

# BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter

The blizzard of the world has  
crossed the threshold and has  
overturned the order of the soul.

-- Leonard Cohen

## HIGHLIGHTS

"Nomenclature," a graduate conference sponsored by the Department of English and Graduate Student Government and organized by GEO, is set for Friday, March 5th and Saturday, March 6th in Tawes! This year's conference features six panels of graduate students from DC Consortium universities, roundtable discussions with Maryland MFA students, a professionalization panel on archival research, and a Friday reception.



There will be two keynote lectures: **Kavita Daiya** (George Washington) will be speaking on "Taxonomies of Violence" and **Tita Chico** (Maryland) will be speaking on "Why Details Matter."

This year's GEO Conference will also feature faculty respondents for each panel. The impressive team of respondents consists of **Jonathan Auerbach**, **Jane Donawerth**, **Michael Israel**, **Keguro Macharia**, **Peter Mallios**, and **Brian Richardson**. Also on the agenda is a professionalization panel discussion on archival research led by **Carla Peterson** and **Martha Nell Smith**.

Please plan on attending if you can! For more information, please see the [conference website](#).

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

The **Graduate Studies Forum** will meet on Monday, 2/22/10 at 12:15PM in Tawes 1121. The subject will be doctoral qualifying exams.

**Writers Here & Now** is back with poet Kimiko Hahn and fiction writer Joseph O'Neill. Wednesday, 2/24/10 at 7:00PM in Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes.

The **CLCS Works in Progress Series** welcomes Brian Richardson for a talk titled "The Fate of Reading in the Twentieth Century." Thursday, 2/25/10 at 2:00PM. Location TBD.

Dympna Callaghan (Syracuse University) will be speaking on "Marlowe's Last Poem" for **Renaissance Reckonings**, Friday, 2/26/10 at 12:30PM. Tawes 3132.



Sandra Bermann (Princeton University) will give a lecture titled, "In the Light of Translation: Insights from Dante's *Commedia*" for the **Comparative Literature Lecture Series** on Friday 2/26/10 at 3:00PM. The lecture will be preceded by a faculty workshop from 10:00-11:30AM on curricular and institutional issues related to translation and comparative literary studies.

Also on Friday, 2/26/10 at 3:00PM, **Critical Theory Colloquium** welcomes Douglass Ishii (PhD candidate in American Studies) for a research presentation: "'this baggage of essentialist expectation': Un-Critical Multiculturalism, Neoliberal Time, and APA Identity Politics." Tawes 3132.

The **LGBT Studies Lecture Series** continues with Mel Chen (UC Berkeley), presenting "Racial Animacies" on Thursday, 3/4/10 at 5:00PM in Tawes 1101.

The **Transatlantic Poetics Lecture Series** welcomes Charles LaPorte (University of Washington) for a talk, topic TBA. Monday, 3/8/10 at 4:00PM. Location TBD.

**Center for Teaching Excellence** will be running a workshop on "Creating and Preparing Students for Formal Writing Assignments," Thursday, 3/11/10 at 2:00PM. Location TBD.

[www.english.umd.edu/bywords](http://www.english.umd.edu/bywords)

## UPCOMING DEADLINES and DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

**Ahem!** Attention faculty, lecturers, and TAs teaching 200 level courses. Chances are you have forgotten to submit a copy of your **Spring 2010 syllabus**. Please submit your syllabus as soon as possible!

We use these copies to answer inquiries from current students who need to finalize their class schedules, and former students needing transfer credits. Your syllabi on file has been a big help to new TAs when they're in the process of developing their own syllabi. Please help us by submitting your syllabus to Isabella Moulton at [imoulton@umd.edu](mailto:imoulton@umd.edu), and to [english@umd.edu](mailto:english@umd.edu) for our computer database.



## Do Grad Student Avatars Dream of Electric Snow Days?

The snowmageddon has left many professors scrambling. Syllabi need to be restructured, class time needs to be made up, events and lectures need to be scheduled anew. Not so for **Matt Kirschenbaum's** Engl 758C "Simulations" class.

While the rest of us were shoveling our way to eternity and avoiding Stephen Kingesque delirium, "Simulations" carried on as scheduled. How, you ask? They put theory into practice and met in Second Life (class picture below)!



"It seemed 'right' discussing Baudrillard within the simulated world of Second Life," says student **Peter Grybauskas**. "But I was still reprimanded when I interrupted discussion to take a few pot shots at classmates with my new blaster."

