

## A Conversation with Robert Pinsky

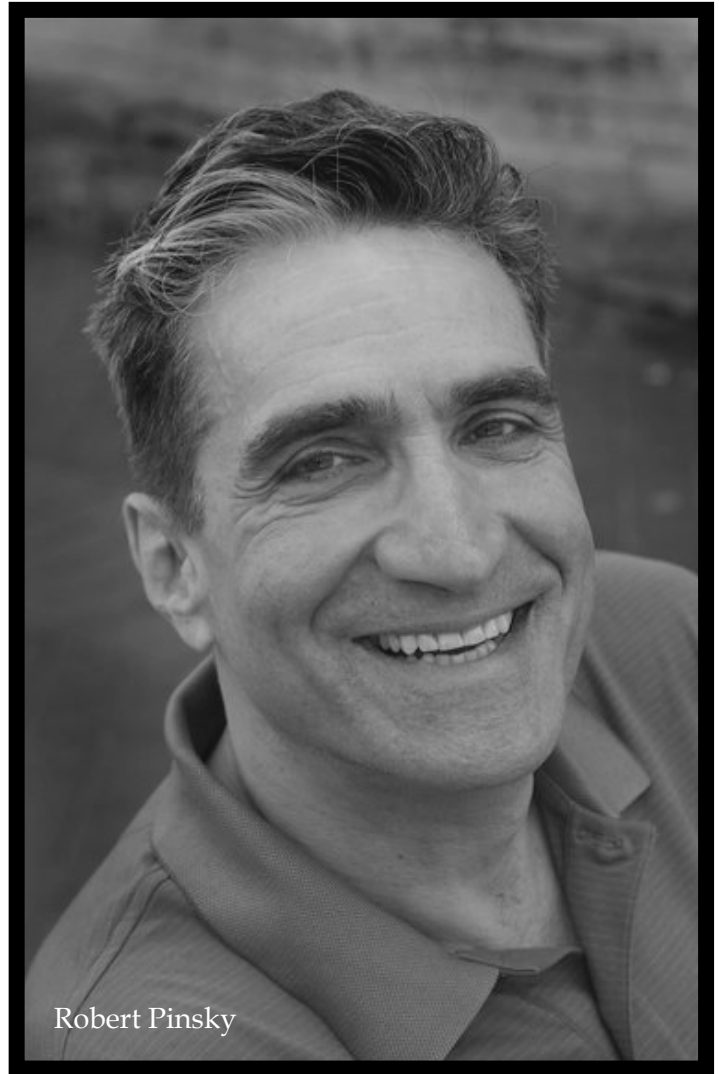
This year, the Creative Writing Program and Robert D. Clark Honors College Reading Series welcomed poet, translator, and former United States Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky.

Pinsky's talk with Kidd Tutorial Program students underscored the importance of studying the masters, what William Butler Yeats in his poem "Sailing to Byzantium" calls "monuments of unaging intellect." He urged students to create a personal anthology of poems that could become their own "singing school." During the presentation, Pinsky reached into a leather shoulder bag and retrieved a stack of bound, type-written papers. "These are a few hundred pages of my favorite poems . . . I happened at one time or another to pay the tribute of typing up." Like the writing workshop, he explained, a person's singing school is a way of studying and developing her or his art.

At a lunch with MFA candidates, Pinsky urged that, in addition to traveling the diverse environments and soundscapes of the poetic tradition, writers should travel physically as well. Contact with other landscapes and cultures, he suggested, has a powerful affect on artistic sensibility. He recommended that writers experiment in their work by attempting to connect seemingly disparate objects, places, and observations.

For Pinsky, the poem is at once a singular articulation of "the best words in the best order" that occurs the moment the poem is spoken and a compendium of poetic ancestors, who transmit histories across generations.

In the following, edited transcript of his interview with Paul Peppis of *UO Today*, Pinsky elaborates on poetry's unique relationship with time, place, and history, describes his work as United States Poet Laureate, reflects on his award-winning translation of Dante's *Inferno*, and introduces his latest book, *Singing School*.



Robert Pinsky

### Favorite Poems Project

*Pinsky describes the Poet Laureate position as an opportunity to create the Favorite Poems Project:*

We were adopted by the Clinton administration, which wanted to celebrate the year 2000. Our mission was to create a portrait of the United States through the lens of poetry in the year 2000—not the lens of the news, or pop entertainment, or sports, or any number of things.

