

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

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**2008-2009**  
*Edition*



## **Another Great Year of Student Successes**

**Eric Ekstrand wins the Ruth Lillie Poetry Fellowship**

**Samuel Amadon wins the Iowa Poetry Prize**

**Janine Joseph wins the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship**

**Lauren Berry wins the Diane Middlebrook Poetry Fellowship**

**Hayan Charara wins the National Endowment for the Arts**

**Farnoosh Fathi wins the Fulbright Scholarship**

**Matthew Siegel wins the Wallace Stegner Fellowship**

## **Student Writing Continues to thrive at UH:**

**Thea Lim - The Same Woman**

**Paul Otremba - The Currency**

**Anna Journey - If Birds Gather Your Hair for Nesting**

**Samuel Amadon - Each H (chapbook)**

*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...

*This year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston. It has been a rich 30 years, and I thank you all for your contributions.*

*Last year, I wrote about the necessity and the benefit of fallow periods. As with so many things, there is a rhythm to the writing life and genuine growth sometimes requires periods of rest or inactivity that allow for new ways of seeing and writing to emerge. I have been thinking a lot recently about how one sustains a writing life. This is often an issue that does not get sufficient attention in graduate school. There are probably a lot of reasons for that, but I suspect that one of the chief reasons is that while a writer is in graduate school, that writer finds himself or herself within a community of writers and that community provides important support. If when one finishes a degree, one is lucky, the writer gets a position teaching creative writing and there are at least a couple of humane writers in the Department. Or possibly, a writer is fortunate enough to get a post-doc and gets a year or two to revise and complete a manuscript. But if one is not lucky, often that means working in a situation after graduate school that is not supportive of writing. It doesn't matter whether it is a teaching situation with a crushing workload or some other sort of job. What matters is that there is no support and much fatigue. It is not that anyone is seeking actively to discourage the writer. It is simply that the writer encounters a massive indifference to the passions and commitments at the heart of the writing life.*

*The situation becomes further complicated because we are, among other things, a celebrity-driven culture, and it is psychologically difficult to sustain an activity—even or especially an activity about which one cares deeply—without some public recognition. The truth is that there is little satisfaction in a job well-done, if no one else acknowledges the worth of the work.*

*If you then throw into the mix the fact that the writing life requires a certain amount of solitude, then it is easy to understand how difficult it is, for even the most dedicated, disciplined, and passionate of writers to maintain a writing life.*

*So what is to be done? For me, this is a live question. Part of the answer is that one needs to cultivate the virtues necessary to sustain a practice, namely a sense of courage, honesty and justice. But that only gets one so far. I think that finally one needs a community, even if the community is only one other person. Here the internet may help. If for whatever reason, one finds oneself in a physical setting that does not provide a community, a writer can seek an alternative community on-line. One place to start is to connect with people in the program who were part of your community here. To that end, Jessica Wilbanks, a current MFA student in fiction, set up a facebook site for UH creative writing alums, and we encourage you to check it out. Another way is to continue to submit your work, hoping that someone will read it and contact you. I am sure that people have discovered a multitude of other paths to community. But I think that it is the rare individual who will sustain the writing life in the absence of some functioning community. I am interested in hearing from people (and sharing what I learn) about how they sustain the writing life. I do think that it is a difficult thing to do, and the more that we can help each other, the better for all. And I think that it is a life that offers a richness that is worth the difficulty.*

As Ever,

j. Kastely,  
Director

## Program News

Well, we made it through Hurricane Ike without any damage to the program. Of course, if you were anywhere near Houston during that time, you know how traumatic it was for our community. Actually, since the University opened within days of the hurricane, it was a real treat to come to work. We had hot water, electricity and A/C at work. Many of us were without those necessities for 2 or 3 weeks at home. Hopefully, we'll be spared that kind of storm for the next few years.

Be sure to check out the new and improved CWP website. It's still a work in progress but we have lots of ideas. Please feel free to let us know what you think works and doesn't work and send your ideas about what should be included. In the near future we hope to start doing alumni and student spotlight pieces and add more photos and some video. Working on the website has been a real focus of the program this year.

We had a farewell party for the graduates this year for the first time in several years. The folks at Inprint were kind enough to let us use Inprint House for the event and we had about 80 people attend--faculty, staff, students, alumni and their families and the Inprint staff. The event was a big success so we'll keep up the tradition from now on.

We've tried to buy all the new books that are out by faculty, alumni and students for our library. There are a bunch of them. If you have a new book, be sure to let us know about it. We like to include them in the newsletter and show them off in our display case in the hallway.

We'll certainly miss Mark Doty and Bob Phillips now that they've left us. Of course, we wish them both all the best in the future. But we're also looking forward to having Martha Serpas here. It was wonderful having her as a visitor last year and think she'll be a great addition to our community.

We're excited about the new students coming in the fall. They seem to be a talented and dynamic group. Of course, the first couple of months are always chaotic but we hope they'll be happy and productive here. We think it's the best place to be.

**Shatera Anderson** has been working for the Creative Writing Program since Nov. 2006. In addition to her full time job as Program Coordinator for the Creative Writing Program, she's a full time student at Texas Southern University where she is studying Sociology. She is currently working on her first soul album while raising two beautiful daughters, Cidnee 9 and Jasmin 7.



*Cidnee, Shatera & Jasmin*

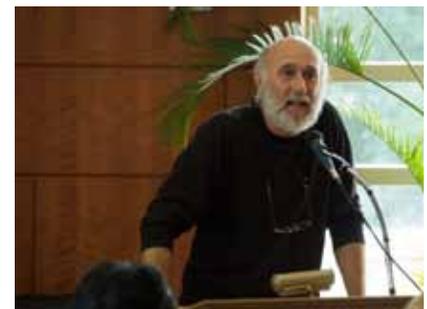
**Kathy Smathers** is just happy to have a website up that we can be proud of. She's going to be soliciting information for spotlight pieces and working with j, Mike, Shatera and the web technicians to make changes and keep things updated. She worked with j. and the Eng-

lish Department to obtain funding to send 27 students to AWP this year. It was a lot of paperwork but well worth the effort. She says that working on this newsletter fills up the quiet time of summer and helps us stay in touch with alumni and students who tend to scatter once classes are out in the spring. Otherwise, the days would be awfully long.

Kathy continues to spend as much time at her Lake Livingston house as possible. Sometimes it's really hard to leave the peace and quiet and head back into the city.



**Mike Doyle** has again been hard at work on our website, this newsletter and our new recruitment ads. He's been here at least a couple of times a week all year. He's also helping put together a hard copy "facebook" for the program. And, he's working with Dr. Herendeen, the English Dept. Chair, on a project. We're very grateful for Mike's expertise in design and his support.



*Dr. Kastely speaking at the Honors College*

## Inprint Houston

Inprint, whose mission is to inspire readers and writers, is excited to once again work closely with the University of Houston Creative Writing Program (UH CWP) during the 2009/2010 academic year. A nonprofit organization founded in 1983, Inprint fulfills its mission through the nationally renowned Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series; the Cool Brains! Inprint Readings for Young People series; writers workshops for the general public, senior citizens, K-12 school teachers, at-risk youth, and Methodist Hospital employees; support for the UH Creative Writing Program; and other literary and educational activities which strive to make reading and writing a vital aspect of community life in Houston.

The Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, now in its 29th season, is presented in association with the UH CWP, and presents the world's great writers on-stage. Through the years the series has featured more than 300 authors, including winners of four Nobel Prizes, 44 Pulitzer Prizes, and 43 National Book Awards. The 2009/2010 season showcases a stellar line-up of fiction writers, creative nonfiction writers, and poets:

**Joseph O'Neill** and **Marilynne Robinson** on Monday, September 21, 2009, at 7:30 pm, Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center: **O'Neill** is the author of the bestselling *Netherland* and the New York Times Notable Book *Blood-Dark Track*. **Robinson**, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award

for *Gilead*, will read from her novel *Home*, recipient of the 2009 Orange Prize.

**E. L. Doctorow** on Monday, October 19, 2009, at 7:30 pm, Hubbard Stage, Alley Theatre: **Doctorow**, one of America's most celebrated writers and winner of the National Book Award, three National Book Critics Circle Awards, and two PEN/Faulkner Awards, is the author of, among others, *Ragtime*, *Billy Bathgate*, *World's Fair*, *The March*, *City of God*, *Loon Lake*, and *Welcome to the Hard Times*. Doctorow will read from his latest novel *Homer & Langley*.

**Mary Karr** on Monday, January 11, 2010, at 7:30 pm, Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center: **Karr** is the author of the New York Times bestseller, *The Liar's Club*, which helped launch a revival of the memoir, and its sequel *Cherry*. She will read from her latest work, *Lit: A Memoir*, which chronicles her life as an adult and mother.

**David Wroblewski** on Monday, January 25, 2010, at 7:30 pm, Hubbard Stage, Alley Theatre: **Wroblewski** burst onto the literary scene last summer with his debut novel *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, which became a New York Times bestseller and was chosen for Oprah's Book Club. Kirkus Review calls the 600+ page book a "spell-binding first novel...nearly impossible to put down."

**John Banville** and **Abraham Verghese** on Monday, March 1, 2010, at 7:30 pm, Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center: **Banville**, one of Ireland's most reputed authors and recipient of the 2005 Man Booker Prize

for his bestselling novel, *The Sea*, will read from his eagerly anticipated new novel, *The Infinities*. **Verghese**, an Ethiopian-born South Asian physician, is the author of two highly acclaimed memoirs, *My Own Country*, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and *The Tennis Partner*, a New York Times Notable Book. He will read from his debut novel, *Cutting for Stone*.

**Tracy Kidder** on Monday, March 22, 2010, at 7:30 pm, Hubbard Stage, Alley Theatre: **Kidder**, a master of the non-fiction narrative, won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *Soul of a New Machine*. He is the author of nine books, including his latest, *Strength in What Remains*, which follows a refugee from the civil war and genocide of 1990s Burundi who makes his way to New York City.

**Dorianne Laux** and **Patricia Smith** on Monday, April 12, 2010, at 7:30 pm, Neuhaus Stage, Alley Theatre: **Laux** is the author of four collections of poetry, including *Facts About the Moon* and *What We Carry*, both finalists for the National Book Critics Circle Award, *Smoke, Awake*, and coauthor of *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry*. **Smith**, four time winner of the National Poetry Slam, is the author of *Blood Dazzler*, a National Book Award finalist, named one of NPR's Top 5 books for 2008, and described by Booklist as "a towering testament to the tragedy of New Orleans before, during, and after Katrina."

