



Poetic 'Yield'

When does it become a poem? What can you do when it floats on the surface and stalls? What's the difference between the almost-passable look alike and the real, the un-fake-able, thing? If we enter the poem to be changed, to discover connections or depths we could not have plotted beforehand, what place does that leave for craft and deliberation? How can we "plan" to be surprised? We will look together at a number of contemporary poems that, using contrasting methods and materials, successfully practice the art of discovery. We will experiment with varied compositional strategies that seek to maximize our own poetic "yield."

Linda Gregerson is the author of four books of poetry, *Magnetic North*, *Waterborne*, *The Woman Who Died in Her Sleep*, and *Fire in the Conservatory*, as well as two books of criticism, *The Reformation of the Subject* and *Negative Capability*. Winner of the 2003 Kingsley Tufts Award, she has also received awards and fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Poetry Society of America, *Poetry* magazine, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, the National Humanities Center, the Institute for Advanced Study, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the NEA twice. She is on the MFA faculty at the University of Michigan.

POETRY

The Wild and the Cultured

Poets tend to divide writing into distinct phases of inspiration and revision. While it may be customary to speak of the impulse behind a poem as separate from the work required to bring it to fruition, it is not necessary to accept that we first "receive" the poem before we "make" the poem. The danger in this perspective is that the poet adopts a double mindedness, an expectation that there is a necessary distance between creativity and discernment, between the wild and the cultured. I'd like to examine the assumptions behind this divide and explore methods of challenging ourselves to bring our ideas into being with language that reflects the intensity of their origins.

Bob Hicok's fifth book of poetry, *This Clumsy Living*, was published in 2007 by Pitt. *Animal Soul* (2001) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Recipient of an NEA fellowship, Hicok's poems have appeared in three volumes of *Best American Poetry* and twice received the Pushcart Prize. He was recently awarded the Jerome J. Shestack Prize by *The American Poetry Review* and the Anne Halley Prize from *Massachusetts Review*. He teaches at Virginia Tech.



POETRY



Memory and Imagination: Toward Effortless Writing

In this workshop we will practice methods for exploring memory and using the imagination to find material for fiction. The workshop subtitle comes from a book by Dorothea Brande which examines ways the unconscious can be harnessed in the service of writing stories. We will, ourselves, practice a number of such processes for writing, exercises directed toward such harnessing, with the goal of generating a serious amount of new work during our time together. It is my hope that you will learn new approaches to the task of writing, approaches which will make writing more "effortless" and rewarding, and that you will write some things that will surprise you, and come away from the workshop with a great deal of new, exciting material with which to continue your work.

Laura Kasischke has published four novels (most recently, *Be Mine*, Harcourt, 2007), six collections of poetry (most recently *Gardening In the Dark*, Ausable 2004), and a novel for young adults. She has published writing in *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The New England Review*, and elsewhere, and been the recipient of several Pushcart Prizes and two fellowships for the National Endowment for the Arts. Her third novel is being made into a film starring Uma Thurman, directed by Vadim Perelman. She teaches at the University of Michigan.

FICTION & POETRY



Poetry in Performance

We will explore the many meanings of the term "poetry in performance," from on-stage performances, to the idea that poetry is itself a language performance. We will consider poetry's "internal action," how lyric poetry in particular spins out of itself, finds its direction through the momentum generated by the free flow of words. Poetry's rhythm or music is an essential performance component. We will discuss the history of poetry's oral (and aural) roots. We will also listen to recordings of poets renowned for their successes in performing poetry with and without musical accompaniment.

Barry Wallenstein is the author of five collections of poetry, the most recent being *A Measure of Conduct* (Ridgeway Press, 1999). His poetry has appeared in over 100 journals in the U.S. and abroad, in such places as *Transatlantic Review*, *the Nation*, *Centennial Review*, and *American Poetry Review*. His 1971 book *Visions & Revisions: the Poet's Practice* (T.Y. Crowell) was reissued in a new and expanded edition by Broadview Press (2002). A special interest is his performance of poetry with jazz collaboration. He has made five recordings of his poetry with jazz, the most recent being *Pandemonium* (Cadence Jazz Records CJR 1194) November, 2005. He is a Professor of literature and creative writing at the City University of New York and is also an editor of the journal, *American Book Review*.

PERFORMANCE/ POETRY

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

James McCullough and Richard Tillinghast first planned the Bear River Writers' Conference as a place where writers from outside northern Michigan could enjoy the beauties of this place and where they could meet the writers who live here. They hoped to bring people with general literary interests together with those who were interested in writing about place and the natural environment. They hoped the mix would create new ideas that would send all the writers home with good work to continue... And they thought the shores of Walloon Lake—which had already inspired one American classic—would be a good place to help accomplish their idea. I'm pleased to report that so far it seems to be working!

Keith Taylor published two new books in 2006. *Guilt by the Rapture*, a collection of poems and stories, was picked as a Michigan Notable Book of the Year for 2007. *Battered Guitars: The Poetry and Prose of Kostas Karyotakis*, a book he translated with his friend William Reader, was published in England. Over the years his work has appeared in a couple of hundred places, ranging from *Starry* to the *Los Angeles Times*, from *Bird Watcher's Digest* and the *Chicago Tribune* to *Michigan Quarterly Review* (two issues of which he recently guest edited), *Poetry Ireland*, and *The Southern Review*. He has won awards for his work here and in Europe. He works as the coordinator of undergraduate creative writing at the University of Michigan.



DIRECTOR