

Fall 2017 Sabbatical



“The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.”

—William James

1



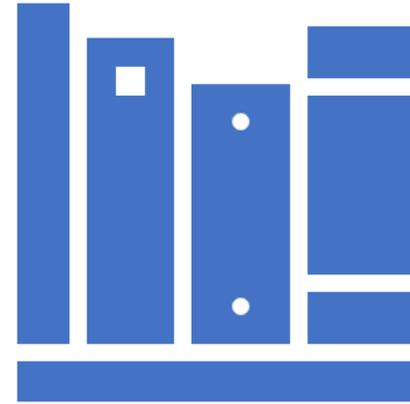
**The Plan**

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**The Project**

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**The Product**

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**The Prospects**

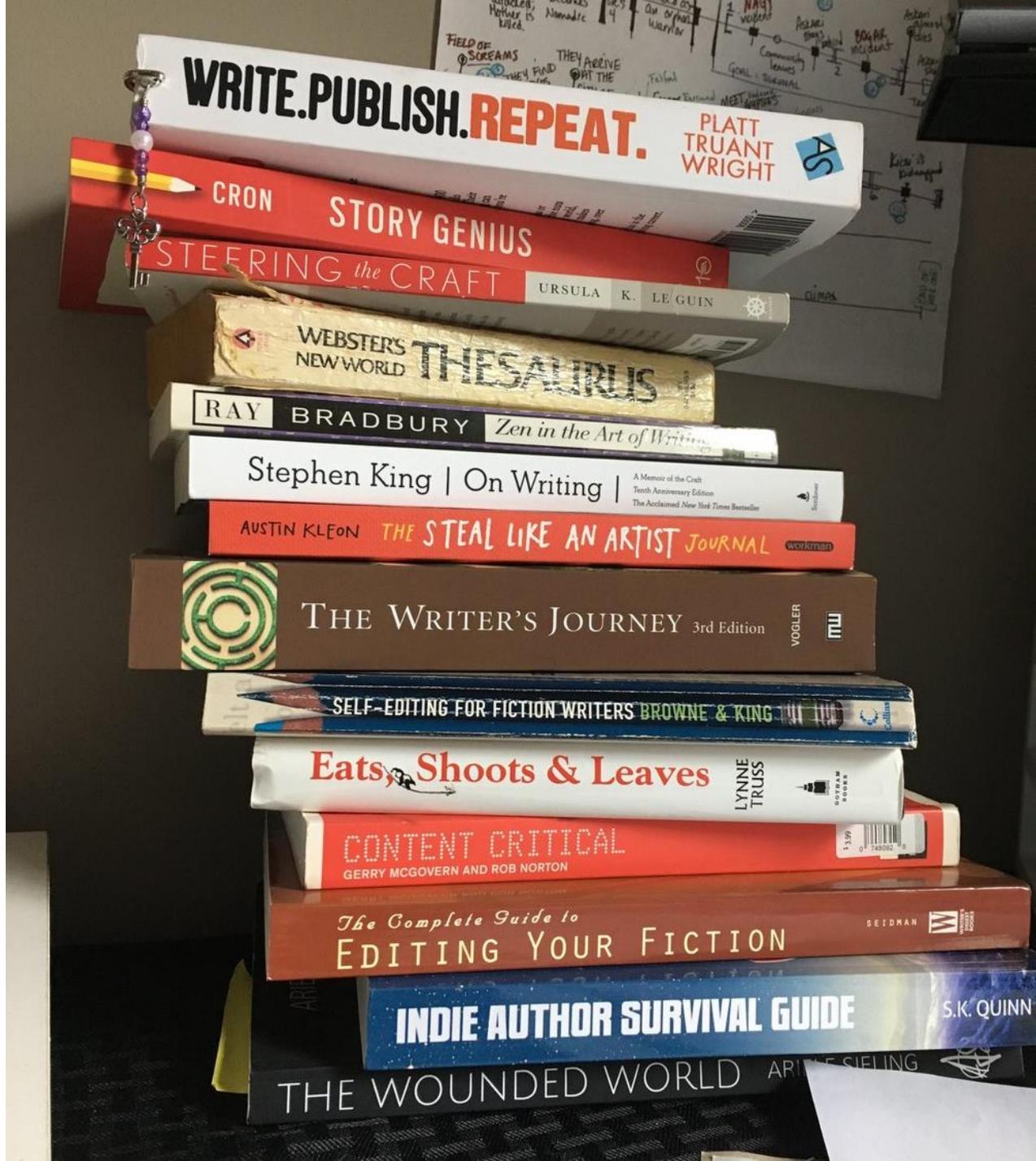
**Jason Whitesitt**

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Professor of English and Humanities