One thing I learned is that contrary to stereotype, there are many, many Americans who love poetry

**Pinsky** — *Cont'd on page 2*



## Pinsky

and speak about it very articulately. There have now been three anthologies published by Norton—not a charitable organization. They print these books because they sell them to make money. The first one, *American's Favorite Poems*, is now in its sixteenth printing, and every poem in those books is accompanied by headnotes taken from letters people wrote me.

Anytime I was interviewed, I said, “This is the website, this is where you can write.” It was not a survey. People had to write. I said, “Write a few sentences about a poem you love.” We received tens of thousands of letters. And there are those videos. People sometimes say, “Where do you find those people for the videos?” I didn’t find them; they found us.

There is a kind of patriotic meaning to the project for me. Our poetry, poems by Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson—poets in every language of the world have been influenced by them. There are poets writing in African languages and poets writing in Asian languages for whom Walt Whitman is an important figure. Along with our jazz and our feature

film, it’s one of the things we deserve to be remembered for. I’m proud that the Favorite Poem Project does celebrate that, and it doesn’t tell anybody that poetry is good. It’s not advocacy for poetry. We asked people, “What is a poem you love? What do you have to say about it?”

### *Voice and Body in Poetry*

*Robert Pinsky has said that his poem “Rhyme” might contain, for him, an implicit ars poetica. The poem begins:*

*Air, an instrument of the tongue,  
The tongue an instrument  
Of the body, the body  
An instrument of the spirit,  
The spirit a being of the air*

*Below, Pinsky elaborates on the close connection he finds between poetry and its instrument, the body:*

Poetry is a vocal art. I have nothing against beautiful books. For me, this is notation. The poem is something that happens every time anybody reads it, not just when the poet performs it like a singer-songwriter, or when an actor reads it. In those videos at [favoritepoem.org](http://favoritepoem.org), you have a construction worker reading Whitman, a Jamaican man reading a poem by Sylvia Plath. You see those poems happen in that reader’s voice.

For me, a poem—as much as a piece of music or a movie or a play or anything that happens in time—a poem happens every time somebody says it, or even imagines saying it. And if you’re not going to read it aloud, you should be thinking about what it would feel like to read it aloud. Ultimately, what would it feel like to need to say these exact words: *A slumber did my spirit seal; or, Air instrument of the tongue; or, Three sorts of serpent do resemble thee*. What does it feel like to say *Further in summer than the birds?* It’s a feeling that’s partly bodily and also in the mind.

One of the reasons I emphasize voice so much is that there is a kind of possession by the dead. If I recite a poem by Emily Dickinson, or Yeats, or Williams, a little fragment of that departed spirit is alive in me. They orchestrate what I do with my lips and tongue and teeth and breath. And poetry—every art has its own thing—poetry, its uniqueness is in its

## Literary Reference

**Program Director** ..... George E. Rowe

**Business Manager**..... Julia A. Schewanick

**Administrative Assistant**.....Jacob T. Berns

**Special Projects** .....Paul Pickering

**Fiction Faculty** .....David Bradley,  
Jason Brown, Ehud Havazelet

**Poetry Faculty** ..... Danny Anderson,  
Geri Doran, Garrett Hongo

**Adjunct Instructors**.....Jacob T. Berns,  
Cai Emmons, Nicola Fucigna, Otis Haschemeyer

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## New Collection Out!



### Danny Anderson

Associate Professor of Poetry

Publisher's Review:

"The poems in *The Night Guard at the Wilberforce Hotel* navigate the evanescent boundaries between the public and the private self. Daniel Anderson's settings are often social but

never fail to turn inward, drowning out the chatter of conversation to quietly observe the truths that we simultaneously share and withhold from one another—even as we visit friends, celebrate a young couple's union, or eavesdrop on the conversations of others. These twenty poems include meditations on teaching hungover undergraduates, wine tasting

among snobs, and engaging the war on terror from the comfort of the suburbs. They are alternately driven by ornamental language that seeks to clarify and crystallize the beauties of our common world and the poet's faith that fellowship ultimately trumps partisanship. Even as they weigh and measure the darkness of the heart and the sometimes rash and stingy movements of the mind, the poems refrain from pronouncing judgment on their characters. As much as they ponder, they also celebrate in exact, careful, and loving terms the haunting and bracing stimuli from which they originate. ●



## Pinsky

human scale vocality. I don't believe poetry can show images as immediately and vividly as film. I think that for instant emotion poetry can't match music. Music can be military, or sexy, or funereal, or celebratory—right away you feel it. Poetry works more slowly than that. It can't do what those arts do.

