

CATS & MONKEYS

The Newsletter of Adelphi University's MFA Program in Creative Writing

a note from the editor

— Martha Cooley

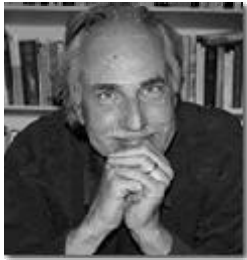


Catherine Bowman

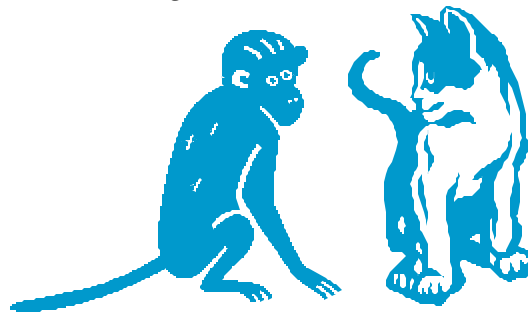
Who's got your back? That question used to be uttered regularly by the poet **Liam Rector**, who liked his writer-friends to stay mindful of the people who'd helped them do what they most wanted to do: **revel in reading and writing**. By "help," Liam intended all varieties of aid, from the sublime to the mundane. Most of all, though, he was referring to the sustenance we derive from those special individuals who really get what it's all about, this literary life of ours—its particular **exaltations and exigencies**, the reckonings it requires of us, the daily humblings it performs. He was talking about the people who go to extraordinary lengths to help us thrive.

Who's got your back? I think of Liam's question a lot these days. Here at Adelphi, **Laura Reitano**, our department's beloved secretary, had *all* our backs, always. She knew precisely what it was all about, this literary life of ours. Petite, quick-witted, comic, savvy, and deeply kind, Laura **made everything run** with a smoothness we knew we didn't deserve. She was nothing short of a

miracle-worker on every front. Whatever it was we needed—including things we didn't even know we needed—Laura procured for us. She protected our autonomy, chastened us when we got puffy-ego'd, buoyed us when we felt deflated, and laughed at us (**such a laugh she had!**—it could express anything from deserved skepticism to utter childish delight). She transformed the departmental office into a perpetual safe haven; *Continued page 7*



Askold Melnyczuk
by Laura Paz



coming up...

CATHERINE BOWMAN

7 April
Q & A: 4:15-5:30
HHE 213
Reading: 6 PM
Alumni House

**ASKOLD
MELNYCZUK**
28 April
Reading: 4 pm
Harvey 215

ignobled in indianapolis

— Kermit Frazier

The name "Ku Klux Klan" apparently derived from the Greek word "Kyklos," from which comes the English word "circle." "Klan" was added for the sake of alliteration. The Klan was based in Indiana in the early 1900s, when it was at its height and had millions of members, including grand wizards, grand dragons, grand titans, and grand Cyclops.

I'm in Indianapolis, Indiana, to do **some research for a play** I've been commissioned to write. It will be called ***Of Promises and Hope in Freetown Village: Scenes from Black Life in 1870 Indianapolis***. I'm walking across a street in the middle of the day in the busy downtown, walking with the black woman who has commissioned me for her African-American museum organization. As we reach the sidewalk and are about to enter a municipal building, **I hear a shout** from behind me. I think it's "stop" or "hey," but I'm not sure. All I know is that it was loud enough to catch my attention and cause me to turn around. I see a smartly dressed white police officer walking across the street toward me. Since I clearly don't know him, I turn away and continue walking with my companion. Suddenly, the voice says something else—"hey, you," perhaps—in a louder tone that stops me again. I turn around. **The police officer** is walking straight *Continued page 2*

ignobled in indianapolis continued...

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toward me, glaring all the way. My heart begins to pound. What the hell have I done?

I wait stiffly for him to explain himself, all the while trying to be cool and nonchalant, the kind of pose a man naturally takes in such a situation when there's a woman at his side. The police officer tells me I had jaywalked across the street. I'm caught so off-guard I nearly laugh—an impulse that, fortunately, I swallow. I had no idea I'd just jaywalked; I'd simply walked across the street with my companion, who was a native of the city. Or did I take the lead? Was I the instigator? I don't know. Besides, I'm from New York, where pedestrians routinely consider red lights mere suggestions.

