

The Newsletter of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston

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2006-2007
Edition

A Tradition of Excellence Continues:



This year we welcome two new and one visiting
faculty member—all are exciting writers; all are
compelling teachers.

Every effort has been made to include faculty, students, and alumni news. Items not included will be published in the next edition.



From the Director...

As we begin another academic year, I am struck by how much change the Program has endured in the past year. After the departure of several faculty members the previous year, we have hired Alexander Parsons and Mat Johnson as new faculty members in fiction into tenure track positions, and we also hired Liz Waldner as a visitor in poetry for the year. Our colleague, Daniel Stern, passed away this Spring, and he will be missed. Adam Zagajewski will take a visiting position in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago this year, and that Committee will most likely become his new academic home. Ed Hirsh submitted his letter of resignation this Spring, and although Ed had been in New York at the Guggenheim for the last five years, he had still officially been a member of the Creative Writing Program on leave. And Antonya Nelson returned from leave this Spring to continue her teaching at UH. So there has been much change.

When I first assumed the Directorship of the Creative Writing Program five years ago, I thought that we would undergo some change and then enter into a utopian period of stability in which the Program would simply run itself. Since then, I have learned that change is the norm, and that healthy programs embrace change, even as they work hard to preserve their core values. And once I understood that change is the norm, I ceased worrying about it and instead viewed it as one of the many things with which we will deal. Having a dedicated and professional faculty and engaged and generous graduate students allowed us to meet whatever challenges we encountered. I was continually struck by how hard people worked on behalf of the Program and by how committed they were to making it the best Program that it could be. I felt proud to be part of such a community.

Last year we began a new reading series, the Inprint Studio series, and we had some wonderful visitors, Bob Hicok and Laura Kasischke, here in the Fall. It was great to have three of our alumni—Farnoosh Moshiri, Pimone Triplett, and Andrew Feld—also read in the series in the Spring. This year looks equally exciting. In early October, Maurice Manning and Emily Fox Gordon will visit then later in the month William Henry Lewis and Justin Cronin will be here. UH alumni Lisa Lewis and Tracy Daugherty will join us in the Spring.

And as always, we are excited about this year's entering class. They are a wonderful group of writers and we look forward to getting to know them better and to bringing them into our community.

As ever,

J. Kastely,
Director

Program News

Staff News

It's been a good year in the Creative Writing Program office. We have three new exciting faculty members starting in the fall and we have some very strong and talented new students coming into the program in the fall. The application process was stressful as we had 336 applications this year. That's a lot of information gathering. The staff did a great job of organizing the applicant files and keeping the whole process running smoothly.

Last fall our offices got a real face lift with some remodeling, new paint and carpeting. It made our whole environment nicer. This summer, there's more remodeling going on. The hallway outside our offices, the graduate student lounge and the graduate library are all getting a new look. We're very excited about it. I'll bet that many of you didn't even know that there had once been big windows at the end of the hall over the staircase. Well, they're back! We just hope that all the work is completed before classes start in the fall. Kathy and j. have been pestering people about getting something done with this area for three years and their efforts have finally paid off.

Sadly, there were departures this year. We lost a good friend in Dan Stern and wish the very best for his family and friends outside the university. We'll miss Adam terribly and hope he'll stay in contact with us. His kindness and wit were always appreciated. We're also hoping that Ed will return for a visit from time to time. He's just been affiliated with the program for so long that it's hard to think of him being totally detached from us.

There's been a change in the Office Coordinator position. **Cassie Colbert**, who worked with us for the past couple

of years, has left to return to Beaumont to live closer to her family there. Although we miss Cassie already, we were lucky enough to hire back an old friend. **Shatera Dixon** is back. She was our Office Coordinator from 2003 to 2005. She moved to Florida a couple of years ago but returned to Houston in December, 2006. She's actually been working in the UH English Department office and we stole her back. We're thrilled to have her back with us.

Mike Doyle continues to provide design and technical support to the Program. He's updated the designs for our recruiting ads this year and is a major contributor to the design and layout of the Newsletter. We're lucky to have him as a friend.

Kathy Smathers, Asst. Director, (that's me) is just glad the faculty hiring process was successful, the student application process went well and that the renovations are going forward. I wish the best for Cassie and am really glad that Shatera is with us. I also hope that, with Mike Doyle's help, we'll get the website up and running this coming year. The UH/CLASS tech people have not been able to work with us much this past year and we really want to get going on the website. I was out of the office for a few weeks at the beginning of the summer because of a bad fall at home. Luckily, I came out of it with only a broken wrist (although I had to have surgery on it) and a hyper-extended knee. Early summer is a pretty quiet time for the CWP office and j. and Cassie kept things running smoothly in my absence. But I was sure glad to get back to work.



Kathy Smathers & Shatera Dixon



The windows of Roy Cullen

Faculty News

Chitra Divakaruni received a Champions of Literacy award from Literacy Advance of Houston for her writing and her support of literacy. She has also been chosen for the Distinguished Writer Award, 2007, by the South Asian Literary Association. The award will be presented at the association's annual meeting during the MLA convention in December. Chitra's novel, *The Palace of Illusions*, based on the Indian epic, *The Mahabharat*, has been accepted for publication by Doubleday, and will be coming out in the spring of 2008. Her children's novel, *The Conch Bearer*, has been optioned for a film by the award winning independent filmmaker, Oren Rudavsky.

Mark Doty's *Dog Years* was published in March by HarperCollins, spent two weeks on the New York Times Bestseller List, and was also a bestseller in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston and other cities. Now in its 7th hardcover printing, the book is forthcoming in the U.K., France, Italy and Brasil. *Dog Years* received starred reviews from Kirkus, Publishers Weekly and Library Journal. The New Yorker said of the book, "Doty brilliantly captures the qualities that make dogs endearing." O: The Oprah Magazine called it "a radiant memoir of loss, renewal and unleashed affection." After five weeks of book-touring and talking about canine company,

Mark was pretty well ready to spend the summer hiding someplace, though he did teach at the Juniper Institute at the University of Massachusetts, and at Robert Pinsky's Favorite Poem Institute for Teachers at Boston University.

Next spring, Harper will publish *Dog Years* in paperback, along with *Fire to Fire: New and Selected Poems*, which pairs a group of new pieces with selections from twenty years of poems.

In the spring, Mark and his partner, **Paul Lisicky** will be guest professors at Cornell University, most likely snowed in till April.

Nick Flynn is working on a book tentatively entitled *Who Died and Made You King*, a hybrid of prose and poetry circling around the recent legalization of torture in the United States (The Military Commissions Act of 2006). In the past year, along with teaching at the University of Houston, he has taught workshops and given readings in many venues across America and in Europe, including the 92nd St. Y in New York City and the Cuirt Festival in Galway, Ireland.

Tony Hoagland's book of essays, *Real Sofistikashun*, was published by Graywolf Press in fall of 2006. Many of the essays appeared in the AWP *Writer's Chronicle*. One of the essays was awarded the 2006 Editor's Prize for best nonfiction in *Poetry Magazine*. Also in fall 2006, Tony (along with colleague Mark Doty) was one of the featured writers at the humongous Dodge Poetry Festival in New Jersey. In September, 2007, he will participate in the International Literature Festival in Berlin, which he's looking forward to. And he'll be a visiting writer at the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop in the fall.

j. Kastely was named Professor of the Year, 2006 – 2007, by the Graduate

English Students. This is his second time to receive the award.

Antonia Nelson is a visiting writer at the Michener Center this fall. She is now serving as a writer at large for *Texas Monthly*, where personal essays have appeared (May and June) or are forthcoming (September). A short story appears in the summer issue of *Tin House* magazine, and stories are forthcoming in the *New Yorker* and *Glimmer Train*. Toni is also serving as faculty at the Taos Writers Conference and at the Napa Valley Writers' Conference.

Robert Phillips' book of poems, *Circumstances Beyond Our Control*, was nominated for the National Book Critics' Circle Award and the National Book Award. He recently gave readings at the Brazos Bookstore, Borders River Oaks Bookstore, Montgomery County Literary Arts Council and the Huntington Museum in Los Angeles. New poems are appearing in the *Texas Observer*, *Light*, *Connecticut Review*, *Sewanee Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *Chautauqua Literary Review*, and *Stone Canoe* (a new literary journal from upstate New York.) New essays appear in *Expository Writing*, *Dark Horses*, *The Texas Review*, and the *Houston Chronicle*. Garrison Keiller read another of his poems on National Public Radio in April. Prof. Phillips continues as poetry editor of *The Texas Review*, as a nominator for the Whiting Writing Awards and serves as literary executor for the estates of Delmore Schwartz, Karl Shapiro and Daniel Stern.



Robert Phillips

New Faculty



Mat Johnson

Mat Johnson will join the Creative Writing Program this Fall. Mat is the author of two novels, *Drop* and *Hunting in Harlem*, and a work of non-fiction, *The Great Negro Plot*. *Hunting in Harlem* won the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Fiction in 2004. His fourth book, *Pym*, is a surreal re-imagining of Poe's *The Narrative of Gordon Pym*. Also forthcoming is a graphic novel, *Incognegro*. Mat received a BA from Earlham College and an MFA in Fiction from Columbia University. He has taught at Rutgers University, Camden Campus, Columbia University, and most recently he has been an assistant professor of English and Creative Writing at Bard College. He teaches workshops in fiction and non-fiction, African American Autobiographical Narrative, 20th Century African American Literature, African American Satire, the Harlem Renaissance, Race in 19th Century American Literature, and U.S. Literature 1866-1939. He has also taught for the Callaloo Writing Workshop.



