

# DANCE TO FREELANCE

By Dawn Coutu

Mary-Catherine Jones combines her work as a freelance creative director and copywriter with her classical training as a dancer. Each word choice and keyboard stroke is an act of editing similar to the phrases of dance that she once performed. Music and rhythm are everywhere in her writing. She is a writer who thinks visually. "Choreography serves movement on the stage as it does words moving on a page," she says.

She crafts language for ad campaigns and social media, websites, video scripts, billboards, and even tweets. Some of her clients include Aveda, Target, Southwest Airlines, Snickers, and Chanel. "You have to be extremely conscious of how you use and lay out words," she notes. That is particularly challenging with tweets, where creativity is limited to a mere 140 characters.

Mary-Catherine moved to New Hampshire from New York City with her husband Adam and their two young children.

In New York, she was surrounded by artists and creative people, and quickly found ways to build a community of talented individuals in the Granite State. Just a few short months after graduating from the MFA program at New England College, Mary-Catherine established the Datum:Earth reading series. Datum:Earth builds on New Hampshire's reputation as the home of many fine poets and writers. During the 2011 season the series featured award-winning poets, a Brooklyn experimental prose poet, and a creative nonfiction author. According to Mary-Catherine,

Datum:Earth represents the more eclectic voices of New Hampshire and beyond, and she has dedicated herself to seeking out writers who represent new perspectives. She also looks to expose New Hampshire writers to work they may not have encountered otherwise and has attracted writers from as far away as Chicago and New York. The series also draws on the talents of two other members of the MFA community at New England College for promotional assistance – Dawn Coutu and Tucker Sampson. As far as Mary-Catherine is concerned, a poetry reading is a success even if only three new people show up.

Mary-Catherine graduated from the MFA program poetry in 2009 and sums up her educational experience as reading, writing, and thinking. "For the caliber of mentorship that this program offers, it is well worth the investment." She found that the program enriched her work as a freelance copywriter and helped to shape her first poetry manuscript. "I think what changed, more than anything, was my sense of discipline for the craft and practice of poetry. The rigor that had been there for dance is still there when I freelance, it just calls on a different set of muscles."

To learn more about upcoming readings through Datum:Earth, visit the website at [www.datumeearth.blogspot.com](http://www.datumeearth.blogspot.com). Mary-Catherine's portfolio is featured at [www.marycatherinejones.com](http://www.marycatherinejones.com).