But I say nothing to the police officer.

He knits his brow as though he were really angry with me now. Why, though? I haven't said anything, haven't mouthed off. Or is it precisely the fact that I've said nothing—rather than apologize profusely—which has ticked him off?

The officer's eyes open wider; he blows hot steam in my face. To me he's now officially nothing but a goddamn cop. Why's he so pissed off? Is he the Indianapolis police department's lone anti-jaywalking freak? Has he not had his coffee and donuts yet? Did he have a fight with his wife last night? Did his partner get wasted recently? My speculation is ludicrous, I know, though no more so than his attitude toward me.

Soon I find out what the deal is. He tells me he'd been calling me and I hadn't stopped right away; I had just walked on, ignoring him. On top of that, when I had finally stopped and turned around, I had looked right through him, as if I didn't know or didn't care that he was talking to me.

But I *didn't* know he'd been calling me. How *could* he have been? Cops yell at someone who's done something wrong, and that wasn't me, as far as I was concerned.

He isn't buying it. How could I have *not* known he'd been calling me? He'd been looking right at me, he insists now.

Sure, but from my point of view, he'd simply been looking across the street, not specifically at me. After all, there were lots of other people on the street—men, women, children, black, white, Asian . . . whatever. *Continued page 8*



Julianne's Garden: Bronzes by Preston Jackson

“Cats and monkeys; monkeys and cats; all human life is there.”

—Henry James



student and faculty news...

send your news to
mfa@adelphi.edu

FACULTY NEWS

The **entire faculty** of our MFA program gave a well-attended reading on February 1, 2008, at the **Annual Conference of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs** in NYC. We also hosted a lively party! As a major sponsor of the conference (AWP's largest thus far), our program was strongly visible throughout the five days: at our table (which was very ably manned—or is it “person’d”?—by our grad students), on several panels, and at major author readings, in particular that of **John Irving** (whom director Judith Baumel introduced). Better visibility and networking couldn't have been asked for or gained.

Anton Dudley's play “Substitution” will open Off-Broadway in April at the historic **Soho Playhouse**. Recently, Anton participated in a six-week intensive at Manhattan Class Company, developing two new plays: “The Empty Ocean” and “Untitled Faery Project.” MCC presented a reading of his play “Eloise Scrogg Gets Stuck in Central Park” on March 16th at the Baruch College Center for Performing Arts. Anton's play “Letter to the End of the World” is currently running at the Stella Adler Conservatory, while his most recent play, “City Of,” was performed under his direction by students in Adelphi's Performing Arts Department on March 20th and 21st. His **new musical, “Tina Girlstar,”** was optioned by a commercial producer and will receive its first workshop presentation in June at the Lark Play Development Center.

Kermit Frazier conducted an intensive day-long television writing workshop at the national conference of **NAMIC** (the National Association for Multi-Ethnicity in Communications) in New York on September 17, 2007. He was a presenter at the New York State Council for the Arts'

“Facing Pages” **Conference in Blue Mountain Lake, NY**, in October 2007. Kermit gave a reading and spoke to students about writing in the Living Writers Series at SUNY/Oswego in October 2007. His play “Kernel of Sanity” had a reading at the New Federal Theatre in New York in December 2007. Kermit conducted an intensive **television writing workshop** at the public library in Olean, NY, on February 9, 2008.

Martha Cooley gave a reading on November 13, 2007, with **Judith Baumel** as part of the Ordinary Evening reading series in New Haven, CT, curated by fiction writer Alice Matison. Martha was **in residence at Yaddo** (Saratoga Springs, NY) for three weeks over winter break. Her **essay on the work of Italo Calvino**, “A Bridge Flung Across the Abyss,” will be published this May in *The Writer's Chronicle*, the journal of the Associated Writing Programs.

Igor Webb's long essay “Dickens in America: The Writer and Reality,” a chapter of his book-in-progress on the nineteenth-century novel, appears in the forthcoming *Dickens Annual*.