Alex Parsons

Alexander Parsons is coming to the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston, having been an As-

sistant Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of New Hampshire for 5 years. Alex has a BA from Wesleyan, an MFA from the University of Iowa and an MFA from New Mexico State University. He has published two novels, *Leaving Disneyland* and *In the Shadows of the Sun*, and is at work on a third novel, *El Repoman*. *Leaving Disneyland* won a 2000 Associated Writing Programs Award for the Novel and also the 2001 Writers' League of Texas Violet Crown Award. Alex has also had several screen plays optioned. He has taught graduate and undergraduate workshops in fiction, Writing Historical Fiction, Advanced Editing and Publishing, and Form & Theory of Fiction: Landscape in Literature

Visiting Faculty

Liz Waldner will be a visiting faculty member in Creative Writing for F2007-S2008, teaching poetry workshops. She has published six books of poetry and five chapbooks. *Dark Would* won the University of Georgia Press 2002 Contemporary Poetry Series and the Alice James Books' Hawley Prize for 2001; *A Point Is That Which Has No Part* won the 2000 Laughlin Prize from the Academy of American Poets and the 2000 Iowa Poetry Prize. Her other books are: *Saving the Appearances*, *Etym(bi)ology*, *Self and Simulacra* and *Homing Devices*. Liz has a BA from St. Johns and an MFA from the University of Iowa. She has taught at Cornell College, the College of Wooster and the Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa. Her teaching interests range widely, including: contemporary poetry, translation, metaphorical poetry, visual thinking/visual arts, women's studies, creative non-fiction, film and poetry and philosophy.

Visiting Writer

Brigit Pegen Kelly will visit UH's Creative Writing Program during the week of February 11. She will read from her work and also either conduct a workshop

or offer a masters class. She is the author of *The Orchard* (2004), *Song* (1995), for which she received the Lamont Poetry Selection award by The Academy of American Poets, and *To The Place of Trumpets* (1987), which was chosen for the Yale Series of Younger Poets. She has been awarded a Whiting Writer's Award and the Witter Bynner Prize for Poetry, and she has received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work has been widely anthologized and it has appeared in numerous literary journals. She has taught at University of California at Irvine, Purdue University and Warren Wilson College. Currently, she is a professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Inprint Studio Series and Residencies

—We have a wonderful line-up of readers for this year's Inprint Studio Series. In the fall, we will sponsor two readings. On October 10, poet **Maurice Manning** (*Lawrence Booth's Book of Visions*, *A Companion for Owls*, *Bucolics*) and non-fiction writer and UH alum **Emily Fox Gordon** (*Mockingbird Years*, *Are You Happy?: A Childhood Remembered*) will read at Diverse Works. On October 24, **William Henry Lewis** (*In the Arms of Our Elders*, *I Got Somebody in Staunton*) and **Justin Cronin** (*The Summer Guest*, *Mary and O'Neil*) will read. In the Spring UH alums **Lisa Lewis** (*The Unbeliever*, *Silent Treatment*) and **Tracy Daugherty** (*Axeman's Jazz*, *Late in the Standoff*, *Hiding Man*—a biography of Donald Barthelme, forthcoming) will give a reading on March 31.

We will continue the practice that we began last year of having our residencies conducted by visiting writers for the Inprint Studio Series. In the fall Maurice Manning will do a residency in poetry and William Henry Lewis will do a residency in fiction. In the Spring Lisa Lewis and Tracy Daugherty will also give residencies in poetry and fiction. Each of these writers will read work from 10 students and then meet with those students personally to discuss the students' work. So almost half of our current students will be able to participate in a residency with a visiting writer this year.

Glass Mountain

UH undergraduates now have a new outlet for their creative self-expression. Glass Mountain began when a group of creative writing undergraduates recognized a need for an established literary journal in which students can learn the ins and outs of both publishing and being published. The journal's founding editors are Maureen Sanchez, Melissa Martinez, Regina Vigil, Ruth Joynton and Kim Thai. The first issue contains poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction and artwork by undergraduate students, as well as an interview with poet/memoirist/professor Nick Flynn. The winners of the Department of English's Sylvan Karchmer, Howard Moss, and Brian Lawrence prizes are published in the journal as well.

Glass Mountain will continue to seek new and changing voices and will document ongoing conversations with those that instruct and inspire the undergraduate student body. The journal will also host and participate in live events that encourage young writers to bring their work to the local community.

The Society for the Performing Arts has invited Glass Mountain to participate in their Performance Prelude program. Contributors to the journal will be reading their work for twenty minutes on January 12 at the Wortham Center prior to the performance of "Radio Stories and Other Stories" by Ira Glass, host of NPR's "This American Life".

For more information on the journal and upcoming events, visit Glass Mountain's website at www.uh.edu/glassmountain.



Volume 1, Spring 2007

Inprint-Brown Reading Series

Inprint brings to Texas 12 of the world's leading authors, including Pulitzer Prize winner **Michael Chabon**, McSweeney's founder **Dave Eggers**, National Book Award winners **Alice McDermott** and **Richard Powers**, and former U.S. Poet Laureate **Robert Hass**, for the 2007-2008 Inprint Brown Reading Series. The series, which runs from September to April, is presented by Inprint, in association with the UH Creative Writing Program (UH CWP), Alley Theatre, and Brazos Bookstore. Each of the seven evenings consists of a reading by the featured writer(s) and an on-stage interview, followed by a book sale and signing. Readings take place at the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Avenue, on Mondays at 7:30 pm (doors open 6:45), unless otherwise noted.

The Inprint Brown Reading Series, entering its 27th season this fall, ranks among the nation's leading literary showcases. Over the years, the Inprint Brown Reading Series has presented more than 250 of the world's great writers, including winners of four Nobel Prizes, 38 Pulitzer Prizes, and 39 National Book Awards. In *Ultimate Houston 2006*, the *Houston Chronicle* writes, "For 26 years Inprint has brought the royalty of world literature to town and charged us a paltry \$5 (OK, in a couple of cases \$10) to sit at their feet. John Updike, John Irving, Louise Erdrich, Seamus Heaney, Salman Rushdie, Jeffrey Eugenides, Sandra Cisneros — those are just a few of the A-list authors who have read for the Inprint Brown Reading Series."

The 2007-2008 Inprint Brown Reading Series continues this tradition of excellence. The internationally renowned writers featured this season—many visiting Houston for

the first time—address pressing contemporary issues in brilliant ways. It promises to be a very thought-provoking season. This year's writers include:

Michael Chabon—September 10, 7:30 pm, Alley Theatre, Hubbard Stage: Pulitzer Prize winner Chabon, whom Michiko Kakutani calls "an immensely gifted writer and a magical prose stylist," is the author of *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, a *New York Times* bestseller; *Wonder Boys*, which was made into a feature film starring Michael Douglas and Tobey Maguire; and the 2001 Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*. He reads from *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, his new detective novel, in which contemporary Israel does not exist and European Jewish refugees have found a home in Alaska.

Richard Powers and **Jennifer Egan**—Monday, October 15, 7:30 pm, Alley Theatre, Hubbard Stage: MacArthur "genius" Fellowship winner **Richard Powers**, whose masterful plots combine contemporary issues with aspects of science, medicine, technology and the arts, is the author of nine novels, including *The Gold Bug Variations*, *Operation Wandering Soul*, *The Time of Our Singing* and his most recent, *The Echo Maker*, winner of the 2006 National Book Award. **Jennifer Egan**, "one of the most gifted writers of her generation" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*), is the author of *The Invisible Circus*, *Look at Me* (a National Book Award finalist) and her most recent, *The Keep*, which Madison Smart Bell describes as "prodigiously entertaining and profoundly moving."

Elizabeth Alexander and **Taha Muhammad Ali**—Monday, November 12, 7:30 pm, Alley Theatre, Neuhaus Stage: **Elizabeth Alexander**, whose work penetrates the African American experience, is the author of four collections of poetry, includ-

ing *The Hottentot Venus* and *American Sublime*, a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize. *The Chicago Tribune* says, "Her poems make the public and private dance together." **Taha Muhammad Ali**, coming to Houston with his translator Peter Cole, is a leading figure in the contemporary Palestinian literary scene. Writing for more than five decades, Ali's works, including his latest *So What: New and Selected Poems*, focus on the everyday realities of the Arab-Israeli crisis. *The Boston Globe* praises him for distilling from it "not slogans, not hatred, but art of the highest order."

Vikram Chandra and **Mayra Montero**—Monday, January 21, 7:30 pm, Alley Theatre, Hubbard Stage: **Vikram Chandra**, Indian-born UH Creative Writing Program alum, received rave reviews for his novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* and story collection *Love and Longing in Bombay*. *The Christian Science Monitor* describes *Sacred Games*, Chandra's latest 900 page novel, as "monstrously entertaining, conjuring images of a literary duet between John Irving and Vikram Seth, with a dollop of Mario Puzo thrown in for good measure." **Mayra Montero**, Cuban born and hailed as "a worthy peer of the likes of Mario Vargas Llosa" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), is the author of nine novels and a collection of short stories, including her latest novel, *Dancing to "Almendra"*, which "without a wasted word . . . weaves the real and fictional . . . in a web that personifies Cuba of 1957" (*The Washington Post*).

