

THE CREATIVE WRITING ALUMNI NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2005

A newsletter for CSU MFA in Creative Writing Alumni, Faculty, Students, and Friends
Please send any announcements (publications, awards, or other news) or corrections to Judea Franck at
Judea.Franck@Colostate.edu.

THE PH.D. EXPERIENCE

CW PROGRAM WELCOMES SASHA STEENSEN

SPOTLIGHT ALUM: STEVEN CHURCH

CR ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF THE UNBIRTHDAY PARTY

TREMBLAY/CROW FELLOWSHIP

RETURN OF THE CROW/TREMBLAY ALUMNI READER

2004-2005 READING SERIES

AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

THE PH.D EXPERIENCE

It has become increasingly common for graduates of Master of Fine Arts programs to pursue a Ph.D. in English studies. In light of this recent trend, we've asked several of our own MFA Alumni who have gone on to earn a doctorate to describe their experiences and explain some of the benefits of having an advanced degree. Jacqueline Lyons, Sandra Meek, Stuart Ching, and Jennie A Camp all gave generously of their time and answered some questions about their experiences in Ph.D. programs. We really appreciate their advice and honesty in sharing information with current and former students.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH **PH.D. LITERATURE & CREATIVE WRITING** By Jacqueline Lyons



I earned my Ph.D. in Literature & Creative Writing at the University of Utah (2000–2004). I had a year “off” between my MFA and Ph.D., during which I taught as an adjunct here at CSU and at AIMS Community College. I can't imagine having gone directly from the MFA into a Ph.D. program without that year in between—it saved me from having to take exams and complete my thesis while writing Ph.D. applications, which felt like part-time job in itself.

When I decided to do a Ph.D., there was some talk in the CSU English department about requirements for adjuncts changing, and that helped affirm my decision. But the primary

motivation for me was to ensure that I would remain a writer. I had some fear that if I didn't place myself, for a few more years, in a setting that acknowledged and required that I write, the whole practice of writing might fade into the background. While some people can be computer programmers or engineers or ditch diggers or botanists full time and simultaneously be writers, others, I have noticed, don't manage it. I wanted to be sure.

I entered the program at Utah thinking I would more or less tolerate the literature and theory requirements as part of the deal, and that the dissertation, which was creative, and the workshops and poetry courses were what I would focus my real energy on. In the first semester I took a course in colonial and post-colonial literature and theory, and all of that changed. I found my point of connection with theory along the po-co/cultural lines, and that study has been invaluable to me as a poet and person. The literature courses were simply fabulous, and now I can't imagine not having taken them. A particular humanities course on the Renaissance was mostly responsible for setting in motion my second poetry manuscript. Overall, the four years I spent doing my degree were extremely productive and challenging. The year I was reading for qualifying exams was amazing in terms of what I was understanding—and creating—because all that reading prompted me to want to write, write, write. I felt absolutely at my intellectual and creative peak.

I've been asked about the effect of the Ph.D. in terms of the job market, and it seems to me that more and more it is becoming necessary, with the significant exception being for writers whose books are published through well-known contests and/or win major awards. As more programs expand to include Ph.D.s, it seems logical that teachers in those programs will have to have their own doctoral degrees. Also, my brief experience thus far on the job market reveals that many schools want someone to be the poet as well as have an area of expertise in literature, which a Ph.D. more or less ensures.

My advice to those applying to Ph.D. programs: Apply widely, as the scene is quickly becoming more competitive. Apply to the programs where writers you want to work with are happily employed (i.e., make sure they're not about to leave). Consider the community of the English department as well as the larger community, because this can greatly affect the support you have as you write. Learn about fellowships and teaching loads. Also, and this may not apply to other programs, but at Utah a great deal of emphasis was placed on the critical writing sample in admitting creative writers, so I'd recommend that anyone applying have their former teachers critique both critical and creative writing samples—you want your application to be strong by all considerations.

Jacqueline Lyons's collection of poetry, *The Way They Say Yes Here*, was published by Hanging Loose Press (2004) as part of their 2003–2004 series. She has won a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship, and her work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poems and essays have appeared in numerous journals, such as *Barrow Street*, *Bellingham Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *Florida Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *Permafrost*, *Phoebe*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Quarter After Eight*, *Sonora Review*, *Turnrow*, and others. She earned her MFA in Poetry from Colorado State University and her Ph.D. in Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Utah. Currently, she teaches as an adjunct professor in the English Department at Colorado State University.

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
PH.D. ENGLISH, CREATIVE WRITING

By Sandra Meek



I attended the University of Denver's Ph.D. Program from 1992 to 1995. After receiving my MFA from CSU in 1989, I joined the Peace Corps and taught in Botswana for two years. I applied to doctoral programs from Botswana, using the school secretary's manual typewriter after hours, and began at DU about six months after my return to the U.S.

The Ph.D. at DU was an interesting pairing of a traditional approach to literary study—we were required to take courses in six literary periods (Medieval, Renaissance, Restoration/18th century, and 19th century British; American to 1900; and 20th century) and oral exams in four of the periods—with a fairly avant garde creative writing program. I took workshop courses from several visiting writers, including Ann Lauterbach and Susan Howe, and I also worked with Bin Ramke, my dissertation advisor, and Donald Revell.

I decided to go on for a Ph.D. mainly because I wasn't finished being a student. I wanted to keep studying, to keep reading, to keep writing, and to continue being part of a formal community of writers. During two years living in a village with no access to a library, I came to a very strong appreciation of the academic life, and I missed it.

