

## LIVING ACUTELY IN LANGUAGE

An interview with author Tess Gallagher  
by Amber Larson

Tess Gallagher is a poet, fiction writer, essayist, screenplay writer, and translator. Among her many poetry collections are *Under Stars*, *Amplitude: New and Selected Poems*, *Moon Crossing Bridge*, *Portable Kisses*, and *Dear Ghosts*. Her honors include a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation, two National Endowment of the Arts Awards, the Maxine Cushing Gray Foundation Award, and the Elliston Award for "best book of poetry published by a small press" for *Instructions to the Double*.

In her most recent collection, *Dear Ghosts* (Graywolf Press, 2006), the ghosts of the past are conjured and communed with: the deceased beloved, the father long dead, the victims of holocaust and war. With these spirits beside her, Gallagher, a cancer survivor, confronts her own illness and mortality and celebrates new love and friendship in these spare lyrics and sprawling narratives.

Tess Gallagher participated in the 2006-2007 Visiting Writers' Series, offered by the University of Oregon Creative Writing Program. She read to a full house on April 12, 2007.

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**Amber Larson:** You once took a class from Theodore Roethke. What was that experience like? Who were some of your other early influences as a writer?

**Tess Gallagher:** Being in Roethke's class was a life-changing event. I was so young that everything he said went into me so deeply. I had just wanted to write poetry, but I discovered a way of inquiry, a way of living acutely in language. I think the music of language and how it affected the memory and the body itself impressed me. Roethke made you feel this in his way of teaching. I think his having us memorize poems and recite them aloud was very compelling. It became a central part of my own teaching when I began to get positions at universities around the country.

As for my other influences: David Wagoner and Mark Strand were strong influences while I was still in the Northwest. When I went to the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1972, I met many young poets from around the country and they really became influences. I ultimately married Michael Burkard, a poet I very much admired. We were in some classes together with Norman Dubie and Marvin Bell, Donald Justice, Larry Levis as our teachers. Of course everything I read began to influence me: especially work in translation such as Anna Akhmatova.

**A.L.** You write poetry, fiction, essays and screenplays. How does writing in different genres influence your writing as a whole?



**T.G.** I've probably never experienced writer's block. I just have periods when I am working on something else. I seem to go more deeply into many kinds of reading too. I love reading short stories, of course, and always have. I had written them early on and tried to get into Stanford to write stories in the beginning of my writing aspirations, but failed to gain entrance. My poetry was beginning to gain notice though, so I just turned my head toward poetry. It wasn't until I met Raymond Carver and we began to make a life together that I went back to writing stories. Right now I love nothing better than to discover a good book of short stories to read. I just finished *Creatures of the Earth* by John McGahern, a wonderful Irish writer who passed away recently, but who is from the part of Ireland I have

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## Creative Writing Program Changes



**Geri Doran** joined the Creative Writing Faculty as a Visiting Assistant Professor for 2007-2009. Geri received her AB from Vassar College and her MFA from the University of Florida. She is the author of *Resin* (Louisiana

State University Press, 2005), which received the 2004 Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets. Her poems have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Republic*, *New England Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Tri-Quarterly*, and other journals. A former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford, she is the recipient of the 2005-2006 Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship as well as fellowships and residencies from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Literary Arts, the Vermont Studio Center, and the Millay Colony for the Arts. She will teach graduate workshops and seminars and undergraduate writing courses at UO. •

## Literary Reference

*Literary Reference*, the newsletter of the Creative Writing Program, is published quarterly in conjunction with the University of Oregon Office of Publications.

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Laurie Lynn Drummond

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**Dorianne Laux**, after ten years with CRWR, recently accepted a position at North Carolina State University, where she will teach in the graduate creative writing program. She will be much missed by the Program, as will Joe Millar, her husband and a former Kidd Tutorial Program Director. Dorianne's fourth book of poems, *Facts about the Moon* (Norton, 2005), received the Oregon Book Award and was shortlisted for the 2006 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize. Joe's most recent book, *Fortune* (Eastern Washington University Press 2006), won the C. Hamilton Bailey Prize from Oregon Literary Arts. We wish Dorianne and Joe all the best in their writing and new life in North Carolina. •



**Julia Schewanick** joined the Creative Writing Program in May 2006 as Office Coordinator. Her advanced computer and organizational skills resulted in a promotion to Business Manager for both

Creative Writing and Women's and Gender Studies in May 2007. •

The Creative Writing Program recently made three continuing GTF appointments for 2008-2009 support of students and the Program. **Sara Johnson** will return to teach Introduction to Poetry Writing; **Chris Roethle** will teach Intermediate Poetry; and **Will Fleming** will provide support for special projects. The Program wishes to thank our student assistants for the past two years, **Alysa Iha** and **Ryan Stoker**. •

## Faculty News

**David Bradley's** "... By Any Other Name" will be reprinted in *Best Creative Nonfiction* (W. W. Norton, 2008). This essay originally appeared in *Obit*. A piece on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* is forthcoming in *A New Literary History of America* (Harvard University Press, 2009) and a short essay, "Beyond Chagrin," is slated for publication in *AARP*. •

**Geri Doran** has poems in the current issues of *Subtropics* ("The Dark Octaves"

and "Swan Goes") and *Southwest Review* ("The Passion of Mary, Called Magdalene"). Her poems "City" and "Impedimenta" will appear this fall in *TriQuarterly*. •

**Laurie Lynn Drummond** received a residency fellowship to Ucross last June, and she has received another fellowship there for this August. In the past year, she has given readings at Pennsylvania State University and Ashland University. Work continues on her novel. •

**Karen Ford's** "Marking Time in Native America: Haiku, Elegy, Survival" is forthcoming in *American Literature* (2009). "The Lives of Haiku Poetry: Self, Selflessness, and Solidarity in Concentration Camp Haiku" will be included in *Poetry, Politics, and the Profession: Cary Nelson and the Struggle for the University*, SUNY Press. Karen's essay "The Sonnets of Satin-Legs Brooks" appeared in *Contemporary Literature* (Fall 2007). •

