

Summer 2013

CREATIVE WRITING DEPARTMENT

San Francisco State University

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Dear Students, Faculty, and Alumni:

Welcome to fall semester 2013, which promises to be an exciting one for the program. Our new tenure-track hire, Guggenheim Award winner ZZ Packer, begins teaching fiction here, and several new opportunities for students at all levels of the program are ready for you to enjoy. First is our connection to and launching of our Book Arts correlative for MFA students. There will be a book arts show opening in the SFSU Gallery in September and a student opening of the first collaborative project between the departments. Students at all levels are invited to explore the visual aspects of writing, and we will in the future develop some courses such as writing the graphic novel which will do just that. There is also an official 12-unit sequence in screenwriting (Cinema Department) available to MFAs as a correlative and other interested graduate and undergraduate students as single courses. We hope to forge more connections with other departments that develop your potential as writers and expand your sense of how your view of writing itself can enrich your field of creative endeavor or perhaps lead to a career.

In our own department, we have added a fourth emphasis to our specialties in poetry, playwriting, and fiction. Creative non-fiction is now an official genre for which graduate students may apply and for which the MA and MFA degrees will be awarded. With our own tenured and faculty Toni Mirosevich, Chanan Tigay, Peter Orner, Nona Caspers and Michelle Carter teaching classes in this area as well as occasional guests, we are excited about its prospects for our current and future students. In addition, our Business of Creative Writing, our Poetry Center Workshop, our Writers on Writing class, our Craft of Translation, our *Transfer* and *14 Hills* classes, our Playwrights Theater Workshop, and our Community Projects in Literature all help you to consider how writers make a living in fields directly related to your studies.

We must in this newsletter also mention a wonderful milestone, the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archives turn 60 this year. With their new presence on DIVA, more and more students and members of the general public will be able to explore their vast holdings and hear and see poets who began appearing on campus in 1954. The system has had 66,000 "listens" and 7000 downloads in its first 24 months. Its current schedule is just as active with approximately 32 live events a year, some containing several poets. We will also look forward in spring to our annual Gina Berriault reading, in which a well-known fiction writer visits to talk to students and read from his/her work. The playwriting area continues to stage student work through the Theater Department and to offer many opportunities to learn the craft of playwriting and see its development onstage. Many chances to learn from the rich history and tradition of our program are

available to you, as is your own opportunity to be part of that history by participating in these events, by working on the literary magazines and in internships, by supporting and appearing at the Vel Ro student-run readings, and by developing your own series, blogs, writers' groups, and publications.

I also must take time in this newsletter to offer deep gratitude to Dean Paul Sherwin, who will retire at the end of this year. A staunch and loyal supporter of our program since he became dean twelve years ago, we would not have the stellar new faculty we do nor the many visible and invisible improvements to our program were it not for his vision and generosity and deep knowledge of the arts and humanities. As we go forward with our programs this year, it is in a spirit of hope that a newly chosen dean can even approach the vision, wisdom, and encouragement that he has so kindly bestowed upon us since his arrival.

As a strong and well-respected program whose students write brave and important work, I am certain our high standing at the university will continue. Please share your successes with us, and if you are an alum reading this, please consider making this environment even more supportive for our students by donating to the program. From small amounts for supplies, guest speakers, and student events and prizes to larger amounts for much-needed graduate fellowships and scholarships, your support makes a great deal of difference in our lives.

Have a wonderful school year. I hope to meet many of you and see you at our events and in our pages. We also have a showcase in which we proudly display the books written by our talented alums, faculty, and students. We are proud of you all and look forward to celebrating your endeavors.

