# Wordsworth

## The Newsletter of the Lewis & Clark English Department: Fall 2025-Spring 2026

Hello, students, faculty, staff, and alumni!

This year, in the English department, we heard a lot of stories, listened to many poems, shared a lot of joy and most of all, spent hours writing essays. The year passed so quickly, it feels like it was just yesterday when we were eating pizza in Alumni Circle with our English professors. But now (many emails from Amy later) it's time to look back and reflect on this academic year. We're spotlighting English Majors abroad, Will Pritchard's sabbatical and his new course on *David Copperfield* and *Demon Copperhead,* Mike Mirabile's new book "Murder in Motion," and the phenomenal medieval manuscript exhibit brought to us by Karen Gross and Alli Sanders. There's much to reflect upon, from our wonderful visiting writers to the beautiful capstone readings, and please do take a moment to read the letter from our chair Kristin Fujie, as well as our dedication on the final page. But first, let us initiate with a mesmerizing poem which was featured in the Palatine Hill Review, by one of the Capstone poets: Indira Heller.

### Unguarded

By Indira Heller

Perhaps if I were to remove everything else:
The chair, the unlit candles on the table
We might not have anywhere to divert our eyes
And then suddenly, when yours and mine met—
We'd fall silent

I have this feeling that you would regret
Unfolding your words for me
You might feel ashamed that for a moment
Your face was soft with glassy eyes

You are not used to being held gently
It makes me feel protective
I am funneling your rare softness
Into the safest places of my brain
Hoarding this delicacy— just for a second

But, I promise
Your heart was always yours, and I would hand it back
To you if you asked me to

If everything around us
That is: the chairs, the unlit candles on the table
If everything were to reappear

Or maybe if they had never left in the first place
I might
—No, I would—
Silently bless all the vibrant physical things around us
The soft landing pads they serve for our desperate eyes

Thank you, I would whisper
(So silently as to not disturb your steady secrets
Spinning in the air between us)

*For letting her pretend*

*we are just sitting in the kitchen*

*chatting.*

Edited by Ziad Mahmoud and Amy Baskin

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# Visiting Writers Series Spotlight: Joe Wilkins

By Scarlett Robinson

This year, the English Department hosted 6 marvelous writers for the annual Visiting Writers Series. The event gathered hundreds of viewers, starting in the fall with Anis Mojgani in September presenting his latest poetry collection *The Tigers They Let Me.* In October, the college had the honor of hosting Alexia Arthur, author of *How to Love a Jamaican,* her debut novel published in 2018. Afterwards, we hosted the wonderful Julia Elliot, who presented her collection of short stories, *Hellions.*

The Spring semester brought us 2 talented poets: Elizabeth Willis, author of the powerful poetry collection *Liontaming in America,* as well as the outstanding poet Rick Barot, with his newest book of poems *Moving the Bones*

The English department' brought poet and novelist Joe Wilkins to campus on Feb. 24. Wilkins' work includes fiction, nonfiction and poetry. The author presented texts from a range of styles at the reading.

Wilkins has earned his MFA in creative writing from the University of Idaho. Currently, Wilkins lives in Oregon and directs the creative writing program at Linfield University. Wilkins' debut novel "Fall Back Down When I Die" was shortlisted for both the First Novel Prize from the Center For Fiction and the Pacific Northwest Book Award. His most recent novel, "The Entire Sky," won the 2024 Montana Book Award and the 2025 High Plains Book Award.






Joe Wilkins

The event was well-attended by students, faculty and community members. Much of the writing Wilkins presented centered around agriculture and the environment in Montana and Wyoming.

Wilkins' writing balances nature and the farm industry, with settings such as trailer parks and a sheep ranch. He has a talent for writing characters and places that feel real and palpable. The author drew a lot from personal experience in his book — he discussed his time growing up on a sheep and hay ranch and his surprise in discovering that birthing animals is not a common experience when he attended college.

During the question-and-answer segment, Wilkins explained the journey he has been on to become a writer, starting with poetry and branching out into other genres with practice.

"We all want to communicate. We all want to speak to one another," Wilkins said. "We want to write something down that gathers our thoughts in the best way to give it to somebody. I think that comes naturally to all of us, but the ability to do what the writers who impacted me as a young person did is not natural. It takes hard, hard work."

