

UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

Friday, March 23, 2007

Interim editor: Gerry Shapiro

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"Speaking Truth to people in varying states of powerlessness"

Recent Publications and Other Achievements

Mary K. Stillwell's one-act play, *The Burden*, has been selected for reading during the Second Annual Great Plains Theatre Conference (Edward Albee's conference) in Omaha--as part of its Short Play Lab (for performance sometime between May 27-June 2). A selected theater company will provide a rehearsed staged reading of the play. Recently, Mary K. was a judge of the NEA, Poetry Foundation, & Nebraska Arts Council's *Poetry Out Loud* state-wide high school recitation contest. Nebraska's winner will go on to the nationals in Washington, D.C. The competition was held at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery Auditorium with student contestants representing eighteen Nebraska high schools.

Marco Abel presented his paper "Imaging Germany: The (Political) Cinema of Christian Petzold" at the Society of Cinema and Media Studies conference in Chicago. Christian Petzold's film *Ghosts* is going to be one of the 12 films screened at the "Retrospective of Contemporary German Cinema: The Berlin School," which Marco curates through the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center from March 23 - April 5. Look out for the posters and consult www.theross.org for a detailed schedule. As special guests, the event features two German directors, Benjamin Heisenberg (who will be here from March 23-March 27) and Christoph Hochhäusler (who will be here from March 30-April 3). Passes for the entire Retrospective can be purchased for \$20 at the Ross's box office.

Also in attendance at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies International Conference in Chicago, **Wheeler Winston Dixon** presented a paper, "The Digital Divide – The Moving Image in the 21st Century." Wheeler has published an essay, "Night World: New York as a Noir Universe," in *City That Never Sleeps: New York and the Filmic Imagination*,

edited by Murray Pomerance (Rutgers University Press).

Amanda Drake will be attending the 16th Romance Languages and Literatures Conference "Humor and Laughter in Literature and Film" held at SUNY. Amanda will be presenting a paper tomorrow, March 24th, entitled "The Witty Words of Lucy Snowe: The Stabilizing Influence of Humor in *Villette*."

Anthony Hawley's new chapbook, *Record-Breakers*, is just out from Ori is the New Apple Press (NYC). It contains eight sonnets.

Grace Bauer recently attended the AWP Conference in Atlanta, where she participated in a pedagogy panel, attended the chairs & directors meeting, and also did a signing at the bookfair for her newest collection, *Retreats & Recognitions*. She also read at the Oglethorpe University Museum of Art, surrounded by Rembrandt etchings.

Joy Arbor has accepted a two-year appointment as an Assistant Professor in the Writing Program of the American University in Cairo. Congratulations, Joy!

Congratulations to **Linda Pratt**, the newly-appointed Vice-President and Provost of the University of Nebraska System!

Upcoming Events

Today--March 23: The No Name Reading series continues with **Amber Harris Leichner** and **Dave Madden**, 4 p.m., Sur Tango Bar & Grill, 1228 P Street.

Tomorrow--March 24: The Clean Part Reading Series continues with readings by two young poets from Richmond, VA. 7 p.m., Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery. **Allison Titus** is the co-editor of *Handsome*,

a new poetry journal. She was also a finalist in the 2006 National Poetry Series competition for her manuscript, "Barter, Fasten." **Joshua Poteat** won the 2004 Anhinga Prize for Poetry for his book "Ornithologies" and the 2004 National Chapbook Award for his work in "Meditations."

Monday, March 26: Aaron Raz Link and Hilda Raz, reading from *What Becomes You*, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Nebraska Union (room to be posted). *What Becomes You* has just been published by the University of Nebraska Press. Books will be available for purchase and signing. Cookies and beverages will be provided.

Wednesday March 28: Medieval/Renaissance Studies Lecture: **Professor Nabil I. Matar**, Florida Institute of Technology, speaking on "**Queen Elizabeth I of England and Mulay Ahmad al-Mansur of Morocco**," 7:30 p.m., Bailey Library.

Friday, March 30: Aaron Raz Link and Hilda Raz, reading from *What Becomes You*, 7:30 p.m., Lee Booksellers, Edgewood Shopping Center, 5500 S. 56th.

Wednesday April 4: Graduate Student Appreciation Lunch, 11:30-1:00, Bailey Library. Everyone is invited! Come to celebrate the scholarship and teaching of all English Department Graduate Students!

Thursday April 12: Steve Stern, fiction writer, author of several novels and collections of short fiction, reading from his work. 7 p.m., Great Plains Art Gallery, 12th and Q. Reception to follow. This event is co-sponsored by the Harris Center for Judaic Studies, the Creative Writing Program, and *Prairie Schooner*.

Wednesday April 18: The annual *Plains Song Review* reading, reception, & gallery show, 6:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Art Museum, 12th and Q. Authors will read from their work, and the Center for Great Plains Studies will present the Christine Pappas Award for Best Work by a University of Nebraska undergraduate. Volume IX of *Plains Song Review* will be available for sale at the special rate of \$5. For more information, visit: www.unl.edu/plains or email Shoshana Sumrall at ArtisticDeli@aol.com.

Thursday April 19: Dr. Nancy Welch (Ph.D. from our department), Professor of English at the University of Vermont, giving a scholarly talk, "Living Room: Teaching Public Writing in a Privatized World," 3:30-5:00 p.m., Bailey Library.