1

# The Plan



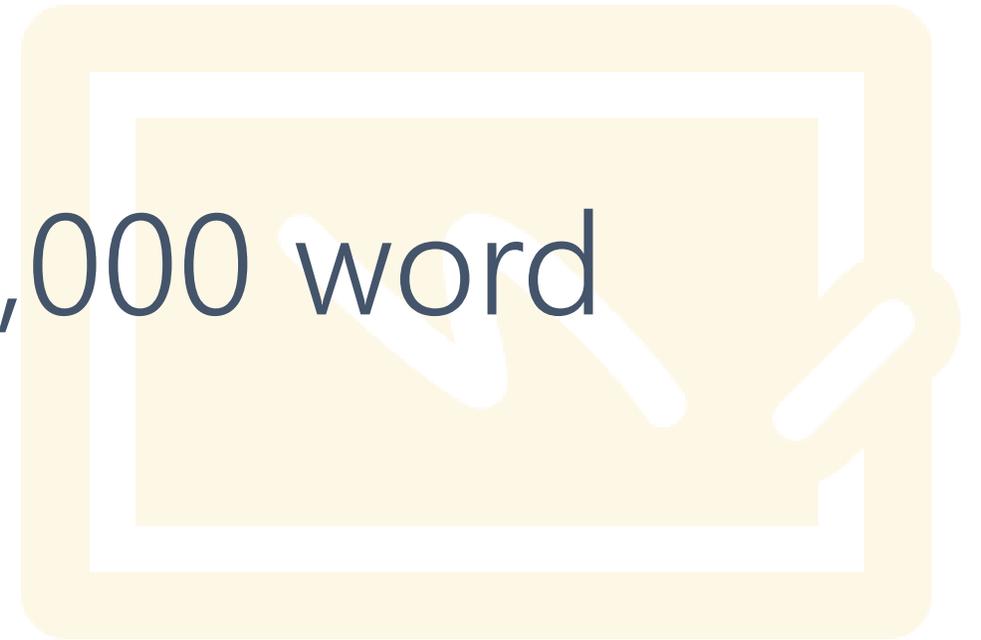


“There is an agony in bearing an untold story inside you.”

—Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

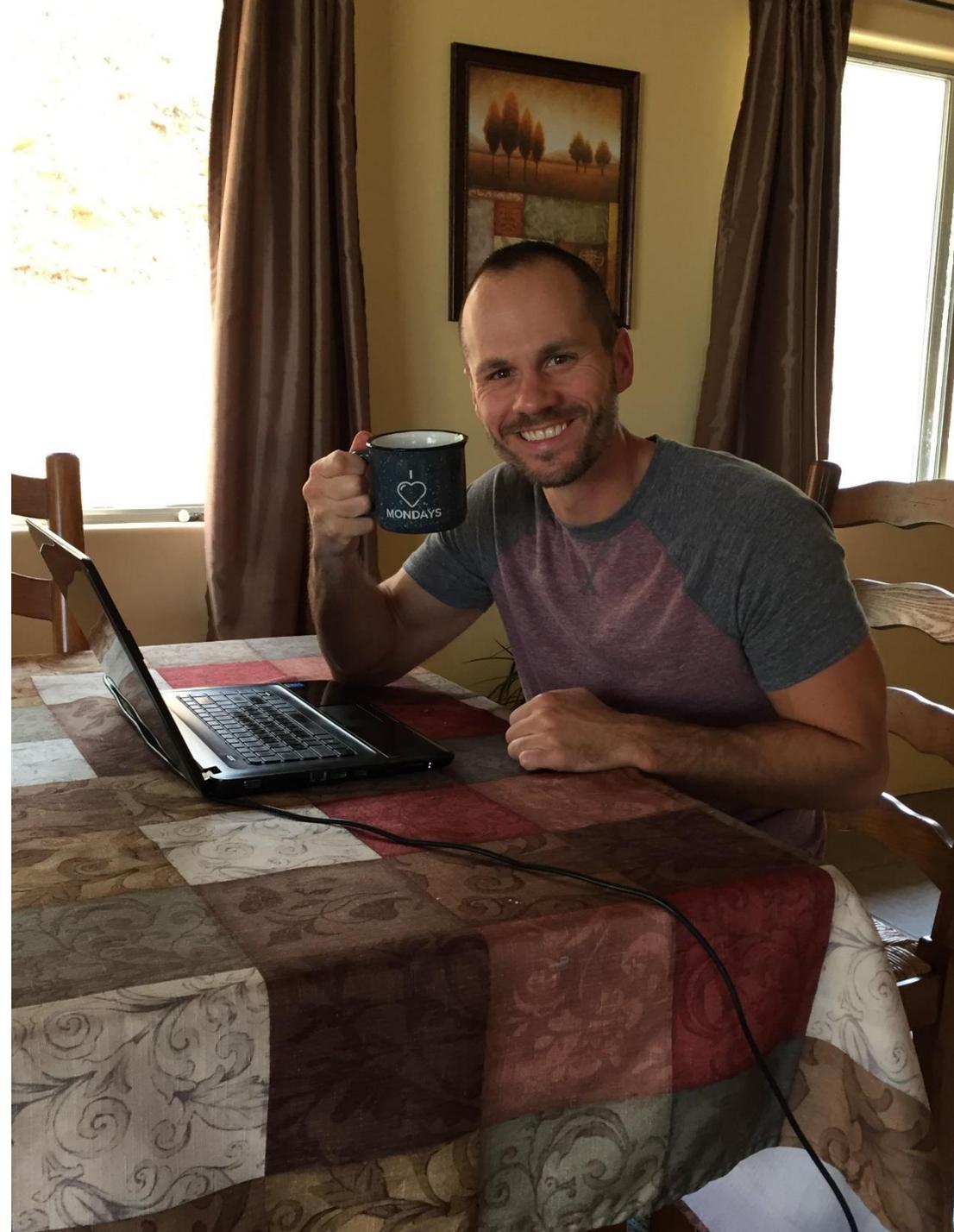
## The Plan

Compose a 60,000-70,000 word  
historical fiction novel



2

# The Project





"A friend came to visit James Joyce one day and found the great man sprawled across his writing desk in a posture of utter despair.

'James, what's wrong?' the friend asked. 'Is it the work?'

Joyce indicated assent without even raising his head to look at his friend. Of course it was the work; isn't it always?

'How many words did you get today?' the friend pursued.

Joyce (still in despair, still sprawled facedown on his desk): 'Seven.'

'Seven? But James... that's good, at least for you.'

'Yes,' Joyce said, finally looking up. 'I suppose it is...but I don't know what order they go in!'"