I applied to only two doctoral programs, primarily because of the difficulties I encountered applying from abroad—particularly from a village with no access to a computer or Xerox machine. I would certainly recommend applying to more programs than I did: while it did work out, having only two shots at acceptance caused me a lot of anxiety. In choosing a doctoral program, I would suggest considering what (inevitable) gaps you would like to fill in from your MFA study; what balance you would like with academic and creative work (i.e., completing a creative versus literary dissertation: I did a creative one); and the aesthetics of the program (the program at Denver was very different aesthetically from the one at CSU at that time, and I feel that this gave me a more comprehensive range in my graduate work overall).

The doctoral program helped me as an academic and as a writer in several ways. In my graduate work at CSU, my literary focus had been primarily on the 20th century; I hadn't formally studied most literary periods since my undergraduate years, so the Ph.D. filled the gaps I myself had created in my study. The academic part of the degree—and the Ph.D. was more academically oriented than the MFA—gave me the confidence to write and to publish academic prose as well as creative work, and that has served me well not only in my secondary field of postcolonial literature, but also in writing reviews and review essays on contemporary poetry.

As far as the job search goes, I am confident that I would not have been selected for my position without the Ph.D. I began as Assistant Professor, and am now Associate Professor of English, Rhetoric, and Writing at Berry College, a liberal arts college in Georgia. As the college

was beginning its program in creative writing, they had no experience hiring MFAs in the English department, and the doctoral degree was a requirement. Also, small programs like Berry's generally want a secondary field in literature or another genre of writing, and for me the Ph.D. helped establish my credentials for teaching postcolonial and postmodern literature. Now that Berry's program has grown, our recent creative writing hire does have an MFA only, but he also came in with a book from a well-respected national press. In my experience, this is fairly typical: an MFA with a book is great, but the MFA without a book means a very difficult job search at the college or university level.

Sandra Meek is the author of *Nomadic Foundations* and *Burn*, most recently published by Elixir Press (January 2005). Her chapbook, *The Circumference of Arrival*, was published by Elixir Press in 2001. Her poems have appeared in the *Iowa Review*, the *Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Conjunctions*, *Quarterly West*, and many other journals. She is an assistant professor of English at Berry College, where she teaches creative writing and contemporary literature. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana from 1989 to 1991 and received an MFA from Colorado State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Denver.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
PH.D. RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION
By Stuart Ching

I decided on the Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition for two reasons: (1) I wanted to expand my marketability in college teaching by gaining a second specialization. (2) Since the late 1980s, the field of rhetoric and composition has taken a turn toward social and cultural contexts, and this turn has enabled me to read widely across the humanities and social sciences and to merge my intellectual, cultural, political, and creative interests.

The Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition has impacted my creative process significantly. My research in rhetoric and composition involves reading across ethnic studies, Asian Pacific American literature, composition and literacy studies, narrative and genre theory, post-colonial theory, and critical pedagogy. I also read widely outside of these areas on any topic that feeds my research. And I remain grounded in the voices of the local communities that both inspire my fictive characters and inform academic critique. Informed by the social turn in the social sciences—i.e., reading the material world as text and examining, through narratives, the ways in which ideologies prefigure the material world—the field of rhetoric and composition remains interdisciplinary at the current time.

For me, this social/interdisciplinary turn in rhetoric and composition has blurred the lines between “academic” and “creative” work. In my academic research, I have written about those subjects closest to me: my family's genealogy and immigration history from southern China to Hawaii, the voices of the women in my family across four generations, my own struggles with language and identity politics, my experiences growing up as a Hawaii Creole English speaker, and the master narratives that structure the myths and legends that shape my imagination. In different forms, these ideas have always illuminated and motivated my fiction as well.



On a practical note, the Ph.D. and the MFA greatly enhanced my job opportunities. I interviewed at Research I, Doctoral I, and Master's Comprehensive institutions. I received tenure-track job offers from institutions in all three categories. So that I wouldn't be perceived as a scholar or writer without a focus, I defined clearly in my job search letters how my creative work, my academic research, and my reading across multiple disciplines projected a coherent research and writing trajectory.

For those interested in forging connections between a Ph.D. in rhetoric and an MFA in creative writing, I'd say that the social turn in rhetoric/composition studies now supports such interdisciplinary work.

Stuart's research has appeared in journals such as *Language Arts*, *The New Advocate*, and *Writing on the Edge* and in anthologies such as *Fractured Feminisms* (SUNY Press), *Fourteen Landing Zones* (U of Iowa Press), and *The Subject is Story* (Heinemann). His fiction has appeared in journals such as *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Madison Review*, and *Hawaii Review* and in anthologies such as *The Best of Honolulu Fiction* (Bamboo Ridge Press) and *Growing Up Local: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose from Hawaii* (Bamboo Ridge Press). Currently, he's an assistant professor of English and the assistant director of Liberal Studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, where he teaches courses in rhetoric, writing, Asian Pacific American literature, and children's literature.

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

PH.D. LITERATURE

By Jennie A Camp



As I neared the completion of my MFA in fiction writing in the spring of 1997, I knew I simply wasn't finished with school. My BA is in journalism, and I worked for several years as a news and crime reporter in Seattle, Portland, and Chicago, so writing and studying literature felt like a guilty pleasure that I hated to see end. I was thriving on the camaraderie of the CSU writing workshops, and each literature course offered me only a brief glimpse of what more I could be exploring. Because my husband's job in Denver was secure, I applied to only Colorado doctoral programs: the University of Denver and the University of Colorado. I was accepted at both, but because CU wanted me to make up a few literature courses before launching into the formal degree, I

decided to attend DU in the fall of 1997. I was honored to enter the program as one of only two doctoral candidates in fiction writing, but I soon found myself mildly bored by the writing workshops and longing for more in-depth literature courses. After fall quarter, I formally switched from a Ph.D. in fiction writing to a Ph.D. in literature, a move that caused some tension with those faculty members who had cheered my admission to the fiction program, but it was clearly the right decision for me.