Poetry happens in the audience's body. Another side of emphasizing voice is that it is uniquely physical; it's in the audience's body. It's uniquely intimate, and it's on a human scale. It needs that one person's voice, and as I said before, it doesn't have to be an actor's voice, or the poet's voice. Most importantly, it's anybody's voice at all.

### "Englising" Dante's *Inferno*

According to *Publishers Weekly*, "Pinsky's voice is nearly irresistible when rounding out the grotesqueries of Dante's *Hell*: his versions of the ninth and final circle bring the bizarre terror of the fiery pit to life. Plainspoken yet elegant, this *Inferno* sustains a tactile succession of images over 34 cantos, and lends itself to being read aloud." Below, Pinsky describes his relationship to translation in general, and to Dante in particular:

Translation literally means *trans latus*. It means "to carry across." And anybody who has tried knows

you can't carry meaning across from one language to another the way you carry a loaf of bread across the street. *Pane* is not bread. I mean it is bread. You can say bread or pane and get the substance, but the words are utterly different.

In English we say "Is he a good guy?" and "Oh, he's as good as gold." In Italian, "Quello?" and "Hai un pezzo di pane." He's a piece of bread (laughing). It's a different complement. He's as good as gold. He's like a piece of bread.

So, that's only one word.

The old term that I think is certainly more accurate for what I did with *Inferno* is *Englising*. I did an *Englising*. There's that great essay by Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," and my interpretation of that essay is that the best translation that will ever be done of the *Commedia*, of Dante, is the Italian version that Dante Alighieri did of an original in the mind of God. No translation will ever be as great as that one.

However, the Swedish translation, the Japanese translation, the Navajo translation, the Yiddish translation, the Igbo translation, each adds a little bit of information, moves over to the side a little information about that original in the mind of God. If

## Faculty Focus



### Gerri Doran

Associate Professor  
of Poetry

Gerri spent last July writing in Brittany thanks to a 2013 Individual Artist Fellowship from the Oregon Arts Commission. This winter, Tupelo Press brought out a CD recording of her second book *Sanderlings*. Her poems have recently appeared in *Southwest Review*, *Subtropics*, *The Harlequin*, and *The Stinging Fly*, an Irish journal. "The Observable World," one of five poems-in-

sequence published last year in *Ninth Letter*, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by the journal editors. She was also invited to write a poem in response to the work of sculptor Marguerite Karhl; "Noble (Savage)" appears in a catalogue of her series *Noble Savages*.



### Ehud Havazelet

Professor of Fiction

Ehud's "Six Days" will be appearing in *The New*

*Diaspora: The Changing Face of American Jewish Fiction, In Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Edward Lewis Wallant Award* (Wayne State University Press, spring 2014).



### Garrett Hongo

Professor of Poetry

Garrett gave readings at Pepperdine University, the Los Angeles Times Book Fest, and Texas Christian University. Early this summer, he will be a resident fellow of the BAU Institute in cooperation with the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France. He is also scheduled to teach a poetry workshop at the Vermont Studio Center and be a MacDowell Colony resident in August. For this fall, he was awarded a Creative Arts Fellowship by the College of Arts and Sciences. ●

## Alumni News

**Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach** (Poetry '13) was selected as a finalist for *Consequence Magazine's* Poetry Prize. In the last year, her poetry has appeared *Guernica*, *Nashville Review*, *JMWW*, *Doctor T.J. Eckleburg Review*, *Gold Man Review*, *Northwind*, *Split Lip*, *Commons Magazine*, *Mason's Road*, *Diverse Voices Quarterly*, and *Poetry Quarterly*.

**Keetje Kuipers** (Poetry '06) was among the prizewinners of the 2013 Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Prizes.