The night concluded with the distribution of copies of Wilkins' work and a chance to speak with the author and have books signed. This was the last Visiting Writer event in the spring semester, but the event series will return in the fall.

# More Photos from the Visiting Writer's Series



Rick Barot



Aaron Seaver (BA '26), Alexia Arthur, Jerry Harp, and Amy Baskin



Pauls Toutonghi, Meg Storey, Julia Elliot, Amy Baskin, and Ziad Mahmoud (BA '29)



Elizabeth Willis

# Poetry and Fiction Capstone Readings



Fiction Capstone Readers Josie Alberts, Ribs Kramer, Miriam Baena, Katie Coiteaux, Mahkena Dahir, Heather Galles, Viviana Lopez, Lily Morales, Liam Murphy, Jacob Pechersky, Alessandra Richardson-Beatty, Lucy Updyke-Welch, Audrey Valentine

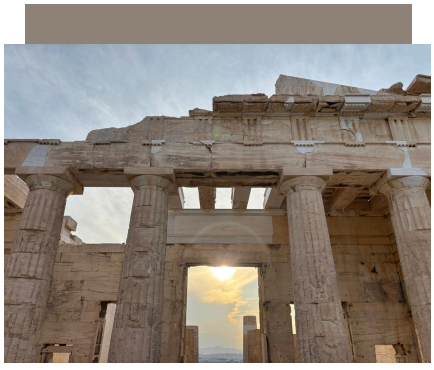


Professor Mary Szybist with Poetry Capstone Readers (L to R) Indira Heller, Isla Watson. Erin Montgomery, Deirdre Jones, Lillian Watsoe, Sawyer Orme, Nadia Cota, Jamie Kushnick, Bodie Beaumont-Gould

## English Majors abroad!



Olive picking in Lesvos



Acropolis entryway at sundown by Nico Stevenson



Nico Stevenson (BA '27) with friend at the Acropolis

# Fun Outside of Miller 4th!



Miriam Reside (BA '26) and Jerry Harp



Aaron and friend Hugh, hitching to Paris

## English Majors in Prague

By Aaron Seaver

Ah, Prague. I like it here. It's old, and the cobblestones are bumpy, and the street lights are yellow by design. It winds and wiggles under fogs that roll off the river Vltava. From the balcony of my apartment, I can see St. Vitus cathedral and Prague Castle.

Abroad is great. In the big city, the sordid lives of beautiful singles like myself would knock your socks off. The secret nooks and hidden cafes are also too sensitive to publish in a newsletter of this stature. I am at 'em though, working through a pilsner, and reading Kafka, Hašek, Brod. Spring is beginning. The apple trees on Petrin hill are blooming pink and white. In Letna and Holešovice college kids drink beer and lounge at noon. I can still barely order in Czech; God, this language is difficult.

The abroad program lets me teach English in a K-12 school. (Ironic given my inability to grasp anything more than the essentials of Czech.) Three times a week I shadow teachers and lead often discombobulated lessons. For anyone interested in being a teacher, this is a great program.

Other than that, life is much the same. Oh, yeah, except I recently got back from a trip to Fontainebleau, France, where I camped and climbed in paradise for two weeks. That's different. Before that I was in London. I had to borrow a coin to toss into the Serpentine like Mrs. Dalloway. I also went to Tavistock square, where Woolf lived, and Dickens too. And where Wayne, an old regular from a cafe I worked at, lived while getting his masters back in the 60's. Thanks, Wayne! (He told me to go see it.)

The accessibility of theatre and dance is a highlight of Europe. For ten dollars you can see ballet at the State Opera, or Hamlet in Czech at the National Theatre. (I went to Czech Hamlet. It was wild. R+G were very pretty ladies dressed all in pink. "To be or not to be" has a twenty letter word involved in the translation.) Or go see The Bacchae, where Bacchus wields an electric guitar, and strips Pentheus entirely naked on stage after having him killed.

Like I said, life is much the same. Sometimes you stop, and miss the Bon, or the comfort of Miller. Me? I miss my cat, Boji, most. I'll see her soon enough. And the melancholic lights of Prague will turn on every night like before, and then I'll miss those too.