DU offers a classical literary education, with requirements in Medieval Literature, Renaissance literature, 17th/18th-Century Literature, 19th-Century Literature, American Literature, and 20th-Century Literature, as well as two language requirements and a rigorous oral

examination process. I completed the last of my coursework and oral exams a few days before our son, Miles, was born in April of 2000, and although I had high aspirations for quickly kicking out my dissertation while adjusting to parenthood, the completion of my degree went on hold for several years until I found myself pregnant with our third child and realized that if I didn't finish my degree before her arrival, it might never happen. In August of 2003, I began writing my dissertation, and after countless all-nighters and several chapters written with Disney movies blaring on the other side of the living room, I completed a 420-page draft shortly before our daughter, Mattie, was born in December. I defended my dissertation—titled “Angling for Repose: Wallace Stegner and the De-Mythologizing of the American West”—in May of 2004, and graduated, with three kids in tow, in June of 2004.

I am now a Ph.D. mom with a desk in my living room where I sporadically sit down to write book reviews, fiction projects, and occasional conference proposals—all amidst errant graham cracker crumbs and scattered Hot Wheels. I am the proud mother of Miles (5), Piper (3), and Mattie (1), and a fourth child is due in early October. I won't pursue university-level teaching positions here in Colorado until all of my children are in kindergarten, but I know that time will come soon enough. As for now, it always surprises me when I have just finished changing a diaper or doling out fruit snacks and juice, and I check my e-mail to find a message addressed to “Dr. Camp.” Even though my kids laugh at the notion that Mom is a doctor, since I bear little resemblance to their bearded pediatrician, and my son still believes that those long hours of drafting my dissertation were actually Mom's cover for many, many afternoons of playing computer games, I have confidence that someone, somewhere, will acknowledge this hard-won degree in years to come.

Jennie A. Camp has a Ph.D. in American Literature from the University of Denver, an MFA in fiction writing from Colorado State University, and a BA in journalism from Pacific Lutheran University. She has published book reviews and short stories in such publications as *Prairie Schooner*, the *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, and *Colorado Review*, and other literary magazines. She currently writes monthly book reviews for the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*. Although full-time motherhood keeps Camp out of the classroom these days (her children are 5, 3, and 1, and a fourth baby is due this fall), she has a desk set up in her living room where, amidst scattered Legos and multi-colored Goldfish crackers, Camp keeps her intellectual appetite whetted by writing essays and book reviews focused primarily on the literature of the American West. She has dedicated her studies to Wallace Stegner's expansive oeuvre for more than a decade.



CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM WELCOMES POET SASHA STEENSEN

By Judea Franck

In August of 2005, the Creative Writing Program will welcome Sasha Steensen as an assistant professor of poetry. She will be the newest member of the poetry faculty. She comes to CSU with an accomplished resume of publications and awards and brings with her a variety of interests in poetry, art, and history. In an interview with the assistant to the director of Creative Writing, Sasha expressed her enthusiasm and excitement

in joining the Creative Writing Program and noted some important goals that she hopes to fulfill in her new role as a professor of poetry.

Q: What are some of your specific interests in poetry? How might these interests translate to the students? How do you hope to bring these interests into the classroom or to the Creative Writing Program at large?

A: I was originally attracted to poetry because, for me, it offered a space in which habitual writing and thinking practices could be challenged, and I am still fascinated by poetry's ability to make the familiar unfamiliar. Poetry is always asking us to go places we had no intention of going, but it is here where we can encounter something entirely new. Poets have found almost innumerable ways to achieve this defamiliarization—Emily Dickinson's terse poems and Gertrude Stein's permutative poems are very different, yet both poets have the ability to hold a mirror up to language, to ask us how it operates, and by extension, how we operate. The wonderful thing about a creative writing program is that writers with very different interests and styles are able to introduce one another to new methods, and facilitating this interaction between writers is probably the most rewarding aspect of teaching in general.

Q: I understand that your educational background includes a degree in history. It seems that this would afford you interests and insights in your work that cross boundaries into other disciplines—history, art, etc. How do you think this will influence your teaching here at CSU? Are there any courses in particular that you are hoping to teach? Courses you might propose in the future?

A: For me, poetry really emerged as an alternative to more normative modes of communication when I was studying history as an undergraduate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I was doing a lot of archival research on a project documenting women's work in Las Vegas casinos, and I wrote my BA thesis on the various images of Las Vegas and how they corresponded to national, political, and social trends—the atomic city, sin city, Disneyland for adults, etc. Many of the materials I looked at in UNLV's special collections were organized according to casino, and it struck me then that how materials are organized is determined by who holds the most power, and in Las Vegas, it is certainly the casinos. I wanted to find an alternative way of dealing with the materials of the past, and since I had been writing poetry and taking creative writing workshops throughout my undergraduate career, I knew that poetry allowed for flux and uncertainty and it seemed to emerge as an alternative. It was the method that I was most attracted to in creative writing and literature. I realized I didn't necessarily have to abandon historical materials, but rather I could just approach them from a different angle, so my projects tend to explore the intersection between poetry and history. In *A Magic Book*, I consider the history of magic in the United States, particularly nineteenth-century magicians and magic acts. I became fascinated with the notion of the "spell," and the controversy surrounding trickery and the supernatural. The book I am working on now, *The Method*, takes its title from a manuscript by Archimedes in which he kept all the proofs for his equations. Though for many years, historians thought the manuscript was lost, a copy turned up recently, and it is currently being restored at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. While it was presumed lost, the manuscript was shuffled between the Christian and the Muslim worlds, so in my book, I'm following the various adventures of this particular manuscript to see what it has to say about the current political environment. In both *A Magic Book* and *The Method*, I am trying to find out what poetry, as an alternative mode of expression, can tell us about our past. While I don't expect my students to

