Katrina Miller
explores and explains science news

Science writer, *New York Times*

BS, physics, Duke University, 2016
PhD, physics, University of Chicago, 2023

(Photo by David Dowd.)

What was your PhD research focus?

I worked on the MicroBooNE experiment at Fermilab, measuring neutrino cross sections in liquid argon.

What were you looking for in a job?

In the day-to-day work of my PhD, I felt like a software developer. And I didn't like the structure of particle-physics research, which, because of the nature of the experiments, has huge collaborations. I realized I liked learning about science more than I liked doing it. I was looking for something more connected to society, something where I could use my expertise for the good of people.

How did you get into science writing?

As a graduate student, I did an internship with the University of Chicago's news office. I have always liked writing, but that's where I started learning the tricks of the trade of journalism—how to write a lede, how to conduct interviews. Then I got an AAAS [American Association for the Advancement of Science] mass media fellowship, and I worked for a summer at *Wired* magazine. I wrote freelance up until I finished my PhD. I applied for a *New York Times* fellowship and got it. That was for a year, and then they hired me.

What do you like about science writing?

I love that I am immersed in science, and I get to talk to scientists about the cool work they do. And I get to bridge the gap between scientists and the public.

How do you use your physics in your job?

My technical expertise comes into play with translating for the public what scientists say. It guides my choices of articles to pitch to my editor and the angle I approach a story from. And it comes in handy in building trust, in both directions: with scientists and with readers.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

Recently, I served on a career panel and was asked whether I have any regrets about leaving academia. So far, no.