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Allegra Goodman:
As Cool as Air Conditioned Streets

Reviewed by Iliana Luciano, Stephanie Lekowski and Leigha Kervin

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, Roasterskoll Hills, 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 scene 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 socialism, 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 formulating rather than trying it. When asked how she was able to deal with her fictional world, Goodman replied with a smile that there might be a need for a sequel to further explore this topic.

“Allusions*
Doug Anderson Remembers the Chaotic Sixties
Reviewed by Ilama 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 (1996) 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 faded out once he realized his heart wasn’t in it. So he became an English teacher, and 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 learnt 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 Ilama 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 Given: 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 strike 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 has 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.

Professor and Students Face Off Against Mercury
Reviewed 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 great 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 in 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.

Shoshan 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 frogs, 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 to be active participants in raising awareness of the mercury problem. Sharpe said, “Some students have written songs or made t-shirts. I do open mic 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.

Nobie Palon, 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 Palon.

Students wrote poetry on the numerous ways mercury pollutes humans, animals, and the environment. Palon 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.”

Frank Delaney’s Imaginative Writing Educates and Entertains
Reviewed 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, Lauren 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, Tippenny, 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: Veneta Kelly’s Traveling Show. Set in 1952 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 tape 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

PICTURE
Students Create Writing Workshop to “Let It Go”  
BY KAYLEE BYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

There are numerous resources offered at the University of Connecticut for students who are interested in creative writing. These resources are open to all students, not just those who have declared a major in the arts. This includes workshops, writing contests, and poetry readings. The university has also funded a writing workshop called “Let It Go” that has been meeting since 2006. The workshop is run by students, and the workshop leader is Jacki Reed. Reed has been the new president of Let It Go, and she will begin her term next fall. Reed 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  
REVIEWS 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 Edvin Yagi. With a brand new website, the LRR staff set out to broaden their presence on campus and in the literary community. The website, longriverreview.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 publishing class was quite evident from the quality of the cover design, the literary pieces, and the art work. Anna Bruce, 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.”

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. The course aims to appeal to students who are interested in both fields. This program is funded by Theatrice 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 sorts through 30,000 submissions every year. Poetry, which is famous for discovering talented poets, is the oldest monthly English language 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 2022.

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 entered 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 lovely 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 this world of cancer. The experience imprisons you, but you wake 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 depurifying 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 dissociate the poetry he edits from his own writing. Wiman can successfully navigate through the worlds of editing and writing as 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  
REVIEWS BY LILIANA 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 origin. She explained that she conceived the idea for the “Big Band Theory” from a misunderstanding that occurred while she was listening to NPR and heard the radio host talking about the big band theory. This story helped her transition into “Basin Baa,” 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.

“EDITING POETRY IS COMPLETELY 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 Riz, Timothy Stohbierki, and Jennifer Few.

Born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, Zara Riz 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 postcolonial literature. Riz said she was “inescapably enraptured” to win the award for her piece “Farrowing the Enemy.” “It felt a little bit of embarrassment because I won the award last year as well,” she said. Riz 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 Stohbierki, from Ansonia, Connecticut, is a junior majoring in English with a concentration in creativity writing. He won the first place undergraduate prize with his piece “He Had Some Tears.” In second grade, Stohbierki 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 expected to win the Aetna award, he said, “I really wasn’t expecting to win. I was very shocked.” Stohbierki 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 “Lupined ‘Cafe.’” 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.

Beth Ann Fennelly

Competes with Green Beer

BETH ANN FENNELLY, PROGRAM INTERN

Beth Ann Fennelly, the Spring Aetna post-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 Kay Ryan Review Prize in Poetry for a First Book, Ten- der 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 at- tending her event when we could be out drinking green beer. In celebration of the holiday, Fennelly recited “Adam’s Curse” by Wil- liam 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. She said in the poetry and prose she read from her books. Several of her poems were inspired by those close to her, through Fennelly stated that it is “tricky writing about family members.” For example, her poem “Mother Sends My Poem to Her Sister with Post-It” 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 some- thing 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 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

poetry by Woman’s Studio Directors Dr. Ameliae Nixon and local high school teacher/alumna Denise Alberzombie. “The Tell Tale Heart,” a puppet film based on Edgar Allan Poe’s classic by alumnus puppeteer MFA Lynne Cohen, and stories by alumnus and professional storyteller Carolyn Storms.