Dave Eggers and **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**—Sunday, February 17, 7:30 pm, Wortham Center, Cullen Theater: **Dave Eggers**, founder of the independent publishing house McSweeney's, rose to literary stardom when his memoir, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, quickly became a bestseller and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Eg-

Calendar for Reading Series Fall 2007/Spring 2008

9/10	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Michael Chabon</i>	<i>Alley Theatre</i>
9/19	<i>Poetry & Prose</i>	<i>Alex Parsons, Mark Doty</i>	<i>M.D. Anderson Library, UH Campus</i>
10/3	<i>Inprint Studio</i>	<i>Maurice Manning, Emily Fox Gordon</i>	<i>DiverseWorks</i>
10/15	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Richard Powers, Jennifer Egan</i>	<i>Alley Theatre</i>
10/17	<i>Poetry & Prose</i>	<i>Mat Johnson, Liz Waldner</i>	<i>M.D. Anderson Library, UH Campus</i>
10/24	<i>Inprint Studio</i>	<i>William Henry Lewis, Justin Cronin</i>	<i>DiverseWorks</i>
11/7	<i>Poetry & Prose</i>	<i>First Year M.F.A. & Ph.D Students,</i>	<i>M.D. Anderson Library, UH Campus</i>
11/12	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Elizabeth Alexander, Taha Muhammad Ali,</i>	<i>Alley Theatre</i>
1/21	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Vikram Chandra, Mayra Montero</i>	<i>Alley Theatre</i>
<i>Week of 2/11 (TBA)</i>		<i>Brigit Pegeen Kelly</i>	<i>Place to be announced.</i>
2/17	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Dave Eggers, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie</i>	<i>Cullen Theatre, Wortham Center</i>
3/12	<i>Inprint Studio</i>	<i>Tracy Daugherty, Lisa Lewis</i>	<i>DiverseWorks</i>
3/31	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Alice McDermott, Laura Restrepo</i>	<i>Zilka Hall, Hobby Center</i>
4/12	<i>Special Event</i>	<i>Marjane Satrapi</i>	<i>Zilka Hall, Hobby Center</i>
4/21	<i>Inprint/MRB Series</i>	<i>Robert Hass</i>	<i>Alley Theatre</i>

gers' latest novel, *What is the What*, based on a true story of a Sudanese "lost boy," is hailed by New York Magazine as "nothing short of genius." Nigerian-born **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** is the author of the critically acclaimed *Purple Hibiscus*, winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book 2005. Her new novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, set in 1960s Nigeria, is described by Time magazine as "a gorgeous, pitiless account of love, violence, and betrayal during the Biafran war," and New York Magazine says, "It's like 'Gone With the Wind', except in Nigeria." The book won the 2007 Orange Prize.

Alice McDermott and **Laura Restrepo**—Monday, March 31, 7:30 pm, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Zilka Hall: **Alice McDermott**, "a genius of quiet observation . . . One of our finest novelists at work today" (Los Angeles Times Book Review), is the author of six novels, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist *That Night*, the bestselling *Child of My Heart* and the National

Book Award winner *Charming Billy*. She reads from her latest novel, *After This*, which, like her other works, explores on Irish-Catholic American life. Columbian writer **Laura Restrepo**, a life-long peace activist, is a leading figure in the Latin American literary scene. The Washington Post says of her latest novel, *Delirium*, the sixth to be translated into English, "Laura Restrepo's *Delirium* is a book-and-a-half: stunning, dense, complex, mind-blowing. The novel goes far above politics, right up into high art."

Robert Hass—Monday, April 21, 7:30 pm, Alley Theatre, Neuhaus Stage: **Robert Hass**, former U.S. Poet Laureate, is a champion of the literacy and environmental movements. A recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" Fellowship and two National Book Critics Circle Awards, Hass is the author of five collections of poetry, including *Field Guide*, *Praise*, *Human Values*, *Sun Under Wood* and his much-anticipated new collection, *Time and Materials: Poems 1997-2005*. The Atlantic

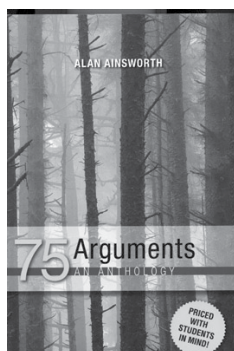
Monthly says, "No practicing poet has more talent than Robert Hass."

The Inprint Brown Reading Series is presented by Inprint, a Houston arts organization whose mission is to inspire readers and writers. The Inprint Brown Reading Series receives generous underwriting support from The Brown Foundation, Inc., Weatherford International and is also supported by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts "which believes that a great nation deserves great art." Inprint also receives in-kind support from the Alley Theatre, Continental Airlines, Hines, Houston Chronicle and KUHF 88.7 FM, as well as other support from the Texas Commission on the Arts and The City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.

Visit our website at:
www.inprintheouston.org

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INSPIRING READERS & WRITERS

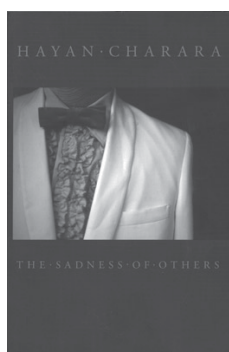
Books



Alan Ainsworth



Kim Garcia



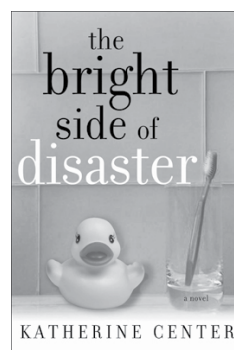
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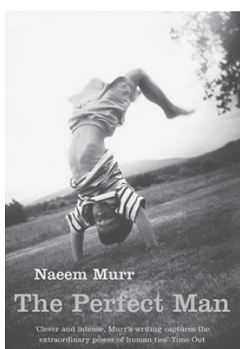
Tony Hoagland



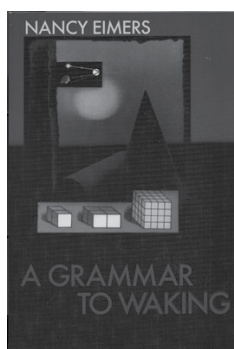
Michael Dumanis



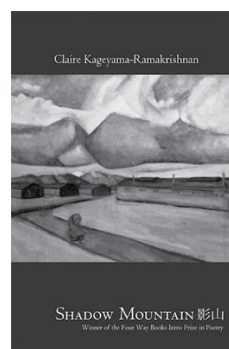
Katherine Center



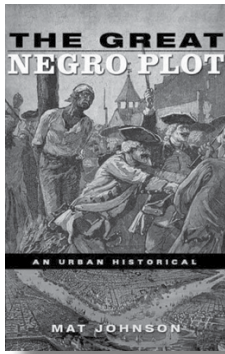
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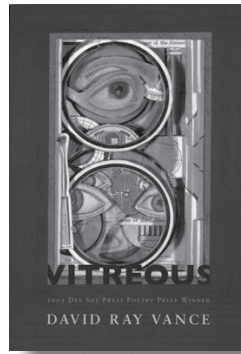
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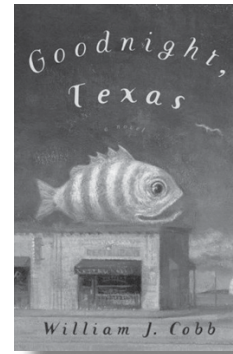
Claire Kageyama-Ramakrishnan



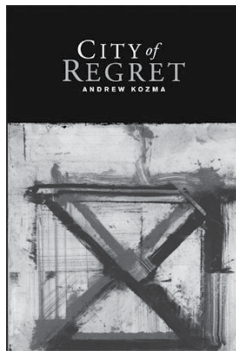
Mat Johnson



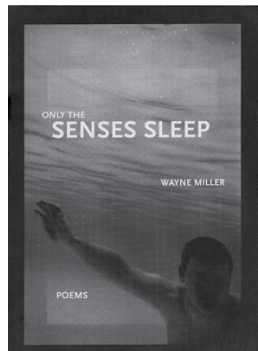
David Vance



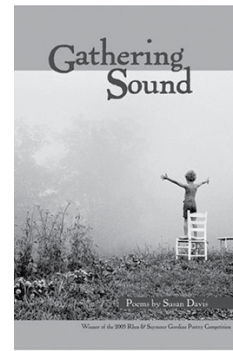
William J. Cobb



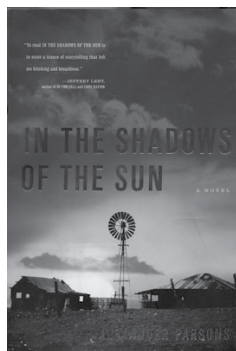
Andrew Kozma



Wayne Miller



Susan Davis



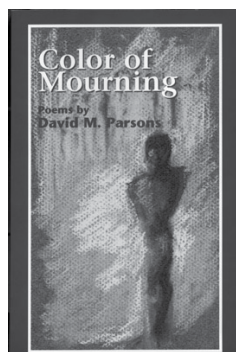
Alexander Parsons



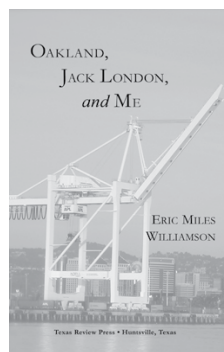
Joni Tevis



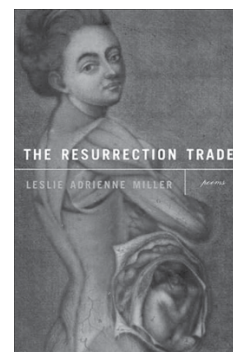
Renee Dodd



David M. Parsons



Eric Miles Williamson



Leslie Adrienne Miller

Student News

Lauren Berry (M.F.A., Poetry) received a First-year MA/MFA Scholarship to Sewanee Writers' Conference.

