

# Wordsworth



The Newsletter of Lewis & Clark's English Department

## LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE WELCOMES ROBERT HASS FOR POETRY READING

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Front page  
Lewis & Clark College Welcomes Robert Hass  
for Poetry Reading

Page 2  
A Reading with Paul Merchant  
New Study Abroad Program in London

Page 3  
A Book Warming with Jerry Harp  
Creative Writing at L&C

Page 4  
Faculty & Alumni News & Updates  
Graduating Seniors

Page 5  
Student Awards and Honors

### *We want to hear from you!*

Drop us a line to let us know what you've been up to, where you're living, and what plans you're making. You can email the department at [english@lclark.edu](mailto:english@lclark.edu) or write to :

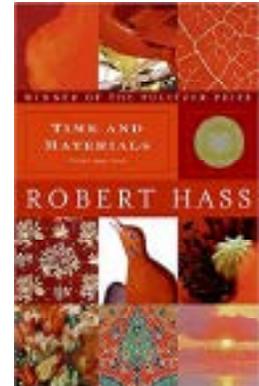
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Image by Shoey Sindel, 2014



On February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Lewis & Clark community was lucky enough to welcome Robert Hass, a poet of great eloquence, clarity, and force, whose work is rooted in the landscapes of his native Northern California. Widely read and much honored, he is also an essayist, translator, and activist on behalf of poetry, literacy, and the environment. Most notably, in his tenure as United States Poet Laureate Hass spent two years battling American illiteracy, armed with the mantra "imagination makes communities."

Hass has published many books of poetry including *Field Guide*, *Praise*, *Human Wishes*, *Sun Under Wood*, and more, as well as a book of essays on poetry, *Twentieth Century Pleasures*. His collection of poems entitled *Time and Materials* won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. His book of essays, *What Light Can Do: Essays on Art, Imagination, and the Natural World*, is the recipient of the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay. His most recent book is a collection of essays exploring poetic form titled *A Little Book on Form: An Exploration Into the Formal Imagination of Poetry*.

Hass has also been awarded the MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, the National Book Critics' Circle Award (twice), and the 2014 Wallace Stevens Award. He is a professor of English at UC Berkeley.

Hass began his reading with praise for the late William Stafford, a beloved member of the Lewis & Clark community for many years. After this tribute to L&C's poetic legacy, Hass began his first poem, a tumultuous rollercoaster of language that included widely known phrases such as "Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers" and "She Sells Seashells by the Seashore." Hass recruited the audience to join him in a call and response for this fun exercise in language and sound, quickly creating an inclusive community that set the tone for the rest of the evening.

Hass soon showed his full range, sharing new, unpublished poems that chronicle death in each decade of life, honoring the sudden passing of his nephew. Though drastically different in tone from his opening poem, these poems carry the same precision of language and sound, moving the audience in ways some of us could not have expected.

The evening concluded with a question from Professor Mary Szybist, the Morgan S. Odell Professor in Humanities and Hass's former student at the Iowa Writer's Workshop. She asked him to speak to his suggestion that "It is good sometimes for poetry to disenchant us." To this, Hass said that poetry should be used as alternative knowledge, a fitting declaration as it is safe to say that each member of the audience left feeling fundamentally altered in some way.

## A READING WITH PAUL MERCHANT

On February 26th, Paul Merchant returned to the Lewis & Clark Campus to read from his newest collection, *Bread and Caviar* (2016).

Merchant, the previous director of the William Stafford Archives here at Watzek Library, introduced his poems by saying, "One writes translations when one has nothing more to say." It becomes clear after listening to Merchant's work, complex reimaginings and translations of ancient poems in Greek, Latin, and Welsh, that he experiences anything but a lack of things to say. His reinventions and renditions of canonical poets and thinkers such as Horace or Chladni help readers develop a sense of the difficult thoughts and works that are so often beyond our reach in the present day. Be it in

a poem imagined as a letter from Gesner, the famed zoologist, to Froschauer, one of the first printers in Zurich ("A Dream of Order"), or in his "imitations" of Horace's first book of Epistles, Merchant injects something new, while remaining loyal to the greats that came before him.

