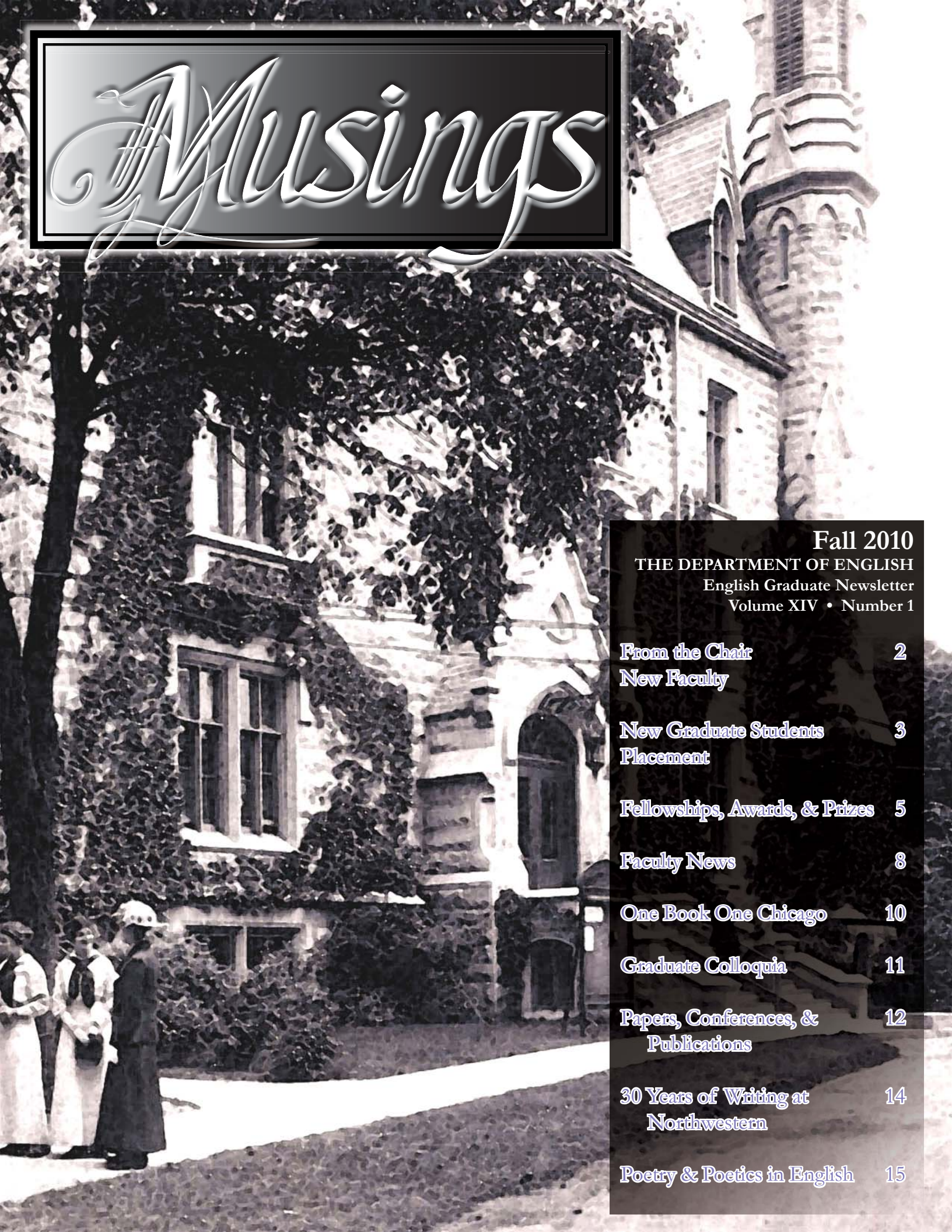


Musings



Fall 2010

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

English Graduate Newsletter

Volume XIV • Number 1

From the Chair	2
New Faculty	
New Graduate Students	3
Placement	
Fellowships, Awards, & Prizes	5
Faculty News	8
One Book One Chicago	10
Graduate Colloquia	11
Papers, Conferences, & Publications	12
30 Years of Writing at Northwestern	14
Poetry & Poetics in English	15



From the Chair

As you can see from all the news printed in this issue of *Musings*, the English Department continues its upward trajectory. Frankly, just when it looks like we could never have as impressive a year as the year past, yet another faculty member wins a prize or fellowship or another graduate student places a first article or lands an exciting tenure-track job. It's become nearly impossible to summarize the accomplishments of the department as a whole. Do I single out the faculty who achieved career milestones over the past year, noting that while Vivasvan Soni and Ivy Wilson received tenure, Julia Stern was promoted to Professor? Or focus on the graduate students who landed tenure-track jobs? (See page 3.) Or list the external awards received by the faculty and graduate students? (Pages 5 ff.) Or do I underscore the engagement of faculty and graduate students in the community beyond the academy? Once again, it seems hard to imagine a more hard-working or accomplished group. Will the department prove me wrong once again next year? I cannot wait to see. Congratulations to all!

Susan Manning

New Faculty



Rebecca Johnson is a College Fellow in the Department of English and the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, where she teaches courses in Middle Eastern literary and cultural studies with a special focus on modern Arabic literature. Her research focuses on the history and theory of the novel in Arabic and English, the literature of the nineteenth-century period known as the *Nahda*, and literary orientalism and occidentalism, and her wider interests include pre-modern Arabic prose genres, cosmopolitanism, and the poetics and politics of translation. Her current book project studies the intertwined early histories of the Arabic and English novels, using translation as a lens through which to understand the form and function of the genre. Professor Johnson has been a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, the Council for Library and Information Resources, and the Fulbright Foundation. She has also published translations of Arabic literature; her translation with the author of Sinan Antoon's *I'jaam: An Iraqi Rhapsody* is available from City Lights Books.

New Graduate Students

Megan Brown graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2008 with a major in English and a minor in Theology. Her primary research interest is in twentieth-century African-American literature, and her favorite novel from this period is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. She also has an affinity for film studies, a subject she fell in love with during her senior year. Her (not so) guilty pleasures are watching Arnold Schwarzenegger movies (yes, that's right...Arnold Schwarzenegger) and baking, although not necessarily at the same time.

From the time a helpless victim was first presented to her over twenty years ago in the form of her newborn brother, **Annalese Duprey** has enjoyed teaching others (willing or not) about literature. Early studies of various themes which can be found in Dr. Seuss's seminal work, *Green Eggs and Ham*, gave way in recent years to both secular and religious expressions of the courtly love genre in medieval literature. Frustrated that current scholarship seems largely to relegate distinct "religious" and "secular" versions into two categories which may influence each other but which do not coincide, she looks forward to spending her time at Northwestern considering the implications of expanding the genre to

include both. She is assisted in this work by an undergraduate degree in English Literature from Bethany College, a Master of Theological Studies from the Harvard Divinity School, and an inordinate love of dead languages like Latin and Occitan.

