

UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

Friday, April 11, 2008

Editor: Gerry Shapiro

Publisher: Joy Ritchie

"Speaking Truth to people in varying states of powerlessness"

Recent Publications and Other Achievements

Zachary Schomburg's book of poems, *The Man Suit* (Black Ocean 2007), is included on the New York Public Library's list of *Top 25 Books to Remember for 2007*. In June, the book will have a second printing and he will go on an eight-stop reading tour of the east coast. Also, two poems from *The Man Suit*, translated into Italian by Marco Simonelli, are now published in *Nazione Indiana*.

Lisa Renfro's short story, "White Night Fire," appears in the anthology *A Stranger Among Us: Stories of Cross Cultural Collision and Connection* (edited by Stacy Bierlein), published by the University of Illinois Press/OV Books. From the jacket text: "Thirty acclaimed writers of international fiction explore the stranger in tales of cultural clashes and bonds. These stories of disparate experience travel beyond politics and multicultural manners to become an essential discussion of otherness." Lisa's essay, "Mother?" was awarded third place in the *So to Speak* 2007 Nonfiction Contest and appears in the Winter/Spring 2008 issue of the journal.

Kwakiutl Dreher read from her book *Dancing on the White Page: Black Women Entertainers Writing Autobiography* at Purdue University in March. Her presentation was part of The Harriet Jacobs Lecture Series in the Humanities and the Arts. She also performed "Tea & Temptation ... An Intimate Musical" at the Lincoln Community Playhouse as part of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's *Evening of Elegance* fundraiser.

Steve Edwards has a short story, "Offerings," due to come out in this spring's *Sou'wester*.

Hilda Raz has poems in the current issue of the *Women's Review of Books*. *What Becomes You*, her memoir co-written with Aaron Raz Link, is a finalist in two categories for the Lambda Book Awards.

Natalie Schwarz, an MA student in Creative Writing at UNL, will have two poems, "Street Dance" and "Let's Run Away," published in the upcoming issue of *Plains Song Review*, volume X.

Joy Castro served as a visiting writer on Vanderbilt University's symposium "Beyond Our Beginnings: Women Writers from Lower and Working Class Backgrounds," March 25, 26, & 27. She gave a reading, visited a class, and served on a panel with Dorothy Allison, Heather Sellers, Karen Salyer McElmurray, and spoken-word poet Minton Sparks. Lorraine López, author of *Soy la Avon Lady*, organized and hosted the event. Joy is also happy to announce that her Fall 2007 Engl 258B student Allison Formanack has had her final class project accepted by a national undergraduate literary journal. Congratulations to Allison!

Ted Kooser recently delivered the annual Leidig Lecture at Emory and Henry College in Virginia, also read poems there and at Lyndon State College in Vermont and Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. By the time this newsletter comes out, he will have taught another in a series of classes in observation skills at the med center in Omaha and will have read poems in Kalamazoo, MI.

April Lambert and **Lupe Linares** presented papers at the 39th Annual College English Association (CEA) Conference in St. Louis on March 27th. Both presented on the panel titled "Personal Writing as Passage in the Public Writing Classroom," which discussed the use of personal writing assignments in their English 151 courses during the Fall 2007 semester. Thanks to **Robert Brooke** and **Alison Friedow** for their feedback on early drafts of the proposal.

Marco Abel spent much time away from Lincoln in the past four weeks. He first visited Southern Illinois University, where Dr. Ryan Netzley organized a faculty (English, Philosophy) reading group on Marco's book, *Violent Affect*. A week later Marco traveled to Athens, GA, where he attended a German Studies Conference on the "Meaning of Culture" and took the opportunity to conduct an extensive interview with the conference's guest of honor, Andreas Dresen, whom some of you might know as the director of *Summer in Berlin*, which the Ross screened as part of last year's German film retrospective. Finally, in early April, Marco traveled to the Kingston, RI, where he delivered a talk on "Violence, Affect, Ethics: Thinking the Violence of Ethics as the Ethics of Violence"; he gave his presentation as the invited guest speaker at a public symposium on "Violence and Ethics" organized by the University of Rhode Island Center for the Humanities. The following evening Marco visited Dr. Naomi Mandel's

English graduate seminar, "Novels of the Contemporary Extreme," in which he taught Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* and enjoyed a lively discussion of *Violent Affect* with Dr. Mandel's students.

