

Griz Read 2017 Writing Contest

As part of the Griz Read, we invite you to submit an essay in response to any of the following prompts. These prompts invite you to engage with the ideas presented in *Lentil Underground* and to reflect on how those ideas can be put to use.

Cash prizes of \$125 will be awarded to four writers of the most compelling essays, and the essays themselves (with the authors' permission) will be posted to the Griz Read webpage.

Writing Prompts (select one of the following options):

1. Write an op-ed that convinces people who don't eat lentils to eat lentils, or that convinces restaurateurs like Blu Funk to use lentils in their meals. Your op-ed should use ideas from *Lentil Underground* and your own ideas to make a case for choosing lentils over conventionally produced grain.
2. Go to one of the farms Carlisle describes and meet the people who keep the farm running. Learn to operate one piece of farming equipment, to weed one row, or to perform some other useful function on the farm. After your time on the farm, eat one meal made up primarily of the crops described in the book. Write about your experience.
3. Write a proposal for your own version of *Lentil Underground II* that eschews story telling and chronology as an organizational structure. Propose how you might shape your book to highlight the ideas Carlisle investigates—e.g., the nature of conversion, the complications of working against the modern U.S. agricultural system, the challenges involved in navigating the loneliness of doing something different than your neighbors and living in a rural community.
4. Defend conventional/industrial agriculture. Explain to Carlisle and the Timeless Farmers what you think they do not understand. Do so in a way that enlarges their thinking.
5. Propose a solution to the problem alluded to on page 158: create an accounting system that quantifies the net benefit of each crop used in a Timeless-style rotation. You can use both the Montana State enterprise analysis tool and farmers as resources.
6. Because agriculture involves the purposeful disturbance of natural ecosystems, a key challenge is to produce abundant food and fiber while doing the least possible harm to those ecosystems. Ecological agriculture (or agroecology) involves mimicking the strengths of natural systems to address this challenge. Write an essay that convinces a local farmer who doesn't use ecological agriculture that this approach is preferable and feasible. You can interview farmers and refer to *Lentil Underground* to investigate and support your argument.

7. Submit a personal reflective essay about your experience reading *Lentil Underground*. The essay should advance a *specific, distinctive claim* that connects ideas from the book with aspects of your life. Good essays will be based on striking insights that depend on your unique personal experiences and the ideas in *Lentil Underground*, but that are also useful or instructive for readers who do not share your personal history.

Evaluation Criteria:

The primary evaluation criterion will be the smart and original engagement of the writing with the ideas presented in *Lentil Underground*. When the evaluators, who have read the book, read your submission, do they understand your insights and think about the book's ideas differently as a result? Can they remember your ideas well enough to summarize them to their friends at dinner the night after they read your submission? Do those friends—who also have read the book—then think about the book's ideas differently as a result of hearing your ideas third-hand?

Submission Instructions:

- Entries are due MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13.
- The contest is open to all first-year students enrolled for the first time at The University of Montana—Missoula, beginning in Autumn, 2017.
- Submissions are limited to one entry per student.
- Submissions should be between 750 to 1250 words.
- Submissions should be given a title and SHOULD SPECIFY THE OPTION NUMBER CHOSEN.
- The student's name should not appear on the submitted writing.
 - Attach a separate sheet with a brief biography (100 words maximum), the word count, and the appropriate contact information: name, active email address, phone number.
- Send the submission as an e-mail attachment (in Word document format) to kelly.webster@umontana.edu.
- Please type "Griz Read Writing Contest" in the message subject line.

Contact Information:

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