Seven events were held in the series’ long-time venue, the Steen Lounge in the CLAS building, while four special events took place in alternate locations. The four special events included “Represent & Resist,” orga- nized as part of UConn’s campus-wide Metronos on preventing violence against women and held in the Student Union Lobby; “Long Row 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 “Poems & Pictures” exhibit; and “LAVA Bow Live!,” held outdoors at the UConn Griffin Wall in col- laboration 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 Metronos on preventing violence against women, and one of very few Metronos events organized by students in a departmental program. The event, held on October 9 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 “speakers” 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 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 Metronos events at UConn over the past thirty years.

Along with West and Welch’s work organizing the event, the participa- tion of few English graduate students contributed a great deal to the evening’s success. Jared Derricott spoke and read poetry about women’s oppression in exploited labor forces; Sarah Rasker read and discussed a 15th-century letter on a case of “seduction” showing a long history of women’s resistance to violence and community support for women speaking out; Katy Norman delivered a PowerPoint presentation and talk on representations of violence against women in advertising; Zara Riz read a children’s book about nurturing unconventional daughters and encouraging creativity and imagination in girls; and Michael Jones spoke about young men’s normalization toward 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 interdisciplinary and interdisciplinarian collaborations in the future.

10th Anniversary of Poetic Journeys

REVIEWED BY JESSICA CHAMES, 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 MFA New York Transit’s “Poetry in Motion” series, itself inspired by London’s “Po- ems 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 25 at the Wil- liam 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 Morrison was hoisted on top of a chair by his accompanying father, Professor Jean Courtmacshe, who helped him through a read- ing 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 Vlamerteyn, 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 slaying fashion across a white surface representing falling snow and rain.

Sean Frederick Forbes, the 2010-2011 Director of Poetic Journeys, describes the series as “visually amazing. It illustrates the creative col- laboration between poetry, art and design.”
Poets, Painters, and Puppets, Oh My! Long River Live Is Born!

The Creative Writing Program’s popular, long-running Long River Review Reading Series was transformed this year into a multi-genre arts/performances 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/African American 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 Cravarich, who presented a silent but intense wrestling match through a medium he described as “nailed puppetry” – a form of puppetry that uses only the artist’s bare hands.

This year LRL held eleven events featuring performances/playdates by undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and alumni artists, including poets, fiction and nonfiction writers, puppeteers, storytellers, musicians, visual artists, comedians, filmakers, and dancers. Undergraduate featured artists included writers Ilana Luccia, Marcus Rummell, Duncan Campbell and Marius Gumpert, musicians Kiki Thierens, Ashley Hamel and Matt Consueco; visual artists Tom Rudovich, Caroline McManamy, Caitlin Yates, Alea Lelande, Jessica Machnicki, John Aller and LAVA (Launching Artivism Via Arts); puppeteer Zach Dorn; international dance troupe Alima; improv comedy troupe The Reckless Geese; filmmakers Kiki Archambault and Elizabeth Dargie; and multi-genre artists Daniel Gregory and Tyley Bussey. Graduate featured artists included: writers D. Michael Jones, Sean Forbes, Phillip Korn, Kee Ceramic and Curtis “CT” Walker; musicians Joe Therens; visual artist Sarah McRay; and puppeteers Michael Cereaunnah. In addition to the many students who presented their artistic works, LRL also featured powerful, Fenelly expressed humor in the story, like when she realizes her baby daughter discovered liquor. 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 vigour, Fenelly 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. Fenelly’s poems and prose captured conflicting feelings simultaneously, which made the audience laugh, ponder, and laugh throughout the entire evening. In competition against green beer, Fenelly (and her audience) surely won.

Stewart O’Nan Provides Laughter and Literature

The highlight of O’Nans visit was the reading on October 1st at the Kronner 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 reader 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 showed 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 facts people have already seen my mistakes,” he explained.

The evening ended with a QA 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 from the environment and people around him.