Nora Eltahawy received a B.A. in English and Comparative Literature from the American University in Cairo and completed an M.A. in Comparative Literature from the University of Texas at Austin this past May. Her primary research interests include ethnic and minority literatures of the U.S., particularly within the Arab- and Latino/a-American communities, film, and pop culture/cultural studies. When not staring down Microsoft Word, she laughs at awkward humor, tracks down fellow third-culture kids, and fantasizes about working at Sephora.

Becky Fall received her B.A. in English from the University of Virginia. Upon graduating, she attempted to ride the corporate train at a large financial firm in Chicago, but found that the cubicle life was not for her. Fleeing to New Zealand, she waited tables, pruned vineyards, taught belly dance, cleaned toilets, wrangled sheep, and mastered the traditional nine-step ritual to pour the perfect Belgian beer--all while

dreaming of re-immersing herself in literary scholarship. Taking the long way home, she stopped to lunch with komodo dragons in Indonesia and to be attacked by a cow in Nepal before landing back in the Virginia suburbs of D.C.. Becky has returned to Chicago and Evanston to study the intersections of gender, space, and power in early modern lyric poetry.

Rickey Fayne grew up in Brighton, Tennessee and is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. His literary interests currently include the study of African-American literature and African Diaspora literature. Originally, Rickey was a pre-med student majoring in Biology. However, he realized during his sophomore year that studying the relationship between literature and culture was more important to him. Though he's looked forward to moving out of Tennessee to pursue graduate study, he grapples with the terror that restaurants in the Chicago area may very well not sell sweet tea. When not doing research, he is very active in his fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma.

Aaron Greenberg was born in Chicago and grew up in Northbrook, Illinois, less than a half an hour northwest of Evanston. He received his
continued on pg. 4

Placement

Five more of our students have started first-time tenure-track Assistant Professorships or multi-year Visiting Assistant Professorships since last year:

Leah Culligan (Ph.D.2009, Comparative Literary Studies) - Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Peter Jaros (Ph.D.2009) - Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Heidi Kim (Ph.D.2010) - University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Abram Van Engen (6th year) - Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

Sarah Mesle (Ph.D.2009) will begin a three-year joint Assistant Professorship/Post-doctoral appointment at the University of California in Los Angeles.

Two of our other students also have first-time appointments beginning in the Fall:

Nathaniel Small (5th year) has accepted a position teaching at Lake Forest Academy in Illinois.

Christie Harner (Ph.D. 2010) was appointed as a Visiting Assistant Professors in the English department here at Northwestern during the 2010-11 term.

New Graduate Students continued

undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2009, majoring in English Literature but spending about half of his energy studying languages (Spanish, French, and German) - including a summer in Granada, Spain and a semester in Seville. He wrote his senior thesis on Shakespeare and Object-Oriented philosophy (phenomenology, Martin Heidegger, Graham Harman), and after graduation, moved to northeastern France (Lorraine, Nancy-Metz region) to teach English at a *lycée* in a small town called Pont-à-Mousson. He's happiest while reading Shakespeare and listening to the old bluesmen of the early twentieth-century (Blind Willie McTell, Robert Johnson, etc...).

Alanna Hickey has never lived more than three hours outside of Chicago. She studied English and History at the University of Illinois. Academically she's interested in the history of American poetics and the ways that historically marginalized writers express national identity. She likes to sing karaoke even though she's no good at it, has a tendency to over compliment when she's out of things to say, loves Indian cuisine above all others, and worries that "historically marginalized" might not have been the right phrase to use in her third sentence.

Kara Johnson, a western Massachusetts native, graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a double-major in English and Dance in 2007. While a resident in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she performed with the Prometheus Dance Company and taught at the Boston Ballet School, pursuits she hopes to transplant here to Chicagoland area. In between getting floor burns on her body and teaching four-year-old children how to skip, she continues her research interests (under the rubrics of gender studies and performance culture), which include the performing female body in nineteenth-century American literature, male artists and their female subjects, the public and private selves of women writers, neurasthenia, freak shows, and spiritualism. She enjoys *Seinfeld*, baking, Hitchcock films, and dreaming about still dancing *en pointe*.

Christina Kapucija grew up in Ontario, Canada and southern California. She earned her undergraduate degree in English at the University of California, Irvine. Her undergraduate thesis examines the genre of the fairy tale in the context of oral tradition and folk belief, incorporating a Marxian explication of the 'gift economy' as it reflects rural economic structures or phenomena adapted by fairy tales. Fascinated by Victorian anthropology, she has a particular interest in the relationship of anthropological discourse to nineteenth-century literature. She enjoys cooking, walking her dog, and (when possible) traveling to other countries to hunt down obscure folklorists.

Hosanna Krienke, the youngest of seven siblings, grew up on a turkey farm outside Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. Her interest in literature stems from reading Victorian novels during long, hot summers gathering eggs. During her undergrad at Bethel University, she studied abroad in Oxford, traveled to archeological sites in Greece and Turkey, and helped at an orphanage in the Philippines. She focused on Victorian and Romantic literature, cognitive criticism, history of science, poetics, and narrative theory over the course of her M.A. at Boston College, interests which she currently unifies by evaluating cognitive overtones in nineteenth-century literary theory, in terms of both contemporary theories of mind and recent neuroscience research.

Simon Nyi hails from the rural college town of Galesburg, Illinois, and has returned from

time spent in the equally rural college town of Oberlin, Ohio, where he just received his B.A. in English from Oberlin College. At the graduate level, he hopes to continue exploring gender and sexuality in dialogue with early modern anatomical science, particularly in Shakespearean drama. Outside academia, he enjoys bicycling, baking, and in his pre-graduate life, enjoyed his job as a student journalist.

Marie Pantojan grew up in Toronto and earned her B.A. in English from Duke University. Her undergraduate honors thesis examined the intersections of race, nationhood, visibility, and Darwinian sexual selection in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. Her other interests include religion in the nineteenth-century British novel, the politicization of domestic space, and colonial/postcolonial literature. After graduation, she worked for the marketing department at a university press, doing her best to keep up with new trends in scholarly publishing. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, cooking, going to the beach, and casual walks through the city (any city).

Eric Walker spent his early years in Boise, Idaho, a great place to grow up and one that would teach him all the requisite lessons in irony crucial for his future career in advertising. Before spending his days crafting thirty-second narratives, he studied English at the University of Portland. His time at U.P. also included a year studying and drinking beer in their overseas extension program in Salzburg, Austria. After graduating, he spent a good many years as an ad-man up and down the west coast, finally landing in Los Angeles where he worked as a writer and creative director, crafting and shooting campaigns for such brands as Apple, Lexus, Starbucks, Nissan, Toyota, and Pedigree. In search of a new challenge, he arrives in Evanston with a desire to study consumerism and material culture as it intersects with identity in twentieth and twenty-first century American literature and film. He is the blessed father of a twelve-year-old boy, who now emphatically states he will be attending Northwestern. When not playing with words, Eric can usually be found playing his guitar and hanging out with his dog, Jake.

