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Instructor: Cathy Ryan

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Diane Williams

Diane Williams is an American author and founder and editor literary annual NOON. In her interview with John O' Brien, Williams discusses her struggles as an editor in her early career and how she came about being the author she is today. Williams graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in English Literature, Sculpting, and Drawing. Unsure of her future, Williams went to New York and taught dance therapy at Bellevue Hospital in the psyche ward. She describes the people in the psyche ward to be "heavily drugged they were zombielike, except in the wards they were manic-so manic that they couldn't be subdued". Williams believes this early experience may have led to her writing styles. As time passed Williams worked at Doubleday trying to be an editor. Since Williams was a woman, she was placed as a secretary while her male colleagues were put into immediate editor positions. Angered and disgusted, Williams left New York and moved to Chicago where had her first child, Jacob.

The turning point for Williams happened when Williams went out drinking with her friends. O' Brien asks "Do you know when you start one of your odd stories where it's going?". Williams answered "No, no, god no" and exclaims that the start of her stories came when she "went out drinking" and "started talking about something she(l) observed, her(my) children". It

was here when Williams decided to write about the things in her life. Williams says that all her stories come from a “very real place” and that she “manipulates it into a completely new idea”. This allows her fiction to have deep emotion, but also have a fictional aspect to it.

Some of Williams most notable works include but are not limited to:

- *This Is About the Body, the Mind, the Soul the World, Time, and Fate* (1990)
- *Some Sexual Success Stories Plus Other Stories in Which God Might Choose to Appear* (Grove 1992)
- *The Stupefaction* (1996)
- *Excitability: Selected Stories* (1998)
- *Romancer Erector* (2001)
- *My First Real Home* (2009)
- *Vicky Swanky Is a Beauty* (2012)
- *Fine, Fine, Fine, Fine, Fine* (2016)

If I had the opportunity to interview Diane Williams I would ask what advice she has for young writers facing discrimination. I feel that Williams went through a lot at her time Doubleday with her sex being discriminated against. I would want to know how she was mentally strong enough to keep a positive spirit and continue to write and write a scholarly level like with her short story “Pornography”. Lastly, I would ask Williams why she never returned to her hometown Columbus, Ohio to write her stories. In her interview she says that she likes writing “in populated, but concentrated areas” and I strongly believe Columbus is a great place for that.

<http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/a-conversation-with-diane-williams-by-john-obrien/>