# Dixon Award Winner: Marin Cady

By Nico Stevenson

When Marin shared that she was thinking about applying for the Dixon award, I knew immediately she would succeed. During our semester abroad together, Marin quickly established herself as one of the most intelligent and eloquently spoken people I had ever had the pleasure of sharing a classroom with. In the preliminary stages of her thought process, she talked about applying what we'd been learning in Greece to something within her specific English major. From there on forward, there was never not a time Marin was working diligently on her proposal and application. Of course, she did even this to incredible extents, creatively figuring out how to maximize her experience abroad while still getting work done. This took the form of exploring coffee shops– many, many coffee shops– and on one exciting occasion, the National Library of Greece. Very memorably, we were watching a pirated version of Wicked on the couch when she received the congratulatory email, whispering a small "oh my god" under her breath from where she was sitting by my side.

Marin's research project itself reflects the same kind of thoughtful, intellectual curiosity that makes talking with her so engaging. Her proposal explores Virginia Woolf's relationship with Greece, tracing a tension between Woolf's idealization of Ancient Greece as a foundation of European tradition and her more complicated, at times potentially disillusioned, response to modern Greece in her travels. At the center of Marin's research is Woolf's 1922 novel Jacob's Room, in which the protagonist's fascination with Greece echoes Woolf's own. What makes Marin's proposal especially compelling is the way she situates Woolf within the larger literary and historical contexts. She plans to contrast Woolf's perspectives with earlier philhellenists such as Lord Bryon, while also considering the timeline of the novel's publication alongside the Burning of Smyrna and the Greco-Turkish population exchange. Furthermore, Marin extends her analysis– yet again reflecting her boundless intellectual curiosity– by considering how gender complicates the perspectives between Woolf and Jacob, in which Woolf's position as a woman writing within a heavily patriarchal tradition introduces a different set of tensions than Jacob may experience in his engagement with Greece. As part of the application, Marin developed a clear and ambitious research plan that centered on archival work in order to explore this proposal. Over the summer, she will visit the Special Collections Library at the University of Washington, where she will examine the travel guides from Virginal Woolf's time in Greece. By working with these wonderful primary sources, Marin aims to understand and further examine how Woolf encountered and engaged with Greece in real time, and how those experiences may have influenced the tensions that later emerge in her writing. Marin also plans to extend her research to archival collections in New York City, significantly expanding the scope of her research and taking full advantage of the opportunities made possible by the Dixon Award.

In many ways, Marin's project is a natural extension of who she is as a student, bringing together the same intellectual curiosity and precision that consistently defines her work. It is a project that allows her to work with literary analysis and historical context, building a claim that is both wide-ranging and grounded in close reading. As Marin moves forward with the project, there is no doubt that she will continue to do so with a strong sense of nuance, especially in her willingness to hold on to complexity rather than simplify it– always pushing a little further and thinking a little more carefully in order to give the research the depth she believes it deserves. In the end, Marin's project reflects not only the sincerity of her curiosity, but also the intellectual care with which she approaches every question she takes up, making her recognition through the Dixon Award entirely well deserved.

# Autumn in Greece: Will Pritchard's Sabbatical

By Scarlett Robinson

Professor Will Pritchard took a sabbatical for the Fall 2025 semester. He accompanied his wife Professor Maureen Healy to Greece as she led the overseas trip. Pritchard's focus of research deviated from his original plan as he expanded into other topics.

Pritchard's began with his return to an earlier project dating back to his previous sabbatical seven years prior. Pritchard had begun researching and working on an article about a song called "The Birth of the Blues" and used his time away to complete the article and submit it to an academic journal on ethnomusicology called American Music. His fascination with the song grew out of a first year course he taught on blues music.

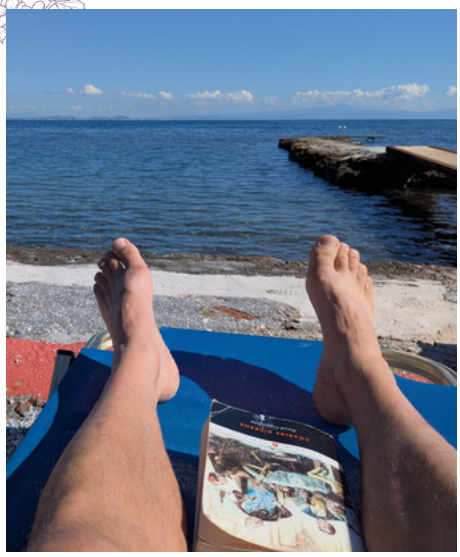
Pritchard commented on the process of researching and writing about a topic outside of his professional expertise. "My interest in music is more of a hobby than a scholarly thing, which I turned into a teaching thing and then tried to move into academics," said Pritchard. "That's one reason why it took me so long to complete, because it was a lot to learn."

