

As a child I lived in the ideal world for a writer, an apartment dominated by stacks of books. My father, John Birkett, was the author of several detective novels published in the late 80s and early 90s. I got to witness what writing really looked like as he sat at the kitchen table at his typewriter each day and I still decided to pursue it. I began my career as a journalist and feature writer. I enjoyed putting other people's words together but it struck me that journalism was puzzle building, while creative writing was like painting a picture. I write poems, stories and ten-minute plays from a home office in Louisville, Kentucky. My writing has taught me a lot about what I think is important in the world. My work deals with issues of perspective, seeing, and being seen. I think writers are called upon to place the right words in the right order and to reveal something important about the human character while doing it, which, of course, is why we are paid so well.

Early on I was influenced by the short stories of Barbara Kingsolver, Bobbie Ann Mason and Ann Beattie. I enjoy the work of Elizabeth Strout for the fine writing and deep well of humanity that lies under the stories. I admire the poetry of W. S. Merwin and marvel at the natural rhythm of his voice and the work of poet Ted Kooser, who shines a light on the lives of ordinary people in ordinary pursuits in an extraordinary way.