

allusions*

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AUTHORS Doug Anderson, Sharon Bryan, Bruce Cohen, Frank Delaney, Beth Ann Fennelly, Jamie Ford, Allegra Goodman, Geraldine Mills, Susan Brind Morrow, Naeem Murr, Stewart O'Nan, Heidi Pitlor, Christian Wiman | **RELEASES** Aetna Creative Nonfiction Awards, Collins Literary Prize, Creative Writing and Art Awards, Gloriana Gill Art Awards, Graduate Creative Writing Community, Hackman Awards, *Hartford Courant*, "Let It Go," Long River Live, Mercury, *plain china*, *Poetic Journeys*, Wallace Stevens Poetry Program

Allegra Goodman: As Cool as Air Conditioned Streets

REVIEWED BY ILIANA LUCIANO, STEPHANIE LETKOWSKI
AND LEIGHA KERWIN

On November 12th at the Konover Auditorium, Allegra Goodman read an excerpt from the first chapter of her latest novel *The Other Side of the Island*. This book is Goodman's first foray into the world of young adult literature. Goodman is the author of six books including, *The Family Markowitz*, *Kaaterskill Falls*, *Paradise Park*, and *Intuition*. She was named by *The New Yorker* as one of the twenty best writers under forty.

Goodman shared with her audience details of how her focus throughout her career has evolved from psychological novels such as *Intuition* to writing for young adults, something she claimed she never thought she could do. She explained that her children encouraged her to write and publish a book for young adults, adding: "I didn't want to

write about magic, dragons or anything like that." Goodman said she was influenced by the current world events, such as the political and social struggles of Burma and global warming. She noted that the very things that are happening in our lives are often more frightening and unbelievable than the fantasies one's imagination can create.

The initial inspiration for *The Other Side of the Island* came on a hot day when Goodman went inside her air conditioned apartment and thought about how nice it would be if it were just as cool outside. This became the idea for the beginning sentence of her novel: "All this happened many years ago, before the streets were air conditioned." She connected this initial inspiration with concerns of global warming, censorship, the nature of socialization, and religion.

Goodman ended the evening with a Q&A session that helped the audience understand her and her writing. She discussed the ambiguity in her book and how she wanted "younger people to listen critically to what they hear." This discussion encouraged the readers to think about the world they live in. Goodman gave advice to those who were thinking about becoming writers, stating that when writing something, you should start handwriting rather than typing it. When asked how sex was dealt with in her fictional world, Goodman replied with a smile that there might be a need for a sequel to further explore this topic.

Doug Anderson Remembers the Chaotic Sixties

REVIEWED BY ILIANA LUCIANO, PROGRAM INTERN

Award-winning poet Doug Anderson read from his memoir *Keep Your Head Down* on September 15th at the UConn Co-Op. Anderson is the author of two books of poetry, *The Moon Reflected Fire* (1994) and *Blues for Unemployed Secret Police* (2000), and is the recipient of the Kate Tufts Discovery Award. *Keep Your Head Down* started as a creative dissertation Anderson wrote while completing his PhD in English at the University of Connecticut. His was one of the first creative dissertations completed and defended here.

Keep Your Head Down recounts the events of Anderson's life, including the Vietnam War and the chaotic sixties. Anderson's vivid prose brings these events to life for the reader, while highlighting their cultural significance. The world Anderson recreates gives us a glimpse into a very real chapter of American history. The excerpts Anderson read illustrated the way people employ humor to get through difficult times.

During the Q&A session, Anderson explained the complex task of doing research for his memoir. He had attempted to interview the members of his old platoon, but found that many of them had passed away.

Originally Anderson had wanted to become an actor, but this dream fizzled out once he realized his heart wasn't in it. It soon became apparent that Anderson felt passionate about writing. When asked if his time in the service influenced his decision to write this memoir, he said, "I'm glad I wrote it."

“ORIGINALLY ANDERSON HAD WANTED TO BECOME AN ACTOR, BUT THIS DREAM FIZZLED OUT ONCE REALIZED HIS HEART WASN'T IN IT.”

Heidi Pitlor Balances Editing and Writing

REVIEWED BY ILIANA LUCIANO, PROGRAM INTERN

Heidi Pitlor stood before an audience in the UConn Co-op on October 1st to read from her book *The Birthdays*, which was published to wide critical acclaim in 2006. The event was part of the "Writers Who Edit, Editors Who Write" series funded by Beatrice Fox Auerbach Fund at The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Pitlor is a former senior editor at Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston. Currently she is editor of *The Best American Short Stories*, working alongside authors like Stephen King, and Salman Rushdie.

Pitlor read to a crowd of students eager to hear her speak about her experiences with the publishing industry. Prior to answering questions, she gave a brief overview of her writing career. Initially Pitlor began working at Houghton Mifflin Company as a secretary. Her main job was to help organize submissions and keep track of work that was rejected or accepted for publication. It didn't take her long to ask for more hands-on work. By the time one of the editorial positions became available, she had enough experience to fulfill the job's requirements.

During the Q&A session, Pitlor gave students advice on how to best tackle large manuscripts in need of serious revision, explained the need to stick with what one feels passionate about, and encouraged students to feel enthusiastic about their writing. "It's a good idea for people to hold an internship position," she advised, adding that by doing so, students can get an idea of the types of things they might be interested in. Members of the audience also wanted to know how Pitlor balanced writing and editing, and she explained that there's a lot of overlap between these two tasks.

As editor of *The Best American Short Stories*, Pitlor had some insight into the qualities that make a short story stand out. She mentioned authenticity and the author's willingness to take risks in both the prose and storyline. She stressed the importance of momentum and the ability of stories to raise questions. Each year Pitlor chooses a new guest editor and determines the direction of *The Best American Short Stories* anthology, a job she finds both challenging and rewarding.

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Christian Wiman Navigates the Worlds of Editing and Writing

BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

“Writers Who Edit, Editors Who Write” was created by the University of Connecticut’s Creative Writing Program to cater to those interested in both writing and editing, to appeal to students who are interested in both fields. This program is funded by The Beatrice Fox Auerbach Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. For this spring’s event, Christian Wiman spoke on March 25th at the Storrs campus’ Co-Op.

Wiman has been the editor of *Poetry* magazine for the past seven years, and sifts through 90,000 submissions every year. *Poetry*, which is famous for discovering talented poets, is the oldest monthly English verse magazine in the world. In addition to editing, Wiman has published two books of poetry – *The Long Home and Hard Night* – as well as a collection of essays titled *Ambition and Survival: Becoming a Poet*. A new volume of his poetry will be released in 2011.

Wiman opened with a poem by A. R. Ammons. Wiman said that his stance, like Ammons’, is in a realm between belief and disbelief, though Wiman himself leans towards belief. This was evident in the poetry he read that evening. He read “One Good Eye,” a poem describing the relationship between his aunt, uncle, and himself. Wiman explained that the piece is “about realizing that buried in what you hate is love.” Vivid descriptions enticed the audience’s senses, giving life to the images in the poem like the aunt’s glass eye.

The unexpected elements in Wiman’s poetry captured the audience’s attention. “It Takes Particular Ticks” describes sounds from all corners of Chicago, but only the sound of a squirrel interests the narrator’s dog. Something as lowly as a squirrel is what’s noticed in a city full of bustling life. In “Dark Charms,” Wiman addresses the experience of having cancer. Wiman said, “You cannot imagine the world of cancer. The experience imprisons you, but you exalt it.” Wiman looks beyond the surface of life, and explores what lies in the depths of it. When we thought a poem was about the relationship of family members, a dog getting distracted, or an experience with cancer, it was just the beginning of our understanding. There was deeper significance and surprise within every piece.