**Oscar Casares** and **Gwendolyn Zepeda** on Monday, May 3, 2010,

at 7:30 pm, Hubbard Stage, Alley Theatre: **Casares** was raised in Brownsville and is a life-long resident of Texas, where his collection of short stories, *Brownsville: Stories* and now his first novel, *Amigoland*, are set. **Zepeda** is the author of the story collection, *To the Last Man I Slept With and All the Jerks Just Like Him*, the novels *Houston, We Have a Problema* and *Lone Star Legend*, her latest.

All readings will be followed by an on-stage interview and a book sale and signing. Tickets for all readings are \$5 general admission, available at [www.inprintheouston.org](http://www.inprintheouston.org). Free rush tickets for students and senior citizens will be given out at the door on the evening of the readings, depending on availability. Select authors will also give craft talks on the UH campus, specifically for the UH CWP students.

Inprint also looks forward to involving UH CWP students, faculty, and alumni in community teaching positions, collaborations, and literary activities that bring the power of the written word to all Houstonians. For more information about Inprint and Houston's literary scene, visit [www.inprintheouston.org](http://www.inprintheouston.org).



*Kent Shaw speaking at the Grad Party held at Inprint House*

## Poison Pen

The Poison Pen Reading Series will be celebrating its third anniversary this September. Started by three UH CWP alumni and a local business owner, the series has grown from being attended exclusively by UH CWP grad students to attendance of over 100 made up of an unpredictable mixture of diverse Houstonians. Poison Pen hosts their monthly reading on the last Thursday of the month on the patio of Poison Girl Bar located in the heart of Montrose. Every month two to three readers are scheduled. The readers are a mix of professional authors, poets, grad students, undergrads, and local writers. Voted "Best Reading Series 2008" by the Houston Press, highlights from the past year include readings by Joshua Beckman and Antonya Nelson.

The 2009-2010 season promises to be even more diesel powered as Poison Pen continues its partnerships with DiverseWorks!, Inprint, Boldface, Brazos Bookstore, Glass Mountain, and Gulf Coast. Though still young, the series already has its traditions and the November reading has become the release party for Gulf Coast's Fall/Winter Issue. Each and every Gulf Coast editor reads from his or her own creative work for four minutes. It's easily one of the most fun readings of the year and contains within it all the insouciant charm that characterizes Poison Pen Readings.

Check out Poison Pen Reading Series on facebook, become a fan, and browse through it for announcements of upcoming readings and pictures and short videos of past readings.

*David MacLean*



*Wayne Miller*



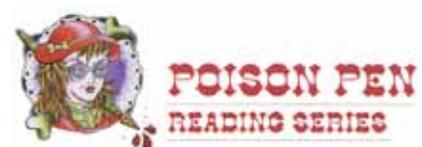
*Antonya Nelson*



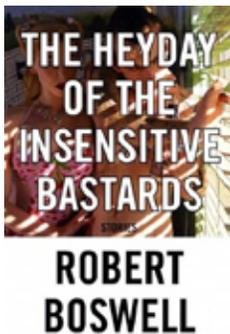
*Darin Ciccotelli*



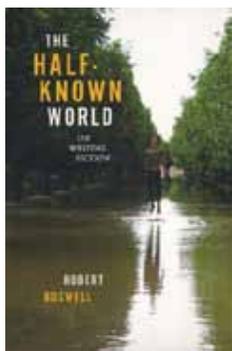
*Dane Wisher*



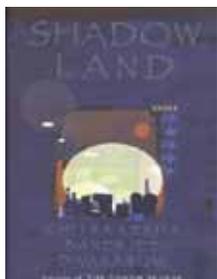
## Faculty News



**Robert Boswell** has a story in the current issue of *Callaloo* and an essay coming out in an anthology called *Dedicated to the People of Darfur: Writings of Fear, Risk, and Hope* in November. *The Heyday of the Insensitive Bastards*, his new story collection, came out in the spring, and Oprah picked it as one of her summer reading books (not the BIG Oprah pick, alas, but one of 20 or so for the summer) and Ward Sutton did illustrations for his review of the book which are very cool (see page 25). Boz's book on the craft of writing fiction, *The Half-Known World*, came out in July, 2008



Other wise, Prof. Boswell participated in three writing conferences this summer; The Napa Writers' Conference, The Taos Writers' Conference, and the Kachemak Bay Writers' Conference.



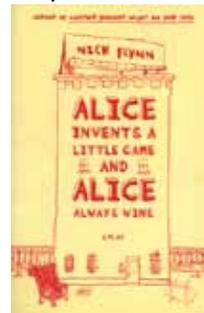
**Chitra Divakaruni's** book *Palace of Illusions* was issued in paperback in the US and translated into 6 foreign lan-

guages and published in Germany, Spain, France, Israel, Italy, Indonesia and India. In India it hit the bestseller list. Her young adult novel with an environmental theme, *Shadowland*, was published in spring 2009. An op-ed she wrote for the *Los Angeles Times* on "Slumdog Millionaire" and the Nature of Art was picked up by 43 newspapers worldwide. Chitra's novels *The Conch Bearer* and *The Vine of Desire* have both been optioned for movies. And last, but certainly not least, scenes from her novel *Palace of Illusions* were choreographed and performed by award winning Houston dancer Rathna Kumar.

**Mark Doty** had an amazing year, winning the National Book Award for Poetry for *Fire to Fire: New and Selected Poems*. He also got married (in Truro, MA, in a salt marsh, in August, 2008) and accepted a new job as Professor and Writer in Residence at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. He'll be living in New York City and taking the train to work, which feels a bit easier than maintaining a life in New York and one in Texas. He's just completing a prose book, *The Art of Description*, which Graywolf will publish in 2010 as part of a series of books devoted to aspects of the craft of writing. He's also at work on a prose book about Walt Whitman, tentatively titled "What is the Grass?", and a new collection of poems. He wants to thank everyone at Houston for ten rewarding and transformative years, and sends the best of wishes to all.

**Nick Flynn's** memoir *The Ticking is the Bomb* will be published in January, 2010. It will also come out in Germany and the UK. Also in Jan-

uary, **Maeve** will be two. Filming of *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City* is scheduled to begin summer 2010, with Robert Deniro and Casey Affleck.



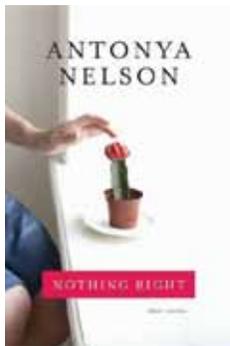
Nick has also written his first play, "Alice Invents a Little Game and Alice Always Wins".

**Tony Hoagland** has two books coming out in the next year: a new collection of poems called *Unincorporated Persons of the Late Honda Dynasty*, from Graywolf Press, in January, plus a smaller chapbook of poems, called *Little Oceans*, from Hollyridge Press. In the fall, Tony will be reading at Princeton, as well as elsewhere, and will be a visiting writer at Indiana University. In the spring he hopes to be teaching a class for the Houston Seminar. He's currently at work on a book of prose essays about American poetry.



Tony Hoagland, Marion Barthelme

**Mat Johnson** will be reading with the orchestral group this October. His next graphic novel, set in Houston and New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, will be published by Vertigo/Warner Books on the fifth anniversary of the disaster in 2010.



**Antonya Nelson's** collection of short stories, *Nothing Right*, was published in February. Stories also appear in *The Best of the*

*West 2009*, and *You Must Be This Tall to Ride* anthologies and in *The New Yorker*. She served as one of the judges of the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction (Joseph O'Neill, *Netherland*, winner) and will be faculty at the Bear River, Napa Valley, and Taos Writers' Conferences, as well as a Master Writer at the Atlantic Center for the Arts.

**Alex Parsons** and his wife, **Aimee**, welcomed **Vivienne Elise Parsons**



into the family on March 26, 2009. Young Viv, while not yet literate, seems fascinated by books and counts among her other pleasures having her diaper changed, sacking out on her dad's chest, and blowing spit bubbles. When not performing baby maintenance, Alex is revising his novel, *El Repoman*. He has an article on Cormac McCarthy's work forthcoming in *The Writers' Chronicle* and a piece of short fiction, "Victory Extraction," recently appeared in *Puerto del Sol* magazine. He was named the 2009 dis-

tinguished alum for the College of Arts & Sciences at New Mexico State University and was the 2008 John Gardner Fellow at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

**Robert Phillips**, former Director of the Creative Writing Program, announced his retirement from the University in May, 2009. His last title was John and Rebecca Moores Professor of English. Thirty of his books have been published. In the spring, he participated in a Writer's and Their Regions class to discuss the work of William Goyen, specifically Goyen's first novel, *House of Breath*, which is set in East Texas. Prof. Phillips also shared some personal stories and insight about being a creative writer.



His new book of poetry, *Now & Then: New & Selected Poems*, was published in April, 2009. It contains poems from eight former

collections. He and his wife, **Judith**, plan to move to Connecticut to be near their son, daughter-in-law and grandson.

**Edward Albee**, distinguished American playwright and winner of 3 Pulitzer Prizes, will be returning to teach at the University of Houston in Spring 2010. Albee, who taught at UH from 1989 to 2003, helped revitalize American theatre in the mid twentieth century. His plays are often an uncanny synthesis of absurdist and realist drama. He is probably best known for "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"—one of the most important Ameri-

can plays of the last century. His works include "The Zoo Story", "The Sandbox", "The American Dream", "A Delicate Balance", "Seascape", "Three Tall Women", and "The Goat: or Who Is Sylvia?" His awards are numerous, and in addition to the 3 Pulitzers, he has received a special Tony Award for life time achievement, a National Medal of Arts Award, a Kennedy Center Honors Award, and the gold medal in drama from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Albee will have a joint appointment as a Distinguished University Professor in the School of Theatre and Dance and in the Creative Writing Program, and graduate creative writing students interested in drama will be able to take a workshop from him.



Robert Boswell, Mat Johnson at Poison Pen



Antonya Nelson, J. Kastely

# Martha Serpas Returns to UH

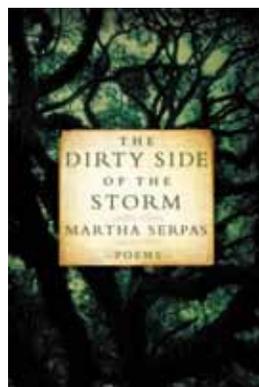
It is a pleasure to welcome back to the University of Houston Professor **Martha Serpas**. Martha received her BA with Honors from Louisiana State University; she holds an MA in English, with a concentration in creative writing from New York University, a Masters in Divinity from Yale Divinity School, and a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Houston. She has been Poet-in-Residence at Gustavus Adolphus College, Visiting Associate Professor of Religion and Literature at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and, for the last ten years, an Associate Professor of English and Writing at the University of Tampa, where she was the poetry editor of Tampa Review. Last fall semester she was a visiting associate professor in creative writing in the Department of English at the University of Houston. Also, since 2007 she has served as a chaplain at Tampa General Hospital



Martha has authored two collections of poetry that have received high critical praise. Her first collection, *Cote*

*Blanche*, was published by Western Michigan University Press in its New Issues Poetry and Prose series, and her most recent collection of poems, *The Dirty Side of the Storm*, was published by Norton. Her individual poems and some of

her nonfiction have been published in such journals as Relief: A Journal of Christian Expression, "Verse Daily", "Poetry Daily", The New Yorker, Image, The Nation, the Connecticut Review, Passages North, Metre, and elsewhere. Her three poems, "Psalm at High Tide," "The Water," and "A Corollary," published in The New Yorker, became an important rejoinder to the Bush administration's disastrous handling of Katrina and to the larger and ongoing ecological problem of the destruction of Louisiana's coastline.