—from *On Writing*

## The Project

I wrote every weekday,  
7:00 am – 3:00 pm  
from August to January



## The Project

That's more than  
1,100 hours of writing



## The Project

But I still wasn't  
done



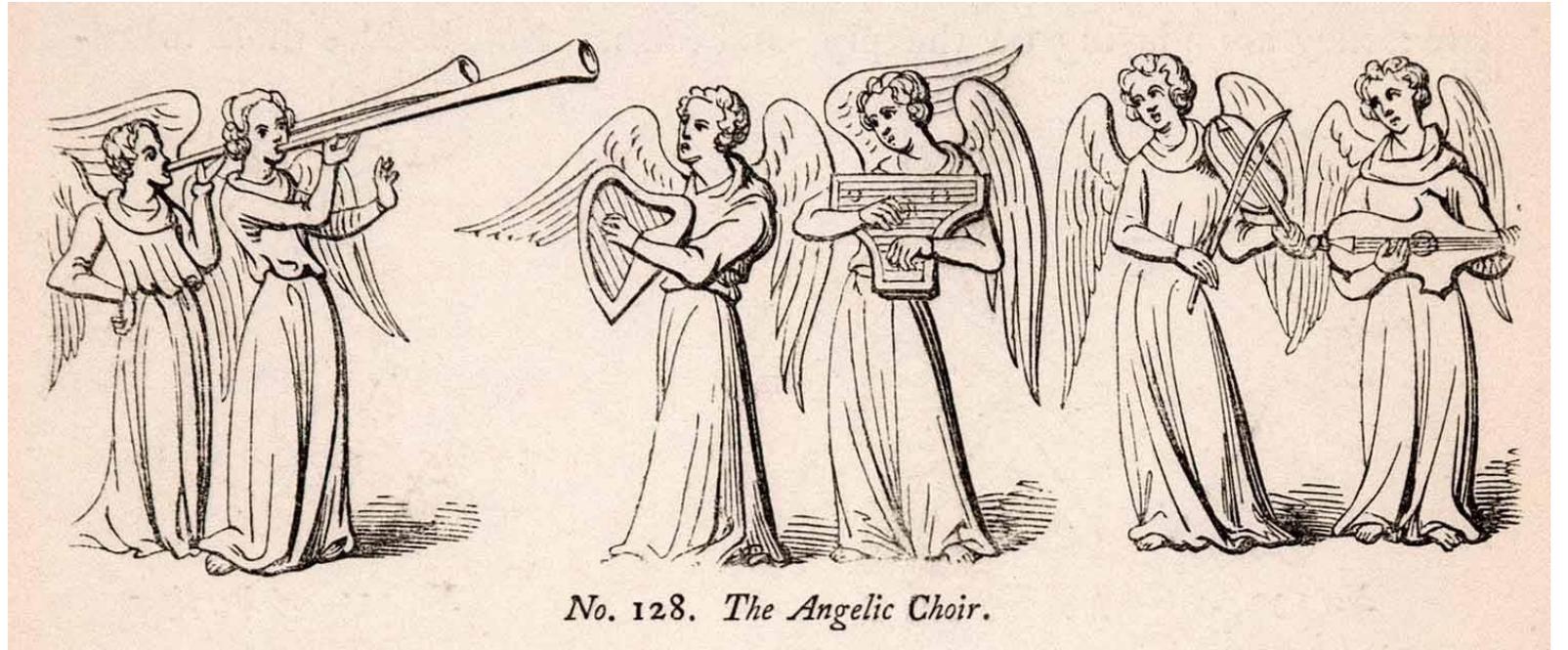
## The Project

So I wrote more  
and sought  
support from  
other writers



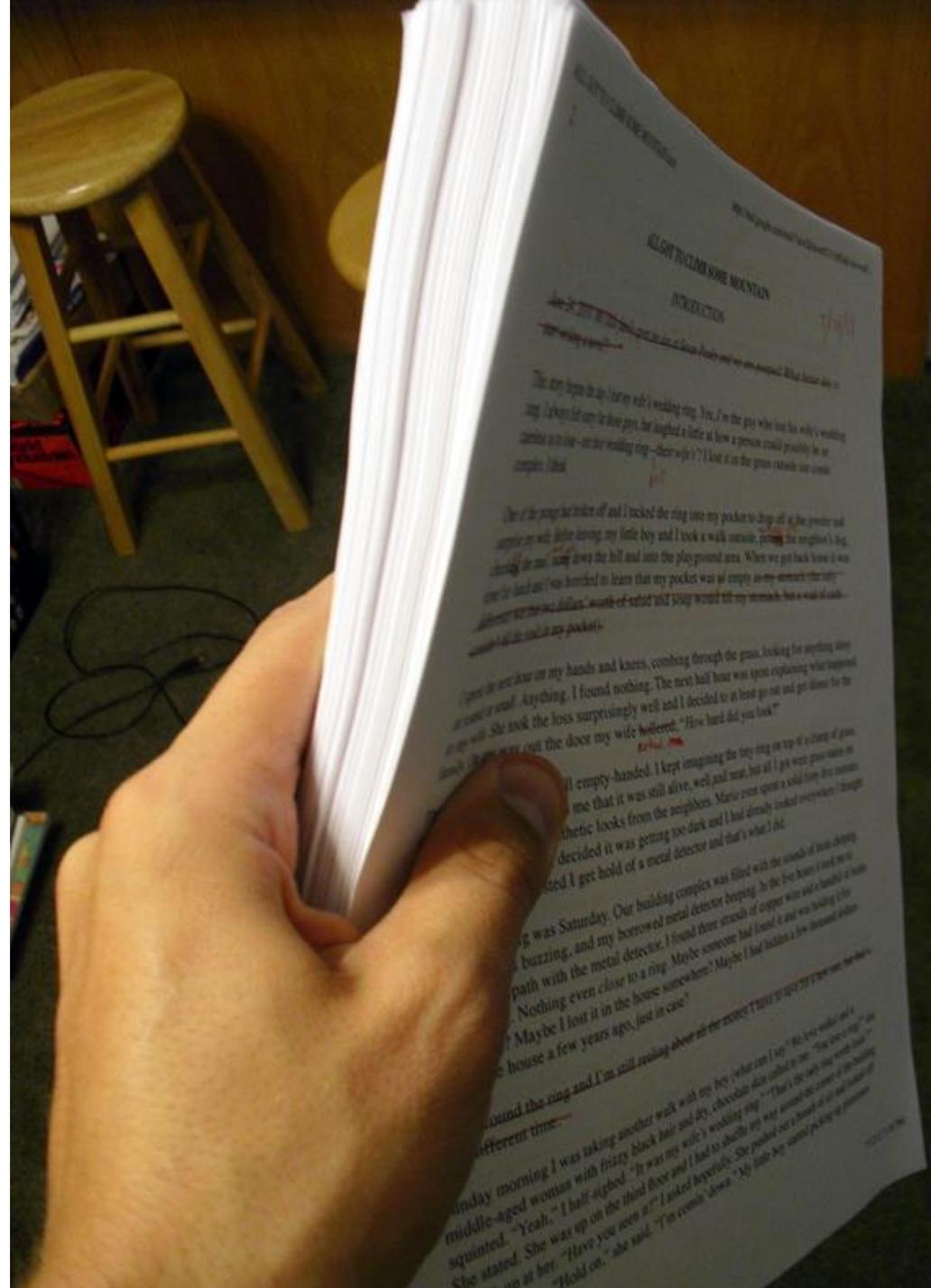
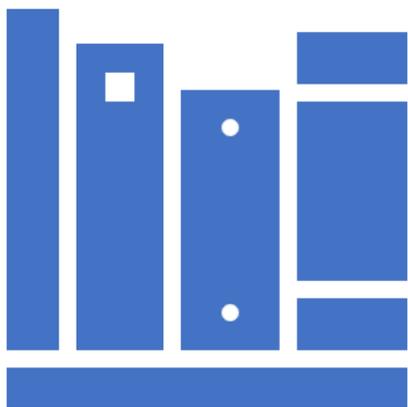
## The Project