After the poetry reading, Wiman answered questions about both writing and editing. Wiman described the recent life of *Poetry*, and his role in handling new submissions to the journal. “One of the dispiriting things about editing is saying ‘no,’ but you can also lift the spirits of young aspiring poets,” he said. When asked if reading thousands of poems a year affected his own writing, Wiman said that he has learned to disassociate the poetry he edits from his own writing. Wiman can successfully navigate through the worlds of editing and writing, so it doesn’t affect his own creative work. Thanks to Wiman’s experiences as an editor and poet, the audience enjoyed an engaging and informative evening.

Misunderstandings with Sharon Bryan

REVIEWED BY ILIANA LUCIANO, PROGRAM INTERN

Sharon Bryan stood before the crowd at the UConn Co-op on November 3rd to read from her latest book of poetry, *Sharp Stars*. Bryan is the Visiting Poet-In-Residence in the Department of English, and she recently won the Isabella Gardner Poetry Award for *Sharp Stars*. Some of her other awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Discovery Award from *The Nation*.

Bryan started the reading by informing students and faculty in attendance that laughter was allowed throughout the event. The first couple of poems – “Big Band Theory” and “Saying Things” – centered on the theme of origins. She explained that she conceived the idea for the “Big Band Theory” from a misunderstanding that occurred while she was listening to NPR and misheard the radio host talking about the big bang theory. This story helped her transition into “Bass Bass,” a poem that shows how the pronunciation of words affects its meaning.

As the reading came to a close, the poems became more lighthearted. The poem “Body and Soul,” for example, presented us with a different way of viewing the relationship between these two entities. Bryan left some time at the end for a Q&A session. Asked about the editing process, Bryan admitted that she spent more than a year putting together *Sharp Stars*. “Editing poetry is completely different than editing fiction. You have to be in a different mindset,” she stated

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DIFFERENT THAN EDITING FICTION.”

Aetna Creative Nonfiction Prizes Awarded to Aspiring Prose Writers

KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

The Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award is just one of the many annual creative writing contests the English Department sponsors. This award, which is given by the Aetna Chair of Writing to support creative nonfiction writing, is granted to graduate and undergraduate students. The 2010 winners of the awards are Zara Rix, Timothy Stobierski, and Jennifer Few.

Born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, Zara Rix is the winner of the Aetna Creative Nonfiction graduate prize. She is a candidate for a PhD in English, and focuses on children's literature and post colonial literature. Rix said she was "surprised but excited" to win the award for her piece "Knowing the Enemy." "[I felt] a little bit of embarrassment because I won the Aetna award last year as well," she said. Rix hopes to become a professor in the future, and will definitely continue writing. She said, "I like writing; I like experimenting with different things."

Timothy Stobierski, from Ansonia, Connecticut, is a junior majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing. He won the first place undergraduate prize with his piece "He Had Some Tears." In second grade, Stobierski began writing to, ironically, "get out of doing work." He would write daily journal entries, and to avoid reading his work out loud to the class, he would continue to write until the entry was so long he could not possibly read it. "What started out as an attempt to get out of doing work is what I do for fun now," he said. When asked if he was expecting to win the Aetna award, he said, "I really wasn't expecting to win. I was very shocked." Stobierski will get his degree in English, and hopes to enter graduate school to get a master's degree. He would "love to make a living writing."

Jennifer Few of Manchester, Connecticut is an English major who will begin grad school for special education in June. She won the second place undergraduate prize with her work entitled "Lopsided Cake." Few became serious with her writing when she took a UConn English course her senior year of high school.

Writing has now become an outlet for her. When asked how she felt about winning her first creative writing award, she said, "I did not expect to win at all. It was actually my birthday when I got the call. It was very exciting news." In a couple years, Few hopes to complete grad school through UConn, and to be married to her middle school sweetheart.

English Professors Regina Barecca, Liz Hart, and Sam Pickering judged the submissions sent to the contest. The Aetna Chair of Writing was established in 1986 with a \$500,000 endowment from the Aetna Foundation and matching funds from the State Department of Higher Education. This year, the Aetna Chair of Writing, Lynn Bloom, awarded cash prizes of \$500, \$300, and \$200 to the winners.

Beth Ann Fennelly Competes with Green Beer

REVIEWED BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Beth Ann Fennelly, the Spring Aetna poet-in-residence, brought Irish spirit to her poetry reading on the evening of St. Patrick's Day. Fennelly has published a book of essays, *Great With Child*, as well as three books of poetry: *Open House*, which won the 2001 Kenyon Review Prize in Poetry for a First Book, *Tender Hooks*, and her latest book *Unmentionables*. She has been included in *The Best American Poetry* series three times, is the winner of a Pushcart Prize, and won a 2009 Fulbright Fellowship to Brazil.

Fennelly charmed the audience immediately, thanking us for attending her event when we could be out drinking green beer. In celebration of the holiday, Fennelly recited "Adam's Curse" by William Butler Yeats, The Irish poet. This beautiful piece by her poetic predecessor prepared the audience for Fennelly's own creative work.

Family and friends had a significant impact on Fennelly's writing, as evident in the poetry and prose she read from her books. Several of her poems were inspired by those close to her, though Fennelly stated that it is "tricky writing about family members." For example, her poem "Mother Sends My Poem to Her Sister with Post-Its" is a hilarious revenge poem Fennelly wrote after her mother wrongly analyzed one of her poems. Her poems also explored parenthood, and the intimacies of motherhood. Fennelly said she received hate mail for the poem "Once I Did Kiss Her Wetly on the Mouth," which explores the erotic aspects of maternal love. The close connection described in the poem is something many people wouldn't comfortably consider, and the hate mail seems to have resulted from a few readers who could only focus on the physical relationship described in the poem. However, Fennelly shows how strong the emotional and physical bonding between a mother and her baby can be, and what it is like to completely know one's own child.

After reading poems from *Tender Hooks*, Fennelly read a piece of prose from *Great With Child*, which consists of letters Fennelly wrote to a young mother. As in her poetry, the language here was lovely and

powerful. Fennelly expressed humor in the story, like when she realizes her baby daughter discovered lying. She described the violation she felt when lied to, but at the same time the sense of pride that her daughter had conceived her first lie at such a young age. Reading with heartrending vigor, Fennelly made audiences connect with the emotions expressed throughout her work. Everything up to and including the final poem, "Cow Tipping," was a mixture of hilarity and sincerity. Fennelly's poems and prose captured conflicting feelings simultaneously, which made the audience brood, ponder, and laugh throughout the entire evening. In competition against green beer, Fennelly (and her audience) surely won.

Stewart O'Nan Provides Laughter and Literature

REVIEWED BY ILIANA LUCIANO, PROGRAM INTERN

Fiction and nonfiction writer Stewart O'Nan visited UConn in October as the Fall Aetna Writer-In-Residence. He is the author of over fifteen books of fiction and nonfiction, including, *Snow Angels*, *A Prayer for the Dying*, *Wish You Were Here*, *The Good Wife*, *Last Night at the Lobster*, and *Songs for the Missing*. He is the winner of Connecticut Book Award, The Martin Luther King Drum Major for Freedom Award, and a finalist for the *L.A. Times* Book Prize. O'Nan spent three days on campus holding tutorials with undergraduate and graduate students, sharing meals with students, and giving a reading from his works.

The highlight of O'Nan's visit was the reading on October 21st at the Konover Auditorium. He began with a funny story in which he admitted to the audience that he forgot the books he was going to read from at home and had to purchase copies of his own books at the UConn Co-op. "The cashier looked at the name on my credit card, then at the name on the books, and finally at me. I just smiled and nodded," he recalled.