Pritchard's original intention and second focus of his sabbatical was on an essay putting Charles Dickens' classic novel *David Copperfield* (1849) in conversation with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Meditation on these two novels led to the inspiration for Pritchard's third project while on sabbatical: a Words course comparing *David Copperfield* with Barbara Kingsolver's recent retelling *Demon Copperhead* (2022). Pritchard is currently teaching the new course.

"The problem was that then I was thinking about *David Copperfield* in two different ways," said Pritchard. "So that muddied the waters a bit, some of my scholarly energy got diverted to class prep."

Pritchard first encountered *David Copperfield* as a young child, overhearing his father read it to one of his older brothers. Later on, the novel became the first he ever taught while instructing a 9th grade class at an all girls school in Manhattan. More recently, focus on the novel was inspired by Pritchard's Dickens reading group. The group began in January of 2021 and continues to meet regularly. While abroad, Pritchard would wake in early hours of the morning to continue participating in the group across time zones.

"That got me re-interested in Dickens and *David Copperfield* and thinking about the *Robinson Crusoe* echoes that are everywhere," said Pritchard. "It's an interesting book. It's his first experiment, his first first-person narrative…and his most autobiographical in the sense that it pretends to be an autobiography but also it transmutes a lot of his personal experiences or fictionalizes it."



Will Pritchard's feet
with David Copperfield in Greece

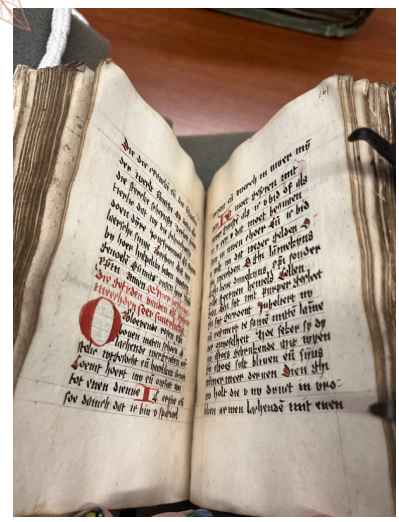
Pritchard's article on "The Birth of Blues" has been accepted by the journal and is in editing stages on track to publication. Pritchard's essay on *David Copperfield* and *Robinson Crusoe* is in the writing stages.

Pritchard commented on the benefits of a sabbatical period and its role in professional development. "If it was my last one, I'm glad I had it. I'm very grateful because it's one of those small perks of tenure track professorship that are disappearing," said Pritchard.

# On Medieval Manuscripts: "Shaping the Soul" and "Scattered Leaves"

By Erin E. Connelly

This spring, Lewis & Clark hosted Portland's largest medieval manuscripts exhibition in decades. The exhibition, Shaping the Soul: Books in Medieval Life, was curated by Professor Karen Gross and Alli Sanders BA '26. An opening reception was held on January 26th in the Watzek Atrium including music performances by Musica Universalis and undergraduate choir members, who performed a 15th-century plainchant. The manuscripts were on display in Watzek Library from January 12th through March 8th. A variety of objects were represented in the cases including 15 leaves, a legal scroll, and Books of Hours from Lewis & Clark's Special Collections as well as a collection of manuscripts on loan from rare book dealers Les Enluminures and Phillip J. Pirages.



Manuscripts, Photographed by Erin Connelly

The loaned manuscripts included a stunning 15th century choir gradual, a nun's prayerbook containing a unique set of prayers to female saints, two beautifully illuminated Books of Hours, a French legal miscellany, and more. Les Enluminures provided items via the Manuscripts in the Curriculum program; Lewis & Clark is the first liberal arts institution to receive this loan. Over its eight-week course, the exhibition drew visitors from all over the Pacific Northwest and received coverage from Oregon Arts Watch, OPB, and Willamette Week.