**Ehud Havazelet** was promoted this spring to full professor of fiction. Ehud has recently published his second book (see next page). His recent and forthcoming publications include stories in *Ploughshares* and *Tin House* and an essay in the *New York Times Magazine*. In other news, Ehud notes that Coby was named Most Improved Player on his under-eight AYSO soccer team—Coby claims "it's no big deal." •

**Garrett Hongo's** "Cane Fire" was selected by Charles Wright for *Best American Poetry 2008*; the poem originally appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of *Ploughshares*. "Chikin Hekka" appears in *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond*, co-edited by Tina Chang, Nathalie Handal, and Ravi Shankar, foreword by Carolyn Forché (W.W. Norton, 2008). Other recent publications include "Coral Road" and "55" in *American Poetry Review*, "Kubota Writes to José Arcadia Buendía" in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and "A Child's Ark" in *New Labor Forum*. In April, Garrett gave a reading at the University of Vermont; this August he will teach at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. •

## In Memoriam James Byron Hall

July 21, 1918 – February 28, 2008

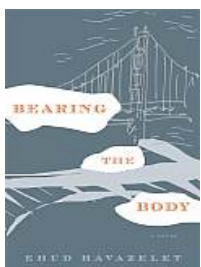
Best known as a short-story writer and novelist, teacher and critic, James B. Hall was also instrumental in founding the Creative Writing Program at the University of Oregon. We mourn his passing and wish to remember him here with an excerpt from his poem "Envoi: A Clutch of Dreams":

The forked path in the woods  
Dreams of a crossroads, dreams  
The perfection of concrete divides  
A valley into four equal fields;

The shoat at the slaughterhouse door  
Remembers a fine white gate  
And the barn-end of a meadow  
Where corn calls with the voice of a man.

## Havazelet Publishes New Book

**Ehud Havazelet's** newest book and first novel, *Bearing the Body*, was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 2007. The novel has received the Edgar Wallant Award, was a finalist for the John Singer Sergeant first novel prize, and was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year and a *Chicago Tribune* Favorite Book for 2007. *Bearing the Body* has been translated into six languages.



Francine Prose, writing for the *New York Times*, remarked, "Havazelet's novel, as its title suggests, is intensely aware of the weight, the demands and the sheer rebelliousness of the body. As he demonstrated in his 1988 collection of linked stories, *Like Never Before*, he has a particular fascination with, and ability to capture, the mystery of how a single body can simultaneously harbor all its younger incarnations." •

## CRWR Fall 2008 Course Schedule

### CRWR 230: Introduction to Poetry Writing

Introduction to forms and techniques of writing poetry. **Instructors:** Akdeniz, Peñaloza, Johnson

### CRWR 240: Introduction to Fiction Writing

Introduction to forms and techniques of writing fiction. **Instructors:** Goldberg, Malick, Roos

### CRWR 330: Intermediate Poetry Writing – Verse to Free Verse

T.S. Eliot once wrote that "No verse is free for the man who wants to do a good job," implying that even poems without strict formal character require a degree of ordering for maximum effect. Yet, as contemporary poets, we often take the notion of "free verse" as permission to think less critically about how we shape a poem and use that shape to communicate with others. It does not help that many poets (even talented ones) are unclear about what "free verse" is. The usual definition – that free verse is not rhymed or metered – does little to help us understand it better or use it to the fullest in our work. In this workshop, we will read and write both formal and free verse poetry to discover ways in which successful writers, especially those writing in free verse, have patterned their work to make it richer and more powerful. Specifically, we will discuss practical matters such as sound, rhythm, syntax, line length, and stanza length as tools we may use to unlock greater texture and deeper meaning in revision. Poets and essayists on our reading list will include Elizabeth Bishop, Lucille Clifton, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Paul Fussell, Jack Gilbert, Joy Harjo, Robert Hass, Anthony Hecht, Marie Howe, Galway Kinnell, Robert Lowell, Mike McGriff, John Milton, Sharon Olds, Edgar Allen Poe, Ezra Pound, Robert Pinsky, Carl Sandburg, Ntozake Shange, Christopher Smart, Timothy Steele, and more. Texts will include *The Poet's Companion*, edited by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux. This course has a strong writing emphasis.

**Instructor:** Roethlis

### CRWR 340: Intermediate Fiction Writing

This course will provide undergraduates

## Drummond Named Kidd Director 2007-2009

Assistant Professor **Laurie Lynn Drummond** was appointed Director of the Kidd Tutorial Program beginning in Fall 2007. Laurie holds a BGS in English and an MFA in Creative Writing from Louisiana State University. Her short story collection, *Anything You Say Can And Will Be Used Against You* (HarperCollins 2004), was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award and won the Jesse James Award in Fiction for Best Book from the Texas Institute of Letters, as well as the Violet Crown Award in Fiction from the Writers' League of Texas. A story from the collection, "Something About a Scar," won an Edgar Award for Best Short Story.

Laurie's stories and essays have been published in *Story*, *Southern Review*, *Fiction*, *Black Warrior Review*, *New Virginia Review*, *Louisiana Cultural Vistas*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Fourth Genre*, *Brevity*, and *River Teeth*, among others, and translated into Farsi for *Golestaneh: Iranian Cultural & Arts Monthly*.

Of her first year as Kidd Director, Laurie writes, "I have been quite fortunate to have had five wonderful Kidd tutors and a fabulous Kidd fellow [Chris Roethle] to work with; they have made my position more rewarding and less difficult than it might have been. The real reward, of course, comes from seeing students excited, improving, taking chances, making connections, thinking more critically, and creating work that is accomplished and moving. I'm honored to be a part of such a stellar program, and I'm looking forward to working with next year's tutors, students, and Kidd fellow, Jenn Kepka." •



## Kidd Scholarships Awarded to Six UO Undergraduates

To support undergraduate writing, the CRWR program is offering six \$3,000 scholarships for the Kidd Program next year. These scholarships are awarded to highly qualified applicants to the Kidd Program whose literary work shows unusual merit. Scholarship recipients for 2008-2009 are:

### Poetry

Anna Nakano-Baker

Laura Pizzo

### Fiction

Brenna Crotty

Elin Guttormsen

Ryan McConnell

Kristina Stipetic

These six scholarship recipients will join another 22 students for a full year of creative writing study. Each Kidd Tutorial section matches one graduate tutor—a poet or fiction writer—with at least four and no more than seven undergraduates who have identified a primary focus of poetry or fiction. In the belief that writers must explore and experiment in order to learn their craft and become better writers, all students study and write poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. All sections convene for the Kidd Talks throughout the year, which are presented by each of the Program's Visiting Writers.