adopt the historical model that I have, I do encourage them to see imaginative writing as an alternative method that allows them to ask whatever questions interest them without needing immediate answers. Regardless of the students' individual projects or interests, I would always encourage them to explore other mediums of expression and other disciplines because I believe that when we approach similar questions from a number of different angles, we recognize patterns in our own thinking and writing that need to be considered, if not re-considered.

There are a number of classes that I am looking forward to teaching that would explore the relationship between poetry and other mediums/disciplines. One course I am really excited about is a course I devised entitled Documentary Poetry, and this would be a topic-based creative writing workshop for graduate students. We would read a number of documentary poems, including William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*, Muriel Rukeyser's *U.S. 1*, and Lyn Hejinian's *My Life*, but we'd also look at the act of documenting across genres and mediums—film, visual art, audio projects, etc. Students would work on their own documentary projects, and I would encourage them to explore other mediums as a way of articulating their interests and methods. What I hope to show students is that documentation is a mode of inquiry not just the setting down of historical facts or a linear record of a particular experience. It is really a method that can be useful for any writer.

Q: What additional strengths/ interests do you hope to bring to the program? You are both an editor of a well-respected journal and a former curator of a reading series. Tell me a bit about how you hope these skills will be an asset to you in the CSU community.

A: Again, just as teaching allows us to facilitate interactions between students, editing and curating allow us to facilitate interactions outside of the classroom. I have really enjoyed both co-editing *Kiosk: A Journal of Poetry, Poetics and Experimental Prose* and curating *Another*, which was a Buffalo reading series I curated for three years. In both cases, I tried to bring together a range of poets and writers. *Another* was really designed to bring local poets in contact both with the Buffalo community and with poets from outside of Buffalo. We usually had two local poets read alongside a visiting poet. Similarly, in *Kiosk*, which I co-edit with Kyle Schlesinger and my husband, Gordon Hadfield, we try to publish young writers alongside established writers in order to give their work more exposure. We also try to publish not only American poets, but also poets from other countries; we have published British poets, translations of Mexican poets, and Canadian poets. We offer the writers we publish a lot of space so that they aren't merely publishing one short poem, but rather they can publish sections from a long poem, a number of poems, an essay or an interview.

Editing *Kiosk* has really introduced me to a number of small press journals, and I think it would be useful to start a journal cooperative at CSU. It would be wonderful to subscribe to a wide range of journals so that the students could get a sense of what sort of publications are out there, as well as which publications might be right for their work. It would be a sort of mini-library that would be devoted not only to the larger, more visible journals, but also to the cutting-edge, small press side of publishing.

Q: I know you have an interest in visual arts, namely bookmaking. Tell us a bit about how you might integrate those interests in your teaching life. Are there collaborations that you might propose? Do you hope to introduce any projects along those lines?

A: In addition to helping with CSU's regular reading series, I would love to organize a symposium on bookmaking, bringing a few bookmakers to discuss their work and perhaps demonstrate some of the aspects of bookmaking. I'm also really excited about the prospect of helping students design their own chapbooks. Over the past few years, I've learned a lot about how to make beautiful books that aren't incredibly expensive. This is really a wonderful way for young writers to get their work into the world. Printing a hundred chapbooks allows them to send their books to writers they admire and distribute their work at readings. It also helps them think about the visual aspect of their poems—layout, font, cover images, etc. The labor involved in setting type in a letter press forces the writer to consider every word and space on the page. The knowledge I have gained from making books translates into my own writing practice, causing me to be more aware of the page itself.

I am a big proponent of collaboration, and in addition to collaborating on *Another* and *Kiosk*, I've published a collaborative chapbook, with Gordon Hadfield, entitled *correspondence*. The book is a travelogue of sorts that moves from Quito, Ecuador, to La Paz, Bolivia. In conjunction with the chapbook, we also published a creative nonfiction piece on political murals in La Paz. Travel, like poetry, asks me to reconsider my own habitual thinking processes, and I try to get outside of my comfort zone as much as possible. Happily, both Gordon and I received grants that will allow us to spend the month of June researching and traveling in Central America, where we will hopefully complete more collaborative writing. I'm drawn to collaboration because it forces me to consider my own writing tendencies, and I've found this to be very generative.

Perhaps the most exciting form of collaboration I have participated in is what I would call installation-readings. These projects had 20 to 30 participants, and they brought together writers and artists to produce art objects that fused image and word. Each project had a particular theme or approach and a particular formal structure. For instance, in the Grid Project, participants were given a grid format with a certain number of spaces in which to place words, and the poems were then placed in handmade boxes on an abacus-like format. There were four poems in each box, so the words could be reordered and rearranged to make an almost innumerable amount of new poems. At the reading itself, we read various versions from each box. I am interested in starting an on-going collaborative series like this at CSU, and it would be great to involve artists in other mediums. Again, these kinds of interactions can be really crucial, as they expose us to ways of thinking and producing that are quite different from our own.

