

I have always had an intense access to my fear. At nine years old, I was diagnosed with severe anxiety disorder with a side dish of panic attacks. Add a repressive Southern Catholic upbringing and a hidden queer disposition and you're left with a healthy mix of shame and Catholic guilt. But all that fear and shame have made me hyper-aware and increasingly empathetic. My inner world no longer felt safe, so I focused on the external. Hailing from a small meth town in Louisiana, not much was ever really expected of me. Most people who grow up in Louisiana and other places like it are no stranger to fear, darkness, and fighting to survive another day. All one can hope for is a quiet life. But I refuse to believe that a quiet life has to be a bitter one because those born here know how to fight. These resilient communities are often misrepresented and satirized by people who have never been here. Therefore, writing became not only my escape but also my purpose. I wanted to set the story straight on what it means to be a mentally ill repressed Southerner and show that joy is present despite these harsh realities.

I am a Southern Gothic writer who tells stories about the innocence and hopefulness of characters in a dark, often dangerous world. I took all that fear and hyper-awareness of being alive and created fantastical worlds where the young heroine, despite navigating a dark and treacherous wood, comes out on the other side of her journey bruised and bloody, yes, but also somehow kinder and happier. Though my characters are innocent, they are never naive. I write characters who are fighters, who find joy, who aren't complacent in their small worlds; through worlds that are all at once fantastical while veering into something slightly nightmarish, my characters view the world as something special, something magic. In this way, my work comes close to magical realism, but it is scarier and slightly sweeter too.

Theatre takes those scary voices in my head and creates beauty. I am fascinated and motivated by what can only be theatrical. That is why I am drawn to the southern gothic and horror genres. When emotions get so big and ugly, we have no choice but to put them right before us; true magic happens. We get to see the scariness, but we also get to see the humor and beauty in these private lives. I also believe that just because something is dark and scary doesn't mean there isn't love and humanity. Comedy plays an essential role in all of my work. I often write younger characters or characters with a youthful disposition because I have no interest in writing jaded people stuck in sad situations. No matter how hard the world becomes, my characters keep their bellies soft. They show their empathy and humanity because what other choice is there? Thus, humor and joy abound in even my darkest worlds.

Through my work, I hope to build worlds where children talk to trees, where the stars know my character's names, and despite the violence, we see the joy and beauty of a resilient community of individuals who have made friends with the dark while still reaching for the light.