Fellowships, Awards, & Prizes

Ari Bookman (4th year) won the Panofsky Pre-Dissertation Award from Northwestern's Program of African Studies, which helped fund summer travel, and research on publishers' archives, in Nairobi, Kenya. Ari is serving this year as a Graduate Affiliate of the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities.

Carissa Harris and **Greg Laski** (both in their 5th year) were both chosen as recipients of the 2009-10 English Department Teaching Excellence Award.

Hugh McIntosh (6th year) was a Fellow at the Center for Historic American Visual Culture for a month this summer at the American Antiquarian Society.

Emily Izenstein (3rd year) serves this year as one of the Teaching Assistant Fellows at the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence.

Maha Jafri (4th year) was awarded the Meade and Unteman Fellowship to participate in Northwestern's Paris Program in Critical Theory during the 2010-2011 academic year.

Jeff Knight (Ph.D. 2009) was selected to receive this year's Hagstrum Prize for Best Dissertation for his dissertation "Compiling Culture: Textual Assembly and the Production of Renaissance Literature."

Jenny Lee (6th year) was chosen to receive the Mellon Dissertation Year Fellowship in Medieval Studies for 2010-11.

Jason Malikow (6th year) was awarded a DFI (Diversifying Faculty in higher education in Illinois) Fellowship to begin in the coming academic year.

Jackie Murdock (5th year) is one of the recipients of Medieval Academy of America's 2010 Schallek Award.

Wendy Roberts (6th year) was at the Huntington Library on a three month Mellon fellowship over the summer, and is funded as a Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellow starting during 2010-11.

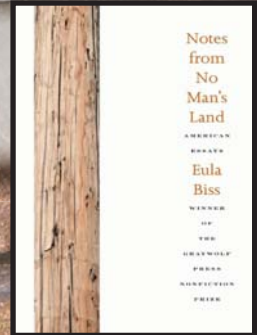
Michael Slater (5th year) is this year's recipient of the Northwestern University Presidential Fellowship, the most prestigious fellowship offered by the university. Along with two years of funding the award carries, Michael has joined as a member of the university Society of Fellows, meeting twice a year with other Fellows from across the university.

Jade Werner (4th year) was awarded the 2009-10 English Department Award for Excellence as a Teaching Assistant.

Faculty Publications

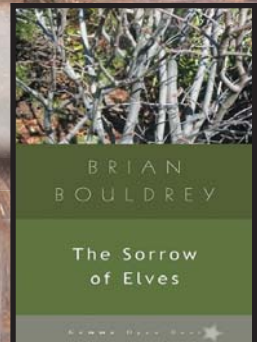
Biss, Eula

*Notes from No Man's
Land: American Essays*



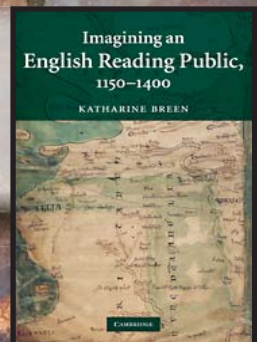
Bouldrey, Brian

The Sorrow of Elves



Breen, Katherine

*Imagining an English
Reading Public,
1150-1400*



Faculty News

This fall **Eula Biss** received the Chicago Public Library's 21st Century Award. Her video essay collaboration with John Bresland titled "Ode to Every Thing" appeared in the spring issue of *Required*, her poem "After Time" was in the *Huffington Post* this past August, and her essay "In the Syntax" is forthcoming in *Fourth Genre*. Last spring her essay collection, *Notes from No Man's Land*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism.

Katharine Breen's first book, *Imagining an English Reading Public, 1150-1400*, and her second daughter, Samantha Breen O'Hara, arrived within a couple of weeks of each other this past spring. Both are doing well.

John Alba Cutler presented a paper about nineteenth-century New Mexican writer Eusebio Chacón at the American Studies Association annual convention in Washington D.C., and another paper about Quinto Sol Publications, an independent publisher of Chicano literature in the 1970s, at the American Comparative Literature Association annual convention in New Orleans. His article on Eusebio Chacón has been accepted for publication by *MELUS* (the periodical of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States), and his article on the work of Arturo Islas has been reprinted in the revised edition of the *Chicano Studies Reader*. He continues to work on his book manuscript, "The Ends of Assimilation: Nationalism, Gender, and Chicano Literary History," and was pleased to present a talk drawn from the manuscript at the department's annual Fall Collation in October. He is excited to be teaching new courses this year on race and experimental poetry and on the confluence of U.S. Latino and American frontier literatures.

Last spring, **Nick Davis** published an essay about the performances and the political activism of Julie Christie and

Vanessa Redgrave in the anthology *Hollywood Reborn: Movie Stars of the 1970s* (Rutgers University Press). He also presented papers at the Society for Cinema & Media Studies in Los Angeles and the Gender, Place, and Space conference at Notre Dame University, and gave an invited lecture at the Chicago Film Seminar. He continues to finalize the full draft for his first book manuscript, on Gilles Deleuze and queer cinema. Meanwhile, his movie review website, www.NicksFlickPicks.com, was profiled this past summer in the U.K.'s Daily Telegraph and in other media outlets, and he served as an accredited journalist at the 2010 Chicago International Film Festival in October.

After a busy summer, spent partially in Fez and Casablanca where he was researching new Moroccan writing, **Brian Edwards** is honored to return for a second year as Director of Graduate Studies of English. In that capacity, he was especially pleased to welcome the big and brilliant entering class of eleven Ph.D. students and two M.A. students, and now to see this dynamic group on a weekly basis in his Introduction to Graduate Studies seminar. This fall too, Brian travelled to Lisbon to give a plenary lecture at a three-day conference-festival celebrating the centennial of Paul Bowles's birth (in February, he'll speak at another Bowles centennial 5,600 miles to the west of Lisbon in Santa Cruz, California). On

November 18, his creative non-fiction is being featured at the Brooklyn Academy of Music at an event called "Between the Lines: Stories for the 21st Century," where Brian will read from his new work. The next day, he flies to San Antonio to present at the American Studies Association meeting and to greet the publication of *Globalizing American Studies*, the volume he edited with Dilip Gaonkar, to be published December 1st by the University of Chicago Press (advance copies available at A.S.A.). *Globalizing American Studies* originally emerged from a series of three symposia Brian organized at Northwestern between 2004 and 2006. To celebrate the publication of the edited volume, and to open up the G.L.A.S. project yet further, he and Dilip Gaonkar with the participation of other Northwestern colleagues and graduate students will host the fourth Globalizing American Studies symposium on campus May 19–20, 2011, featuring speakers from across the U.S. and from Ireland to India. Please join us!

