

ALEX GEANA

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MISSION STATEMENT

To blend magical realism into the real world by creating memorable and vibrant work that brings gay fiction into the mainstream market. To inspire with a unique voice in an ever-changing culture by creating written projects that illicit emotion.

Using themes such as the awareness of relationships, ambition, the chasm between the wealthy and poor, social consequence and emotion.

Creating a showcase for a strong, well-crafted voice, that blends into a pertinent theme – which transpires through various written media: that of novel, short story, blog and play.

OVERVIEW AND SUCCESS

The goal is to connect the virtual world to the literary world. Interconnectivity from virtual world to tangible work – work which can be touched and felt; is an important aspect of literary innovation as technology merges with art. The blog connects reader to writer; that connection is then easily transferred to novel and play.

The theme and awareness of achieving gay marriage, entering into solid relationships are expressed through the blog. The more complex themes of development and a person's ever changing life are expressed through novel. The plays directly challenge the perception of wealth, happiness and the American Dream. Each writing project is connected through its themes and scope to all other projects. It is a unique approach to acquiring readers and bringing awareness to literary endeavors.

Each tied to the success of the other, first focusing on the reader, then the reader's interest and connection to a wide variety of literary projects. The blog builds a reader base that would not normally take a risk on literary fiction. The goal is to build awareness to the importance of reading novels and exposing readers to plays that challenge social context, thereby stimulating culture. Gay themes are a major part of thematic scope, yet the context of social consequence is paramount.

The projects success can easily be measured through the Site Meter feature on the blog which records visitor and page view. A detailed graphic analysis has been included with this grant. Attendance at play workshops, readings and events can be recorded, sales and the successful publication of the novel, these are all tangible numbers that can be easily identified and will grow from year to year.

I often encounter the myth that literary writers labor away the hours in dark rooms behind a Remington, producing work that will never see the light of day. The writing projects from blog, novel, to play are meant to dispel that myth as well as bring new work that can broaden the scope of writing in the modern age. The National Endowment for the Arts states that "through its literature, a nation expresses its hopes and fears, and tells its stories to its citizens and to the world."

Through this grant and by gaining foundation as well as individual support I want to challenge the notion of literary work. I strive to bring awareness and tell the story of a community struggling to gain human rights, to once again evaluate the American Dream and bring new definitions into our society. By providing a new look and strategy for the written word, I hope to encourage more involvement and gain support for society on the cusp of change.

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HISTORY AND INSPIRATION

My first inspiration was C.S. Lewis and *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, after quickly reading all the chronicles; I sat down to write the eighth installment, I was twelve at the time and found out how truly hard it was (and still is) to write a novel. I remember finishing only ten pages before giving up. Yet that moment started me on the long road to becoming a writer.

Quickly I was inspired by the work of Toni Morrison, Barbara Kingsolver and Gabriel García Márquez, falling in love with their strong voices, their work and mission. I have become inspired by how their literature has changed our culture and view of the world.

I was born in Romania, grew up in California, went to college for luxury hotel management in Connecticut, interned in Florida at Hawk's Cay Resort and finally established roots in New York. During this time I collected stories and started the habit of listening to people that I encounter daily. I also started to understand my own place in the world and my singular passion for creating written work.

Because of my family's insistence that I find a proper career, my first job was at the Essex House's front desk overlooking Central Park. This was the time that I was exposed to people and their many reactions, seeing wealthy people interact with others of supposed insignificance, seeing celebrities come check-in, hide – without make-up, road weary travelers hoping to finish a truly tough whirlwind tour; quickly putting on a smile when recognized. Soon I became the Catering Manager for Restaurant Associates at NASDAQ Marketsite, continuing my career in operations management.

After six months my employer discovered I was gay and fired me on the spot. I retained a law firm, yet because they didn't have the passion to pursue my interests and deemed that my case wouldn't provide a suitable pay out, the case went nowhere. With solace and determination I tried to continue my hospitality career and salvage a wrongful termination, yet was unable because of an atrophying industry and economy. Unconsciously, with much need, I began slowly building characters that now live in my writing.

The guests I've encountered, the hotels and restaurants I've become intimate with, now serve as the backdrop for *Spartan Sunrise* and are a major inspiration for *Three Tables* as well as my other work.

During my life I have never been able to stop writing; it is my one love and joy. Something I diligently seek to make my profession and life career.