Jamie Ford Speaks on “Day of Remembrance”

February 2nd marked the commemoration of the “Day of Remembrance” for Executive Order 5066, which forced Japanese Americans into internment camps. The event was co-sponsored by SIAAm (Sampling \ Literature by Asian Americans), the Aeta 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 Story 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 material and emotional trauma of being uprooted and discriminatorily treated. 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 grays emotions did not consume the event. He infused 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 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 DRYAM, 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 the idea to 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 succinct 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 to lead 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 DRYAM, PROGRAM INTERN**

Storr’s annual Creative Susenance event took place on February 17th at the Co-Op. Creative Susenance 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 Susenance-Storr raised $955, 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 Arts visiting Writer-in-Residence in Fall 2017. Murr is currently a UConn Humanities Institute Fellow, and teaches a seminar in creative writing.

Audiences provided charity in spirit of the Creative Susenance 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 Post,” which was featured in Poetry magazine in 2011. This comic 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 words successfully allowed the audience to truly see through each character’s point of view, and

*English/Women’s Studies Ph.D. student Amber West founded a non-profit 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 Hamburg,” which West adapted from a children’s book of the same name by Mike Resnick (_The Simpatico, Force 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 _Funhouse 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, Mandible Bay,” which was selected for last year’s Poet’s Journey broadside series, was reprinted in UCONN Magazine in May 2019. West also had her first academic publication this year. Her article “Metamorphic Rosaura: The journey of Shangai’s first 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 Zach Rix, Jon Anderson, Gordon Fraser, Philip Korth, Jennifer Holley, Amber West and Sean Forbes. There were also many talented graduate students featured that 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; poetry/MFA Acting candidate Phillip Korth; poet/Psychology Ph.D. candidate Curtis “CT” Walker; puppetry MFA candidates Joe Tseitlin and Michael Curnanough; 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 major student Zhengwei Guanweii won second place in the Edible Way Taste Nature Writing competition for his piece, “Husbandry.” Puppetteer’s major student Caitlin Shirts won second place in the same contest for “Climates.” MFA Acting candidates Phillip Korth won first prize in the Walker Stevens Poetry Contest, in which History Ph.D. candidates Katelyn Aguilar took second place. 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 Byam, 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 DRYAM, 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 Whitman 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 2005, plain china is an online collection of the best work in undergraduate creative writing. It showcases the finest undergradate 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 E&R 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."
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 MA’s 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 Nosuch Is Nowhere in December 2009 with Cimocdemic 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, Tonic Poetry and nannatha. His story “Christmas with Grandmas” was aired on the radio program “BCC America” on December 23, 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 Atea Creative Works in Progress Grant for “Homecoming” from his novel in progress, Tetra. His fiction will be published serially in the next several issues of The Dirty Poet, a project that was crowned in a recent issue of the New Haven Advocate. Salyer also has a comic book coming out next year.

English Ph.D. students Zara Bix and Channell Maier, along with MA candidate Christian Ibab, founded a graduate creative writing workshop now “affectionately known as The Stewits Ezra.” Maier 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 Millman, Jorge Santos, and Joanna Petrocelli, 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. Rick 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 Stewits Ezra is quite exciting, Maier, for example, is working on a historical novel currently titled “The Greyhound’s Keeper,” while Millman’s work is science fiction fantasy. Bix currently has two works in progress, a short story about aliens and the Fox conveying 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 Rick recently won UConn’s Long River Graduate Writing Award for her creative nonfiction piece “Deliberate Denialism,” as well as the Atea 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 lyrics-heavy poetry manuscript in progress, Provincia, 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, Poetry Journal, and Long River Review. Forbes served this year as Assistant Director of the Creative Writing Program and Director of Poetry Journeys. He was also a featured poet at Long River Zoo’s celebration of National Poetry Month held at the Benton Museum in April.

Jennifer Hoyer, another English Ph.D. candidate, has a short-short story entitled “It” forthcoming in December. Hoyer was awarded a Diaspora 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 Atea Creative Works in Progress Grant competition. Hoyer 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. Hoyer will perform her toy theater as part of a larger experimental work entitled Toy Pointe Theatre, which she is collaborating on with another graduate creative writer, Amber West.

connect with the subjects of the tests. Niesan. Misty felt the audience’s minds with creativity, while the audience helped feed the homeless with generous donations.