Each Kidd student will complete a course of study involving workshops, substantial reading, inquiry and research, and a final creative project. •

## Kidd Fellows Provide Program Support



Each year, a 3rd-year MFA student is appointed the Walter and Nancy Kidd Tutorial Program Fellow. The Kidd fellow mentors new tutors, conducts Pedagogy Sessions, and helps the Kidd

Director coordinate and promote the program. The Kidd fellow also assists with undergraduate applications to the program and administration of the Kidd Prize. Poet Chris Roethle completes his fellowship year this June and passes the baton to incoming fellow (and fiction writer) Jenn Kepka, who will assume her role in Fall 2008. •



## Kidd Awards in Poetry and Fiction

### 2006-2007 Prize Winners

POETRY JUDGED BY VISITING POET TESS GALLAGER

Chad Canter (1st): *Looking Through My Dad's Polaroids of Vietnam*

Katherine Neall (2nd): *Misfolded*

Larissa Nelson (3rd): *i drank a flower tonight*

FICTION JUDGED BY VISITING WRITER BRET LOTT

Christopher Rowe (1st): *My Father's Horn*

Julian Aaron (2nd): *Jarred Tomatoes*

Jason Curtis Thayer (3rd): *Eyes Like Wet Cement*

### 2007-2008 Prize Winners

POETRY JUDGED BY VISITING POET N. SCOTT MOMADAY

Joey Eberhart-Garah (1st): *The Sea & The Island*

Hajara Quinn (2nd): *Country Song*

Shelly Emerson (3rd): *Broken*

FICTION JUDGED BY VISITING WRITER ANTONYA NELSON

Jason Curtis Thayer (1st): *21*

Leslee Chan (2nd): *My Grocery List*

Benjamin Woods (3rd): *Lost Things*

## Meet the Incoming MFA Students

**Aziza Lucia Akdeniz** grew up in Europe, Asia, and New York and received her BFA from New York University. She has spent the last two years in Denver, CO, teaching literature at the University of Colorado. She is looking forward to spending the next two years in Eugene immersed in good poetry, good people, and good Oregon wine. ●

**Patricia Zane Biebelle ("Zane")** was raised on a ranch outside of Carlsbad, NM, and currently lives in Las Cruces. After spending her life in the desert, she is looking forward to her move to Eugene. She received her BA in English from New Mexico State University, with a minor in Creative Writing. While at New Mexico State, Zane won the Robert A. Wichert Award for Creative Writing in fiction and started a writers' group, Ink, with some of her peers in the Creative Writing department. She plans on spending the summer writing short stories and short-short stories, reading for pleasure, knitting and teaching her friends to knit, as well as getting ready for the big move with her husband, Timothy Ahearne. ●

**Erica Braverman** is currently living abroad in Cheongju, South Korea, where she is teaching ESL at a *hogwan*, or private language academy, to elementary and middle school aged students. She is planning on returning to the States after traveling around Southeast Asia when her contract is up at the end of July and moving to Eugene shortly thereafter to begin classes. She received her BA from Florida State University, where she majored in Creative Writing and minored in Film Studies. Erica is still very interested in Film Studies and is considering going for her PhD in that area of study. For now, she is looking forward to concentrating on the last few months left in Korea and then the green, bicycle-friendly town of Eugene and the beautiful University of Oregon campus, or more specifically, its plush lawn, where you will be able to find her with her shoes off and a book of poems close at hand. ●

**Elizabeth Lee Buchanan** is heading to Eugene from Washington, D.C., where she has been working steadily as an editor for the last four years. She earned her BA in

English and Women Studies from the University of Maryland while working at a Texas-themed pub and a cluttered book store. Her subsequent work covering music and gossip for *The Washington Post* introduced her to a dizzying number of senators and wannabe rock stars. Elizabeth also taught English in Poland (where she realized her love of medieval architecture) and Ecuador (where she realized she spoke very poor Spanish). This summer, when she isn't occupied with pawning her furniture, she'll be keeping busy with long walks in the city, a long trip to Southeast Asia, and long forays into the written word. ●

**Adrienne Gunn Goldberg** is the author of fiction and essays. She holds an MA in Creative Writing from Northwestern University and is excited to begin the MFA program at Oregon in the fall. Her current projects include a collection of short stories, a novel, and editing a forthcoming anthology. For the past six years, Adrienne has lived in Chicago and worked in Marketing and Special Events. She is excited to no longer be working in these areas. Adrienne now lives in Eugene with her husband and dog and would love to get together. ●

**Jennifer Knight ("Jenne")** is moving to Eugene from Boston, MA, where she has spent the last year living as a stranger in a strange land. A northwest native, Jenne is excited to return to the relative normalcy of the region. She received her BA in English from the University of Washington and is interested in language: accents/dialects, etymology, and translation. She also loves fiction for young adults and is a KEXP addict. ●

**Nichols Ford Malick ("Nick")** earned his BA in Philosophy and Creative Writing from Colby College in Waterville, ME. When he isn't writing Nick enjoys running, singing, and wrestling with his two dogs, Jogger and Darcy, neither of whom likes to play fetch. While he has held numerous jobs in his lifetime, from baker to pseudo-geologist, he has most recently been teaching English at the Tilton School in Tilton, NH, where he has enjoyed the additional responsibilities of cross-country coach and dorm parent. He will

be moving to Eugene with his new wife Rebecca (who is a much more talented musician than he will ever be), the two fifty-pound beasts, and their rickety old Camry. After eight years in the east, the west is looking quite lovely. ●