Sincerely,
Maxine Chernoff, Chair

NEWS * NEWS * NEWS NEWS * NEWS * NEWS

Faculty

Maxine Chernoff, who won a 2013 NEA Fellowship in poetry for \$25,000, was a Visiting International Scholar at Exeter University, England; she also gave readings in London, Bath, Plymouth, and Exeter. Her poetry book, *Here*, is to be published by Counterpath Press in early 2014. Her poems appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Conjunctions*, *14 Hills*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Phoebe*, *Interim*, *Witness*, *Drunken Boat*, *Buenos Aires Review*, *Poetry*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *NEA Writers' Corner*. One of her poems was featured in the playbill for the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. **Dodie Bellamy's** new book of poems, *Cunt Norton*, will be out from Les Figues Press in August. She's been commissioned by SFMOMA to write a poem for a chapbook on the occasion of Mark di Suvero's installation at Crissy Field. **Paul Hoover's** anthology *Post-*

modern American Poetry, 2nd Edition (W. W. Norton, 2013), was published in March and has received numerous reviews including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Poetry*, and *The Nation*, as well as interviews of Paul by Jeffrey Brown on the PBS News-hour online site and Evan Karp in the *SF Chronicle*. Publication events were held at the New School, the deYoung Museum, Denver's Counterpath Gallery, and another featuring Pulitzer prize winner and alum Rae Armantrout and others is scheduled for Los Angeles in October. **Heather Gibbons** has new poems in *Boston Review*, *Forklift*, *Ohio*, *Indiana Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *West Branch*, *The Associative Press*, and *Sixth Finch*, and more forthcoming in *Laurel Review*. She received a fellowship residency at the Vermont Studio Center last summer. *Lawfully Wedded Wives*, compiled and edited by **Nona Caspers** (and **Joell Hal-lowell** MFA)--twenty-four personal tales of lesbian marriage today--is scheduled to come out in August from Triton Books, an imprint of Spuyten Duyvil. Nona also has a story in *Kenyon Review*. **Bob Glück** was interviewed by Miranda Mellis for June 2013 issue of *The Believer*, #99, and was on the Academy of American Poets Poem-a-Day series. Bob was on the summer faculty at the Naropa Institute for Disembodied Poetics, his first prose book, *Elements*, was just republished by Ithuriel's Spear, and his book of collected essays, *The Greatness of Kathy Acker* was accepted by Semiotext(e) for publication next year. **Michelle Carter** is one of three American writers and three Russian writers commissioned to write plays for Book Wings Russia. The plays will be simulcast from the Moscow Art Theatre and the University of Iowa in March 2014. **Peter Orner's** latest collection of short stories, *Last Car Over the Sagamore Bridge* came out August 6, 2013, from Little, Brown and Co. His award-winning first collection, *Esther Stories*, with a new foreword by Marilynne Robinson, was reissued. On March 21, 2013, he was in conversation with Michael Krasny (you can listen online at www.commonwealthclub.org, search for Michael Krasny: Twenty Years and Counting at KQED). **Steve Dickison** was on KPFA's Against the Grain in December 2012, and you can listen to this, along with a selection of recordings from the American Poetry Archives at www.againstthegrain.org, search Opinionated Poets. He was a contributing editor to *Homage to Etel Adnan*, published by Post-Apollo Press 2012. **Daniel Langton's** latest poetry collection, *Personal Effects* is due out from First World Press Fall 2013, and one of his poems from *On Our Walks*, was re-printed on the website American Life in Poetry.

Former Faculty

Dan Coshnear's new collection of fiction, *OCCUPY & Other Love Stories*, with original artwork by Squeak Carnwath, was published by Kelly's Cove Press, November 2012. **Alice La Plante's** novel, *Turn of Mind* (Grove Press, 2012) was awarded the California Commonwealth Club's Gold Medal for First Fiction. **Will Boast** was awarded the San Francisco Foundation 2012 Mary Tanenbaum Nonfiction Award for his manuscript *Archaeology*.