Thursday April 19: Elena Dykewomon, discussing and reading from her work, 7 p.m., Great Plains Art

Gallery, 12th and Q Street. A reception and book-signing will follow. Dykewomon is the author of *Beyond the Pale*, an historical novel which begins in a Russian shtetl and follows its protagonist to Manhattan's Lower East Side. The *Village Voice* reviewer called it "One of the most compelling novels I have ever read," while Arlene Istar Lev praises Dykewomon's "use of language and her finely-honed story-telling," stating that the book "represents the best of historical fiction." This event is sponsored by the Committee for GLBT Concerns, the Creative Writing Program, and *Prairie Schooner*. For more information or if you want to be involved with Dykewomon's visit, contact Barbara DiBernard at bdibernard2@unl.edu.

Thursday April 19: John Keeble, winner of the 2006 *Prairie Schooner* Fiction Prize and author of a number of books, reading from his fiction, 7:30 p.m., Bailey Library. This event is sponsored by *Prairie Schooner*, the University of Nebraska Press, and the Creative Writing Program.

Thursday, April 19, Ladette Randolph (Ph.D. from our department), editor of the anthology *The Big Empty: Contemporary Nebraska Nonfiction Writers*, leads a group reading of contributors to the anthology as part of the John H. Ames Reading Series, Bennett Martin Public Library, 136 S. 14th Street, 7:30 p.m.

Friday April 20: Nancy Welch, reading from her short story collection, *The Road to Prosperity*, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Bailey Library.

Alumni Updates

Jeff Martinson (B.A. from our department) has taken over as owner of the Crescent Moon Coffeehouse in the Haymarket, where he plans to continue the Monday night poetry/fiction readings -- with one or two featured readers followed by an open mic. He invites any faculty or grad students interested in reading to contact him at: jdm27@yahoo.com. He also invites us to encourage any interested undergraduates to show up for the open mic readings.

"The Somnambulist," a short story by **Chris Higgs** (M.A. 2006), will appear in the 2007 issue of *Salt Hill*, due out late May/early June.

When I Was a Loser: True Stories of (Barely) Surviving High School, an anthology edited by **John McNally** (Ph.D. 1999) has been published and is

available in bookstores now. This month's *Elle* magazine wrote, "When I Was a Loser. . . gathers some two dozen winning recollections by Julianna Baggott, Will Clarke, Brad Land and others who look back with humor, embarrassment, and even grudging affection on how they survived their high school years packed with bad hairdos, boring family vacations, backstabbing best friends, and other painful rites and rituals of adolescence."

Hadara Bar-Nadav (Ph.D. 2006)'s new book of poetry, *A Glass of Milk to Kiss Goodnight*, is just out from MARGIE/Intuit House. It was selected by Kim Addonizio for the MARGIE First Book Prize.

American Life in Poetry
By Ted Kooser, U.S. Poet Laureate 2004-2006

Those of us who have hunted morel mushrooms in the early spring have hunted indeed! The morel is among nature's most elusive species. Here Jane Whitledge of Minnesota captures the morel's mysterious ways.

Morel Mushrooms

Softly they come
thumbing up from
firm ground

protruding unharmed.
Easily crumbled
and yet

how they shouldered
the leaf and mold
aside, rising

unperturbed,
breathing obscurely,
still as stone.

By the slumping log,
by the dappled aspen,
they grow alone.

A dumb eloquence
seems their trade.
Like hooded monks

in a sacred wood
they say:
Tomorrow we are gone.

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Pet Dream Analyst

Dear Pet Dream Analyst:

Probably brainwashed by Paul Shepard's assertion that domesticated animals are mere "ecological wrecks," most of my dreams involve wild animals. For instance, I dreamed the other night that I walked down into this dark basement, and there I was, on this cement floor with a low ceiling, surrounded by birds. Cranes, crows, cardinals, etc., were all casually walking around, the size of humans, and all of them were talking. Or rather, I could read their minds, as plainly as if I were on a downtown Lincoln street listening to the homeless spout their Jeremiads to dark skies. For instance, a huge robin said/thought, "What is this fellow doing here? He is an apostate!" A huge starling was screaming, "And what about the women and children? We have no bandages to cope with such carnage!" Suddenly, I was surrounded by four huge crows. They said, "We are here to take you to the Bird-God. You have nothing to lose but your brains." Then I woke up. Thankfully. I think. Any ideas, oh, dear Pet Dream Analyst?

– Brainwashed by Paul Shepard

Dear Brainwashed,

Wild animal dreams are not my forté (like most of my fellow students, I majored in Cats and Dogs, or C 'n D, at the Academy of Pet Dream Analysis). But I'm willing to take a whack at this one, because it's just sitting there begging to be analyzed. Big birds (that is, human-size cranes, crows, cardinals, starlings and robins) give me the willies, as they would most people, I imagine. Those beaks, for one thing. As Freud said, sometimes a beak is just a beak, but occasionally it's a cigar. Then there's the chirping. I happen to love the song that cardinals sing to one another. But how would it sound coming out of a six-foot-tall cardinal? Would you want to hear Meatloaf sing "La Vie en Rose"? I don't think

so. As for the screaming of gigantic starlings and the cawing of crows the size of football players – well, that’s not a dream, it’s a nightmare. Which brings me to “We are here to take you to the Bird-God. You have nothing to lose but your brains.” This is where it all gets murky. Is this a Bird-God dream? Is it a dream about losing your marbles? Can it be both? Is that okay? My answer to the above is maybe, could be, and probably yes. So here’s my advice: definitely stay away from stimulants for three hours before bedtime. If bird-voices inside your head persist, take two (okay, three) aspirin and put a cold compress on your forehead. If gigantic birds continue to dominate your dreams, buy a cat. A very large cat.