



Out of IOWA

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH FALL 2017

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR: Claire Fox



Professor and Chair of English
Claire Fox

I am honored to assume the department chair position this year, after sixteen years on the English Department faculty. Thanks to the fine leadership of our previous chair, Jon Wilcox, who held the position for nearly eight of the past twelve years, I have the pleasure of serving a thriving community

of over a thousand students and scholars who coalesce in our various departmental programs, at a University known for its longstanding support of creativity and innovation in the arts and humanities, and in a city that boasts one of the most lively literary scenes in the world.

As I am learning all too quickly, sometimes English seems more like a small city than an academic department. The Department houses two graduate programs, two undergraduate majors, three distinguished journals, and a General Education Literature program. Our most recent addition to the degree programs is the undergraduate major in English and Creative Writing, a cooperative venture with the Iowa Writers' Workshop. The new major represents the expansion of a Creative Writing Track that initially operated within the English major and has now become a major in its own right, with both the English literary studies and English and Creative Writing students sharing a host of foundational courses. As of this fall, students from both English majors also have the opportunity to pursue a Literary Publishing Track, a multidisciplinary selection of courses especially designed for students who wish to pursue careers in publishing, editing, and the book trades. While many English departments

around the country are experiencing a period of contraction, ours is gradually expanding, with approximately 850 undergraduate students enrolled across our two majors.

Just as the new English and Creative Writing major was launching, *College Magazine* ranked the University of Iowa first among "Top 10 Universities for Aspiring Writers" in an article that cited one of our English majors. Among my challenges in the coming years is to maintain that reputation by satisfying the demand for high-quality English courses on the part of undergraduate students who are coming to our department from all over Iowa, the United States, and indeed, the world. When I joined the English Department, there were over fifty professors on the faculty. Now there are approximately thirty-five. In a time of declining state funding, we have managed to do more with less, largely because of the wisdom and leadership

(continued on page 3)



The New Major: Iowa Gets Creative

English and Creative Writing Major Draws Hundreds of Students

When Irene Enlow came to the University of Iowa as a first-year student, she knew that she wanted to write. She had grown up filling notebooks with supernatural tales and stories of other worlds. During her first college writing workshop, she felt defensive and apprehensive. No one had ever critiqued her stories before, and she worried how other students might respond to her writing. But Enlow found that the experience was more than rewarding. Not only did she discover new ways to grow as a writer, but she found a new community. “It felt wonderful to know people had read my work and reacted thoughtfully,” Irene recalls. “Every writing class I have been in has always felt like taking part in a community where everyone is welcome to contribute genuinely and joyfully.” Creative writing classes at Iowa, she says, have introduced her to a community of writers who are all as passionate and driven as she is.

“We make our communities in a lifelong commitment that radiates far beyond the classroom.”

-Robyn Schiff

Enlow is majoring in English and Creative Writing, a new undergraduate degree offered by the English Department. The University of Iowa is already renowned for its prestigious graduate writing programs, and the degree goes one step further in cementing the university’s distinction as the “Writing University,” a destination for writers from all over the world. Though the University of Iowa pioneered the workshop model over eighty years ago with the Iowa

Writers’ Workshop, no opportunity for undergraduates to earn a formal degree has existed until now. A collaboration of the Department of English and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, the new English and Creative Writing major has evolved from the Creative Writing Track that English launched nearly a decade ago. In the second year of existence, the major has already seen a boom in enrollment. Over five hundred undergraduates are now registered as English and Creative Writing Majors, and they are joined by over three hundred students who are pursuing the English Major.

The new major, which *College Magazine* ranked #1 for aspiring young writers, is as challenging as it is inventive. Majors have opportunities to take classes in playwriting, translation, creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry, and they also receive a rigorous grounding in literary study, learning their craft from the great writers that have come before them. “Exploring and hearing the breadth of voices present in English literature has been such a fulfilling experience.



Melissa Lauer (left) and Austin Hughes (right), English and Creative Writing major and president of the English Society at the Undergraduate Honors Reception in April 2017.

THE NEW MAJOR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Being able to read works from people I’ve never heard of before always feels like a source of artistic growth for me,” says Austin Hughes, an English and Creative Writing Major and current co-president of the English Society. “The major has been a fantastic reminder of the versatility, weight, and the promise of written word, and I enjoy experiencing, again and again, that pleasant shock of a resonant voice I’ve never heard before.”

When it comes to creative writing, there is no better place to be than Iowa City. With literary events taking place on campus and in town nearly every day of the week, the city itself becomes the classroom. “I hope our writers will graduate with an appetite for urgent innovation in their own work, met by an inspired sense of responsibility and belonging as emerging stewards of a fulfilling, inclusive literary community,” says Robyn Schiff, Director of the Undergraduate English and Creative Writing Major. “We don’t inherit a literary community as writers,” explains Schiff, “we make our communities in a lifelong commitment that radiates far beyond the classroom.” Indeed, majors are encouraged to reap all the wealth of opportunities available in a place crowned a UNESCO

City of Literature. They take advantage of the multitude of cultural resources the city has to offer—from literary journals and presses, to bookshops, readings, and festivals. “It’s truly a privilege to live and study in a city which values writing as much as Iowa City,” says Hughes. “The major has led me to be more active in the literary community whether, it’s by attending a reading or hosting a poetry slam and privileging whatever voice comes to the mic.”

And yet the English and Creative Writing Major offers more than just a degree. It has not only helped students grow in their writing, but also as people. “The English and Creative Writing Major at Iowa has helped me to be more confident and comfortable in my own skin, which has been beneficial not only for the evolution of my writing but also for my growth as a person. It has encouraged me to challenge myself in my art, and this has translated to me doing the same thing in my personal life,” says Enlow. Bringing together a distinguished faculty, dedicated students, and a vibrant literary community, the UI English and Creative Writing major is unique among undergraduate creative writing programs in the U.S. ♡

Introducing the New Publishing Track

In addition to the new English and Creative Writing Major, the English Department introduced a new Publishing Track in the spring of 2017, drawing on the department’s expertise in publishing and book studies. 40 students from both the English and English and Creative Writing Majors have enrolled thus far.

In the core courses, Publishing I and II, students gain hands-on experience in creating their own literary journal, an exercise that calls upon them to critically reflect upon their own identities as consumers, producers, and distributors of literature. “I believe that a publishing class can transcend its obvious appeal as a vocational tool and actually be an essential component in how students learn about the creation of art and culture,” says Ethan Madore, a graduate of the Nonfiction Writing Program who was integral in designing these classes.

In the spring of 2016, publishing students also worked to select the ten best manuscripts submitted by undergraduates across the state of Iowa for the annual Iowa Chapbook Prize. The award, dedicated to capturing emerging voices, publishes limited-run chapbooks, focusing particularly on creative nonfiction and cross-genre texts that strike toward new territory. Copies of the selected chapbooks were featured at the nationally recognized Prairie Lights bookstore. ♡



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of first-rate professors, a dedicated staff, and talented, motivated students. As the creative writing area expands in our department, I am thrilled to report that English will be searching for a professor of Fiction Writing this year.