One student's reportedly "adorable" cat-eared avatar is missing from the class photo. "Ironically, I was having some trouble flying on top of that damn giant cat," says **Rebecca Wise**.

*More articles on recent department activities are available on our [web site](#)! If you have an idea for an article, please e-mail [englweb@umd.edu](mailto:englweb@umd.edu)*

## Catching up with our alumni...

**Lara Vetter** (PhD '03), assistant professor at University of North Carolina - Charlotte, is publishing two books this year: *Modernist Writings and Religio-scientific Discourse: H.D., Loy, and Toomer* (in Palgrave's Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics Series edited by Rachel DuPlessis) and *Approaches to Teaching H.D.* (MLA, and edited with another Maryland alum, **Annette Debo** (PhD '98), who holds tenure at Western Carolina University).

**Jon Reiner** (MFA '87) has signed a contract with Simon & Schuster for a memoir, a book-length expansion of his recent piece in *Esquire*, "[The Man Who Couldn't Eat](#)."

**Michelle Brown's** (PhD '08) article, "Bleeding for the Mother(Land): Reading Testimonial Bodies in Nuruddin Farah's *Maps*," has been accepted by *Research in African Literatures*.

**Jay Dougherty's** (MA '84) PhotoCamel.com continues to grow steadily, now boasting over 40,000 members, making it one of the Internet's largest sites catering to professional and enthusiast photographers. His other online venture, PoetryCircle.com, will release its first anthology in 2010. PoetryCircle Press, recently started, will begin publishing books by selected PoetryCircle poets later this year.

**Todd Oakley** (PhD '95) has been appointed chair of the Department of cognitive science at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH.

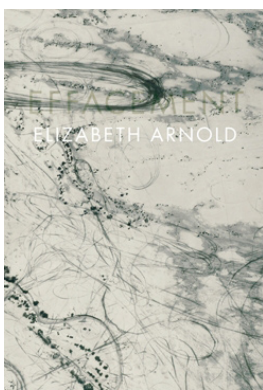
## Arnold Publishes New Volume of Poetry; Wins Lowell Scholarship



A flurry of good news for **Elizabeth Arnold**: she has published a new book and she has won a major award!

Associate Professor of English Elizabeth Arnold's third volume of poetry has just been published by Flood Editions. *Effacement* is a powerful sequence of poems that think about the wounded body. *Effacement* addresses such difficult topics as disfigurement, surgery, war, and cancer.

"In this remarkable new book, Elizabeth Arnold focuses on what certain bodies undergo against forces that efface them," writes James McMichael. "Physical law has it that 'what pokes out gets hit.' Limbs, noses, and jaws are blown off. There are mastectomies. Prosthetic reconstruction is 'flesh displaced.' Some of those who experience it learn that there is now between them and the ones they love a wall of cancelled desire."



Read more about *Effacement* [here](#).

In other news, Arnold was recently selected (from nearly 400 applicants) winner of the 2010-2011 **Amy Lowell Travelling Scholarship**. This award, which is adjudicated by a member of the Harvard English department, along with two nationally prominent poets, is well known in the poetry world and has been won by some of the country's most distinguished writers. Past winners include Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Bly, Phillis Levin, and Adrienne Rich. The single requirement of the award is that the winner must spend the twelve months of the award outside the United States.



## FACULTY NEWS

**Michael Collier's** poem, "The Bees of Deir Kifa," received the Emily Clark Balch Prize from *Virginia Quarterly Review*, given by the editors to the best poem to appear in VQR in a given year. His poem, "An Individual History," which also appears in VQR, has been selected to appear in *The Best American Poetry, 2010*.

Two new books from **Neil Isaacs**: a novel, *The Doaker's Story*, was released by Drinian Press in November; and a clinical study of couples, *The Package and the Baggage*, is due out from Blue Dolphin Publishing early this year. Visit [Neil's website](#) for details on both books.

**Sheila Jelen** and Seth Himelhoch have announced the birth of a new daughter, Meirav Sarit, on Saturday the 9th of January at 5:04PM, weight 8 pounds 13 ounces. Meirav joins her older siblings Malka, Nava, and Akiva.

**Matt Kirschenbaum** was quoted on the digital future of libraries for the *New York Times Online's* [Room for Debate](#) blog.