*The Dirty Side of the Storm* should be required reading for anyone who wants to understand the mystery of that strange

land known as the Gulf Coast. The land, the water, and history of the people who have been defined by that land and water combine to form the central character of the

collection. Coming to know the region is like coming to know a person. If some of the collection deals with loss, other of the poems traffic in celebration. At its core, Martha's vision is unflinchingly honest—not giving into nostalgia or some sort of amelioristic apology. Martha's lyrics work from an unadorned vocabulary that works in service of the emotional and spiritual force of a place. But if there is celebration in many of these poems, what strikes one most is the poet as a witness to and recorder of loss. Martha is a poet who seeks to understand our fate—our spiritual condition—in a culture and economy where rapid change, transformation, and homogenization indifferently determine and destroy our inheritances. Maybe there is an important connection between the ecological and the spiritual that grows out of a need for a material world and a need for a life lived in the flesh, even as we see that world slipping from us. To read Martha Serpas is to appreciate the place in which we live as an important part of what it means to be a resident of the wonderful and polluted and exploited Gulf.

## Have you been to the **website?**



## Visiting Faculty

Bruce Smith,  
Visiting Poet, Fall 2009

In fall 2009, **Bruce Smith** will be Visiting Professor in Poetry at the University of Houston. He will teach a graduate and an upper division undergraduate workshop in Poetry. We are delighted that Bruce will be here. Professor Smith teaches in the creative writing program at Syracuse University, where he was named Outstanding Graduate Teacher last year.

He is the author of 5 books of poems, *The Common Wages*, *Silver and Information*, *Mercy Seat*, *The Other Lover*, which was a finalist for both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, and *Songs for Two Voices*. Influenced by Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, Bruce Smith's poetry moves like jazz, incorporating images and narratives into a startling, musically unified whole.

Currently, he is at work on his sixth book, *The Devotions*, and poems from this manuscript have appeared in The New Yorker, The Paris Review, the American Poetry Review, Poetry, Slate Magazine, The Yale Review, Tin House, Kenyon Review and elsewhere.

Professor Smith has twice received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2000-2001, he was a Guggenheim fellow, and in 1982 he was awarded a Discovery/The Nation award.

## Remembering Bob: Tributes to Robert Phillips



*Bob Phillips, Grace Paley*

Many creative writing professors are merely writers supporting themselves by occupying university posts. Not so in the case of Robert Phillips. He's the rare major writer who is also a true professor.

After Donald Barthelme died, many of us who were Don's students had nowhere to turn for professional guidance, as we'd not cultivated relationships with the other UH faculty. I'd already graduated with my MFA and secured a full-time college position, and could no longer expect the UH faculty to help me with anything. But nonetheless I approached Bob Phillips at his home with my then unpublished novel, *Two-Up*, in one hand, and a fifth of Dewars in the other hand. Bob accepted both, and by the end of the week he'd secured me a New York agent—his own.

Shortly after I moved to New York City to get my PhD at New York University, Bob came to town and invited me to the Algonquin for cocktails. There he introduced me to a number of the New York literati, including Richard Foerster, then the editor of Chelsea, and Bob recommended me for an editorship, which I received. I'll not detail the hundreds of other times Bob Phil-

lips helped me out, but suffice it to say this: I now have four published books and two more contracted for publication next year; I edit three major literary journals; I'm on the Board of Directors of the NBCC; I'm a full professor. None of this would have been possible without the kindness of Professor Robert Phillips, my mentor, my literary father, my friend.

--Eric Miles Williamson  
*MFA, Fiction, 1991*



*Bob Phillips, WD Snodgrass, Michael Sofranko*

When, in the fall of 1999, I arrived at the University of Houston an eager, wide-eyed MFA poetry student, I was disappointed to discover that, due to a scheduling mishap, there was no room left in any of the poetry workshops. This was not the end of the world, of course, but it was a little frustrating, given that I'd just moved 1,600 miles to study with U of H's poetry faculty. Then word began to circulate that Robert Phillips was willing to work with any poetry student who didn't find a place in one of the poetry workshops.

In his office, Bob was kind and forthcoming about the poems, offering suggestions for improving each. His approach was—and, throughout my time working with him, continued to be—laissez-faire. He wanted the poems to be mine, in other words, not his. When Bob

was critical of something in a poem, I quickly learned to take notice. But at that first meeting, what was most important to me, a young uncertain poet having doubts about grad school, was that Bob said with no uncertainty that he thought my work had potential—that I should stick with Houston and stick with my writing. He suggested we meet at his house every couple weeks, essentially offering to serve as a mentor outside—or alongside—the writing program’s scheduled coursework. And thus began our friendship—born of Bob’s generosity and kindness.

When Bob thought a few of my poems were done, he sent them off with a note to The Paris Review—thus helping me land one of my first publications. When I had personal problems, Bob was there to meet me for a civilized drink at the Volcano Lounge. When I didn’t have money to go home one Thanksgiving, Bob invited me—and several other students—over for dinner. When the time came, I was grateful to have Bob direct my thesis.

When I heard Bob was retiring from Houston, I was sad. Of course, Bob has written many fine poems and stories over the years. His work as executor of Delmore Schwartz’s literary estate has been outstanding, and his volume on the Confessional poets is essential. Mostly I felt sad because of the important role Bob played in welcoming many young writers into the fold of the program and, more importantly, into the world of being a writer. I, for one, have no idea where I—or my writing—would be without him.

--Wayne Miller  
MFA, Poetry, 2002



Maureen Maillet, Annette Sauders,  
Bob Phillips, Liz Bennett

I first met Bob Phillips in 1998 over lunch with Gail Storey at a small, brightly lit cafe in Rice Village. This was a year before I’d even applied to the Creative Writing Program, though I was well aware of its reputation and Bob’s position on the faculty there. While we ate, he quizzed me in a friendly way, and asked my opinion of various authors, most of whom I hadn’t read. I thought I was blowing an interview.

After lunch, though, he asked me to walk with him over to Half Price Books and continue our discussion. So we walked through the aisles and chatted while he scanned the shelves for titles that might interest him. I felt much like a fly he hadn’t decided to swat yet. And, despite my expectations, he never did. Instead, he asked me to send him something I’d written, and later, took the time to offer comments. It was just the kind of encouragement I needed then, and an act of uncommon kindness I’ve never forgotten.

However, a few years later, right after my thesis defense, I had a conversation with Dan Stern, who pointed out to me that the kindness Bob had shown me was not uncommon at all. That Bob had given much needed assistance to a number of writers, and in many instances, even helped resurrect their careers. That if you knew him well,

he had a reputation for it. I hope now that I can say I know Bob well enough to emulate that same generosity of spirit.

--Robert Liddell  
MFA, Poetry, 2005



Edwidge Danticat, Bob Phillips, Billy Collins

There are few men on this planet who wear the bow tie well: Winston Churchill, Humphrey Bogart, and FDR. And it should be noted, I believe, that a quick glance at the New York Times fashion pages this spring verifies that the bow tie is back. And we have Robert Phillips—“Bob” to his students—to thank for it. Because of him one might argue that the bow tie never actually left. Thankfully.

But the tie is the unimportant detail of an important man, and I was lucky enough as a student to get to know him and count him as a friend. Besides learning every poetic and fiction form around—which one must know would be tedious subjects even if taught with a flame-thrower, and he made them lively, sans flame-thrower—those students wise enough to sign up for his seminars were also invited to attend a course outside the walls of the classroom, where literary discussions normally found at the conference table moved easily between the West Alabama Ice House and the Volcano; and, occasionally,

over an intimate dinner with his wife Judith in their home on Banks Street.

It was during these sorts of gatherings that one really began to “get” the whole MFA thing. For example, it might occur to you that Bob’s self-effacement in the afternoon seminar had not been accidental but a lesson itself, and perhaps, just maybe, it was for your benefit entirely, and the apparent leisure of a Bob Phillips class was actually very much structured and deliberate and was, in fact, an act of grace to lighten the mood in the room and to disarm you. And then, over dinner, over a glass of wine and a forkful of roast duck, it might also occur to you that Bob was trying to make you and the rest of the writers—generally uneasy, uncomfortable people—at ease and comfortable in a wholly uneasy and uncomfortable room.

Of course, one was lucky to be in one of his workshops, and his contributions to literature—collections of stories, poetry, and essays, as well as his role in helping the careers of important writers—are instructive to say the least. But I found that the most important stuff one could learn as a writer came directly from Bob outside of the classroom, and one simply couldn’t get it anywhere else. Sure, Bob helped students figure out how to craft their work—that was expected—but more importantly he also taught his students how to live as writers. Better still, he showed his students how to live as generous, kind, gracious writers.

This, of course, if one were paying attention, was a compliment: You, dear student, were already a writer. One might even suspect, even as you were trying to figure out what

you were doing, that he knew precisely what you were doing, or attempting, and more importantly, he knew why you were doing whatever it was that you were doing when you did it. In fact he knew exactly how you probably felt about the entire situation of being a writer in a program, that the very act of getting together to talk about writing was ultimately a kind of war. Luckily for all of us, Bob had the friendly gossip, the good and edgy jokes, and the anecdotes of literary adventure to help smooth things over. Even if you never took a class from him you probably knew him: He was the one with the good humor and grace of a diplomat. He was the one who opened the doors of his home and made sure that everyone—every writer in the program—was welcomed in.

--Bill Hughes  
*MFA, Poetry, 2002*



*Ed Hirsch, Richard Howard, Bob Phillips*



*Wyman Herendeen, Bob Phillips, Ted Estes*



*Robert Liddell, Bob Phillips, David Mikics*



*Bob Phillips, Marion Barthelme*



*Judith and Bob Phillips*

# Student News

**Samuel Amadon's** (Ph.D., Poetry) chapbook, *Each H*, was published by Ugly Duckling Press. And, Sam won the Iowa Poetry Prize for his manuscript "Like a Sea".