This issue of *Out of Iowa* features many highlights from the past academic year, including the Department’s prominent role in the global celebration of Shakespeare on the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the Bard’s death and the Lloyd-Jones Residency, which brought seven Iowa high school teachers and their students to UI for three days of intensive writing classes taught by our Department’s Nonfiction Writing MFA students and English Education students from the College of Education.

This fall semester 2017 began on a bittersweet note with a symposium, “Performance, Culture, and the Book,” in honor of Claire Sponsler (1954-2016), M.F. Carpenter Professor of English, award-winning scholar of medieval studies and performance, and former chair of the department. We in English keenly feel the loss of our colleague, and we gathered to celebrate her life and contribu-

tions to the field through this memorable event.

Meanwhile, English faculty members continue to be amazingly productive teachers, writers, and scholars. In addition to the recent creative and scholarly books and articles profiled in this issue, our faculty are also visible in arenas such as the *New York Times*, *Slate*, and *Harper’s*, and they are collaborating on ambitious digital and public humanities projects on topics ranging from the poetry of Walt Whitman to Early Modern publishing, Medieval European Jewish communities, the Fluxus movement, creative writing in Iowa City, and community-based stories about climate change in the Midwest. To learn more about these and other exciting projects, I invite you to visit the faculty pages on the UI English website.

I look forward to sharing further news about the English Department with you in the coming years. As recruitment and career placement of our English students becomes increasingly central to our departmental operations, we value all the more our connections to alumni, colleagues, and friends. I would love to hear from you, and I thank you for your support. ♡



IOWA ENGLISH IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD

SHAKESPEARE 400

Adam Hooks, an Associate Professor of English, first encountered *Hamlet* as a teenager in his local public library. “I’ve spent the years since then trying to understand why I felt compelled to do so, in part by tracing Shakespeare’s lives and afterlives in print,” says Hooks, the author of *Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography, and the Book Trade* (Cambridge, 2016). On the four hundredth anniversary of the writer’s death, Hooks curated “The Books That Made Shakespeare” at the UI Main Library, featuring many Renaissance books from the UI Library Special Collections.



Professor Adam Hooks with English Honors undergraduate student Ryan Schroeder in the UI Library Special Collections

The product of a collaboration between faculty, librarians, and students, the exhibition provided an excellent opportunity to connect the public with literary scholarship and demonstrate the important value of the humanities. Professor Blaine Greteman led a tour of the exhibition for the Burlington Shakespeare Club, a historic women’s club devoted to the study of the author, while Professor Emerita Miriam Gilbert gave a lecture accompanying the exhibition. A digital extension of the exhibition with additional texts, videos, and photos, is now available online at <http://shakespeare.lib.uiowa.edu>.

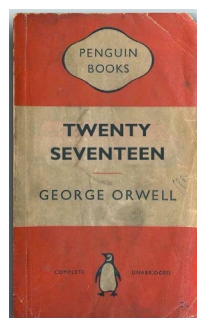
Audiences jumped at the chance to view the First Folio, the first collection of Shakespeare’s plays, that is usually, as Hooks says, “locked away in the vaults of rare book rooms.” Though nearly three hundred copies of the First Folio exist in circulation, with many digital versions available online, the exhibition presented a unique opportunity to see the First Folio up close. The exhibition was so popular that it attracted over three thousand visitors during the course of its run, the highest number of visitors the library has ever had for a display of this kind. The exhibition’s popularity points to the enduring value and appeal of the mysterious playwright who has become synonymous with the Western literary canon.

The lasting influence of Shakespeare, Hooks says, can be traced to the rise of the early modern book trade. “Attending to the ways in which his works were printed and published, bought and sold, and collected and catalogued in his own time can help us understand how and why he came to inhabit the center of our literary canon. We continue to explore the ways Shakespeare has been read and reshaped over time, sometimes in unexpected places—like the prairies of Iowa,” he says.

1984 IN 2017

In the tumultuous wake of the November election, George Orwell’s dystopian classic *1984* soared to the top of the bestseller list. What does it mean to live in a world where dystopian fiction resembles reality? This was the question posed by English Professors Loren Glass and Garrett Stewart. In April, Glass and Stewart organized a symposium at the Iowa City Public Library to examine what new resonances Orwell’s text might have today in an increasingly helter-skelter world of “alternative facts.” Bringing together scholars, writers, filmmakers, and artists from across the university, the symposium featured live performances, poetry, dramatic readings, panel discussions, and lectures that explored the role of litera-

ture in the contemporary political moment. “Fascism takes many forms, and it is crucial that we maintain our sense of nuance and complexity in a world of sound bites and slogans. Indeed, one thing all dictatorships both imagined and real share is the desire to suppress and regulate the reading habits of their citizenry,” says Stewart. “Under these conditions, reading itself becomes a political act.”



TRANSLATE IOWA PROJECT

The Translate Iowa Project, a new student-run organization on campus, unveiled its first anthology, *Boundless*, featuring a selection of creative writing translated by Iowa undergraduates. With the belief that translation transcends the simple mechanics of moving between languages, the project aims to celebrate and promote intercultural collaboration and connection. “This collective work presents a shared effort to create a common space for people who come from various places, cultures, and languages,” said Zhiyun Ma, a senior from China majoring in English and Creative Writing who is Vice President of Translate Iowa. The group translates works from a variety of languages, from Japanese to Turkish, Portuguese, and Thai. Their projects also include a weekly radio broadcast sharing news, world music, and conversations with established translators, writers, and students from the University of Iowa. The project fulfills what its organizers see as the duty of all diverse communities: to provide a safe and inclusive environment for voices of all backgrounds.



LLOYD-JONES RESIDENCY IN NONFICTION WRITING

This spring, 27 high-schoolers from seven schools around Iowa participated in master classes taught by graduate students in the Nonfiction Writing Program. Led by Professor Bonnie Sunstein, the project was named in honor of nationally influential nonfiction writer and English educator Professor Richard “Jix” Lloyd-Jones, who died in 2014. In addition to a gift

from Lloyd-Jones, Sunstein received a Community Impact Grant from the Office of Outreach and Engagement.

Designed to be a short but comprehensive introduction to the genre, this class allowed students to participate alongside their teachers in learning the art and craft of nonfiction writing and was a unique chance for them to experience writing at the college level. According to Sunstein, “There’s nothing better than seeing a kid feel free about creating, informing, and feeling as if their voice has something to say to a reader.” According to Brenna Griffin, an English teacher at Cedar Falls High School and a University of Iowa alumna, “Getting to watch [the students] sort of wrestle with words in a way that was not tied to any standard or any kind of assessment is a powerful experience.”

The residency culminated in a final reception at the Old Capitol Museum, where each high school student read an original piece of writing. “I was confident in my writing from the get-go, but I remember the first day being here, I was thinking, ‘maybe I’m not good enough to be here,’” said Madison Larsen, a student at Cedar Falls High School. “Through this, I learned to be confident in my own writing, and I realized it’s not about comparing [your writing] to other people’s work.”



“The Books That Made Shakespeare” Exhibition at the UI Main Library.