Sasha Steensen is the author of *A Magic Book* (Fence Books) for which she won the 2004 Alberta DuPont Bonsal Prize. She co-edits the journal *Kiosk: A Journal of Poetry, Poetics and Experimental Prose*. She is also the coauthor of *Correspondence* (Handwritten Press, 2004). Her work has appeared in *Chain*, *Slope*, *Interim*, *Colorado Review*, and others. Originally trained as a historian, she holds a BA in History and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She will have completed a Ph.D. in the Poetics Program at SUNY Buffalo when she joins us here at Colorado State University in the fall.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)



SPOTLIGHT ALUMNI: STEVEN CHURCH

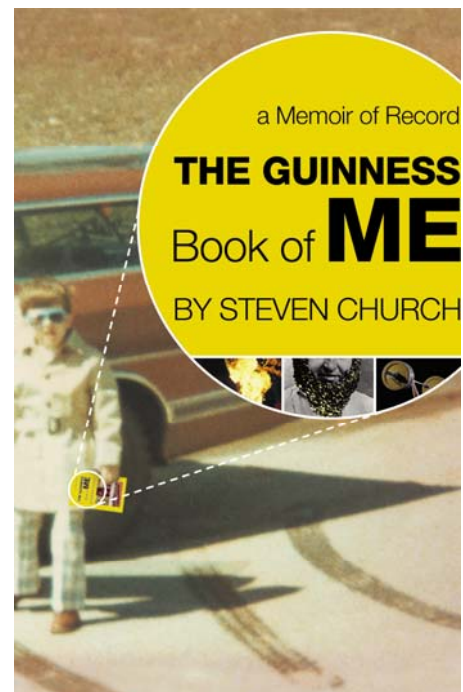
By Judea Franck

After graduating the MFA program in 2002, Steve Church became a father, a teacher, a full-time advisor for liberal arts students here at CSU and the author of a new memoir, *The Guinness Book of Me*, published this spring by Simon & Schuster. Until recently, he was also my officemate. Some might describe Steve as dedicated, driven, and ambitious to have accomplished so much such a short time after receiving his MFA. The word Steve himself uses is “obsessed.” It is that sort of obsession with both writing and with the peculiar people of the Guinness Book that has made Steve’s recent work a success. The memoir chronicles Steve’s childhood—the awkwardness he felt growing up, his struggles to understand his larger-than-life father and

brother, and having to cope with the sudden and unexpected loss of his brother, Matt. He uses entries from the 1980 Super Edition of the Guinness Book of World Records to begin each of his essays in the book. According to Steve, the people that inhabited the Guinness book weren’t “your typical idols. They were the flawed and strange and the perfect sort of hero-freak for a kid who felt misfit for childhood.” These people provided inspired leaps of the imagination to lead Steve into the telling of his life. According to Steve, “Some of them are thematic leaps. Some leaps of language and sound. Some leaps in character connections. Some are stand-ins for reflection, using other people to tell my story. Some of them just fit perfectly without much architecture around them. Some leaps I had to hammer out of raw materials and build into more solid bridges and transitions.” Regardless, it has come together as an inspiring whole. It’s the kind of work you want from a memoir—it’s raw and heartbreaking, honest and funny all at the same time. It works with the whole range of emotions and experiences that detail the roller coaster of human life. And as all good memoirs must have, Steve’s story is driven by his unmistakable voice. He has given the gift of his wild, adventurous, and at times painful life to his readers.

He attributes his dedication to writing and the subsequent publishing of his book to the habits he began here in the MFA program. Despite the challenges of fatherhood and full-time employment, Steve established some discipline and routines in graduate school that he says he’s managed to maintain. He tries (but often fails) to write every day—at least three hundred words. He sets regular deadlines for himself and he shares his work with his writer’s group, the Minions. He also says that he’s ridiculously competitive and stubborn; and he’s actually gotten the point where he appreciates rejection.

Steven adds that many of the book’s chapters started as essays he wrote during his time in the MFA program here at CSU in John Calderazzo’s nonfiction workshop. Others



took root in fiction workshops with Leslee Becker and Steven Schwartz. He can't say enough about how much he appreciates the gentle nudging and influence of his teachers at CSU. According to Steve, "They've always *always* encouraged me to trust my instincts, my obsessions, and my own voice."

Armed with his "bag of essays," Steve gave a four-minute reading at Breadloaf Writers' Conference in 2003. Afterward he was approached by the person who would become his editor. It was this editor who encouraged Steve to take advantage of the Guinness Books as a unifying structural force.

During the next few months, Steve will be giving readings from *The Guinness Book of Me* throughout the country. His book tour began in Fort Collins at the Lory Student Center Book Store on March 22. From here, he will continue on to the Tattered Cover in Denver, on April 5, and then back to his home town of Lawrence and Kansas City, then off to Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland. You can find the whole schedule on his website www.guinnessbookofme.com.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)

CR ANNOUNCES RETURN OF THE UNBIRTHDAY PARTY

The Center for Literary Publishing is hosting the second annual **UnBirthday Party**, a benefit for *Colorado Review*. The event celebrates literature and the tradition of literary journals, specifically *Colorado Review*. In addition to raising funds for the journal, the event is intended to increase Fort Collins residents' awareness of and interest in *Colorado Review*, an international literary magazine that makes its home in this community. This year the party will take place upstairs at the Rio Grande Restaurant on Thursday, April 21, beginning at 7 p.m., and will celebrate the work of Edgar Allan Poe with dramatic readings by professor Martin Bucco, actress Wendy Ishii, and cowboy poet Gary McMahan. Desserts and drinks will be served prior to the readings and a margarita cash bar will also be available. Reservations are required for this event. Tickets are \$40 for individuals, \$70 for couples, and \$25 for students. Ticket prices for individuals and couples include a one-year subscription to *Colorado Review*. Please R.S.V.P. by 8 April 2005. To make reservations or to ask questions about this event, please call the Center for Literary Publishing at (970) 491-5449 or e-mail: creview@colostate.edu. This year's sponsors include Colorado State University, Wild Oats Natural Marketplace, Whole Foods Market, and New Belgium Brewing Company.