Dave Madden's essay, "Play Dead," won the 2008 AWP Intro Journals Project Award, judged by Brenda Miller. *The Tampa Review* will publish the essay in an upcoming issue.

Timothy Schaffert, as part of the education committee for Film Streams, Omaha's nonprofit cinema, wrote the teacher's guide for the theater's repertory series of films by Alfred Hitchcock. He also led a screening and discussion of "Psycho" for Omaha high school students.

Rachel May has won *The Journal's* William Allen Creative Nonfiction Contest, with her essay, "One of Those Fall Days." In other news, she has a story forthcoming in *Meridian*, titled "At St. Christopher's."

Lisa Renfro has won a \$2,000 Graduate Fellowship for next year. She's completing her dissertation in Creative Writing. Lisa has also learned that another of her stories has been accepted by *Glimmer Train*.

Nick Spencer's review essay, "Utopia's Doubles," currently appears in electronic book review at this web address: <electronicbookreview.com/thread/fictionspresent/spacely>.

Steve Behrendt spent last week at the University of Colorado, as part of a "Big 12 Faulty Fellowship." While there, Steve gave a formal paper on British women Romantic poets at their Center for British and Irish Studies, co-conducted a graduate seminar in the English department, participated in a "State of the Profession" colloquium in that same department, and consulted with faculty and graduate students on projects of mutual interest in British Romanticism. And he even had time to do some serious research in the UC Libraries' Special Collections, which has a splendid collection of Romantic-era writing by British women. Steve reports that "it was cold most of the week, but only one of the promised snowstorms actually happened, and that one left only a couple inches, so I think I lucked out!"

Wheeler Winston Dixon's essay, "Tomorrowland: Science Fiction Television in the 1950s," appears in *The Essential Science Fiction Television Reader*, edited by J.P. Telotte, just out from the University of Kentucky Press.

Farrah Lehman presented a paper, "Signaletic Forces: Anti-Illusionisms in the English Renaissance Theater," at the recent Renaissance Society of America conference in Chicago.

Maureen Honey wants to remind us again that despite the fact that the restoration of Edith Wharton's home in Lenox, Massachusetts, The Mount, has been a complete success, this landmark is nevertheless facing foreclosure due to the large loan that had to be taken out to do the massive restoration. The Mount is collecting donations in the hopes that enough can be raised to satisfy the bank. A private donor has been found who will match private donations. Maureen, who has

visited the Mount and has seen pictures of the completed restoration, believes it's a tremendous resource to everyone interested in Wharton and in literature of her era. "Even Wharton's library has been reassembled and is available to scholars," Maureen writes. "This is the house in which The House of Mirth was written and Lenox is the site of Ethan Frome. Wharton designed and built her home in 1902 and she lived there until 1911 when she made a permanent move to France. Make a donation at edithwharton.org or go to the web site of the Edith Wharton Society. Or you can send directly to Edith Wharton Restoration, 2 Plunkett Street, Box 974, Lenox, MA 01240."

Rebecca Bednarz's chapbook, *Camera Obscura*, is due out this spring from Noemi Press.

Carrie Shipers has poems in *The Cimarron Review* and *La Fovea*.

Laura Madeline Wiseman has two entries in the *African American National Biography* (Oxford 2008) and has poems in the recent issues of *MO*, *Conceit Magazine*, and *Blue Collar Review*. She also presented her paper "Writing Out (of) Crisis" at the *Split This Rock Conference: Poetry of Provocation and Witness* in DC over spring break.

Zachary Schomburg's book of poems, *The Man Suit* (Black Oceans 2007), is included on the New York Public Library's list of Top 25 Books to Remember for 2007, along with two other poets, Margaret Atwood and Robert Hass. In June, the book will have a second printing and he will go on an 8-stop reading tour of the east coast, including a reading at the New York Public Library. Two poems from *The Man Suit*, translated into Italian by Marco Simonelli, are now published in *Natione Indiana*. The entire book will be translated and published in Italy in the spring of 2009. Zachary recently returned from the University of Cincinnati where he gave readings and led poetry workshops. He has poems in new issues of *Fou* and *Redivider*.