O'Nan read excerpts from three of his novels, providing audience members with the necessary contextual information. While reading from *Last Night at the Lobster*, he came across a clichéd sentence and briefly mused on this mistake, wondering how such sentences made their way into his novel. He used this opportunity to advocate the need for help in the editing process and thanked his editor for helping him present the book with minimal errors. "I'm not like Walt Whitman or writers like that. I don't go back and edit things that have already been published. Once it's been published it's out of my hands. It's in the public realm and I cannot take back the fact people have already seen my mistakes," he explained.

The evening ended with a Q&A session, where students and faculty were given the opportunity to ask about his writing career and techniques as a writer. He spoke of the need to tell untold stories and the necessity to conduct research for his novels so he could truthfully write about his characters' experiences. Furthermore he made it clear to the audience that all of his characters are extensions of himself and that he draws inspiration for them from the environment and people around him.

Jamie Ford Speaks on "Day of Remembrance"

REVIEWED BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

February 2nd marked the commemoration of the "Day of Remembrance" for Executive Order 9066, which forced Japanese Americans into internment camps. The event was co-sponsored by slAAm (Sampling Literature by Asian Americans), the Aetna Chair in Writing, the Asian American Studies Institute, and the Creative Writing Program. Jamie Ford, author of *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* and winner of the Clarity of Night Short Fiction Award, honored UConn with a tribute to the history behind the order.

Ford educated audiences with modern reactions to the Japanese Internment, and enlightened us on why we should not forget this era of American history. Ford read from his novel, which is the story of the relationship between a Chinese American boy and a Japanese American girl during the time of the internment. The passage highlighted the many hardships people of Japanese ancestry had to face after the executive order was passed. Ford reminded us that the internment was more than just the physical removal of Japanese Americans. These citizens suffered through the mental and emotional trauma of being uprooted and discriminated against. We were asked to remember not only the violation of Japanese Americans' rights as citizens, but also to recognize the emotional injustices surrounding the internment.

The subject matter was heavy, but Ford made sure grave emotions did not consume the event. He softened the mood with humor and wit. He confessed he was "a sucker for love stories," and spoke of how he viewed love stories as a child. Ford incorporated his own family experiences into his novel, and proved that even he, a Chinese American living in a post-Japanese Internment America, could peak interests and turn heads towards this important subject.

Ford answered a variety of questions during the Q&A portion of the reading. He explained why fiction narratives can be more effective at teaching history than non-fiction reads, and why historical mistakes need to be acknowledged by future generations. With the help of Jamie Ford, this “Day of Remembrance” was most memorable.

Stay Fresh! *UConn Students Published in Hartford Courant*

KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

“Fresh Talk” is a section of the *Hartford Courant* reserved for Connecticut writers under 30 years of age who submit articles containing strong views. Timothy Stobierski, Jennifer Few, Michelle Carter, Alana Wenick and Evan Lawrence are UConn students who have been published in “Fresh Talk” within the last academic year. These five students have something else in common: they all took Professor Regina Barreca’s Creative Nonfiction class.

The class requires students to do something that many would not do until after graduation: send their work out into the world. The class discusses the inner workings of the publishing industry, and how it functions as a business. Barreca said, “One of the requirements for the course is that people have to send their work out. Part of the course is making sure that you get used to the idea of sending your work out for public consumption. Every writer wants to be heard, and if you’re brave enough to be taking a creative writing class you should be brave enough to be sending your work out for [the] consideration of an editor. That’s part of the deal.”

Timothy Stobierski said of Barreca, “She teaches you practical knowledge, like sending cover letters; she teaches you how to write for a living. You learn a lot of secrets working with someone like her.” In the course, students write essays and evaluate each other’s work every class. Through workshops and constructive feedback, students are able to explore their strengths and weaknesses and learn how to improve their writing skills. Jennifer Few, speaking of Barreca’s class, said, “It was very helpful. She knows how hard her students work, and she encourages you to write all the time, and she encourages you to submit your work.”

UConn hosts many talented creative writing students, which is evident by the numerous publications in the *Hartford Courant*. Professor Regina Barreca is an example of how encouragement can help students take chances, and get their work out into the world. Students should take advantage of the outstanding courses the creative writing program

has to offer, and of publications such as “Fresh Talk,” which caters to their young ideas and opinions. We expect many more UConn students to be published in “Fresh Talk” in the future. For now, we congratulate the five students, and those before them, who were published in the *Hartford Courant*.

Naeem Murr Presents Food for Thought and Charity

REVIEWED BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Storrs’ annual Creative Sustenance event took place on February 17th at the Co-Op. Creative Sustenance is a benefit that raises awareness about the homeless and hungry in our area, and collects donations of food and money to aid local charities and organizations. This year Creative Sustenance–Storrs raised \$695, which was given to the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic.

Author Naeem Murr donated his time and read at the event. Murr’s first novel, *The Boy*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book. His latest novel, *The Perfect Man*, was awarded the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best Book of Europe and South Asia, and was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. Murr has won several writing awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Pen Beyond Margins Award. He has been a writer-in-residence at the University of Missouri, Western Michigan, and others, and was UConn’s Aetna visiting Writer-in-Residence in Fall 2007. Murr is currently a UConn Humanities Institute Fellow, and teaches a seminar in fictional creative writing.

Audiences provided charity in spirit of the Creative Sustenance event, and in turn, Murr’s readings provided entertainment, laughter, and food for thought. He read a passage from *The Perfect Man*, which was loaded with sensual details of the character Ruth’s regrets and memories. Murr’s intricate narrative absorbed the audience, as if the scene depicted in the passage had physically manifested in the room. Next, he read his short essay, “My Poet,” which was featured in *Poetry* magazine in 2007. This comical tale highlights the differences between poets and fiction writers. Murr’s witty and stereotypical observations of poets and writers gave insight into the lives of creative minds, and kept the audience laughing.

Murr closed with the essay “Don Nelson Sings Elvis,” inspired by a childhood school friend. The story delves into themes of loss, and imitation versus reality. This sobering piece opens the door into the mind of a reminiscent man who evaluates the impact the deaths of his father and schoolmate have on him. Each of Murr’s works successfully allowed the audience to truly see through each character’s point of view, and

connect with the subjects of the texts. Naeem Murr fed the audience's minds with creativity, while the audience helped feed the homeless with generous donations.

Bruce Cohen Entertains UConn with Poetry

REVIEWED BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Poet Bruce Cohen visited UConn on February 3rd for an enthralling evening of poetry. He read poems from *Disloyal Yo-Yo*, which was awarded the 2007 Orphic Poetry Prize, and his latest book, *Swerve*. His poetry has been published in many journals, including *Harvard Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *TriQuarterly*, and others. When he is not writing, Cohen works as the director of the Counseling Program for Intercollegiate Athletes here at UConn.

Cohen began with the poem "Scattered Joy," which deals with the complexities of simple things, such as people with the same first and last names, or how we wish food would heat up faster in the microwave. Cohen introduced each of his poems, providing the audience with insight to the origins of each piece. For example, he humored the audience with tales of late nights with Jerry Lewis, and expressed his experiences further through the poem "The Jerry Lewis Telethon."

Because the audience was given the background to each poem, a connection was built between us and the material. The focus of the poems became more personal, though the topics were already very accessible. Cohen shared several poems dealing with real world annoyances and woes, though in a hilariously cynical way. He successfully combined deep subject matter with humor, and used jokes to ease us into some depressing subject matter. Cohen finds significant meaning in the menial, and his poems remind us to pay attention to even the most ordinary things.