Jacqueline Jones LaMon has given a number of readings since December—at Brownstone Books (with Linda Susan Jackson and Greg Pardlo); **Perch Literary Tuesdays** in Brooklyn; Key West Literary Seminars; Sarah Lawrence College; Great Neck Arts Center's Poetry Sundays; SUNY Albany; and the NEWS Reading Series in Boston. On April 29, she will participate in a reading hosted at the New School (**Cave Canem/Ringing Ear**) at 6:30 pm. She has invited an impressive group of writer-visitors to her classes this term, including the poets A. Van Jordan, Gregory Pardlo, Aracelis Girmay, **Linda Susan Jackson**, Catherine Bowman, Jeffrey Harrison, as well as the novelist Tayari Jones and the playwright Paul D. Shoulberg. Jaci has been busy organizing Adelphi's upcoming Poetry Day events, *Continued, page 4*



Holly Eaton, Judith Baumel, Rebecca Schmidt and Erica Naess at the Adelphi Drinks Party, AWP



Martha Cooley and Matt Wise (class of '07) at our AWP booth

student and faculty news continued...



Photo by Paul Beckman

Alice Mattison

which will include an appearance by the prize-winning poet Natasha Trethewey.

Judith Baumel gave a series of lectures, "Grammar of Marriage: Marianne Moore, Gertrude Stein, Elizabeth Bishop and Anne Carson," to the English Faculty at Oxford University, UK in February. She participated in an AWP panel called **Sleeping with the "Enemy"**: Garnering Support and Gaining Resources for Creative Writing Programs in a Corporate Era of Higher Education.

STUDENT NEWS

Danielle Mebert reports that the sixth issue of *Barefoot Muse*, the e-zine

devoted to formal and metrical verse, went online in December. For the issue, about 875 poems were reviewed; 35 were chosen (from 26 poets), including work by featured poet Annie Finch, special guest poet X.J. Kennedy, repeat contributor Carol Taylor, Mike Alexander, Quincy Lehr, and others. A poem of Danielle's also appears in the issue. Here is the link: <http://www.barefootmuse.com/mebert.htm>

Michael Thomas Cain has a spring internship at the historic **Cherry Lane Theatre**. He is working closely with the staff on Edward Albee's "The American Dream & the Sandbox" (the theater's spring main-stage production), The Mentor Project Productions, and The Master Class Series.



Leslie Lee

don axinn awards in creative writing 2008 judges :

DRAMATIC WRITING

Leslie Lee, award-winning playwright, screenwriter, novelist, documentarian, director, and teacher (currently in the NYU Department of Dramatic Writing and the MFA Program at Goddard College in Vermont).

FICTION

Alice Mattison is the author of four novels, three previous short story collections, and a volume of poetry. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Best American Short Stories*, *The Pushcart Prize*, *The New Yorker*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Ploughshares*. She teaches fiction in the Bennington Writing Seminars and lives in New Haven, Connecticut



Amy Gerstler

POETRY

Amy Gerstler's books of poetry include *Ghost Girl* (Penguin, 2004); *Medicine* (2000), finalist for the Phi Beta Kappa Poetry Award; *Crown of Weeds* (1997); *Nerve Storm* (1995); *Bitter Angel* (1990), winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award; and *The True Bride* (1986). She is the author of art reviews, books reviews, fiction, and various journal articles. She also collaborates with visual artists, and her writing has been published in numerous exhibition catalogs.

practicum class: three reports

—Bram Hsieh. Poets & Writers by Mary Johansen

On February 29, 2008, Bram Hsieh, the [Director of Information Services](#) at Poets & Writers in Manhattan, visited our practicum class and talked with us about his work at Poets & Writers, the nation's largest nonprofit organization serving creative writers.

The goals of the organization, explained Mr. Hsieh, are to foster the professional [development of poets and writers](#), to promote communication throughout the U.S. literary community, and to help create an environment in which literature can be appreciated by the widest possible public. Poets & Writers publishes a bimonthly magazine, *Poets & Writers*, which includes its most popular section, [Grants and Awards](#), as well as a variety of articles on publishing trends. The organization also provides financial support for readings and other literary events, sponsors multiple writing prizes and awards, and maintains an information-rich website, www.pw.org. Mr. Hsieh's responsibilities include management of the website, which was completely [revamped and newly launched](#) in 2008.