Upcoming Events

TODAY! April 11: No Name Reading, featuring **Kelly Grey Carlisle** and **Cody Lumpkin**, 4 p.m., Sur Tango Bar ét Grill, 12th and P, downtown.

Monday, April 14: Giant book fair! 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Pearson Longman, Houghton-Mifflin and Bedford St. Martin's will let you finger their wares and feed you too (La Paz will cater the lunch). Could it get any better?

Monday April 14: novelist **Frances Washburn**, reading from her work, 3:30 p.m., Great Plains Art Gallery, 11th and Q Street. Book-signing and reception to follow.

April 16-19: The 2008 Death, Murder, and Mayhem Symposium, in Omaha. **Mary K. Stillwell** will be reading from her manuscript of poems in progress, *Absolute Danger*, on Friday at 10:00 a.m.; chairing a session at 8

a.m. on Literary Violence Across the Plains, Part III, and introducing the dinner evening program, Limb from Limb: A State of Rowdy Disorder, with **William Kloefkorn**, **Neil Harrison**, and **Jim Reese**.

Monday, April 21: screening of the film “Mysterious Skin,” an adaptation of the novel by Scott Heim, at Film Streams (1340 Webster St., Omaha), 7 p.m. The author will speak about the film after the screening and read from his new novel, “We Disappear.” Tickets available at the door, or online at www.filmstreams.org. The event is co-sponsored by the Nebraska Summer Writers’ Conference and the (downtown) omaha lit fest.

Friday, April 25: Reading by Award-Winning Poets in the Sheldon Art Museum’s “Poets on Painters” Competition, 5 - 7 p.m., Sheldon Art Museum.

Monday April 28: Grace Bauer, reading from her poetry, 3:30 p.m., Bailey Library. Book-signing and reception to follow.

Wednesday, April 30: Literary Contest Winners’ Reading Extravaganza, 3:45-5:30 p.m., Bailey Library.

Thursday, May 1: English Department Awards and Recognition Celebration, 3:30 p.m. in Bailey Library.

English Department Scholarships Available!

Reminder to Faculty: The English Department has scholarship money for English majors who are eligible for financial aid and will be fulltime students for at least one semester of the 2008-09 school year. Apply by 5 p.m. on April 15 to **Elaine Dvorak**, 202 Andrews Hall, UNL 0333.

News From the Placement Office

It was another very good year for another strong crop of Ph.D. job seekers from our department. **Jehanne Dubrow** accepted a one-year Visiting Assistant Professor position at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland; **Daryl Farmer** is heading to Nacogdoches, Texas, where he was hired as a tenure-track Assistant Professor at Stephen F. Austin University; **Tyrone Jaeger** has accepted a two-year Creative Writing Residency at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas; **Kristin Naca** will become a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota; and **Eric Turley** has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all of them – and to **Hilda**

Raz, Jonis Agee, Judith Slater, Chris Gallagher, and the many other faculty advisors and mentors who guided this group of graduate students on the way to their first academic appointments. If anyone knows of other graduate students who accepted a position for next year, please contact **Marco Abel**.

News From the Nebraska Summer Writers’ Conference

The Nebraska Summer Writers’ Conference has a new website with online registration: <http://nebraskawriters.unl.edu>. The conference will run June 14-20, with a series of readings and panel discussions open to the public Monday through Thursday. Workshops will be held in Andrews Hall; readings and panels will be held at the Ross Media Arts Center and the Great Plains Center.