**Matt Boyleston** (Ph.D., Poetry) is an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing and English at Houston Baptist University. He graduated with his Ph.D. in December and was the featured graduate student speaker at the Winter Graduation. His poems and essays have recently appeared in The South Carolina Review, The Portland Review, The Sierra Nevada Review, the Roanoke Review, the Flint Hills Review and Painted Bride Quarterly.

**Chuck Carlise** (Ph.D., Poetry) spent the month of May studying Italian at the Laboratorio Linguistico language school in Milazzo, Sicily. He also had poems appear in Beloit Poetry Journal and Cimarron Review, non-fiction in Pebble Lake Review, was a \$1000 prizewinner with the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Memorial Poetry Competition, and a finalist in several other contests, including the Greg Grummer Poetry Prize from Phoebe. In June he had poems picked up by Quarterly West, and by Southern Review. Chuck also interviewed Chuck Klosterman for Gulf Coast this winter, where he's currently non-fiction editor. He serves as Poetry Rep for the CWP and teaches for WITS.

**Hayan Charara** (Ph.D., Poetry) was awarded a fellowship, for poetry, from the National Endowment for the Arts. His children's book manuscript, "The Three Lucys", received the New Voices Award Honor. He also had poems accepted for publication in The Massachusetts Review, Perihelion Review, Hanging Loose,

Weber: The Contemporary West, and New Plains Review, as well as in the anthologies Mutanabbi Street Starts Here and Poems for Palestine. One of his poems was included in the Alhambra Poetry Calendar 2009. He also participated on panels at AWP and at Kennedy Center's ARABESQUE: Arts of the Arab World festival in Washington D.C.

**Liz Countryman** (Ph.D., Poetry) had poems published in Black Warrior Review, Forklift, Ohio, and Makeout Creek. She also won the Brown Award from the Vermont Studio Center in summer of 2008.

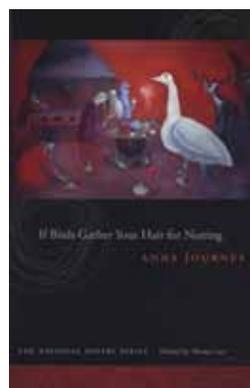
**Will Donnelly** (Ph.D., Fiction) was awarded a Wildacres Writers' Residency in North Carolina this summer. His short story, "Coyotes", was published in the October issue of Potomac Review.

**Eric Ekstrand** (M.F.A., Poetry) won a Ruth Lilly Fellowship.

**Farnoosh Fathi** (Ph.D., Poetry) received a creative writing Fulbright Scholarship to Brazil that begins in March 2010.

**Christine Ha** (M.F.A., Fiction) got engaged to **John Suh** in the spring. They have set the tentative wedding date for May, 2010.

**Janine Joseph** (Ph.D., Poetry) was among 31 graduate students in the nation to be awarded a 2009 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship. She had poems published this last year in Third Coast, Nimrod International Journal, Calabash, Spoon River Poetry Review and the anthology, *Breathe: 101 Contemporary Odes*. Janine also appears in Episode 2 of "Pinecones: A Podcast of Young Poets" ([www.pineconespoetry.net](http://www.pineconespoetry.net))



**Anna Journey** (Ph.D., Poetry) is the author of the collection, *If Birds Gather Your Hair for Nesting* (University of Georgia Press, 2009),

selected by Thomas Lux for the National Poetry Series. Her poems are published in a number of journals, including American Poetry Review, FIELD, and Kenyon Review, and her essays appear in Blackbird, Notes on Contemporary Literature, and Paranassus. She's currently a PhD candidate in creative writing and literature at the University of Houston, where she's received the Inprint/Barthelme Fellowship in Poetry.

**Irene Keliher** (M.F.A., Fiction) has stories forthcoming in Quarterly West, the Bellingham Review, the Potomac Review, and Pebble Lake Review. She received an Inprint/Barthelme award in nonfiction this year, and an essay of hers placed in the Atlantic Monthly Student Writing Contest. One of Irene's stories won the Potomac Review Fiction Contest, and another won the Tobias Wolff Award for Fiction from the Bellingham Review. She graduated with the M.F.A and she's now teaching for WITS and Inprint and working on the novel.

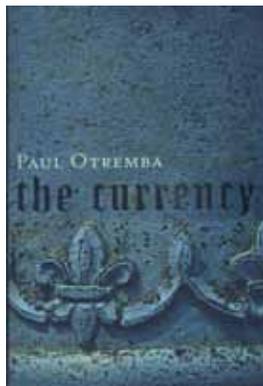


Thea Lim

**David Lombardi's** (Ph.D., Fiction) short story "Flight" was selected for the anthology *Best New American Voices 2010*.

**David MacLean** (Ph.D., Fiction) was selected the runner-up for *The Missouri Review's* Non-Fiction Editor's Prize. He also reports that *The Poison Pen Series* was awarded the "Best Local Reading Series" by the *Houston Press*. In Fall 2009, David will begin a year long position as a Post Doc with the Creative Writing Program.

**Oindrila Mukherjee** (Ph.D., Fiction) will be joining Emory University in the fall of 2009 as the Creative Writing Fellow in Fiction for 2 years, and getting her novel, *The Extraordinary Sins of Ordinary Indians*, ready for publication. One of Oindrila's stories, "The Ways We Cook Fish" has been selected for publication in *Best New Writing 2009*, an annual anthology published by Hopewell and edited by Christopher Klim.



**Paul Otremba's** (Ph.D., Poetry) first book of poems, *The Currency*, was released this spring from Four Way Books.

He also had poems appear for "Poetry Daily", the Academy of American Poets' "Poem-A-Day" project, and the *Washington Post's* "Poet's Choice" column. He was a scholar at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in summer, 2008, and he returned this year as a fellow.

**Kathryn Paterson** (Ph.D., Fiction) presented a paper at the SCMLA last

November comparing Mat Johnson's *Incognegro* to Nella Larsen's *Passing*, which Mat purposefully tried to turn on its head. Also her essay "Gloria Naylor's North/South Dichotomy and the Reversal of the Middle Passage: Juxtaposed Migrations within Mama Day" was published in Dr. Brown-Guillory's book *Middle Passages and the Healing Place of History*. It came out in 2006, but Kathryn says that she completely forgot to mention it last year. Her students are doing well. One of her UHCL students won the Bay Area writing league contest in both fiction and creative non fiction, and the prison students did well again in the PEN/Prison contest. As a consequence, she's now an interviewee/participant in a qualitative study on reform and prison education.

**Edward Porter** (Ph.D., Fiction) celebrated his first wedding anniversary in France, where he was a Fellow in residence at LaMuse in Labastide Espairairenque, Languedoc. In the fall his story "The Changing Station" will appear in *Best New American Voices 2010*.

**Coert Voorhees** (M.F.A., Fiction) will be spending next year as the Parks Fellow in fiction at Rice University. The paperback version of his first novel, *The Brothers Torres*, will be released in August, and his second novel, *The Artist*, is forthcoming in late 2010. *The Brothers Torres* was named as one of the American Library Association's 2009 Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults.

**Allyn West** (Ph.D., Non-fiction) had an essay, "Sperm Donors," accepted by *Cimarron Review* for their summer issue.

**Brandon White** (M.F.A., Fiction) has been teaching a writing memoir/fiction workshop for Inprint. He

moonlights around Houston as a guitar player and songwriter for local artists including University of Houston's very own Shatera Anderson. (But only after he finishes up all of his professors' assignments) He just finished writing songs and poems for Houston Grand Opera.

Below, students at the 2009 Grad Party held at Inprint House



## Writing Competitions

*The University of Houston's Creative Writing Program is pleased to announce the writing awards winners for 2008-2009*

*Inprint/Diana P. Hobby  
Prize In Fiction  
Erin Namekawa*

*Inprint/Paul Verlaine  
Prize In Poetry  
Lauren Berry*

*Inprint/Joan & Stanford Alexander  
Prize In Non-Fiction  
in honor of Andrea White  
David MacLean*

*Inprint/Barthelme  
Memorial Fellowships in Fiction  
Sruthi Thekkiam  
Ian Stansel*

*Inprint/Barthelme  
Memorial Fellowship In Non-Fiction  
Irene Kelliher*

*Inprint/Lucille Joy  
Prize in Poetry  
Matthew Siegel*

*Inprint/Barthelme  
Fellowship in Poetry  
Anna Journey*

*Brazos Bookstore/  
Academy of American Poets Prize  
Russel Swensen*

*Honorable Mention  
Ryler Dustin*

*Judges  
David Shields-Non-fiction  
Victor Lavalle-Fiction  
Brenda Shaughnessy-Poetry*

## Graduates

Fall 2008

Michael Powers, M.F.A., Fiction

Matthew Boyleston, Ph.D., Poetry

Spring 2009

Lauren Berry, M.F.A., Poetry  
Marantha Bivins, M.F.A., Fiction

Stacey Higdon, M.F.A., Poetry

Irene Keliher, M.F.A., Fiction

Christine Lee, M.F.A., Fiction

Lisa Lee, M.F.A., Non-Fiction

Matthew Siegel, M.F.A., Poetry

Coert Voorhees, M.F.A., Fiction

Miah Arnold, Ph.D., Fiction

Craig Beaven, Ph.D., Poetry

Kristine Ervin, Ph.D., Poetry

Gretchen Heyer, Ph.D., Fiction

David MacLean, Ph.D., Fiction

Oindrila Mukherjee, Ph.D., Fiction

James Thomas, Ph.D., Poetry

## Incoming Students

*This year the Creative Writing Program welcomes 16 new students- eight in fiction and eight in poetry.*

### Fiction

Jason Daniels, M.F.A.  
B.A., Ohio State Univ.

Andrew Dimond, M.F.A.  
B.A., Rice Univ.

Ashleigh Eisinger, Ph.D.  
B.A., Univ. of Central Florida  
M.F.A., Georgia College and State Univ.

Lauren Genovesi, Ph.D.  
B.A., College of the Holy Cross  
M.F.A., New Mexico State Univ.

Eric Howerton, Ph.D.  
B.A., Univ. of New Mexico  
M.F.A., Pennsylvania State Univ.

Corey Noll, M.F.A.  
B.A., Hampshire College

Adam Peterson, Ph.D.  
B.A., Drake Univ.  
M.A., Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dylan Walsh, Ph.D.  
B.A., New England College  
M.A., Univ. of New Hampshire

### Poetry

Karie Buss, M.F.A.  
B.A., Univ. of Iowa

Melinda Capps, Ph.D.  
B.A., Queens Univ. of Charlotte  
M.A., Ohio Univ.  
M.F.A., Univ. of Iowa

Adam Day, Ph.D.  
B.A., Eckerd College  
M.F.A., New York Univ.