On March 4th, the Lewis & Clark Society of Fellows hosted Yale graduate and Executive Director of the Medieval Academy of America Dr. Lisa Fagin Davis as the 2026 Distinguished Visiting Scholar and keynote speaker for the exhibition.

Dr. Davis' talk, Scattered Leaves: Otto Ege in Oregon, was held in the Council Chambers, drawing a diverse audience of professors, students, librarians and archivists, and other interested community members. Davis presented her research on the impact of infamous bookbreaker Otto Ege on manuscript collections in Oregon. Using sales ledgers recording Ege's business endeavors and Scott Gwara's handlist of known Ege manuscripts, Dr. Davis tracked down leaves in the Portland Art Museum, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Reed College, Multnomah County Library, and Mt. Angel Abbey collections. After the lecture, the Society of Fellows hosted Dr. Davis, Karen Gross, and a group of undergraduate students for dinner. Dr. Davis posted about the lecture on her blog, Manuscript Road Trip.



Erin Connelly and her mom Karla

Shaping the Soul represented a rare opportunity for undergraduate students and members of the public to learn about medieval art and written culture with physical objects in front of them. Students in Karen Gross' medieval manuscripts class spent the semester working hands-on with these items, and through the Gender Studies Symposium workshop, Stories of Resistance from the Archives, members of the public were also given an opportunity to see the exhibition objects outside their cases.

# English Students Abroad: Greece

By Nico Stevenson

Having a class about the Acropolis of Athens take place on the Acropolis is an experience that remains unmatched and serves as a fitting reflection of the Greece study abroad program as a whole. Although the program is centered around Classics, it is fundamentally interdisciplinary in practice, and students from any major– especially those in fields as closely connected as English– benefit from its teachings.

In Greece, reading was not just in reference to literature, it extended to landscapes, ruins, museums, people, and even the cities themselves. The experiences often felt like an extension of our prior teachings: learning how to interpret, contextualize, and research comfortably within complexity. However, our cohort included students from psychology to biology, SOAN, environmental studies, art, history, and more, and these varied perspectives consistently contributed positively to our understanding of both ancient and modern Greece.

That is to say, the success of the program was not only due to its setting, but to the community that formed within it under the brilliant guidance of Mo Healy in the history department.

Once acceptances had been sent out, the program immediately started, with Mo organizing bi-monthly meetings where we got to know each other and the place we would be living for four months. This early preparation made the transition to life in Greece significantly smoother; no one arrived entirely alone or unaware. Instead, we came in already partially oriented with each other and to the country itself, making our first few weeks there smoother.

One of our first significant experiences in Greece was a non-program day trip to the island of Aegina. Together, we navigated Athens' public transportation system for the first time, figuring out the metro, buying ferry tickets, and making our way to the smaller island of Moni by following a hand-drawn map from the owner of our favorite study cafe, Kekkos. That first swim in the Mediterranean sea with my classmates was when the structure of orientation started to fall away and we began to settle into daily life in Greece.

Over the course of the program, we traveled extensively, visiting places such as Nafplio, Mycenae, Olympia, Metsovo, and Delphi. Each site added another layer to our understanding of Greece's historical and literary complexity. While these trips were wonderful and deeply educational due to the knowledge of our professors, much of the learning also took place within the classrooms of College Year in Athens (CYA), the study abroad program that LC is partnered with. These courses ranged from contemporary Greek culture to Byzantine history, with a crash course in the Greek language class during our first week. The program consistently resisted separating ancient Greece from modern Greece, instead encouraging us to think about how closely they are intertwined, a perspective that also reflected the program's interdisciplinary structure and encouraged us to look beyond the literary into the lived experience around us.