**Jenna Lynch** (Poetry '13) received a residency at The Vermont Studio Center and was chosen as a finalist for *Cutthroat, a Journal of the Arts'* Joy Harjo Poetry Prize for her sequence "Memories of Charlotte Delbo." Her poem "Gardening" is forthcoming in *The Westchester Review*.

**Michelle Peñaloza's** (Poetry '11) was named 2013/14 Made at Hugo House Fellow.

**Chloe Garcia Roberts** (Poetry '07) won a PEN/Heim Translation Award for her translations of Li Shangyin's *Derangements of My Contemporaries*, to be published summer 2014 by New Directions Press.

**Jeff Schultz's** (Poetry '03) manuscript, *What Ridiculous Things We Could Ask of Each Other*, was selected by judge Kevin Young for publication by University of Georgia Press.

**Lysley Tenorio** (Fiction '98) received the Zacharis and Edmund White Awards for Debut Fiction, and was a finalist for the Rome Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was also selected as the first Paris Review Writer-in-Residence for a one-month residency at the Standard Hotel, East Village, NYC.

### Call for Student/Alumni News

Let us know how you're doing.

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:  
[crrweb@uoregon.edu](mailto:crrweb@uoregon.edu)  
 (Subject: Student/Alumni News)  
 Make sure to include your name,  
 genre, and graduation year.

# Recent Alumni Pubs

## Poetry

**Allen, Paula Gunn** – *America the Beautiful: Last Poems* (2010)

**Archila, William** – *The Art of Exile* (2009)

**Averill, Diane** – *Among Pearls Hatching* (2011)

**Bedikian, Lory** – *The Book of Lamenting* (2010)

**Brown, Stacey Lynn** – *Cradle Song* (2009)

**Fenton, Elyse** – *Clamor* (2010)

**Foster, Gina Rae** – *Beautiful Laceration* (2012) and *heart, speech, this* (2009)

**Garcia, Felecia Caton** – *Say That* (2013)

**Gloria, Eugene** – *My Favorite Warlord* (2012)

**Hagen, Cecelia** – *Entering* (2011)

**Hibbard, Kate Lynn** – *Sweet Weight* (2012)

**Jackson, Major** – *Holding Company* (2012)

**Kuipers, Keetje** – *The Keys to the Jail* (2014) and *Beautiful in the Mouth* (2010)

**Lindquist, Kristen** – *Transportation* (2011)

**Maxfield, Brad** – *For All We Know* (2011)

**Memmer, Philip** – *The Storehouses of the Snow: Psalms, Parables, and Dreams* (2012) and *Lucifer: A Hagiography* (2009)

**Rader, Matt** – *A Doctor Pedalled Her Bicycle Over the River Arno* (2011)

**Rich, Susan** – *Cloud Pharmacy* (2014), *The Alchemist's Kitchen* (2010), and *Cures Include Travel* (2010)

**Robbins, Joshua** – *Praise Nothing* (2013)

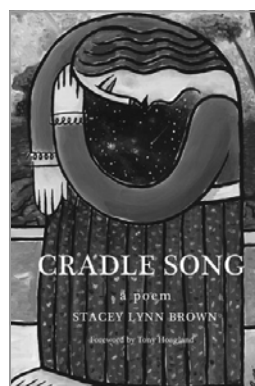
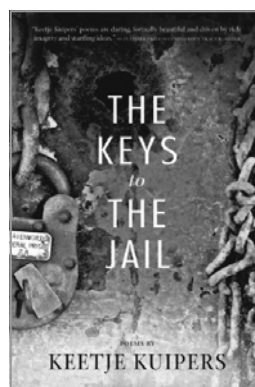
**Sadoff, Ira** – *True Faith* (2012)