Alumni

Brandon Brown (MFA 2006) has written translations of *The Persians By Aeschylus* (Displaced Press, 2011) and *The Poems of Gaius Valerius Catullus* (Krupskaya, 2011) as well as his own *Flowering Mall* (Roof Books 2012). His poetry and critical work have appeared in *Postmodern Culture*, *Try!*, *Rethinking Marxism*, *Art Practical*, and *Open Space*, the blog of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). His debut play, *Charles Baudelaire the Vampire Slayer*, was staged in early 2012 at Small Press Traffic's Poet's Theater, and his work appears in the FAX show at the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery. **Gabriel Roth's** first novel, *The Unknowns* is out from Little, Brown and received an excellent review from Janet Maslin in the July 11, 2013 New York Times Book Review. **Ivan Hobson** (MFA 2010) had poetry published in *Flyway Prize*. **Elizabeth Scarboro's** (MFA 2008) memoir *My Foreign Cities* was released by Liveright, an imprint of Norton, in April 2013. **Lucille Lang Day's** (MFA 2004, MA 1999) memoir, *Married at Fourteen: A True Story* (Heyday, 2012) was a finalist for the 2013 Northern California Book Award in Creative Nonfiction. SFSU Creative Writing alum **Brandon Mise** (MFA 2006) launched his new indie film project *Tales from the Backwoods* on www.kickstarter.com. **Annie Dawid** (MA 1985) won the Fall 2012 Orlando Prize for Flash Fiction for "Nitza Kosher Pizza." **Manuel Paul Lopez** (MA 2002) won the Ernest Sandeen Prize in Poetry for his poetry collection *The Yearning Feed*. He received \$1,000 and his book will be published by the University of Notre Dame Press. **Ernest Gaines**, (BA 1957) was honored in a ceremony at the White House July 10, 2013, where he received a National Medal of the Arts. In April **Barbara Rose Brooker** (MA 1991) saw the publication by Simon & Schuster of the *Viagra Diaries*, which has been translated into ten languages for foreign publication and picked up as a series by HBO. **Suzanne Stein**, (MFA 2005) is head of community engagement at SFMOMA, and frequent contributors to SFMOMA's Open Space Blog. **Sandra Wassilie** (MFA 2012, MA 2010) was awarded a residency at the Vermont Studio Center Fellowship, where she'll spend a month in November 2013; she's also co-founded a reading series called Generations to debut in San Francisco on September 23 at The Emerald Tablet and has work forthcoming *California Quarterly*. **Anhvu Buchanan's** (MFA 2010) first book of poetry *The Disordered*, released in July 2013 by sunnyside, is available from Small Press Distribution and Amazon. **Richard Melo's** (BA 1990) second novel, *Happy Talk* has just been published. It's the darkly comic flipside of the Rodgers and Hammerstein song of the same name, set among Americans stationed in Haiti during the 1950s on misdirected missions and is a tribute to the 60s postmodern novels. **Radhika Sharma** (MFA 2009) was selected for the Napa Valley Writer's Conference, made it to the shortlist of the Sewanee Writer's Conference and will be participating in the Vermont Post Graduate Writer's Conference. **Joan Tollifson** (MA 1989) latest book *Nothing to Grasp*, (Nonduality Press, 2012) is a collection of writings about, in her own words "...a celebration of what is, exactly as it is." **Rafaella Del Bourgo** (MA 1995) won the 2012

Paumanok Poetry Award from Farmingdale State College. **Beverly Dahlen** (MA) received a \$25,000 2013 Grant to Artists from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, an annual award given to emerging and established poets. **R.J. Martin, Jr.** (MA 2009) second book about people in, and clients of the sex industry, *Johns, Marks, Tricks and Chickenhawks: Professionals & Their Clients Writing About Each Other*, is out from Soft Skull Press, 2013. Actor/director John Turturro bought permission to use some lines from his story "Pimp School," from his first book, *Hos, Hookers, Call Girls, and Rent Boys: Professionals Writing on Life, Love, Money, and Sex*, to be used in the upcoming movie *Fading Gigolo*, which stars Woody Allen, Sharon Stone, and Turturro. He thinks Woody Allen is saying the lines! **Aimee Valentine** (MFA 2013) was accepted to three doctoral programs, and has accepted a fully-funded course of study at Western Michigan. **Scott Lambridis** (MFA 2012) as-yet-unpublished novel was awarded the 2012 Dana Award. His story "Under The Peach Tree" was published in *New American Writing* in Fall 2012. His story "RE: Sugar" will be published by *The Newer York* in Winter 2012. His performance series Action Fiction! is accepting fiction submissions at omnibucket.com. www.scottlambridis.com

