

Program Welcomes New Fiction Faculty

Interview with Marjorie Celona

by Allison Donohue, 1st-year poetry MFA

In Fall 2015, the Creative Writing Program welcomed Marjorie Celona as a member of the fiction faculty. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Marjorie's debut novel *Y* was published in 2013. The Program featured Marjorie as the first reader in the annual reading series.

Allison Donohue: First off, as the most recent addition to the MFA faculty as Assistant Professor of Fiction, Welcome! This past fall you read from your debut novel, *Y*. The novel begins with the lines, "My life begins at the Y. I am born and left in front of the glass doors, and even though the sign is flipped 'Closed,' a man is waiting in the parking lot and he sees it all: my mother, a woman in navy coveralls, emerges from behind Christ Church Cathedral with a bundle wrapped in gray, her body bent in the cold wet wind of the summer morning."

The first chapter continues as the speaker tells the story of her own birth. How did you decide to begin your novel with such an interesting and arresting point of view?

Marjorie Celona: Years ago, I attended a reading in which the writer told the true story of his parents' fraught journey to the hospital where he would later be born. They lived somewhere remote—some



Maritime island maybe—and had to cross a treacherous channel on a small ferry in the middle of winter in a rattletrap car, his mother practically bursting. The conceit—that "impossible" omniscient voice—isn't any different from what Truman Capote did in *In Cold Blood*, or what countless other omniscient first-person narrators in fiction have done, except that in this case the writer was telling the story of his own birth. It stuck with

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Literary Reference

FACULTY

Fiction

Jason Brown
Marjorie Celona
and
Karen Thompson Walker,
Visiting Writer

Poetry

Garrett Hongo
Daniel Anderson
Geri Doran
and
Lisa Fay Coutley,
Visiting Poet

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New Fiction

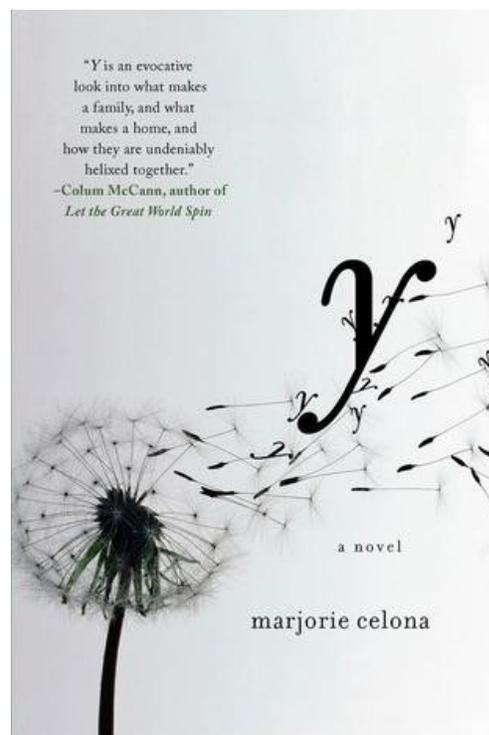
me.

I wrote *Y* in chapters that alternate between first- and third-person—though the whole thing could be said to be written in the first-person omniscient. The narrator—abandoned at birth at the YMCA and raised in foster care—has pieced the story of herself together, like a detective assembling clues, and thus she takes ownership not only of her own story but also of the stories of her family members, real and imagined, and of the story of her birth and later abandonment. The duality of the point view felt like the right vehicle for expressing the textuality of identity itself, as well as the duality of Shannon's character—android, asexual, not a person who can be easily categorized. The book is a performance piece of identity in a lot of ways—a literal breakdown of the "self."

(The other, possibly more honest answer is that I got sick of the limitations of first person. The "I" key on my laptop stopped working halfway through the first draft—I took that as editorial comment.)

AD: Some of the MFA fiction writers have spoken about your use of the term "interiority." Could you talk a little bit about what this means and how it has influenced your own writing?

MC: I'm usually railing against it! Interiority is a catch-all term that we use when we don't understand what's happening in a character's mind. Typically, this dissatisfaction arises because there is a disconnect. There is too much space either between the writer and the reader, or



between the writer and her characters. Dissatisfied by the story, we ask the writer for *interiority*—that is, access to a character's interior reality.

An alternative to interiority is to assert narrative control through physicality. It means getting closer, point-of-view wise, to the character, until writing becomes an act of embodiment. "[Flaubert] sometimes found himself weeping as he wrote," writes Lydia Davis in her introduction to her translation of *Madame Bovary*, ". . . he so identified with Emma during her last days that he was physically ill."

The portrayal of consciousness is one of the central things realism is concerned with. How do we portray thought? Not through the *transcription* of thought, but rather through the body and what it notices. Thus: what are the physical sensations that the character is experiencing in the moment; what does the character

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see, hear, taste. When you can write this close to a character without thinking about it, you are approaching something that resembles true interiority. And the need for descriptions of feelings disappears. Our thoughts will always fail us. So, we continue to look for better ways to portray consciousness—to portray a “realer” interior reality. The body is one solution.

AD: Some writers talk of having “preoccupations” or certain ideas that continue to haunt them. Are there stories—or ideas—that you find yourself continually returning to, writing about again and again? And, conversely, are there stories (or novels) that have been placed in the “graveyard,” so to speak, that you imagine you will never return to?

