

Visiting Writers Have Something to Say

Interviews with Visiting Assistant Professors Amanda Coplin (fiction) and Katy Didden (poetry) by Jane Keyler, 1st-year fiction MFA, and Jayme Ringleb, 3rd-year poetry MFA

In fall 2014, the Creative Writing Program welcomed two Visiting Assistant Professors: Amanda Coplin and Katy Didden. Amanda Coplin led a graduate fiction workshop, and Katy Didden taught a graduate poetry seminar titled "Poets on Poetry: A Brief History of Poetics." Additionally, both Amanda and Katy gave lectures for the Kidd Tutorial Program, read for the Program Reading Series, and held individual tutorials in their respective genres with each of the first-year MFA students.

Jane Keyler: In your Kidd Talk, you spoke a lot about structure and your writing process. Having read *The Orchardist*, the structure stood out to me, especially the way you move between characters throughout. Can you talk about how you came to decide on this structure?



Amanda Coplin

Amanda Coplin: The novel began with a vision of the two girls in Talmadge's orchard, skulking around. There was this tension, this grief, in the air, and I didn't understand it; the parsing of this atmosphere

became the work of the novel. I asked questions of the characters as I saw them – why did the girls remain in the orchard? Why did they avoid Talmadge as they did? Why did he care for them? Why are the girls pregnant? How did Talmadge come to live in the orchard alone? Does he have friends at all? If so, who are they? What are the stories of their relationships? I think it is important, for me at least, to first be visited by a vision, and then to carefully, methodically, obsessively question what is present in that vision in order to discover more.

After a while, I had a catalog of scenes and impressions that constituted characters' lives. The paring away and consequent arranging of these moments, in an effort to structure the novel, was as much an intuitive act, if not more, than an intellectual one. I tried to tell what needed to be told – in a novel this means, necessarily, illuminating the great moments of a character's life – and then I asked myself:

Visitors – *Cont'd on page 2*



Katy Didden

Literary Reference

FACULTY

Fiction

Ehud Havazelet
Jason Brown
Amanda Coplin, Visitor

Poetry

Garrett Hongo
Danny Anderson
Geri Doran
Katy Didden, Visitor

Instructors

Cai Emmons
Jacob T. Berns
Nicola Fucigna
Wayne Harrison
Otis Haschemeyer

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Visitors

what other character would have a perspective on this? Or: How can I provide greater context for this scene or moment? I could talk about another character, or jump to another time or place that seems only tangentially related but really has powerful bearing on that other, primary moment—this requires great playfulness, open and wide-mindedness, and focus. Also, trial and error. Years of it.

JK: One of the things I loved about this novel was its tone. Inasmuch as a novel can encompass a season, this novel spoke to the idea of autumn, both tonally, and perhaps metaphorically. With a book that spans such a long period of time, how did you negotiate such consistency of tone?

AC: It has always been important to me to just sit down and write, and once I familiarize myself with what it is I am actually writing about—the subject, the scope, the characters—this familiarity is developed in early drafts—then I recognize when the novel “sounds” like itself. Again, finding this tone is largely intuitive—I don’t hear it until I write it—but when I have enough on the page that sounds good and feels right, and I feel secure analyzing what I’m doing, I can begin to scrutinize my writing style, to see how I write when I’m most successful. I don’t really do this, though, look at my style too closely in this way, until the very end, because it makes me self-

conscious and impedes progress.

JK: In your Kidd Talk, you mentioned some of your go-to writers, specifically Virginia Woolf. Can you talk about your relationship with Woolf’s writing?

AC: I first read *Jacob’s Room* as an undergraduate here at the UO, when I was a junior—and was stupefied. Totally shocked with joy. She turned the world inside out. It took me years to process, intellectually, what she was doing—but I felt her first in my nerve endings, which is so important. I love Woolf’s style, her insistence on the musicality of the units of prose—the words, the sentences, the paragraphs, and finally the whole constructed piece. Her work reinforces one of the most beautiful tenets of fiction: to show the synthesis of the inner and outer worlds as a character’s consciousness. Her inventiveness in this regard, not to mention others, is absolutely stunning.

JK: Do you find that your writing process evolves as you grow as a writer? What has changed and what has stayed the same?

AC: When I was writing *The Orchardist*, for the early drafts at least, I relied heavily on the example of others’ style and structure; I emulated them in order to learn—it was a kind

Visitors — Cont’d on page 4

AMANDA COPLIN

Amanda Coplin’s first book, *The Orchardist*, was released in 2012 (HarperCollins). She is a recipient of the Oregon State Book Award: Readers’ Choice, the 5 Under 35 Award from the National Book Foundation, the Whiting Writers’ Award, the Washington State Book Award in Fiction, and the Barnes & Noble 2012 Discover Award for Fiction.

Faculty News



Danny Anderson

Professor of Poetry

Danny was on sabbatical last fall, serving as Senior Tennessee Williams Fellow and Visiting Writer at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, where he will return this summer as faculty of the Sewanee Writers' Conference. Recently, he was promoted to full professor beginning fall 2015.



Geri Doran

Associate Professor of Poetry

On sabbatical in 2015-2016, Geri will be a writer-in-residence at the James Merrill House in Stonington, Connecticut, and a fellow at The Lighthouse Works on Fishers Island. Her poems have recently appeared in *Subtropics* and *Birmingham Poetry Review*.



