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Writer is coming home today

Lisa Gray Fisher, a Palmer High grad, will sign copies of her first novel, "Full Body Wag," today at Poor Richard's. **A3**

BOOK SIGNING

'FULL BODY WAG' HAS LOCAL INFLUENCES

Palmer graduate is coming downtown to promote novel

BY EMILY WILKINS
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Even after she moved to New Mexico, residents of Colorado Springs provided inspiration for characters in Lisa Gray Fisher's first novel.

Fisher, a Colorado Springs native who graduated from Palmer High School, returns to her hometown today to promote and sign copies

of her first novel, "Full Body Wag," at Poor Richard's Bookstore, 324 N. Tejon St., from 6 to 8 p.m.

The title refers to a dog's movement when, as one of the story's canine-loving characters says, "they got more happiness than tail."

Fisher, an English teacher at Santa Fe Preparatory School, didn't know she was starting a novel when she wrote a short story seven years ago during spring break. Fisher shared the story during an annual faculty

reading and was encouraged to continue exploring the characters.

An avid writer whose short stories, poems and essays have been published for 20 years, Fisher had never attempted a novel. It was the characters, she said, who let her expand the story to the 266-page book.

"Writing with the characters became a self-perpetuating force,"

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FISHER: Author expanded story, integrating characters from other short stories

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Fisher said. "They ended up driving me on because I became more interested in them, and they became more interesting."

Fisher expanded the story over the next six summers, integrating characters from other short stories she'd writ-

ten. After taking an eight-month leave from teaching, Fisher finished the story. The book was published in May.

"Full Body Wag" has received several positive reviews from readers at Amazon.com and attracted a full house at a Santa Fe book store signing.

The story focuses on a group of women in a community college writing

class.

A passion for canines unites them with an independent film crew shooting a low-budget lobster-horror flick called "Claws."

"The book is mostly about the depth and integrity of friendship as a lasting value in the world," Fisher said. "Dogs are an easy way into friendship."