MC: The single-parent/only-child relationship was the preoccupation of my twenties. I’m more interested in the ripple effect of guilt right now. I don’t think I have anything in the “graveyard,” to borrow your term—the things that troubled me years ago still trouble me, and I have found no answers to anything, only deeper, weirder questions. There is one story that I’ve been noodling with for a decade and I opened the document this afternoon to see if I could finally finish it. (It continues to elude me.) What’s it about? Some guy and his brother. The way families form factions. The way there are things you can’t talk about and how everyone sort of understands that. Later on in life, I’d like to write more about gender—it was part of *Y*, but somewhat tangential. I’d like to write more about geomagnetic storms.

AD: Your short stories have appeared in the *Harvard Review*, *Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *The Sunday Times*, and elsewhere. Yet you chose to write and publish a novel for your debut literary work rather than a collection of short stories. How did you decide this?

MC: I didn’t! My agent did. She said it was important that I begin my career with a novel. This was crushing to hear at the time—I didn’t have a word of a novel written. What I’ve come to accept since writing one is that the novel and the short story couldn’t

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Faculty News

Marjorie Celona

Assistant Professor of Fiction

Celona gave readings in Eugene and Portland, and finished a second draft of her novel. A dramatic reading of the French translation of Marjorie’s first novel, *Y*, was performed in Paris by actress Valérie Bezançon for the 32nd ASSISES DE LA TRADUCTION LITTÉRAIRE.



Garrett Hongo

Professor of Poetry

Hongo’s book, *The Mirror Diary: Selected Essays*, has been accepted for publication by the University of Michigan Press for their Poets on Poetry series and scheduled for publication in spring 2017. His poem, “I Got Heaven,” was selected for *Best American Poetry 2016*. He gave two panel talks at the AWP Convention in Los Angeles: “Concentration Camps, USA” and “Poetry Los Angeles” and was a final judge in the Hopwood Creative Writing Contests at the University of Michigan. In addition, he wrote the Introduction to *Liviticus*, a new volume of poetry by Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite. This summer he will be Writer-in-Residence at the Lucas Artists Residencies at Villa Montalvo Art Center. ■



Staff News

Julia Schewanick

Business Manager

Joining the Creative Writing Program in Spring 2006, Julia celebrates 10 years of managing the day-to-day operations of the program. Congratulations!



Karen Thompson Walker

Visiting Assistant Professor of Fiction
Winter – Spring 2016



Walker's first book, *The Age of Miracles*, was published in 2013 and is a New York Times Bestseller. She holds degrees from UCLA and Columbia. She is the recipient of the 2011 Sireland Fellowship as well as a Bomb Magazine fiction prize. A former book editor at Simon & Schuster, Walker is from San Diego.

Interview by Allison Donohue, 1st-year poetry MFA

Allison Donohue: While writing *The Age of Miracles*, you worked full time, snatching moments before work and on the subway to write. How have your writing habits changed?

Karen Thompson Walker: Learning to fit my writing life around a demanding full time office job turned out to be great training for everything else: writing while teaching, writing while raising a child. For me, the most important thing is to sit down with my work every day—or nearly every day—even if it's only for an hour, or even less. Even when I do have a longer stretch of time to work, I find that the first hour is still my most productive. It's a slow process, though. I think of it like collecting dew to slowly fill a swimming pool.

AD: You've said that working as an editor formed you into a writer who "[edits] every sentence as [she goes], rearranging the words again and again, like an editor." So, which comes first: the story or the beautiful attention to language?

KTW: I usually start with a premise. That's what takes hold of my imagination and gives me an engine, a way forward. But my daily work is almost all about the sentences. Some people seem to think that writers who are interested in language are not invested in plot, and vice versa, but I really am committed to both ele-

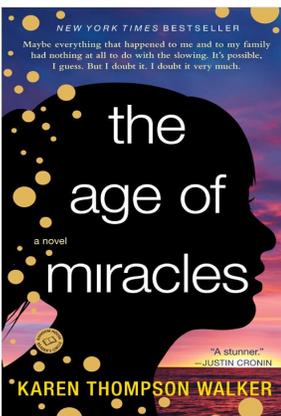
ments. As a reader and a writer, my ideal book is one in which every sentence is doing at least two kinds of work: moving the story forward and also offering some sort of poetry.

AD: Could you talk about your novel in progress, what it's about and where the inspiration came from for this work?

KTW: I feel a little superstitious about saying very much about my novel in progress—as if somehow I'll lose the thread if I try to describe it in any detail—but it's about a mysterious contagious disease that strikes a small college town. Like *The Age of Miracles*, it's about ordinary people facing an extreme situation. It's hard to pinpoint exactly where the idea came from, but one element came from a dream I had while living in a small college town.

AD: What difficulties have you encountered while walking the line between the real and the speculative in your writing?