**Michelle Peñaloza** received her BA from Vanderbilt University with concentrations in English, Women's Studies, and Secondary Education. Originally from Nashville, Michelle is moving to Eugene from the suburbs of Philadelphia, where she's been teaching at a Quaker boarding school for the past three years. Michelle spent her summers volunteering at 826NYC, a writing center for kids in Brooklyn, and traveling to the Philippines to (re)learn Tagalog. Teaching full time has left little time for writing, so she's excited about getting back to school after the summer – this time on the other side of the desk. ●

**Chelsey Roos** spent her childhood moving around the country with large stacks of books and equally large stacks of crackers. She received her undergraduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis (MO) and then spent a year as a pharmacy technician in Pittsburgh, PA, telling people that, yes, they really do need those drugs. Chelsey spends a lot of time reading, wandering, and inhaling caffeinated beverages. She enjoys arguing about the merits of young adult fiction and how psychology has changed the world. She is also, by chance, extremely tall. ●

**Natasha Sunderland** comes to Oregon after three years in Brooklyn and a couple of desk jobs in Manhattan. She is grateful for the reading time provided by countless subway commutes and for the illusion of nature provided by city parks. Natasha grew up in Malibu, CA, and then came east in search of seasons. She received her BA in English/Creative Writing from Colgate University, with a minor in Film & Media Studies. When she is not practicing survival by Internet during the workday, she is reading, writing, running, worrying over daily minutiae, watching bad movies on television, or traveling. Eager to be near the Pacific again, Natasha is thrilled to have this opportunity, and cannot wait for a great two years in Eugene. ●

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been going to for the past thirty years, in the West on the border of Co. Sligo and Co. Roscommon.

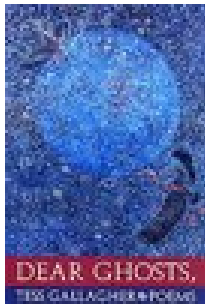
**A.L.** You were married to the great short-story writer Raymond Carver just prior to his death in 1988. What influences did you have on each other's writing?

**T.G.** We had a very great impact, I think, although if you were reading Carver scholarship this wouldn't be acknowledged. They would speak about John Gardner, Hemmingway, Chekhov, etc., but never Tess Gallagher as an influence. It's just too obvious maybe? Ray's poetry got very much stronger when he met me, I do believe. And his stories stopped being just "slice of life" encounters. They began to actually develop and to let in more light in say a story like "Cathedral." It's, of course, hard for me to speak too much about all this, for it inevitably would sound self-serving. In our working together on our poems and stories we were just so happy to contribute to each other's writing we never claimed territory. Our writing stayed our own, but inside that work were essential contributions from each of us.

Ray tended to help me clarify my work. I got some narrative muscle in my poetry from working with him and writing short stories. This ability entered my poetry too. But my nature was always a bit more complex in how I moved in the language, so I kind of reverted to that after Ray's death, I admit, when I wrote the book of poems *Moon Crossing Bridge*.

**A.L.** You write about grief in both *Moon Crossing Bridge* and *Dear Ghosts*, especially the loss of Raymond Carver. Can you talk about how the experience of writing those poems differed with fifteen years separating them?

**T.G.** *Moon Crossing Bridge* was like an experience poured molten out of the vat, whereas *Dear Ghosts* was more like an exploratory expedition that has definite branches and themes. *Moon Crossing Bridge* is essentially monothematic, deal-



ing with the death of the beloved. *Dear Ghosts* is very political and yet also very attentive to new elements of my life mixing with the "ghost" elements. I experienced my own mortality in my battle with breast cancer. I nursed my mother through Alzheimer's. I embraced a new love with my Irish partner, the painter and storyteller Josie Gray. I began to write more openly out of my Buddhist readings and experiences, my meeting with Jacucho Setouchi-san and a winter retreat with Thich Nhat Hahn. My Irish life began to become visible in poems like "Lie Down with the Lamb." In many poems though the eyelet sting of the Iraq war makes itself known. I even brought back the poem "Sugarcane" about my first husband, who was in the Vietnam War, a poem that had become marooned in the book *Portable Kisses* where it didn't have the appropriate impact.

**A.L.** You have some emotionally powerful poems in this collection about your experience with cancer. How did writing those poems influence your journey toward healing?

**T.G.** Actually I didn't start writing those poems until after my treatment was com-

ing the experience out there in all its severity seems to help emotions release, and this is part of healing.

**A.L.** The idea of physical, emotional and spiritual transformation arises time and time again in this collection. Can you talk a little about how that theme functions in your writing?

**T.G.** Well, I think my writing has always been about transformation and companionship. Poetry has always been a way for me to stay close to what matters and to acknowledge all the unseen elements that deeply influence one. Those we have loved and who have passed out of our lives through death and who continue to ghost us—I have a form for including them and acknowledging them in my poetry. Life is really about change and those who are most able to move with the changes in a clear-sighted way are going to be the most vibrantly alive. Poetry is really against all those spirit-calcifications that can happen to a person.

**A.L.** Aside from the powerful emotional landscapes you give us access to, you also bring us into different physical landscapes in your poetry: Cairo, Bucharest, and Ire-

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*Moon Crossing Bridge was like an experience poured molten out of the vat, whereas Dear Ghosts was more like an exploratory expedition that has definite branches and themes.*

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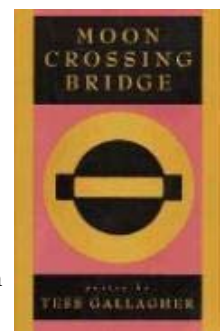
plete. Of course healing is a long process. I think I am still going through it. For as huge an experience as the cancer was, I really wrote relatively little. Maybe that was because I was helping my niece during her pregnancy (she was living with me while I went through chemo) and also taking care of my mother who was gradually needing more attention.

**A.L.** What reactions have you received from readers who may be experiencing similar challenges?

**T.G.** I've actually had a very good response from both men and women who have had breast cancer, but also lots of moving response from those who have lost loved ones to breast cancer. Just get-

land to name a few. How important is travel to your work?

