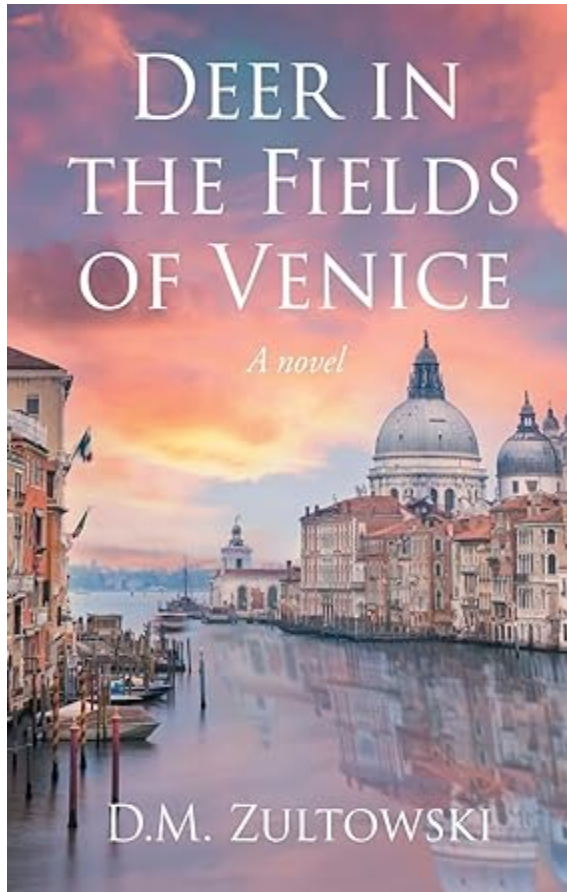


A Former Priest Pursues A Career As A Novelist & Artist; His Unique, & Gripping Book Relies On A Masterful, Character-Driven Story To Explore Life's Big Questions



Father Maurice Lamoreaux is a man of undisputed faith as well as a teacher in the classroom and a follower of the rules. But all three are shaken after his newly graduated student, Cam, shares a secret with him. With trust in hand, Cam's father invites Maurice to accompany them through a tour of Rome, Florence, and Venice since his wife left them with an extra ticket. Maurice claims that his accompaniment is only to support Cam during this period in his life. But Maurice finds the trip becoming more and more about his own life.

While the three sister cities of Italy watch over him, Maurice meets and befriends others in the tour group, including the photographer, Isabelle, who works on pulling him out of the shell he has worked so hard to build around himself. As the journey progresses, as emotions shift, as lives are touched, Maurice realizes that God is not yet finished with him, and there are more mysteries to encounter.

Deer in the Fields of Venice invites the reader to tour the parts of Italy that are not seen but lived. It is a story not only about love between persons, but

it is a tale of love and thanksgiving for a historical country reminiscent of what the monsignor tells Maurice, "That is why our Lord chose Italy for the center of our faith. Anywhere else, and we would die off from boredom."

Can a priest-turned-novelist touch people and move people in a way that helps them live a fuller life?

D.M. Zultowski would certainly say yes.

A seminarian for seven years, and a priest from 2019 to 2023, Zultowski left the priesthood to pursue a full-time life in the arts this year.

“It was a life I enjoyed, but I knew it was not right for me,” he says. “I wanted to take my writing and my art more seriously and reach beyond the Catholic population. Also, my work does not fit the image of a priest. So, I made the decision to commit to the life that was my own.”

Indeed, Zultowski has a calling – as a writer. One five-star Amazon reviewer wrote of his recent novel, *Deer in the Fields of Venice*, “I highly recommend this beautifully written novel.” Another five-star amazon review said: “It’s a good book that will make you tremble, leave you speechless, hold your breath, and make you eager to read it. And it will leave you thinking about it long after you finished it.”

The book is an eye-opening story that follows a priest who travels with a former student, Cam, and his father, for a tour of Italy during a time of personal struggle. While on this journey, Father Maurice ends up discovering fascinating truths that he finds out about himself and what God has planned for him.

The author notes: “I taught morality of theology at an all-boys Catholic high school. Now I use novels to teach different life lessons.”

Zultowski is available in an interview to discuss the following:

- What it was like to become a priest – and then leave it just four years later for a life as a writer and artist.
- Why the book explores loneliness and the universal need for connection.
- Why the book is set in historical and beautiful part of Italy.
- How he handled the complexities of a father-son relationship in his book.
- How a priest discovers a love he didn’t know he could experience.
- The defining life-moments that determine one’s life path
- How he manages his bipolar condition.
- How the book was inspired by several true events and real-life people.
- How he discovered he is a member of the LGBTQ community at age 19.