Cohen described himself as an American surrealist, which is appropriate as there are elements of deeper meaning and surprise present in his work. Cohen stated that he was influenced by John Berryman, another poet whose work was witty yet serious. Cohen also said that he wants his poems to take him on journeys as he writes them, and he prefers not knowing where each journey will lead. For the audience, his poems did just that: took us on a journey.

Irish Culture and Magpie Poetry with Geraldine Mills

REVIEWED BY BEN MILLER AND ALYSHA METCALF

Irish poet and fiction writer Geraldine Mills read her poetry and an excerpt from a short story at the UConn Co-op on October 26th. Mills is the author of two collections of short fiction, *Lick of the Lizard* (2005) and *The Weight of Feathers* (2007), and four collections of poetry, including *Unearthing Your Own* (2001) and *Toil the Dark Harvest* (2004). Her writing has won a variety of awards including the OKI Award, the Moore Medallion, and the North Tipperary Award. She was named the Millennium winner of the Hennessy/*Sunday Tribune* New Irish Writer Award.

Mills engaged the audience as she read "This is From the Woman Who Does," a story about a cleaning lady with a racy sense of humor. The piece showcased Mills' talent for characterization and illustrated an inherently Irish persistence and good-will in spite of suffering. Mills, then, read several poems that used nature images to evoke a sense of the Irish landscape, history, as well as Mills's own Irish identity. She introduced the notion of the poet as a magpie, "stealing" ideas and turning them into works of her own. She gave the examples of her own use of paintings and Greek mythology in her poetry, most notably in the poem "Iphigenia."

Mills prefaced each piece she read with a story that explained the inspiration that led to her writing - a poem transposing the "power of story behind [a] work" of art, or a short story suddenly breathing life into bits of conversation heard on Dublin trains. One of Mills's goals in writing is to find common ground between the past and the present. This was apparent in the poems inspired by the poet's parents, which reflected not only her background but also her familial love and piety. The audience was left with vivid images expressed through clear language that was refreshingly accessible.

"THE PIECE SHOWCASED MILLS' TALENT FOR CHARACTERIZATION AND ILLUSTRATED AN INHERENTLY IRISH PERSISTENCE AND GOOD-WILL IN SPITE OF SUFFERING."

Susan Brind Morrow Treats Audience with a Trip to Egypt

BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

The Creative Writing Program and the Aetna Chair of Writing, Lynn Bloom, created the Aetna Celebration of Creative Nonfiction. This annual event celebrates writers who have made an impact on creative writing. Susan Brind Morrow was invited to read at this year's event, which was held on April 19th.

Morrow is a classicist, linguist, and translator of Egyptian folklore and mythology as well as modern Arabic poetry. She is the author of two books: *The Names of Things*, which was a finalist for the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for the Art of the Memoir, and *Wolves and Honey: A Hidden History of the Natural World*. Both works are critically acclaimed for being exceptional examples of literature.

Before Morrow began her reading, the winners of the 2010 Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award were introduced. Timothy Stobierski, the undergraduate first place winner, and Zara Rix, the graduate winner, both read excerpts from their award winning pieces – Stobierski from “He Had Some Tears,” and Rix from “Knowing the Enemy.”

Morrow began her reading with *The Names of Things*, which describes her journey through Egypt. The land is exotically described with vivid details and color. “Color is a defining principle of place,” she said. She flawlessly ties nature, a significant theme in her life, to language and words. In one passage, she talks of nature's ancestry, and parallels it to familial lineage. She explores how things in nature, like crabs, got their names. Morrow's narrative prompted the audience to ponder how everything acquired its name and what the meanings behind names are. It is an idea that many readers may never have thought of until discovering *The Names of Things*.

An adventurer at heart, Morrow always wanted to go out and travel the world. Recollecting her earliest journeys, she said, “It is wonderful to be young, to have resilience and strength. It is a wonderful thing to be free.” Hearing Morrow share her exotic experiences abroad undoubtedly inspired the audience to travel the world, and see nature in all its forms. Morrow's love for travel and nature were successfully explored through her writing, and she continued the tradition of reading exceptional creative nonfiction at the Aetna celebration for the genre.

Hackman Prizes Awarded to Students for Superb Short Fiction

KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Every year, the University of Connecticut grants prizes to students who show great talent and potential in creative writing. One of the creative writing prizes is the Jennie Hackman Memorial Award for Short Fiction. This prize, dedicated to the memory of Jacob and Jennie Hackman, is given to undergraduates who submit the best work in short fiction. The 2010 Jennie Hackman Memorial Award winners are Jesse Williams, Miranda DePoi, and Sierra Ryan. The winners' stories will be published in the University of Connecticut's 2010 edition of *Long River Review*.

Jesse Williams, a native of California, won first prize with his story “How Gary met Melisa.” An avid reader since childhood, Williams knew he wanted to be a writer at a very early age. He is now a second semester English major. Williams said, “I saw the contest and figured I'd submit something; I didn't have anything to lose.”

Not thinking he would win, Williams believed the email announcing his achievement was a joke at first. When asked what his reactions were to winning, he said, “I was excited. I jumped in the air and yelled, and woke up my roommate.” The story he submitted was a tribute piece, inspired by his favorite author, Charles Dickens. Although he is not sure where his writing will take him, Williams hopes to continue participating in creative writing contests.

Miranda DePoi of Brookfield, Connecticut won second prize with her short fiction piece, “Shadows on the Wall.” She is an English major with a concentration in creative writing. As a child, DePoi created stories for fun, and she was not serious with her writing until the end of middle school.

When asked if she expected to win, she answered, “Half of me did, and half of me was really afraid I wouldn't. I'm flattered, I'm honored; it's very encouraging. If I want to invest my life in writing it's going to be a difficult road for a while, so any positive feedback I can get is great.” DePoi would ideally like to write in the future, but is also thinking of pursuing a career in publishing and editing, or teaching.

Sierra Ryan of Sharon, Connecticut is an English major in her senior year. She won third prize with her short story "Funeral Reds." Writing has always been fun for her, ever since she was a little girl.

"I was not expecting to win at all, but it was really exciting to get that email," she said. When asked about her plans for the future, she replied, "I'm always going to keep writing, no matter what. I'll keep writing, and keep trying."

The contest was judged by Lynn Bloom, the Aetna Chair of Writing, Richard Peterson, an English and Comparative Literature Professor, and Fred Roden, an Associate Professor of English. The Hackman family sponsored the Jennie Hackman Memorial Award for Short Fiction, providing a first prize of \$1,000, a second prize of \$300, and a third prize of \$200.

Young Poet and Prose Writer Awarded Collins Literary Prizes

REVIEWED BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Every year, the University of Connecticut's English Department organizes many creative writing contests. One of these is the Edwin R. and Frances Schreiber Collins Memorial Award, which only undergraduates are eligible to enter. This prize is given to only two pieces: one in prose and one in poetry. The winners were granted cash prizes of \$4,000, and will be published in UConn's 2010 literary and art magazine, *Long River Review*. The talented winners of the 2010 Collins Literary Prize are John Allie and Duncan Campbell.

John Allie of Storrs, Connecticut won the Collins Literary Prize for his prose piece, "Lander." He is currently majoring in illustration and has a concentration in creative writing. When asked when he began writing, Allie responded, "I've always written to some extent; working really seriously probably four or five years with the intent of producing something good."

Also a winner of the Raab Associates Prize for Creative Writing for Children, this is Allie's first time winning the Collins Literary Prize. When asked for his plans for the future, he said, "I'd certainly like to see [my] things published to a greater extent. I want to keep improving what I'm doing. I like doing comics, but I like writing prose, too."

