



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

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Literary Reference

NEWSLETTER OF THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

Program Balanced By New Fiction Writer

The Creative Writing Program is pleased to welcome fiction writer Jason Brown as an Assistant Professor of Fiction starting in Winter 2012.

A native of Maine, Brown received his MFA from Cornell and was both a Wallace Stegner and Truman Capote Fellow at Stanford University. He has won numerous fiction prizes and his work has appeared in numerous magazines and collections, including *The Best American Short Stories* (1996, 2005, and 2010), *Harper's*, *Open City*, *The Georgia Review*, *TriQuarterly*, and *The Atlantic*. His first collection of stories, *Driving the Heart & Other Stories*, was published by W. W. Norton & Company in 1999, and his second, *Why the Devil Chose New England for His Work: Stories* was published by Open City/Grove in 2007. He has recently completed a draft of a novel and is at work on a memoir and third collection of short stories.



Photograph: Stephanie Permain

In order to learn more about Brown's views of his craft and teaching, we asked him a few questions:

When did you first start reading and writing stories, and when did you first start to think about devoting yourself to writing?

Most of my teachers would be surprised that I am using my brain to make a living. I was in my own world, I think, and when I was about ten I started to write down stories.

Who has influenced your writing, both its aims and its forms? Whom do you consider to be your mentors?

Most writers and readers have an evolving relationship to their influences. In the beginning I would say Salinger,

and now W.G. Sebald and Alice Munro. The essays of Baldwin. The list is long.

Many of your stories offer a look at the ways people confront their difficult circumstances – both psychologically and physically – with a great deal of sympathy. As a writer, where do you think this comes from? Is it something you are aware of as you write?

I think stories should be about living. Stories can be entertaining, but they do not exist to entertain us. They help us make sense of experience, they help us make sense of our most difficult experiences, and they help us become better people by teaching us empathy.

Jason Brown
Continued on page 2

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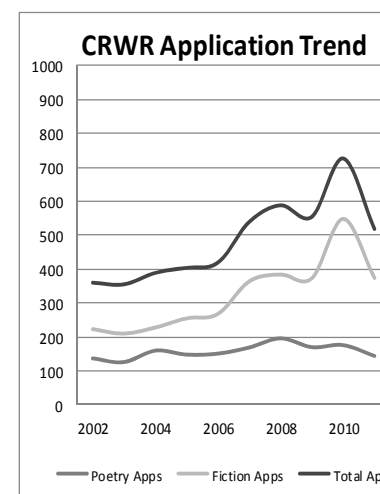
CONGRATULATIONS, 2011 GRADS!

- Monica Brown
- Elizabeth Buchanan
- Owen Cooney
- Michael Flory Ogletree
- Joseph Ireland
- Michelle Peñaloza
- Arsevi Seyran
- Natasha Sunderland
- Nikki Zielinski



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MFA Applications Continue to Rise

Although the graph to the left appears to show a reduction in applications to the MFA program for fall entry 2011, the opposite is in fact the case, at least in terms of completed applications. While it is true that the Program's adoption of the Graduate School's new fully-automated online application seems to have resulted in slightly fewer applications during the transition period, the total number of completed applications actually increased over 2009. The MFA program continues to be ranked by leading organizations and publications among the top 10 programs in the nation, and this year *Poets & Writers* magazine moved the Program up to 8th place from 10th, a change that will likely add even more applications to next years' pool! •

Application Statistics		
Year	Total	% Completed
2007	539	79%
2008	588	77%
2009	554	79%
2010	726	70%
2011	518	93%

Faculty Focus

Daniel Anderson's essay, "Cruising Through the Necropolis," will appear in the Summer 2011 issue of *The Missouri Review*. In July, he will serve on the faculty of the Seawanee Writers' Conference.

Geri Doran received the inaugural UO Arts Council Creative Fellowship to work on a collection of poems, gave a reading in the Poet's Voice series at Harvard University, and had poems published in *New England Review* and *Subtropics*. Her second collection of poems, *Sanderlings*, will be published this summer.