Published by Newman Springs Publishing, Zultowski’s enthralling narrative will transport readers to beautiful Italian views as they explore the rich history and the effects it can have on people. Thought-provoking and character-driven, *Deer in the Fields of Venice* is a compelling page-turner that will remain with readers long after its conclusion, inviting them to return over and over again for a life-changing journey.

“This is a psychological drama that involves a philosophical search for identity and love,” he says. “As a work of literary fiction, I hope readers will appreciate how I connect complex relationships into a meaningful, moving story.”

“Themes of faith, loneliness, discovery, and more are captured in *Deer in the Fields of Venice* by D. M. Zultowski.... The writing style of the book is what first caught my attention. From the start, Zultowski utilized poetic language to bring the book to life.”
– *OnlineBookClub 5-Star Review*

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DM Zultowski

Biography



D. M. Zultowski is a novelist and artist, as well as a former priest.

His first novel, *Earl Grey Mourning*, was published under the name David Buffum in 2009. His newest published novel is *Deer in the Fields of Venice*.

As an artist, he uses toothbrushes and fountain pen ink. He also uses dip pen and ink. He recently received recognition as a semi-finalist, [ScreenCraft Virtual Pitch Spring 2023](#).

An only child, his imagination kept him occupied in a life surrounded by adults. Then while in high school, he started going to poetry readings and a creative writing circle. That is also when he started building his reputation as an artist. With all his experiences in life, he calls his writing and his artwork his two constants

He studied film and media arts at Temple University and also holds an MA in theology.

He can be found on social media: Instagram: [@d.m.zultowski](#) and Facebook: D.M. Zultowski.

He was a seminarian for seven years, serving Immaculate Conception Seminary House of Formation, in Brooklyn, NY, St. Joseph Seminary, in Yonkers, NY, and St. Charles Borromeo Seminary - Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He was ordained to the priesthood in 2019 and served for four years.

His passions and hobbies include: cooking, watching strange films as well as horror films, yoga, hiking, drinking coffee and tea, biking, and strolling around town.

He was born in Turnersville, NJ, and was raised in Springfield, PA until sixth grade. Then he lived in Glen Mills, PA. After college, he moved to Brooklyn, NY. He now resides in Lancaster, PA.

For more information, please consult his website: dmzultowski.com.

D.M. Zultkowski
Q & A
Deer in the Fields of Venice



1. D.M., what inspired you to write *Deer In The Fields Of Venice*?

I was inspired to write it while I was visiting Italy when I was a priest. The country is gorgeous, and as a priest, Rome is *the* place to visit. It's surreal how they take care of the clergy. I was treated like a VIP in some places. But while I was taking in all the sights, I was realizing things about my life as a priest that were starting to hit me in a deeper way. I was starting to question who I was when relating to God and other people. I was figuring out that there were some things I was only then ready to explore. *Deer in the Fields of Venice* is the answer to the questions I was asking.

2. What is it about?

It is about a priest, Fr. Maurice Lamoreaux, who has lived his whole life behind the safety of rules. He has kept his place with books, the classroom, and the Church. Cam has just graduated from high school and is discovering his sexuality and his place in the Catholic society. Jim is Cam's father, and he has just learned that his wife has been having an affair and left their family. When Jim and Cam present Fr. Maurice with an extra ticket to their trip to Italy, Maurice is apprehensive, but is convinced to go. While in Italy, Maurice meets Isabelle, who works on pulling him out of his shell. Now, all the answers Maurice used to have are questioned.

3. Are there autobiographical passages, characters, or influences in your novel?

Absolutely. The Monsignor in my book was inspired by two priests I knew when I was at my first parish. They were the kindest guys in the world and would give the world to you. The older one, who was eighty, would sit at the kitchen table and give some of the best advice about anything. He died before the book was published and I miss him immensely.

The other one was about seventy, and after over forty years as a priest, he knew so much about people. The Monsignor in my book is a man of holy wisdom and charity, and he always wants to make sure Maurice is taking care of himself. I am fortunate to have experienced that in my own life.

4. **You studied film at Temple University and hold an MA in Theology. You are artsy and spiritual. How do you balance the two perspectives in your writing?**

I believe that God gives each of us a number of gifts so we can contribute to the world. I guess I balance my theology background and my artsy side simply by making sure I am being myself and not imitating someone else. My work is typically not religious. It might be at times, but I wouldn't call myself a religious writer. *Deer in the Fields of Venice* has religious themes, but it's not a religious book. My spiritual life is a part of me, so it will always find its place in my stories. But my work is usually pretty dark. I guess I balance it all by knowing who I am and remembering that no one is getting hurt by me being myself.