KTW: Even though my books both involve speculative elements, I'm obsessed with realism—or the illusion of realism, anyway. I want these unlikely stories to feel convincing. I hope they feel true. That's one reason I like to focus on ordinary people living otherwise ordinary lives. I've found that one of the main challenges when working with this kind of material is figuring out how much to explain. Sometimes a detailed explanation of a strange phenomenon can add credibility, but it can also have the opposite effect. In *The Age of Miracles*, I decided not to offer an explanation for why the rotation of the earth has suddenly slowed. If something happened that had never happened before and that no scientist was expecting, it seems realistic that it would take us a long time to understand what was going on and why. Maybe we would never fully understand it. Living in the face of the unknown and the inexplicable is one of the most fundamental parts of the human experience, and it's something I'm always exploring in my fiction. ■



Lisa Fay Coutley

Visiting Assistant Professor of Poetry
Winter – Spring 2016



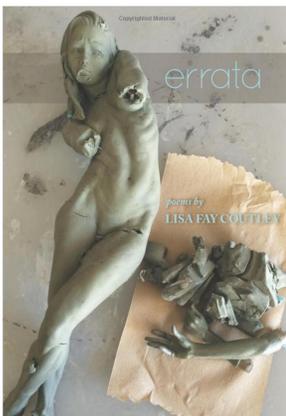
Coutley's debut collection, *Errata*, won the 2014 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry and was published in Fall 2015. She is the recipient of a Literature Fellowship from the NEA, a Rona Jaffe Scholarship, a Tennessee Williams Scholarship, and others. An Assistant Editor for *Linebreak*, she is also a judge for Black Lawrence Press' Chapbook Competition.

Interview by Allison Donohue, 1st-year poetry MFA

Allison Donohue: When you began writing *Errata* did you know that it would be a collection so steeped in grief?

Lisa Fay Coutley: I suppose I didn't know what I was writing toward, initially. Like any obsession that leads to a poem (and perhaps a collection), I was writing about what felt most urgent. For me, my earliest poems were rooted in autobiography, exploring my childhood in a dysfunctional family riddled with addiction and the legacy of abuse and trauma therein. Once I could see the topics I was dealing with, I wanted to heighten that effect for readers so that they might experience those events with the speaker in the book. I fictionalize several events to that end—to create that effect and to bring those poems into the darkest spaces of my imagination in order to expose this feeling of marginalization and also to challenge the ideals that society has about family. In doing so, I was inevitably exploring and praising grief. I believe that any poem about grief—by virtue of the act of recording it—is in many ways always praising the experience and hope for something—understanding, acceptance, change, etc.

AD: Before *Errata*, you published two chapbooks: *In the Carnival of Breathing* and *Back-Talk*. Did these shorter collections lead you to write *Errata*?



LFC: Yes, definitely. *Back-Talk* explores trauma and family dysfunction, and it includes many early poems that didn't make it into *Errata* but that paved the way for later, matured versions of those poems. *In the Carnival of Breathing* was written in a very short time and was centered on two disciplines that I was exploring—limnology and pulmonology. The study of lakes because I was raised on the Great Lakes and take a great deal of inspiration from those large inland seas. The study of lungs because my father was struggling with lung disease. The two studies went hand-in-hand for me, and even while I was reading and writing through those disciplines I was still exploring many of the traumatic events about which I was obsessing. All but a few of the poems in *In the Carnival* found their way into *Errata*.

AD: You hold an MFA in poetry and an MA in nonfiction. Can you talk about the relationship between the two genres?

LFC: In the same way that I try to take queues from the poems and corresponding discoveries to determine a collection's length, I try to do the same in genre switching. There are certain topics I can't explore in such short form or discoveries that I can't make in a poem but can in prose or vice-versa, so I write in whichever feels like the best genre for the content. As you probably know from my craft talk, I'm very interested in allowing my subject matter to determine the form and not the other way around. That is, whatever form and structure will be most functional and in service of the content, that's the route I take.

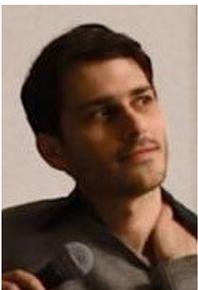
AD: Are you working on a prose project?

LFC: I do have a memoir in progress, and I have been writing and publishing essays in the past few years. For that reason, I'm sure that I'll continue to work in both genres throughout my career. ■



Maha Abdelwahab

Maha is an Egyptian citizen who grew up in Qatar, but spent a few years of her childhood in College Station, Texas. She identifies as an immigrant, even though she is still struggling with concepts of identity and the politics that come with it. She has just completed her undergraduate degree at DePaul University in Chicago studying International Relations, with a minor in English literature. She is bilingual and speaks Arabic fluently and is in the process of studying French. Although she's spent most of her undergrad immersing herself in researching political theory, she has almost never stopped writing poetry. She is interested in literary pieces/themes that involve story telling, identity, the diasporic body, and concepts of time. She is in a love/hate relationship with the city of Chicago where she currently resides, so she is super excited to explore a place that is more nature and less city.



Sam Axelrod

Born and raised in New York City, Sam spent much of his twenties in Chicago, playing in a band called The Narrator. Currently working as a proofreader and a babysitter, he lives in Brooklyn, where he plays in a band called Future of What. He recently graduated from Sarah Lawrence College. A Virgo, a paperback enthusiast, and a "cat person," he has been to all states in the lower 48.