**Scates, Maxine** – *Undone* (2011)

**Thalman, Mark** – *Catching the Limit* (2009)

**Turner, Brian** – *Phantom Noise* (2010)

**Wendt, Ingrid** – *Evensong* (2011)



**Willis, Dawn Diez** – *Still Life with Judas & Lightning* (2013)

**Zepeda, Rafael** – *Desperados* (2013) and *Tao Driver and Selected Poems* (2009)

## Fiction

**Addiego, John** – *Tears of the Mountain* (2010)

**Chacon, Daniel** – *Hotel Juarez* (2013)

**Dean, Debra** – *The Mirrored World* (2012)

**Dickinson, Stephanie** – *Heat: An Interview with Jean Seberg* (2013) and *Lust Series* (2011)

**Gershov, Miriam** – *The Local News* (2009)

**Heynen, Jim** – *The Fall of Alice K.* (2012)

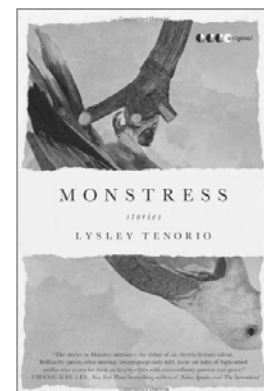
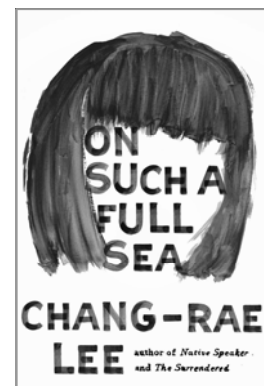
**Jeffress, Lynn** – *The Dali Code & Other Paris Stories* (2009)

**Lee, Chang-rae** – *On Such a Full Sea* (2014) and *The Surrendered* (2010)

**Ochsner, Gina** – *The Russian Dreambook of Color and Flight* (2011)

**Sulzer, Caroline** – *In the Disappearing Water* (2009)

**Tenorio, Lysley** – *Monstress* (2012)



## Nonfiction

**McCormack, Win** – *The Rajneesh Chronicles: The True Story of the Cult that Unleashed the First Act of Bioterrorism on U.S. Soil* (2010)

**Minato, Amy** – *Siesta Lane: One Cabin, No Running Water, and a Year Living Green* (2009)

**Reiss, Bob** – *The Eskimo and The Oil Main: The Battle at the Top of the World for America's Future* (2012) ●



# Graduate Student News



Sarah Blakley-  
Cartwright



Phoebe  
Bright



Andrea  
Danowski



Daniel  
DeVaughn



Cora  
Mills



Charlotte  
Muzzi

**Sarah Blakley-Cartwright** (Fiction '14) accepted an Aspen Writers Foundation scholarship to work on a manuscript-in-progress at the Aspen Summer Words Conference in June '14.

**Phoebe Bright** (Fiction '15) was selected as winner of the Penny Wilkes Scholarship in Writing and the Environment for her story "A Summer."

**Andrea Danowski** (Fiction '15) published in *NANO Fiction* (November 2013) and *Ray's Road Review* (winter 2014).

**Daniel DeVaughn** (Poetry '14) attended the Norman Mailer Writers' Workshop in Brooklyn Heights. He also received a scholarship to attend the 2014 Sewanee Writers' Conference in Tennessee.

**Cora Mills** (Fiction '15) received the Richard & Juliette Logsdon Prize in Fiction for "What They Left Behind."

**Charlotte Muzzi** (Poetry '15) accepted an MFA scholarship to attend the 2013 Sewanee Writers' Conference in Tennessee.

**Alycia Pirmohamed** (Poetry '14) attended the Nobel Week Literary Conference in St. Lucia with a CRWR Travel Award to continue work on her focus of postcolonial literature and theory.

**Jane Ridgeway** (Fiction '15) was awarded a Margaret McBride Lehrman Fellowship for 2014-2015.

**Jayne Ringleb** (Poetry '15) received a scholarship to the 2013 Lambda Literary Foundation's Writers Retreat for Emerging LGBT Voices in Los Angeles. He also received the Karen Jackson Ford Poetry Prize.

**Tarn Painter-MacArthur** (Poetry '14) received a 2013 Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg award for poets under 40. It will allow him to pursue further research on

his family history in the Scottish Hebrides. He also received a CRWR Travel Award, which he used to travel to London to study art focusing on the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar and its repercussions on display at the National Maritime Museum.

**Paul Pickering** (Poetry '14) researched Renaissance and Baroque sculpture in Italy on a CRWR Travel Award, collecting impressions for a group of ekphrastic poems responding to the work of Gian Lorenzo Bernini. He also received a scholarship to attend the 2014 Sewanee Writers' Conference in Tennessee.