Matt Boyleston (Ph.D., Poetry) has poems published or forthcoming in The New Orleans Review, Poetryfish, Harpur Palate, The Spoon River Poetry Review, The GW Review and The GSU Review. He gave and/or is giving readings at SUNY Binghamton, Winthrop University, San Angelo State, and The University of Wales, Bangor. In addition to that, he's presented papers at the Southern Regional American Conference for Irish Studies in Rock Hill, South Carolina and the National PCA/ACA Conference in Boston. And to top it all off, he's to be married on June 15 to **Abby Heller** who graduated with her MA in lit in 2007. Congratulations!!

Jericho Brown (Ph.D., Poetry) served as the commencement speaker this May at graduation ceremonies for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. He is now teaching creative writing in his new position as Assistant Professor of English at the University of San Diego. This past year, he had poems published in the New England Review and AGNI. He also had work taken by Post Road, Prairie Schooner, Water-Stone Review and jubilat. Jericho's first book, *Please*, will be published by Western Michigan University's New Issues Poetry & Poetry in the fall of 2008.

Hayan Charara (Ph.D., Poetry) had poems published in Bat City Review, Literary Imagination, Michigan Quarterly Review, Pebble Lake Review, and the anthology *We Begin Here: Poems for Lebanon and Palestine*. Several poems were translated into French and appeared in the journal *Siècle 21*. Three poems were nominated by Marilyn Hacker for the Pushcart Prize. An anthology Hayan edited, *Inclined to Speak: Contemporary Arab American Poetry*, was accepted for publication and will be put out by the University of Arkansas Press in mid-2008. It contains a lengthy

introduction about Arab American poetry and poems from thirty-eight contemporary Arab American poets.

He participated in two conference panels, the first at AWP in Atlanta ("Emerging Voices: Arab American Literature in the 21st Century") and then at the national conference of the Radius of Arab American Writers in Detroit ("Contemporary Arab American Poetry").

Kimberly Garcia (M.F.A., Poetry) published *Madonna Magdalene* in October, 2006, through Turning Point Press. She will be reading at Old Stone House in Brooklyn (brooklynreadingworks.typepad.com) on Thursday at 8 pm at the 2008 AWP conference in New York and welcomes any U of H folks to come by and read at the open mike following, or just listen. She'll "buy you a beer and bless you for leaving the hotel sheep pen in support of poetry." She can be reached through her website www.kim-garcia.com if you need directions or just want to get in touch.

April Goldman (M.F.A., Poetry) received a First-year MA/MFA Scholarship to Sewanee Writers' Conference.

Lacy Johnson (Ph.D., Poetry) placed her essay, "The Art of Self-Inscription" in the summer issue of Pebble Lake Review. Lacy was an instructor for the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts' collaboration among the arts class. And last, but definitely not least, her daughter, **Hazel**, was born this past December. It's definitely been a good year.

Andrew Kozma (Ph.D., Poetry) won the Zone 3 First Book Prize and his book, *City of Regret*, will be out before the end of the summer. He had a non-fiction piece place as a finalist for the Iowa Review Awards and will be published in the spring issue of the magazine. Poems of Andrew's have been published in Post Road and *Best New Poets 2006*.

David MacLean (Ph.D., Fiction) has been working with **Greg Oaks** (Ph.D.,

2001), **Casey Fleming** (M.F.A., Fiction), and Scott Repass in organizing the Poison Pen Reading Series at Scott's bar, Poison Girl. He has been invited to be a waiter at Bread Loaf and, in April, read in the MFAH's Starbucks sponsored Salon Series with poet and fellow CWP student Lacy Johnson.

James Davis May (M.F.A., Poetry) has poems coming out in The Texas Review, The Cimarron Review, and Atlanta Review this year.

Paul Otremba (Ph.D., Poetry) had his first collection of poems accepted for publication by Four Way Books, and it is scheduled for release in the fall of '08 or the spring of '09. He had an essay on Karen Volkman appear in July in the anthology *American Poets in the 21st Century: The New Poetics*. This year his poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Forklift, Ohio, The Kenyon Review, Lyric, Luna, Marginalia, Pebble Lake Review, and Poetry Daily.

Kathryn Peterson Paterson (Ph.D., Fiction) reports "fabulous" news from the prison near Alvin where she teaches creative writing seminars (and other classes)! When she got to her first class of the summer course she was teaching, several of her students told her that the prison had done very well in the national PEN/Prison awards. One of the students placed in every single writing category, including a first place in fiction! "Even more exciting, though, is that they 'practically swept' the drama category, winning first, second and third place, and one of the honorable mentions!" Most of these students were directly from Kathryn's playwriting class there last summer, and several are former students from the five years she's been teaching there part-time. If you're interested, you can read some of the winning entries online at www.pen.org/page.php/prmID/1439. However, be warned that a couple of the entries can be tough to read, depending on your mindset and background. Some are certainly deep and accurate (if also somewhat disturbing) portrayals of life in our prison system. It

really gets to the heart of a certain part of our society.

Kathryn directed and edited/rewrote a full-length Easter musical for her church in the spring. She says that the writing/adapting part of it was not the most stellar part of her career, as the end result was a sort of Wagner meets Beckett in the middle of a Baptist church with a Greek chorus looking on. A bit crazy, but the congregation seemed to like it!

Also, she's almost at page 230 of her own novel and gathering steam.

Amanda Nowlin O'Banion (Ph.D., Fiction) let us know that *Literary Cash* was released in January 2007. This is the anthology about Johnny Cash which includes a chapter from her novel (more familiar to some as her dissertation).

Brian Russell (M.F.A., Poetry) has poems coming out this fall/winter in *Epoch* and *DIAGRAM*.

Glenn Shaheen (M.F.A., Poetry) has poems published or forthcoming in *dANDe-lion*, *Cranky* and *Subtropics*. He attended AWP in Atlanta and was good enough to provide us with a couple of pictures of our students there.



Glenn, Loren, Nicole & Lauren

Kent Shaw (Ph.D., Poetry) found out that his book was accepted at University of Tampa Press. He won their book contest and the book is set to be published early 2008.

Matthew Siegel (M.F.A., Poetry) had poems published or accepted for publication in *Cimarron Review*, *Passages North*, *Patterson Literary Review*, *Pebble Lake Review*, and *Forklift, Ohio*. He spent the summer of 2007 life-guarding back home in New York and working as an Editorial

Assistant for the *New York Quarterly*, as well as attending the Bread Loaf Writers Conference for non-fiction as a work-study scholar. As of spring 2007 he has been the Assistant Editor of *Pebble Lake Review*.

Bradford Gray Telford (Ph.D, Poetry) won the Willis Barnstone Translation Prize for his work on French poet Geneviève Huttin. His poems and essays appeared in *The Yale Review*, *Pleiades*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The Dirty Goat*, *American Book Review*, and *Gulf Coast* among other places. Look for new work of Brad's forthcoming in *BOMB*, *Columbia*, *Absinthe: New European Writing* and other journals.

Jamie Thomas (Ph. D., Poetry) and his wife, **Steffanie**, gave birth to their second child in February, a bouncing 11-pounder named **Jude Webb Thomas**. Also, Jamie was a finalist for the New Issues Press Poetry Prize for his manuscript, "First Yell Fire", and he had work accepted for publication in *RHINO*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, and *Zone 3*. His poem, "ACME Love Poem," was featured as Poem of the Week on the *Missouri Review* online.

David Ray Vance (Ph.D., Poetry) has published his first book of poetry, *Vitreous*. It came out in January 2007.

Coort Voorhese's (M.F.A., Fiction) first book, a YA novel called *The Brothers Torres*, is set to come out in April, 2008, from Hyperion.

Jacob White (Ph.D., Fiction) had stories published this year in *The Sewanee Review* and *The Greensboro Review*.

Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts

On July 14th eight undergraduate students from the departments of Creative Writing, Communications, Education and Construction Management Technology presented their semester's work to the public as part of the first ever undergraduate course in collaboration among the arts. Sponsored by the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, the Creative Writing Department, the English Department and Lower Division Studies, the course provided students with a unique opportunity to collaborate on the design, execution and promotion of an original, interdisciplinary art project. The two resulting projects were more than instructor **Lacy M. Johnson** hoped for when she designed the course. "Urban Pariah" took the form of a film installation about construction without a conscience in Houston's Fourth Ward and "No Cash Value" comprised an interactive installation about looking inwardly. Although only the students from "Urban Pariah" have future plans for their film (hoping to revise it for the Project Row Houses), students from Johnson's "Introduction to Collaboration" confess it was a "life-changing experience" and "the best class ever." She whole-heartedly agrees.

