

If for no other reason,
because of my
English degree I
learned to love Emily
Dickinson even though
I once swore that I
couldn't stand her.
If for no other reason,
because of my English
degree I learned how
to identify my own
interpretations and to
never apologize for
them.

Rhiannon Potter,
Class of 2012



nglish News

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May 2012

Graduate Asst. Teaching Award goes to Jessica Jones



This year, UM's prestigious Graduate Assistant Teaching Award went to **Jessica Jones**, Graduate Student and TA in English/Literature. Several students wrote letters in support of Jessica's selection for the award; her writing philosophy gives some idea of why she is able to reach her students so successfully:

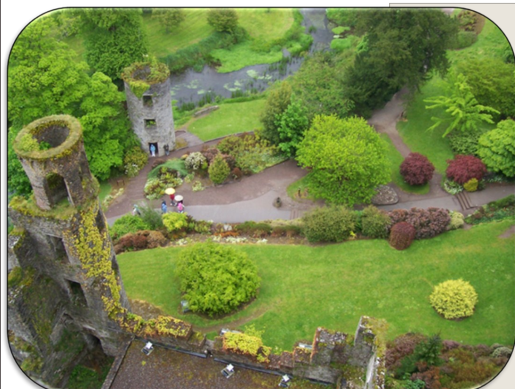
"Writing is hard. Even for experienced writers, even for *published* writers, no piece just 'flows' from the pen like we think it should. I tell this to my first year composition students, and they don't believe me. We read Bruce Ballenger's

"The Importance of Writing Badly.' Then I take in hacked up, crossed out, taped together drafts of my own writing and they start to nod and pay attention, and I pass around Xeroxes of the drafting processes of Hemmingway, Dickinson, Fitzgerald... and copies of rejection letters received by award-winning writers . . . and they start to see it's not just them. Writing is hard work." Congratulations, Jessica!

Students Accepted to PhD programs.

- Joel Beatty has been awarded a full 6-year fellowship to Michigan Tech U, where he will pursue his PhD in Rhetoric and Composition.
- Brett DeFries (MFA '11) has been accepted to the University of Iowa PhD program in Literature.

UM Students travel to Ireland in May!



Is Aoibhinn beatha as scoláire

bhíos ag déanamh a léighinn;

Is follas díbh, a dhaoine

gurab dó is aoibhne in Eirinn

Sweet is the scholar's life,

busy about his studies,

the sweetest lot in Ireland

as all of you know well

These lines are taken from a 17th century poem written by a member of the Bardic institution, a mandarin class of professional poets who traced their heritage back to the druidic order of pre-Christian Ireland. The poem is one of many found in the Irish tradition celebrating the joys and virtues of a life dedicated to learning. The Irish literary tradition is the oldest in northern Europe, with written texts going back to the 7th century. The tradition has proved to be remarkably resilient, reinventing itself through the ages to meet contemporary realities of cultural conquest and destruction, so that it survives, although with less vigor, down to the present day.

As the only university in the United States to offer an accredited course of this kind, UM does its part to maintain Irish culture and tradition through its very popular and quickly growing Irish Studies Program. Seven traditional and five non-

traditional students will spend three weeks in the last great bastion of Irish Gaelic Culture in the southwest of Ireland: the Gaeltacht [Irish-speaking area] of Dingle. It is in this locality that the traditions of storytelling, singing, poetry, music and dance are handed down from generation to generation. The Gaeltacht people are the custodians of Ireland's 3,000 year Gaelic heritage, and they will be the ones who will share that heritage with UM's students.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our students. Constance Shepardson, a senior who will be part of the study abroad group, says "Learning any language is hard, but Irish has the extra difficulty of being spoken by a really small population, so I don't get many opportunities to apply what I've learned. Now, I can have the enriching, fulfilling, fantastic experience of using the language I've been studying for two years."

Student and Alumni Accomplishments

Alumni

Laura Price Steele (MFA 2009) was awarded 3rd place in the Moment Magazine-Karma foundation Short Fiction Contest. Laura first published in *The Oval*.

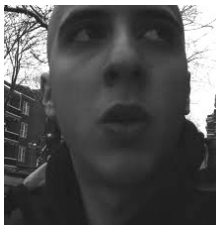
Melissa Leavitt (MFA 2011) has an essay coming out in *Willow Springs: Thirty Years of Poetry, Prose and Interviews*.