Duncan Campbell, an English major from Coventry, Connecticut, won the Collins Literary Prize for his poem "Aesthetics." He started writing fiction when he was in fourth grade, and he "dabbled" in poetry throughout middle and high school. Campbell explained, "The first time I wrote poetry based on my current aesthetic for writing was about two years ago. I want to explore the emotional extremes of things, like awe, frustration, [and] failure."

He submitted his work to literary prizes in the past, but was disappointed. He has progressed as a writer since then, saying that "the times that cause the most growth in us are the most challenging." This year, Campbell was confident in the work he submitted to the contest, though he was still surprised when he won the Collins Prize. "I was really honored to learn that I had won," he said. Campbell is hoping to begin his journey into grad school this Fall, and obtain an MFA in poetry.

Submissions were judged by Jonathan Hufstader, an Associate Professor and Honors Program Director, Ellen Litman, the Co-Director of the Creative Writing Program, and Beth Ann Fennelly, a 2009 Fulbright Scholar and published author. David and Emily Collins.

Gloriana Gill Award Rewards Artists

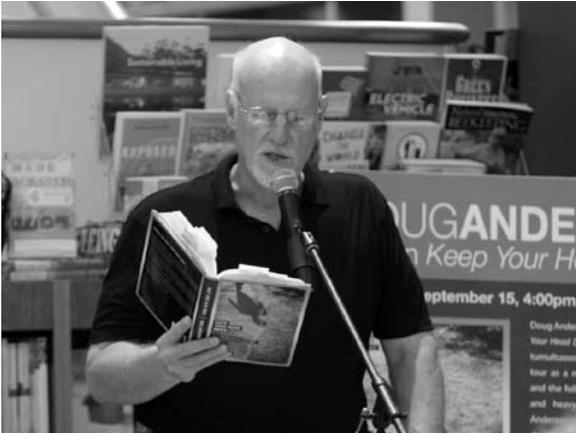
Two Gloriana Gill Art Awards are given every year to UConn Students. This year's winners are John Allie for photography and Alexia Lalonde for silkscreen. Each student received a prize of \$600 and had their work featured in the 2010 issue of the *Long River Review*. Work by both artists was also on display at the UConn Co-op on April 29th at the *Long River Review* release party.

The awards were established several years ago by the family of Gloriana Gill to honor her memory. Gill was a talented artist and cartoonist who found time to make art despite being the wife of a busy dairy farmer in Pomfret, CT. Though her life was not always easy, Gill always managed to bring humor and creativity together. The family hopes this award will help UConn students discover the importance of art and humor in their own lives.

Director of Creative Writing Penelope Pelizzon remarks that "The Gill Awards - and the opportunity to feature these terrific artists in the magazine - remind us of how interconnected the visual arts are with literature. It's so exciting to see how students like John and Alexia transform their experiences in this complementary way, and to have these graphic works alongside poems, nonfiction, and short stories."

Author Talks

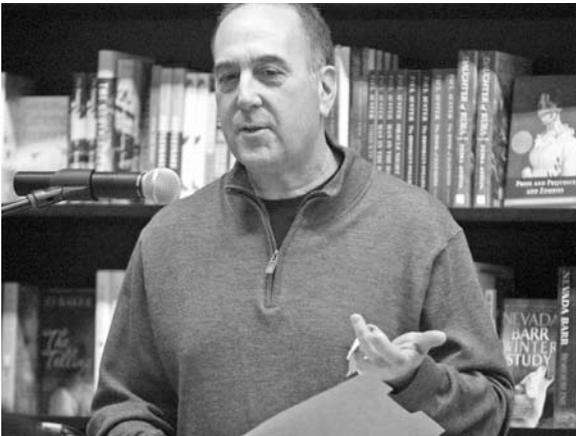
REVIEWED BY ILIANA LUCIANO, PROGRAM INTERN



DOUG ANDERSON



SHARON BRYAN



BRUCE COHEN



JAMIE FORD



GERALDINE MILLS



HEIDI PITLOR

2009–2010 *Creative Writing and Art Award Winners*



Soak, Xiaotong Duan



Untitled, John Allie



Rocketslide, Alexia Lalande

The Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest

First Prize (\$1000): Phillip Korth

Second Prize (\$500): Katelyn Aguilar

Third Prize (\$250): Matthew Salyer

The Edward R. and Frances S. Collins Literary Prizes

Fiction (\$4000): John Allie

Poetry (\$4000): Duncan Campbell

Honorable mention: Nikki Rubin

The Jennie Hackman Memorial Award for Short Fiction

First Prize (\$1000): Jesse Williams

Second Prize (\$300): Miranda DePoi

Third Prize (\$200): Sierra B. Ryan

The Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award

Graduate Award (\$500): Zara Rix

Undergraduate First Prize (\$300): Timothy Stobierski

Undergraduate Second Prize (\$200): Jennifer Few

The Aetna Creative Works-in-Progress Grant

First Prize (\$1000): Matthew Salyer

Honorable mention: Jennifer Holley

The Edwin Way Teal Nature Writing Award

First Prize (\$125): Zbigniew Grabowski

Second Prize (\$75): Caitlin Shirts

The Long River Graduate Writing Award

First Prize (\$250): Zara Rix

The Long River Art Award

First Prize (\$200): Xiaotong Duan

The Gloriana Gill Art Awards

Photography (\$600): John Allie

Drawing (\$600): Alexia Lalande

Accomplishments Galore! UConn's Graduate Creative Writing Community

WRITTEN BY AMBER WEST,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE WRITING

The English Department at the University of Connecticut is a unique place for graduate students who are creative writers, offering a chance to participate in an active community of creative writers while working toward a more traditional MA or Ph.D. Graduate students take creative writing workshops, participate in tutorials, and submit their work to the numerous writing contests open to UConn students. For decades the Department has fostered a unique group of graduate creative writers: some have MFAs and return to complete MAs and Ph.D.s in literature; some arrive with publications or manuscripts in progress; others simply welcome an environment in which they can continue to write creatively as they work toward their degree. Not limited to English department grad students, UConn's graduate creative writing community also includes many students who are pursuing graduate degrees in other fields. The following is a summary of just some of the numerous and exciting recent achievements by members of UConn's large graduate creative writing community.

English Ph.D. candidate Ken Cormier released a music CD entitled *Nowhere Is Nowhere* in December 2009 with Cosmodemonic Telegraph Records. His second book of poems and stories, *The Tragedy in My Neighborhood*, was published in April 2010 by Dead Academics Press. Cormier also had poetry and fiction published this year in literary journals *Storyscape*, *Toxic Poetry* and *textsound*. His story "Christmas with Grandma" was aired on the radio program "BBC Americana" on December 27, 2009. In addition, we are particularly excited to report that Cormier has accepted a job that begins this coming fall as Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, specializing in fiction, at Quinnipiac University.

English Ph.D. student Matt Salyer was awarded third prize in this year's Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest. Salyer was also awarded the Aetna Creative Works in Progress Grant for "Homecoming" from his novel in progress, *Tenino*. His fiction will be published serially in the next several issues of *The Dirty Pond*, a project that was covered in a recent issue of the *New Haven Advocate*. Salyer also has a comic book coming out next year.

English Ph.D. students Zara Rix and Chantelle Messier, along with MA candidate Christiana Salah, founded a graduate creative writing workshop now "affectionately known as *The Storrs Eight*," Messier said. The group is currently completing its third semester of weekly meetings. In addition to the co-founders, members include English graduate students Gordon Fraser, Jared Demick, Steve Mollman, Jorge Santos, and Jessica Petriello, a graduate student in Higher Education and Student Affairs. Santos values the group because of the "supportive but constructive feedback it provides" on his writing. Rix concurs, and also mentioned that she enjoys getting to "hone [her] skills in giving useful feedback on a variety of works-in-progress, from novels to poetry to a screenplay." The variety of literary genres and styles represented by the work of *The Storrs Eight* is quite exciting. Messier, for example, is working on a historical novel currently titled *The Greyhound's Keeper*, while Mollman's work is science fiction fantasy. Rix currently has two works in progress, a short story about aliens and the Fae converging on a gas station in Canada, as well as a children's fantasy novel about people who live on a magical staircase. It is also worth noting that Rix recently won UConn's Long River Graduate Writing Award for her creative nonfiction piece "Deliberate Decisions," as well as the Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award for "Knowing the Enemy."

