

**Marcus Brown, Iowa City, Iowa**  
**2016 CARTHA Fellow in Creative Writing and Humanitarianism**



Throughout my life circumstance and opportunity have demanded an appreciation of empathy and communication, and these are qualities to which I would attribute the majority of my success thus far. I have worked numerous jobs ranging from bike messenger to hospitality waiter. Most recently while attending the University of Iowa as an English major, I have found myself working as the Editor in Chief of *earthwords*, the undergraduate review on campus, in addition to contributing writing to the University of Iowa's *Daily Iowan* and working as a technical writing assistant for the company ASA Global. While my job titles have varied those same principles of empathy and communication have dictated the choices I have made and the opportunities I have chosen to pursue. I consider myself to be a writer by trade, but more important than that I consider myself to be a storyteller which can lend itself to a variety of mediums and occupations. The ability to speak clearly and listen to others is my most valuable skill and one that translates to my larger aspirations for humanity. I wish to live in a world where communication and true understanding takes priority over the callous apathy I have witnessed people display towards each other every day. I believe aligning myself with an organization like CARTHA will put me in a better position to affect change and see the manifestation of my own beliefs projected upon the world at large. For this reason I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside CARTHA, and I am looking forward to seeing all of the positivity that will come as a result of this collaboration.



CARTHA Founder Usha Balakrishnan first met Marcus Brown on October 8, 2016 at the Iowa City Book Festival when Marcus did a public reading of his poem titled "The Dancers." Usha introduced herself to Marcus and invited him to read the same poem at a Rotary-CARTHA Social Event on October 25 which was designed to bring together writers, poets, and humanitarian volunteers—Rotarians and Carthans—in Iowa City, the first and only UNESCO-designated City of Literature in North America.

The idea of this new CARTHA Fellowship in Creative Writing and Humanitarianism was designed after a conversation between Marcus, Usha, Brad Pector (also a sophomore at the University of Iowa and Poetry-Editor for *earthwords* whom Usha had met at the Book Festival), and CARTHA Board members Roger Williamson and Judy Leavitt. Marcus will be provided a travel stipend to participate in the 2017 Annual Conference of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) in Washington DC. He has already begun working on topics for proposing a CARTHA panel at AWP 2018 in Tampa, Florida; and at AWP 2019 in Portland, Oregon. Marcus will also assist with running some Glocalizers in Iowa City. Usha is now encouraging Marcus to pursue the prospect of a fully-funded Masters in Peace and Conflict Resolution through support from the Rotary Peace Scholars Program.