Garrett Hongo's poem, "Pupukea Shell" went live on SLATE (audio as well) in May 2011. His book *Coral Road*, will be published on October 4, 2011, by Alfred A. Knopf. He was also awarded a Senior Research Grant by a the College of Arts and Sciences for research on a new book. •

Literary Reference

Program Director
George Rowe

Business Manager
Julia A. Schewanick

Special Projects GTF
Beth Buchanan

Faculty
Danny Anderson
David Bradley
Geri Doran
Laurie Lynn Drummond
Ehud Havazelet
Garrett Hongo

Visiting Instructors
Cai Emmons
Chris Roethle

Creative Writing Program
T (541) 346-3944 | F (541) 346-0537
Email: crwrweb@uoregon.edu

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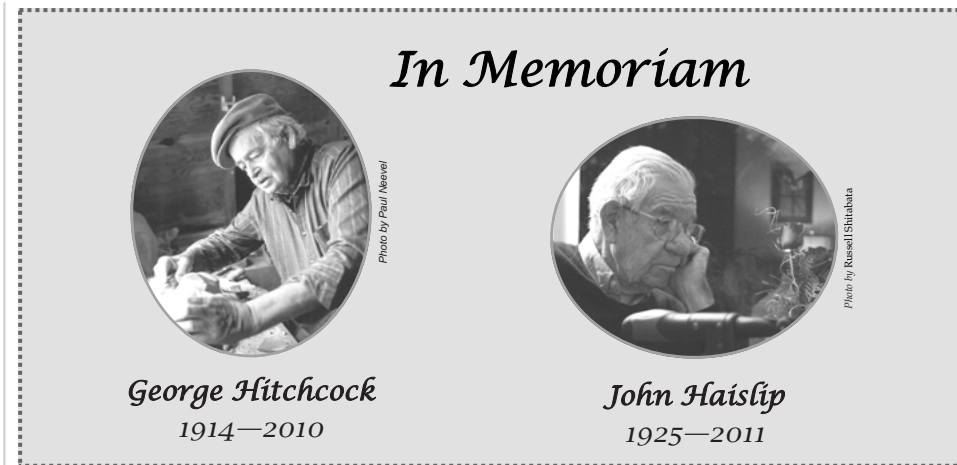
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Jason Brown

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The natural world of your stories is beautifully rendered. How do you employ setting as you are writing, and what do you think a setting's relationship is to storytelling?

I do think of place as character in story. Most of the people I know in my daily life do not have an intense relationship to place. But for most of human history cosmology, culture, place, and identity were inextricably linked. In contemporary urban and suburban life, we have lost touch with place and with our own particular tribal history. I try to portray some of that longing for place, for a sense of belonging, and for community.

As a professor of writing, what do you hope to teach your students about writing and about being a writer?

I hope I can be helpful in many ways. I want both to hold the bar high, so to speak, and to encourage students to keep striving toward their own better selves as writers.

Can you tell us about your current project?

I can't say too much about my current work because, like Hemingway, I am superstitious. I am working on a novel about a remote, fictional island in the Bay of Fundy. I am also working on a memoir and

more short stories. The short story is my favorite form.

What readings do you suggest – both from contemporary authors and the traditional cannon – and what are you reading now?

Right now I am reading *The Duke of Deception* by Geoffrey Wolff, a memoir about his father. I just finished Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*, a book I read years ago. I've been reading Per Peterson, a contemporary writer I like, and I recently reread Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*. I have also been dabbling in Elizabeth Bishop's poems about Nova Scotia. I

would suggest that students develop a canon of books they should know about, going all the way back to the Greeks. It is not hard to form a list by checking through anthologies and asking professors and other writers. They should read through everything, and then go back and explore in more depth those writers who speak to their own emerging visions. It is a lifetime project. Professors and other writers, both living and dead, are there to help guide students and to help them learn from what they read. •



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2010 – 2011 Reading Series



Kent Meyers, Fiction Writer

Writer-in-residence at Black Hills State University, Kent Meyers, read from his novel-in-progress in October. Meyers is the author of a memoir, a collection of short fiction, and three novels, most recently *Twisted Tree*, which won the Society of Midland Authors award.