Class program trip to Meteora

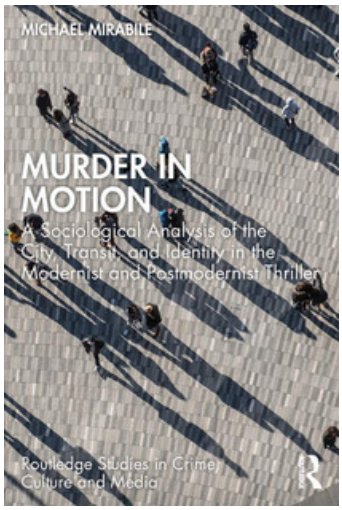


Sunset at the Caryatids at the Acropolis

# Mirabile's New Book: Murder In Motion

By Ben Z. Naftali

On April 15th, Michael Mirabile, our resident English professor and film noir expert, published his new book, Murder in Motion: A Sociological Analysis of the City, Transit, and Identity in the Modernist and Postmodernist Thriller. According to Mirabile, the concept for the book began when he attended a particularly fascinating graduate seminar on 19th century Paris. Over time his interest in the topic grew to influence his classes. If you have ever taken Crime and Suspense Fiction, or Suspense and Paranoia with Mirabile, you will have seen the influence of this fascination.

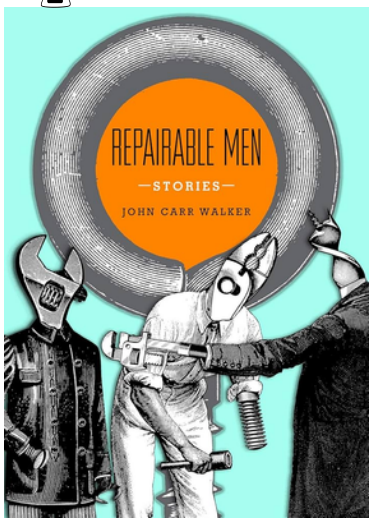



Mirabile's work explains how suspense literature synthesizes the thriller genre and urban sociology. The thriller begins with ordinary people, who are then transformed by some unique event that turns their world upside down. This transformation from the regular to the irregular is further exacerbated by the urban environment in which it takes place. Too many people in such a small space creates a compression of life; people are thrown together, individuals collide and these essential social encounters are created.

However, Murder in Motion addresses more than just the claustrophobia of urban society. Mirabile writes that we assume a temporary identity when we travel. In the minutes we spend between places, we become anonymous.

Furthermore, there is a "law of non-interaction" in public spaces, and the social encounter inherent to the thriller coincides with the breaking of these laws, resulting in the erasure of these temporary identities. In Hartmut Rosa's theory of social acceleration, he argues that while we might encounter the same social interactions today as we did a century before, these interactions have accelerated. Mirable takes this theory and expands it to the suspense genre, arguing that the conflict and drama necessary for these works follows Rosa's theory of acceleration.

If this peek into Mirabile's rich exploration of the thriller genre interests you, you can purchase a copy of Murder in Motion on the Routledge website.



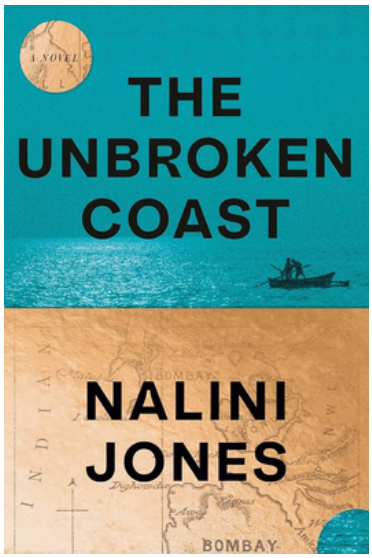

# 2026-2027 Visiting Writers Lineup

by Lucy Updyke-Welch

In this tumultuous time of downsizing within higher ed, layoffs of art professors, and a general malaise towards the future, it's comforting to know that some things aren't leaving us for good. Like a train barreling on while the track on either side is ripped up, the English department plans another wonderful series of visiting writers unimpeded by Weltschmerz and budget cuts. The Visiting Writers Series provides a multi-destination track of published authors to share their literary world wisdom with our eager community of readers.

Two authors have signed on so far: John Carr Walker, and Nalini Jones. If those names mean nothing to you, then rejoice! Let's uncover to two precious gems worthy of excavation.

