

Amber Caron: Revision and History

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Amber Caron,

English Instructor

USU fiction writing instructor Amber Caron shares her writing process foundations and offers insight into how to grow as a writer

By: Kennedy Parker, CHaSS Communications Student Journalist

Amber Caron is an instructor in the English department here at Utah State University. She is currently teaching undergrad courses in fiction writing alongside her position as the Program Coordinator of the Center for Intersectional Gender Studies and Research. Amber has just published her story *The Stonemason's Wife* in the fall 2020 issue of *The Threepenny Review*, which is recognized as one of the country's most prestigious and competitive literary journals. Caron's work has appeared in multiple other venues such as *PEN America Best Debut Short Stories*, *AGNI*, *Southwest Review*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Writer's Chronicle* and *Longreads*. Her impressive contribution to the world of writing is far-reaching and enduring as she continues to publish her work.

Amber has been endlessly fascinated by the work people do. Her characters work in a wide variety of trades, including search-and-rescue workers, dog trainers, saleswomen, stonemasons, archaeologists, photographers and deep-sea divers. Writing characters with such different experiences from her own requires extensive research,

which Amber identifies as the foundation of her writing process. While beginning the writing process for *The Stonemason's Wife*, she was living in England where stone walls are an architectural staple. Amber became fascinated with the walls and the people who build them because, while they are functional for fencing in sheep and other animals, they are also an art form.

Any of Amber's students could tell you the magic happens in revision. Taking the time to revise your stories and other works over and over again may seem like a tedious process, but it is one that is sure to lead to success. This was true for *The Stonemason's Wife*. The first draft was completed during the summer of 2017, and Amber took the next two and a half years to revise the short story. During this time she was able to whittle the story down from 20 pages to just five. The process was arduous and there were times when she would put the story away, worried it was not salvageable. However, after a trusted reader claimed the story was finished and urged Amber to get it published, she sent it off to *The Threepenny Review* where it was accepted by the editor in February of 2020. The printed publication appeared on her doorstep the first day of fall semester.

When asked about any advice Amber could offer CHaSS students and alumni, she said, "If you wish to grow as a writer, probably the most important thing you can do is to read widely and deeply. Read books you know you'll like and books you think you might not. When you find an author whose work you love, read everything they've written. Ask librarians and booksellers to recommend books. Definitely ask your professors to recommend books. As for writing, enjoy the process and remember that research and revision are an essential part of it."

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