Katrina Roberts, Poet

November brought Katrina Roberts who read a selection of her work. Her second book of poems, *The Quick*, was selected as part of the Pacific Northwest Poetry Series. Her poems appear in several anthologies, including *The Pushcart Prize Anthology* and *The Best American Poetry*.



Tyehimba Jess, Poet

In February, New York-based poet Tyehimba Jess read from his book, *leadbelly*, an exploration of the blues musician Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter, and his work in progress. His work has been featured in numerous anthologies, including *Soulfires: Young Black Men in Love and Violence* and *Slam: The Competitive Art of Performance Poetry*.



Jonathan Raymond, Fiction Writer

The Half-Life (2004) author Jonathan Raymond started off Spring term with a reading from his novel-in-progress. Based on a story from his 2008 collection *Livability*, he co-wrote the 2008 film *Wendy and Lucy*. In 2009, he won the Ken Kesey Award for the Novel for the collection.



William Logan, Poet

Poet William Logan read from his 2008 collection, *Strange Flesh*, in April. A regular critic for the *New York Times Book Review*, his honors include the Citation for Excellence in Reviewing from the National Book Critics Circle and the Peter I.B. Lavan Award.



Margot Livesey, Fiction Writer

For the final reading in May, the program welcomed Margot Livesey, the author of a collection of stories and six novels, including *Eva Moves the Furniture* and most recently *The House on Fortune Street*, which won the L.L.Winship/PEN New England Award. She has taught at the Iowa Writers' Workshop and Emerson College, where she is currently the distinguished writer-in-residence. •

New Students

Continued from page 5

Tarn Painter-MacArthur (poetry) was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, and is a 2009 alumnus of the University of the Pacific's Eberhardt School of Business (BSc, Finance). Despite his major, Tarn spent much of his final two years at Pacific studying poetry and literature under the tutelage of Dr. Camille Norton.

Since graduating, Tarn has been traveling, living, writing and working throughout Latin America (Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina), and Asia (China, Lao, Cambodia, Thailand). "This time abroad has proved invaluable to both my growth as a person and a poet," said Tarn.

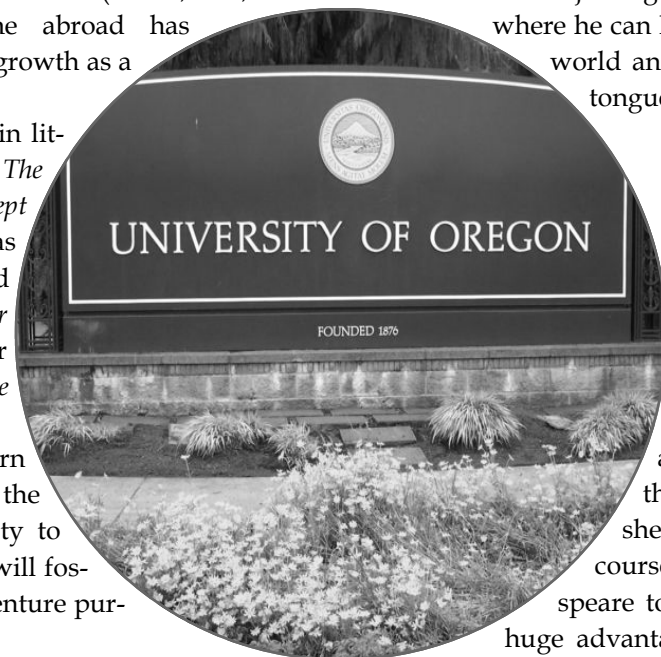
Tarn's work has appeared in literary magazines, including *The Columbia Review*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Blue Earth Review*. It has also been anthologized in *Leonard Cohen: You're Our Man*. His poem "To the Winter Woods" was nominated for *The Best of the Net Anthology* (2010).

An avid outdoorsman, Tarn looks forward to his move to the Northwest and the opportunity to study in an environment that will foster both his academic and adventure pursuits.

Barry Pearce's (fiction) parents emigrated from Ireland in the '60s. He grew up in Chicago and attended Northwestern and New Mexico State universities. After working as a reporter, editor, and publisher for more than a decade, he left journalism – for good this time, honest – a few years ago. Since then he has been teaching at the City Colleges of Chicago and working to abolish the death penalty in Illinois, which became the 16th state to end capital punishment in April. His fiction has appeared in *The Cimarron Review*, *The Colorado Review*, and *Other Voices*. A Capricorn and member of several twelve-step programs, his hobbies include Reiki, animal husbandry, shamanism, and crystals (Folgers).