Lacy M. Johnson

The Mitchell Center and
University of Houston present:

"No Cash Value"
:: a presentation in looking inwardly ::

: alongside :
Urban Pariah
:: multimedia installation about
construction without conscience ::

Saturday, July 14, 2007
4:00-6:00pm
U of H, Fine Arts Building
Room 110
Parking in Lot 16B

Incoming Students

Fiction

Bean, Zachary, Ph.D.
B.A., Univ. of Arkansas
M.F.A., Penn State Univ.

Boyd, Erin, M.F.A.
B.A., Univ. of Texas-Austin

Cedilnik, Laurie, M.F.A.
B.A., Wellesley College

Flowers, Quincy, Ph.D.
B.A., Kennesaw State Univ.
M.A., New York Univ.

Johnson, Brianne Alexis, Ph.D.
(Deferred from Fall 2007)
B.S., Georgetown Univ.
M.S., Joint Military Intelligence College

Niles-Gill, Jonathan, M.F.A.
B.A., Susquehanna Univ.

Schimmel, B. Ian, M.F.A.
B.A., Tufts Univ.

Stansel, Ian, Ph.D.
B.A., Northern Illinois Univ.
M.F.A., Univ. of Iowa

Thekkiam, Sruthi, Ph.D.
B.A., Bangalore Univ.
M.F.A., Bowling Green State Univ.

White, Brandon, M.F.A.
B.A., Univ. of Illinois

Poetry

Bishop, Sean, M.F.A.
B.A., Hampshire College

Carlise, Charles, Ph.D.
B.A., Wittenberg Univ.
M.A., Univ. of California-Davis

Countryman, Elizabeth, Ph.D.
B.A., Tufts Univ.

M.F.A., Univ. of Maryland

Ekstrand, Eric M., M.F.A.
B.A., Wake Forest Univ.

Gamble, Hannah K., M.F.A.
B.A., Univ. of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Glover, Kasten C., M.F.A.
B.A., Central Missouri State Univ.

Higgins, Eric, Ph.D.
B.A., Univ. of Arizona
M.A., Ball State Univ.

Journey, Anna E., Ph.D.
B.F.A., Virginia Commonwealth Univ.
M.F.A., Virginia Commonwealth Univ.

Kirby, Margaret E., M.F.A.
B.A., Univ. of Houston

Spinks, Daniel B., M.F.A.
B.A., Univ. of Georgia

Writing Competitions

The Creative Writing Program's 2006 – 2007 writing competitions were judged by Sigrid Nunez for fiction, Toi Derricotte for poetry and Richard McCann for non-fiction. *The winners were:*

Inprint/Diana P. Hobby Prize in Fiction
Oindrila Mukherjee

Inprint/Verlaine Prize in Poetry
Sasha West

Michener Fellowship in Honor of Donald Barthelme for Non-Fiction
Kimberly Meyer

Inprint/Barthelme Memorial Fellowships
Jeanine Walker- Fiction
Nick Brown- Fiction
Raj Mankad- Non-Fiction
Paul Otremba- Poetry

Inprint/Lucille Joy Prize in Poetry
Andrew Brininstool

Brazos Bookstore/Academy of American Poets Prize
Jeanine Walker

Honorable Mentions
Bradford Telford & Kate Schmitt

Graduates

Fall 2006

Lindsey Royce, Ph.D., Poetry
David Vance, Ph. D., Poetry

Spring 2007

Nicholas Brown, M.F.A., Fiction
James Davis May, M.F.A., Poetry

Nelson Demery, a.k.a. **Jericho Brown**, Ph.D., Poetry
Chris Dunn, Ph.D., Poetry
Andrew Kozma, Ph.D., Poetry
Amanda Nowlin-O'Banion, Ph.D., Fiction
Roberta Short, Ph.D., Fiction
Gemini Wahhaj, Ph.D., Fiction
Sasha West, Ph.D., Poetry



Jericho Brown

Mine Own Edward Hirsch

Once, driving up Houston's Shepherd Drive in the late fall with the windows down—my wife, Landon, and I consumed again with laughter—a car pulls up beside us and Ed's familiar voice commands from the next lane: "You're not supposed to be having so much fun!" he mock-scolds us. "The rest of us are miserable over here." And the three of us roll together in mirth through traffic, caught in a private moment of unexpected joy, affronting the stereotypes of poetry.

Another afternoon, in the diffuse light of a South Texas winter, our entourage of poets unhibernating again, entering again the monochrome seminar room—Ed glows with anticipation of the assembling possibilities for the day's discussion. "I'm finally with the smart kids," he gloats. But later, the room is struck dumb as Ed tells us of Radnoti on the march, his last poems written in a notebook during his terrible, forced march, the notebook lifted from the mass grave. And at head of the table, Ed has his head in his hands, witness to abjection, a type of experience we know only as: poetry.

The Houston of my experience and my memory is imprinted with Ed, his joy and his seriousness, his poetry, which saves me.

Gary Hawkins
Black Mountain, North Carolina
July 2007



On Adam...

At The Menil Collection this past March, on a Tuesday declared "Adam Zagajewski Day" by Houston's mayor, students, colleagues, friends, members of the arts community, and the community at large paid tribute to Adam, with the full force of his impact here being felt. Over his 19 years of teaching in the Creative Writing Program, Adam contributed a seriousness of thought and an awareness of European poetry that helped to distinguish this program as a place where the life of the mind is just as important as the study of a craft. With his poems and essays, Adam's influence on American poetry has been beyond the sphere of Houston, and through the Krakow Poetry Seminars, he furthered his role as a facilitator between American poets and a larger and diverse tradition. This fall, Adam will continue his contributions to the American intellectual and artistic community as he joins the faculty for the Committee of Social Thought at the University of Chicago.

Paul Otremba



Adam & Ed with Nick Flynn



Remembering Dan Stern

I wrote this story when I was in Dan's famous boot camp workshop, "Forms of Fiction." Dan, always a demanding teacher, asked us to write a story a week using a chosen form. We grumbled at first, whined too much. "No! It's impossible! It can never be done! Won't quality suffer for quantity?" Rather than turn us into writing automatons that semester, Dan helped us understand what we needed to do to become writers; write often; write even when you think you have nothing to say; write because you have to, because words won't leave you alone. This story, my first published story, came about because of Dan's urgings and his wise lessons. How lucky I am that it is also Dan who published this story in Hampton Shorts, a journal for which he was fiction editor.

I teach fiction writing workshops now and I always find myself repeating Dan's lessons to my students when they ask how you "fit" writing in with everything else that fills up a day and night. I brag, with the pride of a daughter, "When my teacher Dan Stern was working for Hollywood, working a how-can-I-fit-anything-else-into-my-day kind of job, he wrote novels. How did he do it? 250 words a day, most every day. So no whining about how much work you have to do for the course. You just do it, like he did." When my students ask me how you "become" a writer, Dan is my example: "You live a life that's larger than writing. You become many things—cellist, as executive, Hollywood mogul, Holocaust scholar, husband, father, grandfather, teacher, writer. You become Dan Stern."

Kerry Neville Bakken
Excerpt from *A Book For Daniel Stern*



Gulf Coast



Domestic Crude

Before there was Gulf Coast, there was a magazine called Domestic Crude. Published in 1983, Domestic Crude was the University's first literary journal. It was sixty-four pages long. It had poems by Naomi Shihab Nye and Marie Ponsot. On the cover, it had a ground-view photograph of I-45. It wasn't until 1987 that Domestic Crude gave way to Gulf Coast . . .

. . . which technically makes this year our twentieth anniversary. And while it wouldn't be out of place to wax nostalgic, or to write one of those "my, how we've grown!" monologues, we at Gulf Coast would like to say a simple, heartfelt thanks to all of you—the University of Houston Creative Writing Program. You're the alumni, faculty, and friends who for twenty years have supported our little rag—reading it, writing for it, editing it. You're the reason it's still here.

Happily, we can report that the little rag is thriving. Gulf Coast continues to be a vital part of both the local and national literary communities. Last year, Heather McHugh chose David Shumate's "Drawing Jesus," first published in Gulf Coast, for the 2007 *Best American Poetry* anthology. Other Gulf Coast poems are forthcoming in the Best New Poets and Pushcart Prize collections. And Poetry Daily recently featured **Matthew**

Siegel's "Is Pepper Steak a Steak Made of Pepper?: An Interview with Bob Hicok." Accolades like these contribute to Gulf Coast's national reputation as "one of the established players . . . in the progressive mainstream."

Locally, Gulf Coast continues to make the literary arts an important part of Houston. As many of you already know, our annual reading series at Brazos Bookstore was voted "Best Reading Series" by Houston Press in September 2004, and our readers also appear on KUHF's "Front Row." In 2006, our CLMP Small Press/Literary Magazine Fair was held for the first time at Ziggy's Healthy Grill, giving us a chance to reach out to a larger community of aspiring writers, and to offer that community deeply-discounted books and magazines, as well as seminars and one-to-one conferences with Gulf Coast editors.