**Kara Wang** (Poetry '15) received the Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Award to pursue her writing over the summer. ●

## Congratulations!



Alycia  
Pirmohamed



Jane  
Ridgeway



Jayne  
Ringleb



Tarn Painter-  
MacArthur

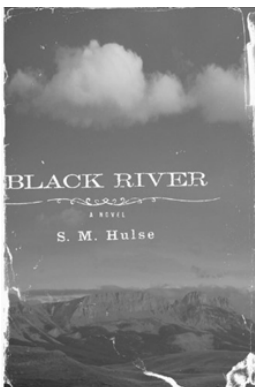


Paul  
Pickering



Kara  
Wang

## Forthcoming Alumni Pubs



### Fiction

**Hulse, Sarah** – *Black River*, forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as part of a two-book contract.

**Quade, Kirstin Valdez** – *Jubilee* (stories) and *Via Dolorosa* (novel), both forthcoming from Norton.

### Poetry

**Archila, William** – *The Grave-digger's Archeology*, forthcoming from Red Hen Press

**Johnson, Sara Eliza** – *Bone Map*, forthcoming from Milkweed Editions

**Schultz, Jeff** – *What Ridiculous Things We Could Ask of Each Other*, forthcoming from University of Georgia Press



## Undergraduates

### Walter and Nancy Kidd Memorial Writing Competition in Poetry and Fiction

Judges: Anthony Doerr, Fiction, and Kathleen Graber, Poetry

#### FICTION

- 1st Nathan Harris ~ "Bait"
- 2nd Molly Gunther ~ "The Fawn"
- 3rd Hannah Harris ~ "We All Travel Upstream"
- HM Kelsey Dethlefs ~ "Cityscapes"

#### POETRY

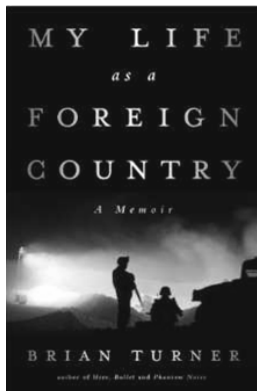
- 1st Elizabeth Yandel ~ "The Undertow"
- 2nd Lorra Jones ~ "Laura on the Edge"
- 3rd Eva Bertoglio ~ "This World Is Not Conclusion"

## Kidd Tutorial Program

**Timothy Lane**, former Kidd Tutorial Program student, published his first novel, *Rules for Becoming a Legend*, with Viking Press in March. The book is a "spirited debut of a rising basketball star wrestling with his town's outsized expectations and his family's complicated legacy."



Timothy graduated from the University of Oregon with a journalism degree and worked as a sports reporter for *The Molalla Pioneer* before pursuing a career in publishing in New York City. His writing has appeared in *The Good Men Project* and *Pology*. He lives with his wife in Portland, Oregon. ●



### Nonfiction

**Turner, Brian** – *My Life as a Foreign Country: A Memoir*, forthcoming from Norton ●



# Welcome New Fiction Writers!

## Jane Keyler

grew up in the suburbs of Indianapolis, where she survived 12 years of Catholic school. She received her BFA in Writing, Literature, and Publishing from Emerson College in Boston. After graduation, she moved back to the Midwest, where she could afford both to eat and pay rent. After a year working the night shift at the fanciest hotel in Indianapolis and a truly misguided attempt at waitressing, she now works in the Admissions office at Southern Illinois University, where she spends most of her workdays listening to podcasts and plotting short stories.

## Rose Lambert-Sluder

grew up in Asheville, NC. In 2012, she received her BA in American Studies and Creative Writing from the University of North Carolina. Her studies often involved Southern foodways, especially okra, Frito pies, and the evolution of cooking fat. She spent last summer working on a dude ranch in Montana.

## Jake Powers

was born and raised in the woods of Western Massachusetts. After quitting high school to try his hand at construction, factory labor, door-to-door sales, and general transience, he decided to return to his education and found himself at Greenfield Community College. After completing his Associates Degree, he transferred to Amherst College, where he earned his BA

in English, focusing most of his energy on Creative Writing. While furthering his education, Jake worked in the addiction recovery field as a counselor at a halfway house, a reintegration mentor in the Massachusetts prison system, and a community engagement coordinator at a peer-to-peer recovery center, where he facilitated a writing group for people in recovery from trauma and addiction. Jake is thrilled to dedicate himself fully to his writing, and looking forward to new experiences, landscapes, and communities in Oregon.

