

## O Fortuna!

Greetings, and welcome to the final issue of *Reading Matters* 2019. As we wrap up fall semester and the calendar year, I'd like to thank the English Department faculty, staff, and students for your heroic efforts during an unusually busy period. This semester's six faculty meetings, six Executive Committee meetings, 27.75 FTE on duty, external review, and ongoing strategic planning process are mere hints of where we've been collectively over the past 16 weeks. I especially wish to thank **Bluford Adams** for serving as English Strategic Planner and **Matt Brown** who will be stepping down from his position as DUS after two and a half years of great work on behalf of the English undergraduate programs.

Spring semester also promises to be full, but in a more pleasurable way, as we host campus visitors in connection with the African Americanist search, chaired by **Harry Stecopoulos**, and special events, such as the Morris Sessions featuring **Loren Glass** and **Hanif Abdurraqib**, the Obermann Humanities Symposium on *What Can Museums Become?* co-organized by **Jennifer Buckley**, and the annual English graduate student organized *Craft Critique Culture* conference.

English faculty member Linda Bolton died around this time last year, and I want to take a moment to recall her generous spirit and resonant laugh—these memories carried me through the worst of last winter, and now I hope they will guide all of us toward a peaceful and restorative break.

## Faculty Matters

Tim Cassedy's *Figures of Speech: Six Histories of Language and Identity in the Age of Revolutions*, which is published in **Matt Brown's** UI Press series "Impressions: Studies in the Art, Culture, and Future of Books," has won the 2019 MLA Prize for a First Book. The prize committee observes Tim's "rare and wonderful gift to be able to craft a scholarly argument—and there is a strong scholarly argument in this work, grounded in deep archival research—that also tells page-turning stories." Matt adds that Tim designed his own typefaces for the book, while UI Press book designer Sara Sauers makes it a beautiful object.

Congratulations to the following faculty who received Career Development Awards for the coming academic year:

**Jennifer Buckley**, "Act Without Words: Speechless Performance on Modern Stages"

**Kathy Lavezzo**, "Race in Medieval Europe: Making Whiteness Visible"

**Ed Folsom** concluded a busy year of celebrating Walt Whitman's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday by teaching seminars at John Cabot University in Rome in October and giving the keynote address for the "Italy Reads" program, in which Italian American

Studies teachers are focusing this year on Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Among other Bicentennial activities, Folsom gave the keynote address at the "Whitman @ 200" conference at the University of Pennsylvania in March; the opening address of the "Whitman at 200" symposium at the University of Iowa in April (coinciding with the opening of the Whitman Bicentennial Exhibit at the UI Main Library Gallery that he co-curated with Stephanie Blalock and James O'Neil); the keynote address at Israel's national "Poetry Now" conference (this year dedicated to "Poetry and Democracy at the Whitman Bicentennial") and the Carmel Lecture at the University of Tel Aviv, both in May; the keynote lecture for the Whitman International Symposium at the Grolier Club in New York on the eve of Whitman's birthday, and then he joined David Reynolds and Jerome Loving for a birthday panel at the Whitman Birthplace on Long Island on the actual 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. During the summer, Folsom gave the keynote at the Minneapolis Source Song Festival, this year dedicated to music based on Whitman's poetry, and then traveled to the birthplace again in August to give the keynote address for the three-day international conference held there. This month, *North American Review* is publishing Folsom's concluding entry to its 200-day project called *Every Atom*, in which 200 scholars and artists each responded to a passage of "Song of Myself" on each the first 200 days of the Third Whitman Century. During the bicentennial year, three of Folsom's essays on Whitman have appeared in three different collections of essays published by Cambridge UP and one collection published by University of Iowa Press; in addition, the newly expanded 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Edition of *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song* appeared in April (edited with Jim Perlman and Dan Champion).

Congratulations to **Kerry Howley**, [whose first movie script is going into production](#). The film, 'Winner,' focuses on the real life story of Reality Leigh Winner and Russian interference into the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

## **Grad Matters**

Congratulations to **Maria Capecchi**, who just won the [2019 MMLA Graduate Student Paper Prize](#).

**Rajorshi Das**, along with Lipika Das, translated a short story that was recently published in an edited collection by Bloomsbury India. The Google Books version can be found

here: [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Women's Writings from India Pakistan and/yOCrDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Women's_Writings_from_India_Pakistan_and_yOCrDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0).

**Paul Schmitt** completed a summer-fall internship with Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development during which he spent time listening to Vinton, Iowa, residents' stories about flooding and working with local officials to develop a website that documents the human element of flood recovery and strengthens

future flood resiliency. Click here to read more about the project: <https://uiowa.edu/stories/vinton-defining-flood-resilience>.