## The Future of Visiting Writers cont.



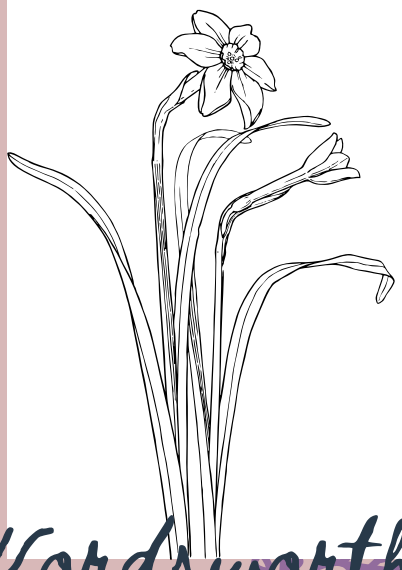

Yes, yes, reading during the school year is hard as our focus is drained into the academics, but don't despair yet. John Carr Walker's *Repairable Men* (sunnyoutside, 2014) isn't just short, it's also a delightful and entertaining read. Rather than burdening his prose with Poe level complexity, he gets down to the grass roots of his characters. In ten short stories, he lays out their inner lives with emotion and wit as they struggle through dead family members, clumsy mistakes with fire, and inherited dogs that just won't die already.

Or perhaps you're more interested in a deeper dive into the waters of Mumbai, where a retired historian and a daughter of a debtor form a unique bond. Nalini Jones's The *Unbroken Coast* (Knopf, 2025) takes you to a Catholic fishing village during the time when Bombay became Mumbai, focused on the turbulent inner unrest of two families, but spanning generational and class divides. For her debut novel, it is a fantastic entry to the annals of literature.

Not convinced yet? Why not go to see them when they visit and let them read out exactly what you're missing.

## Fir Acres Writing Workshop

Over the past six years, Fir Acres has become a premiere residential summer writing program for talented high school students. Admissions is competitive, with applicants from around the nation and globe. This summer's faculty includes Alexia Arthurs, Audrey Gutierrez (LC '16), Eliza Frakes (LC '19), Lisa Wells, and Tramaine Suubi. The program runs for two weeks each summer and is run by Professor of Practice and Program Director Don Waters with help from Amy Baskin.



## 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 or write to:

Lewis & Clark English Department
MSC 58
615 S. Palatine Hill Rd.
Portland, OR 97219

# Alumni News:

**Lizzy Acker** (‘05) got an MFA in fiction at San Francisco State University, is back in Portland, and on staff at The Oregonian.

**Lauren Caldwell** (‘24) will be attending Trinity College's (Dublin) for its Master's in Creative Writing Program. Before heading there, she will be a Resident Director at Fir Acres this summer.

**Ariana Chandler** (‘97) taught high school English for Teach for America right after LC, later taught ESOL and got a Master's in Applied Linguistics at PSU.

**Ailish Duff** (‘22) has been promoted to Program Manager at FP Transitions, "the nation's preeminent consulting firm dedicated to wealth managers and independent financial advisors.” (Description from their website.)

**Audrey Gutierrez** (‘19) has a forthcoming debut novel Gótica. She will serve as facullty for Fir Acres this summer as well.

**Michael Jarmer** (‘89) earned an MFA from the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers and reports having been writing regularly and prolifically ever since. His novella, "Submarine Stories," is available for preorder.

**Miri Karraker** (‘15) is publishing her first book Garden Path.

**Chris Keady** (‘10) got an advanced degree in music and now makes a living as a performer and teacher.

**Samantha Mueller** (‘21) has accepted a fully funded English PhD program at Loyola Chicago.

**Jason Robertson** (‘07), co-owner of Fremont's nearly 30-year-old independent bookstore Ophelia’s Books, is always on the lookout for more used books to add to the store’s stock.

**Nicole Rosevear** (‘06) completed an MFA in fiction at Bennington College and now teaches in the English department at Clackamas Community College.

**Richard Sames** (‘12) is wrapping up his third year at Dell Medical School in Austin, TX, completing both an MD and Master of Public Health.

**Joe Seamons** (‘07) founded the Rhapsody Project which is in the midst of its campaign to launch the King Street Station community-focused non-profit arts space in Seattle.

**Kaes Vanderspek** (‘20) has completed their MFA in poetry from Colorado State University.



# Faculty and Staff Updates

Lyell Asher was a guest on David Bernstein's "Contrarian" podcast, last May, to discuss "How Education Schools turned Teachers into Political Activists." This spring, he was a panelist for a webinar sponsored by the North American Values Institute (NAVI), entitled "Upstream Activism: How Teachers Colleges Shape K-12 Classrooms."