Garrett Hongo

Professor of Poetry

Garrett spent parts of last year at various residencies — the BAU Foundation at Camargo in Cassis (France), the MacDowell Colony, and Villa Montalvo. He also gave readings at the Los Angeles Times Book Fair, the St. Martin Book Fair, Loyola College (Baltimore), the University of Maryland (College Park), Villa Montalvo, and here in Eugene at the Public Library. Recent poems have appeared in *Plume*, *Miramar*, *Aloha 'Āina (Vol. II)*, and the webpage of the Academy of American Poets. A special three-part interview (by Michael Collier) ran this past year in the *Asian American Literary Review*. And just recently, his book *The Mirror Diary: Selected Essays* was accepted for publication by the University of Michigan Press.



Jason Brown

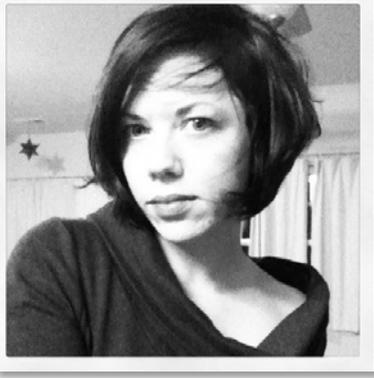
Associate Professor of Fiction

In early 2015, Jason and his sister, Elizabeth Schaeffer Brown, interviewed Roya Mahboob (named one of the 100 most influential people of 2013) in New York. Shortly afterward, they traveled to Afghanistan to speak to Mahboob's family and friends to learn more about how Mahboob's work teaching computer literacy to young women has had an empowering effect in a society that restricts women's access to education.

Find links to published articles on our website:
<http://crwr.uoregon.edu/people/brown/>.

Above: Afghan girls work at an internet café for women in Kabul in 2012 (Credit: Reuters/Mohammad Ismail);
Inset: Roya Mahboob (Credit: Wikimedia/alena Soboleva Photography)





Monica Brown

(Poetry '12)

was accepted as a creative presenter to read poetry selections from her manuscript, *Heirloom*, at the Flannery O'Connor and Other Southern Women Writers Conference hosted by Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, GA, in September 2015.

Monica teaches Creative Writing workshops in poetry, prose, and novel writing at Chattanooga State Community College where she is the advisor of *The Phoenix*, Chattanooga State's student literary magazine, and the founding advisor of the Chattanooga State Writer's Association.

Jacob Berns

(Fiction '13)

Jacob's story "As It Comes" appeared in *North Dakota Quarterly* (Issue 80.3).

Dawn Diez Willis

(Poetry '98)

Her poetry collection, *Still Life with Judas & Lightning*, was named a finalist for the 2015 Oregon Book Award.

of apprenticeship – but also out of insecurity, I realize now. I try not to do that anymore, cleave so closely to others' work, especially early in the composition process. This was painful to step away from, because it had formed as part of my writing habit. But it was important for me to acknowledge this as a poisonous impulse and own my shoddy habits and try to correct them. In listening so closely to others' voices, I failed to train myself to listen as deeply to my own; imposing structures of others' work onto my own premature material kept it from finding, more truly, its own gravity and shape. So I have tried, in my consequent writing practice, to trust the instincts of the work itself, which is another way of saying I'm learning to trust my own unconscious.

JK: For you, what's the relationship between reading and writing? Do you find yourself reading more or less when you're working? Do you read differently when you're working on different projects?

AC: I'm not one of those people who thinks that you shouldn't read fiction if you're composing your own work, but for me that's how it usually is. When I'm deeply engaged in my own project, I read less fiction; I have a hard time concentrating on it. I might study novels during this time, but that's different than really committing to the reading experience, which has much less sense of agenda. When I'm deeply engaged in composing I read poetry, mostly, and essays, depending on the tone. And of course I read a lot of material pertaining to the world of my novel – for *The Orchardist* this included oral and written histories of the PNW, journals, horticulture manuals, old magazine and newspaper articles, and other fictional accounts of the time and place.

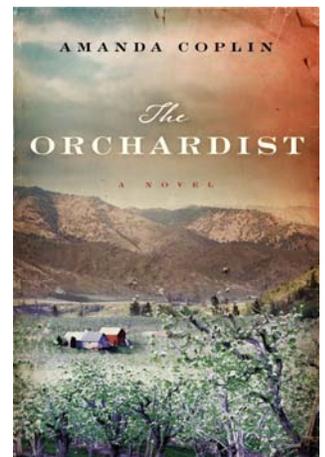
JK: I've been following the Morning News Tournament of Books, so I'm curious to know about your more contemporary reading. Are there any books that have come out in the last year or two that you are really excited about?

AC: There is another contest I pay attention to every year, the Best Translated Book Award – there are always some real gems to be found in the longlists there; I always try to read at least the titles on the shortlist, though I've fallen off the last couple

years. This is a great way to get at least some sense of what's going on internationally. (Some sense: it's not comprehensive, by any means, but it's something!)

As far as recent American novels, I really love Anthony Marra's *A Constellation of Vital Phenomena*, and Marilynne Robinson's *Lila*.

JK: Your family lives in Eugene and you completed your undergraduate work here. I'm curious to know what it was like to come back. Highlights? Lowlights?



Visitors – *Cont'd on page 12*

Starlin Poetry Honoree Passes

Miriam McFall Starlin

1916 – 2015

Miriam Starlin, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend, died on January 2 of chronic pulmonary disease. She was 98.