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WRITING PROJECTS

I'm seeking funding for my body to develop an amalgam of novel, short stories, blog and plays. Each is tied to the other and careful to build on connected success.

Novel

Spartan Sunrise is written through many voices and uses a blend of magical realism and reality to tell the life story of a man, who is on every cusp – as society recognizes human rights and changes.

It is the story of the first man to be married to his partner, wed on the steps of the capitol building. The character John Hayward experiences New York relationships; he almost marries Bonny, a socialite. After coming out he drifts through odd jobs and unemployment, he becomes a waiter. One of his long time guests offers him an entry-level job; he works his way up the corporate ladder to a prestigious position. The novel follows John's childhood, college years, quest for a partner, wedding, marriage, children and inevitable death.

Spartan Sunrise is heavily laden with religious and social themes while sprinkled with surreal storytelling. John learns about life through the many people he meets and the many ways he finds love and himself. In the Sunshine Hotel, a flop house on the Bowery, he discovers earthly manifestations of four religions through Lilith, Adam, Geb and Rhea. They retell their creation and their struggle to grow. John is inspired for the rest of his life: these characters influence him and his struggle to gain recognition for himself and his partner.

The themes expressed are the validity of gay marriage and the importance of real relationships and self-awareness in society.

Short Stories

Short stories are an important part of my work because they build and showcase individual themes and while allowing me to take risks with creativity. Once I find something that works, I feel confident transferring the vision, voice or theme to a major work. The literary voice used in *The Ring* honed the voice used in *Spartan Sunrise*, even though *Traveling* didn't work on its own, the individual vignettes came to life in the novel. The theme in *Fabulous Things* is now echoed in the play *Three Tables*.

Fabulous Things a story about a single man who realizes he can't buy happiness, uses conventional storytelling and magical realism, in the end, to bring the story together. The story has been published in the online journal *Fluent Ascensions*.

The Ring tells the story of Clark's obsession with finding love, his love with the concept of love. His desire to find a rich young husband drives him to develop a relationship with the mythic Isaac (Ben's pseudonym). A boy who's built a fictional life for himself with information he's found online and in magazines. This story is slated for publication in an anthology of gay shorts by *Merge Press* in summer 2006.

The Glitterati, written in the tradition of social consequence; such as Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World* and Anthony Burgess's *Clockwork Orange*. It describes a world of two cultures, which collide. *Traveling* is an experimental piece about the barriers set between ourselves and the act of living. It's written in the basic five-paragraph essay format taught to students in junior high.

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WRITING PROJECTS

Blog

One Gay Date at a Time reaches over 600 consistent readers and continues to grow. It portrays vignettes of gay culture through dating experiences. It is also a primary fundraising tool and draws instant feedback from readers about my writing and themes. It grows a reader base of individuals interested in my work.

The site is written in pop fashion inspired by the voice created by Candace Bushnell for her character Carrie Bradshaw. It deals openly with relationships, sexuality and the need for commitment in the gay community.

The Blog is a direct face for my writing, encouraging people to delve deeper into my craft and thoughts. The goal is to transfer the budding reader base to my more serious literary work.

Merge Press discovered my work because of the blog; Maria Angeline is a regular reader of the site and asked to have a short story submitted to the anthology. *Spartan Sunrise* found interest from *Alyson Books* because the editor was able to experience the blog in an introductory email from a friend.

I continue to get wonderful feedback and connect to people. *One Gay Date at a Time* connects my writing to a global community because it is easily updated and constantly changing at the pace of life.

Plays

Three Tables is being developed and is currently being workshopped by a group of actors. I'm working on the final edits before soliciting production. In the play, high society meets reality. *Three Tables* is set in three different restaurants, in three different time frames, on the same stage. Nine players enact the plot. The restaurant is the perfect setting for action to unfold. The characters become drunker and more truthful.

Set in the future. Chris is dining alone, waiting for his wife. They've been married for four years. He engages the waiter that serves Table One.

Table Two is set in the past. Crystal, Chris's future wife, sits at brunch with her friends; they talk about relationships in their lives – desires and dates. Josephine, Chris's mother, dines with a business partner and a friend at Table Three. Set in the present day, she talks about her expectations of the wedding and hope for her son's future. The relationship between the characters and their money is established by conversations they have through restaurant table banter. Josephine, shrewd in business, must come to her son's defense as Crystal presents divorce papers at the end of the play.