Joshua Gottlieb-Miller, M.F.A.  
B.A., St. Mary's College of Maryland

Margaret Monahan, M.F.A.  
B.A., Catholic Univ. of America

Caitlin Plunkett, M.F.A.  
B.A., Virginia Tech

Analicia Sotelo, M.F.A.  
B.A., Trinity Univ.

Rebecca Wadlinger, Ph.D.  
B.A., Bucknell Univ.  
M.F.A., Univ. of Texas-Austin



*Alex Parsons, J. Kastely  
and several 2009 graduates.*

## Thanking Mark

About the same time that Mark Doty joined the faculty of the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, I crouched week after week in the poetry section of an independent bookstore thumbing through contemporary poetry volumes as a semester-long assignment in an undergraduate poetry-writing course. I never bought any of the books. I didn't even like poetry.

One day, I happened to pick up *Atlantis* and a strange thing happened. I remember the moment precisely: the afternoon light bisecting my black leather boots, the white store cat purring in an open window, the front door opening, a bell clanging to. And just like that: a subtle change, an irrevocable shift in a singular direction, a small, dormant thing given speech. I bought the book instead of that evening's dinner.

Ten years after reading *Atlantis* for the first time, I told Mark, my dissertation committee chair, that I was thinking of making my manuscript a hypertext—fully digital, connected by links rather than by tangible pages, a text driven completely by the reader. Any other teacher might have told me I'd finally and completely lost it. But Mark is a beautiful teacher; he writes beautiful poems and teaches beautiful classes and as his student I learned about the reflexivity of creating beautiful things. I doubt I'm alone in my little grief that he is no longer teaching in Houston. "Of course I know it ends," he writes in "Fog Argument": "I know there's a precise limit // where salt marsh gives way / to fogged water's steel." Those of us who have had the profound pleasure of working with

him over the years continue even now to be changed by that proximity. We wish him the best of everything.

- Lacy Johnson  
*MFA, Poetry, 2008*



*Christopher Tilghman, Greg Oaks  
Ben Grossberg & Mark Doty*



*Mark Doty & students on the porch  
at the end of the semester*



*Mark Doty, Cynthia MacDonald, Bob Phillips*

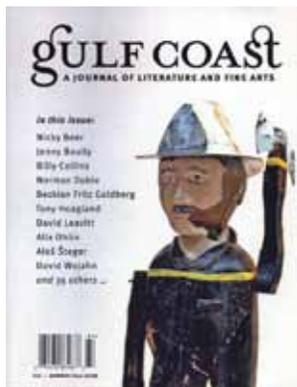


*Kimiko Hahn, Annie Finch & Mark Doty*

## Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts

Creative Writing graduate students were able to take workshops in Fall 2008 by **Sarah Rothenberg** and **Adam Zagajewski** as part of the Mitchell Center's Damaged Romanticism exhibit. Sarah and Adam also presented an evening of artistic performance and discussion on the role of form in art. Also, during the fall semester, the Creative Writing Program was an active partner in a celebration of the work of Emily Dickinson. As part of this celebration the Creative Writing Program and the Department of English sponsored a critical discussion of Dickinson's work. Professor **Dorothy Baker** moderated a panel that included Dickinson scholars, Eliza Richards and Martha Nell Smith. Later that day **Mark Doty** curated a reading of work by Dickinson and work influenced by Dickinson. 5 graduate students read their favorite poem by Dickinson, and then Mark Doty, Alice Fulton, and Susan Howe read from both their own work and the work of Dickinson. The entire day was a signature event for the UH Creative Writing Program and the Department of English in which scholarship and creative work came together to enhance the understanding of a major poet. The Dickinson event concluded with a world premier performance by the Ridge Theatre of "Lightening at Our Feet", a dramatic and musical presentation of work by Dickinson. In Spring 2009, creative writing undergraduates participated in the Mitchell Center's Collaboration among the Arts course, and Professor **Nick Flynn** served as one of the faculty facilitators for the course.

# Gulf Coast



This past year was an action-packed one for Gulf Coast – we got a new logo, launched a new website, faced down a hurricane, weathered “the current economic climate,” and produced two issues filled with the best writing from both emerging and established authors. Our nationally-distributed, student-run journal has momentum like never before.

But natural disasters and fiscal meltdowns aside, this past year has been an artistically exciting one at Gulf Coast. Our thriving, Texas-sized journal was recognized this past year on both “Poetry Daily” and “Verse Daily”, featuring original poems first published in Gulf Coast. We saw Brenda Miller’s essay “Table of Figures” from Gulf Coast Issue 20.2 selected for inclusion in *Best Creative Nonfiction 3*, due out in August. And the novel excerpt

from Barry Hannah’s forthcoming book *Sick Soldier at Your Door* that we published in October was reprinted in the June issue of Harp-er’s. We may run our journal out of a small office in UH’s Roy Cullen building, but we continue to collect national attention for the works we publish. And it’s now even easier to access Gulf Coast content – our new website, [gulfcoastmag.org](http://gulfcoastmag.org), launched in November and features online-exclusive content and selections from the current issue.

Gulf Coast’s Summer/Fall Issue 21.2 features new poems from **Nicky Beer**, Billy Collins, Norman Dubie, Beckian Fritz Goldberg, and David Wojahn—plus new fiction from Alix Ohlin, translations of essays by Ales Steger, and an interview with author and Subtropics editor David Leavitt. It also includes our first winner and Honorable Mention for our new Donald Barthelme Prize for Short Prose –\$500 awarded annually to a piece of flash fiction, prose poem or micro-essay.

When our Summer/Fall Issue was released in April, we were lucky to hold our release party at the Glassell School at the Museum of Fine Arts – Houston and to have contributor Alix Ohlin give a reading. This spring was packed with Gulf Coast events, as the journal hosted its annual Houston Indie Book & Small Press Festival that had the patio at Domy Bookstore brimming with discounted journals and books, and drew large crowds for the on-the-hour readings by Creative Writing Program (CWP) students and graduates and local writers.

If it’s readings you’re looking for, Houston can offer you a Texas-sized dose of those, too. The Gulf Coast Reading Series, voted “Best Reading Series” by Houston Press in 2004, continued to fill Brazos

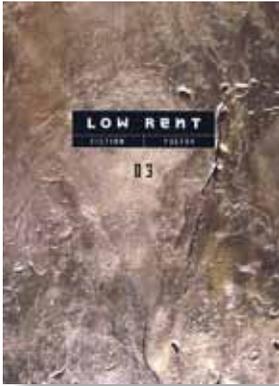
Bookstore to capacity this year by featuring eclectic readings from more than twenty CWP students. In December, the Gulf Coast editors also read at the Poison Pen Reading Series, held monthly at favorite Houston nightspot, Poison Girl Bar.

As we look ahead to our next issue, we’re happy to announce the recipients of the Gulf Coast \$1,000 prizes. Our editors read through nearly a thousand diverse entries to select finalists in each genre. First, faculty member **Antonya Nelson** tabbed Dana Kinstler’s “Bird in My Throat” to receive the Gulf Coast Fiction Prize. Dinty W. Moore awarded the Gulf Coast Nonfiction Prize to Kelly Blikre for her essay “On Our Skin.” Finally, Brigit Pegeen Kelly chose Patricia Murphy’s “Why I Burned Down Namdaemun Gate” for the Gulf Coast Poetry Prize. Congratulations to the winners, whose work will appear in our upcoming issue, and our thanks to all who entered the contest.

Here in our office, we are relishing the Texas-sized air conditioning and putting the finishing touches on Gulf Coast Winter 2009/Spring 2010, which is shaping up to be another incredible issue. This Gulf Coast will feature new fiction by 2009 Iowa Short Fiction Prize-winner Jennine Capo Crucet, stories by Matt Bell and John Weir, and essays by Ilya Kaminsky and Joe Wenderoth. Our poetry feature showcases emerging women poets, and the issue also includes poems by Ai, T.R. Hummer, Mark Jarman, Laura Kasischke, Sarah Vap, and G.C. Waldrep. And to elaborate on our mission to be a crossroads of both literature and fine art, Issue 22.1 will feature a graphic interpretation of a section of T.S. Eliot’s renowned poem “The Waste Land”—it’s an issue you won’t want to miss.

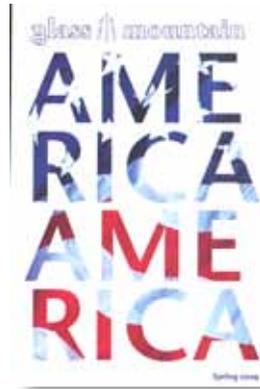
Subscriptions to Gulf Coast are available at \$28 for two years (a savings of \$12 off the cover price) and \$16 for one year (\$4 off the cover price). Send check or money order along with subscription address to: Gulf Coast, Department of English, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77204-3013. Or subscribe online: Check out [www.gulfcoastmag.org](http://www.gulfcoastmag.org).

## Low Rent



According to Editor **Bill Hughes** (M.F.A., 2002), Low Rent experienced a few growing pains in the spring as they were absolutely overwhelmed with submissions. So, as the work piled up they decided to do what people often do: they took a break. Bill says luckily that's over, so the next few months should prove to be exciting for Low Rent. They've reorganized their reading process and have expanded the staff with UH alumni and others in New York. Everything seems to suggest that the journal is still growing, i.e., they're not off the scene, and with some luck, they will announce a small story prize before the year's end. Students and alumni of the program will certainly get the first word. Other staff members include Poetry Editor, **Jason Koo** (M.F.A., 2002), and Fiction Editor, **Robert Liddell** (M.F.A., 2005).

## Glass Mountain



From June 22-26, the University of Houston hosted Boldface: a conference for emerging writers. Sponsored by Glass Mountain, the undergraduate literary magazine at UH, Boldface attracted more than 70 writers from three states in this inaugural year. Unlike the majority of writing conferences aimed at experienced authors, Boldface focused specifically on emerging writers, in both fiction and poetry. Current graduate students and professors of the Creative Writing Program served as conference faculty and presenters.

Prior to the conference, each of the participants prepared and submitted a manuscript which was then developed through the course of the week in multiple workshops and individual conversations with faculty mentors. Boldface conferees also attended craft talks and readings offered by conference faculty as well as presentations about publication, the writing life, and the realities of graduate school in creative writing. Evening events included a reception at Kaboom Bookstore in Houston Heights, an open-mic reading by conference participants at Antidote Coffee, and a raucous, packed reading at Poison Girl Bar in the Montrose—all during one of the hottest weeks of a hotter-than-

usual Houston summer!

"Boldface is an innovative initiative that will allow serious emerging writers a chance to work on their craft and to professionalize themselves," said **J. Kastely**, Director of the Creative Writing Program. "It is representative of UH's efforts to provide the best education to its students and to be a national leader in curriculum innovation."