LORI BRANCH AWARDED NEH GRANT

Professor Lori Branch has been awarded a \$139,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to teach a Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers as part of the agency's program to provide funded opportunities for educators to study a variety of humanities topics.

Branch taught the course "Post-secular Studies and the Rise of the English Novel, 1719-1897" at the University of Iowa alongside Mark

Knight of the University of Toronto. Andrew Williams, who earned his doctorate in English from the UI in 2015 as well as a bachelor's degree in English and Psychology in 2002, was the seminar coordinator.

The course drew upon Branch's prolific scholarship in Restoration and 18th-century British literature, religion and secularism, and literary theory. Branch is the author of *Rituals of Spontaneity: Sentiment and Secularism from Free Prayer to Wordsworth* (Baylor, 2006), and is currently at work on her next book, *Post-secular Reason: An Anti-Manifesto*. In her scholarship, Branch seeks to uncover new modes of understanding religion in all its breadth and complexity, dismantling the secular/religious binary in order to grapple with uncertainty, interpretation, and faith in new ways that are distinctively literary and post-secular.

JOHN D'AGATA NAMED M.F. CARPENTER PROFESSOR IN ENGLISH

The University of Iowa College of Arts and Sciences has appointed Professor John D'Agata the M. F. Carpenter Professor in English. D'Agata, the director of Iowa's top-ranked Nonfiction Writing Program, is the author of *Halls of Fame* (Graywolf, 2013), *About a Mountain* (Graywolf, 2011), and *The Lifespan of a Fact* (Norton, 2012), as well as the editor of the three-volume series *A New History of the Essay* (Graywolf, 2013), which is comprised of the anthologies *The Next American Essay* (Graywolf, 2003), *The Making of the American Essay* (Graywolf, 2016), and *The Lost Origins of the Essay* (Graywolf, 2009). Of D'Agata's appointment, Dean Chaden Djalali of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences said, "He is very deserving of this recognition, as his creative and scholarly work have been essential to our university's reputation as a national and international center for writing, and he has significantly advanced nonfiction writing as a discipline and art form."



BARBARA ECKSTEIN CREATES PROGRAM FOR LIFELONG READERS

This past winter and spring, undergraduates from the Department's Interpretation of Literature classes could be found reading every Friday not in the familiar haunts of dormitories or libraries, but in the elementary classrooms of Grant Wood Elementary School in Iowa City.

Over the course of twelve weeks, English Professor Barbara Eckstein, Director of the General Education Literature program, paired

university students with 88 fourth- and fifth-graders. Students from the College of Education served as peer mentors, observers, and guides for the UI students. "One thing I think they are learning is that reading is a lot about relationships: reading to other people, listening to other people read, talking about books that you like," says Eckstein. Younger readers and their teachers also had the opportunity to sample all the cultural offerings of the university: classes in literature and rhetoric, the university library, and dance rehearsals culminating in a dance performance in the Voxman Music Building. According to Eckstein, "If the project nudges all of them closer to habits of lifelong reading, that's an assessment I can live with."

GARRETT STEWART LECTURES ABROAD

Garrett Stewart's international lectures this year included a paper on literary language from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf at the University of Neuchâtel, another on visual puns in screen comedy from the silent to the sound era at Berlin's Institute for Cultural Inquiry, and a third on Victorian art collectors at the Villa La Pietra in Florence. In December, he delivered another keynote address at the University of New South Wales in Sydney on "Prose Style: Dickens to Don DeLillo." Stewart has been designated an alternate for the Berlin Prize of the American Academy, for a Spring 2018 Residency at the Hans Arnold Center in Berlin.



STEPHEN VOYCE HONORED WITH COLLEGIATE TEACHING AWARD



Associate Professor Stephen Voyce was selected to receive a 2016-2017 Collegiate Teaching Award in recognition of his exemplary performance as a teacher. The awardees are chosen by the College of Liberal Arts and Science's Teaching Awards Committee from nominations by students and colleagues. In commending the recipients, Dean Chaden Djalali said, "Great teachers do more than classroom teaching. They are mentors and role models who care deeply about the personal as well as academic development of their students. That is true of these individuals, and I am delighted that their passion and commitment are being recognized."

Applauded for his innovative and energetic style, Voyce is an influential scholar in the study of contemporary poetry and poetics, with an emphasis on media history, print culture, and the digital humanities. He teaches courses at all levels and regularly directs and serves on committees for theses and independent studies. He is also the Director of the Fluxus Digital Collection and a member of the University of Iowa's Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio.



ED FOLSOM RECEIVES GRANT TO DIGITIZE WHITMAN

Ed Folsom, Roy J. Carver Professor of English and Co-Director of the Walt Whitman Archive, received a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to publish thousands more new documents on the online, open-access archive devoted to America's most famous poet. One of the most respected scholars of Walt Whitman and his work, Folsom is also a leader in the development of the digital humanities.

The Archive, the most comprehensive record of works by and about Whitman, aims to make the extraordinary collection of marginalia and annotations Whitman left behind, many of which have never before been published, freely accessible. Through the Walt Whitman Archive, readers can explore Whitman's reactions to the literature, history, science, theology, and art of his time. These documents reveal the mind of a poet in the making.

Folsom has directed or co-directed numerous national and international Whitman conferences and has written, edited, or co-edited a number of books on Whitman. Folsom is also the editor of both the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, the online open-access journal of record for Whitman studies, and the popular Whitman Series for the University of Iowa Press. The *Review* and Press recently reissued Whitman's long-lost novel, *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*, first published anonymously in 1852.

LENA AND MICHAEL HILL SPOTLIGHT INVISIBLE HAWKEYES

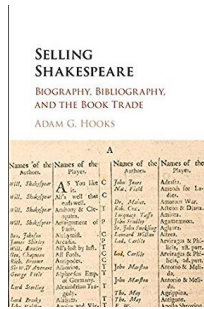
In their new book, *Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era* (University of Iowa Press, 2016), Professors Lena and Michael Hill illuminate a long-concealed chapter in the University's past: the stories of the first black students at the University of Iowa. In collecting the testimonials of these trailblazing alumni who sought an education in an era when African-Americans were barred admission from most colleges and universities, the Hills examine "the quieter collisions between Iowa's polite Midwestern progressivism and African American students' determined ambition."



experiences at the University of Iowa from the 1930s to the 1960s through lectures, screenings, and performance. "With a long overdue flourish," says Lena Hill, "Fields of Opportunity' recuperates and celebrates the achievements of black Hawkeyes who introduced American pluralism to a Midwestern and a national citizenry that often resisted such progress." By emphasizing the messiness of human progress, the event communicated both the lessons of the past and the challenges for the future in the ongoing struggle toward racial equality.

