



February 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

I'm thrilled to write a letter of recommendation for Kahlan Weir, who was a student in my junior and senior fiction writing courses. Kahlan's a terrific student, a talented writer, and a wonderful person.

Kahlan was actively, actively involved in our classes—present, of course, at every session, completely prepared, and deeply involved in every discussion, offering insights and perceptive, careful, and wide-ranging questions and ideas about all our workshop manuscripts. In our workshops, in particular, we get a variety of kinds of writing from students with often different backgrounds and levels of preparation, and Kahlan found the best and most helpful ways to work with every one of their manuscripts, giving powerfully helpful specific suggestions and smart ideas about craft, in general. She did so respectfully, thoughtfully, and was much liked by all in both workshops. And—to my eye—she found ways to take away from every discussion some notion of how to improve her own writing, as well.

Her critical writing? In our senior class, students were expected to respond to published stories I assigned and to present on authors they chose. The literary analyses Kahlan wrote were sharp, close readings that contextualized their arguments in larger literary and moments and movements, and her presentation was succinct, smart, and illuminating. Her fiction? It's as strong or stronger as anything published today in the best journals. There's an intelligence and thoughtfulness that pervades everything she writes, though those qualities appear gracefully and organically, embedded in what her stories illustrate to us, in the dramas big and small that combine in her fictions to show, on the whole, historical and fantastic worlds rich in relationships and family—and that's just the content. Kahlan's fiction is as much about its poetry, its lyrical attention to every single word, to the power of a line and what can be made powerfully evident by what's carefully crafted in and just as smartly left out. Every piece she wrote for workshop was sharp and smart and beautiful and of the absolute highest quality.

Kahlan was also active in our literary community, working with the other students to run our extracurricular fiction writing group. She was a presence at all of our literary events, in support of creative work at CMU. In class, she shared with other students what she knows of publishing, as well as publishing leads. She continues to work collaboratively with others on writing projects. She's simply a positive force.

I was also able to see Kahlan teach, because she helped lead several of my junior level classes when she was a senior, and it was abundantly clear that she was organized, engaged, and inspiring, and her fellow students learned not just what she taught but by her example. Kahlan has, in short, a charming and effective leadership presence, and I saw that on display also when she contributed to our workshops. It is obvious to me that she will be—well, already is—a great teacher.

A wonderful person and fresh thinker, Kahlan will do extremely well at whatever she sets her mind and hands to, and I can recommend her in the highest possible terms, both as a fantastic student and a dedicated, capable person with a gracious personality. She will, without doubt, excel in all present and future circumstances.

Sincerely,

Matthew Roberson
Professor of English
Central Michigan University