She was born to John William and Sadie Stockton McFall on a sheep ranch by the Little Wood River in Lincoln County (Shoshone), Idaho, August 16, 1916. She had one older sister, Molly, who pre-deceased her.

She graduated from Twin Falls High School in 1934 and from the University of Idaho in 1938 with a B.A. in English and Journalism, then moved to San Francisco where she worked for a pathologist at Stanford Medical School.

She met D. Glenn Starlin at the University of Idaho in 1935, and they married in 1939 in Spokane, Washington. They enjoyed a special relationship for 59 years. They lived in Iowa City, IA, Akron, OH, and Arlington, VA, before moving to Eugene in 1947 where Glenn started a professorship at the University of Oregon. They took sabbatical leaves for a year each to Ann Arbor, MI, Albany, NY, and London, England. They loved nature, music, the theatre, reading, travel, entertaining friends and family, activities connected to the University of Oregon, and spending time at the family cabins at Priest Lake, ID.



Glenn and Mir Starlin

Her interests were universal, and she will be remembered by those who knew her as a spiritual and mystical soul, a loving friend and counselor, and a gifted poet.

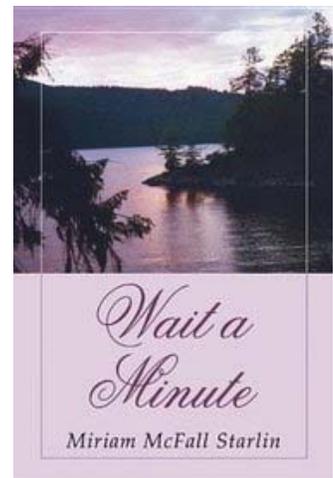
She is survived by: two sons Scott (Ann) and Clay (Sue); two grandsons Ben (Sara) and Drew (Michelle); 4 great-grandchildren – Gabriella (10), Gavian (6), Kate (3) and Sam (1); 3 nieces (Gail, Jan, Jill) and 3 nephews (Jim Jr., Jim S., Jay).

Full obituary published in Eugene Register-Guard on January 23, 2015

*Wait A Minute
Miriam McFall Starlin
(2006, Rev 2014)*

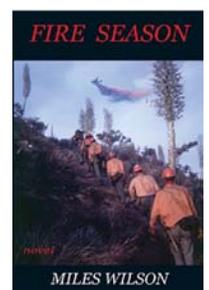
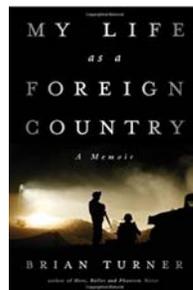
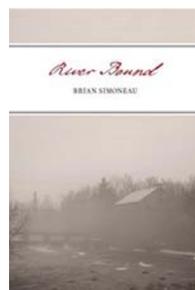
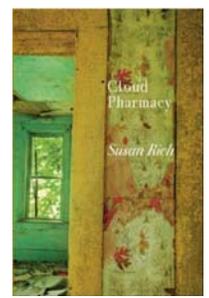
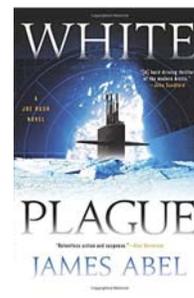
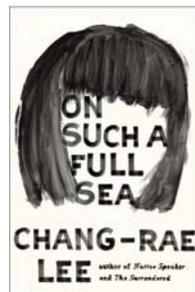
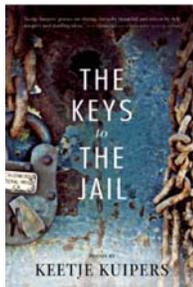
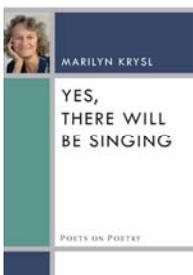
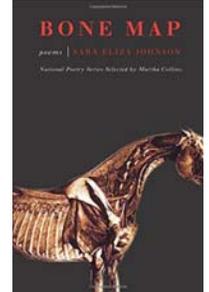
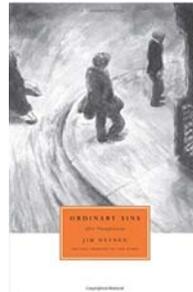
Starlin Prize

- 1997 Kate Lynn Hibbard
- 1998 Sonya Posmentier
Jude Nutter
- 1999 Alison Dubinsky
- 2000 Lora Vahlsing
- 2001 Becca Barniskis
- 2002 Kate Westhaver
- 2003 Laura Passin
- 2004 Sarah Seybold
- 2005 Emily Besley
- 2006 Erika Mueller
Kelsie Gray
- 2007 Drea Brown
- 2008 Nikki Zielinski
- 2009 Michelle Penaloza
- 2010 Rachel Swafford
- 2011 Luke Hollis
- 2012 Paul Pickering
- 2013 Jayme Ringleb
- 2014 Kara Wang
- 2015 Amy Strieter

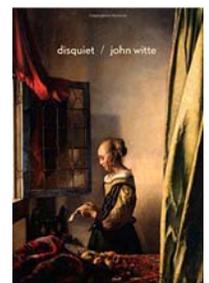
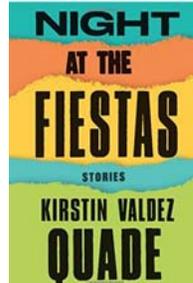
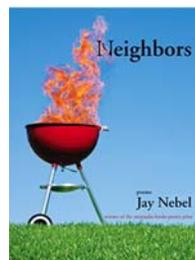
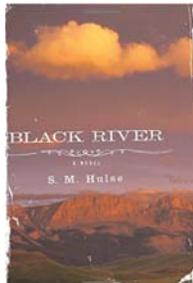