Merchant said (with a mixture of reluctance and pride), that he seems to "spend most of my imaginative life in the past." *Bread and Caviar* is a testament to the newness and complexity that is produced when we return to the past and insert our own, modern imagination amid the myths and stories that live there.

Merchant was born in Wales and taught for many years at Warwick University. Since 1988 he has lived in Oregon. His other books of poetry include *Bone from a Stag's Heart* (1988 Poetry Book Society Recommendation) and *Some Business of Affinity* (2006 Oregon Book Award finalist).



Paul Merchant

## PROFESSOR KAREN GROSS LEADS NEW STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM IN LONDON

Last fall, Karen Gross led a group of students to London for a brand new study abroad program. Karen, along with professors David Campion, Rishona Zimring, Kurt Fosso, Ben David, and Michael Olich, created this program in part to replace the Scotland program, which had to be discontinued due to curriculum changes at the University of Glasgow. With this new program, students live in the Mile End neighborhood surrounding Queen Mary University of London, where they attend classes. In addition, students take a course taught by the trip leader. This time around, Karen taught a class on King Richard II, exploring how Middle English literature flourished under his rule, culminating with Shakespeare's *Richard II*.

Karen also led the students on field trips, some highlights being their visit to Derbyshire and to the Green Chapel from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, along with the highlands in Scotland. Karen, who herself studied abroad in Italy as a junior in college, believes in the transformative nature of travel. The love for Italian medieval literature and culture she discovered on her own study-abroad trip led her to develop expertise in medieval lit that has enriched the L&C community for thirteen years.



The Green Chapel, Wetton Mill, Peak District, Derbyshire



High Tea at the National Portrait Gallery in London

The new London program is interdisciplinary in nature, incorporating aspects of literature, theater, culture, history, socio-political climates, and more. The trip is currently being led by Professor David Campion, and will run again in the fall of 2020.



Students in the Isle of Sky



## SPIRIT UNDER CONSTRUCTION: A BOOK WARMING WITH PROFESSOR JERRY HARP

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Professor Jerry Harp sat down with students, faculty, and community members in the campus bookstore for a book warming party. Professor Harp shared poems from his new book, *Spirit Under Construction*. After reading, Professor Harp answered questions from the audience. He was kind enough to allow us to include one of the poems from this new collection. "History and Sun" is a poem thirty years in the making, thirty years well worth the wait.



Jerry reads from his new book, *Spirit Under Construction*



History and Sun

Splitting sunlight with its angled head,  
slowly twisting in the angled light,  
a crystal angel sways, suspended by a thread.

The light fades down the walls, an indigo streak  
forming a hieroglyph, or something in Greek,

about an underworld where shadows  
arrange themselves in shifting formation.

Who could rest easy, being dead?  
Like the living, they seek new motivation.

Ten minutes after the hour, the hours chime.  
These things are not my obsession,  
but give them time.

Approaching the age my father died,  
I'm learning again to orient the world  
as I did when I was a child:  
Face the river. West lies to my right.  
Fields stretch behind me. Sun rises in the east.

From the shade of cedar trees, my father approaches  
with all the petty grandeur of the recently deceased.

Head down, his unzipped jacket flailing in the breeze,  
he points to the river, but does not speak.

## CREATIVE WRITING AT LC

Our fiction and poetry writing courses, led by Pauls Toutonghi, Don Waters, Mary Szybist, and Jerry Harp, remain as strong as ever. After a semester of hard work and countless revisions, this year's batch of young writers shared original works with the LC community at the Manor House. In celebration of this accomplishment, students of Mary's advanced poetry course met at her house for their final period, to share a few last poems and reflect on a rigorous and rewarding semester.