**T.G.** I think it is very important because it is a mechanism of change and of helping one to enter into new realities. It unseats us and invites us. I have just returned from Spain. I had only been there very briefly with Liliana Ursu in about 1991. But this time I was a guest at the Residencia de Estudiantes where Lorca, Buñuel, Dali, Jiménez, etc., were all students in Madrid. It was so exciting to be



where Lorca was formed and to feel those artistic currents still alive there. I also went on a pilgrimage to Granada and actually got to sit at his desk and play his piano there at the summer home of his parents where he went to write in summer. I felt so close to his spirit. It was an important homage. And having my poems go into Spanish was perhaps one of the most important things that has happened to me in the past ten years, for I really feel they are somehow, through the wonderful translations of Eduardo Moga, newly alive.

**A.L.** Can you talk about the role memory plays in your poetry?

**T.G.** Memory is really the deep breath of the present as it has power to reach its full potential of binding the past to the present in new seeing, new feeling, new being.

**A.L.** You're able to walk a fine line between sentimentality and bitterness in your elegies. How do you find that balance?

**T.G.** I do feel pain and sorrow and loss are our teachers, much as one might wish otherwise. They are disconcerting and disorienting. It's only human to hate having to encounter them as the terms of being alive. I guess I have learned to be grateful for being unseated by them. In writing the elegies I learn ways to treasure and even new ways to explore the loss and who that person was. They become more whole in my imagination. Reality is not what it's cracked up to be! you might say.

**A.L.** Robert Frost once said, "To be a poet is a condition, not a profession." What does it mean to you to be a poet?

**T.G.** I am finding out, really, with each poem I write what it is to be a poet. I like it that there is no exact job description for being a poet. I do know that I want to keep alive the music and meaning of this language I was born to, but which is ever changing, both in my apprehension of it and in its daily use. To be a poet, for me, means to maintain a heightened awareness and empathy for the life around me—and this means people, animals, and the trees, birds and living companions and elements of this earth. I feel like a

truth teller—one who makes the truth appear when I am most able. A life without the spirits of those who inform us is not, for instance, a life I could bear, so I make them present for myself and for everyone.

**A.L.** Are you working on a new project? What does the future hold for you?

**T.G.** I am just finishing work on a book of oral stories I have been working on for the past twelve years with Josie Gray. It is called *Barnacle Soup*, and I'll be in Ireland to welcome it with Josie in late September. Blackstaff Press in Belfast is the publisher and it will be available in the U.S. from DuFour Press, which will distribute it.

These are stories from the West of Ireland and told in a wonderful and engaging way by Josie Gray. We will do some occasions in Belfast where I used to live in the mid 70s, for instance at a pub there. But we'll also do a reading in Sligo.

I am also writing new poems, of course. And working on the Everyman's volume of Ray's work. Occasionally I get wonderful travel invitations, and recently I got invited to a festival in Scotland for March. I will also return to Spain in May for a festival. My Irish appearances seem to be more frequent each year, and this means that more poems are starting to come from those trips. ●

## Creative Writing Reading Series



Photo by Shelly Withrow

Visitor N. Scott Momaday with Poetry Professor Garrett Hongo

A reading by poet, fiction writer, and playwright N. Scott Momaday capped the 2007-2008 Creative Writing Reading Series. The May 1 reading and subsequent Kidd Lecture were highlights in a vibrant season of readings and lectures. Each year the Creative Writing Program invites several working writers to read, discuss their writing, and meet with student writers. ●

### 2006-2007 Visiting Writers

Brian Turner & Kate Lynn Hibbard  
(MFA alumni readers)

Scott Nadelson

Maxine Scates

Cai Emmons

Tess Gallagher

Quraysh Ali Lansana

Bret Lott

### 2007-2008 Visiting Writers

Susan Rich & Lillias Bever  
(MFA alumni readers)

David Bradley

Ehud Havazelet & Dorianne Laux

Paul Lisicky & Mark Doty

Gerri Doran

Antonya Nelson

N. Scott Momaday

## Meet the Returning MFA Students

**Leslie Barnard** received her bachelor's degree in Religious Studies from Pomona College in Claremont, CA. As an undergraduate, she studied abroad in Kenya and India. After graduating, Leslie spent two years teaching elementary school on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. She recently received the Penny Wilkes Prize for Writing and the Environment. •

**Anna Drexler** spent two years teaching English language in Tokyo and Bangkok before moving to Eugene to pursue her MFA in fiction. She returned to her hometown in Iowa where she finished her undergraduate degree at Coe College, receiving her BA in Asian Studies. After graduating she worked for an investment firm for two years before deciding to focus on her writing. Currently she is working on a novel based on her time abroad. •

**Sara Keilholtz** received her bachelor's in English from the University of Oregon in 2007. She has been an exchange student in Spain, trekked in the Pyrenees and in Tibet, and studied Spanish at a language school in Mexico. She taught English and hosted a travel TV show in China. She has also been an ESL teacher for French teens in an annual summer program and has taught oral English to middle school students. •

**Kärstin Painter** is a fiction student from Boulder, CO. Before packing up her pica ruler to attend graduate school at Miami University, Kärstin worked as a book editor for Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, an independent academic press. She has an Australian shepherd named Finn. Eugene has helped her to discover both intense grass allergies and *The Sweet Life*. Kärstin plans to spend her summer writing while under the influence of Claritin D. •

**Daphne Sanford-Blacketter** has lived in California, Oregon, Iowa, and Idaho. A graduate of Reed College (BA) and the University of Iowa (MAT), she is still recovering from her senior thesis—something about Anne Carson, triangulated eros, and Oscar Wilde. The former teacher and Boise Public Library assistant

lives with her husband, fiction writer Ryan Blacketter, and their cat, Ernie. Daphne can squeak out "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" on ocarina and sing along with beat-up pianos. She writes poetry and would love to speak Spanish more often.

