

JAMES McMANUS
NOVELIST / JOURNALIST

James McManus is a novelist and free-lance journalist who writes with a scholarly insight and an edgy style. His stories have been featured in *Harper's*, the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, on NPR's "This American Life," and in *The Good Parts: The Best Erotic Writing in American Fiction*.

In 2003, McManus published the *New York Times* bestseller, *Positively Fifth Street: Murderers, Cheetahs and Binion's World Series of Poker*. The book is commonly cited as the best poker narrative ever written. After reading the book, David Sedaris said, "in writing about poker, Jim McManus has managed to write about everything, and it's glorious."

Originally a cover story in *Harper's* magazine, the book came to be when McManus was asked to cover the 2000 World Series of Poker in Las Vegas and the murder trial of Ted Binion, the tournament's prodigal host. He spent his entire advance from the magazine to enter the tournament himself, putting himself in the center of his own story, James created an intense drama with a first hand view of all the glory and agony that is Sin City. The film version of the book, now being produced by Christine Vachon of Killer Films, will be released in 2005. The screenplay will be written and directed by John Ridley, who also wrote 1999's *Three Kings*.

McManus is currently working on his next book, which will examine his own mortality, a subject which he has given great consideration while helping his daughter in her struggle with juvenile diabetes. In this book he will discuss weight loss, pediatric ophthalmological surgery, the politics of embryonic stem-cell research, and whether or not to get a vasectomy and / or neuter his puppy.

McManus currently teaches a course on the literature, art and science of poker at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the author of four novels, including *Going to the Sun*, which won the Carl Sandburg Award in 1996, and two books of poetry, most recently *Great America*. He still plays poker in several professional tournaments each year and is a featured narrator on the History Channel's documentary about the game. McManus also serves as emcee of poker tournaments for charities, conventions and corporate functions.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- America's New National Sport: An Insider's View to the World of High Stakes Poker
- The Craft of Writing: Fiction, Nonfiction and Poetry
- A Middle-Aged Man Faces His Mortality