**Gret Metcalf's** essay "Them like US, Then like Now: The Modernized Historical and the Americanized Foreign in Disney's Animated Films" appears in *The Americanization of History: Conflation of Time and Culture in Film and Television*, Kathleen A. McDonald, ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

**Brian Richardson** delivered an invited lecture, "Narrative Space in Postmodern Texts," at the Ohio State University and another on "Unnatural Narratives: Theory and Practice," at Aarhus University in December. At MLA he read a paper on "Modernism, Interpretation, and Duplicity: Reading and Misreading in *Lolita*," at a Nabokov Society session. In January, he gave a talk on "The Book in the Jungle: Conrad and Intertextuality," at the Conrad in California Conference. His article, "Postmodern Narrative Theory," appears in the current issue of *Foreign Literature Study* (Wuhan, China); another article, "Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology" (co-authored with Jan Alber, Stefan Iversen, and Henrik Skov Nielsen) appears in the upcoming issue of *Narrative*; and his review of Eric Bulson's *Novels, Maps, Modernity* is in the current issue of *Novel*. In January, he acceded to the position of Vice President of the Joseph Conrad Society of America.

From high schools through universities, writing centers have increasingly become a focus as resources for improving students' written communication skills. On Monday, February 1, Fairfax County English teachers attended a "Writing Center Summit," designed to assist them with planning and implementing writing centers in their high schools. Featured as keynote speaker was **Leigh Ryan** who spoke on "Peer Tutoring: Outcomes for Students." Joining Leigh as joint keynote speaker was Ruth Okeke, a Writing Center tutor and undergraduate Secondary Education English major, who spoke on "Peer Tutoring: Outcomes for Tutors."

## STUDENT NEWS

An article by **Sara Schotland** "Defiled and De-Sexed: Dickens's Portrayal of a Woman Waging War in Victorian England" appears in the *American Journal of Legal History* 49.4: 438-455. The article concerns Sally Brass, the dishonest female law clerk who functions as *de facto* lawyer in Charles Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop*.

### NAME THAT LIBRARY!



Emperor Pedro II laid the first stone for this library's foundation in June of 1880. Statues of Pedro Alvares Cabral, Luís de Camões, Henry the Navigator, and Vasco da Gama watch over the main entrance.

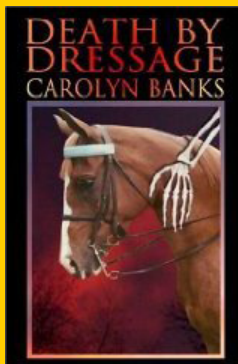
**Answer on Page 4!**



## HISTORY of the ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Writers Here & Now has become a hallmark of the English Department, reflecting the department's keen interest in foregrounding contemporary literature's most important voices. The series began in 1970 as Poets Here & Now under the direction of **Roderick Jellema** as a complement to the growing interest in creative writing in the department.

Jellema was joined by a generation of creative writing faculty that had profound impact on the shape of the department. In 1969, **Rudd Fleming**, **Edward Gold**, Jellema, **J.R. Salamanca**, **Peter Van Egmond**, and **Reed Whitemore** spearheaded the development of an M.A. degree with a creative emphasis, a precursor to the department's MFA program.



The program's first graduate was **Carolyn Banks**. She went on to teach at Bowie State before turning to a full-time writing career. Banks is the author of numerous short stories and eight novels, notably her series of equine-themed mystery novels (*Death by Dressage* and *Groomed for Death* now rank among my most favorite book titles ever).

Banks' success is made clear by the bragging done by her hometown of Bastrop, Texas. Bastrop's wikipedia page proudly claims as its most famous residents WWE wrestler The Undertaker, country singer Tres Womack, and Banks.

Following Banks' graduation, many more incredible writers have graced the halls of Taliaferro, Susquehanna, and now Tawes. A small sampling of their award-winning output can be seen [here](#). Writers Here & Now has carried on as well, a tradition that continues this coming Wednesday, February 24, with poet Kimiko Hahn and fiction writer Joseph O'Neill. Click [here](#) for details!

## Name that Library Answer

The Real Gabinete Português de Leitura in Rio de Janeiro has been called "possibly the most beautiful library of the mall" by the blog Librophiliac Love Letter.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*The next edition of Bywords will be released on Thursday, March 18th. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplished accomplishments by Friday, March 12th.*

*Please include dates, locations, and titles of papers/lectures/etc. in your news submissions.  
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