Michael "Paul" Pickering (poetry) was raised in Selma, Alabama, in the company of ghosts. He completed an undergraduate degree in English at Auburn

University. Soon after, he moved to Birmingham, Alabama, to start a coffee company with friends. After years of spreading the good news of fair trade coffee and Higher Ground Roasters, Paul made a midcourse correction. In 2010 he completed a Master's degree in English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Currently, Paul resides at Camp 4 in Yosemite Valley. Moving delicately across the granite landscape, the climbers here interpret the stone through motion. In a sense, they let the stones speak. Paul looks forward to joining the MFA community at Oregon where he can learn to listen to the things of the world and work to translate their unique tongues.



Maria Thomas (fiction), from London, UK, received her BA in American and English Lit from the University of Sussex, where a year abroad also took her to the University of Pennsylvania. She was awarded a teaching fellowship at the University of Virginia, where she taught undergraduate level courses in everything from Shakespeare to Twentieth century lit and took huge advantage of the fiction faculty! Maria graduated with an MA in English from UVA in 2010 and is thrilled to be headed back to America so soon, especially to Oregon which is completely new territory for her, having never travelled farther west than Ohio. Maria can't wait to begin her MFA but hopes Eugene is NOT as rainy as London!

Aaron Tidwell (fiction) grew up deep within the Choctaw Nation in a little town named Bokchito, a tribal word meaning "Big Creek." As a writer of both Irish and Native American heritage, Aaron has developed an avid affection for cultural storytelling and folklore. He has studied playwriting at Southeastern Oklahoma State and creative writing at Arizona State University. During his time at ASU, he co-founded the writing workshop *scribes@asu* and served as the workshop director for two years. Aaron is currently a first reader for *Hayden's Ferry Review*. In his free time, he enjoys TV adaptations of classic literature, the BBC, and all levels of football. •

Current Student News and Awards

The Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Prize



Luke Hollis is the first male recipient of the Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Prize since it was opened to both men and women in 2010.

"I was excited and grateful to find that I had been selected to receive the Starlin award. Throughout the summer I plan on continuing my translation work and my research in the history of my family's immigration from Paris to Gage County, Nebraska."

Like Luke, Mrs. Starlin frequently writes poetry about her family. When she and Luke got together on Tuesday, June 7, they discussed their mutual interest and shared their poems with one another. •

Richard & Juliette Logsdon Award for Creative Fiction Writing



Sarah Hulse was selected as the winner of this year's Logsdon Award primarily, on the strength of her story, "Sine Die." This complex and moving story of a promising politician whose career has been ended by a neurological illness that leaves him unable to form new memories was a powerful realization of Hulse's overall academic excellence in artistic form. •

The Karen Jackson Ford Poetry Prize



Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach received the 2011 Karen Jackson Ford Prize for "Learning Yiddish."

"I am so honored and grateful to have been awarded the Karen Jackson Ford Poetry Prize. My work is deeply concerned with my family's rich history of suffering as a result of our Jewish identity, the refugee immigrant experience, and the strife endured in the former USSR. I feel that it is my poetic responsibility to record my story and that of my relatives, and this award has not only reaffirmed my mission, but inspired a deeper commitment to exploring the role of displacement and Diaspora within my life and my poetry." •

The Walter & Nancy Kidd Memorial Writing Competition in Poetry & Fiction

Poet William Logan and fiction writer Margot Livesey judged the 2011 Kidd Memorial Writing Competition. Winners were announced on May 12, 2011, at the Creative Writing Program's Reading Series event featuring Margot Livesey. •



2011 Kidd Prize Winners (l-r): **Debbi Cassidy** (F3), **Bailey Meyers** (F2), **Ian Geronimo** (F1), **Kevin Burnside** (P3), **Maya Rinta** (P2), **Edward Earl** (P1)

Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach ('12) received honorable mention for "This Is Where I Keep You" in the Fall 2010 Spoon River Poetry Review Contest.