Kurt Fosso attended Tom Stoppard's play Arcadia at the Old Vic in London over Spring Break. He viewed a marvelous exhibit on the Romantic-era painters John Constable and J.M.W Turner at Tate Britain, and walked along the Thames in Richmond. In January, he presented a paper at the MLA Convention in Toronto. After thirty wonderful and fulfilling years of teaching at LC, Kurt Fosso is retiring. He'll divide his time between the US and UK, and focus on writing a book on William Blake and biodiversity. "I'll miss this department and all of my amazing colleagues and students. What a pleasure and privilege it's been. Thank you!"

Recent poems by Jerry Harp appear in America, The Christian Century, Kleksograph, Laurel Review, Poetry Northwest, Presence, and Yanaguana Review. His review of Roger Reeves's Best Barbarian appears in American Book Review.

## Departmental Honors Class of 2026

**Indira Heller:** *"Bridging the Gap in the Middle English Poem, Pearl: The Dreamer's Transcendence into The Cloud of Unknowing"*

**Liam Murphy:** *"Here is Everywhere: Dubliners' Linguistic Threads East and West"*

**Olivia Lyons:** *"Loneliness and Friendship in Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping "*

**Rebekah Kramer:** *"Death of the Subject, Emancipation of the Artist: How Madness Becomes the Medium of Gothic Imagination"*

# Student Awards

## The Jerry Baum Award

Anna Littlejohn

## Vern Rutsala American Academy of Poets Prize

Winner: Lillian Witsoe
Honorable Mention: Sabine Heier

## Senior Fiction Award

Josie Alberts

## Senior Creative Nonfiction Award

Tj Muhammad

## The Dixon Award

Marin Cady

We congratulate all recent graduates who have accepted offers to pursue further education, including:

Maggie O'Leary, Masters in English Program
at Queen Mary University, London, UK

## A Letter from the Chair, Kristin Fujie

Dear Friends of the English Department,



Dr. Kristin Fujie
Photo Credit: Nina Johnson

Greetings from the hill, where the Portland spring weather is currently of two minds: cool and overcast in the mornings, sunny and 70 degrees in the afternoon!

As my third year as English department chair draws to a close, I am feeling as grateful as ever for our English department community. We've had a wonderful year of events, adventures, and achievements.

One important piece of news I must share now is that our dear colleague, Professor Kurt Fosso, has decided to retire from Lewis & Clark College this summer. Kurt has been a member of our community for over thirty years and his retirement brings to its culmination a brilliant career of inspired teaching, innovative scholarship, and dedicated service to his department and the college at large.

Kurt joined the English department in 1995 after earning a PhD in English with an emphasis on critical theory from UC Irvine. During his time with us his publications ranged from studies of Oedipus the King to the British Romantics, and his most recent work established him as an authority on animals and biodiversity in Wordsworth, Blake, and Coleridge. As many of you will know by experience, Kurt, who was Pamplin Teacher of the Year in 2001, shared his intellectual passions with his students through innovative, challenging courses on literary theory, ancient literature and its impacts on English literature, British Romanticism, and animals/animal rights in literature. Whether teaching in the Core or the senior seminar, in Miller or on the London Humanities Program, he brought his big heart (and laugh!) to all his classes and everything he did with students.



*Kurt teaching here at LC in 1996. Photo credit unknown.*

He brought those same virtues to the work he did with his colleagues, which included chairing the English Department, serving as Director both of our Exploration and Discovery general education program and of Advising, and collaborating on innovative course offerings with Environmental Studies, Theater, and Classics. (He was also a member of the LC faculty band, The Wankers!)

While Kurt will no longer be with us here in Miller, he is assuming a new role as the college's liaison with Queen Mary University of London, with whom he has worked to establish a pathway for our graduates into the university's MA programs. So while we wish him bon voyage, we don't have to say goodbye altogether. It is difficult to imagine ourselves without Kurt, but we could not be happier for him as he embarks on his next adventure.

To the class of 2026, heartiest congratulations! We look forward to hearing from you now that you are English department alumni. And to all of our alumni, please drop us a line and let us know how you are doing. We always love to hear from you.

~Kristin

## In Memoriam

We dedicate this newsletter to

Oliver Milavetz and Aurelia Tittmann

both of whom are greatly missed.