But perhaps our biggest success came at this year's Gulf Coast launch party. Celebrating the release of Issue 19.2 (Summer/Fall 2007), Gulf Coast was proud to sponsor a one-time special event at Texas Gallery, featuring the work of artist David McGee as well as a reading by National Book Award-nominee Mark Z. Danielewski. Supported by the Poets & Writers Foundation, the event was truly an evening of "literature and fine art"—a celebration of what Gulf Coast is and has become over the last twenty years. (If you are in the Houston area and would like to be notified of upcoming readings, fairs, and events, please email us at editors@gulfcoastmag.org.)

If you haven't already, be sure to read Gulf Coast 19.2. It's an embarrassment of riches—poetry by C. Dale Young, Carl Phillips, and Monica Youn; new translations by Anne Carson and Daniel Mendelsohn; Padgett Powell's "Bebek"; the work of Bangladeshi author Shabnam Nadiya; and nonfiction by Claire Davis. Moreover, it features "Only Evolutions," an eight-page folio on the

many drafts and versions that went into Page One of Mark Z. Danielewski's *Only Revolutions*.

And the riches spill over into Gulf Coast 20.1, which should be on newsstands and in subscribers' hands sometime next month. The issue features poems by Mary Jo Bang, Michael Burkard, Norman Dubie, Brenda Hillman, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Natasha Trethewey; stories by Viet Thanh Nguyen and Bapsi Sidhwa; nonfiction by Michelle Disler and Allison Schuette-Hoffman; and special tributes to **Daniel Stern** and Robin Utterback.

Subscriptions to Gulf Coast are offered to UH CWP affiliates for a special price of \$25 for two-years (a savings of \$7 off the cover price) and \$13 for one-year (\$3 off the cover price). Send check or money order along with subscription address to: Gulf Coast, Department of English, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77204-3013. Also check out our website at: www.gulfcoastmag.org.



Spring 2007



Fall 2007

Alumni News

Alan Ainsworth (Ph.D., 1996) edited an anthology designed for freshman composition students, *75 Arguments*, published by McGraw-Hill. He continues to serve as Chair of English at Houston Community College Central.

Christopher and Kerry Neville Bakken (Ph.D., 1999 and Ph.D., 2000, respectively) were both featured as readers at the Spring 2007 Single Voice Reading Series. Kerry's book, *Necessary Lies*, won the Best Books 2006 award in fiction/short stories from USABookNews.com.

Nicky Beer (M.F.A., 2003) says she has no book yet, and no new family members (unless she counts the cat), but she got a 2007 Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

David Bernardy (Ph.D., 2006) presented as part of a panel at the International Writing Center Association Conference in Houston along with fellow UH alumni **Julie Chisholm** and **Heather Bigley** (M.F.A., 2003). In August, David and **Joni Tevis** will be moving to Chapel Hill, NC, where Joni will begin her new position at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Ann Bogle's (M.F.A., 1994) poems appeared this year in *PFS Post*, *W O M B*, and on *MiPORadio*. An article, "A Perennial Review of Leo Kottke's Thanksgiving Concert at the Ordway Music Theatre in St. Paul, Minnesota," appeared in *The Lyre*. She keeps a weblog called Ana Verse at <http://annbogle.blogspot.com>. Prose poems are forthcoming in the new national publication, *Minnetonka Review*. She attended the 2007 AWP Convention in Atlanta and had the pleasure of seeing several Houston friends and professors.

Shannon Borg (Ph.D., 1999) has a new job as the lifestyle editor for *Seattle* magazine - editing the food/wine/dining/entertaining sections of the magazine...She's also working on a non-fiction food/cookbook called *Chefs on the Farm: The Quil-lisacut Farm School of the Domestic Arts*

- about a farm in Eastern Washington where chefs go to learn about farm life - butchering, cooking from the gardens, making sausages and preserves, foraging, etc. etc. This book will come out in 2008 from Mountaineers Books, Seattle. She's also working on her second book of poems.

Derick Burleson's (Ph.D., 2001) new collection of poems, *Never Night*, is forthcoming from Marick Press in spring 2008. He teaches in the MFA program at the University of Alaska--Fairbanks.

Katherine Center's (M.F.A., 1998) novel, *The Bright Side of Disaster*, came out in June. There's a lot of excitement about the book at Random House, which published it under the Ballantine imprint. They are calling it "the book everyone from the publisher to the proofreader fell in love with." Last January, Random House featured the book along with five others at a Summer Showcase for the press at Sardi's in New York City. *Vanity Fair* threw a book party for *Bright Side* in New York the day after it came out and will feature it in the magazine. *Redbook* featured it on their July Entertainment page, and *People Magazine* gave it 3^{1/2} stars calling it a "snappy romance" that's "cleverly told and uncommonly appealing." The book deal with Random House is actually for two novels, so she will have another novel coming out next summer, too. Random House has also asked her to join their Emerging Voices series, a speakers' program run in liaison with the American Program Bureau. Katherine also has an essay coming out in the August issue of *Real Simple* magazine about her son, **Thomas** (complete with photos!). She read from the new book at Brazos Bookstore in Houston in June. Katherine also filmed a Public Service Announcement commercial for Writers In The Schools that will run in 9 cities across the country. Please visit her website, www.katherinecenter.com, for more info!

Julie Chisholm (Ph.D., 2002) let us know that she has a new appointment as Assistant Professor of Communication Literacies at Cal State University, Maritime.

Patricia Clark (Ph.D., 1986) had 3 poems published this summer in *Gettysburg Review*. There are also poems forthcoming in *Zone 3*, where one poem, "Homage to the Green-backed Heron", won one of their editor's prizes

William Cobb (Ph.D., 1993) read at the Fall 2006 Single Voice Reading Series. He's reading coincided with the release of his new novel, *Goodnight Texas*.

Deborah Cummins (M.A., 1994) has had two poems selected and read by Garrison Keillor on "The Writers' Almanac" on NPR. Deborah was a member of the faculty for the Down East Writers' Conference in Stonington, Maine, in June and she continues to serve on the Board of Trustees for The Poetry Foundation.

Tracy Daugherty (Ph.D., 1985) reports that St. Martin's Press has signed to publish his biography of Donald Barthelme titled *Hiding Man*. Tracy was a 2006-07 Guggenheim Fellow, and he's been invited to be a writer in residence at the Vermont Studio Center in February. Recent short stories and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *McSweeney's*, *The Georgia Review*, *Boulevard*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Green Mountain Review*, *The Fairy Tale Review*, and the *Writer's Chronicle*. He's currently Chair of the English Department at Oregon State University. He will be reading at the Univ. of Houston in Spring, 2008.

Susan Davis (M.F.A., 1995) has a new book of poems, *Gathering Sound*, that came out in fall 2006. It won the Gorsline Prize from Fairweather Books. Also, an anthology that she co-edited called *Searching For Mary Poppins: Women Write About the Intense Relationship Between Mothers and Nannies* was recently published by Penguin Books. Included in the book are essays by fellow UH alumni **Marisa de los Santos** and **Karen Sheperd**.

Marissa de los Santos (Ph.D., 1996) spent the first part of the winter touring for the paperback edition of her novel *Love Walked In*, which came out right after Thanksgiving. She says touring eats up lots of time and energy, so she had to push back the delivery date for her sec-

ond novel. She delivered the book in and William Morrow will publish it in spring 2008. Marissa plans to start a third novel this summer.

Renee Dodd's (M.F.A., 2004) book, *A Cabinet of Wonders*, was included in Kirkus's Best Books of 06 special issue as one of the "30 outstanding titles that deserve your attention."

Barbara Duffey (M.F.A., 2005) had poems accepted in Barrelhouse and Fault-line. She'll start her Ph.D. in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Utah this August, and she's getting married in October. Congratulations, Barbara!

Michael Dumanis's (Ph.D., 2005) first book of poems, *My Soviet Union*, won the 2006 Juniper Prize for Poetry and was published by the University of Massachusetts Press this April. Additionally, work by Michael has recently appeared in Conduit, Pleiades, and Post Road, as well as on the Academy of American Poets website as a Poem-of-the-Day selection. Michael is leaving his teaching position in Nebraska after two years to become Assistant Professor of English at Cleveland State University, and Director of the Cleveland State University Poetry Center, where he will be responsible for the publication of four books a year.

Nancy Eimers (Ph.D., 1989) has had two previous collections of poetry published and her third one, *A Grammar to Waking*, was published in 2006 on Carnegie Mellon. She's currently at Western Michigan University.

Randi Faust (M.F.A., 2006) says her short story "Displacement" was a finalist in Glimmer Train's Fall 2006 Short Story Contest for New Writers. "Displacement" also won The Iowa Review 2007 Fiction Award. There was a cash prize and the story will be published in the December issue of The Iowa Review. Other than that, she's working on a novel set in the mountains of West Virginia. Also, her 9-year-old son, **Sam**, just won an award for an essay he wrote about his time in Sri Lanka after the tsunami, so he's one-up

on Mom!

Rebecca Flowers (M.F.A., 1994) reports that her first novel, *Nice to Come Home To*, will be published by Riverhead Books, an imprint of Penguin, in April, 2008. She's currently working on her second book, *Miss Blue Tip*, and running her husband's solo medical practice. They're still in Western Massachusetts and have two little girls, ages three and "five-and-three-quarters!" Her web site is www.rebeccaflowers.com.

Tiphannie Yanique Galiber (M.F.A., 2006) had a story published in Transition Magazine and won a Pushcart Prize (she was nominated for three!) for her poem, "The Bridge". Her chapbook, *The Saving Work*, won the Kore Press Short Fiction competition and is to be published as a chapbook with Kore Press in the fall. Tiphannie has accepted a position as Assistant Professor at Drew University.

