

# THE STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES SOCIETY

*The official newsletter, inaugural issue*



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## Welcome from SGJ Society President, Dr. Billy J. Stratton

I was first introduced to Stephen Graham Jones' work through *The Fast Red Road* while enrolled in the University of Arizona's American Indian Studies PhD program in 2004. Despite my struggles to unpack this complex, and at times, utterly disorienting novel, I had the sense that what Jones had accomplished was truly extraordinary. It was certainly a revolution in the context of native literature, a view that has been reinforced in the years since with the publication of a dizzying array of equally complex works such as *Demon Theory*, *The Bird is Gone*, *Ledfeather*, and *Growing Up Dead in Texas*--works that are imaginative, experimental, and transgressive, while bolstered with a biting humor and irreverent edge.

The experiments in genre-crossing Jones has carried out since, including detective stories, science fiction, postmodern narrative, horror, graphic novels, and comics also reflect such qualities. These works, many of which don't engage self-evident native

## President's Welcome, continued

themes, have opened a myriad of other routes into and from his imagination for us to explore, and to get lost in. And after all, isn't that one of the best things we can do with stories, while prompting us to seek out others with which to discuss such work and share insights?

Over the last ten years, this interest led me to regularly assign Jones' work to my own students, while sharing the insights gleaned in this context through presentations and the organization of panels at various literary conferences. These activities, and the work of other admirers of Jones' work I've encountered along the way, eventually became the driving force behind the publication of a critical collection of essays on Jones' work, *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones* (2016)--a volume that presents the insights of a group of scholars who all share a passion for his ever-growing body of work.

It is our hope that the official establishment of the Stephen Graham Jones Society at the 2018 Western Literature Association conference acts will encourage further scholarly and popular interest in Jones'

continued literary output, while creating an energetic network through which we can all more easily connect, share, and engage.

To this end, the Stephen Graham Jones Society is happy to be organizing a dedicated panel at this year's American Literature Association Conference in Boston (May 23-26), with plans to hold additional new panels at the upcoming Western Literature Association and Native American Literature Symposium gatherings later in 2019 and 2020.

It's been an exciting and rewarding process to get this literary society from idea to reality, and we would certainly appreciate your interest, enthusiasm, support, and participation over the coming months and year to keep it all going!

All the Best,  
Billy J. Stratton, University of Denver  
Stephen Graham Jones Society President

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### SGJ SOCIETY SPONSORED ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PANELS

*American Literature Association May 2019 Boston, MA*

*Western Literature Association Sept 2019 Estes Park, CO*

*Want to join an upcoming SGJ panel?*

*If you are interested in presenting on the work of Stephen Graham Jones at the upcoming WLA 2019 meeting, please email Dr. Rebecca M. Lush at [rlush@csusm.edu](mailto:rlush@csusm.edu) and Dr. Billy J. Stratton at [bstratt4@du.edu](mailto:bstratt4@du.edu) with a 250 word abstract by May 10, 2019*



# A Conversation with SGJ

CONDUCTED BY BILLY J. STRATTON

**Stratton:** Looking back, what are your thoughts about writing thus far, what have you learned?

**Jones:** I've learned that simple is better than trying to be smart. That's probably the one thing I've learned from my writing career, that the reader engages things you say directly more than things you say obliquely in a way that lets you show off what you think is your big brain, you know? I think for a lot of beginning writers, it's less about telling a good story and more about proving to the world that they're smart. I think I was caught in that for a while. I probably still am to some degree. I probably only think I'm out of it.

**Stratton:** I've heard you say this previously, that you always see a novel as "a series of what next questions." So in terms of your own writing, what comes next, and where do you see your work going from here?

**Jones:** Actually since *Mongrels*, which fused together what I always considered the two halves of my writing self--the genre side and the literary side--since then I've done *Mapping the Interior* and *My Hero*, both of which continued that fusion at least as far as I suspect. These next three or four books I have coming out; they also are more of the same. They're genre builds, but with something else to them it feels like anyways. Especially, *Elk Head Woman* and *Last Stand at Sabre Ridge*, those are both very much descendants of *Mongrels* I would say. Whereas, *The Babysitter Lives* and *Killer on the Road* are more descendants of *Zombie Bake Off*.