Until one  
glorious  
afternoon in  
May when  
I finished



3

# The Product





“Charlie couldn’t go home. Dad would be there, hunched over the paper and his afternoon tea. He’d told her not to write about the ship, and though he was too kind —no, too polite— to gloat, he’d ferret out her defeat and his face would say it all. Then he’d set her to rewriting the report, Friday or no.

Better to be alone, she decided, and made for the water. Along the way she found a shady spot behind Gunn’s Gallery and climbed atop the pallets for the view.

Woolstowe Harbor spilled out before her.

In the distance, white triangles slid across its jade expanse, propelled by the gentle breeze and captained by invisible men of leisure, men of means, men of ease —those that did not labor on sun-struck afternoons. She regarded them coldly, the blood-memory of poverty still pinching the veins two generations removed.

Charlie wondered why she was here.

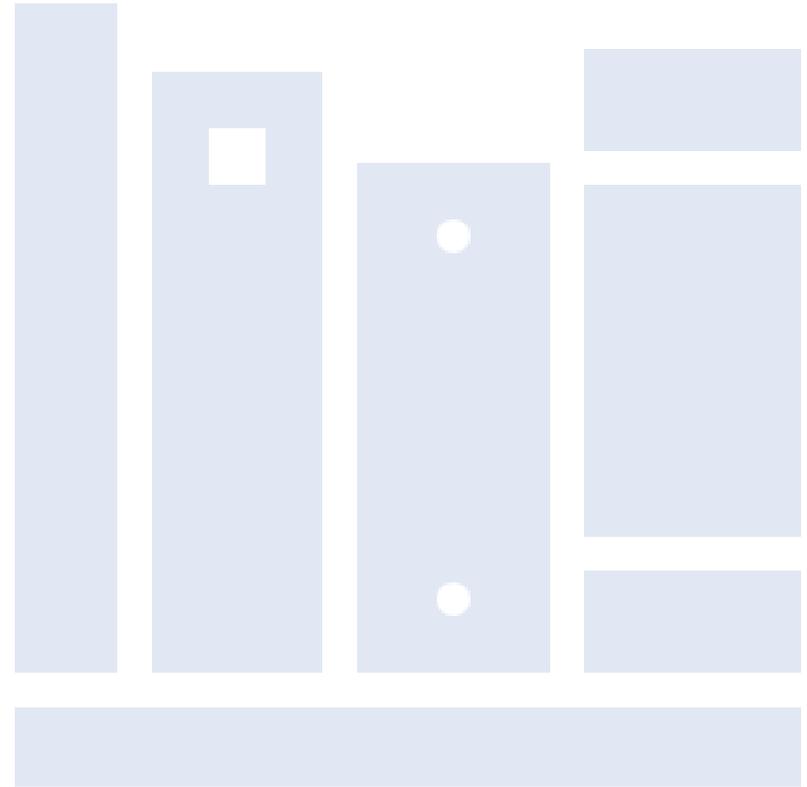
Then she closed her eyes and drew a deep breath. She inhaled the yachts, plucking the wispy polygons from the waves, pulling them deep into her lungs, taking in their papery cleanness. She held them inside for a moment, in that black space where cells quicken, and then she blew them out. One by one they cartwheeled across the North Sea: the *Samantha*, the *Tulip*, the *Miscellaneous Expense*. She imagined them hurtling against the Dutch shore, their splintered geometry piercing the landscape like toothpicks from a machine gun.

