

## About Cynthia Kraack

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Cynthia Kraack is a Twin Cities-based writer and winner of the 2010 Northeastern Minnesota Book Award for Fiction for her first work, *Minnesota Cold*. In September 2010, North Star Press of St. Cloud released her second novel, *Ashwood*. *Ashwood* is the first book in a speculative fiction trilogy following one family's experience after a global economic depression.

Cynthia is a graduate of the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast M.F.A. in Creative Writing program. A native of Wisconsin, she graduated from Marquette University's College of Journalism with plans to be a sports journalist or cover the government beat at a major U.S. newspaper. The reality of those careers collided with other goals in life and she spent a number of years in corporate communications then human resources. During that part of her career she achieved recognition from a variety of professional associations.

With easy access to The Loft Literary Center and opportunities to attend summer programs at the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop, Cynthia developed her creative writing skills including short stories and a number of novel length works. Her graduate work concentration was in literary fiction.

Whether writing speculative fiction, contemporary fiction or short stories, Cynthia's work is always centered on people and their relationships. Family themes, both subtle and overt, play throughout much of her writing. The many roles of women, the pressure of the business world, and the influence of an individual's roots frequently lend to the fictional stress of her stories.

"While many writers have a cathartic tradition, digging into their past for today's stories; I find myself writing through my fears of the future," says Cynthia. "How could we survive a world changed by environmental catastrophe, what happens in the face of economic deprivation, what will it be like to lose family members? The only way I've found to discipline an imaginative brain is through creativity."

Beyond studying journalism, Cynthia has a Masters degree from the University of Minnesota in labor economics and educational psychology. When not writing, she has been a management consultant and freelance writer including development of a number of interactive business simulation games. The team designing these games was recognized in 2007 for innovation.