Kasey Evans was honored to receive a Distinguished Teaching Award from WCAS in the spring of 2010. In the fall of 2009, she completed the manuscript of her first book, *Colonial Virtue: The Mobility of Temperance in Renaissance England*, which is forthcoming from the University of Toronto Press in 2011. An article excerpted from the book, entitled "Temperate Revenge: Religion, Profit, and Retaliation in 1622 Jamestown," is forthcoming in *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*. During the upcoming year, she will be presenting work at "The Poem's the Thing"—a conference on lyric poetry hosted by the Northwestern English Department—as well as at the annual meetings of the Renaissance Society of America and the Shakespeare Association of America. In May of 2011, she will lead a three-day workshop on "Utopias of the European Renaissance" at the Newberry Library's "Teachers as Scholars" program.



Christine Froula presented “Past Proust Present: Yellow Walls 1660-2000” at the meeting of the Modern Literary Association last December, was an invited participant in the Modernist Networks conference at Loyola University in April, and gave a plenary lecture, “Proust’s China,” at the Modernism and the Orient conference in Hangzhou, China in June; it will appear next year in *Modernism/Modernity*. In September she presented a plenary talk titled “Orlando Lives,” on theatrical and other adaptations and productions of *Orlando*, at the Virginia Woolf Contemporaine conference in Aix-en-Provence; she will give it again at Reed College this fall. She contributed an invited essay, “On Time,” to a centenary volume titled *On or about December 1910*. In collaboration with Christopher Reed she co-organized a symposium, “New Looks: The Social Life of Art and Design in Bloomsbury,” linked to the Block Gallery’s exhibition *A Room of Their Own: Bloomsbury Art in American Collections*; and she contributed three lectures to the associated Alumnae course on Bloomsbury. Once again she enjoyed helping her colleagues to shepherd our nine 2010 Honors in Literature students to successful completion of their senior essays. And on June 16 - Bloomsday - she gave an impromptu introduction to *Ulysses* to the 110 Evanstonians who showed up for the first meeting of the Evanston Public Library’s “Mission Impossible: Reading *Ulysses*” project.

During the 2009-10 year, **Reginald Gibbons** published a bilingual edition of his poems, *Desde una barca de papel*, in Spain (published by Littera Libros, edited and translated by Jordi Doce), and a new collection in the U.S., *Slow Trains Overhead: Chicago Poems and Stories* (University of Chicago). In connection with the latter release, he was interviewed on WGN TV, WBEZ, and elsewhere. At the end of December 2009, the *Chicago Tribune* names him one of the 2009 Chicagoans of the Year in the arts. He published work in *American Poetry Review* and other literary journals; presented papers at two Classics Department conferences; gave readings

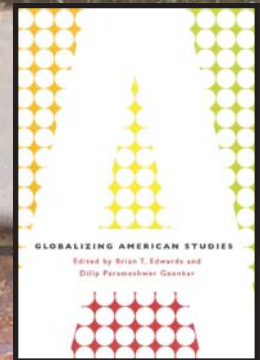
sponsored by The Poetry Foundation (with the new-music group Fulcrum Point), The Arts Club of Chicago, GRANTA magazine, Make magazine, Printers Row Lit Fest, and others; did research for new translations at the Center for Hellenic Studies (Washington, D.C.) while continuing work on new poems, essays, and translations; and posted several dozen mini-essays on the web site of the Center for the Writing Arts (www.northwestern.edu/writing-arts/ and available also on reginaldgibbons.northwestern.edu). He was co-chair of the Poetry and Poetics workshop of the Kaplan Humanities Institute, and continued as Director of the Center for the Writing Arts and Co-Director of the MA/MFA in Creative Writing.

Chris Lane’s study of Victorian agnosticism, *The Age of Doubt: Tracing the Roots of Our Religious Uncertainty*, is now in press and slated to appear in March in a trade edition from Yale University Press. The book covers the years from Hume to Hardy, focusing chiefly on philosophy, literature, and science, with a transatlantic emphasis that asks why forms of unbelief historically have been weaker in the U.S. than Britain. Chris also contributed an essay to *The Cambridge History of the English Novel* (2010), reviewed for *Modern Language Quarterly*, and wrote pieces on psychiatry for *Slate*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* (“Why Using Meds for ‘Neuroenhancement’ is a Scary Thought.”) His previous book, *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness* (Yale, 2008), recently won the 2010 Prix Prescrire for Medical Writing (Paris), with *Prescrire* magazine publishing Chris’s acceptance speech at the awards ceremony as a guest editorial. The book is now out in French, Korean, and Japanese, with Spanish and Danish translations due imminently. Chris continues to write a weekly blog for *Psychology Today* called “Side Effects.”

Jules Law’s book, *The Social Life of Fluids: Blood, Milk and Water in the Victorian Novel* has just been published by Cornell University Press. Work from his new project on

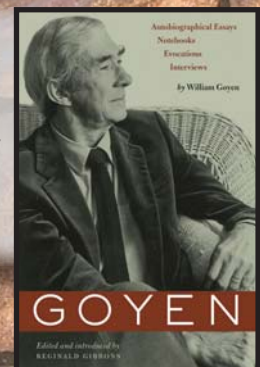
Edwards, Brian & Dilip Gaonkar, eds.

Globalizing American Studies



Gibbons, Reginald, ed.

Goyen: Autobiographical Essays, Notebooks, Evocations, Interviews



Gibbons, Reginald

Desde una barca de papel (bilingual edition of poems in English and in Spanish translation)



Gibbons, Reginald

Slow Trains Overhead: Chicago Poems & Stories



continued on pg. 8

Faculty News continued

Victorian virtuality is being presented in November at the North American Victorian Studies Association conference in Montréal. This past summer Jules taught at a rural school in Guatemala. Closer to home, he is a tutor and member of the board of directors at Chicago's Centro Romero immigrant center.

Amy Leach was the recipient of a coveted 2010 Whiting Writer's Award, one of ten identified as being among the most imaginative and visionary young writers at work today. She is at work on a book of essays about animals, plants, and stars for Milkweed Editions.

Susan Manning has now completed two of her three years as Chair of the English Department. It's a time-consuming and challenging job, and has given her a new appreciation for how much her colleagues accomplish, individually and collectively. Over the coming year, while finishing her term as Chair, she is launching new projects, which will not truly take off until next year when she is on sabbatical. Stay tuned.

Jeffrey Masten did research in June at the Zentralbibliothek Zürich on the only known copy of the first edition of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, which he will be editing for the new Arden Early Modern Drama series, the sibling series to Arden Shakespeare. Masten's essay on sex and riot in the collaborative Elizabethan play *Sir Thomas More* is forthcoming this December in the collection *Shakesqueer* (Duke University Press). In April, he was elected to the board of trustees of Denison University.

