

## History of Teen Publishing

Teen writers, just like their adult counterparts, need encouragement. Publishing may seem like an insurmountable goal for an aspiring teen, but many accomplished authors began their writing careers as teenagers. Mary Shelley was only 19 when she wrote *Frankenstein* and Gordon Korman's first novel, *This Can't Be Happening at McDonald Hall*, was written as a 7<sup>th</sup> grade English assignment. Publishing can be a positive outlet for teen energy and creativity. Seeing their writing in print or on the web encourages a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Libraries can play a part in this

process by educating teens about the publishing process and encouraging their active participation. Young writers also need to be inspired. By



Mary Shelley was a teenage author

sharing success stories, librarians can make the goal of publishing seem that much more attainable. In addition,

teenagers respond to the voices of their peers. Published teen writing has value beyond the cost of a paperback novel. Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* has educated generations of young adults about the holocaust. Teens relate to her voice because it is genuine. The power of publishing, in print and on-line, has made it possible for teens to share their experiences with one another. Libraries can assist this positive exchange, by encouraging and inspiring their teenage patrons to publish their writing.



### Spotlight on Jenn Crowell

Crowell wrote *Necessary Madness* when she was seventeen. It is an adult novel, about a 30 year-old woman in England who is grieving her husband's death. This book has been well received, and Crowell has been praised for her accurate portrayal of life in England. This praise is in part due to Crowell's age and the fact that she had, at the time of writing, never been to England.

Her second novel, *Letting the Body Lead*, was published in 2002, although she was still a teenager when she started working on it. It was met with general indifference, I've never personally seen a copy of it, and much of it takes place in Iceland, where Crowell has also never been.

*Necessary Madness*. Putnam, 1997. (age 17)  
*Letting the Body Lead*. Putnam, 2002.