In the fall, *Invisible Hawkeyes* united with the dance company Step Afrika!, one of the top ten African-American dance companies in the nation. Their performance "The Mi-

2016-2017 FACULTY HONORS

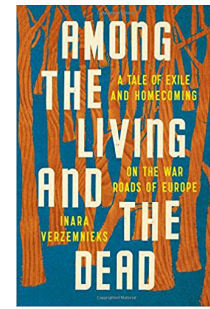


ADAM HOOKS
Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography, and the Book Trade

(Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Selling Shakespeare tells a story of Shakespeare's life and career in print, a story centered on the people who created, bought, and sold books in the early modern period. The interests

and investments of publishers and booksellers have defined our ideas of what is "Shakespearean," and attending to their interests demonstrates how one version of Shakespearean authorship surpassed the rest. In this book, Adam G. Hooks identifies and examines four pivotal episodes in Shakespeare's life in print: the debut of his narrative poems, the appearance of a series of best-selling plays, the publication of collected editions of his works, and the cataloging of those works. Hooks also offers a new kind of biographical investigation and historicist criticism, one based not on external life documents, nor on the texts of Shakespeare's works, but on the books that were printed, published, sold, circulated, collected, and cataloged under his name. ♡



INARA VERZEMNIEKS
Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe

(Norton, 2017)

Inara Verzemnieks's grandmother's stories recalled one true home: the family farm left behind in Latvia, where, during WWII, her grandmother Livija and her grandmother's sister Ausma were separated. They would not see each other again for more

than 50 years. Raised by her grandparents in Washington State, Inara grew up among expatriates, scattering smuggled Latvian sand over the coffins of the dead and singing folk songs about a land she had never visited. When Inara discovers the scarf Livija wore when she left home in a box of her grandmother's belongings, this tangible remnant of the past points the way back to the remote village where her family broke apart. As she comes to know Ausma and the trauma of her exile to Siberia under Stalin, Inara pieces together Livija's survival through years as a refugee. Weaving these two parts of the family story together in spellbinding, lyrical prose, she gives us a profound and cathartic account of loss, survival, resilience, and love. ♡



KATHY LAVEZZO
The Accommodated Jew: English Anti-Semitism from Bede to Milton

(Cornell University Press, 2016)

In a sweeping view that extends from the Anglo-Saxon period to the late seventeenth century, Lavezzo tracks how English writers from Bede to Milton imagine Jews via buildings—tombs, latrines, and especially houses—that support fantasies of exile. Epitomizing this trope is the blood

libel and its implication that Jews cannot be accommodated in England because of the anti-Christian violence they allegedly perform in their homes. In the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the Jewish house not only serves as a lethal trap but also as the site of an emerging bourgeoisie incompatible with Christian pieties. Lavezzo reveals the central place of "the Jew" in the slow process by which a Christian "nation of shopkeepers" negotiated their relationship to the urban capitalist sensibility they came to embrace and embody. In the book's epilogue, she advances her inquiry into Victorian England and the relationship between Charles Dickens (whose Fagin is the second most infamous Jew in English literature after Shylock) and the Jewish couple that purchased his London home, Tavistock House, showing how far relations between gentiles and Jews in England had (and had not) evolved. ♡



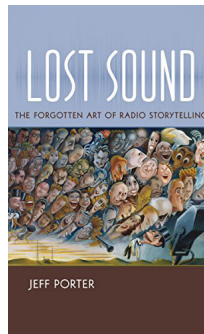
LOREN GLASS, ed.
After the Program Era: The Past, Present, and Future of Creative Writing in the University

(University of Iowa Press, 2017)

After the Program Era explores the consequences and implications, as well as the lacunae and liabilities, of scholar Mark McGurl's groundbreaking book on the postwar rise of the creative

writing program, titled *The Program Era* (Harvard, 2009). Glass focuses on American fiction and the traditional MFA program, and this collection aims to expand and examine its insights in terms of other genres and sites. Postwar poetry in particular has until now been neglected as a product of the Program Era even though it is arguably a "purer" example since poets now depend almost entirely on the patronage of the university. Similarly, this collection looks beyond the traditional MFA writing program to explore the pre-history of writing programs in American universities, as well as alternatives to the traditionally structured program that have emerged along the way. Taken together, the essays in *After the Program Era* seek to answer and explore many of these questions and continue the conversations McGurl only began. ♡

RECENT BOOKS BY FACULTY

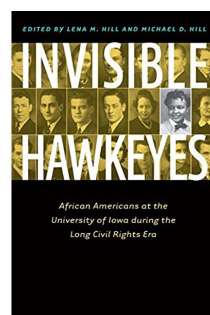


JEFF PORTER
Lost Sound: The Forgotten Art of Radio Storytelling

(University of North Carolina Press, 2016)

In *Lost Sound*, Jeff Porter examines the vital interplay between acoustic techniques and modernist practices in the growth of radio. Concentrating on the 1930s through the 1970s but also speaking to the rising popularity of today's narrative broadcasts such as

This American Life, *Radiolab*, *Serial*, and *The Organist*, Porter's close readings of key radio programs show how writers adapted literary techniques to an acoustic medium with great effect. Addressing avant-garde sound poetry and experimental literature on the air alongside industry policy and network economics, Porter identifies the ways radio challenged the conventional distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow cultural content to produce a dynamic popular culture. ♡

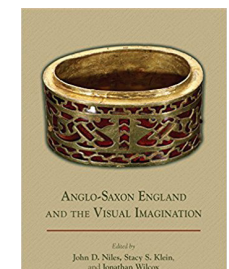


LENA D. HILL AND MICHAEL D. HILL
Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era

(University of Iowa Press, 2016)

Between the 1930s and 1960s, the University of Iowa sought to assert its modernity, cosmopolitanism, and progressivism through an increased emphasis on the fine and performing arts and athletics. This enhancement coincided with a period when an increasing number of African American students arrived at the University from both within and outside of the state, seeking to take advantage of its relatively liberal racial relations and rising artistic prestige. By examining the quieter collisions between Iowa's polite Midwestern progressivism and African American students' determined ambition, *Invisible Hawkeyes* focuses attention on both local stories and their national implications. By looking at the University of Iowa and a smaller Midwestern college town like Iowa City, this collection reveals how fraught moments of interracial collaboration, meritocratic advancement, and institutional insensitivity deepen our understanding of America's painful conversion into a diverse republic committed to racial equality. ♡

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JONATHAN WILCOX, co-ed.
Anglo-Saxon England and the Visual Imagination

(ACMRS Publications, 2017)

How did the Anglo-Saxons visualize the world that they inhabited? How did their artwork and iconography help to confirm their identity as a people? What influences shaped their visual imagination?