Welcome New Students



Blaine Ely

In 2014, Blaine received his BA in English from Western Kentucky University. Though much of his life had been spent in the bluegrass, he moved to Alabama following graduation, where he eventually completed an MA in English at Auburn University. An adventurer at heart, however, he is beyond excited to claim a new home in the Pacific Northwest, and he looks forward to both conquering Oregon's waterways with a fly rod and joining a hungry and dedicated literary community.



Nicky Gonzalez

Nicky grew up chasing lizards and eating guava pastries in Hialeah, Florida. Her interests include stand-up comedy, cartoons, adventure video games, and literature. She received her BA in English at Tufts University in 2014. She has worked as a barista, a pre-school teacher, and a bookseller and has volunteered with PEN New England, Beacon Press, and the Wisconsin Books to Prisoners project. She

currently lives in Miami, where she's soaking up the swampy, tropical landscape of her homeland before moving to Eugene. She is very excited to move to the opposite corner of the country and continue her search for the world's best burger.



Katie Haemmerle

Katie grew up in the Chicago suburbs and the Florida Panhandle. She graduated from Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, with a BA in literature and creative writing and minors in philosophy and Spanish. For the past two years, she has been living in Boston where she works in scholarly publishing and survived the 2015 winter of five blizzards. She is an outnumbered poet in the writing group she participates in and organizes. Baking is her compulsive habit, which has gained her the reputation as the person who always appears with baked goods for everyone. The Pacific Northwest seems to be the remaining coast for her to explore, so she's excited to move to Eugene and join Oregon's MFA community.



Ndinda Kioko

Ndinda has, until three years ago, inhabited the peripheries of writing. She grew up in Kenya and comes to University of Oregon with a B.Ed in English and Literature from Kenyatta University. Her current writing obsessions are death, water, and ways of seeing. Ndinda was recently listed and published in the *Africa39 project*, a selection of 39 writers under the age of 40 from Africa. Her works have also appeared in several other publications including *The Trans-African*, *Fresh Paint - Literary Vignettes by Kenyan Women*, and *Jalada Africa*. Ndinda is a Miles Morland scholar for 2014. She is moving to Oregon from Nairobi and is hoping to spend some time in the woods dismantling the rules of writing and inventing a language for her stories where existing languages are not enough.



Ryan MacLennan

Ryan was born and raised in Taos, NM. He earned his B.A. in Social Studies from Harvard University, where he wrote his senior thesis on the American Environmental movement. He spent his undergraduate time writing fiction, hosting a late-night radio show, and beekeeping. Since graduating, he has held several jobs, including at the Harvard Kennedy School and in Hollywood. This will be his first foray into the Pacific Northwest.



Erik Neave

While he still calls Wisconsin home, Erik has not weathered a proper Midwestern winter in years. During the last decade, he washed a thousand windows, built a fence, learned to make coffee, ran for mayor, got married, fathered two children, and travelled across the U.S. and Western Europe playing music with his band Cedarwell. He is currently finishing his undergraduate degree at St. John's College in Annapolis, MD studying the liberal arts, liberally. Besides poetry and philosophy, he enjoys cooking/eating with his wife Meaghan, walking outside with his dog, working in ceramics by himself and reading to his children Oliver Wolfe and Baisley Rae. He is very excited to join the work in Oregon.



Sarah Skochko

Sarah grew up in South Jersey and lives in the Kensington section of Philadelphia. She went to Rutgers-Camden twice, has studied in Azerbaijan, and is slowly chipping away at an MDiv from Meadville Lombard Theological School. A natural introvert, she enjoys solo backpacking in the woods; her poetry is mostly about trees, transience, and death. She's also an avid and affectionate observer of people; she occasionally preaches, and plans to become an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister. ■

Ehud Havazelet

1955-2015

Professor of Fiction
Creative Writing Program

On the afternoon of Saturday, March 12th, 2016, a large crowd gathered in the University of Oregon's Knight Library Browsing Room to honor the memory of Ehud Havazelet.

Ehud Havazelet was known to expect his students to work; he critiqued their work with an astute eye, wanting his students to learn and be the best writers—and people—that he knew they could be. A true mentor, he challenged his students in the way a parent might or a close friend: someone who cares about you enough to speak the truth, even when it hurts. And his students responded, rising to heights they would have never reached had Ehud not asked them to climb.

Ehud Havazelet, my closest and longtime colleague, was the greatest—fiery, brilliant, unstinting, mercurial, and very very loving of his students and our shared enterprise of creating lasting work. Though his own fiction was often characterized as psychological realism, I thought of it as elegiac, stately, with a terror at the center of it, though it was not for mere death, but for a paucity of mind, a life without serious reflection. As he is now, where he is now, I see him on the seat of nirvana, reflecting upon us all, inspiring us to acts of mind and the exercise of serious consciousness. *Me ke aloha*, Ehud, I have for you *aloha* in my heart. Without you, we are an absence, the vast landscape around us with no spring blossoms or the autumn leaves of maple. You are the evening that descends, firing the roofs and west-facing walls of our homes in the bright flame of a setting sun.