Sheldon Poetry Contest Update

Rebecca Bednarz reports that “we’re delighted to say that we received over 250 entries from across the state, a great success for our project and a reflection of the real commitment Nebraskans have to the arts. It has been a pleasure to read the writing and we’re planning to announce winners by Friday, April 11 on the Sheldon website. We would also like to invite members of the English Department to the “Poet on Painters” exhibition opening and Nebraska Poets on Sheldon Paintings awards reception & reading on Friday, April 25th from 5-7 pm at Sheldon. Please join us in celebrating poetry and painting with our winners & judges in a gallery reading. (See **Upcoming Events**, above.) Refreshments will be served. Sheldon also has several other poetry & writing related activities scheduled for the next month. Please see the full listing below and at the Sheldon website:

<<http://www.sheldonartmuseum.org/events/programs/index.html>> for updates. **Ted Kooser** will be giving a lecture/tour on Sunday, April 27. Writing workshops will be facilitated by **Carrie Shippers, Emily Danforth** and **Steve Edwards** throughout the months of May and June. In addition to these events, Sheldon will be the beneficiary of an all-day Book Fair at the Barnes & Noble at SouthPointe Pavilions on Saturday, May 10. The museum will receive a percentage of receipts from customers who mention Sheldon before checking out or who present a Book Fair voucher. We hope you’ll stop by!

Great News From Creative Writing Alumni

It's been another very productive and noteworthy year for alumni (recent and not-so-recent, grads and undergrads) of the Creative Writing Program. Recent Ph.D. **Hadara Bar-Nadav's** *A Glass of Milk to Kiss Goodnight* was selected by Kim Addonizio for the *Margie/ IntuiT House Book Prize; Postcards on Parchment*, by recent Ph.D., **Christine Stewart-Nuñez**, was selected by David Baker for the ABZ Press First Book prize; and newly-minted Ph.D. **Jehanne Dubrow's** *The Hardship Post* was picked by Peter Pereira for the Three Candles Press First Book Award. (Christine's book also was selected for the 2008 Folsom Distinguished Dissertation Award at UNL.) An earlier Ph.D. poet from our department, **Constance Merritt**, published her second poetry collection, *Blessing and Inclemencies* from Louisiana State University Press in 2007; and her next book, *Two Rooms*, was accepted by LSU for 2009 publication. Ausable Press/Copper Canyon Press will publish **Ray Ronci's** *The Skeleton of the Crow: New and Selected Poems* later this year. Ray received his Ph.D. in poetry in our department in the early 1990's. *Bicycling Beyond the Divide: Two Journeys Into the West* (U of Nebraska Press), by recent fiction/creative nonfiction Ph.D. **Daryl Farmer**, has won a Barnes and Noble Discovery Award. **Joshua Casey**, a recent BA in English with a Creative Writing concentration, published a story, "For Jill, Who Isn't Here Anymore," in the March/April issue of *The Rambler*.

Department of Corrections

Gwendolyn Audrey Foster and **Wheeler Winston Dixon** are the co-editors of *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*; last issue's item on new publications in the journal omitted Gwendolyn's name. We regret the error.

Our Award-Winning Colleagues!

As is often the case, our department fared well this year in campus-wide competitions for awards of all kinds. **Marco Abel** and **Nick Spencer** were both winners of College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Awards; Nick also won the Annis Chaikin Sorensen Award for Distinguished Teaching in the Humanities; **Sandra Tarabochia** and **Michael Page** received College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Teaching Awards; **Robert Brooke** won the first Hazel R. McClymont Teaching Fellow Award. And **Dave Madden** won a \$20,000 Fling Fellowship. Congratulations on these great awards!

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

From your school days you may remember A. E. Housman's poem that begins, "Loveliest of trees, the cherry now/ Is hung with bloom along the bough." Here's a look at a blossoming cherry, done 120 years later, on site among the famous cherry trees of Washington, by D.C. poet Judith Harris.

In Your Absence

Not yet summer,
but unseasonable heat
pries open the cherry tree.

It stands there stupefied,
in its sham, pink frills,
dense with early blooming.

Then, as afternoon cools
into more furtive winds,
I look up to see
a blizzard of petals
rushing the sky.

It is only April.
I can't stop my own life
from hurrying by.
The moon, already pacing.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright (c) 2007 by Judith Harris, whose most recent collection of poems is *The Bad Secret*, Louisiana State University Press, 2006. Reprinted by permission of Judith Harris. Introduction copyright (c) 2008 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.