The Search for the Golden Grapefruit is the search for the American Dream. Characters travel from a high-end retail store in the Meat Packing District, to a whore house in the village.

Tiff and Jimmy are twin drifters who seduce the good-old-boy Rowley. The play parallels the desire for the perfect life, at all costs. Once found the Golden Grapefruit can be cut and anyone that eats it will achieve eternal happiness. The production is sprinkled with sexuality and characters that represent civil liberties and government. I'm currently writing the play and dreaming up the lines; it'll be ready for readings in a few months.

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ESTABLISHING INTERCONNECTIVITY

Marketing is the binding tie that connects all projects. Without marketing there is no awareness or success for each individual project.

The first need is to redesign *One Gay Date at a Time*. It's a very text heavy website that has little stick factor until readers become involved with at least two to three posts (pages). By creating a great design that conveys the theme in a savvy and artistic way, readers will instantly identify with the blog and its theme. This will increase stick factor and reader awareness.

Beth is a gifted designer who has also typeset this document, as well as designed the promotional material attached. She brings a distinct awareness to the project and has been identified for her strong thoughts on branding as it applies to art. She will be providing a consistent image for all team members to work with. The blog must also gain a wider following in the virtual world as well as print. Since it is the gateway to other projects, a strong public relations campaign is vital and must accompany all work.

TEAM PROJECT

The following individuals are crucial to the success of the writing projects as a whole and have been included in the budget. They are familiar with my work and are willing to support the growth of an artist.

Blog Marketing

Toby Bloomberg is an Atlanta-based marketing guru that uses the power of blogs for viral marketing. She has served clients including Cingular, Avaya, Chick-fil-a, Lucent Technologies, the City of Wichita and the New Mexico Lottery. Toby has spoken about blogs and marketing topics at national conferences and organizations including the American Marketing Association, MIT and at the University of Delaware.

She realizes that blogs go steps beyond traditional internet marketing to creating "corner grocery store relationships." Toby is passionate about and helps companies build marketing strategies that harness the power of blogs.

Graphic Design

Elizabeth McDonald, an accomplished illustrator, has over 15 years of graphic design experience working within a variety of industries. Her experience in branding, identity and interactive design will be a strong asset to the team and critical to the design of the blog and collateral materials.

Event Marketing and Fundraising

Timothy Dean Cochran, as Part of the Brand Awareness Team for Bare Escentuals (now the number one selling cosmetic line in the world) is familiar with public relations through networking events. As a leader in the industry, he has raised tens of thousands of dollars by planning and executing events as well as fundraisers.

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SUPPORTING COMMENTARY

"I discovered your Blog while searching for Daniel V sightings. I've been reading it daily now for a week or so. I live in Seattle, but I really enjoy reading your view from the other coast!"

Briand Sanderson, (contributor),

briand@chezbriand.com

"Alex sees New York and its inhabitants through an observer's lens. In his finest work (almost finished pieces) he has the outsider sensibility combined with a genuine writer's ability to perceive and understand. He is capable of what I can best describe as a sometimes painful, sometimes comic self-awareness. He is equally capable of turning this tender and penetrating lens towards the outcasts, the marginal people of a forever up-and-coming city. His narrative voice is at times bewildered but is at times always knowing. He richly deserves the time and support to allow him to continue his work."

Katherine Janowitz PHD, elected Drama Desk, (editor),

janowitz_66@msn.com

"I wanted to say I love the daily site, and the time you put into this new writing for the masses, I love it. Your wit, your stance on "things" is fresh and seriously serious, but fun at times too. Thank you. I could say that your picture [so great, a handsome guy, the eyes have it also, like Marilyn. What are you thinking?] has the potential to tell the tides of a storyline for so many everyday moments. A picture and words written with thought. You need Alex to run away to some far off local [Europe, Morocco, South Africa?] and really write with what Tennessee Williams called the Terror of facing each day's output. I know you have that thing we call talent. Anyway, really I love the site, love the writing and wish I was on The Committee to give a Macarthur Grant to you and then you could be free and pushed out to return later with immortally placed words set to today's most distinct visions of this humanity."

Gary, (reader),

palmgator@earthlink.net

"Thank you for sharing some of your thoughts with me. I got lost tonight in you writing and New York became even more of a mysterious wonderland for me. I look forward to seeing so much more to come. Your writing kept me glued to the screen and I'm afraid I've neglected my appetite. So hungry..."