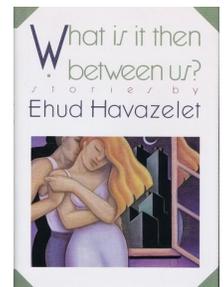
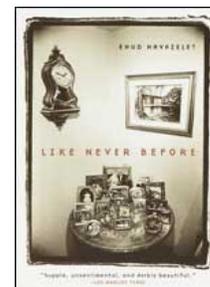
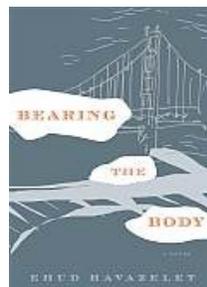
~ Garrett Hongo
Professor of Poetry

No one who worked with Ehud didn't wish they could read—or teach—stories like him. Every word, he showed us, every breath counts. And if any of your words *didn't* count, he'd let you know. Unequivocally. But after your workshop shellacking, it would eventually sink in that he did this because he cared about your characters—perhaps even more than you did. Because he knew they deserved more—more humor, more charity, more patience. Because he saw something under your stacked prepositions and thudding metaphors that made him think you could actually give it to them. For this faith, Ehud's opinion was paramount. I don't write a paragraph without thinking about what he'd say if he were over my shoulder. I get to write for my work, and so I'm lucky to think of him often.

I have many favorite Ehud quotes ("Never use the word 'chuckle'—ever" comes to mind), but my favorite of all is this: "Everyone has a story, and everyone's story is worth telling." Hands down, the ten most important words I heard in any classroom. When Ehud talked about Chekhov or Babel or O'Connor, he wasn't just talking about fiction. He was talking about the ways we connect to one another and the need to keep trying when we fail—not necessarily to reach agreement but understanding. His passion for teaching was matched only by his empathy, and I'm a better person for knowing both—a little more generous, a little less cynical, a little more willing to listen.

~ Jacob Berns
Fiction '15

It is no secret that Ehud loved secrets; he wanted to know about you. He pushed your buttons. Oh, how he could. He asked about your pain—your happiness, too—but his currency was pain. It was, of course, a way of satisfying his endless curiosity; but



it was also an entry point, a way of making you see yourself, what you needed and therefore, what you needed to write about, write toward. It wasn't for everyone; but if anything made it work, it was Ehud's undeniable—his radical—empathy. We trusted him because he could imagine his way into your troubles, into your character's experiences, because he understood that no one was better than anyone else; that we were all just trying—to really listen, to be a kinder daughter, a more tolerant friend. And to try was to be nothing less than heroic.

The other day I listened to a radio interview Ehud gave a few years back. There he was again, riffing on history and his work and quoting his tenets, being at once self-deprecating and slightly boastful; explaining how language is both what we hide behind and what necessarily reveals us. He always did this with such ease and brilliance that if you missed a beat you might have lost the key to that story you'd been suffering for weeks, that one sentence; you might have lost, really, a reason to get out of bed in the morning, a new way to live.

~ Natasha Sunderland
Fiction '14

There are no answers in stories, Ehud once said. No sociological or journalistic message or moral.

What, then, are stories? What are they for?

Ehud tells me Flannery O'Connor told him that a story is "a small history in a universal light."

Ehud's small history was a history in which he changed the course of my life by teaching me to write, and to read like a writer. As I continue working on my novel, Ehud's vote of confidence means more than all the rest. No teacher has been more influential, no critic more adept at diagnosing exactly where and why a story has gone wrong, and more importantly, what to do to bring it back on track. Ehud's fierce friendship still feels present, and his words will continue to echo over the decades, passing from writer to writer, reader to reader, human heart to human heart. This is what stories are for.

~ Leslie Barnard Booth
Fiction '10



Although I did not have the privilege of knowing and working with Ehud until I became the Director of this Program some six years ago, he has left me a series of indelible memories: an email in which he equated a decision that I had made during a fiction search to what horses often leave in their wake during a parade—followed almost immediately by another email asking me out for drinks; the look on his face when a candidate in that same search suddenly blurted, "The canon! I love the canon!"; to his love for George Eliot and Chekhov, his energy in the classroom and the sparkle in his eyes and pride in his voice when speaking of his son, Coby. Each week I still expect to see him, coke can in hand, on his way to a workshop in the Alder Building.

~ George Rowe
Program Director

Reading Series



In addition to joining the Program in Fall 2015 as full-time Fiction Faculty, **Marjorie Celona** introduced our Reading Series by reading from her recently published novel, *Y*; following this, she read her short story “Othello,” which was recently shortlisted for the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award.

Novelist **Kirstin Valdez Quade** (Fiction ‘09), joined us this past winter to read from her debut short story collection, *Night at the Fiestas*. Her Kidd Talk focused on examples of, and strategies for, avoiding the pitfalls of “Evasive Protagonist Syndrome,” a common challenge in first drafts of fiction. A recipient of the “5 Under 35” award from the National Book Foundation, Quade will begin as assistant professor at Princeton University in Fall 2016.

Following the release of her first book of poetry, and joining the Program as a visiting poet this winter and spring, **Lisa Fay Coutley** read from *Errata* and her in-progress collection of poetry, *tether*. She also gave a Kidd Talk on grief in poetry and how it can surpass the elegy.

Karen Thompson Walker, a visiting fiction writer for winter and spring term, read this past February from her current novel in progress, *The Dreamers*. She also gave a Kidd Talk on the value of speculative fiction and how successfully to incorporate speculative moments into one’s story or novel.