‘Grandpa’s a liar,’ she said and opened her eyes.”

—Prologue, *Tom Fish and the Good Ship Hippolytus*

## The Product

A 125,000 word  
draft manuscript



# The Product

What's next?

- Current round of edits (Jan)
- Beta readers (Jan-March)
- Another round of edits (March-May)
- Query agents (May)
- Publication (?)



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# The Prospects





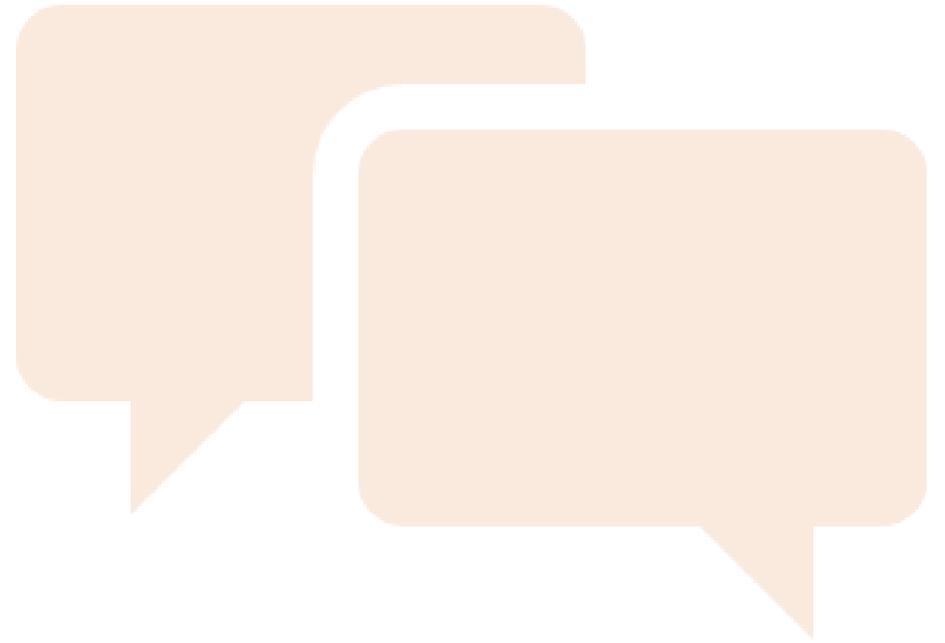
“Take a rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.”

—Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*

## The Prospects

### 2015-2020 YC Strategic Initiatives:

- Student Success
- Economic Responsiveness
- Engaged Community
- Fiscal Stewardship
- Organizational Development



## The Prospects

### Student Success (Goal 1)

- Back in the trenches
- Modeling struggle and success
- Making connections
- Creative interchange



"If you mean, 'are we all going to get killed?' Yes. Clearly, Field Marshal Haig is about to make yet another gargantuan effort to move his liquor cabinet six inches closer to Berlin."

—from *Blackadder Goes Forth*

## The Prospects

### Economic Responsiveness & Engaged Community

- Improve district-wide awareness of YC education & training opportunities (Goal 2)
- Improve credit enrollment and increase East County satisfaction (Goals 1,3,4)



# The Prospects

## Fiscal Stewardship (Goal 1)

- Nimble and forward-looking



## The Prospects

### Organizational Development

- Improve Employee Engagement & Satisfaction (Goal 1)



“Every artistic achievement is a victory over human inertia.”  
—Herbert Von Karajan





# Gratitude