Abi Keller's (MFA 2009) first book, *Lake People*, which is a novel told in stories, will be published by Knopf in the spring of 2013. The book will be published under her married name, Abi Maxwell. You can read the first story, "Giant of the Sea," in *McSweeney's* 3

Robby Nadler (MFA 2011) gave debut readings of his new manuscript in Paris and Morocco. While in Morocco, he spoke at a MENA conference with Tom Heely on a panel entitled "Speaking of Language: The Written Record." He will also be reading from the manuscript for a private event for the American Ambassador. He has been invited to sit in on a hybrid-forms panel at the Israeli literary conference, *Tsuris and Other Literary Pleasures*. His pantoum, "sunny morning-- eight legs" is forthcoming in *The Offending Adam*.

Students Mackenzie Cole, John Jepsen, Laurel Nakanishi, and Emma Torzs presented their work at the University of British Columbia's "Endnotes: Roots and Radicalisms" conference in Vancouver, B.C.

Melissa Mylchreest, 2012 student winner of the **Merriam-Frontier Award**, gave a poetry reading from her award-winning manuscript, *Reckon*. Her poem "The Gap-Tooth Girl," winner of the Obsidian Prize in Poetry, appeared in *High Desert Journal*, along with new fiction by William Kit-tredge and drawings by Wes Mills. Find it here: <http://www.highdesertjournal.com/links/>



Gil Filar (first year MFA) has a story, "Here for Life," coming out in *Glimmer Train*. **Laurel Nakanishi** (second year MFA) received a grant from Humanities Montana to place poems on

Missoula's Mountain Line buses. Working together with the Missoula Writing Collaborative, Nakanishi has included poems by elementary school students as well as famous poets.



"People often think that poetry only exists in books or greeting cards, but in actuality, it's all around us," according to Nakanishi. "Poetry can shape and articulate our world, it can slow us down and help us to pay attention, even during a morning commute," says Nakanishi. **Emma**



Törzs (second year MFA) has "3 Stories" in the online journal Hobart, in *Redivider* and the *Cincinnati Review*, and a story forthcoming in *Ploughshares*.

Faculty Activity

Joanna Klink was awarded the 2012 Jeannette Haien Ballard Writer's Prize (\$25k award), which is awarded annually to "young writers of proven excellence in poetry or prose."



The Blackwell Companion to the Literature and Culture of the American West (edited by Nicolas Witschi) was named a Choice Outstanding Academic Book for 2011. Our own **Nancy Cook** contributed to this collection, "Framing Class in the Rural West: Cowboys, Double-wides, and McMansions."



Nancy will present a paper at the Affective Landscapes conference at the University of Derby, UK, May 25 and 26, 2012.

Quan Manh Ha translated two short stories (from the Vietnamese into English) that will be published in *Metamorphosis: A Journal of Literary Translation*. They are: "From Theory to Practice" by Vu Trong Phung and "The Annamese" by Nguyen Cong Hoan.



Beverly Chin presented "How WIN Formative Assessment Empowers Teachers and Students" at the OPI Assessment/Data Conference in Helena.

At the October state conference of Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts, Beverly presented "Making Connections with Native American Poetry," "WIN: 6th Grade Writing Assessment," and "Celebrating 100 Years of NCTE."

At NCTE's 100th anniversary in Chicago, Beverly presented "Using a Framed Story Structure to Write Memoir." She was the chair of "Intersect and Connect: Kids Create Learning through 21st Century Tools" and was the respondent on "Who Writes the Past? Literature as Record and Resistance." She was also a Table Leader on "Sharing Our Favorite Young Adult Authors and Literature." Beverly serves as an elected member of the Middle Level Section Steering Committee.

Beverly's many contributions to English Teaching have been recognized: In September, the Arizona English Teachers Association honored her with their FRIEND OF AETA AWARD for 2011. Beverly received a Star Quilt from Greg Hirst and his Poplar High School students. The Star Quilt honors Beverly's leadership and contributions on behalf of writing instruction, assessment, and professional development. Most recently, she was awarded the NCTE Distinguished Service Award.

More Faculty Activity



Robert Stubblefield's essay, "Minding the Store," appeared in the Fall 2011 issue of *High Desert Journal*.

Heather Bruce has been invited to give the keynote address at MEA-MFT in Billings in October. Her talk will be titled, "Subversive Acts of Revision: Writing and Justice."



David Moore has had several publications: "Ask no one for your sovereignty': John Trudell and the Affirmations of Alcatraz" in *EOLLE: Est Ovest Langues Littératures Echanges*; an invited chapter: "The Ground of Ethics: Arrowboy's Ecology in *Almanac of the Dead*," published in *Howling For Justice: Critical Perspectives on Leslie Marmon Silko's Almanac of the Dead*. Ed., Rebecca Tillett. Forthcoming from Arizona UP. David has also been invited to edit a volume on Silko for the UK/NY publisher Bloomsbury/Continuum.