Short story writer and novelist **Elizabeth McCracken** read from her novel in progress about the founding of candlepin bowling in New England. Her craft talk challenged the stereotypical habits of a writer (i.e. “write every day”) in favor of habits that work best for one on an individual level. McCracken, who holds the James A. Michener Chair in Fiction at the University of Texas, Austin, concluded her talk by stating, “We are all of us our own experiment and we must take all negative emotion and spin it into gold.”

Poet **Edward Hirsch** concluded the 2015-2016 Reading Series. His Kidd Talk on reading poetry fo-

cused on the reader’s relationship to the poem. Hirsch stated that when you read poetry “you’re alone with your own feelings, but you’re [also] alone with the words of another.” Hirsch concluded that “a poem can say things that a family member, that a friend can never say...[therefore] poetry is for our lives.” At his reading, Hirsch read from his new and selected poetry collection, *The Living Fire*, and his book-length poem, *Gabriel*, and then finished by sharing with the audience a number of new poems. The author of eight books of poetry and five books of prose, Hirsch is currently the President of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in New York City. ■

UO Today



Guests of the Reading Series are invited to participate in a UO Today interview during their visit as schedule permits.

UO Today, the Oregon Humanities Center’s half-hour television interview program, provides an eye into what’s going on around the University. UO Today has conducted a number of filmed interviews with our visiting writers and faculty, exploring various questions about writing, craft, the books each writer has written, and what he or she plans to work on in the future.

Recordings featuring Anthony Doerr, Miriam Gershow, Sara Eliza Johnson, Keetje Kuipers, Michelle Latiolais, Robert Pinsky, Jeffrey Schultz, Sidney Wade, Edward Hirsch (forthcoming), and others are posted on our website:

<http://crwr.uoregon.edu/uo-today-interviews/>. ■

Program Awards

The Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Prize

Leah Gómez
Poetry '17

from "Abuelo, Mi Muerto"
After Aracelis Girmay

I've walked four nights in the rain,
Abuelo, I am heavy and far from you, here.
I want to resurrect you, so I cry your name.

I look for your reflection in every window pane,
I am as good as brittle bones without you near,
I've walked four nights in the rain.

The Richard and Juliette Logsdon Award for Creative Fiction Writing

Jake Powers
Fiction '16

from "The Far Side
of the Pocumtuck River"

The air inside the shop trembled. Alloys hissed in molds, grinders chewed away at metal, torches and welding guns spit flames and sparks into the air. We called it the furnace—that's what it was, what it always had been. In the summer, the temperature never dropped below 100 degrees. Coveralls were mandatory. We tore the armpits open, slashed vents behind the knees, held icepacks against our backs with our belts. You learned to drink water, to keep your knees bent. Rookies seized in the heat. I once saw a new guy fall out and sear his face on a newly welded floodgate. His coveralls didn't do a damn thing.

The Walter and Nancy Kidd Writing Competition in Poetry and Fiction

Fiction Judge: Elizabeth McCracken

1 st Place	Shannon Moffet	"Portrait of a Lady in Nothing"
2 nd Place	Finlay Loudon	"Burn-Over"
3 rd Place	Sarah Hovet	"Evidence"

Poetry Judge: Edward Hirsch

1 st Place	John Mulcare	"King"
2 nd Place	Grace Hanich	"Daddy knows what's pretty"
3 rd Place	Jacob Bitney	"A Place to Rest Your Eyes"

Student News

Rose Lambert-Sluder

Fiction '16

Rose was awarded a month-long residency at Hawthornden Castle in Lasswade, Scotland, for the summer of 2016.

Claire Luchette

Fiction '17

Claire's short fiction appeared in the Winter 2015 issue of *Glimmer Train*, and online this past November in *Gulf Coast*.

Cora Mills

Fiction '16

Cora's play *On the Street Where We Used to Live* won the University of Oregon's New Voices competition and will be produced as part of UO's mainstage season next winter. In the fall, Cora begins at Georgia State University as a doctoral candidate in English-Fiction.

Ishelle Payer

Fiction '17

Ishelle's story "Grow" appeared this past December in *The Rumpus*.

Morgan Thomas

Fiction '16

Morgan received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Darkhan, Mongolia. She will teach at the Mongolian University of Science and Technology.

Cormac White

Poetry '16

In the fall, Cormac will teach high school English as a Baltimore City Teaching Resident and creative writing and composition at the Community College of Baltimore County. ■

Alumni News

Gloria Receives Fulbright

Eugene Gloria
(Poetry '92)



A Professor of English at DePauw University, Gloria has received a Fulbright Lecturer Award to Manila, Philippines, where he will be hosted by the Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies at The Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas, The Catholic University of the Philippines (UST). Founded in 1611, UST is the oldest extant university charter in the Philippines and in Asia. Many of the country's most prominent writers and artists have studied or taught at UST, including national hero José Rizal.