This volume brings together a wide range of scholarly perspectives on the role of visuality in the production of culture. Jewels, weapons, crosses, coins, and other artifacts; descriptive passages in literature, types of script, deluxe illuminated manuscripts, and runes and other written inscriptions, whether real or imagined, all receive scrutiny in this collection of new essays. Noteworthy for its interdisciplinary scope, the volume features arresting work by experts in archaeology, art history, literary studies, linguistics, numismatics, and manuscript studies. The volume as a whole demonstrates the power of current scholarship to cast light on the visual imagination of the past. ♡



GARRETT STEWART
Transmedium: Conceptualism 2.0 and the New Object Art

(University of Chicago Press, 2017)

If you attend a contemporary art exhibition today, you're unlikely to see much traditional painting or sculpture. Indeed, artists today are preoccupied with what happens when

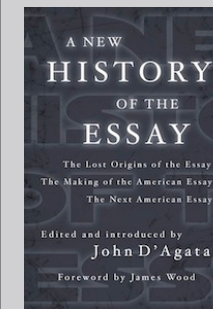
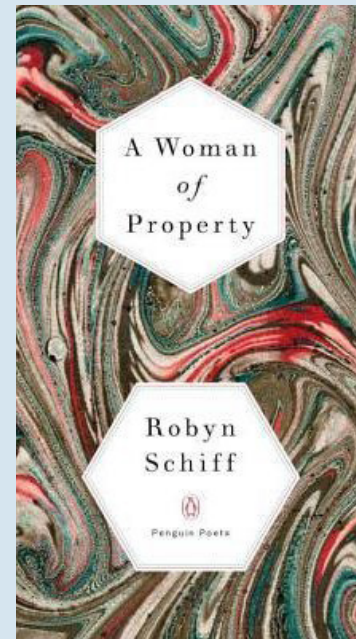
you leave behind assumptions about particular media—such as painting or woodcuts—and instead focus on collisions between them, and the new forms and ideas that those collisions generate. Garrett Stewart in *Transmedium* dubs this new approach "Conceptualism 2.0," an allusion in part to the computer images that are so often addressed by these works. A successor to 1960s Conceptualism, which posited that a material medium was unnecessary to the making of art, *Conceptualism 2.0* features artworks that are transmedial, that place the aesthetic experience itself deliberately at the boundary between often incommensurable media. The result, Stewart shows, is art whose forced convergences break open new possibilities that are wholly surprising, intellectually enlightening, and often uncanny. ♡

A WOMAN OF PROPERTY

(Penguin, 2016)

ROBYN SCHIFF'S critically acclaimed third volume of poetry, *A Woman of Property*, was named as one of the top books in 2016 by the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New Yorker*. Schiff was also named as a finalist for the LA Times Book Prize in Poetry. According to the *New Yorker*, the work is “a study of the imagination’s darker powers and their daily, domestic insurrections.” Schiff’s poetry has been lauded for its apocalyptic vision, formal precision, and fierce intelligence. Intricate and breathtaking, the poems forcefully traverse the Iowan landscape, American history, and the travails of parenthood and domestic life. “Schiff’s poems,” the *New Yorker* says, “with their Hitchcock-like distrust of appearances, their alertness to hidden binds and snares, offer something few poets ever discover: a vision of the whole world.”

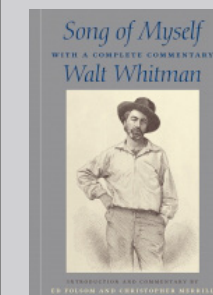
Located in a menacing, gothic landscape, the poems that comprise *A Woman of Property* draw formal and imaginative boundaries against boundless mortal threat, but as all borders are vulnerable, this ominous collection ultimately stages an urgent and deeply imperiled boundary dispute where haunting, illusion, the presence of the past, and disembodied voices only further unsettle questions of material and spiritual possession. This is a theatrical book of dilapidated houses and overgrown gardens, of passageways and thresholds, edges, prosceniums, unearthings, and root systems. The unstable property lines here rove from heaven to hell, troubling proportion and upsetting propriety in the name of unfathomable propagation. Are all the gates in this book folly? Are the walls too easily scaled to hold anything back or impose self-confinement? What won’t a poem do to get to the other side? ♡



JOHN D'AGATA *A New History of the Essay*

(Graywolf, 2016)

For two decades, essayist John D'Agata has been exploring the contours of the essay through a series of innovative, informative, and expansive anthologies that have become foundational texts in the study of the genre. Now, with *The Making of the American Essay*, D'Agata concludes his monumental tour of this inexhaustible form, with selections ranging from Anne Bradstreet's secular prayers to Washington Irving's satires, Emily Dickinson's love letters to Kenneth Goldsmith's catalogues, Gertrude Stein's portraits to James Baldwin's and Norman Mailer's meditations on boxing. *The Making of the American Essay* shows the essay at its most varied, unique, and imaginative best, proving that the impulse to make essays in America is as old and as original as the nation itself. ♡



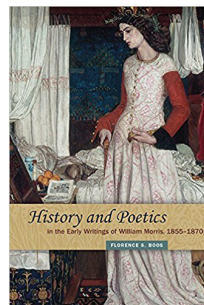
ED FOLSOM AND CHRIS MERRILL *Song of Myself: With a Complete Commentary*

(University of Iowa Press, 2016)

This book offers the most comprehensive and detailed reading to date of “Song of Myself.” One of the most distinguished

critics in Whitman Studies, Ed Folsom, and one of the nation's most prominent writers and literary figures, Christopher Merrill, carry on a dialogue with Whitman and with each other as they invite readers to enter into the conversation about how the poem develops, moves, improvises, and surprises. Instead of picking and choosing particular passages to support a reading of the poem, Folsom and Merrill take Whitman at his word and interact with “every atom” of his work. The book presents Whitman's final version of the poem, arranged in fifty-two sections; each section is followed by Folsom's detailed critical examination of the passage, and then Merrill offers a poet's perspective, suggesting broader contexts for thinking about both the passage in question and the entire poem. ♡

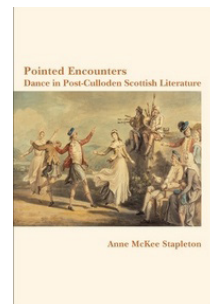
RECENT BOOKS BY FACULTY



FLORENCE BOOS *History and Poetics in the Early Writings of William Morris, 1855-1870*

(Ohio State University Press, 2015)

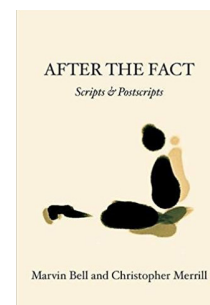
Florence S. Boos's *History and Poetics in the Early Writings of William Morris, 1855-1870* examines Morris's literary development in the context of his Victorian contemporaries, probing the cross-influences of temperament, cultural ambiance, early reader reactions, and his restless search for an authentic poetic voice. Boos argues that to understand this development, we must understand how Morris reinterpreted and transformed medieval history and legend into modern guise. *History and Poetics in the Early Writings of William Morris, 1855-1870* traces Morris's literary evolution. This book explores the young poet's successive efforts to find a balancing ethical framework through poetry—a framework that was at once a motivation for action and a template for authentic, shared popular art, one that reemerges forcefully in his later work. ♡



ANNE STAPLETON *Pointed Encounters: Dance in the Post-Culloden Scottish Literature*

(Brill | Rodopi, 2014)

Pointed Encounters establishes the literary significance of representations of dance in poetry, song, dance manuals, and fiction written between 1750 and 1830. Presenting original readings of canonical texts and fresh readings of neglected but significant literary works, this book traces the complicated role of social dancing in Scottish culture and identifies the hitherto unexplored motif of dance as an outwardly conforming yet covertly subversive expression of Scottish identity during the period. The volume draws upon diverse yet mutually revealing sources, from traditional dance and music to Sir Walter Scott and contemporary Scottish women novelists, to offer students and scholars of Scottish and English literature a fresh insight into the socio-cultural context of the British state after 1746. ♡



CHRISTOPHER MERRILL AND MARVIN BELL *After the Fact: Scripts and Post-Scripts*

(White Pine Press, 2016)

After the Fact is a lively and imaginative conversation between two legendary poets. Marvin Bell, writing from Iowa City and Port Townsend, and Christopher Merrill, writing from around the world, give us an intimate look into collaboration at its best. ♡

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS 2016-17

PATRICIA FOSTER was awarded the 2017 Clarence Cason Award for Distinguished Nonfiction by the University of Alabama and the Theodore Hoepfner Award from Southern Humanities Review for her essay “The Problem.” She served on the Nonfiction Prize Jury at Yale University for the 2017 Windham-Campbell Literature Prizes. Her essay “The Lost Years” was named a 2016 Notable Essay in *The Best American Essays*, and she has essays forthcoming in *Ploughshares* and *Antioch Review*.

