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Interview with Laurie Jean Cannady

“It was an awakening for me,” Laurie Jean Cannady says, describing the process of writing her debut memoir, *Crave: Sojourn of a Hungry Soul*. Cannady began writing as far back as she can remember. In her childhood, she wrote stories, poems, and plays. As an adult, she knew she would have to write a memoir.

“I was really called to writing because I thought of the young women and young men who grew up where I grew up, or who grew up in similar situations to the one that I grew up in,” Cannady says. “I just kept thinking that our voices need to be out there. They need to be heard. People need to understand what it’s like to live in a world where oftentimes you’re marginalized, and people will really negate your voice.”

Cannady’s lyrical voice is the one she uses in everyday speech. She says honing one’s voice is critical.

“I think it’s very important for writers to read aloud what they’ve written, and also get others to read it to them,” she says. “You hear where they pause and where they stop.”

Cannady believes writing workshops and writing groups are invaluable resources, but family can also play a big role.

“My husband was forced to listen to me read it aloud,” Cannady jokes. “Sometimes he would read it aloud. And my son is also a writer, so he was very helpful, too.”

Cannady wrote *Crave* one page at a time, typing at least one page every day. Sometimes she wrote more, but she would not allow herself to go about her business without finishing her daily session. This morning ritual allowed her to have a life outside writing, while not allowing herself to procrastinate or become upset for not writing enough.

According to Cannady, a revision is a major undertaking. She says she used to do simple line editing, but that isn’t enough to prepare a manuscript for publication.

“Once I learned that [line editing] was a waste of time [early in the process], I started thinking more holistically about the different chapters that I was working on. What message was I trying to convey with that particular section or scene or chapter? When I started thinking about it that way, I wasn’t looking for what needed to go; I was looking for what I could keep.”

Cannady made major changes during this revision process. Sometimes only a few sentences out of a 30–page chapter would remain in the next draft. She says she searches for the heart of the piece. Her routine of writing one page a day may produce plenty of material she’ll never use. “I look for those lines that string together, that allow me to see the whole



piece a little better,” she says.

This selectivity allows Cannady to feel removed from the pressure of making every one of her sentences perfect as she writes. Once she finds the heart of the piece, Cannady re-writes the entire section.

Laurie Jean Cannady is a professor of English at Lock Haven University. She spends much of her time encouraging her students to realize their true potential. She is a consummate champion of issues that affect women, veterans, and underprivileged youth. Cannady resides in central Pennsylvania with Chio Cannady and their three children.

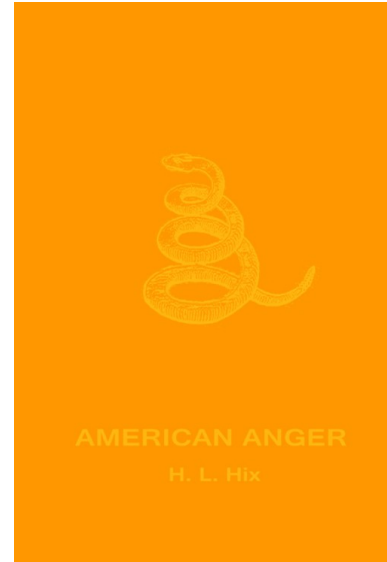
Sam Chiarelli has completed his M.F.A. in Creative Nonfiction at Wilkes University. He is working on his first full-length manuscript -- an exploration of humanity's fascination with dinosaurs.

[To read Laurie Cannady's full interview, go to etruscanpress.org.](http://etruscanpress.org)

New Releases from Etruscan

American Anger by H. L. Hix

Etruscan Press is proud of the numerous pre-publication reviews H. L. Hix has received from *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *NPR* for his newest release, *American Anger*. This expressive book of poems portrays Hix's challenging and unpredictable poetic skills in a manner that has Troy Jollimore of *Boston Review* calling him “the most interesting American poet writing today.” *American Anger* is a reflection of civility and self-correction. Hix brings to light how these feelings are significant to any concerned citizen, as well as focusing on how anger is a cultural norm in American life. A ribbon of text runs in boustrophedon, an ancient Greek writing form—like a watermark behind the poetry—to form a fully developed depiction of sociocultural circumstances and arguments.



Etruscan Outreach Program

Etruscan Press Executive Director Dr. Phil Brady and Etruscan Press author Lynn Lurie recently participated in the Etruscan outreach program in Youngstown, Ohio. The program hosts several events to promote a love of literature across multiple demographics, including underserved students, disabled adults, seniors, and incarcerated men and women.

Each year, Etruscan's outreach program provides books signed by visiting writers to over 1,000 students at East High, Early College, and Choffin Career Center. The program also presents reading and writing workshops in schools and prisons with Etruscan authors. This provides the invaluable opportunity to not only learn about literature from the authors who wrote the book, but also provides the unique opportunity to workshop their own writing with the help of published authors.

These opportunities provided by the Etruscan Outreach Program are an important resource for the unfunded schools of Youngstown, and the Northeast Pre-Release Center, Trumbull County Correctional Institute and Trumbull County Correctional Camp where low expectations and very limited resources often restrict education



Etruscan author Laurie Jean Cannady arrived in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in January as part of the Maslow Reading Series. Cannady also visited a local shelter, Ruth's Place. Cannady makes it a point to go to places such as women's shelters while she's traveling. She wrote *Crave* for people who have faced struggles, and don't often go to book conferences.

During her stay, Cannady found the women at Ruth's Place to be "more

resilient and full of this internal strength.” The author says visits like this exemplify why she’s reading *Crave* throughout the country. Cannady believes it’s important for writers who write from a place of pain to acknowledge their past, and help other people in that place know there is hope.

Visits like Laurie Jean Cannady’s are made possible by donations to Etruscan Press. To help continue outreach programs like these, please visit etruscanpress.org and click on the “DONATE HERE” button on the homepage.

About Etruscan Press:

Housed at Wilkes University and partnering with Youngstown State University, Etruscan is a non-profit literary press working to produce and promote books that nurture the dialogue among genres, cultures, and voices.

For the latest Etruscan events, please visit [our website](#).

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