Bruce Cohen Entertains UConn with Poetry

REVIEWS BY KATIE BYRAN, PROGRAM INTERNE

Poet Bruce Cohen visited UConn on February 3rd for an enthralling evening of poetry. He read poems from Dis loyalty Ye-To, which was awarded the 2007 Orphic Poetry Prize, and his latest book, Sere. His poetry has been published in many journals, including Har vard 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 micro wave. 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 Television.”

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 experiences and woes, through in a humorously cynical way. He successfully combined deep subject matter with humor, and used jokes to ease us into some deepening subject matter. Cohen finds significant meaning in the mundane, and his poems remind us to pay attention to even the most ordinary things.

Cohen described himself as an American surrealist, which is appropri ate as there are elements of deeper meaning and surprise present in his works. 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

REVIEWS 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, Lock of the Lizard (2005) and The Weight of Feathers (2007), and four collections of poetry, including Unsounding Your Own (2001) and Toil the Dark Harvest (2004). Her writing has won a variety of awards including the ORI 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 Dares,” a story about a cleaning lady with a very sly 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 natural images to evoke a sense of the Irish landscape, history, as well as Mills’ own Irish identity. She introduced the notion of the poet as a magpie, “stealing” ideas and turning them into words of her own. She grew the examples of her own use of paintings and Greek mythology in her poetry, most notably in the poem “Philomel.”

Mills prefaced each piece she read with a story that explained the inspir ation that led to her writing—a poem transposing the “power of story behind [a] work” or, in a short story suddenly breathing life into bits of conversation heard on Dublin trains. One of Mills’ goals in setting is to find common ground between the past and the present. This was ap parent in the poems inspired by the poet’s parents, which reflected not only her background but also her familial love and poetry. 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 2020 Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award were introduced. Timothy Szuberis, the undergraduate first place winner, and Sara Ria, the graduate winner, both read excerpts from their award winning pieces – Szuberis from “He Had Some Trees,” and Ria from “Knowing the Enemy.”

Morrow began her reading with The Names of Things, which describes her journey through Egypt. The land is emotionally described with vivid details and color: “Color is a defining principle of places,” she said. She fleshlessly 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 lineages. She explores how things in nature, like crops, 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. Recalling 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 aloud 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 Melina.” 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 use 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, “Shadow 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 a great.”

DePoi would ideally like to write in the future, but 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 Beds.” 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 context was judged by Lynn Bloom, the Aetna Chair of Writing. Richard Peterson, an English and Comparative Literature Professor, and Fred Bodies, an Associate Professor of English. The Hackman family sponsored the Jennie Hackman Memorial Award for Short Fiction, providing a first prize of $5,000, a second prize of $3,000, 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 Prizes are John Allie and Duncan Campbell.

John Allie of Storm, Connecticut won the Collins Literary Prize for his prose piece, “Land.” 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 Bread 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 Littman, 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 Lalande for silkscreen. Each student received a prize of $100 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 Pamela Peانون remars that “The Gill Awards – and the opportunity to feature these talented artists in the magazine – enhance the creativity and visual arts component of the University. 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.”
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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 Alexa Lalande for silkscreen. Each student received a prize of $500 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 25th 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 talented artists in the magazine – emphasized the visual arts are very important. It’s so exciting to see how students like John and Alexa 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
2009–2010
Creative Writing and Art Award Winners

**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 MA's and Ph.D. 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 'Newborn Is Nowhere' in December 2009 with Cosmemicn Telehraph 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 'Styronian,' 'Tonic Poetry' and 'narrative.' His story 'Christmas with Grandma' was aired on the radio program 'BBC America's' on December 21, 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 Aimsa Creative Works in Progress Grant for "Homecoming" from his novel in progress, 'Trenno.' His fiction will be published serially in the next several issues of The Dirty Poet, a project that was awarded a recent issue of the New Haven Advocate. Salyer also has a comic book coming out next year.