ERIC GIDAL co-authored with Michael Gavin (University of South Carolina) both an introduction and a contribution (“Topic Modelling and the Historical Geography of Scotland”) for a symposium on “Spatial Humanities and Scottish Studies” published in the most recent online issue of *Studies in Scottish Literature* Vol. 42 Issue 2 (2016).

BLAINE GRETEMAN published an article in *Slate* on teaching poetry after the election titled, “What It's Like to Teach Poetry in the Age of Trump.”

LENA AND MICHAEL HILL penned an opinion piece in the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* titled “For Our People” celebrates African-American experience at UI. They were also part of the Sunday Speaker series for the Johnson County League of Women Voters. The Hills hosted a Hawkeye Lunch and Learn Series on *Invisible Hawkeyes*, which won the Shambaugh Certificate of Merit with sessions in both Iowa City and Des Moines.

LENA HILL was named one of the *Iowa City Press-Citizen's* Top 11 to Watch in 2016.

MICHAEL HILL was featured on the front page of the *Daily Iowan* in an article titled “When Socializing Meets Activism.”

INARA VERZEMNIEKS penned the article “Life in Obamacare's Dead Zone” for the *New York Times*. She was subsequently interviewed by Nieman about her story.

KEVIN KOPELSON published an essay on the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe in the June 30, 2016 issue of the *London Review of Books*. Kopelson's *Adorno and the Showgirl: Or Late Style* is available on his personal website.

KATHY LAVEZZO delivered the Milton Seminar at the Newberry Library in October 2016 on “Milton and Readmission.” Kathy was also the recipient of a 2016 Summer Collaboration grant from the Digital Bridges for Humanistic Inquiry for her project “Remappings: Christians and Jews in Early England.”

STEPHEN VOYCE published an interview with Commune Editions in *The Iowa Review's* Spring 2017 edition.

GRADUATE HONORS 2016-17

The 2017 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award was awarded to **ENRICO BRUNO, JUSTIN COSNER, COREY HICKNER-JOHNSON, MAKAYLA STEINER, ANNA WILLIAMS, BRITTANY BORGHI, ETHAN MADORE,** and **DINA PEONE**. The W.R. Irwin Teaching Award was awarded to **KATHERINE NESBIT** and **STEPHANIE TSANK**.

HEIDI RENÉE AIJALA served as a Senior Obermann Fellow for the Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy, as a Program Associate for GEL, and as the Junior Editor for the *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*. She won first place in the “Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies” category at the Jakobsen Conference for her paper “Ellen Johnston and the Precarity of Representation.” In addition, she was awarded “Best Submission” for the 2017 Pedagogy Idea Exchange and has received the Graduate College Summer Fellowship Award and the Graduate College Post-Comps Award.

ALEXANDER ASHLAND recently published “Off the Grid: Zora Neale Hurston’s Racial Geography in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*” in *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2017. He presented a paper, “Animating Whitman’s Correspondence: Pedagogy and Practice,” at the American Literature Association (ALA Annual Conference), Boston, MA, 2017, and he was recently awarded the University of Iowa Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio Summer Fellowship.

JACOB BENDER defended his dissertation in summer 2017, and he co-authored a paper with **LYDIA MAUNZ-BREESE** entitled “Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House*, the Wiindigoo, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*,” that was accepted by *American Indian Quarterly* for publication in Spring 2018. His short story “The Adjunct in the Latter Days” was published in the *SLCC Community Anthology* in January 2017. In February 2017, he presented a paper, “‘For you galaxies will flame and the sun will burn’: Carlos Fuentes’s *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* and Samuel Beckett’s *Malone Dies*,” for the Sixth Biannual conference of the Society for Irish Latin American Studies, held at Colegio Universitario de San Gerónimo in Havana, Cuba.

NICOLAS BORCHERT was recently hired as an English teacher at Liberty High School in North Liberty, IA.

JUSTIN COSNER, as chair of the Textbook Committee, co-edited a new anthology for the University of Iowa General Education Literature course. He also served as a Program Associate for new GEL instructors. Justin presented his paper “‘I Wisht I Wuz a Tree’: Nature and the Supernatural in Charles Chesnut’s ‘The Conjure Woman’” at the 2017 MLA annual convention. He was also a panelist and presented his paper, “Epic Fails: ‘Swapper,’ Participatory Ethics, and the Video Game Anti-Epic,” at the 2017 International Conference for the Fantastic and the Arts. These presentations were made possible by the Sally and Ken Mason Travel Grant for research and presentation. Justin is teaching English classes during the 2017-2018 academic year with a Visiting Assistant Professorship.

HARRISON DIETZMAN has an article, “‘Moulder[ing] into nothingness among the rocks’: Sharpshooters in Gardner’s *Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War*,” in *Configurations* issue 25.4. (Fall 2017).

IAN FAITH sat for Comprehensive Exams in addition to serving as Vice President of the Graduate Student Senate, Chair of the Jakobsen Conference Committee, and the Fine Arts and Humanities Delegate on Graduate

and Professional Student Government. He proposed and wrote content for a *Guide to Graduate Student Life*, which was added to the University website in August. In addition, he published a book review, a peer-reviewed article, and a forthcoming book chapter.

SAMUEL FITZPATRICK was honored to be the recipient of the CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowship. The fellowship will help in the completion of his dissertation, “Descent Into the ‘Easy Rawlins Mysteries Series’: Walter Mosley and the Return of the Black Detective.”

LAURA HAYES presented a paper at the department’s Craft Critique Culture Conference that was nominated for special recognition in the *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*. Additionally, she worked on the William Morris Archive with Caitlin Simmons, Kyle Barton, and Florence Boos, in collaboration with the UI Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio to build a map of William Morris’s 1890 novel *News from Nowhere* that will be posted on the archive’s site. In teaching, she has been selected to be a PDP co-leader in the Rhetoric Department for Fall 2017. She also worked as a reviewer for the GPSG grants committee for the 2016-2017 year.



English doctoral candidate Ian Faith

COREY HICKNER-JOHNSON published an article on Hmong embroidery and digital archives in the *Journal of International Women’s Studies* and a book review in the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*. She presented at MMLA and the Jakobsen Conference. Corey was awarded a Post-Comprehensive Exam Fellowship, The Jane A. Weiss Memorial Dissertation Scholarship, The Prairie Lights Scholarship, and an Outstanding Teaching Award. Corey was an Obermann Fellow and organized the Iowa City Women’s March.