Renata Golden (M.F.A., 2000) has a technical writing company (Golden Ink) that develops courseware for Hewlett-Packard. In her spare time, she wrote short biographical entries for books such as the *Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Photography* (Routledge) and *Notable American Women* (Harvard University Press). She is living and working in Santa Fe, NM, home of the Lannan Foundation, Cormac McCarthy, and Valerie Plame Wilson.

Emily Fox Gordon's second memoir, *Are You Happy?*, came out in March of '07. She taught personal essay workshops at Rice University and the University of Houston CWP during the spring semester. In May, she sold her new book-in-progress, a comic novel about aging academics tentatively titled *It Will come To Me*, to Spiegel and Grau. A collection of her personal essays entitled *The Prodigal Returns* will also be published by Spiegel and Grau after the novel appears, and will feature a preface by **Phillip Lopate**.

Jennifer Grotz (Ph.D., 2005) received the New Writing Award from the Fellowship of Southern Writers, a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writing Award of \$25,000, and a fellowship from the Camargo Foun-

dation that will allow her to spend the spring 2008 semester at their study center in Cassis, France. New poems and translations are appearing or forthcoming in The Southern Review, Ploughshares, Image, Tri-Quarterly, and Mantis. She spent a month in Krakow this past summer.

James Hall's (Ph.D., 2006) first book of poems, titled *Now You're the Enemy*, was recently selected as one of the winners of the University of Arkansas Press' Poetry Series. It's slated for release in January 2008. The book was a finalist for the 2007 Walt Whitman Award, and poems from it have appeared recently in Boston Review, American Letters & Commentary, and Painted Bride Quarterly. He has two poems forthcoming in TriQuarterly. James is teaching creative writing and American literature at Bethany College in West Virginia.

Jennifer Hannah (M.F.A., 2006) says there's no book yet for her but she did have a baby on March 27. His name is **Daniel**. He is very cute and sweet and her older daughter, **Margaret**, seems happy to have a little brother. So, Jennifer is grateful and relieved.

John Harvey (Ph.D., 1998) had a new play, "Rot", produced by Mildred's Umbrella Theater Company in February and March, 2007.

Gary Hawkins (Ph.D., 2004) has accepted a new teaching position, and as of July 1st, became the Director of Undergraduate Writing at Warren Wilson College, a progressive school that combines academics, work, and service in the Blue Ridge of Asheville, North Carolina. So, after 3 years of remodeling their Norman, OK, bungalow, he and **Landon Godfrey** (M.F.A., 2000) are done with the work and moved to North Carolina in July.

Sean Hill (M.F.A., 2003) won a Jerome Foundation Travel and Study Grant to support travel for the purpose of professional development. Only fourteen Minnesota and New York City writers were awarded the grants. He was also awarded a Stegner Fellowship from the Stanford

Creative Writing Program, and begins the fellowship in fall 2007. And the University of Georgia Press is publishing his first full-length poetry manuscript, *Blood Ties & Brown Liquor!* It should be out in February 2008.

Cliff Hudder's (M.F.A., 1995) first book, a novella, *Splinterville*, is scheduled for a November '07 release from Texas Review Press. He continues, along with CWP alum **Dave Parsons**, to administer a reading series, a publishing conference, and yearly birthday celebrations of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson as a program director of the Montgomery County (Texas) Literary Arts Council. His son, **Dylan**, turns two in October.

Bill Hughes became a married man in March. His beautiful wife, **Sarah**, is a stage actress in New York. They live in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Bill recently left teaching at CUNY for a gig in advertising with DDB Worldwide. He's started a new bi-monthly lit journal, *Low Rent Magazine*, with CWP alumni **Jason Koo** (M.F.A., 2002), **Robert Liddell** (M.F.A., 2005), and **Jeff Bernard** (M.F.A., 2003). It's a totally independent, self-supporting venture. They expect distribution in most metro areas, particularly New York, by late August. Anyone reading this newsletter is encouraged to send work.

Keith Jardim (Ph.D., 2004) had fiction this year in the *Journal of Caribbean Literatures* and reviews in *Caribbean Review of Books and Compendium of 20th Century World Novelists and Novels*. His long story "The Jaguar" will appear in the anthology *Trinidad Noir* (Akashic Books, NYC) in 2008 and a long review on the first three novels of the Guyanese writer David Dabydeen will appear in *Caribbean Review of Books* later this year. Keith's first book, a collection of stories titled *Under the Blue*, will be published by Macmillan (London, UK) in 2008, with another collection, *The Last Migrations: Stories and a Novella*, forthcoming in 2009.

Keith recently accepted a position at the University College of the Cayman Islands, where he will teach Caribbean literature, English and American literature, fiction workshops, and assorted rhetoric courses.

Claire Kageyama-Ramakrishnan's (Ph.D., 2004) book is forthcoming. Claire recently won the Four Way Books 2006 Intro Poetry Prize. Her manuscript, "Shadow Mountain", was selected by **Kimiko Hahn**. The book will be published in April 2008. She also got married in December 2006 so she now has a longer name.

Laura Lark (M.A., 1989) says that since she's not contributed to the newsletter in the past, she decided to catch us up on what she's done since she was here. She was the Art Critic for *Artlies!: Texas Contemporary Art Journal* and *ArtPapers of Atlanta* from 1995-1999. She was the Guest Editor for *Artlies!: Texas Contemporary Art Journal*, Issue #13, Winter 1996-1997.

She received an M.F.A. in Painting at University of Houston in 2002. She had solo exhibitions in San Antonio and Houston. Most recently at Devin Borden/Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston, she had a solo show in the main gallery entitled "From All of Us, With Love". She is currently represented in Houston by Borden/Butler. "Illinois", a series of small paintings, will be featured at the gallery in an upcoming solo exhibition in September of 2007. She received a \$15,000 Artadia Award in 2003-4, juried by the Whitney's Chrissie Iles, the Walker's Doug Fogle, and the MFA Houston's Alison de Lima Green.

In 2004, her life story that she wrote and posted on a collaborative website entitled "Learning to Love You More" by artists and filmmakers Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher, struck the artists as "the quintessential American story". The story was then translated into Japanese and a new assignment was made: "Make a Video of a Scene from Laura Lark's Life Story". Subsequently, several videos, made by American, British, and Japanese, were screened at Houston's Aurora Picture Show, where Harrell Fletcher hosted the event. This was on February 13, 2004. It was entitled "Loving Laura More". As a result of seeing her story on the website at the 2004 Whitney Biennial, she was approached by Paola Morsiani, Senior Curator, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, and Paula Newton, an independent curator. She was asked to make her own videos from her

own story, and she wrote the story by hand on a 30 foot wall in the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston's group exhibition.

In the past year, she's written essays for the following art exhibition catalogues: "Learning to Love You More: Anthology"; "Paul Druecke's Social Event Archives" (in which she also selected the images); and "Batch: New Work from the University of Houston Intermedia Lab".

For the 2006 Fall edition of *Artlies!* she was chosen to do the artist project, a text and image based work entitled "Laura Lark's Kwik-n-EZ Guide to Creating a Persona".

For 16 years she was married to the department chairman of the Philosophy Department at Rice University and lived in Houston. Now she lives and works in Houston and New York.

Lance Larsen's (Ph.D., 1993) good news is he was awarded a 2007 NEA fellowship in poetry. Recent work has appeared in *Georgia Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Antioch Review*, *Image*, *Prairie Schooler*, and *Orion*, and he had two poems reprinted: one on the Poetry Foundation website and one in *The Pushcart Book of Poetry: the Best Poems from the First 30 Years*. He also published a collage essay in the *Bellingham Review*. He read at AWP, presented a university-wide forum at BYU, and completed a two-week residency at the Anderson Center in Minnesota.

Leah Lax (M.F.A., 2004) came through the CWP as a fiction writer. She's not a poet, but Anthony Freud, the director of the Houston Grand Opera, persists in calling her one. Leah wrote short pieces based on interviews of Houston's immigrants and used them to form the libretto for "The Refuge", to be performed by the Houston Grand Opera on November 10 on the Wortham Center main stage and again in the spring at the Miller Outdoor Theatre. Now she's to be the featured artist at Houston Poetry Fest in October. To Leah, "it's all storytelling in original voices."

Jared Leising (M.F.A., 1998) lives in Seattle and is teaching English at Cascadia

Community College. He and his wife had a baby boy last year and, in his diminishing spare time, Jared volunteers at 826 Seattle, a youth writing center. Recent publications include a poem in *A Slice of Cherry Pie* (an anthology of poems inspired by Twin Peaks) and a chapbook called *The Widows and Orphans of Winesburg, Ohio*.

Timothy Liu (M.A., 1991) had poetry published in the Spring 2007 issue of Boulevard.

Ann McCutchan's (M.F.A., 1998) essay, "Reaching for the End of Time," originally published in Image, will appear in *The Best American Spiritual Writing 2007* (Houghton Mifflin). Ann taught in Image's Glen Workshop at St. John's College, Santa Fe, during the summer. She has a book contract to announce, but it probably won't be official until July.