Visiting Faculty Activity

Elizabeth Robinson held a poetry reading on Friday, April 13. Robinson is the author of eight books of poetry, most recently *Under That Silky Roof* (2006) and *Apostrophe* (2006). She has won the National Poetry Series and the Fence Modern Poets Prize. Robinson is the Hugo Visiting Writer at The University of Montana this semester.



UM alum Daniel Shapiro spoke about translation and writing and gave a poetry reading on Thursday, April 19. Shapiro is the translator of Chilean poet Tomás Harris's 1992 collection, *Cipango*, Director of Literature at the Americas Society in New York, and Editor of *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*.

Garrett Hongo read poetry on Friday, April 20. Hongo is the author of three collections of poetry, including *Coral Road: Poems* (2011), *Yellow Light* (1982), and *The River of Heaven* (1988), which was the Lamont Poetry Selection of The Academy of American Poets and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.



More Faculty Activity

Katie Kane heads to Palestine (West Jerusalem) this month as a Faculty Fellow for the Palestinian American Research Council. She is one of ten scholars chosen from a nationwide application process; her published work on the reservation was a key reason for her selection. PARC seeks to put American and Palestinian scholars from the same disciplines



in contact for the purposes of international research and publication and to educate American academics about the situation in Palestine so that they can pass that information along, in the educational context, to colleagues and students. She will visit checkpoints, the wall, and settlements, meet with literary figures and scholars, and travel to universities (Birzeit, Bethlem, etc).



Professor Kane will also participate in a five-day seminar at the University of Hawai'i for authors included in *Biography Journal's* special issue "Dire Colonialisms," edited by Salah Hasan and David Alavarez. Kane's contribution, "Ayiti Leve/ Haiti Rise": Life, Death, and the Trembling of History in Kreyol and Haitian Literature and Culture," examines the Haitian aesthetic movement of Spiralisme. Katie has presented versions of this paper at the Modern Language Association's Annual Conference and at the Annual American Studies Conference.

Andy Smetanka (MFA 2007 & Adjunct Assistant Professor) is now working on what he thinks is an utterly amazing movie called *And We Were Young*. He is using an old-fashioned silhouette animation to tell the story of American soldiers in World War One, weaving a narrative documentary out of first-person accounts from the Doughboys themselves. His aim is to give the complete arc of America's involvement, as told in the words of men (and women) who were in the very thick of it, in an animated feature with equal consideration given to beauty and brutality.



Student Scholarships and Awards

Undergraduate Awards:

The Helen J. Olson Scholarship: Colin Johnson and Karl Olson

The Maureen Mansfield Scholarship: Claire Mikeson

The Rose Southworth Megee Scholarship: Geoffrey Elliot

Edmund Freeman Award: Kristine Quint

Alice Passano Hancock Davidson Scholarship: Claire Mikeson

Margaret Beebe Memorial Scholarship: Kristine Quint

James P. Welch Jr. Memorial Award: Melissa Lacock

Opus Scholarships: Tyler Cross and Chelsea Elwood

Creative Writing Graduate Awards:

A. B. Guthrie Memorial Fund: Elisabeth Ambury

Creative Writing Scholarships: Catherine Bailey and Samantha Duncan

Goedicke/Robinson Scholarships: Myrrah Dubey and Nicholas Forrest

Greta Wrolstad Travel Award: Laurel Nakanishi

Nettie Weber Creative Writing Awards: Cecile Berberat and

Carl Corder

Graduate Assistant Teaching Award:

Jessica Jones

Bertha Morton Scholarships:

Dana Fitz Gale and Carrie Laben

Academy of American Poets University Prize:

Poet Brian Teare selected the following students for the *Academy of American Poets University Prize*:

Winners: Lauren de Paepe, "The Crossing" and Noel Thistle Tague, "Foundation"

Honorable Mention: Tony Ruzicka, "More Words"

Your Contributions at Work



“The English program's aim is to impart to the student an understanding not only of the aesthetic richness of the literatures that have been written in English but also of the historical and cultural forces that have contributed to their making.”

Spring 2012 Graduation

Degrees Awarded

Master of Arts in English Literature—14

Master of Arts in English-Teaching—7

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing—17

Bachelor of Arts in English—107

with minors in:

Creative Writing

English Literature

English Teaching

Film Studies

Irish Studies

Linguistics



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For more information about making a gift (with no obligation to do so), please contact Kelley Willett of the UM Foundation at Kelley.Willett@mso.umt.edu or (800) 443-2593, (406) 243-2646.