

Julia Gordon-Bramer



**Award-Winning Fiction Writer and Poet,
Journalist, Memoirist, Business Writer, and Literary Community Leader**

**SLWG Member Since 2005
SLWG Publicity Committee Member**

Originally from the Washington DC area, **JULIA GORDON-BRAMER** became a professional writer following a depression brought on when her firstborn son turned one--she'd basically missed that entire year with him due to her high-pressure, time-consuming job helping to launch an unknown tech corporation called ORACLE. (If only she'd bought stock!)

Since then, Julia claims she has done every form of writing to earn a paycheck, including journalism, technical, public relations, general business communications, greeting card poetry, humor, music reviews, fiction, resume writing (all too often another form of fiction), and even erotica. She says, "I write because I have to and I would do it anyway—my ideas for writing often wake me up in the middle of the night and will not let me rest until they're on the page. But that's not the only reason I write. I like setting my own schedule, working in synch with my energy and inspiration, and editing pages on the porch in the sunshine--the writing lifestyle doesn't suck!"



Photo by
Loy Ledbetter

Today, Julia is a freelance writer and marketing consultant to the outside world, but those who know her well know that she compulsively writes poetry and fiction at all hours of the day and night. After founding and publishing her own rock magazine, *NIGHT TIMES*, in the 1990s, she also continues its spirit online at www.nighttimes.com. Check it out!

The Gail Ross Literary Agency, in Washington, DC., is currently shopping Julia's memoir, which focuses on this experience, titled *NIGHT TIMES*, to major publishing houses.

Concurrently, Julia is spearheading THE ST. LOUIS CENTURY OF MUSIC PROJECT (<http://www.accessell.com/stlcenturyofmusic/>), a book and traveling exhibit that showcases a one-hundred-year history of St. Louis music from the early 1900s to today.

Julia was a 2002 finalist for the national William Faulkner Pirate's Alley Creative Writing Award and her poems, "Life Poem" and "Delay" won Honorable Mention in the 2005 Deane Wagner Poetry Contest sponsored by St. Louis Writers Guild. She's on the Publicity Committee for the St. Louis Writers Guild, previously served as the director of the National Writer's Voice Project-St. Louis Literary Center, and she's a current board member of *River Styx*, a St. Louis-based literary magazine. A graduate of Webster University, her degree is in English, with an emphasis on writing as a profession.

Julia lives in St. Louis County with her husband, Tom Bramer, former lead guitarist of the popular mid-1990s St. Louis band Radio Iodine, her two sons: Sam and Ross, and an ever-changing number and variety of rescued stray cats.

Five Questions for Julia Gordon-Bramer

SLWG: *You seem to be a very busy writer. What projects are you working on now?*

Well, I make my living writing marketing materials for companies, but of course, that's not where my heart is! Many of the Guild members know that I'm trying to get my memoir, *Night Times*, published. It's the story of the three years I ran a rock magazine as a single mom, but it also deals with less light-hearted themes of addiction, abuse, and victim-behavior. The manuscript is currently with my agent at the Gail Ross Literary Agency, and I'm waiting for the proposal to go out the door to publishers. It's a long, tedious process.

I've also begun a project for which I've had a lot of community support: the St. Louis Century of Music Project. That's going to be a history of a hundred years of popular music to come out of our city. It's a huge undertaking, but a lot of fun. I especially enjoy combing through the music memorabilia that's been donated and shared with me on the

project. Also, I submitted a collection of my poems to *MARGIE/The American Journal of Poetry's* First Poetry Book contest, so cross your fingers for me!

I have another book idea I'm playing with—another memoir about a corrupt social services organization I used to work for—and of course there are always my poems and short stories, as well as writing music, book and movie reviews for my website, www.nighttimes.com. I rarely have writer's block!

SLWG: Can you talk a little about your writing habits?

I'm obsessive. I write all the time: day, night, while working, driving ... whenever. It's a sickness. I'm only half-kidding! I've heard that there is a condition called 'hypergraphia' and I think I have at least a touch of it! I told our SLWG board member Peggy Haldeman that I'm a little embarrassed of how much I write. I seem to get, at the least, a poem every other day. I'm not saying they're all always good, mind you! I say, 'get' because they are unplanned and they tell me when they've got to come out and what they'll say. I can't refuse them or they'll keep me up at night. Of course, a lot of times they do that, anyway!

SLWG: What do you draw on for inspiration?

Well obviously, I read others' works. I love contemporary and classic literary fiction. And I read from literary journals and collections. A lot of my poems come out of conversations with friends. I suddenly realize that I have a surprising and different take on some subject than most people have. Most of my stories and poems I draw from real life incidents, and I'm continuously in awe of people who can really make stuff up that they haven't lived.

SLWG: Can you tell us a little about your writing style?

A lot of my work has a dark edge, but I try to incorporate humor too. Most people would consider my work intensely personal—and rightly so. I'm someone who wants to go to the dangerous, uncomfortable places because I believe that's where the power and the heart is. My poetry style is usually a little more spare and abstract than my prose, but I'd like to think it's still personal and full of feeling. I really get off on the power of line breaks—spinning a whole new meaning off a simple idea! Rhythm is also very important to me, although I'm not really educated to explain meter, to properly adhere to form, etc. I do enjoy playing with form, like haikus and sestinas—but I always seem to break the rules here and there!

SLWG: Do you have any advice you'd give other writers?

Yes. If they're at the point where they're working with an agent, be prepared for a long, long wait. I'm talking *years*. Books don't just happen, even after your manuscript is complete. Even after you've secured your agent! You've got to have them work with you to develop a proposal that is going to convince the publishers you'll make them money. Keep in mind you're in the queue with about a hundred other writers at that agency. And

if you're an unknown like me who's done all her previous publishing in local journalism and the corporate world, it's even a tougher case to build. No one goes into writing just to be published. You must have the drive to do it anyway.

I think that I only just started to truly believe I was a decent writer a year or so ago. Up until then, I was constantly showing stuff to everyone, workshopping and seeking approval. Reviewers can be helpful--it's always good to have other eyes on your work, but don't do what I did and rely on others to tell you how your work should go. I did that for far too long.

Also, don't think of yourself as a failure if you're like me, in your forties, looking at the work of all these hotshot prolific twenty-somethings. It's pretty easy to be jealous of Dave Eggers, Zadie Smith, and Jonathan Safran-Foer. I heard once that we should never look at our chronological ages as artists. Your art is only as old as the time that you've been intensely, regularly practicing it. That said, I'm still in my early twenties!

[CLICK HERE TO READ AN EXCERPT FROM JULIA'S MEMOIR, NIGHT TIMES:](#)

JULIA'S PUBLICATIONS:

Numerous articles in the *St. Louis Business Journal*, *Riverfront Times*, and other newspapers.

Founded, edited and managed *Night Times* magazine (1994-1998) and Nighttimes.com (present day).

Author of *Night Times*, a memoir, which will hopefully be published in the next year or two.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JULIA GORDON-BRAMER:

If you'd like to learn more about Julia's other writing projects, join her efforts, or just read and comment, please check out these links:

www.nighttimes.com

www.stlcenturyofmusic.com

www.myspace.com/wordgirlnt

Email Julia: wordgirl@nighttimes.com