Alumni Publications

2014



2015



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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Raphael Dagold | <i>Bastard Heart</i> , Silverfish Review Press, 2014 |
| Chloe Garcia Roberts | Translator, <i>Derangements of My Contemporaries: Miscellaneous Notes by Li Schangyin</i> , New Directions Poetry Pamphlets, 2014 |
| Kerry Hoffman as "Kerry Cohen" | <i>The Truth of Memoir: How to Write about Yourself and Others with Honesty, Emotion, and Integrity</i> , Writer's Digest Books, 2014 |
| Jim Heynen | <i>Ordinary Sins</i> , Milkweed Editions, 2014 |
| L. D. Janakos | <i>Plato's Screw</i> , Wild Ocean Press, 2014 |
| Sara Eliza Johnson | <i>Bone Map</i> , Milkweed Editions, 2014 |
| Marilyn Krysl | <i>Yes, There Will Be Singing</i> , University of Michigan Press, 2014 |
| Keetje Kuipers | <i>The Keys to the Jail</i> , BOA Editions, Ltd., 2014 |
| Chang-rae Lee | <i>On Such a Full Sea</i> , Riverhead Books, 2014 |
| Matt Rader | <i>What I Want to Tell Goes Like This</i> , Nightwood, 2014 |
| Bob Reiss (as "James Abel") | <i>White Plague</i> , Berkley, 2015 |
| Susan Rich | <i>Cloud Pharmacy</i> , White Pine Press, 2014 |
| Jeffrey Schultz | <i>What Ridiculous Things We Could Ask of Each Other</i> , University of Georgia Press, 2014 |
| Maxine Silverman | <i>Palimpsest</i> , Dos Madres Press, 2014 |
| Brian Simoneau | <i>River Bound</i> , C&R Press, 2014 |
| Brian Turner | <i>My Life as a Foreign Country</i> , W. W. Norton & Company, 2014 |
| Alana Noel Voth | <i>Dog Men</i> , Tiny Hardcore Press, 2014 |
| Miles Wilson | <i>Fire Season</i> , Stephen F. Austin University Press, 2014 |

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| William Arachila | <i>The Gravedigger's Archaeology</i> , Red Hen Press, 2015 |
| Sarah Hulse | <i>Black River</i> , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015 |
| Jay Nebel | <i>Neighbors</i> , Saturnalia, 2015 |
| Kirstin Quade Valdez | <i>Night at the Fiestas</i> , W. W. Norton & Company, 2015 |
| John Addiego | <i>The Jaguar Tree</i> , Oak Tree Press, 2015 |
| John Witte | <i>Disquiet</i> , University of Washington Press, 2015 |

Welcome New Students



Kevin Bartz grew up in the Chicago area, went to Catholic grade school and a huge public high school, then headed West to study Creative Writing and Spanish at Colorado State University. At CSU, he fell in love with hiking and short fiction. In addition, he worked on the undergraduate literary magazine and in the office of admissions. After graduation, Kevin went to Zamora, Spain, where he has spent the last two years teaching English and U.S. culture on a grant from the Spanish Ministry of Education. Now, Kevin is ready to return stateside. He hasn't published anything of significance yet, but he's excited to come to Oregon and dedicate the next two years to his craft.

Joanna Chen hails from Grand Rapids, Michigan (also known as Beer City, USA) and graduated from Cornell University with majors in English and Sociology and minors in Inequality Studies and Asian American Studies. At Cornell, she was a writing tutor, a peer counselor, a prison-education teaching assistant, and an intramural-sports enthusiast. She spent a semester abroad in Cambridge and would love the chance to hike Arthur's Seat again (or live in Edinburgh). She currently works at a running specialty store. In her free time, she listens to podcasts and public radio, makes friendship bracelets and mix CDs, knits, buys books she then doesn't read, and tries to wrangle enough people together

for a game of Settlers of Catan. In an alternate version of this bio, she simply listed all of her favorite foods.

Allison Donohue was born in Washington, D.C., and completed her B.A. in English, Creative Writing at Virginia Tech, where she received the graduation award for poetry. After working a year in government contracting, she moved southwest where she has spent the last two years working on her M.A. in English Literature and Poetry at Texas Tech University. Having lived for two years in the desert, she suddenly became infatuated with the forest. Her current poetic preoccupation is nature, foliage, and the temptation of the woods. She looks forward to meeting all the trees in Eugene.

Leah Gómez was born and raised in the thirsty borderlands of El Paso, Texas. She earned her B.A. in English and Philosophy, with a Concentration in Women's & Gender Studies, from the University of the Incarnate Word. Leah currently lives in San Antonio and is a grant writer for the nonprofit organization American Sunrise. She is also an instructor at the American Sunrise Learning Center, which seeks to promote literacy in one of the most economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods in San Antonio. She is obsessed with Frida Kahlo, Pablo Neruda, and enchiladas verdes (*sin pollo*). She will be moving to Oregon with her pet cactus, Diego, who is potted in a hand-painted Frida *maceta*.

Claire Luchette, like the nation's best pizza, is from Chicago. She studied English at Brown and spent half her junior year in India. Since graduation, she's been living in New York, but she's thrilled to head West. She's into long-distance running and short fiction.