**Dennis Arlo Voorhees** grew up on a dairy farm in Rutland, MA. He was the captain of the soccer team at Brandeis, until he tired of running and moved to Montana where he received his BA. Before arriving in Eugene, he was a damn good bar cook in Portland, OR, and an adequate ESL teacher in Hungary. •

**Claire Whitenack** graduated with a BA in English from the University of Virginia, then hiked the Appalachian Trail before moving to Eugene. She spends most of her time writing poetry but disappears into the wilderness fairly often, no matter how hard it's raining. She also has an interest in alliterative verse and plans to use her spare time this summer to study Old English and Old Norse. •

**Brenden Willey** is a fiction writer from Kernersville, NC. He has held many jobs, from landscaper to copyeditor. Prior to moving west, he worked at a women's shelter and edited English tests in New York City. He has a BA in English from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the 2008-2009 Margaret McBride Lehrman Fellow. •

**Nikki Zielinski** moved to Eugene from Oakland, CA, where she was working as a sex educator and volunteer ESL tutor. She received her BA from Antioch College with a double major in English Literature and Creative Writing and has worked for *The Antioch Review* and *Livermore Street* literary journal. Since arriving at the University of Oregon, she has been a tutor in the Kidd Tutorial Program and was selected for the Miriam Starlin Poetry Award. Because she finds stasis to be a highly uncomfortable state, she moves frequently and has lived in nearly twenty cities; in order to sit still this summer, she will be writing and reading and running and baking. As usual. •

## The Crystal Palace

I would be lying if I told you  
 I didn't come to love it—  
 legs wound in fishnet, silk  
 of my sweat, scent of cheap  
 sage oil slicking my skin.  
 That I didn't feel  
 a pull in my body  
 when I bent  
 across the bar to pour  
 ampoules of bourbon  
 down every throat that opened,  
 didn't leash their eyes to my back  
 as I leaned toward the flame  
 of an offered light,  
 didn't enjoy the daytime secret  
 of cigarette-soaked neon night  
 caught in the net of my hair.  
 Adolescence had aroused in me  
 the pleasure of being  
 desired, of stripping  
 away the binding and offering myself  
 to the suckling mouths  
 of those who overflowed  
 with lust and dollar bills.  
 So though I'm moved to hide it,  
 I'd be lying if I told you  
 I regret those nights  
 spent half undressed,  
 back when I bent  
 my body like a hook  
 and gathered in the men  
 to drown beneath my breast.

By **Nikki Zielinski**  
 2008 Starlin Poetry Award Recipient



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS—Continued from page 3

with an opportunity to advance their understanding of and skills in applying the essential theory and craft of fiction writing: plotting; characterization and rendering. Students will read selected classic short fiction texts and write "études" based upon them, some of which will be discussed in a workshop-like context.

**Instructor:** *Bradley*

**CRWR 417: Kidd Tutorial I**

This is Section 1 of a three-part intensive, yearlong study of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. The tutorial sequence includes development, completion, and presentation of an individual line-of-inquiry project. Admission is by application only.

**Instructors:** *Biebelle, Buchanan, Sunderland, Braerman, Knight*

**CRWR 607: Seminar – Poetic Meter and Traditional Form**

Primarily for MFA students in poetry, this is a craft seminar in traditional poetic meter and form. We'll begin by studying metrics and syllabics, briefly looking at the founding of English meter during the Renaissance and then taking our study through the nineteenth century on up to current practice. The main focus of the class, however, will be on the varieties and persistence of traditional meter and form in modern and contemporary poetic practice. We'll study the sonnet, villanelle, sestina, various stanzaic structures, blank verse, and perhaps one genre (the pastoral elegy or the prospect ode). Over the last two or three weeks of the course, we'll take a very close look at figuration—figural propositions, narrative analogies, image chains, and the notion of a poem as a metonymic/synecdochal complex— not simple poetic devices used in isolation, but the poet's conscious figurative patterning of a poem in conjunction with its rhetorical structure, so as to constitute, arguably, the survival of a kind of allegory in contemporary practice. Important to these studies will be at least an appreciation of and an acquaintanceship with (if not a grounding in) the Anglo-American tradition of verse. Poets: Wyatt, Surrey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Wheatley, Hardy, Yeats, Frost, Pound, Stevens, Kees, Thomas, Bishop, Hecht, Justice, Van Duyn, James Wright, Plath, Levine, Hass, C.K. Williams, Levis, Hirsch, St. John, Graham, Wood, Jarman, Schnackenberg, and Digges. Background and reserve readings in Thompson, Fus-

sell, Auerbach, Bloom, de Man, Sacks, and Hecht. Weekly exercises and a final portfolio. Lectures, in-class scansion and exercises, and discussion. **Instructor:** *Hongo*

**CRWR 607: Seminar – Memoir & Personal Essay**

The process of discovery is at the heart of writing memoir pieces and personal essays. What we write about needn't be extreme or newsworthy, but it has to have caught the writer's imagination, shifted the writer's world in some way, and that shift is what the writer takes the time to carefully illuminate and examine. Topics of discussion will include the construction of self as a character, the persona we choose to adopt, the question of truth versus narrative shaping, structural choices, and the necessary self-implication we must be willing to undertake. We will examine short-short, lyric, and experimental essays alongside more traditional essays from a diverse group of writers. Exercises, two essays, and one seven- to ten-page paper. **Instructor:** *Drummond*

**CRWR 635: MFA Poetry Workshop**

Concentration on student writing in a workshop setting. We write within the cross-currents of contemporary American poetry—often it forms the bulk of our reading and the basis of our poetics. Poets in the UK share our language but are in other ways as different from us as writers from Croatia or the Azores. As we move through our graduate workshop—writing poems weekly from prompts, discussing our poems—we will also read capaciously (and closely) new writing from the UK. Our accompanying texts will be *New British Poetry*, edited by Charles Simic and Don Paterson, and the June/July 2004 issue of *Poetry* (special issue devoted to contemporary British poetry). **Instructor:** *Doran*

**CRWR 645: MFA Fiction Workshop**

Concentration on student writing in a workshop setting. **Instructor:** *Havazelet*

**CRWR Winter 2009 Course Schedule**

**CRWR 230: Introduction to Poetry Writing**

Introduction to forms and techniques of writing poetry. **Instructors:** *Akdeniz, Peñaloza, Johnson*

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS—Continued on page 11

**MFA Student & Alumni Accomplishments**

**J.T. Bushnell** made two journal appearances this spring: "Runner" in the March/April issue of *The Rambler* and "Listening" in *The Tusculum Review*. J.T. was also awarded a place in the first annual summer fiction seminar at the Elizabeth Kostova Foundation in Sozopol, Bulgaria, on the Black Sea Coast.