Barbara Newman is enjoying a research leave supported by her Mellon Distinguished Achievement Award and working on a book titled "Crossover: Sacred/Secular Dialogues in Medieval Literature." She presented a chapter on René

of Anjou at the New Chaucer Society in Siena, which provided an ideal opportunity to revisit that city's glorious monuments and explore Tuscan hill churches. (One of these rewarded its visitors, after a dizzying three-hour drive, with locked doors and a sign in six languages that read, "Please enter the church dressing decently, the sacred place requires compliance and education. Easily you may not be welcomed.") For an offbeat conference in California (where else?) on rethinking the medieval legacy for contemporary problems, Barbara gave an appropriately strange paper on the ethics of organ transplants, approached via the medieval literary and hagiographic topos of exchanging hearts. Film buffs take note: this issue suffuses the brilliantly understated film version of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, *Never Let Me Go*. Speaking of films, the American release of *Vision*, an excellent German movie on the life of Hildegard von Bingen, will mean more media interviews--and yet another renaissance for the unstoppable twelfth-century firebrand. This year Barbara is also serving as program chair and president-elect of the American Society of Church History, as well as organizing a Mellon Symposium on Medieval Subjectivity to be held at Northwestern in July 2011.

Emily Rohrbach continues work on her book manuscript, "Dark Passages of Time," and presented several parts of it this year:

on the ethics of surprise in Keats's poetry at the Modern Language Association in December; on Coleridgean awakenings at the Narrative conference in April; and on the politics of reading in Keats's "vale of Soul-making" letter at North American Society for the Study of Romanticism in August. In September, she attended the English Institute at Harvard, where the topic was "author." Emily spent the summer gathering essays and beginning an introduction for the summer 2011 special issue of *Studies in Romanticism* that she is co-editing with Emily Sun on the topic of Keats, aesthetics, and politics. She has also been developing two new courses for the winter 2011 term: one on Jane Austen and the politics of narrative, and another on Romanticism, ethics, and aesthetics.

Regina Schwartz gave the inaugural lecture in the "Love and Justice" series at the University of Virginia. She has also been lecturing on "Sacramental Poetics," most recently at Rice University. Her book, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism*, was recently reviewed in *Early Modern Literary Studies* vol. 15, no. 1 on October 5th: "Unfailingly readable, clear and precise, *Sacramental Poetics* is one of the most important studies of our critical moment, allowing us to move beyond readings of early modern ritual and theatre as merely the emptied-out forms of an earlier age. Schwartz's book is an excavation of 'Cultural Memory' that not only recovers a lingering sense of loss, but also an imaginative reconfiguration in an effort to find a just and meaningful world." — Joseph Sterrett, University of Wales (the full review can be read at: extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/15-1/revdonn.html)

Her essay on "Milton and Idolatry" appeared in the *Oxford Handbook on Milton*, edited by Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith, recent recipient of the Milton Society of America Prize for the best collection on Milton. Earlier in the year, her Milton Project

included a conference on John Milton for the public and an adaptation of *Paradise Lost* to the stage which was performed in May at the Newberry Library by the Shakespeare Project of Chicago.

Laurie Shannon gave a talk called “The Law’s First Subjects: Early Modern Animal Entitlements” at the plenary session of the Shakespeare Association of America Conference, which met in April in Chicago.

Brian Sheerin has an article forth-coming in *English Literary Renaissance*, vol.41, no. 2 (2011) entitled “When Givers Prove Unkind: Patronage and Perverse Bestowal in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Antonio’s Revenge*.” Brian will also be presenting two papers at this year’s Midwest Modern Language Association convention: “Toxic Fox: Investment Crisis in *Volpone*”; and “The Politics of Pop Culture: Teaching Frank Miller’s *The Dark Knight Returns*.”

Viv Soni’s book, *Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity*, is just out from Cornell University Press. The book describes the narrative processes by which a politics of happiness comes to be eclipsed in the eighteenth century, in novels, sentimental moral theory, Kant’s ethics, Rousseau’s political theory and the American Revolution. Greek ideas of happiness – Solon, Aristotle, tragedy, Athenian funeral orations – are also used to theorize what a utopian politics of happiness would look like, and how happiness might be rooted in narrative. His special issue of *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* (51.3) on *The Crisis of Judgment* is due out in December, and in addition to the two essays he has in the judgment collection, three other essays have appeared (or are scheduled to appear soon) this year, one of which represents the beginnings of a new project on utopian thought. Viv has continued work on the utopias projects with talks at the University of Wisconsin in April on Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas* and at NASSR on Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* in August. In addition, he not only received tenure this year, but was also

awarded an American Philosophical Society Fellowship for 2010-11, to work on his book about the crisis of judgment in the eighteenth century.

Wendy Wall presented research from her book project, “Strange Kitchens: Knowledge and Taste in Early English Recipe Books” at the Interdisciplinary Early Modern Group at the University of California, Davis; the Humanities Institute at SUNY, Stonybrook; the English Department at Penn State; the Renaissance Society of America in Venice; and as a plenary speaker at the Hermanns Food Studies Symposium at University of Texas, Arlington. This year she will teach a freshman seminar on Food, Film and Literature, and will give the Folger Library Annual Shakespeare Birthday Lecture, “Recipes for Thought: The Art of the Kitchen in the Age of Shakespeare.”

Will West spent the last year discovering all he didn’t know while co-teaching a first-year seminar in comedy with the Kaplan Humanities Center and a course in World Literature from the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* to *1001 Nights* to Rushdie’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, pausing briefly at *Othello*. While not reading new material, he shepherded articles on “Replaying Early Modern Drama” and “Humanism and the Resistance to Theology” into print and led a graduate reading group on Giorgio Agamben. He also spent two weeks in Montepulciano beginning a project on the writings of Angelo Poliziano, philology, and humanism.

Ivy Wilson, recently tenured and promoted to Associate Professor, has two books forthcoming. In 2011 Oxford University Press will publish his monograph, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Politics in the Antebellum U.S.*, and the University of North Carolina Press will release his anthology coedited with Robert S. Levine, *The Works of James M. Whitfield: America and Other Writings by a Nineteenth-century African American Poet*.