Erik Johnson is returning to poetry after a 20-year diversion in the theatre. He completed his undergrad at Yale, lived a couple years in NYC as a bohemian, and spent the last 11 years teaching at his old high school in Shaker Heights, Ohio, directing a set of theatre ensembles with a focus on movement, poetry, and student-written material. He is also completing an unfinished manuscript on teaching left by his predecessor and mentor James Thornton. Along with Cleveland and the Rust Belt, he has a deep love for the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and the canyon country of Utah. Erik will be joined in Eugene by his wife Megan, a dancer and physical therapist, as well as Sylvia (two years old) and Forrest (born in January).

Tia North is a child of Hilo, Hawaii and the daughter of craftsman Joseph Keamoku Gomes and his perennial muse, Elna Mitsue. She received her B.A. in Creative Writing from Seattle University and was the Executive Editor of *Vain Magazine*. North currently resides in the primordial desert of Nevada, teaches elementary special education, and calls Stephen Kaponog her husband and home.

Iselle Payer is a California native and UC Davis Creative Writing Program alum. Ever-obsessed with the idea of compression, she mostly writes short stories but is currently at work on a novella. Her literary interests include apocalypses and sympathetic magic. Most recently, she's drawn inspiration from George Saunders, the films of Carlos Saura and Lucrecia Martel, WWII-era civil defense videos, and signs posted at national parks. She looks forward to calling Eugene home.

Charlie Schneider is a moving target. After growing up in the New York suburbs, then studying philosophy at Kenyon College, he worked at Atlantis Books in Greece for a summer, brooded in a much lamer bookstore in New York for a fall,

wore many ill-fitting hats, pondered the mysteries of the Chicago L for a year, and taught English in Chile for two more. This season, he's waiting tables in Brooklyn, dreaming of Oregon. He's super excited to meet his fellow writers.

Leah Velez grew up slinging newspapers across the intersections of Chicago streets. After surviving the Chicago Public School system and graduating from Northwestern University, where she double majored in Comparative Literature and Creative Writing, she returned to CPS to teach 11th grade English. Having never seen trees that don't grow out of metal-covered dirtholes in sidewalks, she's incredibly excited to be moving to the Pacific Northwest with her husband, cello, and cat. ■

More Faculty News



Cai Emmons

Career Instructor (Fiction)

Cai will be traveling to Greenland in June with climatologist Jason Box of the Dark Snow Project to research her next novel. Later in summer, she will be at PLAYA in eastern Oregon for a month-long writer's residency. Her story "Vanishing" is forthcoming (July) in *TriQuarterly*.

Otis Haschemeyer

Instructor (Fiction)

Otis, who began teaching undergraduate courses for the Program in 2013, received a 2015 Oregon Literary Arts Fellowship in Creative Nonfiction.



**Oregon Book Awards
& Fellowships**

A PROGRAM OF LITERARY ARTS

Reading Series



L-R: Sara Eliza Johnson, Jeff Schultz, Sidney Wade, Karen Russell

In addition to joining the Program in fall 2014 as a visiting fiction writer, **Amanda Coplin** read for our Reading Series and gave a Kidd Talk about her structural strategies and writing process for her novel, *The Orchardist*.

Poet **Katy Didden**, who also joined us in fall 2014, read from her collection, *The Glacier's Wake*, and from her current project of erasures. Her Kidd Talk focused on examples of, strategies for, and political and environmental implications of poetic erasure.

Following the release of their first books, poetry alums **Sara Eliza Johnson** ('09) and **Jeffrey Schultz** ('03) joined us this year. **Sara** read from her collection *Bone Map* (Milkweed Editions), selected as a winner of the National Poetry Foundation's 2013 National Poetry Series open competition. **Jeff** read from *What Ridiculous Things We Could Ask of Each Other* (University of Georgia Press), another winner of the National Poetry Foundation's 2013 National Poetry Series open competition. In their joint Kidd Talk, Sara focused on exploring themes in sublime poetry and the sublime experience, while Jeff discussed social implications of poetry and how that factors into how we approach writing poems.

Sidney Wade read from her recent collection *Straits and Narrows* and from her current project. During her Kidd Talk, she discussed ten different components of strong work in poetry.

Willing Davidson, a senior editor at *The New Yorker*, introduced fiction writer, **Karen Russell**, who read from her story "The Bad Graft," which Willing edited and published. For their joint Kidd Talk, Willing and Karen chose a conversational format, moderated by Professor Jason Brown. Much of the talk was devoted to the revision and editorial processes, and the need for traditional structure in even less-conventional writing. Citing George Saunders—another author with whom Willing has worked—Karen noted that readers "can appreciate [a detour that he takes] as a detour because there is some structure there ... some scaffolding." ■

Once the Program receives recording copies, UO Today interviews will be posted on our website for participating visiting writers: Amanda Coplin; Sara Eliza Johnson and Jeff Schultz; and Sidney Wade. To review these and other past guests, visit: <http://crwr.uoregon.edu/uo-today-interviews/>.

Student News

Andrea Danowski Fiction '15
Andrea's "Like a Reflection of Water" appeared in *Juked* in January 2015.

Ezra Carlsen Fiction '15
Ezra's short story "False Fronts" was shortlisted for Volume IV of *The Masters Review*.

Josh Mak Fiction '15
Josh received a Work-study Scholarship in Fiction for the 2015 Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.