English Ph.D. candidate Sean Forbes is the recipient of a 2009 Woodrow Wilson Mellon Mays University Fellows Travel and Research Grant, and a 2008 Covenant Insurance Company Summer Fellowship. Forbes used these funds to travel to the tiny island of Providencia in order to do research for his book-length poetry manuscript in progress, *Providencia*, which is also the basis of his doctoral dissertation. About *Providencia* Forbes writes, "I titled the book to pay homage to the small Colombian island 140 miles off the eastern coast of Nicaragua, which was mythologized for me by my grandmother. Many of the book's poems highlight a male speaker's creative journey toward understanding his ancestral island." Poems from *Providencia* have appeared recently in *Crab Orchard Review*, *Poetic Journeys*, and *Long River Review*. Forbes served this year as Assistant Director of the Creative Writing Program and Director of *Poetic Journeys*. He was also a featured poet at *Long River Live's* celebration of National Poetry Month held at the Benton Museum in April.

Jennifer Holley, another English PhD candidate, has a short-short story entitled "It" forthcoming in *Decameron*. Holley was awarded a Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the UConn Humanities Institute for 2009-2010, which she is utilizing to write her dissertation on elegies occasioned by the loss of a child. She also received an Honorable Mention for "White Portals" in the Aetna Creative Works in Progress Grant competition. Holley is designing an original toy theater based on her poem, "A Story for the Children," for the Ninth International Toy Theater Festival at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, New York this June. Holley will perform her toy theater as part of a larger experimental work entitled *Toy Poets Theater*, which she is collaborating on with another graduate creative writer, Amber West.

English/Women's Studies Ph.D. student Amber West founded a non-profit arts/arts education organization this year called Alphabet Arts. The group recently received a grant from the Brooklyn Arts Council to support a tour of their puppet play, "City of Hamburgers," which West adapted from a children's book of the same name by Mike Reiss (*The Simpsons, Ice Age*). West was selected by the Black Theatre Association to present a paper entitled "Through the Funhouse, Towards The Dead World: An argument for a puppet-based production of Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro*" at AATE/ATHE, a major national theater conference. Her poetry was recently published in *Opium* and *Long River Review*, and her poem "Jellyfish, Mandalay Bay," which was selected for last year's *Poetic Journeys* broadside series, was reprinted in *UConn Magazine* in May 2009. West also had her first academic publication this year. Her article "Metamorphic Rainbows: The journey of Shange's *for colored girls* from poetry to television and beyond" was selected for the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Research on Women & Gender* published by Texas State University.

Several UConn graduate creative writers were selected this year for the Aetna Writer-in-Residence tutorials with fiction writer Stewart O'Nan in the fall and poet Beth Ann Fennelly in the spring. Each student had the opportunity to meet individually with the writer-in-residence for a 45-minute critique of his or her writing. Graduate creative writers selected for the tutorials this year include Zara Rix, Jon Anderson, Gordon Fraser, Phillip Korth, Jennifer Holley, Amber West and Sean Forbes. There were also many talented graduate students featured this year at *Long River Live*, a multi-genre arts/performance series run by the Creative Writing Program, including: English graduate writers D. Michael Jones, Sean Forbes and Ken Cormier; poet/MFA Acting candidate Phillip Korth; poet/Psychology Ph.D. candidate Curtis "CT" Walker; puppetry MFA candidates Joe Therrien and Michael Cavanaugh; and visual arts MFA candidate Sarah McKay.

In addition to those already mentioned throughout this article, several other graduate writers were awarded prizes through the Creative Writing Program's numerous contests. Ecology/Evolutionary Biology master's student Zbigniew Grabowski won first place in the Edwin Way Teale Nature Writing competition for his piece, "Husbandry." Puppetry master's student Caitlin Shirts won second place in the same contest for "Climate." MFA Acting candidate Phillip Korth won first place in the Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest, in which History Ph.D. candidate Katelyn Aguilar took second prize. Graduate writers have also recently had the opportunity to participate in several graduate-level creative writing workshops, including a poetry workshop led by Professor-in-Residence Sharon Bryan, a fiction workshop led by Humanities Institute Fellow Naeem Murr, and a creative nonfiction workshop with professor Sam Pickering.

Long River Review *Honored by plain china*

BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Six creative pieces from *Long River Review* 2009 were chosen for publication in Bennington College's 2010 edition of *plain china*. Four literary works - "Catching the Eclipse" by John Wetmore; "How to Fold a Paper Crane" by Nicole Rubin; "In the End There is a Line of Wailing Lunch Ladies" by Tae Hwan Song; and "Lander" by John Allie - and two artworks, one by Brittany Whiteman and the other by Justin Wirtalla, will appear in the anthology. The literary pieces are candidates for the Bennington Writing Prizes, which are awarded in three genres: nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.

Created in 2009, *plain china* is an online collection of the best work in undergraduate creative writing. It also showcases the finest undergraduate artwork in the country. The pieces that appear in *plain china* are selected from college and university literary journals from around the country. *Long River Review* is just one of fifty-three creative journals that Bennington reviewed. Other participants in *plain china* come from such colleges as Harvard, Brown, Princeton, and of course Bennington.

plain china is the first compilation of undergraduate creative work to reach a nationwide scale. Two of the three issues of *plain china: Best Undergraduate Writing 2009* are available on the official website; the third issue will be released May 24th. Everyone is encouraged to explore the exceptional writing and art presented in the anthology by visiting plainchina.bennington.edu. With students' work coming in from nearly every corner of the United States, *plain china* is sure to draw a lot of well-deserved attention. The fact that six creative pieces have been selected from a national pool of undergraduate work emphasizes how phenomenal the quality of the *LRR* editorial team is. The University of Connecticut should be proud to have a high quality literary journal featuring exceptionally talented students.

**"PLAIN CHINA IS THE FIRST
COMPILATION OF UNDERGRADUATE
CREATIVE WORK TO REACH A
NATIONWIDE SCALE."**

47th Annual Wallace Stevens Poetry Program

REVIEWED BY SIERRA B. RYAN AND SEAN FORBES

Former U.S. Poet Laureate, Charles Simic, was UConn's featured guest for the 47th Annual Wallace Stevens Poetry Program. This Program is funded by The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. Simic was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1938 where he lived through the Second World War. When Simic was fifteen he and his family immigrated to the United States and settled in Chicago. Simic has been honored with such prestigious literary awards as the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, and two PEN awards for his translations. He is also the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Simic was a professor of English at the University of New Hampshire until his retirement.

On April 7, the Stevens program, held in the Dodd Center, began with readings from the 2009-2010 Wallace Stevens Poetry Prize Winners, Phillip Korth, Katelyn Aguilar, and Matthew Salyer. Simic was then introduced by Professor Jonathan Hufstader, who characterized Simic's work as engaging and insightful. Simic then took the stage and read for over an hour from various collections of his poems, making the audience both laugh at his jokes and silently contemplate his accounts of war and the complexity of life. Simic provided little talk between his readings, nor did he have to buttress each piece with elaborate introductions; instead his work stood alone, not needing to be bolstered by extra words.

