

## Cheers From the Chair

The entry for “February” in Spenser’s *Shepherd’s Calendar* is, as the kids say, “relatable”:

Ah for pittie, will rancke Winters rage  
These bitter blasts never ginne t’ asswage?  
The kene cold blowes through my beaten hyde,  
All as I were through the body gryde. (1-4)

But far from balking at starting our “spring semester” in the midst of a bomb-cyclone-blizzard event, faculty, students, and staff have been incredibly busy in and around EPB. They’ve also been spreading the good news about our department in further flung (and warmer) climes, like Kansas City, which hosted this year’s Associate Writing Programs conference. Or as we like to call it: the Super Bowl of Writing Nerds. Taylor Swift’s reaction shots had nothing on my own, as I cheered on faculty like Sarah Minor (the Patrick Mahomes of the Triptych Reading, keeping the forward momentum, with a close eye on the play clock), alumni like Harrison Cook (the Travis Kelce of the short story form, keeping it tight until the end), and staff like Lynne Nugent (the Chris Jones of the book fair, always coming in clutch).

It was incredibly gratifying not only to reconnect with so many of our alumni, but also to see how very well regarded our programs and our people are. We brag about our *US News and World Report Rankings* (top ranked public university for writing!) even as we quibble with them (rankings are arbitrary, and can’t capture all we do!). But there’s no doubt that Iowa English is the envy of the writing world, thanks to all that our students, faculty, and staff, do and have done.

Read on for more of those exciting activities and accomplishments: presentations, publications, interdisciplinary projects, and, in the case of Garrett Stewart, a “reader” devoted entirely to his work. Has any other English Department reader become a “reader?” I think this is what they call “the full Spivak.”

Best,

*Blaine*

## Faculty Matters

**Matt Brown** presented “The Texture of Awakening: Marginalia, Pulpit Bills, and the New York Public Library’s Copy of *The Christian History*” at the American Historical Association’s annual conference in San Francisco, January 4-7, as part of the session *Overlooked Texts and Understudied Moments: The Problem of Significance in Early North America*.

**Melissa Febos** had an [essay](#) published on December 17, 2023 in the Modern Love column of the Sunday *New York Times* print edition.

## Faculty Matters

**Eric Gidal's** collaboration between engineering and the arts and humanities as part of the "Blue Gap Project" has been much in the news. The project leverages artists, writers, and scholars to put a face on the impacts of nitrogen pollution in waterways and watersheds. Gidal is leading the arts and humanities contributions to the project, which will have a new cohort of graduate students next year. Read the full article [here](#).

**Sarah Minor** has an essay, "On Waiting," in the latest *The Kenyon Review*, and an excerpt from a new book project at FENCE.

Though an advance copy has been in the department window, the official publication date is 22 February for David LaRocca's edited excerpts from Garrett's 20 books, with the punning subtitle "*Garrett Stewart, a Reader*" (slash rather than comma on the cover, by marketing's insistence), including an autobiographical essay on pedagogy, headnotes and Garrett's second thoughts on each book, a glossary of coinages, an extensive interview, and a "topographical bibliography."

**Jon Wilcox** was named a CLAS DSHB Humanities Scholar! This will support his project, "Method and Madness in Early English Medieval Manuscripts"

## Graduate Student Matters

**Spencer Jones** has been awarded a Marcus Bach Fellowship for the 2024-2025 school year.

Her essay "On the Margin of a Psalm," a creative-critical essay in conversation with Chris Dennis's "We Were Hungry" (winner of the 2024 Krause Essay Prize), was a finalist for Michigan Quarterly Review's 2023 James A. Winn Prize in Nonfiction and is forthcoming in *Bennington Review*.

Her essay "'No Peaceful Dreams': On Conscientious Objection and Benjamin Britten's War Requiem" is forthcoming in *Root Quarterly*.

Her essay "'It Really Was Child's Play': (Mis)Adventures in Gilman's Herland (1915) and Gerwig & Baumbach's Barbie (2023)" is forthcoming in *Hopkins Review*.

**Darius Stewart's** book, *Be Not Afraid of My Body: A Lyrical Memoir* debuted from Belt Publishing on February 6.

## Staff Matters

Staff member **Corey Campbell** was named a 2024 MacDowell Fellow. She will spend four weeks writing fiction at MacDowell this spring.

## Emeritus Matters

**Patricia Foster** will be awarded the Hall-Waters Prize for Distinguished Southern Writing from Troy University on April 12 with a monetary prize, a reading, dinner, and tv interview in Montgomery, Alabama. She will give readings from *Written in the Sky: Lessons of a Southern Daughter* at The Shelter House in March in Coralville, IA, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Foley, Alabama, sponsored by the Racial Reconciliation Committee, and at New South Books in Montgomery in April. She will be a panelist at AWP 2024 for the panel, "Of a Certain Age: Women Writers Near 60 (and yes, she will definitely stretch that limit)". She has an essay forthcoming in *The Examined Life*.

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