English Ph.D. students Zara Bix and Channell Marzorati, along with MA candidate Christian Ishaf, founded a graduate creative writing workshop now "affectionately known as The Stirs Writing". Marzorati 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 Millman, Jorge Santos, and Jessica Pettinelli, 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 "here" [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 Stirs Writing is quite exciting, Marzorati, for example, is working on a historical novel currently titled "The Greyhound’s Keeper," while Millman’s work is in science fiction fantasy; Rix currently has two works in progress, a short story about aliens and the Fox 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 Distinctions," as well as the Aimsa 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 Provenceia in order to do research for his book-length poetry manuscript in progress, Provenceia, which is also based on his doctoral dissertation. About Provenceia Forbes writes, "I titled the book to pay homage to the small Columbian island 40 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 Provenceia have appeared recently in Crab Orchard Review, Poets’ Journey, and Long River Review. Forbes served this year as Assistant Director of the Creative Writing Program and Director of Poets’ Journey. He was also a featured poet at Long River’s 2008 celebration of National Poetry Month held at the Benton Museum in April.

Jennifer Holley, another English Ph.D. candidate, has a short-short story entitled "Six" forthcoming in December. Holley was awarded a Dissertation Completion Fellowship from UConn’s 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 Men- tion for "White Portals" in the Aimsa 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-Poetry Theater," which she is collaborating on with another graduate creative writer, Amber West.

connect with the subjects of the tests. Nausen Miss felt the audience’s minds with creativity, while the audience helped feed the homeless with generous donations.

*Irish Culture and Magpie Poetry with Geraldine Mills*

**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, *Lock of the Lizard* (2005) and *The Weight of Feathers* (2007), and four collections of poetry, including *Unwoaring Your Own* (2001) and *Toil the Dark Harvest* (2000). Her writing has won a variety of awards including the ORI Award, the Moore Medalion, and the North Tipperary Award. She was named the Millen- nium winner of the Hennessy/Sunday Tribune New Irish Writer Award.**

Mills engaged the audience as she read: "This is From the Woman Who Dines," a story about a cleaning lady with a merry sense of humor. The piece showcased Mills’ talent for characterisation 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’ own Irish identity. She introduced the notion of the poet as a magpie, ‘snatching’ ideas and turning them into words of her own. She grew the samples of her own use of paintings and Greek mythology in poetry most notably in the poem "Phlegraia."

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” to art, or a short story suddenly breathing life into facts of conversation based on Dublin trains. One of Mills’ goals in setting it to find common ground between the past and the present. This was ap- parent in the poems inspired by the poet’s parents, which reflected not only her background but also her familial love and poetry. The audience was left with vivid images expressed through clear language that was refreshingly accessible.

*“The Piece Showcased Mills’ Talent for Characterisation and Illustrated an Inherently Irish Persistence and Good-will in Spite of Suffering.”*
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

“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 Frew, 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 Baracca’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. Baracca 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 the idea of sending your work out for public consumption. Every writer wants to be heard, and if you’re smart 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 Baracca, “She teaches you practical knowledge, like sending cover letters; she teaches you how to write for a living. You learn a lot of success 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 Frew, speaking of Baracca’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 Baracca 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.

Naem Murr Presents Food for Thought and Charity

Reviewed by Kaylee Syran, Program Intern

Storrs’ annual Creative Subsistence event took place on February 17th at the Co-Op. Creative Subsistence 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 Subsistence-Storrs raised 1955, which was given to the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic.

Author Naem 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 Arts visiting Writer-in-Residence in Fall 2017. Murr is currently a UConn Humanities Institute Fellow, and teaches a seminar in creative writing.

Audiences praised his ability to bring spirit into the Creative Subsistence event, and in true, 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 intimate narrative absorbed the audience, as if they were in the story. The reader is the main character in the story, and his story shows the importance of the characters and the emotions he feels in the story. Murr’s witty and unconventional observations of the world captured the audience in the world of creative writing.