The previous day, Simic read at the Greater Hartford Academy of Arts, where students were presented with copies of one of his books. The students responded well to his personality as well as his work. Both of Simic's readings were exquisite, allowing both audiences to discover the ways in which "Words make love on the page like flies in the summer heat and the poet is only the bemused spectator."

**“WORDS MAKE LOVE ON THE PAGE
LIKE FLIES IN THE SUMMER HEAT
AND THE POET IS ONLY THE BEMUSED
SPECTATOR.”**

Poets, Painters and Puppets, Oh My! *Long River Live is Born!*

WRITTEN BY AMBER WEST,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE WRITING

The Creative Writing Program's popular, long-running *Long River Review* Reading Series was transformed this year into a multi-genre arts/performance series called *Long River Live (LRL)*. This bi-monthly series now provides a platform for UConn artists in all genres to present their works. By doing so, *LRL* aims to "broaden the appreciation of all art forms, encourage cross-genre understanding and collaboration, and dissolve the borders that often keep artists from communicating with and influencing one another and the world."

The series was transformed and curated by two UConn students: English/Women's Studies Ph.D. student Amber West and English/Art History undergraduate Joe Welch. West ran the series as part of her duties as Assistant Director of the Creative Writing Program while Welch served as both a Creative Writing Program Intern and Poetry Editor for the *Long River Review*. West and Welch invited UConn community members who create thought-provoking, original art to present their work as Featured Artists at *LRL*. The curators also kept the series true to its roots by including an open mic at every event. One of the most memorable open mic performances of the year came from puppetry MFA candidate Michael Cavanaugh, who presented a silent but intense wrestling match through a medium he described as "naked puppetry," a form of puppetry that uses only the artist's bare hands.

This year *LRL* held eleven events featuring performances/displays by undergraduate, graduate, faculty, and alumni artists, including poets, fiction and nonfiction writers, puppeteers, storytellers, musicians, visual artists, comedians, filmmakers, and dancers. Undergraduate featured artists included: writers Iliana Luciano, Marcus Rummell, Duncan Campbell and Marisa Gumpert; musicians Kali Therrien, Ashley Hamel and Matt Comeau; visual artists Tom Radovich, Caroline McEneaney, Caitlin Yates, Alexia Lalande, Jessica Machnicki, John Allie and LAVA (Launching Activism Via Arts); puppeteer Zach Dorn; international dance troupe Alima; improv comedy troupe The Reckless Gents; filmmakers Kaiti Archambault and Elizabeth Dargie; and multi-genre artists Daniel Gregory and Tyler Bussey. Graduate featured artists included: writers D. Michael Jones, Sean Forbes, Phillip Korth, Ken Cormier and Curtis "CT" Walker; musician Joe Therrien; visual artist Sarah McKay; and puppeteer Michael Cavanaugh. In addition to the many students who presented their artistic works, *LRL* also featured:

poetry by Women's Studies professor Dr. Angeliqne Nixon and local high school teacher/alumna Denise Abercrombie; "The Tell Tale Heart," a puppet film based on Edgar Allen Poe's classic by alumna puppetry MFA Lynne Cohen; and stories by alumna and professional storyteller Carolyn Stearns.

Seven events were held in the series' long-time venue, the Stern Lounge in the CLAS building, while four special events took place in alternate locations. The four special events included "Represent & Resist," organized as part of UConn's campus-wide *Metanoia* on preventing violence against women and held in the Student Union Lobby; "Long River Laughter," a comedy-themed edition held in the Wilbur Cross North Reading Room; a National Poetry Month celebration at the Benton Museum presented in conjunction with their "Poem & Picture" exhibit; and "LAVA River Live!" held outdoors at the UConn Graffiti Wall in collaboration with the undergraduate Launching Activism Via Art club.

Perhaps the most significant of these events was "Represent & Resist!" which was the only arts-oriented event that occurred during UConn's week-long, university-wide *Metanoia* on preventing violence against women, and one of very few *Metanoia* events organized by students in a departmental program. The event, held on October 5 in the Student Union, was an evening of literary, visual and performing arts that celebrated women while challenging oppression, and also included an open mic "speakout" for anyone who wanted to speak, read and/or perform a piece of art related to this important topic. The turnout was excellent and included undergraduates, graduate students, staff, community members, and a reporter from *The Daily Campus*. The event included performances of poetry, music and puppetry, as well as two assault survivors who chose to stand up and tell their stories. The curators also created a display of poetry by well-known poets and *Poetic Journeys* posters related to the topic, as well as a timeline of articles from the *Hartford Courant* regarding the history of *Metanoia* events at UConn over the past thirty years.

Along with West and Welch's work organizing the event, the participation of five English graduate students contributed a great deal to the evening's success. Jared Demick spoke and read poetry about women's oppression in exploited labor forces; Sarah Rasher read and discussed a 15th-century letter on a case of "ravishing" showing a long history of women's resistance to violence and community support for women speaking out; Katy Kornacki delivered a PowerPoint presentation and talk on representations of violence against women in advertising; Zara Rix read a children's book about nurturing unconventional daughters and encouraging creativity and imagination in girls; and Michael Jones spoke about young men's socialization towards violence, as well as the culture of violence at UConn.

UConn's Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry has agreed to co-sponsor the Long River Live series with the Creative Writing Program, and the current curators hope that the series will continue to grow interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaborations in the future.

10th Anniversary of Poetic Journeys

REVIEWED BY JESSICA CHAMES, CREATIVE WRITING STUDENT

Poetic Journeys is a program that allows UConn's Creative Writing Program and the Design Center to beautifully coincide; it has been in existence since 2000. The series was inspired by the MTA New York Transit's "Poetry in Motion" series, itself inspired by London's "Poems on the Underground." In this series, the graphic artist is given a poem by a writer from the UConn community. Designers transform the poem into a piece of word art that is displayed in various places in campus, including shuttle buses and the library elevators. The program gives poets and artists a wonderful opportunity to share their work with a wider audience.

The 10th anniversary release reception was held on April 27 at the William Benton Museum of Art. Poets were on hand to read their work and designers talked about their own creative decisions, as the posters were projected on a screen behind the podium. One of the most memorable moments was the great laughter from the audience as first-grader Cormac Nocton was hoisted on top of a chair by his accompanying father, Professor Jason Courtmanche, who helped him through a reading of his "Snow, Rain, Snow, Rain, Snow, Rain." Cormac's reading was well-received by the applauding audience as he finished just before promising "never to do that again." An equally playful designer, Jessica van Vlamertynghe, explained her visual rendition of Cormac's poem, noting that she has a brother of the same age. The primary images of the poster are the scattered words falling in a sloping fashion across a white surface representing falling snow and rain.

Sean Frederick Forbes, the 2010-2001 Director of *Poetic Journeys*, describes the series as "visually arresting. It illustrates the creative collaboration between poetry, art and design."

Students Create Writing Workshop to “Let It Go”

BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

There are numerous resources offered at the University of Connecticut, but not all these resources were created by the administration. There are times when students know what the campus needs, and take initiative to create something for all to utilize. “Let It Go” is one of these student-created and student-run resources. It is a creative writing workshop that has been meeting since 2006. All students are invited to attend this “gym for creative writers,” regardless of major or background in creative writing. Jenelle Linder, the Spring 2010 elected president of “Let It Go,” explained how the group works:

“People can bring something that they are working on for a class, poetry, short stories, nonfiction, or whatever they want to share. The person hands out her piece, reads it, and we critique it. We give suggestions, say what we liked about it, what didn’t work, what she could do better, and we just bounce ideas off each other. Some people just come to listen and learn techniques.” Linder encourages writers to read their work aloud. She said students should read at “Let It Go,” *Long River Live*, to a friend, or even to themselves. Linder explains, “It really helps you as a writer to hear what your audience hears. You think your writing sounds one way, but when you read it out loud it may sound different than what you expected.” At every meeting Linder announces when visiting writers will read at UConn, or if there are creative writing contests open for submissions. Group members can bring in work they plan on submitting to creative writing contests, such as the Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest or the Jennie Hackman Memorial Award for Short Fiction. In fact, Duncan Campbell, last year’s “Let It Go” president, won the 2010 Collins Literary Prize in Poetry. “Everyone in the group submitted a couple pieces of writing and a lot of people won prizes, like Duncan. It’s really exciting to see their work published and winning prizes, because you helped them develop that piece of writing. I’m really proud of them,” Linder said.