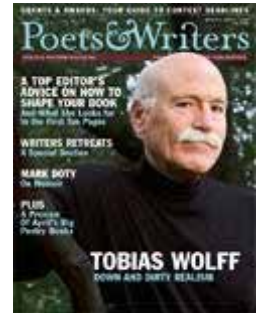
The website's homepage allows users to access various P&W departments. It offers an electronic version of the magazine, which includes articles that are not in the print version. In addition, the on-line version contains the magazine's Grants and Awards section, which can be sorted by deadlines and entry fees. [Magazine profiles](#) and interviews are summarized in the on-line version.

The website has [databases](#) for 200 literary magazines and 100 small presses. These listings are valuable for writers looking to publish for the first time. Other offerings on the website include the "Connect with Others" section, which is a message forum for writers and provides answers to writers' questions; a "Speak Easy Forum," an online community conversation that includes writers critiquing each others' work; a Directory of Writers (authors must be published to appear here); an [events calendar](#), which lists workshops and readings and can be sorted by state; and an Archives section, which contains past articles and a monthly newsletter.

At the Practicum, Mr. Hsieh (who obtained his MFA from NYU) noted that the literary nonprofit world is small and jobs are limited. He [advised beginning writers](#) to participate in a variety of literary events and activities, such as the AWP Annual Conference and the [Harlem Book Fair](#), among others. He also recommended that writers do freelance writing/editing work, which can help them build connections in the literary world. Both Media Bistro, www.mediabistro.com, and Publishers Lunch at www.caderbooks.com are good sources for freelance writing jobs. Another means of [securing connections](#) is to obtain an internship. (Occasionally, Poets & Writers offers unpaid summer internships. Interested students should contact Jen Benka at JBenka@PW.org.)

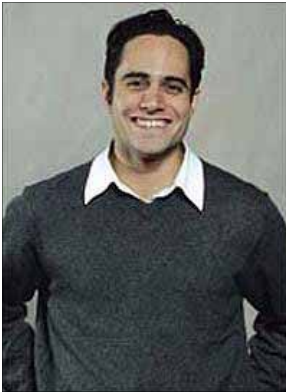
Mr. Hsieh urged writers to [submit their work regularly](#) to literary magazines and small presses. There are also numerous contests for both poetry and fiction; however, Mr. Hsieh was [leery of contests with entry fees](#), and urged writers to consider whether the fee is worth paying.

Mr. Hsieh also described P&W's "Readings/Workshops" grants program. Since its inception in 1970, Poets & Writers has provided honorariums to writers who give readings or conduct writing workshops. Each year, the [Readings/Workshops program](#) supports hundreds of writers participating in events in large cities and small towns throughout New York and California as well as in Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Seattle, New Orleans, Tucson, and Washington, D.C. (The website offers a Guide to Presenting Public Programs.) Annual grants (fiscal year July-June) distribute funds across all counties of New York State; programs applying from less populated counties have a better chance of receiving money.



Poets & Writers

a conversation between anton dudley and rajiv joseph



Rajiv Joseph

AD: Hey, Rajiv, thanks for taking the time to chat with us. Could you start with telling us how you got into playwriting?

RJ: I fell into playwriting by accident. I went to grad school at NYU for Dramatic Writing, wanting to be a screenwriter. At that time the department required students to take courses in both playwriting and screenwriting, and I found that my plays were always a little better than my screenplays, and that writing for the stage came more naturally to me. The desire to stay in New York, rather than move to LA after I graduated, played a part in that as well. I still have an interest in writing for film or TV; however, I realized something about playwriting after I graduated: for a young playwright, especially in New York, there are many different gradations of success. For example, there are fellowships available, awards to apply for, theaters that will stage readings for your play... and these things slowly add up and give you, if nothing else, the psychological edge that artists and writers really need sometimes. You can feel that you “have something going on” no matter how small, and despite the fact that it pays absolutely no money

AD: How did your MFA prepare you for where you are today in your career?