**Drea Brown** was awarded a Fellowship from Cave Canem, which will afford her study at the Cave Canem summer residencies for the next five years.

**Elyse Fenton** received this year's Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry given by *Nimrod International Journal*.

**Sara Johnson** won an AWP Intro Journals Award for her poem "Avocado." She received second place in the *Iron Horse Literary Review's* Discovered Voices contest, and her poem "Resurrection Fern" will appear in *Iron Horse's* National Poetry Month 2009 issue. Sara's poem "Hunting" was recently accepted for publication by *Willow Springs*.

**Matt Rader's** second book, *Living Things*, was published by Nightwood Editions in April 2008.

**Brian Simoneau's** poem "Demolition" appeared in the Fall/Winter 2007 issue of *Poet Lore*. His "Funeral with Cherry Blossoms Falling" appeared online in the *Boxcar Poetry Review* in January 2008.

**Brenden Willey** received the Margaret McBride Lehrman Fellowship from the Graduate School, an award giving him a \$10,000 stipend for 2008-2009 studies. ●

**Call for Student / Alumni News:**

Let us know how you're doing—whether you're a current or former CRWR student. Tell us about:

- your experience in the Program
- your accomplishments
- *current students:* what you look forward to after graduation
- *alumni:* what you've been doing since

Submit your update to:  
Creative Writing Program:

5243 University of Oregon | Eugene OR 97403-5243  
or via web: [crwrweb@uoregon.edu](http://crwrweb@uoregon.edu)

## Creative Writing Program Awards

With the help of generous sponsors, the Program awards three prizes to graduate and undergraduate writers each year.

The **Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Award** honors a promising 1st-year poet with a \$5,000 stipend, to allow her the freedom to pursue her writing in the summer between her 1st and 2nd year in the MFA program. Established in 1997 by the late Glenn Starlin as a gift to his wife, Miriam, the award went to **Drea Brown** for 2007 and **Nikki Zielinski** for 2008 (see poem, p. 8).

The **Logsdon Award** is given each year to a 2nd-year MFA fiction writer for work of exceptional merit. Recent recipients were **Tim Dalton** (2007) and **Tobey Ward** (2008).

New this year is the **Penny Wilkes Environmental Writing Prize** for poetry or fiction writing in the environment. The prize is awarded to both undergraduate and graduate students in the CRWR program whose work concerns the natural world, landscape and place, environmental ethics and concerns, and similar subjects. This year's winners are undergraduate **Nick Bernard** for his sequence poem "The Structure of Loneliness" and graduate students **Claire Whitenack** for "The Green Man Greet the Night" and **Leslie Barnard** for "Bold." •

## Congratulations MFA Graduates



The CRWR Graduates of 2008 pose together for one last photo.

**Back Row** (from left to right): Will Fleming, Jenn Kepka, Jessica Murakami, Matt Rader, Jeremy Simmons, Chris Roethle, and Thomas Watson.  
**Front Row** (from left to right): Chloe Garcia-Roberts, Sara Johnson, Brian Young, Drea Brown, and Tobey Ward.

...and the Graduates of 2007.

**Back Row** (from left to right): J.T. Bushnell, Roby Conner, Cindy Murphy, and Chris Roethle.

**Front Row** (from left to right): Eliza Rotterman, Vanessa Norton, Elyse Fenton, Tim Dalton, Kelsie Gray, and Jessica Murakami.



## Giving to CRWR

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the

- Creative Writing Program General Fund     Logsdon Award  
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Be sure to designate your gift to one of the funds listed along with solicitation code AS0109 in the "Memo" portion of your check.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS – Continued from page 9

**CRWR 240: Introduction to Fiction Writing**

Introduction to forms and techniques of writing fiction. **Instructors:** *Goldberg, Malick, Roos*

**CRWR 330: Intermediate Poetry Writing**  
Intermediate-level study of poetry writing. **Instructor:** *Roethle*

**CRWR 336: Creative Non-Fiction Writing**  
This course will introduce undergraduates to the genre of creative nonfiction (sometimes called literary nonfiction or narrative nonfiction and the subject of great debate in terms of “Truth”) and deepen their understanding and facility with the various techniques, some of which come from fiction and poetry (for instance, narrative arc and characterization from fiction; attention to language and rhythm from poetry). Subgenres we will study closely include memoir, personal essay, landscape narrative, portrait/profile, and nature. We will also examine the short-short and unconventional structure. Lots of exercises and two creative pieces, some of which will be discussed in a workshop-like setting. **Instructor:** *Drummond*

**CRWR 413: Modern Allegorical – Literature for Poets**

In this reading course, we’ll take up discussion about the nature of allegory, its symbolic potential for us as writers, and its incarnation in contemporary literatures. Our springboard will be excerpts from medieval and Renaissance allegories: William Langland’s *Piers Plowman* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queen*. Contemporary readings will likely include selections from Brigit Pegeen Kelly’s *The Orchard*, Maurice Manning’s *Lawrence Booth’s Book of Visions*, Anne Carson’s *Autobiography of Red*, Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*, and Jose Saramago’s *Blindness* and/or *The Stone Raft*. We will also watch “The Bothered Man,” directed by Jens Lien. The course will emphasize traditional close reading of texts. Written work in the first half of the course will include several shorter response papers; in the second half of the course, we will attempt a longer allegorical poem or sequence. Willingness to read deeply and participate in class discussion is essential. **Instructor:** *Doran*