JENNIFER JANECEK published “The Horror of the Primal Sound: Proto-telephony and Imperialism in ‘Heart of Darkness’” in *The Conradian* 41.2 (2016): 8-27. She also wrote the following book reviews which were published: “Review of Rebecca Sanchez’s *Deafening Modernism: Embodied Language and Visual Poetics in American Literature*,” *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* 5.3 (2016) and “Disabled Masculinities in Domestic Realist Fiction,” a review of Karen Bourrier’s *The Measure of Manliness: Disability and Masculinity in the Mid-Victorian Novel. Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* 12.2 (Summer 2016).

DANIELLE KENNEDY was selected to be an Obermann Fellow and participated in the Obermann Center’s Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy. She also became a co-coordinator in the Writing Center, and some of her teaching materials were solicited by the Center for Teaching to be used as an example in a workshop on student participation.

JILLIAN LINSTER published an article in the December 2017 issue of *Early Theatre*.

KATHERINE NESBIT presented papers at five conferences this academic year: Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies (INCS), Midwest Victorian Studies Association (MVSA), the University of Iowa’s “Hawkeye Shakespeare” conference, the English department’s Craft Critique Culture Conference, and the Graduate College’s Jakobsen Conference. Kate’s paper, “The Phonograph Trick: Sound Forms and Transformations in Conan Doyle’s Detective Fiction,” won the Jakobsen Conference’s first place in the Humanities. Kate’s paper on elocution and melodrama was published in the August 2016 issue of *European Romantic Review*. Through her role as a Graduate Teaching Fellow in the Humanities, Kate led a Center for Teaching workshop, “Serious Fun: Teaching with Play,” as well as designing and hosting the General Education Literature program’s “Pedagogy Idea Swap.”

MARIJA REIFF gave a conference presentation at the North American Victorian Studies Association conference in Phoenix, Arizona, and she also participated in their pre-conference graduate student workshop. She had several publications: a chapter, “The Creative Calling,” was published in the book *After the Program Era* (edited by Loren Glass); an article, “Condemned to Be Free: Lucy Snowe and Existential Angst in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*,” is slated to be published in an upcoming edition of *The Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*; and, she wrote an entry on the playwright Elizabeth Robins for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Number 381: Writers on Women’s Rights and United States Suffrage. Marija was awarded a Presidential Ballard and Seashore award for 2017-2018 as well as a Marcus Bach Fellowship, though she declined the latter, as it is incompatible with the former.

CAITLIN SIMMONS passed her qualifying exams in the fall and was recently selected as a co-leader for the Professional Development Program in Rhetoric. This year at the Western Literature Association in Bozeman, Montana, she presented “‘Something of a Non-Person’: Jim Loney’s Static Victimry in James Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney*” and “The Sea as Respite: Challenging Dispossession in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*” at the Craft Critique Culture Conference in Iowa City, Iowa. Both concern the ability to overcome dispossession through mobility.

E. MARIAH SPENCER was selected for a presentation at the 2017 Rice Symposium on “Redrawing Forms: Energy, Media, Science, and Life.” The presentation will be based on the paper she wrote for Professor Landon’s Pulp class titled “Remediating Genre: Cavendish, SF, Slipstream, and the Pulp.” Mariah was also selected for the Newberry Graduate Research Methods Workshop.

MEREDITH STABEL attended the 2017 Craft Critique Culture Conference and presented a paper entitled “‘Land of Laughter’: Fashioning an Alternative Theology of Motherhood in Angelina Weld Grimké’s *Rachel*.” Commissioned in 1916 by the NAACP to serve as anti-lynching propaganda, Grimké’s play features a protagonist who renounces the Madonna of white Christianity as a role model for black American women due to the horrors of lynching. Stabel’s paper focuses on the protagonist’s rewriting of Christian theology via a new myth of the “Land of Laughter,” her use of laughter as a mode of subversion and creativity, and Grimké’s refusal to duplicate the Biblical icon of Rachel weeping over her children.

STEPHANIE TSANK organized and chaired a panel at the MLA Convention titled “Contemporary Immigrant Food Narratives: Culture, Capital, and Genre.”

RACHEL WALERSTEIN has a case study on Elliot Rodger forthcoming in the edited collection, *Misogyny in American Culture: Causes, Trends, and Solutions*. She also has a book review of *Queer: A Graphic History* forthcoming in *Queer Studies in Media and Popular Culture*. Lastly, she attended the Futures of American Studies Institute in summer 2017.

ANNA WILLIAMS has a peer-reviewed article published in the Fall 2017 issue of *Victorian Poetry*, titled “‘The Dramatic Poet and the Unpoetic Multitudes’: Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Allegorized Theatrical Commentary in Book IV of ‘Aurora Leigh,’” a version of which she presented at MMLA in Fall 2016. She received a Post-Comprehensive Research Award from the Graduate College in Spring 2017, as well as two teaching awards: the Doug Trank Memorial Teaching Award from the Rhetoric Department in Spring 2016 and the Outstanding TA Award from the Council on Teaching in Spring 2017. This year she has also served as a Production Assistant for Iowa Public Radio, recently

producing and co-hosting *Lit City*, a ten-episode podcast published digitally on local and national public radio websites.



English Department Undergraduate Honors Ceremony April 2017

UNDERGRADUATE HONORS

English and Creative Writing major **AUSTIN HUGHES**, had his poem “Similes” nominated by Robyn Schiff and selected as the winner of the inaugural David Hamilton Undergraduate Creative Writing Prize.

English major **TATIANA SCHLOTE-BONNE**’s essay “Me Before You,” nominated by Kerry Howley, was named runner-up for the inaugural David Hamilton Undergraduate Creative Writing Prize.

ELIJAH THOMPSON-ACQUAH was one of three students who won a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study in Ireland over the summer with the Irish Writing Program.

English and Creative Writing major **JESSICA ALBRIGHT** blogged about studying abroad in Florence, Italy.

ERIN MCINERNEY’s story, “Wedding in Galena” was published in *Little Village Magazine*. ♡

IN MEMORIAM

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT PAYS TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR CLAIRE SPONSLER



"Just 2mm in length, the tiny river-dwelling animal known as the water boatman produces a noise that can reach 99 decibels. Someone walking along the bank can actually hear these tiny creatures singing at the bottom of the river. For its size, the water boatman is the loudest animal on earth. Unlike other aquatic bugs, such as the backswimmer, the water boatman is non-predatory. It feeds on algae, not other insects. The water boatman sings its song by rubbing its penis against its abdomen, using stridulation like the cricket. Its song is a display of courtship and reaches an ear-splitting 99.2 decibels, equivalent to taking in a booming orchestra from the front row. When the boatman cries, he weeps in the key of D minor, the saddest of all keys."