RJ: Besides introducing me to playwriting, NYU was absolutely instrumental in my development as a writer. I didn’t know how to write a script before I went there. It was an intense and wonderful experience from beginning to end. But I’m extremely glad I didn’t go to grad school right after college. I went to NYU six years after getting my BA. For me, that was key.

AD: You’ve had a really interesting career path since graduating from your MFA program. What was most helpful to you as a writer, both in career terms as well as artistic growth?

RJ: I was lucky enough to be selected for the Cherry Lane Mentor Project just after I graduated. My mentor was Theresa Rebeck and this was my springboard into my career. It also helped me hone my vision as a playwright.

AD: Do you ever feel pressure to identify yourself as a certain type of writer? And along that line of thinking, if I were to teach a class in the Josephian genre, on what would I be focusing?

RJ: It’s amusing to me that I’ve come to be known these days as a “Southeast-Asian Playwright” or an “Indo-American Playwright.” These titles don’t bother me, but they also don’t make much sense. I’m half Indian, half white, and I’ve lived my entire life in the U.S. Some of my plays have had Indian characters, so that’s where the label comes from. I’ve never ever heard of the “Josephian genre,” but I like it! But I also don’t really know how to define it. It seems that the definition of a playwright’s genre, or his central preoccupation, is usually assigned by an outside party. I’d love to get that assessment sometime. I suppose the themes that string through my work are sex and guilt, but those things are never related, so go figure. Also, there’s some stuff that’s rooted in my intense Catholic upbringing..

AD: What’s your process like in creating a new play?

RJ: It varies. Sometimes I sketch out the whole plot in an outline, and then systematically write it scene by scene. I did that with my play “Huck & Holden” and with my most recent play, “Animals Out of Paper.” Sometimes I meander my way through a story, not knowing where the story would go. I did that with “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo.” It depends upon the play, and also my mood. My inspiration comes from various places. But I think I use the newspaper the most. I’m always poring through the *Times* and the *Post* and magazines, keeping an eye open for interesting stories. The specificity of truly odd things strikes me, especially in small AP articles or the NY Post’s daily column entitled “Weird But True,” *Continued page 8*

practicum class: three reports

—Sarah Bagley Second Stage Theatre by Michael Cain

On Friday, February 15, 2008, [Kermit Frazier led a discussion](#) with Sarah Bagley of Second Stage Theatre. Originally an English major, Ms. Bagley worked with Arielle Tepper, producer of many successful Broadway and Off-Broadway productions (such as Monty Python’s “Spamalot,” a theatrical adaptation of James Joyce’s story “The Dead,” and John Leguizamo’s “Freak”), in the Summer Play Festival. Ms. Bagley held a position at Playwrights Horizons and is currently the [Literary Manager](#) at Second Stage Theatre, a nonprofit theater company dedicated to reviving previously produced plays and to developing new plays by emerging playwrights.

The theater employs three full-time artistic staff members and produces six plays a season, four on the main stage and two in a smaller space. The [main stage attracts high-profile](#) productions by established playwrights with whom the theater has built long-lasting relationships. Those productions usually begin out of town before transferring to New York City. The smaller (“Uptown”) space develops [new plays by up-and-coming](#) playwrights. This space offers opportunities for writers in the early stages of their careers.

For these writers as well as for more established ones, Ms. Bagley stressed the theater’s commitment to seeking genuine talent and [building lasting relationships](#). The theater’s literary department is dedicated to reading all new scripts. Having an agent is a good way to get one’s plays into the right hands at the right time, said Ms. Bagley, but it is not necessary for a playwright to have one; Second Stage Theatre will accept unsolicited material. In addition, Ms. Bagley [frequently attends readings](#), workshops, and productions in hopes of finding new work to nurture.

The plays produced by Second Stage Theatre tend to have [strong plots in contemporary settings](#). The theater is looking for scripts that can be produced and are ready to go into rehearsal. A play may have a strong voice and style, Ms. Bagley stated, but production won’t be possible if the script has a sloppy structure. Some plays may not be right for the theater or its season, but if Ms. Bagley feels that a writer has [real potential](#), she will track him or her down and make an effort to continue the relationship.