THE CENTER FOR LITERARY PUBLISHING

The Center for Literary Publishing exists to publish and promote quality literature in all its forms. As the umbrella office for *Colorado Review* and the Colorado Prize for Poetry series, the Center seeks to celebrate writers of literature and introduce their work to the general public. In addition, through its internship, the Center provides graduate students the opportunity to gain valuable skills necessary to pursue a career in publishing. The CLP is in constant need of financial support to help with publishing costs of the projects that the center publishes. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to help support the CLP, click on <https://advancing.colostate.edu/CLA/GIVE>. Click on "Gift Information" and then "Additional Designations" to select the *Colorado Review*.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)

TREMBLAY CROW FELLOWSHIP: A CALL FOR DONATIONS

For the third consecutive year, CSU's Creative Writing Program will award two \$2,000 fellowships to incoming students who show exceptional promise OR to continuing students who are contributive members of the creative writing program and whose writing has shown exceptional growth. The fellowship fund, established by an anonymous graduate of CSU's MFA program, is intended to honor the inspiration and tireless efforts of two faculty poets, Professor Emeritus Mary Crow and Professor Bill Tremblay, who is on transitional retirement. Fellowship recipients are selected by Creative Writing Program faculty and shall not have full graduate teaching assistantships. Fellowship monies will be deposited in students' accounts for tuition only. Previous winners include Carol Christ, Janell Cress, Logan Burns, and Stephanie Stickney.

With recent budget cuts, rising tuition costs, and a decreasing number of graduate teaching assistantships—as well as fierce competition from other writing programs, many of which offer financial support to all of their students—it is imperative that we increase the value of these existing fellowships and (eventually) increase the total number of fellowships.

Please join me in making a contribution to the Master of Fine Arts Creative Writing Fellowship Fund. In addition to the \$4,000 already committed to our 2005 fellowship winners, our anonymous donor will contribute an additional dollar for every five dollars contributed between March 22 and May 1, 2005. Write your check to the CSU Foundation, with “MFA Creative Writing Fellowship Fund” on the memo line, or donate now at <https://advancing.colostate.edu/CLA/GIVE> to make a donation on line. Click on “Gift Information” and then “Additional Designations” to select the Master of Fine Arts Creative Writing Fellowship Fund. Please check with your tax consultant regarding what percentage of your contribution is tax deductible.

With fond memories of the MFA experience,
Deanna Kern Ludwin, MFA 1995

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)

CROW/TREMBLAY ALUMNI READER: SANDRA MEEK

On February 3, 2005, poet Sandra Meek visited CSU as the fourth alumni reader in the Alumni Reading Series, part of the Creative Writing Program's Reading Series. Meek read new work, as well as poems from her full-length collections, *Nomadic Foundations* and *Burn*. Afterward, she answered questions and signed books. The next day, she met with MFA candidates to discuss their creative writing interests. Meek was named Editors' Choice for *Mid-America Review's* 2002 James Wright Award, and her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, the *Kenyon Review*, *Conjunctions*, *Shenandoah*, and other publications.

After receiving her MFA from CSU, she received her Ph.D. in English, Creative Writing, from the University of Denver. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Manyana,

Botswana. She is an associate professor at Berry College, Georgia, where she teaches writing and international literature.

Past alumni readers include fiction writer Wendy Rawlings, poet John Bradley, and fiction writer Jiro Adachi. The Alumni Reading Series was established and is supported by an anonymous alumna of the MFA Creative Writing Program, in honor of Professor Emeritus Mary Crow and Professor Bill Tremblay, who is on transitional retirement. Alumni readers are selected annually or bi-annually by the Reading Series Committee. There is no application process.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)

READING SERIES ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Spring 2005 series kicked off on February 3 with Poet and Alumni Reader Sandra Meek in the Hatton Gallery. This reading's featured sponsor was the Crow/Tremblay Alumni Reader Fund. Sandra Meek is the author of *Nomadic Foundations* and *Burn*, most recently published by Elixir Press (January 2005). She read from both of these collections. The reading was followed by a question-and-answer session and Meek signed copies of her books for audience members.

The reading series continued on February 17 with MFA Candidates Stephanie Stickney, Juliette J. Guilmette, and Judea Franck. This all-fiction reading drew a large crowd and was a wonderful success.

The series also hosted poet Rusty Morrison, winner of the 2004 Colorado Prize for Poetry on Thursday, February 24. This reading's featured sponsor was the Center for Literary Publishing, publisher of Rusty Morrison's book *Whethering*. Morrison read from her award-winning collection as well as forthcoming work. She also signed copies of her collection for audience members. More information on Rusty Morrison and the Colorado Prize for Poetry is available on the CLP website (<http://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/cpp.html>).