Shani Berenholz ('18)

This year, many students submitted original work to various publications. Shani Berenholz's ('18) poem, "Rereading my journals: a series of thoughts," was accepted by the *Indiana Review* online for their undergraduate section, and Jonah Svihus's short story, "Trout Fishing with T.S.," was published in *Meat for Tea: The Valley Review*.



Advanced Poetry celebrating outside Mary's home

## FACULTY NEWS & UPDATES

**KURT FOSSO** returned to the fold from leading last spring's Dublin, Ireland Overseas program. His chapter on "Animals" will be published this year in *William Blake in Context* (Cambridge University Press). Another, "Blake's 'Horses of Instruction,'" will appear in *Beastly Blake* (Palgrave Macmillan). This summer he was working on Coleridge's fable-like poem "The Raven" and investigating the place of birds and other animals in the poetry and letters of Keats.

**KAREN GROSS** Along with leading students on the fall program to London and Glenelg, the highlight of 2017-18 for Karen Gross was walking St Cuthbert's Way, which meanders for



nearly 70-miles through the Scottish Borders and Northumbria, culminating on the holy isle of Lindisfarne, reached by foot across the pilgrim sands exposed at low tides. She continues to research illuminated Apocalypses of the Middle Ages. Last November she was invited to Princeton University to present her work on the Book of Revelation and animal fables, a study that will be published later this year in the edited volume *After the Carolingians: Re-Defining Manuscript Studies in the 10th and 11th Centuries*. She was also invited to contribute several entries to the new *Chaucer Encyclopedia*.

**WILLIAM PRITCHARD's** essay, "Pamela's Wedding Night," appeared in *Studies in English Literature* in the summer of 2017. It subsequently received the Monroe K. Spears award, which is given annually by that journal to an essay that is "marked by clarity, economy and felicity of expression and by elegant and discerning interpretation."

**KRISTIN FUJIE** was positively ecstatic to be awarded tenure by the college this year. Having promptly fallen on her face from exhaustion, and then run around maniacally with joy,

she is now back to her normal self and hard at work. She's currently wrapping up revisions on an essay devoted to Faulkner's *Flags in the Dust* and *The Sound and the Fury*, which explores a pivotal moment in Faulkner's career through the lens, or filter, of voice. She's excited to teach two new courses in 2018-19: a senior seminar on "Regional Modernism" and the English department's survey of African-American Literature.

**LYELL ASHER's** essay, "How Ed Schools Became A Menace," was featured on the cover of the April 27<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education Review*.

**RISHONA ZIMRING** worked with two rising sophomores during the summer of 2018 on a faculty/student collaboration project, focusing on the British artist Laura Oldfield Ford and her 2005-2009 'zine, *Savage Messiah*.

**MARY SZYBIST** published a series of elegies in *Ploughshares* magazine and gave readings at Yale, Caltech, and UC Irvine this past spring.

## ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

**WILL BECK** ('17) is currently working in Portland, manufacturing skis at a ski company. Being indoors with no windows often feels like being inside a cave, so to lighten the mood, Will listens to podcasts. *The New Yorker's Fiction*, *The Writer's Voice*, and *Poetry* podcasts have all helped him get through the long days. Will has been writing poems here and there, and has transposed all his works into a Google Doc - a step towards greater organization. He would like to submit his poems to a journal, but feels it is hard to know if something is finished or even worth finishing without the help of a professor or at least a second set of trustworthy eyes. So for now, they are just sitting.

**TORIN LEE's** ('17) first year out of college has gone by fast. He worked for eight months in a sailboat warehouse and coached sailing on the weekends in Portland. Torin has since switched to working in solar but still spends his weekends on the water.

**MELISSA ROGERS** ('17) has been working full-time as a teaching assistant at L'Etoile French Immersion School in Portland. She will be relocating to Los Angeles to begin graduate school at

the University of Southern California, where she has received full five-year funding to pursue her PhD in English literature.

**SAMMIE WEISS** ('17) has been working with a college-access non-profit called College Possible. She is a college advisor to approximately 175 low-income high school students, helping them with their college search and application process. This fall, Sammie will be moving to Washington, D.C. to get her MA in English at Georgetown University!