When submitting work to the theater, Ms. Bagley urged writers to [submit](#) their plays soon after the first of each year. A playwright should also feel free to invite her to readings, workshops, and productions, and to [request a meeting](#) (by email or phone) after she has had a chance to become familiar with the author’s work.

Second Stage Theatre has an internship program throughout the season and during the summer for people interested in learning more about dramatic writing as well as about the theater as [a business](#). The Second Stage website lists internship application deadlines and play submission guidelines.



Laura Reitano

a note from the editor *continued...*

her [bracing presence](#) protected us. We knew we could always sit at the side of Laura’s desk and be treated to an outrageous story, [a good finger-wagging](#), or an impromptu consultation on how to be a grownup. We knew she’d tell it like it is.

I feel—as I know all my colleagues do, daily—bereft without Laura, and am grateful beyond speech for having known her. We were so very fortunate to have had her among us for so many good years. [May her memory preside over us](#), and keep us honest.

-- Martha Cooley



rajiv joseph continued...



where crazy stories from around the globe are mentioned in quick, two- to three-sentence blurbs. Real Life is always so much crazier than anything anyone could ever write! I've always wanted one day to randomly pick five stories from a single day's newspaper and write a play connecting those stories, regardless of what they are.

AD: Today, if you could phone yourself of five years ago, what would you say to him?

RJ: It would have to do with Pro Football scores from the past five years. Gambling purposes.

AD: Thanks, Rajiv!

ignobled in indianapolis continued...

My explanation, however, only makes him angrier. I'm sure he's thinking now that I'm **being defiant**, slick, a wiseass. . .uh, "black boy" in the face of his triple sign of authority: white male cop. My heart pounds more strongly. How am I going to get out of this? Clearly, the two of us have entirely different points of view, **views of the world**, memories. Or perhaps we do share a memory: of some collective, almost Jungian dance of defiance and death, a dance conducted **between black man and white man**.

Suddenly the cop's gun, even though it's still holstered, becomes the loudest, angriest, most visible thing about him. And although my companion is behind me and we are standing **in broad daylight** outside a municipal building, I have visions of being thrown in jail and beaten, ostensibly as a result of my having broken the city's jaywalking law.

And so I do something that under other circumstances **I would never do**: I apologize.

The cop nods and smiles at me, **very faintly**. He's become a caricature of John Wayne or Clint Eastwood. He "lets me go" with a warning, though his gaze tells me that he doesn't accept my apology, doesn't even believe it, and that if we were alone, he might morph into some kind of **modern-day Klansman**. Or am I being paranoid? After all, this isn't the year 1870, right?

When the cop turns away from me, secure in the knowledge that he's reclaimed his authority over me, my impulse is to say something more, to not let him get away with such arrogance. But I don't. I **simply stand there**, seething. Finally, my companion speaks up, noting that I'd handled the situation well. With a knowing chuckle, she adds that if her husband had been in my position, he would probably have been handcuffed by now. **She delivers that assessment** as though it were the punch line to an elaborate joke.

I'm speechless. And as we walk toward the municipal building, my ego trembles further. Was she happy for me or disappointed in me? Was I hero or scoundrel? Iron man or wimp?

I take a position slightly behind her now, this time consciously letting her take the lead. In my **lingering hurt** and confusion, I feel myself become a truly dangerous black man, one who'd like to strike out violently against **.who knows what**, or whom. Though he won't. Though he won't.



Freetown Village Singers

practicum class: three reports

—Ed Champion. Blogger by Michelle Augello

Ed Champion is **passionate about writing**. His work has appeared in many journals and publications, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, *The Philly Inquirer*, and *Newsday*. His ***The Bat Segundo Show*** is a cultural and literary podcast featuring intelligent, thought-provoking interviews with contemporary authors and other assorted artists. Ed is also a playwright, a director, a fiction writer, and a member of the **National Book Critics Circle**. His respected blog, *Filthy Habits*, can be accessed at www.edrants.com.