Jane Ridgeway Fiction '15
Jane will be moving to Honolulu this fall to teach English and Creative Writing at the 'Iolani School.

Quinn Lewis Poetry '15
Quinn's poem "Flora and Fauna: Eyarth Station, Ruthin, North Wales" appeared in *Best New Poets 2014* and "After" appeared online in *The Harlequin* magazine in March 2015.

Charlotte Muzzi Poetry '15
Charlotte Muzzi will be attending Florida State University as a doctoral candidate this fall.

Alyssa Ogi Poetry '15
Alyssa won the Allison Joseph Poetry Award from the Crab Orchard Review. (March 2015).

Jayme Ringleb Poetry '15
Jayme Ringleb received an M.F.A. Scholarship in Poetry to the Sewanee Writers' Conference and a Summer Fellowship to Fishtrap. This fall, he'll be attending Florida State University as a doctoral candidate. ■

Program Awards



**The Miriam McFall Starlin
Poetry Prize**

Amy Strieter
Poetry '16



**The Richard and Juliette Logsdon
Award for Creative Fiction Writing**

Ezra Carlsen
Fiction '15
"False Fronts"



**The Penny Wilkes Scholarship
in Writing in the Environment**

Charlotte Muzzi
Poetry '15
"January, Gunflint"



Morgan Thomas
Fiction '16
"Ospreys of Santa Rosa Island:
An Unnatural History"

Stephanie Gordon (not pictured)
"Ocean-dwelling" and "Nature is a poem
I can't write" (undergraduate winner)

**The Walter and Nancy Kidd
Writing Competition in Poetry and Fiction**

Poetry

Judge:
Sidney Wade
Visiting Poet
Reading Series

- 1 Isabel Zacharias
"Sundays"
- 2 Sophie von Rohr
"Strange Disease"
- 3 Austin Beaton
"Only Child"

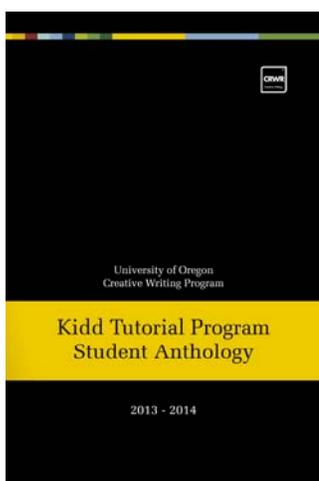
Fiction

Judge:
Willing Davidson
Senior Editor
The New Yorker

- 1 Jeanne Panfely
"Beachy Head"
- 2 Shannon Moffett
"Yellow Socks"
- 3 Persia Hejazi
"Hands in the Door"



L-R: Shannon Moffett, Austin Beaton, Sophie von Rohr, Jeanne Panfely, and Kidd Director Jason Brown



Kidd Tutorial Student Anthology

Last summer/fall, the Kidd Tutorial Program compiled fiction and poetry from 2013-2014 Kidd students to create the first annual Kidd Tutorial Program Student Anthology. This summer, the program will publish the second annual anthology featuring the fiction and poetry of students currently enrolled in the Kidd.

From draft to publication, students in the Kidd Tutorial Program will now participate in the full range of the literary experience.

Writers write to communicate; we hope the anthology will provide one of many outlets for the apprentice writers. ■

Alumni News



Serena Crawford

(Fiction '98)

won the Spokane Prize for Short Fiction. Her story collection, *Here Among Strangers*, is forthcoming spring 2016.

Serena has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and Literary Arts. Her fiction has appeared in *Epoch*, *Ascent*, *Beloit Fiction Journal*, *The Florida Review*, *The McNeese Review*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, and elsewhere.

NATIONAL
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FOR THE
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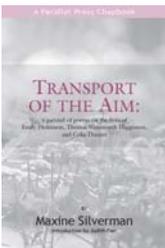
Sara Eliza Johnson

(Poetry '09) and

Major Jackson

(Poetry '99) were

named recipients of the 2015 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowships in Poetry.



Maxine Silverman

(Poetry '72)

released *Transport of the Aim, a garland of poems on the lives of Emily Dickinson, Thomas Wentworth*

Higginson, and Celia Thaxter, a chapbook from Parallel Press, 2013. ■

Visitors

AC: I love Eugene, and feel really comfortable there. I love the bookstores and the weather. And, since it was here, on campus, that I first harbored and tried to nourish my budding literary ambition, there is particular nostalgia I feel walking around. Especially around the English Department and Columbia Hall, where the Creative Writing Department used to be.

JK: You've spoken a lot about your experience with writing retreats. Could you talk a bit more about those experiences and how they have influenced your career?

AC: I've probably spoken most about my experience at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts, a seven-month long residency over the winter. Every year they admit ten writers – five fiction writers and five poets – and ten visual artists, and they all live in a little community there. Each person is given a furnished apartment and a stipend. For me, and for those I met during my time there, this residency was a godsend. It allowed a span of uninterrupted time to work, and to engage with the awesome landscape of wintertime Cape Cod, and with the minds and souls of the other artists. Besides accumulating a lot of pages during my residency, I was able, because of this uninterrupted time, to come to a deeper understanding of what my novel was about. I had never had that before. It was a real gift. Also, I met my agent through a friend there, which was a gift too.

This business side of things – networking – is something I always talk about grudgingly, because residencies should first and foremost be about privacy and creative work, in my opinion – but it is no use denying the advantage of sharing knowledge and resources among like-minded people.