## Morgan Thomas

recently graduated from the University of Florida, majoring in Zoology and English. She's spent her summers trapping pygmy mice in Swaziland, searching for blood vessels in seal eyes, and attempting to learn the language of the mouse-eared bat. As a Publix cashier, she holds the local record for selling the most apple

pies in a single day. As a horse-woman, she has worked closely with neglected and abused horses, attempting to rehabilitate them by bribing them with carrots and empty promises. She is superstitious. An avid birdwatcher once told her that if she held in her head the song of the pipit, she would have many more pipits in her life. She does her best.

## Joshua Nathan

is happy to return home to the Pacific Northwest. After attending college in Vermont, he worked as a salmon wrangler, a teacher, and a writer/editor (at a research institute, at an educational foundation, and, most recently, at a software startup). He has yet to publish anything of consequence, but is grateful for the opportunity to now spend his time wrangling words with this community of talented writers. ●

## CRWR Welcomes New Career Instructor



Cai Emmons (Fiction '98), author of *His Mother's Son* (2003) and *The Stylist* (2007), returns to the CRWR Faculty, this time in one of the newly-created Career Instructor positions. She'll once again bring her talents to bear teaching graduate and undergraduate fiction courses. Cai continues to be involved in film and television as a Career Instructor in the Department of Cinema Studies. ●

*Welcome back, Cai!*



# Welcome New Poets!

## Stephen Godwin

is a poet from Detroit. In 2008, he received a BA in Religious Studies from Humboldt State University in Northern California. Afterward, he spent nearly three years in Spain as a recipient of an educational grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture to serve as an English teacher in Spanish public schools. In 2013, Stephen received an MSc in Creative Writing at Edinburgh University in Scotland, where he was awarded the Grierson Verse Prize 2013. He currently lives in Edinburgh and enjoys exploring the Highlands and Lowlands, as well as the coastal regions. He feels honored to be a candidate in the University of Oregon's MFA Creative Writing program.

## Brittany Herman

attended Houston Baptist University, graduating with a BA in English as a member of the Honors College. Despite her rough and misguided start as a biology major, she realized she could actually pass classes in the English Department and gave in to her love for the written word. She is a native Texan with family across the globe and more siblings than is considered sane. Fortunately for her parents, so far only one of them is a writer. She is looking forward to living out of the Lone Star State for the first time in her life. She's heard winter temperatures actually drop below sixty degrees in some parts of the world, but has yet to believe it.

## Amy Strieter

first met poetry, nature, and poetry about nature while growing up in Cleveland. She attended Kenyon College, graduating in English while exploring its Biology and Anthropology Departments. Studies in Vermont and Costa Rica taught her that she likes living in the mountains; after college, she returned to Costa Rica to teach about butterflies and other invertebrates. It became a professional goal to offer spider-hating students positive interactions with tarantulas. She then volunteered with a human aid org and studied gamelan in Indonesia. After returning state-side, she interned with a church before working as a teacher.

Exploring junctions of poetry, the natural world, biology, and faith has long been one of her deepest interests; food, hiking, and mountains follow close behind. She looks forward to seeking out all these interests in Oregon. Until she moves westward, she'll continue tutoring, writing for a travel website, and teaching natural history. She will not bring any tarantulas.

## Trip Starkey

is currently finishing his undergraduate degree in literature and classical studies at Texas Christian University, just in time to head to Eugene in the fall. For the past four years, he has been reading and writing as much as possible, as well as working some in

publishing and also doing online book reviews. After spending twenty-two long years in Texas, he is finally ready to escape to the Northwest to explore more of the country. Most importantly, he is thankful for the opportunity to write and study in America's rainforest, and hopefully add his voice to this rich tradition of writers.

## Cormac White

was born and raised outside Baltimore. He graduated from the University of Maryland in December with degrees in English and Philosophy, and a minor in Creative Writing. In addition to poems and stories, he writes songs on the guitar his dad handed-down one birthday. He loves his family, likes to travel, and enjoys adventure. He's never been to Oregon, but looks forward to living and writing in Eugene. ●



## Pinsky

*Cont'd from page 3*

they're strong, good translations, you learn how Swedish or Japanese or English had to buckle and change and readapt itself to try to get at that reality that is *Inferno* or *Commedia*.