## **Undergrad Matters**

*UReCA: The NCHC Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity* has published "I Owe You An Apology You Will Never Receive" by English & Creative Writing major **April Bannister**. *UReCA* provides a publication venue for undergraduates with works that make a significant contribution to their respective fields of study and can be anything from microbiology to musical composition. Through an online platform, *UReCA* encourages interdisciplinary creative activity and research among undergraduates.

"Are you there? Am I here?" by English & Creative Writing major **Catalina Irigoyen** was [published in the latest issue of \*Little Village\*](#). Irigoyen wrote this poem in Professor Ariana Ruiz's "Introduction to Latino/a/x Literature" course. The English Society has kept our undergraduates busy with activities all semester including open readings, faculty meet-and-greets and study groups. One highlight of the semester was a visit in October from Markus Zusak, author of *The Book Thief*. English Society Officer **Cailyn Snodgrass** heard Zusak was visiting Iowa City on a book tour, tracked down his agent to make contact, and pulled together the funding for his visit from four different sources, including the English Department and the Writer's Workshop. Over 50 students attended the event which included story-telling by the author as well as a dynamic and humorous Q&A where budding authors had the chance to pick his Zusak's brain about his approach to writing.





## **ATI Matters**

Following is a report from **Cassandra Bertolini**, Historian and Treasurer for Alpha Tau Delta, the University of Iowa Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor Society. As the fall semester concludes, I would like to congratulate new ATI members and thank officers for hosting a variety of events celebrating language, literature, and writing!

"To welcome new and returning students at the start of the fall 2019 semester, ATI officers hosted a Literary Trivia Night. In October, **thirteen students joined ATI (Jen Becker, Wendy Black-Parsons, Lauren Chesire, Julia Devalk, Molly Hill, Shalini Jasti, John Lyons, Molly Manion, Theresa Patterson, Maria Pearson, Rachel Poppin, Carla Seravalli, and Lauren Whitney)**, and several students submitted their creative and critical works for consideration for Sigma Tau Delta's annual international convention, which will be hosted in March of next year in Las Vegas.

Over the course of the semester, other general events for members and interested students alike included informational meetings about the opportunities

available through membership with Sigma Tau Delta, as well as publication in the new Literary Kiosks around Iowa City. The officers hosted a literary-themed Halloween movie night and a write-in where students came together to support one another's work on final projects before the fall break. To kick off the food drive for the Free Lunch Program of Iowa City at the beginning of November, ATI hosted a literary-themed Mystery Dinner. The organization continued to collect donations for the program throughout the month. As the semester comes to a close, officers look forward to planning events for spring, including a graduate school application workshop with current graduate students, and the annual convention in Las Vegas.





## **Alumni Matters**

Congratulations to **Joshua Gooch** (PhD 2010), whose book *[Dickensian Affects: Charles Dickens and Feelings of Precarity](#)* was published by Routledge.

Congratulations to **Calvin Hennick** (English BA 2004), whose memoir *[Once More to the Rodeo](#)* has been listed among the 100 Best Books of 2019 by Amazon.

Congratulations to **Isiah Lavender III** (PhD 2004), who was recently installed as the Sterling-Goodman Professor of English at the University of Georgia. And whose fourth book, *[Afrofuturism Rising: The Literary Prehistory of a Movement](#)*, was

published on October 9, 2019 by Ohio State University Press in their series *New Suns: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Speculative*.

## **Emeritus Matters**

A website that Professor Emerita **Barbara Eckstein** been working on with students for years has been relaunched at [peoplesweathermap.org](http://peoplesweathermap.org). Students and faculty will see familiar faces of former students in [Our Team](#).

## **Upcoming Matters**

Informational Meetings about the Mellon-funded summer Humanities for the Public Good Summer Internships. Join us either Wednesday, December 18 4-5 or Friday, January 31 4-5 (both at the Obermann Center). Learn about our 2020 internships with local cultural organizations for two months this summer and meet last year's interns. The internship includes a \$5,000 stipend.

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Hanif Abdurraqib - January 30, 2020 | 7:00 pm | Prairie Lights

Talk by Sean Silver, Rutgers University - February 20, 2020 | 3:30-5:00 pm | Gerber Lounge, 304 EPB

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Mitchell S. Jackson - February 20, 2020 | 7:00 pm | Prairie Lights

Workshop on Network Modeling by Sean Silver, Rutgers University - February 21, 2020 | 10:00 am-12:00 pm | Digital Studio

Graduate Student Seminar with Sean Silver, Rutgers University - February 21, 2020 | 1:00-3:00 pm | 331 EPB