5. **Your first book, *Earl Grey Morning*, came out nearly 15 years ago, under the name David Buffum. Why the pseudonym? What was it about?**

Earl Grey Mourning was about two prostitutes--Colleen and Patrick--who end up way in over their heads after Colleen brings the mayor back to the apartment. There, he sexually assaults her, and Patrick walks in and murders him. They run away from the scene and go into the country to stay with Patrick's cousin, Victor. Soon, Victor is centering his attention on Colleen, and a new nightmare begins. I took it out of print when I entered the seminary. I was afraid I would get kicked out because of it. When I decided to write *Deer in the Fields of Venice*, I googled the name David Buffum, and I found a lot of men with the same name. Then, I googled D.M. Zultowski, and I saw that I would be the only one.

6. **What role did being an only child play in your development as a writer, do you think?**

I was given the space to imagine. I was also a huge hoarder of action figures, which were my actors for the stories I made up. I even played with my cousin's Barbie and Ken dolls because just by changing the outfit, they could be whatever I wanted. I was also extremely shy to the point of being unhealthy. I would isolate myself from everyone. I was living inside my head. Then, I found my aunt's IBM typewriter. As soon as I found the paper, I started writing. Later, without knowing it, writing became a way for me to communicate, to cope, and to ask for help. I created stories where characters were going through my drama. I was given the room to dream.

7. **Which authors or books have inspired you?**

Edgar Allen Poe introduced me to dark settings. I love being in that world that also scares me. I also love the classics. My favorite is Charles Dickens. Then there's Jerry Stahl. I got to meet him at a signing for his book *Pain Killers*. It was right after *Earl Grey Mourning* came out. He was so welcoming to a new author, then wrote in my copy of *Pain Killers*: "Can't wait to read yours. Respect!" I always make sure it's near me. *Deer*

in the Fields of Venice is dedicated to Anne. Anne is Anne Frank. There was a point in my writing that I wanted to give up, and she inspired me to keep going.

8. How would you describe your writing style and ability to develop characters, utilize dialogue, and sustain the action?

Being trained in film, I look at the scenes as if I am watching them on the silver screen. I even act scenes out sometimes. I check my expressions, the distance between characters, the natural movements, everything I need to write the scene. I speak the dialogue to make sure it feels realistic for that character. It's like playtime! But it's also work. I love getting deep inside the characters. I also think about the readers' reactions when I write. Do I want people crying? Do I want people gasping? I want the reader's feelings towards a character to be as if they are meeting them in person. Whether they love them or hate them is very important.

9. Your background is complicated. You recently left the Catholic Church as a priest – of your own volition. How hard was that decision?

The decision was certainly not a light one. But I knew what I wanted and what I needed in life. And I was learning that I could not properly live the life I was given if I was a priest. I wanted more freedom to be myself. The hardest part was people's reactions towards my decision. I was really concerned about any gossip. But I knew that was going to happen. Also, leaving the priesthood means leaving a job, losing your home, changing your entire life. But I never look back or regret leaving. So, while the decision to leave was rough, I had to remember who I really am and why I did it.

10. At age 19, you realized you were a member of the LGBTQ+ community. How did you live a double life – one committed to abstinence and allegiance to a faith that could not accept you while seeking to find love in secret?

When I came out as bisexual, I was out and proud pretty quickly. I found a great community that accepted me for who I was, even while I was trying to figure it out myself. But later, when I entered the seminary, I found out that same-sex relationships were not only forbidden but criticized. I would have to listen to conversations where loving couples were put down just because they were two men or two women. So, I had to keep my past experiences secret. I also lived in constant fear that I would be found out. I went from being attracted to both sexes to being forbidden from both.

11. Your story features a clergy man, a Catholic priest who goes to Italy and questions things, even meeting a woman who gets him out of his shell. How does your character live in a conflicted world – about what to believe and how to act?

The life of a priest really starts on his first day in the seminary. Every part of the day is planned with prayers, Mass, classes, and meals. And the man is watched during everything. Maurice was the perfect seminarian, then the perfect priest. Wherever he needed to be, he was there. Whatever he was supposed to think, he believed. Then, once he started seeing the other people on the tour, and when he started seeing the beauty that was beyond the church and the classroom, he sees that everything he had been taught and had been teaching may not be as black-and-white as he thought, hoped, and took comfort in.

12. In your book, there is a father-son bond that gets uprooted. What happens?

Cam is the only child of two loving parents who work hard to provide him with all he could ask for. In particular, his father gives him more love than he could ever want or need. Then, after Cam's parents separate, his father starts to lean on him for emotional support. Also, Cam comes from a very homophobic environment, which forces him to keep his sexual identity a secret. Then, after some time in Italy, Cam starts to see the world that is being opened up for him. He learns how to move away from his father. Basically, Cam learns how to grow up and grow away from the life he knew.