“Let It Go” is always looking for new members, and wishes to share its passion for creative writing with all students in the community. “We signed up for the involvement fair, which was really helpful because not everyone knew about ‘Let It Go.’ We put up flyers to try to advertise, and post new ones every two weeks,” Linder said. They are still thinking of ways to promote “Let It Go” and attract more writers. “If you really love to write, stop by, even if it’s for one time. We would love to have people come and let it go.”

Students should keep an eye out for “Let It Go” at UConn’s next involvement fair, and those interested in working with other creative, passionate writers should join the group. Kelcie Reid has been elected the new president of “Let It Go,” and will begin her term next fall. Reid will carry on the tradition of “Let It Go,” as Linder and many other students have done before her. “Let It Go.”

Long River Review, UConn’s Literary and Art Magazine

REVIEWED BY CREATIVE WRITING STAFF

On April 29, the release of the thirteenth volume of the *Long River Review*, UConn’s award-winning literary magazine, was celebrated at the UConn Co-op to a large and enthusiastic crowd. The *LRR* is run by completely undergraduate members of UConn’s writing and artistic community. This project is the cornerstone of the small magazine publishing class offered by the English Department every spring. It features literary and art works by undergraduate and graduate students.

Each year, the class collaborates with the Design Center, led by Edwin Yegir. With a brand new website, the *LRR* staff set out to broaden their presence on campus and in the literary community. The website, longrivereview.com, now features blog posts by members of the class, past issues of award-winning poems, prose pieces, art and photography, and a letter from the Editor. The website allowed for the magazine to create an online community with members of the UConn campus.

The collaborative process between the students from the Design Center and the small magazine publishing class was quite evident from the quality of the cover design, the literary pieces and the art work. Annie Brooks, this year’s Editor-in-chief, stated that the *LRR* “is a representation of the talent that the UConn student body has to offer.”

“[LRR] IS A REPRESENTATION OF THE
TALENT THAT THE UCONN STUDENT
BODY HAS TO OFFER.”

Professor and Students Face Off Against Mercury

BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Methyl mercury has played a significant role in the history of the world. For example, the first emperor of China died from ingesting mercury pills, Abraham Lincoln took medicine with large amounts of mercury, and in the 1950's Minamata, Japan was infected with mercury poisoning, killing 600 people. Yet the average person does not know a good deal about mercury. During the Spring 2010 semester, two of Professor Sydney Plum's creative writing classes worked to change that.

Plum is submitting a chapter to the academic anthology *Mercury: From Science to the Humanities*. In her chapter, select poems written by her students will be published alongside research, diagrams and facts about mercury. Creative and scientific writing will work together to educate readers on the effects of mercury in the environment.

Shanell Sharpe, a sophomore majoring in speech pathology with a concentration in creative writing, was a participant in Plum's creative project. Sharpe explained the mercury dilemma she and other students had learned: "There are issues of ponds being polluted with mercury, and it is affecting loons, ducks, geese, and other types of birds." Students were unaware of the threat mercury possessed, and were enlightened through their involvement in Plum's project.

Professor Plum asked her classes be active participants in raising awareness of the mercury problem. Sharpe said, "Some students have written songs or made t-shirts. I do open mics and I tell the audience about mercury poisoning." Nearly two-dozen students have written creative pieces about mercury, and Plum encourages them to express themselves in unique ways. "When I saw how much this project meant to Professor Plum, she inspired me to write about things that were important to me," Sharpe said.

Niobe Pabon, a junior majoring in philosophy, expressed having a unique, inspiring time while in Plum's class. "We wrote poems, essays, journals, and more about our experiences and what we learned through research. The most interesting topic we discussed this semester was the issue with mercury," said Pabon.

Students wrote poetry on the numerous ways mercury pollutes humans, animals, and the environment. Pabon said, "I learned about the different diseases humans can get from mercury, like the Mad Hatter Disease. Some students wrote poems about animals or nature. My poem was written as if I had Mad Hatter Disease."

Plum's students are pioneers in incorporating mercury into creative writing, since there is little to no poetry about mercury. Plum said, "I was amazed how quickly students took information about mercury and worked it into their poems. It was an assignment that asked them to think a lot. Students are capable of great things."

This project is also a prime example of interdisciplinary cooperation. Plum reached out to the science departments on campus, and informed them of this creative project on mercury. Now a poster called "Mercury, the Creative Element," which showcases the students' poems, images, and facts on methyl mercury, will hang in the Center for Environmental Sciences and Engineering in Storrs. Thanks to Professor Plum and her students, more people will be made aware of the threat of methyl mercury.

Frank Delaney's Imaginative Writing Educates and Entertains

BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

Frank Delaney was invited by the Gerson family to read at the 13th annual Gerson Irish Reading event. The event took place April 13th at the Storrs Alumni Center. Students, professors, fans, and Gerson family members filled the room. Before the reading began, Luran Davis was awarded the Timothy F. Moriarty grant, which is given to a graduate student with a concentration in Irish literature. Davis will use the award to travel to Ireland to continue extensive research for her dissertation.

A native of Ireland, Delaney is the best-selling author of more than twenty-one books of fiction, history, and biography. He has interviewed over 3,000 writers on his *BBC* and international television and radio shows. Delaney has written several novels, including *Ireland*, *Tipperary*, and *Shannon*. His nonfiction works include *James Joyce's Odyssey: A Guide to the Dublin of Ulysses*, and *The Celts*.

Delaney read from his latest novel: *Venetia Kelly's Traveling Show*. Set in 1932 Ireland, the story revolves around young Ben McCarthy, who must journey across the country to find his father, a member of a traveling show, and bring him back home. Mixing historical fact with fiction, Delaney delivered a captivating tale for his readers to enjoy. He incorporated personal experiences of Ireland, like outdoor political rallies, into his novel. His language was precise and beautiful, and the

passages gave us a taste of his eloquent style of writing. Delaney said, “I like to write novels about Ireland that are accessible, but also leave an impression on you.”

Delaney certainly left an impression with his audience at the Gerson Irish Reading. He not only read from his novel, but informed writers how to successfully invest themselves in their writing. Delaney encouraged writers to draw on their whole imagination, otherwise they would “short change” readers. Delaney promoted five points of writing: innocence, rigor, imagination, terror, and emotional energy, the last being the most important. “You need to harness emotions in order to write,” he said.

Through his writing, Delaney educated the audience on how writing can make a difference in the world. “As a writer, you have the power to take away pain and give someone the courage to move forward. Your spirit may prove invaluable to someone else,” the author said. Delaney’s reading of *Venetia Kelly’s Traveling Show* proved that he was a storyteller for all ages and cultures. The esteemed author enlightened us in many ways. His work was an example of great literary accomplishment, and writers gained insight for their own writing. “All our own lives are very close to being freak shows,” he said. Delaney encouraged his fellow writers to write about it, but to write with innocence, imagination, and emotional energy.

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