Matt Farrell's ('12) story "The Joys of Watching a Dog Fall Apart" is forthcoming from *Switchback*, and his poem "A banner stretched across the street announces the Annual Founders Day Celebration of Tomales, California" is forthcoming from *Arcadia*.

Sarah Hulse ('12) took top honors for "Sine Die" in the 2010 Willow Springs Fiction contest. The award includes both a cash prize and publication of the winning story.

Michelle Peñaloza's ('11) poems appeared in *Mythium*, *Nashville Review*, *Lantern Review*, and she has others forthcoming from *Birmingham Poetry Review*. She also won the 2010 Duckabush Prize for Poetry, awarded by *A River and Sound Review*.

Nikki Zielinski's ('11) poems appeared in the Winter 2011 issue of *New Madrid Journal of Contemporary Literature*; four more are forthcoming in *Birmingham Poetry Review* #39.

Zonde Zinke ('12) received the Graduate School's 2011 Margaret McBride Lehrman Fellowship. •

Call for Student / Alumni News:

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

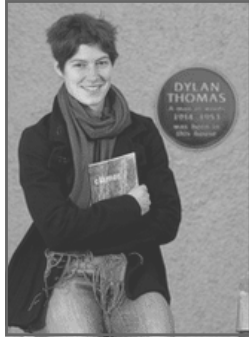
- your experience in the Program
- your accomplishments
- *current students*: what you look forward to after graduation
- *alumni*: what you've been doing since

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Alumni News and Awards

The 2010 University of Wales Dylan Thomas Award



Oregon graduate **Elyse Fenton** ('07) won this year's Dylan Thomas Prize for *Clamor*, her collection of poetry partly written while her husband was deployed in Baghdad.

Clamor is the first volume of poetry to receive the award, and it has been widely praised by US critics for interweaving the brutality of warfare with a love story. Poet Gwyneth Lewis, a member of the Dylan Thomas

prize judging panel, found "The book's vision of the relationship between love and war more than worthy to be considered in the tradition of Dylan Thomas's work," and praised *Clamor* as "poetry of a very high order."

The prize of roughly \$45,000 is designed to encourage writers under the age of 30, and the competition is open to any work written in the English language.

Clamor also received the 2011 Texas Institute of Letters' Bob Bush Memorial Award for a First Book of Poetry (a \$1,000 prize). •

The Briar Cliff Review

Leslie Barnard ('09) was awarded \$1000 by *The Briar Cliff Review* for her story, "Drift River," which will also appear in the Spring 2011 issue of the magazine. *The Briar Cliff Review* showcases fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, reviews, and art that is evocative of the Big Sioux River Basin in South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska. •

Lory Bedikian ('02) is the winner of the 2010 Philip Levine Prize in Poetry for her manuscript, *The Book of Lamenting*.

Joan Dobbie ('88) is the co-editor of the poetry anthology *Before We Have Nowhere to Stand: Palestine/Israel Poets Respond to the Struggle*, a collection featuring over 70 poets forthcoming from Lost Horse Press in Fall 2011.

Jim Heynen ('74) has two books forthcoming from Milkweed: *The Fall of '99*, in the Spring of 2012, and *Ordinary Sins*, a collection of short-shorts, in Spring 2013.

Kathryn Kramer ('75) has a collection of poetry, "Photo-graphing Love," due out in early summer by Authorhouse Press.

Marilyn Krysl's ('68) *Swear the Burning Vow: Selected and New Poems* was a finalist for the Colorado Book Award. She was also published in IMPROV 2010 Anthology of Colorado Poets, *ORION*, *Pilgrimage*, and Vol. 35.

Nick Malick's ('10) short story "The Boy in the Lake" was a runner up in the *Kenyan Review's* annual contest and will be published in their 2012 issue.

Susan Rich ('96) has published work in *Oregon Quarterly*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Southern Review*, and *Poetry International*. Her third collection of poems, *The Alchemist's Kitchen*, was published in May. Her travel piece, *Blue Gates*, will be featured in *Best Women's Travel Writing 2010*.

