



POETRY

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.

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



FICTION

Fiction and Painting(s)

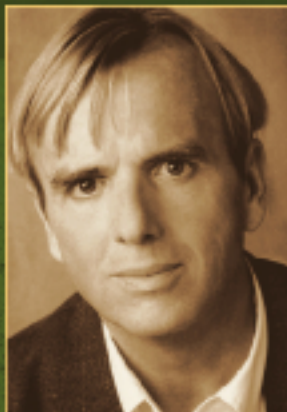
Writers and painters have fed off one another's creative work down the centuries; numerous contemporary novels revolve around the history of painting. What can the visual act offer us as fiction writers? How does the act of putting color on canvas resemble or differ from the act of putting thought into words? Is it possible to describe a painting? In this workshop, we'll explore some of the many ways in which painting and painters can function as subject or inspiration for fiction. In the process, we'll look at works by A. S. Byatt, Alex Miller, Chaim Potok, and Oscar Wilde, among others, and will work on short and long fiction of our own. Bring along a sketchpad (absolutely no drawing experience necessary) and a reproduction of a painting that fascinates you.

Elizabeth Kostova was born in Connecticut in 1964. She holds a B.A. in British Studies from Yale University and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Michigan. Her work has appeared in *Mississippi Review*, *Poets & Writers Magazine*, and *The Best American Poetry*. Her first novel, *The Historian*, (Little, Brown, June 2005) was a #1 New York Times Bestseller and is being translated into 37 languages. She is also co-author of a travel book entitled *1927: The Good-Natured Chronicle of a Journey*.

Adventures in Essaying

Frost said every poem was "an adventure." The end is never known when we begin. It is the same with essaying—a search, a testing, a setting forth, trusting in the language to see us through. This workshop is open to all writers willing to make the leap and to help their fellow pilgrims on the way in the pursuit of something that rings true.

Thomas Lynch is the author of three collections of poetry: His collection of essays, *The Undertaking—Life Studies from the Dismal Trade* won The Heartland Prize for non-fiction, The American Book Award, and was a Finalist for the National Book Award. It has been translated into eight languages. *Bodies in Motion and at Rest* won The Great Lakes Book Award. *Booking Passage—We Irish and Americans*, a third collection of nonfiction, was published in 2005. His work has appeared in journals and newspapers throughout the UK, Ireland and the United States, and has been broadcast on NPR and the BBC. He is an Adjunct Professor in the graduate creative writing program at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



CREATIVE NON-FICTION/ MEMOIR

Life Stories

In this workshop, we'll explore the autobiographical origins of our work, whether in nonfiction or fiction, through remembering and story-telling techniques, and we'll attempt to locate the fragmentary raw materials of memory—such as images, settings, and bits of dialogue—that contain the stories that have been granted to us through the experience of our own lives. Come prepared to generate new work and bring along a few old photos of yourself as well as other people and places important to your life.

Richard McCann is the author of *Mother of Sorrows* (John C. Zacharis Book Award, 2005), which novelist Michael Cunningham describes as "almost unbearably beautiful ... a book so intricately felt, so magnificently written, that it can stand unembarrassed beside the mystery of life itself." *Mother of Sorrows* was chosen by Amazon as one of the 50 Best Books of 2005 and was a Borders Original Voices selection. Richard McCann is also the author of *Ghost Letters* (Beatrice Hawley Award, Capricorn Poetry Award) and the editor (with Michael Klein) of *Things Shaped in Passing*. (Photo credit: Sigrid Estrada)



NATURE WRITING

Glory and Crisis: The Art of Nature Writing in a Dangerous World

In this intensive workshop, we'll make new starts to carry forward into a great creative summer. The emphasis will be on writing well about nature and the environment in whatever genre or genres you call your own: memoir, journalism, essay, fiction, poetry, drama, screenplay, and all combinations. We'll read a little, experiment a great deal, get outside a little to simply look, and try a myriad of exercises designed to generate new ideas, new work, and new possibilities to carry forward into a great summer of writing. Bring field guides, notebooks, pens and pencils—and don't forget your childhood sense of wonder.

Bill Roorbach's newest book is *Temple Stream*, published by Dial Press/Random House, which won the 2006 Maine Literary Award for Nonfiction. Other books of nature writing are *Summers with Juliet*, *Into Woods*, and *A Place on Water* (essays with Robert Kimber and Wesley McNair). He's the author of the bestselling book of instruction, *Writing Life Stories*, and editor of the *Oxford Anthology Contemporary Creative Nonfiction: The Art of Truth*. Bill also writes fiction and is the author of a novel, *The Smallest Color* (a selection of the Brisbane, Australia, literary festival, 2004), and a collection of short stories, *Big Bend* (which won the Flannery O'Connor Award in 2001).

Finding a New Way

Extraordinary writing often springs from ordinary events. In this workshop we will turn ordinary deeds into extraordinary stories & poems, tapping into the deeper psychic levels of fairy tale, myth, symbol and archetype where the real poems and stories live. We will find new ways of shining the light of imagination onto our daily lives and into what lies beneath the surface. There is room in this group for both beginners and experienced wordsmiths. Expect to come away from the workshop more in touch with your own instincts and imagination, having written something that will surprise you.

Richard Tillinghast lives on a mountainside in Ireland. Before leaving the U.S., he taught writing at Berkeley, Harvard, the Omega Institute and the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference; for twenty years he was on the faculty of the MFA program at the University of Michigan. In 2001 Richard co-founded Bear River and was director through 2005. An inveterate traveler, he was formerly Editor-in-Chief of *Let's Go*, the *Travel Guide to Europe*. In addition, he has also worked for many years as a book reviewer and essayist, publishing in *The New Republic*, the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times*, the *Irish Times*, *The Nation*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and elsewhere. He is the author of seven books of poetry and two books of essays, most recently *Poetry and What Is Real*, University of Michigan Press, 2004. His next book of poetry, *The New Life*, is scheduled from Copper Beech Press for later this year.



PROSE & POETRY/ TRAVEL WRITING

THE BEAR RIVER WRITERS

To learn more about these authors—and the many others affiliated with the Bear River Writers' Conference—please visit our website:

www.lsa.umich.edu/bearriver

SPECIAL THANKS TO MEIJER, INCORPORATED FOR ITS GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE BEAR RIVER WRITERS' CONFERENCE.



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. *Guiltily at 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 Karjotakis*, 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 *Sury* 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