**Stratton:** What exciting things do you see happening in literature and what are you currently reading?

**Jones:** What am I reading right now? I just finished a *Longmire* novel by Craig Johnson, which has Henry Standing Bear who can't use contractions, you know [laughs].

**Stratton:** What about native literature, what do you see going on there that captivates?

**Jones:** Brandon Hobson's *Where the Dead Sit Talking* is captivating everyone right now, so that's next up on my list, once I can get to my own list. And Theo [Van Alst] says it's a really good book, so I'm excited to check that out.

**Stratton:** Do you see native lit as transforming, I mean it always is transforming, but what's the current trajectory as far as you can tell? Is that even something you concern yourself with?

**Jones:** Yeah, that's a good question. I do, I think I do see writers, younger writers especially starting to break away from the old issues, you know. The "am I Indian, am I not Indian?" It's like, that's not the concern any more. It's to tell a good story. Maybe that's more hopeful thinking on my part, but I have seen stuff tending that way. Dismissing all the old issues and concerns and whatever . . . that's what the younger generation has to do. They have to get rid of the issues of the old generation to make room for their own. The older generation did things this way, which means the younger generation coming up has to do it the other way. I'm glad about that. And I'm not sure if I'm older or younger, I guess. My bones tell me I'm older, anyway, but I always feel like I'm pushing back, too, which is the province or duty or inclination or whatever of the young.

**Stratton:** So, a final question, about this whole thing we are doing, the Stephen Graham Jones Society. What do you think about having your own society?

**Jones:** It's a huge honor, amazing, cool. Who would have ever thought anything like this would happen [laughs].

# Stephen Graham Jones in the World: Readings, Events, and Appearances

West Texas A&M, Reading, "Growing Up Dead in Texas," April 8–10; Canyon, TX

StokerCon 2019, May 9–12; Amway Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Denver Pop Culture Con, Book and Comic Panel, May 26; Colorado Convention Center

Alamo Draft House Cinema, Host and Introductions for double feature with *Near Dark* and *Ginger Snaps*, May 31; Houston, TX

University of California-Riverside, Palm Desert Low Residency MFA Program, Writer-in-Residence, June 7–16; Palm Desert, CA.

Clarion West Writers Workshop, Reading, July 2–4, Seattle, WA.

Institute of American Indian Arts, Writer-in-Residence, June TBA; Santa Fe, NM

ReaderCon 30, Guest of Honor, July 11–14, 2019; Quincy Marriott, Quincy, Massachusetts

Fleur Fine Books, Reading followed by Meet & Greet and Signing, August 24; Port Neches, TX



## Establishing the SGJ Society & Coming Attractions

By Rebecca M. Lush

The SGJ Society had its first official business meeting this past October at the 2018 Western Literature Association meeting held in St. Louis, MO. The society's charter organizers were happy to have a robust turn out at the early morning panel time for the last day of the conference—which speaks to the enthusiasm of readers and scholars of Jones's work.

Attendees shared suggestions for ways that the SGJ Society could support readers and scholars. As a result of that conversation, in the coming year the society's officers hope to establish a website that

can serve as a resource for a wider community of readers and fans of Jones's work, both in and outside of academia.

We hope to continue to collect newly published work and produce a comprehensive bibliography of published materials that encompass Jones's creative work and also new academic work on Jones. Having a centralized location to find such resources will help create a network of scholarly exchange for future collaboration and research.

For our next SGJ Newsletter we want to hear from you! Please see the call for contributions and send us your submissions for our next issue.

## Recent Critical Works

Anderson, Eric Gary. Review of *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: A Critical Companion*, Western American Literature 52:4 (Winter 2018).

Baudemann, Kristina. "Removed to the Signifier: Utopia in Stephen Graham Jones's *The Bird Is Gone: A monograph Manifesto*" Open Library of Humanities 4:1 (2018).

Keene, Jarrett. Review of *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: A Critical Companion*, Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States 43:3 (August 2018).

Osborne, James D. "Scenes: Broken River Books" (Mention of *The Ones That Got Away*), American Book Review 39:5 (July/August 2018).

Stratton, Billy J. "In the Habitations of Specters: On Stephen Graham Jones' *Mapping the Interior*," by Stephen Graham Jones. The Los Angeles Review of Books, April 21, 2018.