As a UST lecturer during the Spring 2017 semester, Gloria will teach undergraduate and graduate students, give a public reading, and conduct research related to a new collection of poetry. Gloria's Fulbright project will allow him to refresh his knowledge of Filipino writers and writing, which he developed through his first Fulbright scholar grant in 1992-93 at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. The experience eventually led to the publication of his first book of poems, *Drivers at the Short-Time Motel*, and continues to inform his work as a poet and teacher. He hopes the support of a Fulbright grant will again inspire new poems and expand his teaching of literature and the craft of poetry writing.

Tenorio Receives Rome Prize

Lysley Tenorio
(Fiction '98)



A recipient of the Rome Prize in literature by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Tenorio began a year-long fellowship at the American Academy in Rome in Fall 2015. The Rome Prize is awarded to about thirty "emerging artists and scholars who represent the highest standard of excellence and who are in the early or middle stages of their lives."

Publishes in All 50 States

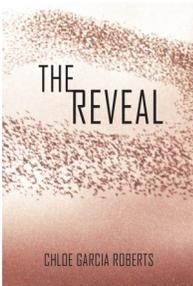
Susan Rich
(Poetry '96)



Rich has now published poems in all 50 States. She is most thankful to recent publications in *Chiron Review* (Kansas) and *Brushfire Literature and Arts Journal* (Nevada). Other publications this year include the Academy of American Poets "poem-a-day" site and *Seattle Magazine*.

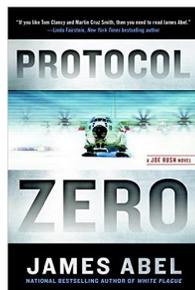
The Reveal,
2015

Chloe Garcia Roberts



Protocol Zero
(A Joe Rush Novel), 2015

Bob Reiss
(as "James Abel")



Landscape/heartbreak,
2015

Michelle Peñaloza

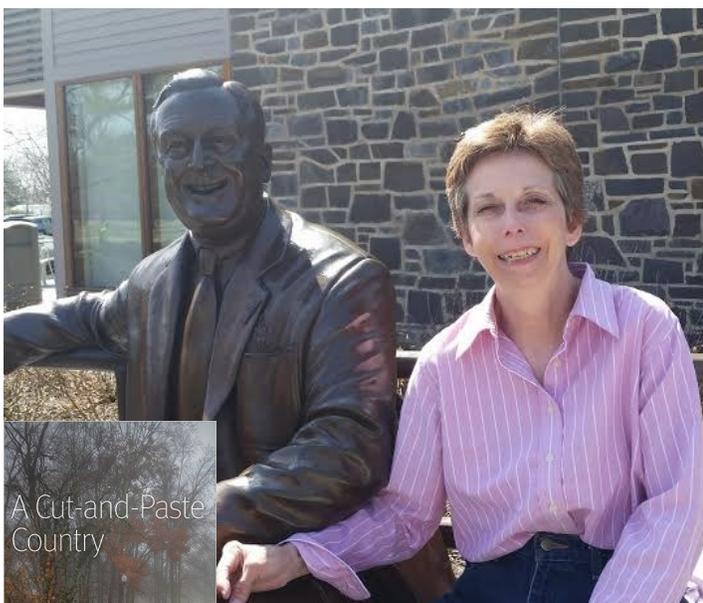


Here Among Strangers
2016

Serena Crawford



Inaugural Prize in Poetry Awarded to Program Alum



Kathleen Hart (Poetry '83) was selected as the winner of the inaugural Jacopone da Todi Poetry Prize for *A Cut-and-Paste Country* (2016). The prize was awarded by Franciscan University of Steubenville to Hart, a former college instructor and high school teacher who grew up in New York and now resides in Texas. Congratulations, Kathleen!

Scheuermann Wins Blue Mesa Review Contest

Ellen Scheuermann
(Fiction '15)

Scheuermann won the 2015 Blue Mesa Review Summer Writing Contest for her story "What We Are Doesn't Have a Name Yet." Judge Antonya Nelson said: "This piece admirably introduces and marries two unfamiliar worlds—the military and the fringe religious—in a fascinating series of escalating events. I felt transported into unknown territory."



Renewed Interest In *Seal Rock*

John Haislip (1925 - 2011)
Program Director, late 1980s

Haislip's book, *Seal Rock*, was the winner of the first Oregon Book Award for poetry (1987). Renewed interest in the book inspired his widow, Karen Locke (Poetry '76), to oversee its re-release. It is available in Eugene-Springfield bookstores, in establishments along the Central Oregon Coast, and via email request: parkavepoetry@gmail.com.



Karen Locke
(Poetry '76)

Locke has a poem forthcoming in an anthology of drought poems tentatively called "Drought", edited by Quinton Hallett (Fall Creek Falls Press), Colette Jonapulus (Tiger's Eye Press), Laura LeHew (Uttered Chaos Press), and Cheryl Loetscher (Noah's Shoes Press).

More Alumni News!

Sarah Hulse's (Fiction '12) novel *Black River* is a 2016 PEN/Hemingway Finalist and a 2016 American Library Association Notable Book. Beginning Fall 2016, Hulse joins the faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno, as Assistant Professor of Creative Writing.

Kara Wang (Poetry '15) and **Nikki Zielinski** (Poetry '11) were featured in the final 50 of the Best New Poets 2015 for poems "Idiom" and "Midnight, Troy," respectively.