**ANNE PIQUETTE** ('18) has been working full-time at Powell's Books, while also building a clientele as a freelance copy editor. She has just moved from Beaverton to SE Portland, and in her free time she has been writing, reading, crafting, and spoiling her cat, Leona.

**JONAH SVIHUS** ('18) has been working at a regional magazine in Boulder, CO called *Yellow Scene Magazine*. His short story, "Trout Fishing with T.S.," was published in *Meat for Tea: The Valley Review*, a small literary magazine based out of Massachusetts.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2018!

WE'LL  
MISS  
YOU!  
BE  
SURE  
TO  
STAY  
IN  
TOUCH!

## STUDENT AWARDS & HONORS

### 2016 DIXON AWARD RECIPIENT, EMILY PRICE

**Emily Price** ('18), recipient of the 2016 Dixon award, used her grant to research medieval conceptions of monstrosity in the bestiary, a kind of encyclopedia which paired descriptions of animals with stories about their theological significance. She presented her project, *The Fantastical Image: Monstrosity and Humanity in Medieval European Bestiaries*, to the department last spring.

Emily's presentation examined how the expanding length and complexity of the bestiary left medieval illustrators with an interesting dilemma: how does one depict the unseen, or the unreal, realistically? She traced the evolu-

tion of the bestiary through its pictures and stories, considering how its images unsettle the boundaries between human and inhuman, as well as how its ideas about monstrosity and human nature remain with us today.

The Dixon Award was established in 2002 by the Dixon Family Foundation thanks to the generous efforts of alumni Hillary ('99) and Adam ('01) Dixon. Each year a junior English major is awarded a \$2,500 research and travel grant to enrich their current studies in preparation for senior year.



### 2018 JERRY BAUM AWARD RECIPIENT, EVA GELLMAN



Eva Gellman ('18)

This year's recipient of the 2018 Jerry Baum Award is Eva Gellman for her paper entitled "The Unknown World: Examining Attempts to Claim the Past as Our Own in Edward P. Jones's *The Known World*." The paper focuses on questions provoked by the nature of the neo-slave narrative and explores how Jones challenges his reader to engage with a fictional representation of the trauma and violence inflicted throughout America's slave history.

The paper examines the ways in which Jones forces his reader to struggle with a desire to claim and somehow repair the atrocities of the past, while consuming a narrative that prevents us from doing so. Through an in-depth analysis of Alice, one

of the slaves on Jones's fictional plantation, Eva's paper suggests that Jones's novel forces the reader to grapple with what it means to be a participant in the consumption of traumatic histories, and consider a world that cannot be "known" to us in the ways we may desperately crave.

The Jerry Baum Award was established in 2007 by the Department of English, alumni, family, and friends to honor the memory of beloved professor R. Jerold (Jerry) Baum. The recipient is a senior whose senior-seminar paper addresses the relationship between literature and history and is recognized as outstanding by the English faculty. A \$250 prize accompanies the award.

### 2018 SENIOR FICTION AND POETRY PRIZE AWARDS

This year's winner of the Academy of American Poets Prize Contest goes to Eva Gellman for her poem, "I Wish I Had One Hundred Eves." Emily Reynolds received honorable mention for her poem, "A Terminus."

Eva and Emily, photographed by Jerry Harp



### HONORS THESES 2018

**Kendall Graham** ('18), "Reframing Portraiture: Virginia Woolf's Models of Character in 'A Sketch of the Past' and Across Genres"

**Peter Kranitz** ('18), "Existentialist Echoes in Virginia Woolf"

**Emily Price** ('18), "I am a shadow now, alas! Poetic Transmission and Textual Posterity in John Keats's *Isabella; Or, the Pot of Basil*"

**Angelica True** ('18), "Reconciling the Impossible: Woolf's *Outsiders*, Intellectual Liberty, and the Social Machine"