Law, Jules

The Social Life of Fluids: Blood, Milk, and Water in the Victorian Novel

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF FLUIDS

Blood, Milk, and Water in the Victorian Novel



JULES LAW

Mwangi, Evan

Africa Writes Back to Self: Metafiction, Gender, Sexuality

AFRICA WRITES BACK TO SELF

Metafiction, Gender, Sexuality



Evan Maina Mwangi

Soni, Vivasvan

Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity

Mourning Happiness

NARRATIVE AND THE POLITICS OF MODERNITY

Vivasvan Soni

Stern, Julia

Mary Chestnut's Civil War Epic

Mary Chestnut's Civil War Epic

JULIA A. STERN

One Book One Chicago *The Plan of Chicago*

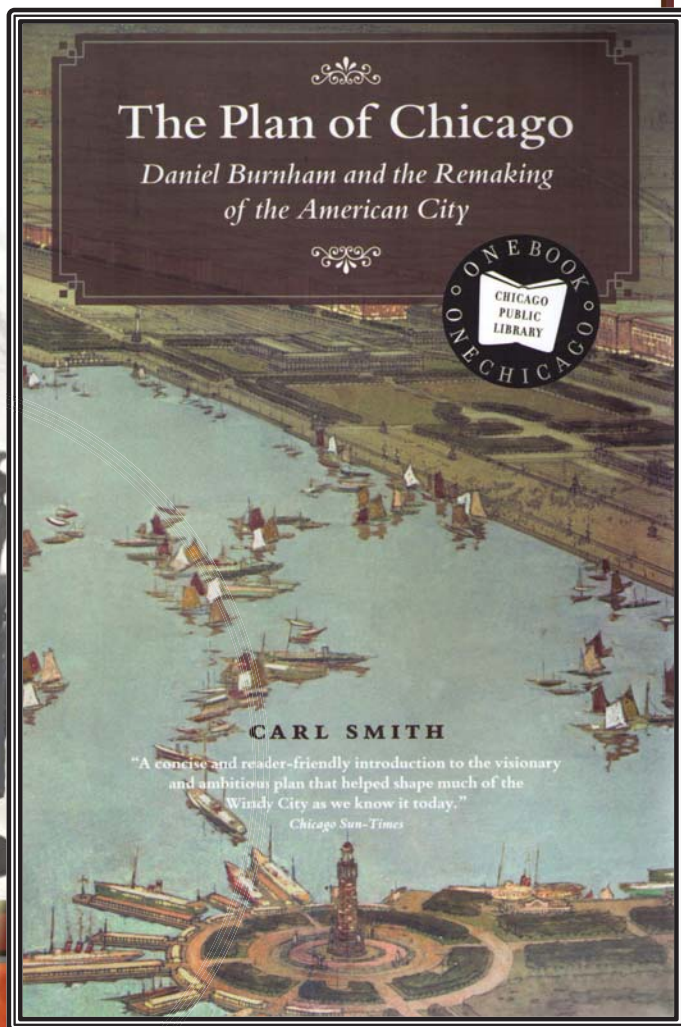
Carl Smith

Learning that my book, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (University of Chicago Press, 2006) was designated the fall 2009 selection of the “One Book, One Chicago” program of the Chicago Public Library was obviously a remarkable and unexpected honor. It was also a heady, even surreal, experience to read the study guide to the book that the Chicago Public Library prepared, to join a list of authors that include Jane Austen, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Arthur Miller, Harper Lee, and my English department colleague Stuart Dybek (I’m less sure my presence on the list was such an honor for them), to see kiosks of the book featured in area stores, and to hear it announced on NPR. But perhaps the greatest pleasure for me was in reflecting how the book developed.

This is because the book demonstrates the close relation of teaching and scholarship, not to mention the multiple forms of publishing today. It began as a cross-disciplinary course on the 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, often called the Burnham Plan, after its principal author, architect (and Evanston resident) Daniel Burnham. *The Plan* is one of the major documents in American city planning history, a yearbook-sized volume full of lofty prose and captivating drawings that proposed several of the defining features of Chicago today, from the lakefront parks to the Magnificent Mile and Navy Pier. This was a team-taught class that was offered twice early in the decade with Computer Science professor Brian Dennis through the American Studies Program and the Computer Science Department.

Titled “Using Technology, Making History,” the course enrolled computer science and humanities majors who worked together in small teams, doing analytical historical scholarship that they then presented online in ways that took advantage of the multi-media dynamism of the Web. Our materials included resources from the archives of the libraries of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Chicago History Museum, which hold the papers of Daniel Burnham and of the Chicago Commercial Club, chief sponsors of the *Plan*. Both the AIC and the CHM agreed to digitize these for us with the agreement that I myself would prepare, in collaboration with Academic and Research Technologies at Northwestern, a lengthy interpretive digital essay on the *Plan* for the electronic version of the *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, a major internet resource that contains special features that cannot be realized as economically or effectively in the print form of this book. *The Encyclopedia*, which was made possible by major funding from the NEH, appeared in print from the University of Chicago Press in 2004, in electronic form the following year.

Robert Devens, my editor at the University of Chicago Press, suggested revising the digital essay into a book of its own. I was skeptical that there would be an audience for something that existed online and that had a visual dimension that print could not replicate. But I was glad to have the opportunity to see how the same subject might be handled this way, and at the same time take advantage of the opportunity to revise the online version. I was pleased, not to mention surprised, to see that in this digital age there was a significant audience for this project in book form, and, to say the least, deeply gratified that it became the One Book, One Chicago choice. This selection was in no small way attributable to the fact that 2009 was the *Plan’s* centennial, an anniversary that never entered our minds when Brian and I first started planning the course almost ten years earlier. I will admit that I had always hoped that the class might open up ways of presenting serious scholarship on the Web, but I never expected it to result in a traditional book as well, let alone one that drew such attention.



Graduate Colloquia



The end of the 2009-10 academic year saw the **American Cultures Colloquium** at Northwestern complete its ninth successful year of bringing Americanists from different academic specialties and institutions into dialogue with one another, continuing its goal of providing scholars using multiple intellectual approaches the opportunity to participate in conversations about a shared set of cultural artifacts and contexts. This year, the ACC was pleased to host speakers from various fields and disciplines including African American studies, American studies, Comparative Literature, Gender Studies, Public Culture, Film Studies, American History, and Caribbean Literature. Our events regularly drew large audiences of faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and alumni from across the university into provocative conversation with elite scholars from around the country.

In 2010-11, the ACC, co-chaired by **Beth Corzo-Duchardt** (Screen Cultures) and **Rachel Bluementhal** (English), will be celebrating its **Tenth Anniversary** with an impressive series of talks that was inaugurated in October with an anniversary keynote lecture on Michelle Obama by **Melissa Harris-Lacewell** (Princeton University), an event co-sponsored with the Department of African American Studies as part of their Allison Davis lecture series. Going forward, the ACC's 2010-11 series will include talks by **Jill Lepore** (Harvard University), **Lauren Berlant** (University of Chicago), **Lisa Cartwright** (University of California, San Diego), **Russ Castronovo** (University of Wisconsin, Madison), **José Limón** (University of Texas, Austin), and **Bonnie Honig** (Northwestern University). For details about the 2010-2011 series of lectures, please visit our website: <http://www.english.northwestern.edu/acc>.

The **Long Nineteenth Century Colloquium** is excited to enter its fourth year. Dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary approaches to the study of 19th and 20th century British culture, society and history, the LNCC seeks to bring Victorianists and Modernists from diverse academic specialties into dialogue with one another. In November, the LNCC will host **James Kincaid** (University of Southern California), who will be giving a talk entitled "Childhood, Death, and the Forms of Tragedy," as well as sponsoring both Kincaid's informal workshop on the trials of Oscar Wilde, and the inaugural meeting of the LNCC's graduate reading group. Updates concerning events scheduled for the winter and spring will be available on their website, www.english.northwestern.edu/lnc.