The series continued in March with Eleni Sikelianos and Laird Hunt on Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 pm. The reading took place in the Visual Arts Building across the hall from the Hatton Gallery in room 101F with reception and book signing that followed. Sikelianos read from *Book of Jon: A Memoir* and *California Poem*. Fiction writer Hunt read from two of his novels: *Indiana*, *Indiana* and *The Impossibly*.

The series will host Ron Carlson on Thursday, April 7, 2005 at 7:30 pm, also in Visual Arts Room 101F, with reception and book signing to follow. Carlson is the author of the story collections *A Kind of Flying* (2003), *At the Jim Bridger* (2002), *The Hotel Eden* (1997), *Plan B for the Middle Class* (selected one of the best books of 1992 by the *New York Times*), and *The News of the World* (also selected 1987); the novels *Truants* and *Betrayed by F. Scott Fitzgerald*; and a young adult novel, *The Speed of Light* (2003).

The Reading Series will conclude on Thursday, April 28 at 7:30 in the Natural Resources Building Room 113. MFA candidates Katie Arnsteen, Jenna McWilliams, and Marcus Aurelius Picket will give readings of their work with reception to follow.

Video-taped performances of our visiting writers and MFA candidates are now available on our website and can be downloaded for viewing (<http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/English/programs/readings.htm>).

Our 2005–2006 Reading Series will include renowned writers Jorie Graham, Le Thi

Diem Thuy, Elisabeth Sheffield, Jeffrey DeShell, Steven Church, Craig Arnold, and others. Please look for the [Fall 2005 Schedule](#) coming soon!

Sponsors for the Reading Series include the Department of English at CSU, the Creative Writing Program, the Organization of Graduate Student Writers through ASCSU, University Park Holiday Inn, the Crow/Tremblay Alumni Reader Fund, and KRFC 88.9 FM Homegrown Radio. All readings are free and open to the public. For additional information about any Reading Series events, please call Judea Franck at (970) 491-6389 or email jdf Franck@lamar.colostate.edu.

CALL FOR DONATIONS

The Reading Series continues to be a great success with the help of our generous sponsors. In order to maintain our vigorous efforts that broaden the scope of our literary community to include these nationally and internationally renowned writers, the Reading Series needs your help. Consider becoming a Reading Series sponsor by donating to the CSU foundation and earmarking your funds for the Visiting Writers Reading Series. All donations are tax deductible and the smallest donation can help expand the scope of the Reading Series. **Donate now at** <https://advancing.colostate.edu/CLA/GIVE> Click on “Gift Information” and then designate gift to English.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)

AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

Jiro Adachi's (Fiction, 1992) novel *The Island of Bicycle Dancers* (Picador U.S.A.) just came out in paperback. He also had a cover story article in the City section of the *New York Times* on 1/30/05 entitled “How Q Found Her Groove.” The article is about young Japanese immigrants in New York City. Check out his article at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/30/nyregion/thecity/30feat.html>

Chris Arigo (Poetry, 2000) has accepted the Schaeffer Fellowship at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. The Department of English at UNLV, with the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML), offers the prestigious Schaeffer Fellowship, a program leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English with a creative dissertation. The fellowship, awarded on a competitive basis, provides \$50,000, supplemented by an additional \$25,000 in graduate teaching funds and a full tuition remission. Two fellowships are awarded annually, one each in poetry and fiction. The program includes coursework in literature and creative writing, a qualifying examination, and a dissertation. There is also a foreign language proficiency examination.

Shelle Barton (Fiction, 2004) has moved back to her home town of Dover, Arkansas, where she owns the local carwash and works for Heifer International in Marketing and Public Relations. She writes for her local newspaper and occasionally for Heifer International's magazine, *The World Ark*. She has recently had work published in *Many Mountains Moving*. She's still plugging away at getting her short stories published and is at work on the very beginnings of a memoir about her hometown, which she describes as “something like *Population 486* except

with deer hunters and rednecks instead of dairy farmers and Protestants.”

Bonny Barry Sanders (Poetry, 1989) recently had a collection of poems, *Touching Shadows*, published by Val Verde Press of California. She was honored to be invited to give a reading of selections from the book, followed by a poetry workshop on Feb. 13 at the Jacksonville Museum of Modern Art in their new downtown location, Jacksonville, FL. Log on to Valverdepress.com for more information.

Leslee Becker will have a story appear in the Spring 2005 issue of *Hunger Mountain*.

John Calderazzo's new essay, "Apocalypse Dogs," has been accepted for an anthology, *Comeback Wolves*, forthcoming from Johnson Books. His nonfiction work *Rising Fire: Volcanoes and Our Inner Lives* (Lyons Press, 2004) is still enjoying great success. He will also be featured in a discussion of creative nonfiction and cultural criticism in an upcoming issue of *Fourth Genre* magazine.

Matthew Cooperman has a new artists chapbook, *Words About James*, forthcoming from Phylum Press. He's had poems accepted in 2004/05 in *Volt*, *Free Verse*, *New American Writing*, *Chain*, *Double Room*, *Matter* and *Square One*. Interviews have appeared in *Chicago Review* (D.A. Powell), *Verse* (Ed Dorn) and *Web Conjunctions* (Marjorie Welish). His poem "Howling Wolf" has been included in the forthcoming anthology *Comeback Wolves*, co-edited by our very own SueEllen Campbell.

Jill Darling (Poetry, 2002) will have a poem included in the new Gival Press anthology *Poetic Voices without Borders* out this spring. Another long poem will be included in the fall issue of *Factorial*. She will also be starting the Ph.D. program in English at Wayne State University in the fall.