Murr closed with the essay “Don Nelson Sings Elvis,” inspired by a childhood school friend. The story dives 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 words successfully allowed the audience to truly see through each character’s point of view, and

English/Women’s Studies Ph.D. student Amber West founded a non-profit 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 Ross (The Simpsons, The X-Files). West was selected by the Black Theatre Association to present a paper entitled “Through the Finishing, Towards The Dead World: An Argument for a Puppet-based Production of Adrienne Kennedy’s Funhouse of a Negro” at AATHE/CATHE, a major national theater conference. Her poetry was recently published in Opium and Long River Review, and her poem “Jellyfish, Manchuria Bay,” which was selected for last year’s Poets’ Journeys broadside series, was reprinted in UCONN Magazine in May 2019. West also had her first academic publication this year. Her article “Meditation Rainbows: The Journey of Shang’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 Aetas Writer-in-Residence tutorials with fiction writer Stewart O’Nan in the fall and poet Beth Ackerman 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 Hickey, 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 Kern Corman, poet/MFA Acting candidate Phillip Korth, poet/Psychology Ph.D. candidate Curtis “CT” Walker, puppetry MFA candidates Joe Stettin and Michael Caruana, 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 Zhiqun Guoduo was awarded 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 “Climber.” MFA Acting candidates 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 Naem Murr, and a creative nonfiction workshop with professor Sam Pickering.

Long River Review Honored by plain china

 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 Wettermon, “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 Whitman 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 2005, plain china is an online collection of the best work in undergraduate creative writing. It showcases the finest undergraduate work in the country. Long River Review is just one of fifty-three creative journals that Bennington reviewed. Other participating 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 underwater writing 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."
Poets, Painters, and Puppets, Oh My! Long River Live is Born!

WRITTEN BY AMBER WALT, 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 Walt and English/American History undergraduate Joe Welch. Walt 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. Walt 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 Cranovog, 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 undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and alumni artists, including poets, fiction and nonfiction writers, puppeteers, storytellers, musicians, visual artists, comedians, filmmakers, and dancers. Undergraduate featured artists included writers Ilana Lucca, Marcus Rummell, Duncan Campbell and Marcus Gumper; musicians Kali Therren, Ashley Hamel and Matt Comesse; visual artists Tom Rudovich, Carline MacKenzie, Caitlin Yves, Alexia Lanternis, Jessica Machnick, John Alle and LAVA (Launching Antirom Vi Ave) puppeteer Zach Dorn; international dance troupe Alima; improv comedy troupe The Reckless Gents; filmmakers Kati Archambault and Elizabeth Dange; and multi-genre artists Daniel Gregory and Tylie Bussey. Graduate featured artists included: writers D. Michael Jones, Swan Forbes, Phillip Korr, Ken Comrine and Curtis “CT” Walker, musicians Joe Therren; visual artist Sarah McRae; and puppeteers Michael Cennaccaugh. In addition to the many students who presented their artistic works, LRL also featured powerful, Fenelly expressed humor in the story, like when she real- izes her baby daughter discovered living. She described the violation she felt when led, 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, Fenelly made audiences connect with the emo- tions expressed throughout her work. Everything up to and including the final poem, “Cow Tipping,” was a mixture of hilarity and sincerity. Fenelly’s poems and prose captured conflicting feelings simultane- ously, which made the audience broad, ponder, and laugh throughout the entire evening. In competition against green beer, Fenelly (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-Resi- dence. 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 under- graduate 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 29th at the Kronner 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 reader 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 cliché 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 tech- niques 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 KAYLIE YUAN, PROGRAM INTERN

February and 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 Ameri- can 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 grey emotions did not consume the event. He softened the mood with humor and wit. He confided he was a “novelist 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 Chi- nese American living in a post-Japanese Internment America, could peak interests and turn heads towards this important subject.

The evening ended with a Q&A session, where students and faculty were given the opportunity to ask about his writing career and tech- niques 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.
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 Stohrsiek, 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 “inspired but seized” to win the award for her piece “Looking at the Enemy.” “It felt like a little bit of endorsement 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 Stohrsiek, from Anamosa, Connecticut, is a junior majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing. He won the first place undergraduate prize with his piece “I Had Some Tears.” In second grade, Stohrsiek 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,” 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.” Stohrsiek 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 “Liquified 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 really exciting news.” In a couple years, Few hopes to complete grad school through UConn, and to be married to her middle school sweetheart.

