

# So Be A Writer

**With fellowship, MFA alumna Rose Whitmore has a novel on the horizon**

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“So be a writer.”

These were the words spoken to Rose Whitmore when she was caught between an unfulfilling job and her desire to write full-time, ultimately leading to her enrollment in UNH’s [MFA Writing program](#). A 2013 graduate, Whitmore is now making a name for herself as a writer.

Not only has she earned a series of writing honors—including a Wallace Stegner Fellowship, a Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference scholarship, and the Peden Prize from the Missouri Review—but she also has a novel on the horizon.

Whitmore's novel is set during Enver Hoxha's communist regime in post-World War II Albania. The novel seeks to document a collective trauma under Hoxha that continues to permeate contemporary Albanian culture.

"My novel is very much about totalitarianism and brutality," Whitmore says, "but it is also about the very small ways people find freedom, which is always, in my mind, an incredible feat."

Whitmore's writing career began at UNH, where she studied fiction with [Ann Williams](#) and [Tom Payne](#). Not only did the program give her an education in writing, but it also gave her a writing community and entry into the broader world of writing. After the program ended, Whitmore continued to explore drafts, tools, and ideas from her time there.

"Tom Payne once said to a group of us: 'You must become the writer that is capable of writing the story you must write.' I remember nodding thoughtfully at this statement but having no idea what he was talking about," Whitmore says. "I think I do now though, in that you're always rising to the level of a subconscious curiosity. [...] Writers are always circling and growing into the things we need to say."

Whitmore is currently working on her novel while serving as a Jones Lecturer at Stanford University. Looking back, she says, "There is absolutely no way I would be where I am today without my experience at UNH."

- WRITTEN BY:  
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