Wickett, Dan. "I Love Short Story Collections" (mention of *The Ones That Got Away*) American Book Review 39:6 (September/October 2008).

## New and Upcoming Novels, Stories, Reviews, Miscellany

### Translations:

Melezler [Mongrels], Turkey: Ithaki, 2018.

"Love is a Cavity I Can't Stop Touching," Suspended in Dust II. Chicago: Grey Matter Press, 2018: 1-9.

### Short Stories:

"Bats" Automata, Issue 1 Vol. 2 (June 2018): 1-2.  
<https://automatareview.com/bats-stephen-graham-jones/>.

"Moonboys," Lightspeed Magazine, Issue 102 (November 22, 2018): 1-4.  
<http://www.lightspeedmagazine.com/fiction/moonboys/>.

"The Boy Who Cried About Werewolves," Critically Acclaimed: Fake Movies, Real Reviews. Ed. Adam Cushman, Los Angeles: Rare Bird, 2018.

"Teaching a Sociopath to Cry," Gamut, Issue 1 Vol. 13 (January 2018). <http://gamut.online/node/345>.

"Broken Record," Devil and the Deep: Horror Stories of the Sea. Ed. Ellen Datlow, New York: Night Shade Books, 2018: 1-40.

"Till the morning comes" (reprint), Nightmare Magazine, Issue 68 (May 10, 2018): 1-18.

"Chapter Six," The Best of the Best Horror of the Year. Ed. Ellen Datlow, New York: Night Shade Books, 2018: 1-17.

"Universal Horror," Nightmare Magazine, Issue 75 (December 26, 2018): 1-22.  
<http://www.nightmaremagazine.com/fiction/universal-horror/>.

"The Darkest Part" (reprint), The Dark, Issue 35 (April 2018): 1-35.

"Use Your Inside Voice," I Don't Want to Play This Game Anymore. Canada: Unnerving Press, 2018: 1-15.

"Every Wonderful Detail," Denver: Hex Publishers, 2018: 1-20.

"Werewolves on the Moon" (comic book). (May 01, 2018) 1 (1), 1-10.

The God of Low Things" (reprint), The Dark, Issue 39 (August 2018).

# Call for Submissions!

The SGJ Society Officers want to facilitate a more interactive author society experience for members, and to that end we want to be able to highlight the questions and contributions of the wider Society membership.

We are looking for submissions for the following categories or topics:

## **Teaching Tips**

Have you ever taught one of Jones' works? How did students respond? What suggestions would you share for colleagues looking to add Jones to their high school, college, or graduate course syllabi?

## **Creative Writers responding to Jones' work**

If you're a creative writer or artist, feel free to share a note with us on how Jones' work has inspired you or helps you think about issues of craft and genre differently.

## **Scholarly Notes on Jones' work**

Have an idea you want to share from any scholarly work in progress you have about Jones' work? We're happy to feature short submissions in our Newsletter.

## **Questions**

Have a question for Dr. Jones? Ever wondered what other scholars or writers think about some aspect of Jones' complex, intriguing, and ever-growing body of work? Send us your questions and we'll try to set up an interactive format to start a dialogue among members and with Dr. Jones when possible.

## **Submission Guidelines:**

Please send all submissions to President Dr. Billy J. Stratton at bstratt4@du.edu and Vice President Dr. Rebecca M. Lush at rlush@csusm.edu. Documents should be sent as Word attachments to ensure file compatibility with our Newsletter software program. Limit submissions to no more than 750 words.

We will accept submissions on a rolling basis. All submissions subject to review by the Society Officers. Officers may ask contributors to approve small revisions before publishing submissions.

## SGJ SOCIETY OFFICERS

President, Dr. Billy J. Stratton, University of Denver (bstratt4@du.edu)

Vice President, Dr. Rebecca M. Lush, California State Univ San Marcos (rlush@csusm.edu)

Secretary, Bernadette V. Russo Texas Tech University (Bernadette.V.Russo@ttu.edu)

Treasurer, Dr. Maria O'Connell Wayland Baptist University (maria.o'connell@wbu.edu)

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DTMYNMD>

to complete the short survey so we know what features matter most to you.

This will help us determine a reasonable annual dues cost to fund the creation and maintenance of a Society website and other perks for the exclusive use of SGJ Society members.

The survey should only take 1-2 minutes!