The Boldface conference successfully bolstered a community in which Houston's emerging writers not only received feedback on their writing, but discovered creative outlets for future literary work. "Boldface also allows these undergraduates to build networks," said **Lynn Voskuil**, English Professor and Glass Mountain faculty advisor. "It's important that they can connect with writers who are at their same level, as well as graduate students who can serve as mentors." Boldface was the brainstorm of Glass Mountain's editorial staff and was funded by a UH QEP Curriculum Grant.

In publication since 2006, Glass Mountain is edited by a staff of undergraduates and is composed entirely of the creative literary work of UH undergraduate students. Its fifth issue will be published this fall.

**Emilie Koenig**  
*Glass Mountain* staff



*Anna Journey at the Boldface Conference*

## Alumni News

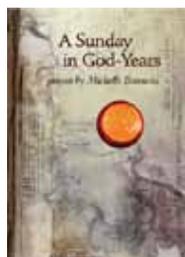
**Alan Ainsworth** (Ph.D., 1996) tells us that four of his poems were part of a musical/dance event, "Notes From Houston". Composer Mary Carol Warwick set them to music and Deborah Quanaim choreographed them as part of the HCC Dance Ensemble recital. A video of the event can be seen at <http://video.hccs.edu/#/1/1>. Last year Alan was a guest reader of the Tidewater Community College 2008 LITERARY FESTIVAL on the focus "Political Punditry" at the Virginia Beach Campus.

**Christopher Bakken** (Ph.D., 1999) served as a Fulbright Scholar in Romania in 2009 and can now brag that he's given a poetry reading delivered at Transylvania University. He also had the great pleasure of visiting former U of H professor Adam Zagajewski on his home turf in Krakow. Christopher has published new poems in Ploughshares, Literary Imagination, Drunken Boat, Beloit Poetry Journal, Subtropics, and elsewhere. A chapter from his new prose project--a memoir of literary/culinary adventures in Greece--appears in the latest issue of Parnassus: Poetry in Review.

**Nicky Beer** (M.F.A., 2003) was one of the winners of a 2008 Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation, and her first book of poems, *The Diminishing House*, was picked up for publication by Carnegie Mellon University Press. The book is due out in early 2010. Her husband, **Brian Barker** (Ph.D., 2004), has accepted a tenure-track assistant professorship at the University of Colorado Denver. Nicky

has accepted a senior instructorship there.

**Ann Bogle** (M.F.A., 1994) tells us that poems from her chapbook, *Dog barks up a tree at the apple left in it under a deerslim moon* (Dusie Kollektiv, 2009), appear in onedit, issue 12. Her chapbook, *XAM: Paragraph Series* (Xexoxial Editions, 2005), was featured at "The Cartier Street Review" in March 2009. "Mike's Writing Workshop and Newsletter" (<http://mikeswritingworkshop.blogspot.com>) carries her writing columns "Cut It Up," "Go Home," "How It Makes Sense," and "Note on Modernism." Her short stories, "The Gift," "Cigs," and "Rule Out Euthymia" with music by Brutus Filius Ioannis appear in Mad Hatters' Review, issue 10, 2008. Her short stories, "The Housecoat," "Mugabe Western," "Still Life in a Bowl," and excerpts from *Work on What Has Been Spoiled*, written in 1985, 1987, and 1991, are forthcoming in Big Bridge. She is the new co-fiction editor at Women Writers: a Zine and incoming nonfiction editor at Mad Hatters' Review. She was a finalist (top ten in poetry in a field of 900 entrants) in Summer Literary Seminars' annual competition, judged by Ann Lauterbach. The self-published mixed-genre b-l-o-o-k of her weblog, *Ana Verse* (Blurb, 2009, hardcover, color, 362 pp., \$95), documents her mother's garden.



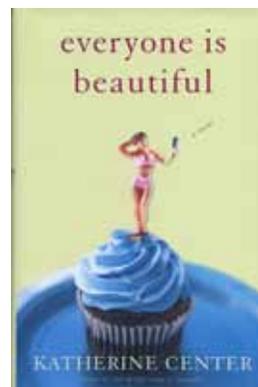
**Michelle Boisseau** (Ph.D., 1985) has a new book of poetry from the Univ. of Arkansas Press--*A Sunday in God Years*.

**Andrew Brininstool** (M.F.A., 2008) won the Editor's Prize in Fiction from nor (New Ohio Review) in fall, 2008.

**Jericho Brown** (Ph.D., 2007) will be in residence at Harvard during the 2009-2010 academic year as a Bunting Fellow of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. He was also selected by Poets & Writers Magazine as one of "twelve debut poets who put their best work forward in 2008" for his first book, *Please*. The article was in the Jan/Feb, 2009 issue. *Please* was #5 on the Poetry Foundation's contemporary best sellers for the week of March 22, 2009.



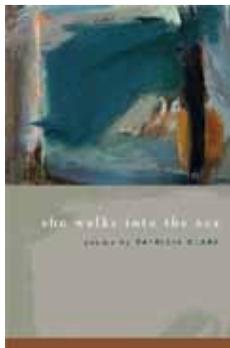
Jericho Brown reading in Houston



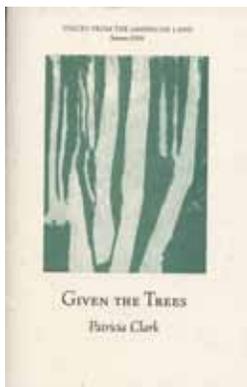
**Katherine Center's** (M.F.A., 1998) second novel, *Everyone Is Beautiful*, went on sale last February. USA

Today called it "a breezy read that glows," People called it "endearing," and Redbook featured it as a great read "for the tub." Kirkus Reviews likened it to the 1950s motherhood classic *Please Don't Eat The Daisies*, and "Booklist"

described it as a "superbly written novel filled with unique and resonant characters." Katherine went on a book tour around the country in March, and she's done all kinds of fun events in Houston, where she still lives with her husband and two kids. She's also just turned in her third novel, called *Get Lucky*, which will come out next year in the spring. And now she's starting on her fourth. Katherine's first novel, *The Bright Side of Disaster*, was optioned last fall by Varsity Pictures. She's blogging, too--and doing some very exciting video projects with excerpts from her novels and essays. Folks can see the videos at the blog at her website, [www.katherinecenter.com](http://www.katherinecenter.com).



**Patricia Clark** (Ph.D., 1986) has a new book of poems, *she walks into the sea*, coming in September '09 from Michigan State Univ.



Press. New poems are in or forthcoming in Poetry Northwest, the Cimarron Review, Zone 3, Rhino, and Manly

Mountains Moving. Patricia also has a chapbook, *Given the Trees*.

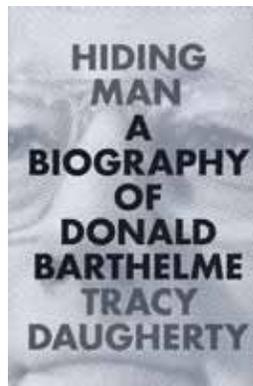
**Thomas Cobb** (Ph.D., 1986) won the Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction from the Texas In-

stitute of Letters. His novel, *Shavetail*, is set in Arizona and northern Mexico in the year 1871.



st. Thomas's book *Crazy Heart* was made into a film starring Jeff Bridges and Robert Duvall.

**Aaron Crippen** (Ph.D., 2005) is pleased to report that part of his visual poem "nowthatsfuckedup.com" was the cover art of the Fall 2008 issue of Cream City Review.



up by Picador, and will be out in a paperback edition next year. Reviews of the book have appeared in The New Yorker, Time, and on the front page of the New York Times Book Review, among others. He has contracted with St. Martin's Press to write a biography of Joseph Heller. *Temptation*, a new volume of short stories, is forthcoming from SMU Press. Stories in the collection have appeared, this past

*Shavetail* also won the Spur Award for 2008 best western novel of 90,000 words for the Western Writers of America.

**Tracy Daugherty's** (Ph.D., 1985) biography of Donald Barthelme, *Hiding Man* (St. Martin's Press), has been picked

year, or are forthcoming in, TriQuarterly, The Georgia Review, Boulevard, The Hopkins Review, Prairie Schooner, and The Northwest Review.

**Robin Davidson** (Ph.D., 2001) is the recipient of a 2009 National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship in Translation. Her translations from the Polish, *The New Century: Poems by Ewa Lipska*, in collaboration with Ewa Elzbieta Nowakowska, are forthcoming from Northwestern University Press in fall 2009. She has new poems coming out this year in the Tampa Review, and she is the recipient of a 2009 Houston Arts Alliance Individual Artist Grant for her poetry. Robin asks that we "Please include my thanks to **Adam Z.** without whom there would be no book, and to **Ed H.** who first introduced me to Polish poetry through the work of Wislawa Szymborska, and who brought Adam to Houston in the first place!"

**Barbara Duffey** (M.F.A., 2005) reports that she's currently a Vice-Presidential Fellow in the Literature & Creative Writing Ph.D. program at the University of Utah. She has two poems in the most recent American Letters & Commentary and two poems forthcoming in Asimov's Science Fiction. She received an Artist's Grant from the Vermont Studio Center. Barbara also has a new dog, a Blue Heeler named **Tesla**. She and her husband recently bought a house in Salt Lake City.

**Blas Falconer** (Ph.D. 2002), a professor at Austin Peay State University, received the Maureen Egan Writers Exchange Award, which

gives emerging writers the opportunity to interact with the literary community in New York City. Falconer has won numerous honors, and he's the author of *A Question of Gravity and Light*, a collection of poems published by the University of Arizona Press in 2007.

**Rebecca Flowers** (M.F.A., 1994) had her first novel, *Nice to Come Home To*, published by Riverhead Books.

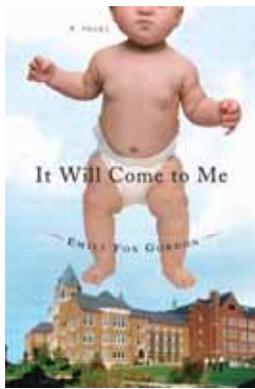


**Greg Fraser's** (Ph.D., 1999) second collection of poems, *Answering the Ruins*, came out on TriQuarterly/Northwestern UP in spring, 2009.

**Renata Golden** (M.F.A., 2000), **Julie Chisholm** (Ph.D., 2002) and Elizabeth Bradfield presented a panel at the ASLE conference at the University of Victoria in British Columbia in June. The panel was titled "Three Chicks Writing about Birds" and was well-attended by birders, writers, teachers, and a cormorant expert. Julie and Renata are considering putting a panel together for ASLE in 2011 titled "The Wild Bunnies of UVic." Considering the plethora of subject matter, they might have to skip the Q&A at the end.