**CRWR 418: Kidd Tutorial II**

This is Section 2 of a three-part intensive, yearlong study of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. The tutorial sequence includes development, completion, and presentation of an individual line-of-inquiry project. **Instructors:** *Biebelle, Buchanan, Sunderland, Braverman, Knight*

**CRWR 607: Fiction Seminar – Chekhov**  
Chekhov is considered by most to be the father of the short story, by many its greatest master. In this seminar we will read the stories and one play closely, paying particular attention to matters of craft and form, how Chekhov while inventing many of the techniques of the modern short story (and play) constructed his works. Requirements include two 7-10 page critical papers, using the secondary as well as primary texts; a formal in-class presentation; a thorough knowledge of the *oeuvre* beyond the reading list; active participation in class discussion. **Instructor:** *Havazelet*

**CRWR 635: MFA Poetry Workshop**  
Concentration on student writing in a workshop setting. **Instructor:** *Hongo*

**CRWR 645: MFA Fiction Workshop**  
Concentration on student writing in a workshop setting. **Instructor:** *Bradley*

**CRWR Spring 2009 Course Schedule**

**CRWR 230: Introduction to Poetry Writing**  
Introduction to forms and techniques of writing poetry. **Instructors:** *Akdeniz, Peñaloza, Johnson*

**CRWR 240: Introduction to Fiction Writing**  
Introduction to forms and techniques of writing fiction. **Instructors:** *Goldberg, Malick, Roos*

**CRWR 330: Intermediate Poetry Writing**  
Intermediate-level study of poetry writing. **Instructor:** *Roethle*

**CRWR 414: Literature for Fiction Writers – Models in Problem-Solving**  
Creative writers tend to view literary texts not as objects of art to be admired, but as exemplars of solutions to classic narrative

problems to be studied and emulated. Writers want to take a text apart to see how it works. This course provides undergraduates with the opportunity to do this. Students will learn and apply reading styles and analytical modes appropriate to literary production, as opposed to literary theory or cultural studies. The course is reading, not writing, intensive; this is not a workshop. Students will read three novels and several shorter texts and written assignments will include close-reading analyses, emulations of exemplar texts and short essays analyzing and/or emulating approaches to a specific fictional problem. **Instructor:** *Bradley*

**CRWR 419: Kidd Tutorial III**  
This is Section 3 of a three-part intensive, yearlong study of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. The tutorial sequence includes development, completion, and presentation of an individual line-of-inquiry project. **Instructors:** *Biebelle, Buchanan, Sunderland, Braverman, Knight*

**CRWR 607: Poetry Seminar – Robert Lowell**  
Polemical, political, lyrical, transformative, self-aggrandizing, self-immolating – Robert Lowell was one of the twentieth century’s pivotal poets and most fascinating figures. In this course, we will read as much of the “complete” Lowell as we can, along with considerable period and current criticism, in order to trace two parallel lines of inquiry: the path of Lowell’s poetic development, from the earliest formal work through the late “verse autobiography”; and the attending (and diverging) critical thinking about his poetry. Of *For the Union Dead*, Thomas Parkinson wrote “it is good to see poetry treating the moment where person and history meet.” Perhaps the two have never met so violently (and at times tenderly) as in Robert Lowell. “We are words,” he wrote in a poem dedicated to John Berryman; “John, we used the language as if we made it.” **Instructor:** *Doran*

**CRWR 635: MFA Poetry Workshop**  
Concentration on student writing in a workshop setting. **Instructor:** *Hongo*

**CRWR 645: MFA Fiction Workshop**  
Concentration on student writing in a workshop setting. **Instructor:** *Drummond*



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## CRWR Summer Session 2008

### CRWR 410: Writing TV Drama

June 16 - June 23, MTWUF, 8:00am - 12:00  
& 1:00 - 5:00pm, 4 credits

This week-long intensive course will replicate the real, intensive experience of the "writer's room" on a TV drama. The class will begin with the genuine pilot episode of a drama to be aired in the 2008 season. Students will conceive and pitch a follow-on storyline, develop an outline, and write a portion of the script. Each day will consist of an hour of screening, at least an hour of lecture, and detailed analysis of television drama. This will include the history of TV drama, from live productions of the Golden Age (1948-1960), the mass appeal genre works that dominated the 1960s-1970s, and the socially daring, more experimental series aired since market expansion in 1987, such as *The Sopranos*, *House*, and *Lost*. A final project, consisting of a substantial TV script, will be required. **Instructor:** *Michael Cassutt*

Register online at [www.uoregon.edu](http://www.uoregon.edu)  
Registration opens May 5, 2008.

### CRWR 199: Character and Point of View

June 23 - 27, MTWUF, 6:00 - 7:50pm,  
1 credit

Whose story is it, which character should tell the story, and what does your character desire? **Instructor:** *Leslie Barnard*

### CRWR 199: Plot, Narrative, Drive, and Structure

July 7 - 11, MTWUF, 6:00 - 7:50pm,  
1 credit

Examines three separate, yet interdependent elements of fiction and the options and obstacles they present to the writer.

**Instructor:** *Leslie Barnard*

### CRWR 199: Time, Scenes, and Flashbacks

July 21 - 25, MTWUF, 6:00 - 7:50pm,  
1 credit

Examines the elements of scene, summary, flashbacks, backstory, and transitions. **Instructor:** *Leslie Barnard*

### CRWR 199: Style, Detail, and Dialogue

August 4 - 8, MTWUF, 6:00 - 7:50pm,  
1 credit

Explores how style derives from words chosen and sentences crafted; how dialogue defines character. **Instructor:** *Leslie Barnard*

### CRWR 199: Fiction Workshop

June 23 - July 17, MTWU, 3:00 - 5:20pm,  
4 credits

Concentration on student fiction writing. **Instructor:** *Jennifer Kepka*

### CRWR 199: Poetry Workshop

July 21 - August 14, MTWU, 3:00 - 5:20pm,  
4 credits

Concentration on student poems. **Instructor:** *Drea Brown*

For more information about the University of Oregon's summer writing courses, please contact the Creative Writing Program.