

# Telling Stories and Planting Seeds

*Dwight Fryer blends moonshine and family history in his debut novel...* BY AIMEE LEWIS ELLIOTTE ('92)

"THE WORST THINGS wrong with most of us were planted there by those who love us best." So goes a line in *The Legend of Quito Road*, echoing the recurring theme throughout the debut novel by Dwight Fryer ('91).

*The Legend of Quito Road*, which was published in May on the Sepia imprint of Kimani Press (a subsidiary of Harlequin Enterprises), tells the story of Son Erby. Son's religious father sells illegal moonshine whiskey in the 1930s and introduces this life to his son. Woven throughout Son's account is the family's history in the Lucy, Tennessee area dating back to the 1850s, tracing all the economic and race-relation issues that make up this turbulent slice of southern American history.

As for Fryer, who graduated from CBU with a master's degree in telecommunications and information systems management, whatever might be the "worst" in him is hard to find. He has persevered and triumphed over many of life's hurdles—not just the everyday hurdles, but personal hardship and tragedy.

Fryer once spent the day with his family at home while a burglar hid in their attic. He survived a terrible car accident in 1992, and then survived cancer six years later—after being laid off from work the same week as his diagnosis. On his 43rd birthday in 2001, he lost his youngest daughter, Adrienne, to meningitis.

Still, bolstered by his strong faith, Fryer has a decidedly positive outlook on life and believes that writing the book is part of his therapy to overcome life's hard knocks.

"My therapy to overcome these blows involved becoming a writer. I was blessed to sell this book without an agent of flesh and blood, and I believe it is going to help me and many persons that read this decadent little tale do what we are here to do," Fryer said. "I am a writer, a storyteller from a line of folks gifted in a southern U.S. oral tradition. On the pages of my novel, you will find how a boy and the seeds sown in him drive his life in directions not imaginable."

Fryer is currently writing his second book while promoting *The Legend of Quito Road*. An ordained



Christian minister and international marketing manager at Federal Express, he continues to hone his writing craft by attending such well-known writing workshops as the Iowa Summer Writing Festival, the Hurston/Wright Writers Week, the Napa Valley Writer's Conference, and the Oxford Conference for the Book. In October, he was a participant in the Southern Festival of Books, held in Memphis, and the Capital BookFest in Washington, DC, where he also held a booksigning at Howard University. He taught a workshop at the 2006 Memphis

Black Writers' Conference. He will participate in the The Southern Kentucky Book Fest in Bowling Green in April 2007.

When he's not writing, preaching, and working, Fryer also serves on the boards of Porter-Leath Children's Center and the historic Zion-Christian Cemetery.

Fryer and his wife, Linda, live in a rural area near Memphis. His hobbies include reading, flying stunt kites on the Mississippi River, and tooling around the countryside in his '69 Chevy Impala. The Fryers have an adult daughter.

Back to those planted seeds, Fryer said, "Plant a good seed everywhere you go. Tell your story... like only you were meant to do. Dream large dreams and keep living them, despite what may come at work, at home, in the attic, within the project plan, on the highway, over the teleconference, in the front yard, via email, and on any page written for or by you." ■

For more information on Dwight Fryer and his book, visit [www.dwightfryer.com](http://www.dwightfryer.com).