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 Kay Ryan Review Prize in Poetry for a First Book, Ten- der 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 at- tending her event when we could be out drinking green beer. In celebration of the holiday, Fennelly recited “Adam’s Curves” by Wil- liam 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, through Fennelly stated that it is “tricky writing about family members.” For example, her poem “Mother Sends My Poem to Her Sister with Post It” 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 some- thing 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 it is what it is 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

English Professors Regina Barcanu, Liz Hart, and Sam Privitera judged the submissions sent to the contest. The Aetna Chair of Writing was established in 1986 with a $500,000 endowment from the Aetna Foundations and matching funds from the State Department of Higher Educa- tion. This year, the Aetna Chair of Writing Lynn Bloom, awarded cash prizes of $100, $250, and $500 to the winners.

7th 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 MFA New York Transit’s “Poetry in Motion” series, itself inspired by London’s “Po- ems 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 7th anniversary release reception was held on April 27 at the Wil- liam 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 Connor Norton was hoisted on top of a chair by his accompanying father, Professor Jean Courtmanche, who helped him through a read- ing of his “Snow, Rain, Snow, Rain, Snow, Rain.” Connor’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 Vlamerteyn, explained her visual rendition of Connor’s poem, noting that she had a brother of the same age. The primary images of the poster are the scattered words falling in a slaying fashion across a white surface representing falling snow and rain.

Sean Frederick Forbes, the 2010-2011 Director of Poetic Journeys, describes the series as “visually arresting. It illustrates the creative col- laboration between poetry, art and design.”
Students Create Writing Workshop to “Let It Go”  
BY KAYLEE FYRAM, PROGRAM INTERN

There are numerous resources offered at the University of Connecticut, but not all those 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 those 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, non-fiction, or whatever they want to share. The person hands out their 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 as “Let It Go,” Long Live Love, 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 Janet Heidemann 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.”

Christian Wiman Navigates the Worlds of Editing and Writing  
BY KAYLEE FYRAM, 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 Theatrice 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 40,000 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 House 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 status, 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 entered 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 all corners of Chicago, but only the sound of a squirrel interests the narrator’s dog. Something as lovely 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 imposes you, but you walk 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 daunting things about editing is saying ‘no’ but you can also like 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.

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 Yapin. With a brand new website, the LRR staff set out to broaden their presence on campus and in the literary community. The website, lungriverreview.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 Editors. 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. Anne Brooke, 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.”

Misunderstandings with Sharon Bryan  
REVIEWED BY LIILANA 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 Post-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 origin. She explained that she conceived the idea for the “Big Band Theory” from a misunderstanding that occurred while she was listening to NPR and misunderstood the radio host talking about the big band theory. This story helped her transition into “Bass Base,” a poem that shows how the pronounciation 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.

“EDITING POETRY IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN EDITING FICTION.”
Doug Anderson Remembers the Chaotic Sixties

Award-winning poet Doug Anderson read from his memoir Keep Your Head Down on September 15th at the UCConn 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 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 faded out once he realized his heart wasn’t in 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.”

Heidi Pitlor Balances Editing and Writing

Heidi Pitlor stood before an audience in the UCConn Co-op on October 1st to read from her book The Birthdays, which was published to wide critical acclaim in 2008. 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 strike with what one feels passionate about, and encouraged students to feel ambitious 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.

Professor and Students Face Off Against Mercury

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, Past Science in 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.

Shalani 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 to be active participants in raising awareness of the mercury problem. Sharpe said, “Some students have written songs or made t-shirts. I do open mic and 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.

Ninho Palom, a junior majoring in philosophy, expressed having a unique, Inspiring theme 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 Palom.

Students wrote poetry on the numerous ways mercury pollutes humans, animals, and the environment. Palom 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.”

Frank Delaney’s Imaginative Writing Educates and Entertains

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, Lauran 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 5,000 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, Vesuvius 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. Mixture 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
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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 street was air conditioned.” She connected this initial inspiration with concerns of global warming, censorship, the nature of socialism, 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 contradicting rather than trying it. When asked how she was able to write about magic, dragons or anything like that, Goodman also said she was inspired 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.

On November 12th at the Kosower 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, Roasterskill 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 also said she was inspired 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.