13. You had taught morality and theology at an all-boy's Catholic high school. In your book, a student comes out as gay. What would you say to such a person if you were teaching today?

I never actually taught at an all-boy's school. But when I was a priest, I went to an all-boys' school to hear confessions. I guess you can say that I taught morality and theology in the confessional. God knows that's where you answer the hardest questions. If a student came out as gay to me, I would first ask if they are safe. Are they in any danger at home or at school? I would ask who else knows and if they are getting support from them. I would also remind them to not be ashamed. May be end with: "Enjoy it!"

14. What challenges did you overcome in researching, creating, and writing a work of literary fiction?

This is the most vulnerable I have ever been on the page. I really opened up my heart and soul for this one. I was always thinking about who would read it and what they would think of me. That was terrifying! The research was done through living. Just as Fr. Maurice Lamoreaux finds out, the best kind of knowledge comes from living out the story. I stood in the places our characters visit. Literary fiction is a strange genre because it could be for anyone at any time. I think that's why I love writing it so much. I don't know whose hands it is going to get into.

15. Your story is at times philosophical, psychological, and just purely about human relationships in all of their complexities. It is not quite a thriller, but the events that unfold are stunning and cause the reader to grapple with contradictions and inner conflicts. Does it drain you mentally, to pen some of the action in your book?

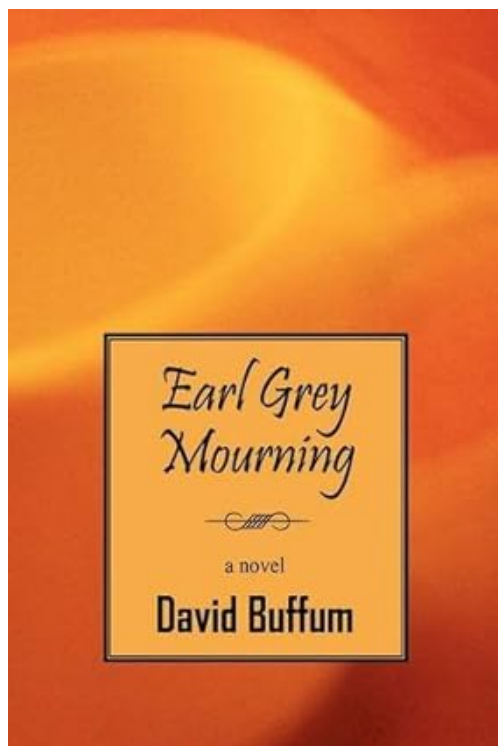
I felt like I was in a relationship. At times, I struggles with the ups and downs, and there were times when I thought I should give up. Then there were times when I found that continuing on was the only thing I could do to keep any sanity. But all that also made me love telling the story even more. I had to remind myself not to soften the story. It would have been easy to just take out the hard stuff and give a nice tale. But that would not fulfill the book's purpose. Sure, it was definitely draining, but that was when I turned to the authors who inspire me. They're like saints, you know?

Sample of Dozens of Five-Star Goodreads Reviews

1. "It is a beautifully crafted novel that takes the reader on an emotional journey through Italy. The main character, Father Maurice Lamoreaux, is a man of strong faith who finds himself challenged and transformed by his experiences on a tour of Rome, Florence, and Venice. Throughout the story, Father Maurice is faced with the complexities of human relationships, including love, friendship, and loss... a heartwarming and thought-provoking novel that takes the reader on an emotional journey through Italy. The themes of love, friendship, and loss are woven seamlessly into the story, making it a must-read for anyone who appreciates a well-crafted and deeply moving tale."
2. "*Deer In the Fields of Venice* is a heart-warming book by D.M Zultowski every line has a deeper meaning to decipher. ... Refreshing read and highly recommended."
3. "A must-read for anyone who loves a good travelogue with a touch of self-discovery. The author has done a fantastic job of painting the surroundings with beautiful words, making the story come alive."
4. "This book shares a fresh perspective of dropping all your fears. This journey of self-realization through the rollercoaster ride of emotions and beautiful scenarios is overwhelming. I liked reading this book and would recommend this book to all."
5. "As a picky reader, I was made to read this book because many readers in my book club kept recommending it and I wanted to know what it was all about. D.M. Zultowski has created a truly special and memorable story in *Deer in the Fields of Venice*."
6. "Zultowski skillfully and poetically probes the depths of a lonely soul in search of self-acceptance and self-realization. ... This book forces you to think deeply while still keeping you interested until the very last page. The book's idea is intriguing, captivating, and original. .. The narration and the plot go quite quickly. Additionally, the storytelling approach is fantastic and may completely captivate readers."
7. "My jaw dropped at the author's detailed descriptions of Italy, Venice, and Florence, which brought the narrative to life. Maurice's metamorphosis and the influence that a random encounter may have on a person's life impacted me."
8. "Zultowski is a skilled writer and a sharp and pardoning bystander of the human condition.... I beyond question loved analyzing this book."
9. "***Deers in the Field of Venice*** is a very unique novel."
10. "*Deer in the Fields of Venice* by D M Zultowski takes readers on an unforgettable journey through the vibrant cities of Italy, while exploring themes of faith, self-discovery, and the power of human connection. The story revolves around Father Maurice Lamoreaux, a man deeply rooted in his faith and committed to his role as a teacher. However, when his former student, Cam, confides in him with a secret, Maurice's world is turned upside down, challenging his beliefs and opening doors to self-reflection."

