and writing.

Even though he claims he was not a "literature guy," Johnson said that the literature courses here at WKU benefitted him immensely. "Literature courses have made me a more reflective and insightful person," he said. Johnson spoke fondly of Professor Walker Rutledge's summer course "Small Town and American Literature." He said it

was the best class he took, stating that “the way he breaks down books, it changed the way that I read, and that’s changed the way I see the world.” He also thanked Professor Tom Hunley and the late Professor Mary Ellen Miller specifically, and he spoke positively of their teaching abilities in his collegiate career.

To current and future English students, Johnson offered this advice: “don’t get caught up in the writer’s lifestyle. You don’t have to go out and get drunk and use drugs; you can get a lot more done without that nonsense. You’ve got to have some kind of stability. Write all the time don’t worry about being published. There’s so much work in the tech writing field too. There are writing jobs available, but you may have to start entry level and work your way up. You don’t have to teach with an English degree. Keep learning; there’s a strong need for it. Slow down, comprehend, and look forward.”

