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## Molly McCully Brown selected as 2017 Oxford American Jeff Baskin Writers Fellow

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS—In February 2017, the Oxford American Literary Project announced the Oxford American Jeff Baskin Writers Fellowship. Designed to support the writing of a debut book of creative nonfiction, the fellowship offers the winner a \$10,000 living stipend, housing, and an editorial apprenticeship with the *Oxford American* toward a nine-month residency. The fellowship is funded with support from ACANSA Arts Festival, Argenta Arts Foundation, Tenenbaum Recycling Group, Argenta Flats Apartments, and Salter Properties.

We are proud to share that **Molly McCully Brown**, a 2017 graduate of the MFA program at the University of Mississippi, is the inaugural recipient of the Fellowship. Brown, whose book of poems *The Virginia State Colony For Epileptics and Feeble-minded* (Persea Books) was published in March 2017, will spend her Fellowship working on a manuscript titled *What We Are*. In her proposal, Brown wrote: “The manuscript I am provisionally calling *What We Are* is a collection of personal essays which approach, from a variety of angles, my evolving understanding of the intersection between the physical body and that intangible other I have come to call the soul.”

Award-winning writers and *OA* contributors **Brian Blanchfield**, **Bronwen Dickey**, and **Ada Limón** selected Brown after a blind judging process. Blanchfield praised Brown’s work sample in the following citation:

“For the other judges (Ada Limón and Bronwen Dickey) and I, the applicant we now know as Molly McCully Brown was a standout even among a group of thoroughly impressive finalists. The personal essays in her developing manuscript, *What We Are*, certainly account what it is to live and work and teach and love with Cerebral Palsy; but her condition is not ultimately the subject of the capacious, reflective essays that make up the proposed collection. In understated, supple prose, she writes about the uses and limits of anger; about the relationship between disability and religious devotion; about the ways in which ‘explaining is a kind of erasure’ and yielding to stillness brings discovery. This is unreluctant intellection, candid and crisp and often poignant, and Molly McCully Brown’s a natural.”

Brown’s Fellowship in Central Arkansas will begin in September 2017. For more information about the Oxford American Jeff Baskin Writers Fellowship, visit [www.oxfordamerican.org/fellowship](http://www.oxfordamerican.org/fellowship).

### ABOUT THE OXFORD AMERICAN

Over the past 25 years, the *Oxford American*, a quarterly magazine dedicated to documenting the complexity and vitality of the American South, has helped launch and sustain the careers of many significant writers of literary journalism, memoir, reportage, criticism, and the lyric essay. Since 1992, the magazine has published original nonfiction work by such powerhouses as Z. Z. Packer, John Jeremiah Sullivan, Alex Mar, Leslie Jamison, Kiese Laymon, John T. Edge, Jesmyn Ward, Barry Hannah, Wendell Berry, Michelle García, Roy Blount Jr., Stephanie Elizondo Griest, John Updike, and many others, while also routinely publishing emerging writers. The *Oxford American*, along with its contributors, has received numerous awards, including the 2016 National Magazine Award in General Excellence.

### ABOUT JEFF BASKIN

A librarian by trade, Jeff Baskin was a lifelong and generous literary citizen. Over his thirty years running Laman Library, he built the North Little Rock Public Library System into one of the most respected library systems in the region. With his leadership and creative approach to programming, the library brought reading, art and theater to countless children and adults. In 2010, Jeff initiated the Laman Writers Fellowship, a prestigious, annual award honoring Arkansas writers. When he passed away in 2014, Jeff left behind a tremendous legacy. The Oxford American Jeff Baskin Fellowship continues that legacy.