John Ackerson (Poetry '76) — After working for 23 years as a certified English teacher in the French Éducation nationale, Ackerson has retired from teaching and is dedicating his time to reading, writing, and translating. His translation of John Boring's scientific thriller, *Un monde sous influence*, *The Breath of Seth*, is available as an iBook on iTunes or by contacting <http://john.boring.free.fr/>. ■

New Fiction

be more different. There is little of one that translates to the other. This was and continues to be sad news! Regardless, I sat down and did the work. I wrestled with the great beasts of plot and structure. We can hide from these things in stories and still write a great story. Very few writers can hide from plot and structure for 300-some pages in our current age. It was fashionable for a while. It's not anymore. There is artfulness to be found within plot—that's what surprised me after writing *Y*. As a grad student, I thought plot was for people who wrote about elves.

AD: Do you see a short story collection in your future?

MC: I've been working on one for over a decade. It's not enough to write ten stories, then bind them together—there needs to be some kind of cohesion. That is, I suppose, what has been taking me so long—the cohesion part.

AD: You've moved quite a lot in the last few years. Originally from Canada, you earned your MFA at the Iowa Writers' Workshop and then spent some time in Cincinnati—not to mention completing a fellowship at Colgate University in New York and serving as a writer-in-residence at Hawthorn-den Castle in Scotland. At your reading this past fall, you said that Eugene was the first place you'd moved to where you felt as though you didn't want to be anywhere else. So I'm curious, what does it take to make a home somewhere? And more so, to make a home as a writer?

MC: Eugene is the ninth city I've lived in. I've always been a restless person and I've always tried to put my writing first, so that's meant a lot of moving around. (An editor once said to me, "You leap about like popcorn!") I grew up feeling trapped on Vancouver Island and left at seventeen for Vancouver and then later Montreal. I moved to Iowa in 2007. Iowa was another planet. Crickets and cicadas, fireflies, tornadoes, lightning. After Iowa, I lived in Madison, Wisconsin, for a while, then upstate New York, then Cincinnati, where I met my husband. After we got married and had our daughter, it was a new era: I wanted to stop stuffing as many belongings as possi-



Welcome, Marjorie (pictured with her daughter, Ena).

ble into my car every eight months or so and taking off. I'm really very happy here. An hour from the ocean; two from the city. I drive so infrequently now that I've almost forgotten how to do it. Douglas Fir. I have a fair obsession with trees. Did you know that the University of Oregon is also an arboretum? You can download an atlas of all the trees on campus. I have spent hours with this document. My favorite section is titled "Is It a Tree?" To which the response begins, "In most cases it is easier to say yes."

AD: Having officially joined the faculty this past September you're nearing the end of your first year. After teaching as a visiting writer and a writer-in-residence, how has teaching as a full-time faculty member differed from your previous teaching experiences?

MC: Well, there's all this other stuff I do as a faculty member aside from teaching—it's really about being an active member of the community and being invested in our program, whereas before, at these other institutions, I was just passing through.

Teaching-wise, I'm teaching classes that have been in my head for years—an examination of the oeuvres of Lorrie Moore, Alice Munro, and Edward

P. Jones, for instance, and a feminist critique of literary realism post-*Madame Bovary*. I also had the privilege of hosting Elizabeth McCracken for our Reading Series; next year, I'll host Chinelo Okparanta. This kind of thing has been thrilling. Seeing my graduate students' theses transform into publishable books, however, has been the highlight of the year.

AD: What's next for you writing wise? Have you thought about or started a new project?

MC: Someone told me to start another novel while I was waiting for *Y* to come out, and I listened, and I've now been wrestling with it for years. It's also about some guy and his brother, and the way families form factions. The way there are things you can't talk about and everyone sort of understands that. It isn't about gender or geomagnetic storms—yet.

The first thing I did when we arrived in Eugene was write a short story—it's the first thing I do when I arrive in any new place: open a Word document, start typing. ■

MARJORIE CELONA

Marjorie's first novel, *Y*, was published in eight countries and won France's *Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Héroïne* for Best Foreign Novel. *Y* was also shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing, a finalist for the Center for Fiction's Flaherty-Dunn First Novel Prize and the *Dioraphte Jongerenliteratuur Prijs* (Netherlands), and was selected as the #1 Indie Next Pick from IndieBound. Her short stories, essays, and book reviews have appeared in *The Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *Harvard Review*, *The Believer*, *Elle Magazine*, *The Globe and Mail*, and elsewhere.

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.

Please consider giving to the **Creative Writing Program**. Your gift will help maintain the program's excellence and dedication to emerging graduate and undergraduate writers—our future literary voices. For more information, visit our webpage:

<http://crwr.uoregon.edu/give-now/>. ■

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Let us know how you're doing!

Submit your update through our new online portal:

<http://crwr.uoregon.edu/>

or email: cwrweb@uoregon.edu

(Subject: Student/Alumni News)

Be sure to include your name, genre, and graduation year.





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Congratulations

2016 Graduates!



FICTION

Phoebe Bright
Jane Keyler
Rose Lambert-Sluder
Cora Mills
Josha Nathan
Jake Powers
Morgan Thomas
Zondie Zinke

POETRY

Brittany Herman
Steve Godwin
Amy Strieter
Cormac White