Andrew DeVore, (reader),

devorester@gmail.com

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SITE SUMMARY

VISITS

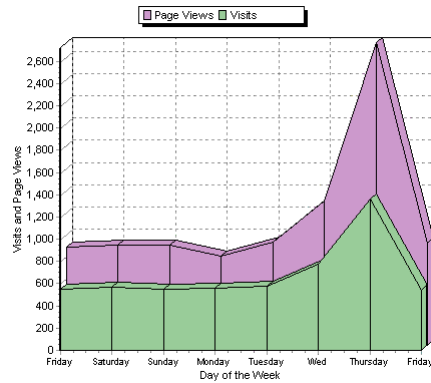
Total	88,161
Average Per Day	705
Average Visit Length	1:34
Last Hour	38
Today	543
This Week	4,936

PAGE VIEWS

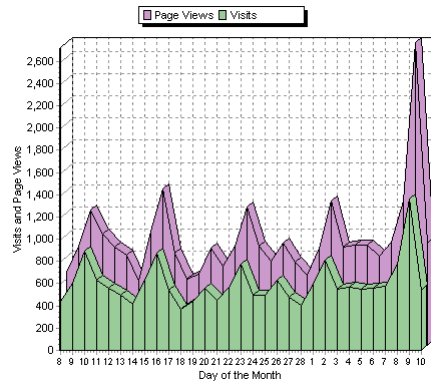
Total	140,868
Average Per Day	1,204
Average Per Visit	1.7
Last Hour	56
Today	922
This Week	8,427

Plus 9,282 visitors before joining Site Meter on February 18, 2005

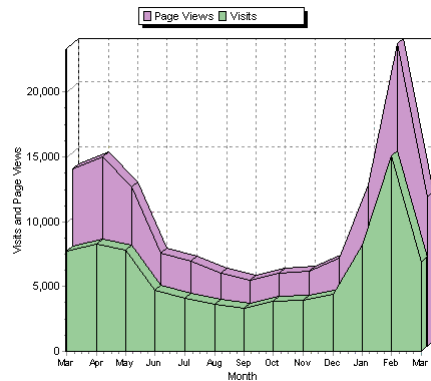
WEEKLY GRAPH



MONTHLY GRAPH



YEARLY GRAPH



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DESIGN BY ELIZABETH MCDONALD

Personifying Character

Skye is the character and main voice created to personify *One Gay Date at a Time*.



Promotional Card

To encourage word of mouth, a little card has been created. The front image of the card has also been reproduced as a refrigerator magnet to further excite awareness and reward sponsorship.



front



back

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ARTIST BUDGET 2006

Sources of Support

Publication	0.00
In Kind Donations	
Graphic Design	1,100.00
Blog Marketing	1,500.00
Computer Programming	370.00
Corporate	
In Hand	0.00
Pending	250.00
Foundations	
In Hand	0.00
Pending	0.00
Fundraising Events	
In Hand	0.00
Goal	3,000.00
Individual Contributions	
In Hand	530.00
Goal	4,500.00
Advertising Revenue	
In Hand	102.00
Goal	350.00

Total Support 11,702.00

Project Costs

Novel	Spartan Sunrise	
	Artist Fee	12,000.00
	Editing	1,500.00
Plays	Three Tables and Search for the Golden Grapefruit	
	Artist Fee	6,400.00
	Workshop	520.00
	Readings	3,100.00
Short Stories	Artist Fee	1,200.00
	Editing	150.00
Blog	One Gay Date at a Time	
	Artist Fee	1,100.00
	Typepad Hosting (14.95 x 12)	179.40
	Blog Consulting (550 x 12)	6,600.00
	Programming	1,200.00
	Marketing (post cards, blogads campaign, business cards)	1,500.00
Operating Expenses		
	Graphic Design	5,600.00
	Event Planner and execution	1,600.00
	Field Membership	250.00
	Rent (850 x 12)	10,200.00
	Food (600 x 12)	7,200.00
	Utilities (190 x 12)	2,280.00
	Computer	1,850.00
	Office Supplies	1,050.00
	Medical (insurance, therapy, medication)	7,000.00
	Transportation (monthly metro cards and taxis)	1,198.00

Total Expenses 73,677.40
Amount of Need 61,975.40