Passion, voice, interest, **instinct, and serendipity** are qualities that Ed Champion displayed and discussed when he visited on February 8, 2008. He advised that every writer should seek awareness of his or her own distinct and individual voice. Creating a blog is one way for a writer to generate an on-line presence, express him/herself freely, and stay in practice as a writer.

Ed also noted that blogs can take on the role of a cultural journal, recording and reflecting **social history**. Through a blog, one can use an alternative medium to celebrate culture, complex art, and life.

Ed spoke **frankly** about the realities of freelance journalism and the importance in developing routines, becoming one's own advocate, and being aware of the **economics of writing** (i.e., paying the rent). He also explored the differences between print and the Web, and drew a parallel between the early history of print journalism and **the future** of on-line journalism. Ed's love of literature was apparent as he spoke about the need for accuracy and honesty in journalism, book reviews, and **interviews**. As writers and readers look for **alternative ways** of accessing literary criticism and information about the literary scene, blogs are offering new paths.

Ever forward-thinking, **Ed created a RSS feed** to his blog called *The Bat Segundo Show*, which Yahoo cited as a pick of the week in 2006, stating "[this] podcast series has released a dazzling array of interviews onto the Web ... the production offers in-depth discussions with such cultural and literary **instigators** as novelists, comedians, comic book **masterminds, humorists**, and media critics. A recent episode covered 'Popeye,' fascist Italy, eerie historical similarities, classic comedy teams, journalism vs. novel-writing, **free lunches**, on being frightened by Bat Segundo, zoot suits, and how to crash parties. And that was just the beginning."

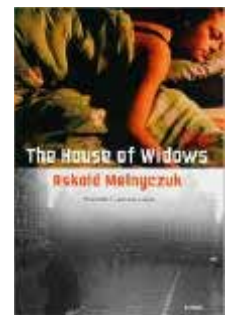
At the close of his lively talk, Ed Champion offered some advice for writers entering this long-term engagement – **become aware, challenge** your own assumptions, celebrate your interests, embrace future changes and developments, be prepared to work, and never lose the passion, joy, and playfulness inherent in writing.

coming up ...

Please join us at **4 pm on Monday, 28 April in Harvey 215** for a reading and conversation with **Askold Melnyczuk**, who stops by Adelphi during his current book tour for his stunning new novel, ***The House of Widows***. Askold Melnyczuk's novel *Ambassador of the Dead* was one of *The Los Angeles Times* Best Books of 2002; his first novel, *What is Told*, was a ***New York Times* Notable Book**. He has also published a novella, *Blind Angel* about the life of Rimbaud. He has received a **Lila Wallace Writer's Award** and the McGinnis Prize in fiction. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The LA Times*, *Ploughshares*, *The Antioch Review*, and *The Nation*. He has **taught at Harvard University** and currently teaches at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and in the Bennington Graduate Writing Seminars.



Ed Champion



COURSE OFFERINGS FOR FALL 2008

ENG 610-01 Genre Development Lyric: Forms of Poetry

R 4:00-6:30 Baumel

We can't write or read poetry without understanding the formal choices the author confronts. This course takes a hands-on approach to the study of poetry. We will consider examples of English-language poetry in classical, traditional and contemporary verse forms and we will write poetry exercises based on our reading. If you are curious about how to write in forms or if you are experienced with rhyme and meter, this class will teach you techniques to develop greater complexity and subtlety in your work.

* This course can be repeated for credit.

Be sure to register soon, before the end of the spring semester, or you may not get the classes you want.

ENG 613 Genre Development: Satire M 7:00-9:30 Cooley

This course will investigate the nature of literary satire, with an emphasis on contemporary American short stories, novels, and poems. In general, satirical literature is designed to expose and mock—gently or harshly—the affectations, foolishness, stupidity, and vices of individuals, social groups, and governing bodies. Satire takes a rich variety of forms, including parodies, lampoons, and dystopian and apocalyptic tales. Our aim in this course will be to investigate how contemporary literary satires function—and in what new directions the genre may be proceeding. We will read work by such authors as Jim Shepard, Stanley Elkin, Rick Moody, Amy Gerstler, and Donald Antrim.