JK: Portland has been developing quite the literary scene. Do you find yourself immersed in that culture or is it something that you feel separate from?

AC: I appreciate the culture, but often feel distant from it, which is wholly due to my hermitic personality.

JK: Can you talk about what you're working on now and its stage of development?

AC: I'm working on a novel set in Oklahoma in the 1920s. It's fairly new, though I've been thinking about one of the characters for a couple years. After two hundred and fifty pages, I have an inkling of what it could be about, and so am in the midst of shifting gears.

Jayme Ringleb: *The Glacier's Wake* takes on a number of speakers, among them a wasp, a sycamore, a glacier – what drew you to some of the collection's different subjects, and how did you go about giving them their voices?

Katy Didden: Each of those speakers arrived in different ways. I started with the wasp poems – I had a residency at the Vermont Studio Center, and at some point there was a notably lethargic wasp haunting

the writers' studios. It crept me out, but the poet in the studio next to mine, Maria Hummel, felt a great affection for it. One day, as I was working in my studio, Maria slipped an index card under my door. The poor wasp, now deceased, lay there, with its feet crossed over its chest very serenely, and Maria had written "RIP Raphael." This inspired a series of poems where I re-figured the wasp as a Renaissance painter, and then as an archangel. Then I wanted to hear what the wasp had to say about other things, especially on topics I'd been discussing with other poets and artists at the VSC. To find the wasp's voice, I used a cinched, tercet structure, to give it both a sense of lightness and shape, and effect a more concise, segmented speech.

The glacier persona is based on the Perito Moreno Glacier in Patagonia. It began as a poem called "Interview with a Glacier," a long poem in sections, and then it morphed into the persona poems. For that voice, for the most part, I used a jagged-edged free verse as a means of approximating the crumbling motion of the glacier. Finally, after I'd written the wasp and glacier poems, I wanted to write in a third voice to create a balance for the manuscript. I used to visit a particular sycamore tree on my running route in Missouri, and that was the sycamore I had in mind as I wrote the poems. To achieve its voice, I wrote in Welsh syllabic-rhyming forms to create a more formal voice. As I've written about elsewhere, I assigned each persona a second career—so the wasp is an academic, the glacier is a former starlet, and the sycamore is a minister.

JR: The collection's movements are also geographic, a speaker making a place for her own narrative in the various landscapes she encounters or imagines.

KD: My travels often inspire poems. This might be because I'm more observant in unfamiliar places, so images are more likely to stick in my mind, or else because I'm taking mental notes to share with people later. More broadly, I think it has something to do with the deep gratitude I feel when I make new connections (with people and places) even when I'm somewhere I've never been before. To travel is to make yourself vulnerable in a lot of ways; it requires a great deal of negative capability, which is, of course, a good mode for poems.

JR: You gave your Kidd Talk last fall on poetic erasure—specifically the distinct processes poets have used in their own erasures, the drama and dynamism that the process of erasure affords us, and even its potential social and poetic implications. What do you find most motivates your own erasures?

KD: I am working on a new manuscript called *The Lava on Iceland*, where I am writing poems in the persona of lava. When I was imagining what form would help me create a lava voice, I thought of erasure (a form where you take a block of prose, and then erase or ink-over words to reveal an inner poem). You are right, as I was researching the form, I noticed that every practitioner follows a particular set of rules—some people erase whole novels, some erase passages, some erase the text down to the word, some down to the letter, some erase vertically down the page, some horizontally, some use collage, some use marker or White-out.

As for me, I am erasing passages from a series of texts about Iceland (for example, an Icelandic saga, a geologic survey, interviews with Bjork), and I erase down to the letter inside words, which lets me have more control over rhythm and rhyme. So, initially I was motivated to see how the form would help me to create a voice, but now I am a true devotee. When I'm creating an erasure, it feels as if I'm inside language in an entirely different way, and finding word combinations has an added, Sudoku-

KATY DIDDEN

Katy Didden's first book, *The Glacier's Wake*, won the Lena-Miles Wever Todd Prize from Leiades Press. Her other awards include the Beulah Rose Prize from *Smartish Pace*, three Dorothy Sargent Awards, and an Academy of American Poets Prize. She is the recipient of scholarships and residencies from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Sewanee Writers' Conference, Vermont Studio Center, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Ragdale Foundation, and Hambidge Center. After earning her PhD, Katy held a Post-Doctoral Fellowship with the Micah Program at St. Louis University and curated the 2012–2013 Observable Readings Series with the poet Rickey Laurentiis for the St. Louis Poetry Center. Most recently, she was a Hodder Fellow at Princeton University (2013–2014).

Visitors— Cont'd on page 14

Visitors

like satisfaction. Creating erasures has also given me a different relationship to voice—I've been surprised to find consistent rhythms despite the variety of source texts.

As I mentioned in my Kidd Talk, the form is controversial, especially because it invokes acts of redaction and censorship. Many people see erasure as a response to 9-11. I've argued that it is also a response to our shifting eco-consciousness, as the final poems often highlight pre-occupations with shifting forms, fields, fluids, and fire. I think the form has great poetic potential, but I also want to respect its political resonance—I want to be aware of those things, so that I don't misuse the form.

JR: We've spoken before about the different ways eco-poetics operates as a lens for or a way into a poem, either in analysis of others' poems or in the writing of our own. What are the most essential resources of eco-poetics, the most essential lenses, to you as a reader and writer?