-Claire Sponsler, from "A Year in Decibels"

Claire Beth Sponsler, who died on July 29, 2016 from the irreversible effects of a cerebral aneurysm, was the M. F. Carpenter Professor of English at the University of Iowa, where she taught for twenty-three years. Claire was born on January 28, 1954 in Easton, Pennsylvania, in the Lehigh Valley. Her father Clair worked for the Penn Central Railroad, a job that took the family from Charlotte, Levittown, and Atlanta to Valparaiso, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati.

Her Nanna supplied Claire with a variety of books even while she was still in her crib. She was a ferocious reader of Agatha Christie by the age of six. By seven, Frederic Nietzsche. Throughout her childhood, Claire was a known animal lover, rescuing stray rabbits (Hermione-Joe) and lost cats (Sam), a feat she often repeated as an adult. There was Milo, her beloved dog, and of course her husband.

Claire had a passionate belief in large public universities, a commitment that evolved from the influential experience she had as a Classics Major and Semple Student Scholar while an undergraduate at the University of Cincinnati. Claire went on to receive her Ph.D. at Indiana University in English and Comparative Literature, completing an innovative dissertation on the literary, legal, and social status of medieval merchants under the direction of C. Clifford Flanigan.

Claire's work centered on medieval literature, with a special interest in the overlapping areas of book history, performance, and cultural studies. Her

second publication, *Ritual Imports: Performing Medieval Drama in America*, was awarded the 2005 Barnard Hewitt Award from the American Society for Theatre Research. Her fourth book, *The Queen's Dumbshows: John Lydgate and the Making of Early Theater*, received the David Bevington Year's Best Book Award from the Medieval and Renaissance Drama Society in 2015. At the time of her death, she was finishing a book on the Beauchamp Pageant and embarking on a cultural history of tragedy in the Middle Ages. Claire was not only a nationally recognized Medievalist but a beloved teacher and colleague. Students cherished her classroom gifts not only for the keenness of her thought but also for Claire's dedication to their growth as interested and aware adults. A masterly editor, Claire leaves behind scores of students and colleagues whose hidden arguments she detected and whose stray sentences she brought home.

From her own family origin, Claire inherited a strong work ethic and a disarming personal modesty. During her four-year tenure as the chair of the English department, she worked to ease bureaucratic pressures on faculty and staff members, sometimes by taking on heavy administrative work herself and by recognizing when a committee task had ceased to serve its purpose. She steered a large department through a period of financial uncertainty with discretion, compassion, and creativity. In remembering her respected scholarship and deep commitment to her students and colleagues, we honor her memory. ♡

Performance, Culture, and the Book: A Conference Honoring the Work of Claire Sponsler

The conference, "Performance, Culture, and the Book," brought over a dozen of Claire's former graduate students and colleagues to the English department for two days of stimulating presentations that explored Claire's scholarly contributions to the study of medieval performance, material, and print culture. A highlight of the event was a standing-room-only reading by Jeff Porter, who shared excerpts from "Planet Claire: A Love Story," his memoir in progress about his life with Claire. The conference also featured keynote addresses from Kathleen Ashley, Distinguished Professor of English (emerita), University of Southern Maine, and Jody Enders, Distinguished Professor of French at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A gift economy reigned in the English-Philosophy Building that weekend, as Porter invited conference participants each to take a book from Claire's office library, and the presenters themselves modeled a spirit of scholarly generosity based on citation, collaboration, and recognition. ♡



Dean Raúl Curto, Professor Jeff Porter, and Professor Kim Marra at the conference

IN MEMORIAM

DR. DAVID S. CHAMBERLAIN of Vero Beach, Florida, passed away on January 7th, 2015, surrounded by members of his family. David was born on February 10, 1931, in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1952, David received his bachelor's degree in English from Dartmouth College. David was awarded a James B. Reynolds scholarship for foreign study and enrolled at Oxford University in England. On his way to Oxford by steamship, David met his future wife, Ytsjelisck Witeveen. After his military service, David began further graduate work at Princeton University and eventually received his Ph.D. in Medieval Literature. In 1962, while still writing his dissertation, David moved his young family to Iowa City to take a job as an assistant professor in the English Department at the University of Iowa. In 1975, David became a full professor of English at the University of Iowa. Dr. Chamberlain was a well-loved professor who was well known for his teaching of *Beowulf* and other pieces of classic literature. He especially enjoyed teaching undergraduate students. In 1997, he retired after a 38-year career of teaching and research in medieval literature. ♡

SHARLENE "SHARRY" LENHART was called home on March 22, 2016. Sharry was born March 1, 1943, in Tama, Iowa. She received her B.A. from the University of Northern Iowa, her postgraduate education from University of Minnesota at Blue Earth, Lomo Linda University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa, resulting in a Specialist in Education Degree in 1971. She taught secondary English and Psychology from 1966-1975. She moved to Iowa City and began working at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in 1975 and then joined the Department of English as a program coordinator until her retirement—a job she thoroughly enjoyed. ♡

BILL MURRAY William Martin (Cotter) Murray passed away, February 21, 2016 at his home in Iowa City. Bill grew up in County Clare Ireland in the 1930's and sailed to the United States in 1948 carrying a cardboard suitcase. He served in the U.S. Army from 1951 to 1953, joined the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the 1950s, and became a professor of English at the University of Iowa until he retired in 1991. Bill wrote poetry and several novels including *Michael Joe*, which won the Meredith award and was broadcast as a radio play across Ireland. He was mentor to Dow Mossman and appeared in the 2003 documentary, *Stone Reader*, about lost novels. Bill leaves behind his wife Hua-Jung and four children Margaret, David, Eleanor, and John. ♡

ALUMNI NEWS

RAQUEL BAKER (PhD 2015) has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Postcolonial and Transnational Literature, California State University Channel Islands.

JEFF DOTY (PhD 2008) published *Shakespeare, Popularity, and the Public Sphere* and started a new position at the University of North Texas.

SUNGHYUN JANG (PhD 2013) was hired in a tenure-track position at Korea University, one of the three most prestigious universities in Korea.

JENNIFER PERCY (MFA 2013) won the 2017 National Magazine Award for Feature Writing. Percy's winning feature article, "I Have No Choice But to

Keep Looking," was published by the *New York Times Magazine* in August. The article follows two men in Japan searching for their loved ones long after the country's 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

GEMMICKA PIPER (PhD 2015) accepted an Academic Resident Librarian position at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

JEN SHOOK (PhD 2016) was hired at the Digital Bridges in Humanistic Inquiry team at Grinnell College.

JOSHUA WRIGHT (BA 2016) has been accepted into the English PhD program at the University of Notre Dame. ♡

PATRICIA FOSTER RETIRES

Patricia Foster celebrated her retirement after a long and distinguished tenure as a professor at the University of Iowa. As a respected writer and teacher, known for her incredible energy, acute perception, eloquence, and razor-sharp intelligence, Foster touched the lives of many students throughout the years. "I admire her brilliance, her vitality, her compassion, and her curiosity. Being in workshop with Patricia is like playing Operation with a brain surgeon," says Dina Peone, an MFA student in the Nonfiction Writing Program. "She is such an incisive reader and explorer of boundaries. She knows exactly which nerves need testing, and which delicate tissues need preserving. I can't tell you how many times I've sat back in my seat in awe of her extractions." ♡



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