I tried to make one that was fast. I used fewer words than any verse translation or prose translation. Other things I don't do so well. Other things I may not get, but I do a version of terza rima, and by translating Dante's sentences rather than his lines, it moves along. You look at my book: on the left you see the Italian, the *terzini*; on the right, you see the English, and the English have a white space between the tercets. English is a more compact language than Italian, so the white space in necessary. It can move along faster.

The general idea of translation is what I said about that original in the mind of God. If you're faithful enough and you can make a work of art out of it, there's a justification for what you've done to exist.

## Singing School

*Pinsky's newest book is an anthology that advocates "a literary and technical approach to poetry."*

*"It resembles," Pinsky writes, "taking a musical approach to music, a culinary approach to cooking, an athletic approach to basketball, a cinematic approach to moviemaking."*

It's the book of my life as a teacher. It's my answer to everyone who said to me, "What should I read to learn how to write poetry?" The best answer is that you must decide what to read. What you must read are things that you consider magnificent. That's what I take William Butler Yeats to mean when he says, *Nor is there singing school but studying / monuments of its own magnificence*. And in the anthology *Singing School*, I say that I hope this book will become obsolete for each person. These are my things I think are worth studying. I hope each reader will start typing up the poems he or she loves, put them in a computer file called "Anthology," or write them out long-hand. It's the way athletes learn a sport, the way musicians learn. You listen to great musicians. You seek the music you love the most. If you want to get better at basketball, or tennis, or anything else, you watch how the really good players do it. That seems in a way kind of obvious, but I think young poets—or aspiring old poets—could learn from this. ●

## 2013–2014 READING SERIES

**Natalie Serber**, *Fiction Writer*

Serber read from her collection *Shout Her Lovely Name*. The title story, characterized in part by the urgency of its second-person narration, enters the complicated relationship of a mother and daughter as they navigate a path through the daughter's struggle with anorexia.



**Gina Ochsner**, *Fiction Writer*

Ochsner (Fiction '97) read from her novel *The Russian Dreambook of Colour and Flight*. The night of magical realism prompted many a conversation on how the fantastic might be embedded in the everyday.

**Danny Anderson**, *Poet*

In March, the Program's own Danny Anderson read from his new collection of poems *The Night Guard at the Wilberforce Hotel*.

**Anthony Doerr**, *Fiction Writer*

"The point of books," Doerr explained during the post-reading Q&A, "is to enter other lives, [and] not be trapped in your own life." Doerr provided that opportunity for his audience when he read from his newest novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*. In addition to his reading, Mr.



Doerr gave a Kidd Tutorial talk where he discussed the importance of defamiliarizing our everyday perceptions in fiction. He began by asking the audience to imagine an object, then choose six words they might use to describe the object to someone else.

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**Reading Series (continued)**

Within a few minutes, everyone had created word lists. "Now," he said, "write two sentences describing the object without using any words from your lists." Much laughter followed as volunteers from the audience read their descriptions aloud. This exercise triggered an energetic discussion of practices writers can use to enter fresh and defamiliarized territories in their own work.

prospect of spending eternity in PDX (due to flight changes in her travel itinerary), and the value of facticity in poetry.

As evidenced by her reading, Graber is a poet of lived experience, of the here-and-now and its perpetual contingency upon the past. When asked if she ever smudges the facts in her poems, she replied, "No. I mean, if you're writing about Harry Houdini's cat, you have to write about Harry Houdini's cat." She is a poet who manifests the deepest investment in the things of this world: "In truth, I have less faith in the gods than I do in the chair I passed one night set out with the trash on John Street."

Graber's visit was enlightening to say the least. She is truly a lovely person with a voice this world has never needed more. ●



**Kathleen Graber, Poet**

During a Kidd Tutorial Program lecture, Kathleen Graber reacted with grace and supernatural poise to a Eugene-gentle voice from the intercom: "There is a fire in the building. Please evacuate calmly." The crowd drifted into a building

across the street, where she finished her talk on syntax, tone, and the hearts of hummingbirds.

During her visit, Graber gathered with MFA poets for lunch. Over slices of cantaloupe, she discussed the pros and cons of the Paleo diet, the

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# Congratulations 2014 Grads!

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