

# Gretchen Johnson

## Poet, Fiction Writer, Educator, and Editor

Gretchen Johnson, an Assistant Professor at Lamar University, has two published books: *The Joy of Deception*, a collection of short stories, and *A Trip Through Downer, Minnesota*, a book of poetry. Her short stories and poems have appeared in *The Blue Bear Review*, *The Meridian Anthology of Contemporary Poetry*, *Poetry Harbor*, *Spout Press*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and others. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing from Southwest Minnesota State University and her MFA in Creative Writing from Texas State University. She has collected and edited two anthologies: *Stories from Texas College Students, 2016*; and *Poetry from Texas College Students, 2016*.

In *The Joy of Deception*, Gretchen Johnson presents memorable and sympathetic characters. Among them are a widow reluctantly starting a new life, a young woman who basks in the thrill of unhealthy decisions and runs from the monotony of security, a slushie machine repairman who knows his work is as important as that of any doctor, and many other people whose flaws, fine points, and idiosyncracies will keep readers turning pages.

Pick up Gretchen Johnson's book, *A Trip Through Downer, Minnesota*, then stop and stay a while in a tiny town located just east of Fargo. Meet the narrator, his overbearing girlfriend, meddling mother, and the other colorful characters who reside there. Travel the pages to see the stark beauty of the prairie in winter, feel the pain of marrying the wrong person, taste the recipes in the church cookbook, and feel the fabric of the fields and faces along the way. You'll be surprised how much there is to see.