Leslie Adrienne Miller (Ph.D., 1991) has a fifth book of poems out. *The Resurrection Trade* came out in March, 2007. She also read at the AWP in Atlanta in the spring. Additionally, two of her poems published in Kenyon Review last year were chosen by Heather McHugh for inclusion in the *2007 Best American Poetry*.

Wayne Miller's (M.F.A., 2002) first full-length collection of poems, *Only the Senses Sleep*, came out in October, 2006, from New Issues Press. It received a starred review in Publishers Weekly.

Naeem Murr's latest book, *The Perfect Man*, was awarded The Commonwealth Writer's Prize for the Best Book of Europe/South Asia, and was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. He has two previous books, *The Boy* and *The Genius of the Sea*, and has received numerous awards for his writing including a Stegner Fellowship, a Lannan Residency Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He currently lives in Chicago. You may checkout his website at www.naemmurr.com.

Laurie Newendorp (M.A., 1992) sent the following update.
"Family: Dad's good. My daughter signed a contract for her first book. My son is

finishing a counseling psych program at USD, where **Jericho Brown** will teach next year, and begins a Ph.D. at Florida State in August. Mom, not so good- zip publication and a broken heart. I lost my beloved black lab, **Orpheus Newendorp**, at 101, almost 15 in dog year time. He was my best friend and muse, a loving, loyal companion and an amazing animal. Without him, I've been unable to write for the first time in 12 years. I turned 62 on the first day of spring and fear I may die before I have a book. I need a publisher!

AWP in Atlanta was terrific. When **Ed Hirsch** spoke on a panel for his new international anthology series, a collaboration with Trinity, San Antonio, he began by saying 'I apologize if I haven't taught everyone in this room.' Lots of Houstonians and former UH students were there: **J.D. Smith** and **Eric Williamson** attended, **Dave Lazar** participated on a panel and **Leslie Miller** read for Graywolf Press. **Rich Levy** of Inprint, Inc., **Robin Davidson** (Ph.D., 2001) and **Chris Bakken** (proud papa of a baby boy) were also there. **Elline Lipkin** (Ph.D., 2003) stayed in Atlanta to visit a high school chum and I went on to Savannah to visit a dear friend. On Dec. 10th, at E. Dickinson's Birthday Celebration, I read 'Emily Dickinson's White Dress' in Conroe with **Laurie Clements Lambeth** (Ph.D., 2005), **David Vance**, **Sarah Cortez** and **Dave Parsons**."

Dave Parsons' (M.A., 1991) second collection of poems, *Color of Mourning*, was released in April from Texas Review Press/Texas A&M University Press Consortium. His poem "Night Hawk" was the winner of the descant (T.C.U.) 2006 Baskerville Publishers Poetry Award and he has 8-10 poems that are to be featured with an essay in the *2007 Langdon Review for the Arts*. He is still teaching Creative Writing and Kinesiology (Handball/Racquetball) at Montgomery College and coaching the Handball Team, still co-directing, with alum **Cliff Hudder**, the Writers in Performance Series (now in its fifteenth year) and trying to stay up with all the grand children.

Padgett Powell's (M.A., 1982) fiction

was featured in the inaugural publication of St. Petersburg Review.

Robin Reagler (Ph.D., 1995) has new poems forthcoming in E O A G H and Ars Poetica. Her manuscript, "Dream Manifesto", was a finalist at FuturePoem Books this spring. Her blog "The Other Mother" (<http://theothermother.typepad.com>) was recently named one of the top 100 Mommy blogs and one of the top 10 Lesbian blogs. She is celebrating her 10th year as Executive Director of Writers in the Schools (WITS).

Martha Serpas (Ph.D., 1998) has read from her collection, *The Dirty Side of the Storm* (which came out in paperback this spring), at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York, at Marquette, to faculty and students of the Literature and the Environment Program at University of Nevada, Reno, and at stops in between, including Loyola of New Orleans. The Spring 2007 issue of American Poet: The Journal of the Academy of American Poets reprinted the book's title poem among a group of ten each representing a "remarkable recent collection." Since 2003 she's been involved in filming a documentary about coastal erosion in Louisiana, and some recent poems by her appear in American Religious Poems (Library of America) and The Nation.

Karen Sheperd (M.F.A., 1992) was published in Glimmer Train Stories.

John Smith (M.A., 1989) says his big news is getting a 2007 Fellowship in Poetry from the NEA. This will give him time to work on his third and fourth collections.

Young Smith (Ph.D., 2003) recently published new poems in Grain, Tampa Review, Beloit Poetry Journal, on the Poetry Daily website, and in other journals. He received a Tennessee Williams Scholarship for the 2007 Sewanee Writers' Conference, and his first collection of poems, *In a City You Will Never Visit*, is forthcoming from Black Zinnias Press/The California Institute of Arts and Letters in San Francisco. "Better Being Bad", his musical play based on Machiavelli's "Mandrachola"

(written with Houston composer Jeffrey Lerner), will be produced in Minneapolis in 2008. Young is an Assistant Professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University, where next year he will help to launch a new low-residency MFA program.

Marilyn Stablein (M.A., 1984) won 1st place in poetry and 3rd place in short fiction at the Southwest Writers Awards contest. She gave readings in Athens, Greece and at Santa Fe's Writer's center. Her art work was exhibited in Kentucky, in an online international artist book exhibition, at the Albuquerque Museum and elsewhere. She and her husband **Gary** operate Acequia Booksellers, a rare and used bookstore in Albuquerque's North Valley.



Marilyn Stablein: Secret Orders

Anna Stepanek (Ph.D., 2003) reports a change in job! She's leaving Wheaton College, where she's been teaching creative writing for 3 1/2 years, to move to Bethlehem, Israel, with a missions agency. The agency is starting a school, an arts program and a library for the Palestinian refugees. If anyone is interested in helping or visiting, let her know! Her email is glyptic@msn.com.



Gail Donohue Storey

Gail Donohue Storey (M.A., 1982) made her "YouTube" debut with "Hip-Hop Pilgrim" and was astonished to see a

spike in sales of her first two novels. Her agent is sending out her third novel, *The Bad Girls Dinner Party*, while she completes her tragicomic memoir about hiking the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada with her husband. She lives in Boulder, CO, and is just back from paragliding in New Zealand.

Jenna Terry (M.F.A., 2002) and **Scott Elliott** (Ph.D., Fiction) live in Walla Walla, WA. They were married on Orcas Island two years ago and are pleased to announce the birth of their son, **August Ray "Gus" Elliott**, on July 5th of this year.

Joni Tevis (Ph.D., 2001) has a new book, *The Wet Collection*, from Milkweed Editions.

David Theis' (M.A., 1988) novel, *Rio Ganges*, was optioned by Mockingbird Pictures.

Mike Theune (Ph.D., 2002) edited *Structure & Surprise: Engaging Poetic Turns*, a new guide to and handbook for poetry from Teachers & Writers Collaborative. The book's contributors include some other Houston alumni: **Christopher Bakken** and **Corey Marks** (Ph.D., 2000). An essay on poetic structure, "Poetic Structure and Poetic Form: A Necessary Differentiation," appears in the most recent issue of *American Poet*.

Robert Tinajero (M.F.A., 2004) is currently in his second year of doctoral studies in Rhetoric and Composition at UT-El Paso. He presented "Brown and Black in Hip Hop: Tenuous-Solidarity" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (New York). He is a contributor to the upcoming *Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education*. Robert received a grant from the Recovery Project (Arte Publico) at the University of Houston to research and digitize the Cleofas Calleros special collection at UT-El Paso's library. He will begin working on his dissertation, "Hip Hop Rhetoric", in the fall of 2007. He got married in September 2006 to **Cynthia Duron**, a nurse from El Paso, Texas.

Jennifer Tseng (M.F.A., 2002) had a story published in *Glimmer Train Stories*.

Sidney Wade (Ph.D., 1984) served last year as President of AWP. Her fifth collection of poems, *Stroke*, is due out from Persea Books in January 2008.

Randall Watson (Ph.D., 1995) told us that his novella, *Petals*, was a finalist in the Mary McCarthy Prize for Short Fiction at Sarabande Books and has won the Quarterly West Novella Competition. Randy is continuing his teaching at Houston Community College but will travel to China and the Silk Road this summer.

Eric Miles Williamson (awarded the CWP's first MFA degree in December, 1991) has now published three books, the novels *East Bay Grease* and *Two-Up*, and his latest, a book of critical non-fiction titled *Oakland, Jack London, and Me*. After serving a six-year sentence at Central Missouri State University, Williamson has returned to Texas and is currently Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas, Pan American. Williamson is Associate Editor of *American Book Review*, Fiction Editor of *Texas Review* and Associate Editor of *Boulevard*. Last year he was re-elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Book Critics Circle, and his book reviews appear regularly in papers such as *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Houston Chronicle*. He has just begun writing what will be a regular column on American writers for the Paris-based literary magazine, *Transfuge*. He lives eight miles from Reynosa, Mexico, with his wife, **Judy**, and their two sons, **Guthrie** and **Turner**.

Department of Corrections

OOPS!!

We would like to apologize for a couple of mistakes made in last year's publication. We misspelled **Eva Ginsburg's** last name. We also misspelled the name of the publication *River Styx*, and we referred to **Farnoosh Moshiri** as "he" in the Newsletter the previous year. Honestly, we don't do the Newsletter "on the fly" and try to catch all our bloopers.

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