KD: I am fascinated by eco-poetics, but I feel as though I've just begun researching the field. The starting point for me was the 2013 Eco-poetics conference at the University of California, Berkeley. I attended the conference, and I was impressed by how it drew academics, artists, poets, and activists together. I think I would define eco-poetics along those lines, as an interdisciplinary conversation, and the first resource I would give to anyone interested in the

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topic would be the conference website, because its participants have written in and around that topic extensively:

<http://ecopoeticsconference.blogspot.com>.

As you know, I hosted an informal eco-poetics workshop in Eugene, and we started to unpack some of the

links between eco-awareness and poetry. For that group, we looked at the relationship between space and place (I am still thinking about the book that Aylie Baker recommended, *Wisdom Sits in Places* by Keith Basso), and we looked at the relationship between forms of nature and poetic forms. We started to talk about the relationship between poetry and documentary, and whether an eco-poem needs to have an activist agenda or not. We also studied the idea of the environment poem, building on Angus Fletcher's book *A New Theory of American Poetry: Democracy, the Environment, and the Future of Imagination*. I know some of you have started to fulfill the last promise of that group, which was to consider how collaborative authorship can change our thinking about poetry, and how eco-awareness creates new ideas of composition. I'm very grateful for our group, and our shared enthusiasm for the topic, and that experience has certainly inspired me to teach more eco-poetry classes in the future.

JR: Last fall, you taught a seminar called "Poets on Poetry: A Brief History of Poetics." The class revolved around a large number of texts that engaged the question of "What is poetry?" In seminar, you said that the more a person writes and studies poetry, the more difficult it becomes for her or him to answer this question. What difficulty, in terms of the poetics, most intrigues you? And is there a particular answer to the question "What is poetry?" that encourages you, or is there one that you feel is most correct?

The Glacier's Wake
KATY DIDDEN



Winner of the Lena-Miles Weser Todd Poetry Prize

KD: These are great questions! When I wrote that description, I think I had in mind the fact that there are so many different kinds of poetry – just think about the different approaches to poetry by a poet like Lisa Robertson versus a poet like Kay Ryan, to choose a random pairing as an example. I was also thinking about the difficulty of setting boundaries between what is poetry and what isn't: Is there an essential quality to poetry, apart from form, rhyme, or meter? I think there is, and I think that means that the boundary between prose and poetry is more a conversation than a line (think of Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric*). These days, I am most intrigued by the conversations between poetry and documentary, and the conversations between poetry and visual art. What is the distinction between a poem and a photograph? I no longer think that's as clear as it used to be for me.

Your question also makes me think about the ways that people equate poetry with difficulty – take a poet like Marianne Moore, for example. Her poem "An Octopus" is not something you can read once and feel as though you've understood it entirely – it's a collage of voices and quotations, for one thing, and it uses a bewildering combination of figurative language that shifts ecosystems in mid-stride (calling a Mt. Rainier "An Octopus/ of ice" for starters, then admiring the mountain for its "vermillion and onyx and manganese-blue interior expensiveness"). It is also dense language, and it treats ideas both directly and obliquely. So

yes, poetry can be difficult in terms of complexity, and that's something I love about it. In my experience, I like poems like this because I can return to them dozens of times and find new connections – I like how the complexities challenge the associative brain. So, to answer your second question, this is one aspect that I'm looking for in a poem – something that will continue to hold my imagination, even after many readings, and something that can seem new after many readings. Why is that important? Maybe because it's a kind of sustained conversation between poet and audience.

My grand hope for poetry is that it can be transformative, both for writer and reader. I hope it encourages people to stay open-minded, attuned to connections, and I hope that the practice of entertaining radical juxtapositions and paradoxes can cultivate imagination, and even compassion. I used to think that community was a by-product of poetry, because people gather for workshops or readings, but I now think that community is essential to the art form – maybe this, more than rhyme or meter, is the thing that defines poetry!

JR: What's next for you?

KD: I am happy to report that I will be joining the faculty at Ball State University next fall, where I will be teaching undergraduate and graduate creative writing classes. I am very grateful for my time at the University of Oregon, and for the wonderful people I met there. I hope we will stay in touch! ■

Annual Giving Reminder



The faculty and staff in the Creative Writing Program are committed to advancing the educational and scholarly mission of the university. However, limited financial resources restrict our ability to develop educational opportunities that benefit our students. Donations to the program and program-related funds allow us to provide a competitive education for our growing body of undergraduates and our graduate students through Graduate Teaching Fellowships.

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Literary Reference and Website Redesigns



You may have noticed that this year's *Literary Reference* has been redesigned. The University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences has implemented new branding for its departments and programs and, as a result, the Creative Writing Program has done some overhauls, not only of *Literary Reference* but also the Program website. If you haven't already, find us online (at crwr.uoregon.edu) and check out our more intuitive design, considerably updated content, and a public calendar of University of Oregon literary events. We've also created a new mailing list, through which subscribers are notified of the Program's Reading Series events and given the option to receive annual PDFs of *Literary Reference*.

Consider going paperless, and subscribe online today: crwr.uoregon.edu/subscribe/. ■

Congratulations 2015 Graduates!

FICTION

Andrea Danowski
Ezra Carlsen
Josh Mak
Michael McDermit
Jane Ridgeway
Ellen Scheuermann
Kelsey Yoder



POETRY

Jake Darin
Quinn Lewis
Charlotte Muzzi
Alyssa Ogi
Jayme Ringleb
Kara Wang