* This course can be repeated for credit.

ENG 638 Teaching Writing: Theory and Practice

W 4:00-6:30 Lamon *

**Baumel
Dudley**

This course is a practical study of the teaching of creative writing and composition, and will focus on teaching methods and exercises suitable for beginning and intermediate university writing classes. We will discuss the assumptions that underlie the writing classroom, consider classroom management strategies, look at some exercises for beginning students, invent our own exercises, critique recent creative writing handbooks, and do some practice teaching. Students will lead discussions, give several short reports, teach a lesson to the class and design a one-semester writing course, which will include a syllabus, a set of exercises, a grading policy, and a detailed rationale.

* Note: Questions regarding this course should be directed to Professor LaMon.

ENG 640 Fiction Workshop

W 7:00-9:30 TBA

For students with a serious interest in imaginative writing and a complementary interest in reading. Students produce writing exercises, reading and critique of colleague's work and try different styles and ways of working with the goal of writing several substantial pieces of fiction by the end of the semester. This course is intended to allow MFA students the time to write and the right forum in which to present their writing. The readings and class discussions serve to strengthen self-critical and reflective skills.

* This course can be repeated for credit.

ENG 641 Writing Poetry Workshop

M 4:00-6:30 LaMon

This workshop aims to create a community of dedicated writers and readers who challenge themselves and support each other. Students will produce substantial new drafts of independent work weekly, develop close editing skills, analyze late twentieth century and contemporary poetry in written and oral presentations, read and discuss essays on poetics, and engage in that ancient communal experience of memorizing and reciting poetry. Students will develop the necessary writing and critical skills to serve them in professional writing careers. Students will consider thoughtful and practical approaches to the life of the artist and the creative process, will articulate and extend their craft – poetics, voice, prosody, etc. and will also look to understanding audience and setting professional goals. This is an advanced poetry workshop intended for graduate and upper level undergraduate students with some experience in the writing of poetry.

* This course can be repeated for credit.

ENG 642 Playwriting Workshop

R 7:00-9:30 Dudley

Though we will study writing from the perspectives of both craft and inspiration, the focus of this workshop is on the foundations of storytelling. The course will start with the question of how one creates a journey and then will track the evolution of dramatic journeys from Aristotle through the present day, analyzing the prevailing models and styles of each structural movement in Western text-based theatre. Students will create conceptual plays based on each model, finally writing both a ten minute play and a full length play. While primarily concerned with plot development, the course will study dialogue construction and character creation, as well.

* This course can be repeated for credit.

ENG 661 Antiquity & Modernity

T 4:00-6:30 McKeown

Mythology and Modern Storytelling.

The mythologies of Greece and Rome have been the most enduring influence on English literature since the Renaissance. Whereas knowledge of the Greek and Roman "classics" is no longer expected of all educated people, authors continue to revisit and revise but also challenge these old stories. In this class we are going to consider how modern writers, artists, and filmmakers have used Greek and Roman mythology in the production of their own art. The course includes an extensive review of classical mythology from original and contemporary sources as well as writings by Rainer Maria, Roberto Calasso, and, Mary Zimmerman, among others.

* This course can be repeated for credit.

Set up a meeting with your advisor to plan the thesis project and to talk about which workshops fit your needs.

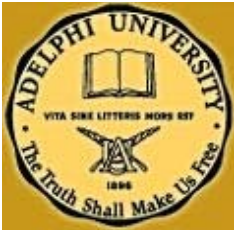
ENG 799 Thesis Colloquium

T 7:00-9:30 Baumel

This course is the capstone experience for the MFA students and will serve as a bridge between their university and professional lives. It will create a forum in which students present ongoing drafts of the MFA thesis to a colloquium of peers who will critique and offer practical advice. The thesis, in parts and as a whole, will undergo the workshop process. Additionally, students will analyze the published work of major figures in their genre and develop critiques of the work of colleagues as they learn to read and respond to the work of others.

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BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE
ON WHOM NOTHING IS
LOST—Henry James

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