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# The Ellen Meloy Fund for Desert Writers

## JOE WILKINS: Winner of 2008 Desert Writers Award

**T**he Ellen Meloy Fund for Desert Writers has announced that Joe Wilkins of Forest City, Iowa, will receive the third annual Desert Writers Award. Wilkins will receive a grant of \$2,000 for field work on the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains.

The Ellen Meloy Fund for Desert Writers supports writers whose work reflects the spirit and passion for the desert embodied in Meloy's writing and her commitment to a "deep map of place." Before her death in 2004, Meloy published four books, numerous articles and radio commentaries. She was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and recipient of the John Burrows Association Medal for 2007.

"Wilkins writes of eastern Montana's 'Big Dry' in the precise, crisp and engaging language of a native son raised under the tutelage of a life-long storyteller," said committee member Ann Weiler Walka. "An eye for detail and an ear for local rhythms reveal a bone deep intimacy with the people and landscapes of his high desert birthplace."

Wilkins' proposed project includes exploring the eastern front from Montana to Texas.

Wilkins has published in the *Georgia Review*, *the Missouri Review*, *Northwest Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Pleiades*, *Orion*, and elsewhere. His essay "A Story and a Prayer" won The Obsidian Prize in Nonfiction for writing about the American West from *High Desert Journal*, and his first chapbook of poems, *Ragged Point Road*, was published last winter by Main Street Rag Press.



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