11. “*Deer in the Fields of Venice* is a heartfelt and thought-provoking novel that will resonate with readers who appreciate a well-crafted story that delves into the complexities of human nature and the transformative power of travel and connection. The author has crafted a beautiful tale that captures the essence of Italy and the profound impact it can have on those willing to open their hearts to its magic.”
12. “You will be transported to another planet by the descriptions of the towns and architecture of Italy and by the gorgeous scenery. The themes of love and trust are deftly addressed, and the characters are rich and realistic.”
13. “The smooth and poetic writing style draws the reader into the plot by enveloping them in the beautiful Italian countryside. The author has a gift for evocatively and poetically depicting the splendor of nature.”
14. “The author's use of descriptive language in this story was truly remarkable.”
15. “Overall, "Father Maurice Lamoreaux: A Journey of Faith and Self-Discovery" is a thought-provoking and emotionally rich novel that will leave readers questioning their own beliefs and the world around them.”
16. “The final scenes & climax to the novel are truly compelling, pulling the reader more deeply into its raw energy & spiritual awakening. The author does an excellent job of making the characters feel like real people, with all their flaws and complexities. This makes it easy for the reader to become invested in their struggles and triumphs.... I would love to recommend this book.”
17. “Fans of character-driven storytelling must read this.”
18. “Overall, this is a book that is sure to inspire and uplift the reader, and one that will stay with them long after the last page has been turned. Highly recommended for anyone who loves a good travelogue with a touch of self-discovery and a lot of heart.”
19. “Zultowski masterfully blends the sensual warmth of Italy with a lyrical exploration of the human soul, creating a beautiful tapestry of love, self-acceptance, and spiritual awakening. He is a talented writer with a keen eye for the intricacies of the human condition. Through his characters, he delves into the complexities of love and faith, asking the reader to consider what is truly redemptive, what is delusional, and what is liberating in our lives.”
20. “The novel's finale and last sections are incredibly gripping, drawing the reader even more into its untamed energy and spiritual awakening. With all of their imperfections and complexity, the author does a fantastic job of making the characters feel like genuine people. This makes it simple for the reader to empathize with their challenges and victories. The book's characters are incredibly well-developed. There are no interruptions, and the plot flows well. The story is intricate. The writing is clear and colorful. Everything appears plausible. I became interested in what might occur next as a result. I really want to suggest this book to all of you.”

Previous Book: *Earl Grey Mourning*



The shadows collide over Hopesburgh, and Patrick and Colleen are making ends meet by connecting with the buyers at the dark corners. They know their price and their worth, as Colleen scribes the poems inspired by all she experiences around her.

Mayor John Miller has strayed from his wife and daughter. Seeking solace in his longtime friend, Father Gary, he is mortified by the demons within him.

Mayor Miller finds Colleen at her corner location. She takes him back to the apartment she shares with Patrick, but what awaits is a force too big to take in. As Father Gary's warnings repeat in John Miller's ears, a violence erupts from him. Patrick comes home to find the horrifying event, and attacks the Mayor. Their feud is brought to a bloody end when Patrick murders John.

Patrick and Colleen quickly dispose of the body and run out. They run to their friend, Clay, who drives them to the small town where Patrick grew up, so they can go to his cousin, Victor. Victor takes them in, promising a safe haven. But, their world crumbles when they discover the price that must be paid for such protection. Patrick is pitched back into the abusive childhood he experienced with the older cousin as Colleen becomes the subject of his obsessions.

As the shadows collide over the house, Patrick and Colleen struggle to keep each other alive, no matter the cost.