

## Promising beginning



Writers Dan Gewertz, Randy Ross, and Judah Leblang (from left) will come together on stage as the "Roving Raconteurs." (Thea Hopkins)

By Jan Gardner

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Boston native Lydia Peelle has received a \$50,000 literary award that honors accomplishment and promise in emerging writers. She was among 10 recipients of the annual Whiting Writers' Awards. Peelle, born in Boston and raised in North Andover, earned an MFA at the University of Virginia and lives in Nashville.

The South and rural living has a large presence in her debut work of fiction, "**Reasons for and Advantages of Breathing**" (Harper Perennial), published last year. In the first story, "Mule Killers," the narrator's grandfather sells his mules for dog meat and replaces them with tractors. Hunting, a devotion to horses, and love lost and found are central concerns of other stories in the collection.

In its announcement, the Whiting selection committee said it admired Peelle's "beautiful prose, gorgeous sentences, flawless ear," adding, "These stories — while working perfectly as short stories — suggest the kind of epic vision usually found in novels." Speaking of epic vision and novels, Jonathan Franzen is among the past recipients who have gone on to achieve wide acclaim.

### A funny time of life

Three men facing middle age and its discontents with a sense of humor are joining forces for "The Roving Raconteurs," an evening of storytelling. Local writers Dan Gewertz, Judah Leblang, and Randy Ross will take to the stage at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education at 7 p.m. on Friday. Gewertz's work-in-progress is "**A Virgin at Woodstock**" and Ross's is "**The Loneliest Planet: A Handbook for the Chronically Single**." Leblang has published a collection of essays, "**Finding My Place: One Man's Journey from Cleveland to Boston and Beyond**." Tickets are \$10. Details at [www.ccae.org](http://www.ccae.org) (click on new courses).

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