Jeremy Simmons ('08) published "The Bluebird" in *A Capella Zoo*, and "Known Things" is forthcoming from *The Blue Collar Review*. •



The 2010 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award

Sara Elizabeth Johnson ('09) won a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award for her poems, some of which have most recently appeared in *Best New Poets 2009*, *New England Review*, and *Iron Horse Literary Review*.

In addition to receiving the Rona Jaffe Award, a prize totaling \$25,000, Johnson also received a 2009-2010 fellowship from the Fine Arts Work Center. •



Oregon Literary Arts Fellowships

Michelle Peñaloza ('11) won the Women Writers Fellowship, a special fund endowed by the Ralph L. Smith Foundation for women writers.

Brenden Willey ('09) won The Walt Morey Fellowship for fiction writers living in Oregon.

Both awards grant writers living in Oregon \$2,500 and are sponsored by Oregon Literary Arts. •

Individual Artist Fellowship from the Oregon Arts Council

Michael Copperman ('07) was one of thirteen recipients of the 2011 Individual Fellowships, "awarded to performers and writers of exceptional talent and demonstrated ability, professional achievement and continuing dedication to an artistic discipline." •

Sarah Blakley-Cartwright (fiction) graduated from Barnard College with a degree in English/Creative Writing. In the year since, she wrote a novel for Little Brown Books for Young Readers, a tie-in with the Warner Brothers film "Red Riding Hood." She can't wait to get to Oregon, where she hopes to do a lot of writing and a little hiking.

Luke Blanchard (fiction) grew up in Virginia and currently lives in Vermont, where he works two restaurant jobs. After correctly identifying a rose-breasted grosbeak at the birdfeeder, the day of this brief bio's composition, Luke realized that perhaps he would enjoy bird-watching. Luke also realized that a hobby like bird-watching, compounded with his growing love of history books and his recent interest in cycling due to a bum knee that can no longer withstand the strain of running, is just one more step toward becoming a middle-aged man at twenty-five years old. Luke is thrilled to be moving across the country to join the MFA program at the UO, and Luke's bum knee is even more thrilled that he will not be working in restaurants come September.

Benjamin Evans (poetry) is the editor and founder of the international arts review, *Fogged Clarity* (<http://foggedclarity.com>), and the collected book of poetry, fiction, and visual art entitled *Fogged Clarity 1*. In 2006 he graduated from Colgate University, where he studied Kantian theory with Joseph Wagner and played for the 1-AA national championship as the football team's starting fullback. Upon graduating from Colgate, Ben took a position with a non-profit in Washington D.C. where he worked for nearly a year before departing for a small village in Eastern France to serve as an au pair and journalist. After months of reading Nabokov and Richard Hugo in the bathtub of his upstairs apartment, he became convinced that a creative life was the only one worth liv-

ing and returned to the states with fresh eyes. He currently lives between Muskegon, MI, and Chicago and earns his keep as a G.E.D. instructor and reading specialist at an alternative high school.

Aaron Fai (fiction) grew up in Los Angeles, and lives in Woodland, CA. He received his B.A. in English and Spanish at UCLA and became a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Kyrgyz Republic. After a year of research in China, he enrolled at UC Davis' Creative Writing Program where he is currently finishing his M.A. His literary interests include travel literature, translation, novellas, religion, and, most recently, poetry.

Tina Mozelle Harris (poetry) grew up in the company of rock hounds. In Pell City, AL, she spent considerable time immersed in her grandparents' obsession. Their yearly migrations to the desert where they wandered in search of precious stones taught her something about the pursuit of beauty. You've

got to dig down in the dirt to find what's waiting. At Oregon, she's ready to get her hands dirty.

Jenna Lynch (poetry) grew up in Yorktown Heights, New York, and received her BA in English from the University of Maryland. She has spent the past few years after college working in the non-profit field, most recently for Girls Incorporated, where she works in communications and also assists in running after school programs for middle school girls. Poetry has always been her passion, and she draws inspiration from silent films, feminist theory, and Freudian thought. Her work has been published in the independent literary journal *That Far Down* and *Stirring*, an online literary magazine. Jenna is excited to move across the country, write in a new environment, and learn the correct pronunciation of Oregon.