LNCC Colloquium
Long Nineteenth Century



The Northwestern Early Modern Colloquium is an interdisciplinary group of scholars and graduate students who meet regularly to attend lectures and to workshop essays and chapters-in-progress. This past year, the EMC hosted events featuring scholars Elizabeth Spiller (Florida State University), Mary Floyd-Wilson (University of North Carolina Chapel-Hill), Roger Freitas (University of Rochester), Harry Berger (University of California Santa Cruz), Jeff Masten (Northwestern), Frances Dolan (University of California Davis), Edward Muir (Northwestern), and Jesus Escobar (Northwestern).

This fall, the EMC joins the Northwestern University Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of English, and the Northwestern Graduate School in hosting a conference titled "The Poem's the Thing: Form, Matter, Affect," which will feature twelve speakers drawn together to consider the possibilities and paradigms for reading poetry in a new generation of scholarship. The participants will be Juliet Fleming (New York University), Richard Rambuss (Emory), Jeff Dolven (Princeton), Kasey Evans (Northwestern), Rayna Kalas (Cornell), Benjamin Saunders (Oregon), Lisa Freinkel (Oregon), Jenny Mann (Cornell), Molly Murray (Columbia), Cynthia Nazarian (Northwestern), Catherine Nicholson (Yale), and Marcy North (Penn State). Details on additional events hosted by the EMC during the Winter and Spring quarters will be announced on their website, www.english.northwestern.edu/emc, and currently include visits by Martha Pollak (Professor of Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago) during the Winter quarter, and Catherine Gordon-Seifert (Professor of Music at Providence College) on May 13th.

Papers, Conferences, & Publications

Rachel Blumenthal (4th year) and **Greg Laski** (5th year) both received funding to attend the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College this past summer.

In March, **Ari Bookman** (4th year) presented a paper entitled “Culture, Ecology and the Ethics of Consumption in Okot p’Bitek’s Song of Lawino” at the African Literature Association Conference in Tucson, Arizona.

Vanessa Corredera (5th year) had the opportunity to present chapters-in-progress at two conferences this past year. First, she presented a paper entitled “A Face Begrimed and Black: Othello, Desdemona, and the Black Body” at the Midwest Modern Language Association, which was held in St. Louis in November, 2009. Then, in April, she attended the Shakespeare Association of America’s conference in Chicago, where she presented a paper entitled “‘False face’ and ‘False heart’: Faces, Nature, and Physiognomic Tension in Macbeth.” Vanessa will be returning to the Midwest Modern Language Association conference this fall as the chair of the “Shakespeare and Shakespearean Criticism” session.

Carissa Harris (5th year) gave papers at both the 2010 Newberry Graduate Student Conference in Chicago, presenting “The Gendering of ‘Spekyng Rybawdy’ in Idley’s *Instructions* and Mirk’s *Festial*”, and at the 45th Annual Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she presented “Talking *Turpiloquium*: The Gendering of ‘Foule Speche’ in Idley’s *Instructions* and Mirk’s *Festial*.” A bit further out of the way, Carissa attended the conference on “The Use and Abuse of Public and Private Spaces in Medieval & Early Modern Towns,” hosted by the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England, giving her paper, titled “‘Comme, Roger, and Pull Robert Wright Out of Elizabeth Thie Doughter’: Transgressive Sexual Speech in *The Castle of Perseverance* and Sixteenth-Century Church Court Records.”

Finally, Carissa’s article, “Talking Turpiloquium: Gendering the Problem of ‘Spekyng Rybawdy’ in Mirk’s *Festial* and Idley’s *Instructions*,” will appear in an upcoming issue of *Neophilologus*.

Maha Jafri (4th year) presented her paper, titled “The Notorious Mr. [B]: Elision and Allusion in Fanny Kemble’s *Journal of A Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839*,” at the EGSO Spring Colloquium.

Sarah Lahey (6th year) delivered a paper entitled, “Choosing Sides: Native Americans and the Civil War,” at the British Association of American Studies conference at the University of East Anglia in the U.K. earlier this year in April.

At the 2009 Midwest Modern Language Association conference, **Greg Laski** (5th year) presented a paper entitled “Slavery’s Recurring Story Lines.” He also had an article, “Falling Back into History: The Uncanny Trauma of Blackface Minstrelsy in Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled*,” accepted for publication by *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters*. In June, Greg shared portions of his dissertation research on Frederick Douglass, Stephen Crane, and the politics of slavery’s persistence at the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College. At the upcoming Midwest Modern Language Association conference in Chicago, he will chair two panels: a special session on “Frederick Douglass After Emancipation,” and the permanent section on African American Literature, which will take the concept of the “post-racial” as its focus.

In May, **Nathan Leahy** (6th year) presented his paper, “The Panic of 1893 and ‘The £1,000,000 Bank Note,’” at the American Literature Association Conference in San Francisco, California. As an invited speaker, he’s presented at a number of Northwestern-based conferences as well; he gave his paper “Let US Now Praise What?: Documentary Form and the Containment of Financial Panic,” at the

Cultural Bankruptcy Conference in April, “Mark Twain and the Poetics of Finance” at the Kaplan Institute for the Humanities in October of 2009, and “Following the Equator and Looking Backward: The Panic of 1893 and the Formulation of a U.S. Economic Character,” at the English Department Annual Fall Collation earlier that same month.

September found **Jenny Lee** (6th year) in Helsinki, Finland, presenting a paper on Thomas Hoccleve and confession at the Seeing, Hearing, Reading and Believing: Authorities in the Middle Ages International Conference.

Lorna Mellon (4th year) spent the better part of the year formulating a project concerned with the connection between feminism and “modernization” in Irish women’s writing from the period 1945-68, and presented at two conferences. The first afforded her the chance to travel to Ireland, where she presented a paper entitled “*Ulysses* and Noise: Controlling and Allowing Chaos” at the International James Joyce Graduate Conference in Dublin. The next issue of the *James Joyce Quarterly* will include her review of the conference, written in collaboration with another of the conference’s participants. Lorna also presented a paper at the national meeting of the College English Association in San Antonio, which was entitled “A Familial Drama: Conflict in and between Sylvia Plath’s *Ariel(s)*.” The 2010-11 year will be spent in Ireland while Lorna continues her research.

Garrett Morrison (2nd year) presented “Reprinted Poems, Remixed Biographies, and the Reception of Phillis Wheatley in the Abolitionist Press” at a Northwestern symposium in April. He also delivered “The Antebellum Afterlife of Phillis Wheatley” at the UCLA Southland Graduate Conference in June, and participated in this summer’s International Walt Whitman Week, held this year in Macerata, Italy.