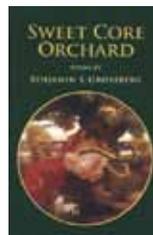


Julie Chisholm, breaking the rules



**Emily Fox Gordon's** news is that she has a new book out, a novel (her first) called *It Will Come to Me*, published by Spiegel &

Grau in March. It's an academic comedy of manners, set at a (fictional) Texas university called the Lola Dees Institute. It has gotten nice reviews from the Washington Post, Texas Monthly, the Boston Globe and several others. She's also done a number of readings in Texas and New York. An editor-author interview with Julie Grau at McNally-Jackson Books in Soho was picked up by NPR's Book Tour podcast series. The paperback will be out in March of 2010, about the same time as the publication of a collection of her personal essays tentatively titled "Book of Days".



Benjamin Grossberg

**Jennifer Grotz** (Ph.D., 2005) will begin teaching at the University of Rochester in the Fall 2009. Recent poems and translations appeared or are forthcoming in New England Review, Ploughshares, American Poetry Review, Tri-Quarterly, and Best American Poetry 2009.

**John Harvey** (Ph.D., 1998) and

**Gabriela Maya** (Ph.D., 2005) continue to live in Houston and work at the UH Honors College, where John is organizing the new Center for Creative Arts. In Spring 2009, John co-translated and directed Euripides' "Electra" for a special performance at the Honors College and he continues to write original work for and produce plays with Mildred's Umbrella.

**Stephen Haven** (1985), Professor of English and Director of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program at Ashland University, had his second book of poetry, titled *Dust and Bread*, named by the Ohio Poetry Association as co-winner for an award for the best book of poems by an Ohio poet published in 2008. Consequently, he was named co-Ohio Poet of the Year for 2009. A new review of his memoir, *The River Lock* (Syracuse University Press, 2008), just came out in July in the Chicago journal Contrary. The review is available online at <http://www.contrarymagazine.com/Contrary/Haven.html>. And, he has new poems coming out in Parnassus and The Southern Review.

Also, the small press Stephen directs--Ashland Poetry Press--last March published **Robert Phillips's** *Now & Then: New & Selected Poems*.

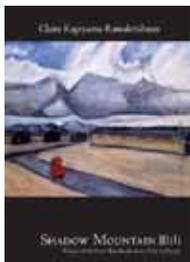
**Sean Hill** (MFA, 2003) has had poems appear in recent issues of the Oxford American and Tin House and recordings of ten poems have been archived on the website "From the Fishhouse". Six of them are from *Blood Ties & Brown Liquor* and four are from the manuscript Sean is currently working on. He recently received a four-week residency

and New Artists Initiative Award from The Hambidge Center in the mountains of north Georgia. His residency there will be from November 24 to December 20, 2009. After recently finishing the Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University, Sean has moved back to Bemidji, Minnesota.



Sean Hill, James Hall

**Caroline Langston Jarboe** (M.A., 1993) and her husband, **Brian**, welcomed their second child, **Anabella Maria Bohanan Jarboe**, on April 19, 2009. Anna Maria, as they are calling her, joins brother **Alex**, 5. Caroline continues to be a regular contributor to *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion's* "Good Letters" blog, as well as an occasional commentator for NPR.



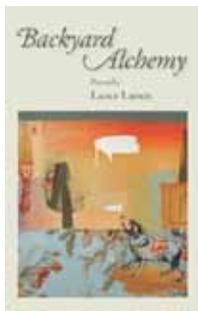
Claire Kageyama Ramakrishnan

**Jason Koo's** (M.F.A., 2002) first collection of poems, *Man On Extremely Small Island*, was selected by Denise Duhamel as the winner of the 2008 De Novo Prize and will be published in the late summer or early fall of this year. Jason was also awarded a \$25,000 Literature Fel-

lowship from the National Endowment for the Arts for the upcoming year. He's the poetry editor for Low Rent.

**Andrew Kozma** (Ph.D., 2007) reports that over the past year he's had poems in The Comstock Review, Quiddity, RATTLE, Slipstream, Smartish Pace, and Subtropics. In Houston, he had a play ("Lights up on a Room/Lights Out") performed as part of the BooTown Houston Fringe Festival, and this summer he'll be attending the Sewanee Writers' Conference as a Walter E. Dakin Fellow in Poetry. And, yes, Andrew's still living in Houston, though plans to move are ever in the offing.

**William Lantry** (Ph.D., 1993) says that although he has no fourth or fifth book coming out, no national prize and no grants to report, he did have 10 poems come out in a single day recently at [www.towerjournal.com](http://www.towerjournal.com), [www.unbrellajournal.com](http://www.unbrellajournal.com), and [www.soundzine.com](http://www.soundzine.com). He thinks that wouldn't be much for others, but says it's a personal best for him. Details can be found at: [www.ablemuse.com/erato/showthread.php?t=7789](http://www.ablemuse.com/erato/showthread.php?t=7789)



**Lance Larsen's** (Ph.D., 1993) third poetry collection, *Backyard Alchemy*, appeared in March from University of Tampa Press (with cover art

by his wife **Jacqui**). He has had recent poems in River Styx, Indiana Review, Black Warrior Review, Agni, and Chariton Review, and es-

says in Iowa Review, Brevity, and Crazyhorse. In the spring he co-directed a theatre study abroad program in London, and in the fall will complete a two-week residency at the Anderson Center in Red Wing, MN. One of his recent poems was chosen for inclusion in *Best American Poetry 2009*.

**Leah Lax** (M.F.A., 2004) has recently completed her memoir. She is holding her breath while still trying to breathe, which is a challenge, hoping to get news of a publishing contract. Meanwhile, family has increased by two granddaughters and **Magnolia**, the intrepid Aire-dale. For now, Leah and partner **Susan Baird** are in Houston, still happy living without snow.

**Elline Lipkin** (Ph.D., 2003) reports that the good news is she does have another book coming out (her second!). The title is *Girls' Studies* and it's part of Seal Press's Seal Studies series. The publication date is November 2009. The book is a critical look at the rise of the field of Girls' Studies and considers that state of contemporary girlhood today. She hopes that's a good synopsis. Otherwise, Elline is still a Research Scholar at the Center for the Study of Women at UCLA.

**Cate Marvin** (M.F.A., 1997) had a baby girl on January 6, 2009; her name is **Lucia Drew**.



Cate says that her U of H connections are already coming in handy; Lucia has been receiving hand-me-downs from **Yvonne Murphy's** (Ph.D., 2000) baby, **Rory**, who is just a few months older than Lucia.

**James May** (M.F.A., 2007) is now the Editor-in-Chief of New South, and he has poetry forthcoming in 32 Poems and Sixty-Six.

**Elizabeth McBride** (M.A., 1982) says that she still makes art, and writes, but hasn't published much fiction or poetry lately. She keeps busy as the Fine Arts Columnist for the Alpine Avalanche. She's represented by an art gallery in Houston, DevinBoedenHiramButler Gallery, and by Barry Whistler Gallery in Dallas. Elizabeth has a drawing in the MFA Houston. She lives in Alpine, TX, where she says she drinks a lot of chamomile tea and walks a lot.

**Ann McCutchan** (M.F.A., 1998) gave a talk titled "Writing the Living Ground of Music" at Sam Houston State University and Florida State University in March and April of this year. Also in April, she gave the annual Lee Lecture in English at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. The lecture, titled "Water Music: Writing the Rhythms of a River," was followed by a reading. Her third book, *Circular Breathing: Meditations on a Musical Life*, is due out in November with Sunstone Press.

Ann has signed a contract with Texas A&M Press for a new book tentatively titled "Water Music: Rhythms of the Atchafalaya." Water Music examines environmental changes in Louisiana's Atchafalaya River Basin by way of the life and

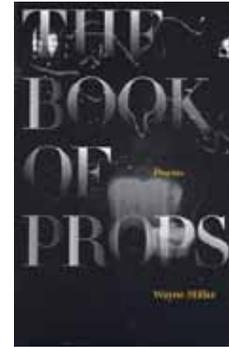
work of Earl Robicheaux, Morgan City composer, naturalist, phonographer, and oral historian. It's essentially a double biography: of a place and of a person. The book's aim is to show how the largest river swamp in North America has shaped the lives of those who live there, and how those who live there have increasingly shaped it. Ann continues to teach creative nonfiction at the University of North Texas.

**Marc McKee** (M.F.A., 2003) tells us that Black Lawrence Press has offered to publish his book, *Fuse*. He says that he is beyond grateful, and very excited. It's scheduled for release in May 2011.

**Kimberly Meyer** (Ph.D., 2008) has had three pieces from her non-fiction manuscript accepted recently for publication. One essay, on the miraculous shrine at Chimayo, New Mexico, appeared this spring in Agni; another, on the Fountain of Youth, appeared this summer in the Oxford American; and a third, on her pilgrimage with her husband and daughters to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Little Houses, is forthcoming in September's Brain Child magazine.

**Leslie Adrienne Miller** (Ph.D., 1991) joined the faculty of the Pacific University M.F.A. program in January of this year for the residency in Seaside, Oregon. In June, she was guest faculty at Northern Michigan University's Summer Writers' Program. This past spring, she was a featured poet at the Des Moines Area Community Colleges Literary Festival, and two of her poems, "Bees" and "Inchworm", appeared in the Northwest Review. Other

publications in the last year include "Diary of a Sentence" in New Letters, "fizzee ollegjee" in River Styx, and "Hyperphagia" at <http://www.stthomas.edu/magazine/2009/Winter/finalthoughts.html>



**Wayne Miller's** (M.F.A., 2002) second poetry collection, *The Book of Props*, was published by Milkweed Editions in April of 2009. It received a starred review in Publishers Weekly and, thus far, has been favorably reviewed in The New Yorker (Apr. 27) and the Kansas City Star (Apr. 11). Wayne also continues to serve as Editor of Pleiades.

**Farnoosh Moshiri** (M.F.A., 2000) was Florida Review's winner of Editor's Award for Non-Fiction and her memoir "Walking on Thorns" was published in the Winter 09 issue of the Florida Review. Currently she's working on a new novel, and in intervals writes memoir pieces.

**Dave Parsons** (M.A., 1991) is still teaching Creative Writing and Handball/Racquetball at Lone Star College-Montgomery and chairing the Conroe Commission on the Arts & Culture. **Cliff Hudder** (M.F.A., 1995) and Dave continue to co-direct the Writers In Performance Series. Dave has a poem in *Beyond Forgetting*, an anthology from Kent State Univ. Press, three poems forthcoming in The Texas Review and two in Louisiana Literature. He was named a finalist

for Texas State Poet Laureate by the Texas Commission on the Arts and inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters. Dave says that it's "mucho more attention" than he deserved this year. However, he says that the most meaningful and touching recognition came from the student editors and staff of SWIRL (LSC-Montgomery Lit. Mag.), dedicating the 2009 issue to him and requesting one of his poems to include in the issue. Below is a photo of the launch party with student staff/editors, advisors, and faculty sponsor and treasured colleague and friend, Cliff Hudder.



