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River of Words: Portraits of Hudson Valley Writers (Excelsior Editions)

Nina Shengold

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An intimate group portrait of contemporary Hudson Valley writers.

“When you truly fall in love, whether with a person or a place, you make everything else fit around it. The last eight years of my life have been a love affair with this place.” — Gwendolyn Bounds, author of *The Little Chapel By the River*

For centuries, writers have drawn inspiration from the Hudson River and its surroundings. John Burroughs, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Edith Wharton all lived and worked in the region immortalized by the Hudson River School of painters. In *River of Words*, author Nina Shengold and photographer Jennifer May explore the current crop of Hudson Valley writers, offering intimate portraits of seventy-six contemporary writers who live and work in this magnificent and storied region. Included in this rich collection of emerging and established novelists, memoirists, poets, journalists, and screenwriters are Pulitzer Prize–winners John Ashbery and the late Frank McCourt, bestselling memoirists Julie Powell and Susan Orlean, and distinguished emigres Chinua Achebe and Da Chen. What draws these writers together is not only their devotion to their art but their love and affection for the Hudson Valley. Through words and photographs, *River of Words* offers an inside perspective on the literary life, the craft of writing, and the pull of this distinctive American landscape.

Nina Shengold is Books Editor at *Chronogram* magazine, and has written author profiles for *Poets & Writers*. Her novel *Clearcut* was published by Anchor Books in 2005. She won the Writers Guild Award for her teleplay *Labor of Love. With Eric Lane*, she has edited twelve theatre anthologies for Vintage Books and Viking Penguin. She lives in Stone Ridge, New York.

Jennifer May’s portraits of authors have appeared on book jackets for Harcourt, Penguin, Random House, Simon & Schuster, Norton, Seven Stories, Doubleday, and several others. In 2009, May flew around the United States photographing women for *The L Life: Extraordinary Lesbians Making a Difference*. Her photography has also appeared in periodicals including the *New York Times*; *O, The Oprah Magazine*; *Country Home*; *Chronogram*; *Hudson Valley Magazine*; *Poets & Writers*; *Gourmet*; and *Food and Wine*. She lives with her husband, the artist Chris Metze, in Woodstock, New York.

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