In May, **Laura Passin** (5th year) presented “Canons and Masks: Forgetting Muriel Rukeyser” at the Northeast Modern Language Association conference in Montreal. It was a particularly exciting occasion, because Rukeyser’s son, Bill, was part of the audience, giving her the opportunity to discuss her work with him. Traveling then to Ireland in late August, Laura attended the Women’s Memory Work International Conference (Gendered Dilemmas and Social Transformation) at the University of Limerick in Ireland, where she presented a paper entitled “‘The women are not affected’: Gender and Witness in Muriel Rukeyser’s *The Book of the Dead*.”

Melvin Peña (9th year) presented at the South-Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies annual conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference was on the theme of “solitude and sociability,” and his paper was titled “Melancholic Isolation and Cosmopolitan Friendship in James Boswell’s *Journal of a Tour to Corsica*.”

Wendy Roberts’s (6th year) article, “Demand My Voice: Hearing God in 18th Century American Poetry” was published in March in a volume of *Early American Literature*.

Elizabeth Rodriguez (2nd year) presented her paper “Begging for Revenge: Imagining Female Agency in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*” at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association’s meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico this October.

Abram Van Engen (Ph.D. 2010) had an article published in the fall issue of *Early American Literature* titled “Puritanism and the Power of Sympathy,” and another, “Advertising the Domestic’: Anne Bradstreet’s Sentimental Poetics,” forthcoming in December in *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*. Abram was also selected for a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute at the Newberry Library titled “From Metacom to Tecumseh: Alliances, Conflicts, and Resistance in Native North America.”



30 Years of Writing at Northwestern

In April of this year, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the English Department's Creative Writing program with a week-long event that included the 2010 annual Writers Festival as well as the participation not only of our own prolific and award-winning writing faculty, but of visiting writers Jo Ann Beard, George Saunders, and Frank Bidart. The goal of the celebration was to address our three genres of study; creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. The program that unfolded was a great success, and a wonderful expression of the strengths that have made the Creative Writing program so enduringly popular.

In their master classes, our invited visiting writers cast light on issues of pedagogy relevant to each of the three genres: Jo Ann Beard discussed two creative nonfiction projects that required long deliberation on the extent to which she could provide her own metaphors to illuminate the life-stories she was telling. As this is a central preoccupation for creative nonfiction writers, the audience members were particularly drawn to the author's points of self-doubt in the midst of a successful career.

The brilliant comic fictionist George Saunders spoke about his version of apprenticeship, since as a young writer he admits devoting himself to the works, prose style, and ethos of Ernest Hemingway (whose work couldn't sound less like the ironic, parodistic Saunders's); he recommended the process of identifying with a great writer as a means of throwing into sharper relief the call (when it comes) of one's own aesthetic.

Frank Bidart used his long poem "Ellen West" to illustrate discoveries he made about structuring a long poem. Based on the case study of a young woman with an eating disorder by the analyst Ludwig Binswanger, Bidart said that he learned from *Hamlet* and *King Lear* the enormous indirect benefit of the use of competing, mutually reflecting characters (with Lear and his daughters being mirrored in a darker vein by Gloucester and his sons). Just so, Bidart's selection and expansion of episodes from the life of Ellen in the poem are set against the story of the great opera singer, Maria Callas, and the effects of her own weight loss on both private life and career.

Admitting that the choice of this pairing was his way of 'living himself into' the story, Bidart rendered the claims made in the case study unimportant in comparison to the empathic depths expressed by the artist.

The panel at which all three writers spoke, moderated by John Bresland, John Keene, and Mary Kinzie representing the three disciplines (creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry respectively), was a lively, irreverent, and illuminating conversation about the contrast between "the writer and the academy" and "the writer in seclusion". As this event was open to the public, and thus afforded an opportunity for those outside the program and the university to participate, a wide range of questions were posed. The practical curiosity about getting published was met kindly but with laudable reserve by the writers, all of whom have appeared in prestigious magazines. Still, all three stressed the importance of resisting the pressure to conform, whether to a space limitation or to the minimalist style of our day.

Alumnae and alumni of the creative writing program were an important part of the program, their contributions focusing on the teaching and mentoring the faculty have provided to Northwestern's outstanding students over the course of these three decades; emphasis was given to what the most extraordinary of these students have built on that foundation, and what current students might hope to build in turn. The alums gave a panel hosted by the Northwestern undergraduate magazine *Prompt* on making one's way in the world, followed by a series of presentations and readings by Josh Weiner, a published poet and critic, as well as a tenured faculty member at the University of Maryland; Karen Russell, a published novelist who teaches at Columbia University in New York; Anne-Marie Cusac, a published poet as well as a prize-winning investigative reporter who teaches at Roosevelt University in Chicago; and Cristina Henríquez, prize-winning fiction writer and 2010 Blattner Visiting Assistant Professor of Fiction at Northwestern. These individuals, closer in age to our present students, brought home to them the possibility of taking their reading and writing so seriously that it becomes a way of life.



Writers Festival Panel Discussion

from left: Mary Kinzie (Director of the English Major in Writing), Frank Bidart (Visiting Writer in Residence), George Saunders (Visiting Writer in Residence), John Keene (Associate Professor of English), Jo Ann Beard (Visiting Writer in Residence), John Bresland (Artist in Residence)

Poetry & Poetics

William N. West

Poetry and Poetics enters its first year as a concentration for English Department graduate students, and its sophomore year as an interest group in this and other departments at Northwestern. The proposal to include Poetry and Poetics as a graduate field grew out of the awareness of an increasing interest among graduate students and faculty alike in the particular structures of thought that poetry articulates, and in the long and varied tradition referenced by the term 'poetics'.

Last year, Poetry and Poetics sponsored a reading group that met to discuss essays by Aristotle, Adorno, and some poems and translations of Afro-Cuban poet and activist Nicolás Guillén. It also hosted Canadian writer M. Nourbese Philip for a poetry reading and a workshop, and Samuel Weber (of Northwestern's Critical Theory, CLS and German programs) for a talk on Friedrich Hölderlin's "Wie wenn am Feiertage". In the current year Poetry and Poetics has already brought in Jahan Ramazani to speak to us about his work in Transnational Poetics, and we hope to have both more speakers and more opportunities for reading and discussion as the year progresses.

The Poetry and Poetics Colloquium was organized in 2009-10 by Reg Gibbons, Susannah Gottlieb, and Ivy Wilson, assisted by Ph.D. student Katie Hartsock (CLS, Classics, English) and undergrad Allison Manley (Religion, the English Major in Writing), and funded by the Humanities Institute. This year, English is sponsoring the group as a continuing departmental colloquium with funding from the Humanities Institute, the Center for the Writing Arts, and other programs within the university.

After a great first year, we are now in the process of putting together our longer-term proposal, which we hope will include a number of new initiatives, including our own website; increased curricular and research opportunities for our graduate students; a poetry-in-the-schools project to benefit area secondary schools, a "younger poets" series, and much more.

We are grateful to everyone who has donated to the department over the years. It is with your continued support that we are able to offer our graduate students the many opportunities for research and professionalization funding available to them.

Here we list, with thanks, some of our most generous donors from this past year.

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Musings

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