*Dave, Cliff & SWIRL*

**Carol Quinn** (Ph.D., 2005) was winner of the 2008 Cider Press Book Award with her manuscript, "Acetylene". She received a publication contract and her first book by the same name will be out in February, 2010. Carol is currently at Towson University.

**Jim Richards** (Ph.D., 2003) is the new poetry editor for Irreantum: a Review of Mormon Literature and Film. For his day job, he's a member of the Brigham Young University-Idaho English faculty, teaching literature and creative writing. He has served as poetry editor of "Meridian Magazine" (online) and as a staff editor at Gulf Coast. His poems have appeared in The Texas Review, Perspective, Literature and Belief, and BYU Studies.

**Mira Rosenthal** (M.F.A., 2005), in 2008-09, received a PEN Translation Fund Award and an NEA fellowship for her translations of Polish poet Tomasz Rozycki's book, *Colonies*. "The Forgotten Keys", a selection from his previous volumes that she translated, was published by Zephyr Press in 2007. Her translations have appeared widely in journals and anthologies, and her own poems have appeared recently in the Cortland Review, The Cincinnati Review, and Faultline. In April and May, Mira was in residence at The MacDowell Colony, where she finished a collection of poems and continued to grow her first child, due in June. She and her husband, historian **Greg Domber**, now live in Jacksonville, FL, where they both teach at the University of North Florida.

And, finally, at 11:00 p.m. on June 2, **Matilda Rose Domber** was born at home in sunny Florida. Tillie entered the world at 8 lbs. 4 oz. after a short but tiring labor. Mommy, baby, and Daddy are doing well, feeding, changing diapers, and napping.



*Matilda Rose Domber*

**Eric Shade** (M.F.A., 1999), author of the Flannery O'Connor Award Winning *Eyesores*, now lives with his wife and young daughter in Tokyo, and is searching for an agent to represent his brilliant new novel.



*Eric Shade & Daughter*

**Amy Spade** (M.F.A., 1997) announced that **Sadie Elsa Silverman** was born June 24, 2009. She weighed 6 pounds, 7 ounces and was 18 3/4 inches long.



*Sadie Elsa Silver*

**Marilyn Stablein** (M.A., 1984) has stories and poems recently published or forthcoming in Sin Fronteras, Gargoyle Magazine, Rag, Chokecherries, Libros, and Wildflowers: A Catskill Mountain Anthology. She writes a column for New Perspectives Magazine and will be featured at the New Mexico Women Author's Book Festival in Santa Fe in September.



*Tool Kit 09*

Her assemblages and artists books were exhibited in San Diego, Denver, Albuquerque,

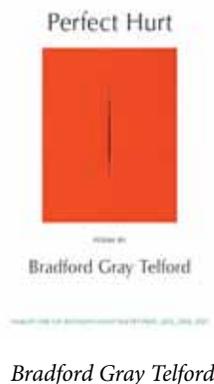
Portland, Ft. Myers, Providence, Silver Spring, Taos and elsewhere.

She and her husband's bookstore, Acequia Booksellers (over 12,000 titles), ships literary titles all over the world. Their website, [acequiabooksellers.com](http://acequiabooksellers.com), features over 1,000 poetry titles.

**Gail Donohue Storey** (M.A., 1982) was featured as a contemporary satirist in AWP's The Writer's Chronicle, in "Satire, The Craft" by Marilyn Krysl. Gail is currently working on her memoir about hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, and in her spare time jumps out of cakes to bust hip-hop moves.

**Marilynn Talal** (Ph.D., 1993) and her husband, **Norman**, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in June, 2009. Now, that's newsworthy!

**Giuseppe Taurino** (M.F.A., 2006) and his wife are still living in Austin, where Giuseppe is now the Education Programs Manager for Badgerdog Literary Publishing. This past year he's had stories published in Word Riot and New South. This summer Giuseppe will attend the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference on a work-study scholarship in fiction.



**Joni Tevis** (Ph.D., 2005) reports that she had a good first year at

Furman University and new essays will run in Orion and the Oxford American. She was honored to share the stage with **Kim Meyer** (Ph.D., 2008) in February, at the Poetry and Prose series in the Honors College at U of H.



This summer, Joni and **David Bernardy** (Ph.D., 2006) went on a research trip to Alaska, where they rafted the Canning River all the way to the Arctic Ocean.

**Robert Tinajero** (M.F.A., 2004) is currently Assistant Professor of English at Tarrant County College. He will be defending his doctoral dissertation, "Hip Hop Rhetoric: Relandscaping the Rhetorical Tradition," in the fall and graduating in December from the University of Texas at El Paso. Robert is serving as Area Chair in Hip Hop culture for the Southwest Pop Culture/American Culture Conference and he self-published a book of poetry this summer: *Love and Revolution*.

**Gemini Wahnaj's** (Ph.D., 2007) story "Voices" is coming out in Crab Orchard Review. She says that she's very happy, since this is one of her Iraq stories.

**Eric Miles Williamson** (awarded the CWP's first M.F.A. degree in December 1991) is Professor of English at the University of Texas, Pan-American, where he teaches postmodern and contemporary literature.

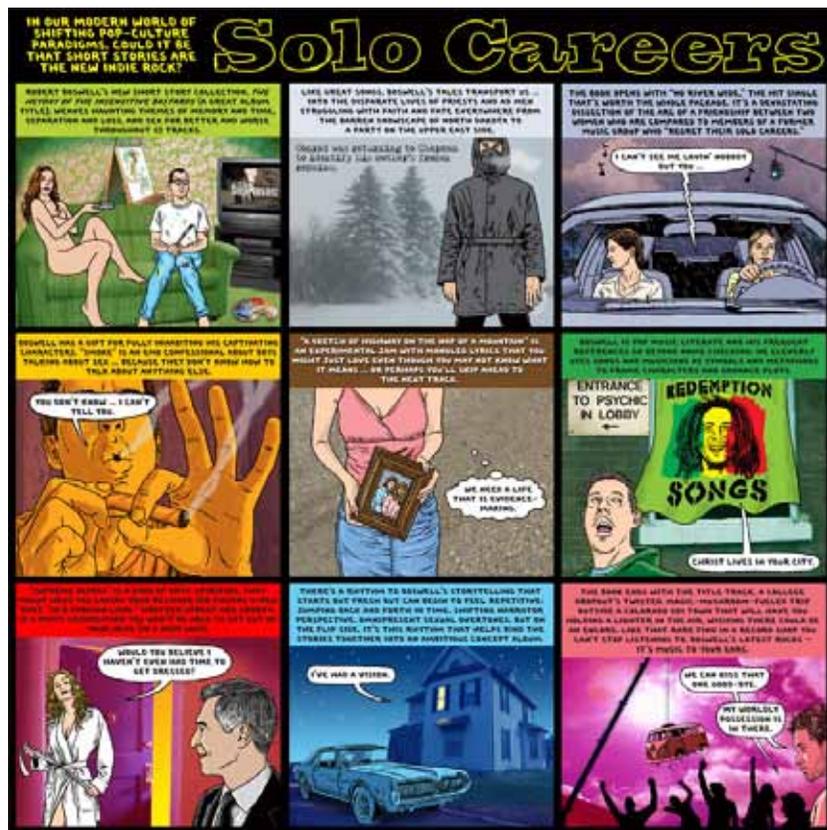


His third novel, *Welcome to Oakland*, has just been published and will appear soon in France, as have his previous novels,

*East Bay Grease* and *Two-Up*. The Atlantic Monthly called his 2007 book of criticism, *Oakland, Jack London, and Me*, "one of the least politically correct texts of our time." His second book of criticism, a collection of essays titled *Say it Hot: Essays on American Writers Living, Dying, and Dead*, will be published in 2010. His short story collection, *13 Fictional Positions*, will also be published in 2010. A three-term member of the Board of Directors of the National Book Critics Circle, Williamson is Associate Editor of American Book Review, Associate Editor of Boulevard, and Fiction Editor of The Texas Review. The French magazine, Transfuge, recently named Williamson one of America's best 50 living authors.

**Tiphonie Yanique's** (M.F.A., 2006) upcoming short story collection is called *How to Escape from a Leper Colony*. Stories from the collection have won a Pushcart Prize, the Boston Review Prize in Fiction, the Kore Press Fiction Award and have been featured in *Best African American Fiction for 2009*. Describing Tiphonie's writing Danzy Senna says it "drew me in with its odd, dreamy locale and fresh language" and called it "haunting and nuanced work". Tiphonie's stories have also been published globally,

including in Callaloo, Transition Magazine, American Short Fiction, the London Magazine and Fiddlehead. Tayari Jones calls her "One of my favorite emerging writers." Tiphonie is an Associate Editor with Post No Ills and Assistant Professor in Creative Writing and Caribbean Literature at Drew University. Her collection will be published with Graywolf in March, 2010.



Illustrations by Ward Sutton for his review of Robert Boswell's *The Heyday of Insensitive Bastards*.

# Calendar of Events

**August 27th: Poison Pen**

**September 21st: Inprint Brown Reading Series; Joseph O'Neill & Marilynne Robinson**  
**Sept. 23rd: M.D. Anderson Poetry & Prose Library Series**  
**September 24th: Poison Pen Third Anniversary Party**

**October 19th: Inprint Brown Reading Series E.L.Doctorow**  
**Oct. 21st: M.D. Anderson Poetry & Prose Library Series**  
**October 29th: Poison Pen**

**Nov. 18th: M.D. Anderson Poetry & Prose Library Series; First-year CWP students**

**December 3rd: Poison Pen; Gulf Coast Winter Issue Release Party**

**January 11th: Inprint Brown Reading Series; Mary Karr**  
**January 25th: Inprint Brown Reading Series; David Wroblewski**  
**January 28th: Poison Pen**

**February 25th: Poison Pen**

**March 1st: Inprint Brown Reading Series; John Banville/Abraham Verghese**  
**March 22th: Inprint Brown Reading Series; Tracy Kidder 7:30pm**

**April 12th: Inprint Brown Reading Series; Dorianne Laux/Patricia Smith**  
**April 29th: Poison Pen**

**May 3rd: Inprint Brown Reading Series; Oscar Casares/Gwendolyn Zepeda**

*Additionally, Gulf Coast Readings take place monthly, on Fridays, throughout the school year at Brazos Bookstore. Make sure to check the Gulf Coast website for details ([www.gulfcoastmag.org](http://www.gulfcoastmag.org))*



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American Library Assoc. 2009 Top Ten Books for Young Adults  
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