Jen Dick (Poetry, 1999) and Mark Tursi have poems forthcoming in *Upstairs at Duroc*. Jen's poem "The Memory Machine" will appear on the *Mipoesias* website this spring.

Evelina Galang (Fiction, 1994) was one of ten winners of the prestigious 2004 Myers Outstanding Book Award for her contribution to advancing human rights as author and editor of the anthology *Screaming Monkeys: Critiques of Asian American Images*.

Justin Hocking's (Fiction, 2001) story "Dragon" published in *Open City* was listed on the *2004 Best American Non-required Reading's* "Notable" list. One of his essays will also be featured in the spring issue of *Many Mountains Moving*.

Jean Knight Pace's (Fiction, 2004) daughter Elizabeth Noelle was born on December 5. She was also chosen as a finalist in the Predator Press Prose Chapbook competition.

Jen Lamb (Poetry, 2004) and Scott Olson were married on July 31 at her family's cabin near Golden, CO. She is currently gainfully employed as an Administrative Lecturer with the English Dept. here at CSU. This summer, she won an Arts Alive Fort Collins Artistic Fellowship for her poetry. Also, her poetry manuscript, *apeiron*, was selected as a finalist for the 2004 Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Prize competition. She was one of twenty-one finalists out of a pool of 578 submissions, and her manuscript was sent on to Philip Levine for final judging. The same manuscript was selected as a semifinalist for the Third Annual Slope Editions Book Prize,

judged by Donald Revell. Her entry was in the top 50 out of 400 submissions.

Chloe Leisure's (Poetry, 2006) poem "Fantangency: Inertia" will appear in the upcoming issue of *Matter*.

Jacqueline Lyons's (Poetry, 1999) poem "Stages of Her Soft Eclipse" appeared in the most recent issue of *Interim*. Her essay "Arbiter of Twilight" appeared in the fall 2004 issue of *Colorado Review*. Her essay "Too Nice" was cited as a "Notable Essay" in *Best American Essays 2004*. Finally, a review of her collection of poems, *The Way They Say Yes Here*, can be found on the Peace Corps Writers website.

Sandra Meek (Poetry, 1989) has published her second book of poems. *Burn* (Elixir Press 2005) is available at www.amazon.com. She is currently an Associate Professor of English, Rhetoric, and Writing at Berry College.

Sharon Moffit (B.A. 1970) her book, *The Blessed: A Sinner Reflects on Living the Christian Life*, was published by Zondervan in 2002.

Bill O'Connell's (Poetry) recent poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Poetry East*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Potomac*, and *Nightsun*.

Karen Olson (Fiction, 1998) was named editor of *Utne* magazine in Spring of 2004.

Samantha Prust (Fiction, 1999) has worked as an editor and writer for Cottonwood Press, Inc., a Fort Collins book publisher, since 2000, and since 2001, she has worked as assistant editor for Fort Collins magazine, *Lydia's Style*. She has also been a freelance writer during this time, and has completed a number of small jobs as well as the larger job of editing a mystery novel. Recently, she was hired as a freelance journalist for the *Berthoud Weekly Surveyor*.

Johannah Racz (Poetry, 2001) recently launched www.CreativeWritingCoach.com, a web site that provides writer's links and resources; local writing class information; and details of Johannah's creative writing coaching and freelance writing services. Johannah is expecting her second child in May. Her first child, Rafael, turned two in February.

Wendy Rawlings (Fiction, 1992) has a new story, "Outlandish Plot," in the current issue of *Sonora Review*.

Michael Shay (Fiction, 1992) will appear on a panel, "Nurturing Writers: Grants and Funding" at "Other Words," a literary conference and book fair at Florida State University March 4-5 in Tallahassee. This is the first statewide gathering sponsored by the Florida Literary Arts Coalition. He will be joined on the panel by representatives from the Florida Cultural Resources Commission, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, and Kore Press. A new story will be published in 2005 in a Wayne State University anthology of working class writing.

Rosa Salazar (Poetry, 2005) has poems forthcoming in *Limestone*, *Matter*, and *Punto de Partida*.

Steven Schwartz has a new story, "Opposite Ends of the World," in the spring issue of *Bellevue Literary Review*. His essay "What We Talk About When We Talk About Negative Attachment"

will appear this spring in *North American Review*. A personal essay about the presidential election, “The Deep-Blue, Hairy-Legged Great Divide,” will appear next November in *Hotel Amerika*.

Oz Spies’s (Fiction, 2003) story “The Love of a Strong Man,” was selected for *Best American Mystery Stories 2005*, to be released in fall 2005 by Houghton Mifflin.

Bill Tremblay won the Colorado Book Award for *Shooting Script: Door of Fire*.

Emily Wortman-Wunder (Fiction, 2003) gave birth to a baby girl (6 lbs, 9 oz) on December 15, 2004. The *North American Review* nominated her story “Home Improvements” for a Pushcart Prize. She continues to write for *Porch* magazine and was recently asked to reprint one of her columns in the prototype issue of the new community magazine *Slice*, out of Dayton, Ohio.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)

We hope this newsletter will help alumni of our writing program (now twenty years old) keep in touch with one another, renew old connections, and provide networking to further your writing career. If you have any announcements, accomplishments, or news items you would like included in the newsletter—such as publications, jobs, marriages, births, awards, fellowships, residencies, or just updates on your life since graduate school—please send an e-mail to Judea.Franck@Colostate.edu with that information. We thank you for helping us extend the boundaries of our writing community.

10323/L0515