Charles Brady (MA 1981) has an annual poetry festival named after him at the Convent of the Sacred Heart High School, from which he retired as an English teacher a few years ago. This was his third career, having served 22 years in the U.S. Army and a brief stint in banking. And keeping it in the family, wife **Lee Brady** (MA 1983) having had a number of plays produced, is cofounder of 3 Girls Theatre and son **Joe Brady** (MA 1991) is on the faculty of the University of Northern Colorado where he teaches screenwriting and English. **Safiya Martinez's** (MFA 2012) one-person play, which she developed as her thesis, *So You Can Hear Me*, had a great run over Summer 2013 at the Marsh Theater. **Jon Boilard's** (MFA 1995) debut novel, *A River Closely Watched*, was nominated for the Northern California Book Award in Fiction as one of the best works by a northern California author published in 2012. **Nina Schuyler's** (MFA 2003) second novel, *The Translator*, came out during Summer 2013 from Pegasus Books to rave reviews and is being translated into several languages. **kathryn pringle's** (MFA 2006) poetry collection, *fault tree* was a finalist for the 25th Annual Lambda Literary Awards. **Dan Lau** (MA 2012), received a San Francisco Arts Commission grant to teach a writing workshop. **River Jackson's** (MA Theatre Arts; BA Creative Writing) novel in verse, *The Islands of the Moon*, is available as a free download from the eponymous website. **Lisa Meltzer Penn** MA (2006), has edited two anthologies of stories and poetry that deal with stories centered on and around the San Francisco Bay Area, *Fault Zone: Words from the Edge* and *Fault Zone: Stepping Up to the Edge* are currently available on Amazon and Kindle. **Flavia Idà Prishtina's** (MA 1986, BA 1984) novel *The Names of Heaven* is due out in Summer 2014 from Hunt Press; also forthcoming from Hunt Press in December 2013, is *The Iron and the Loom*. A reviewer writes that "it is a compelling novel of the early Spanish journeys to the "New World" in the 16th century. We are

given a remarkable bounty of details." **Gina de Vries** (MFA 2013, MA 2012), was written up at www.goldengatexpress.org, in an article outlining how she blends her writing with activism on behalf of sex workers. **Thomas McBee** (MFA 2009) was hired as an adjunct professor of English at Stonehill College, Easton, MA. **Andrea Alban's** (BA 2008) *Any's War* is shortlisted for the Panda Awards in China—highly recommended books for readers in international schools in China. **Marian Palaia**, (MA) is now a Steinbeck Fellow in Creative Writing at San Jose State University. **Erin Jourdan's** (MFA 2005), essays, *Stunt Writing 101*, is based on the course she taught in Los Angeles, where is she is currently teaching memoir writing. **Robin Romm** (MFA 2005) has new work out in *Gulf Coast 25.1*. **Gail Tsukiyama's** (MA 1981) latest work is a novel *A Hundred Flowers* out from St. Martin's Press, 2012. *Why Aren't You Smiling?* a novel by **Alvin Orloff** (MFA 2009), was published by Manic D Press, 2011, and received favorable notice from both Daniel Handler and Karl Soehnlein. **Fred Setterberg's** (MA 2003) novel *Lunch Bucket Paradise: A True-Life Novel* (Heyday, 2011) was short-listed for the 2012 Saroyan Prize. **Sarah Fran Wisby** (MFA 2007) received a generous grant from the San Francisco Arts Commission for Wake-Up Call Project, that culminated in a one-woman show held at 780 Café, August of last year. **Sara Marinelli's** (MFA 2013) translation into Italian of the book of essays *Mediterranean Blues* by Iain Chambers was published in April 2012 by Bollati Boringhieri Press (Turin, Italy). **Gerardo Pacheco Matus** (MFA 2012) received the 2012 San Francisco Foundation Joseph Henry Jackson Award for his poetry manuscript *The Child of the Grasses*. **Phyllis Stowell** (MA in Poetry and Fiction) most recent books of poetry are *Engraved Tablet* (FootHills Publishing, Nov. 2011) and *SUNDERED* (Fisher King Press, 2012). **Daniel Orozco's** (MA 1992) story collection *Orientation and Other Stories* (Faber and Faber, 2011) won the 2012 Saroyan Prize in fiction. **Joan Frank's** (MA 1981) collection of essays, *Because You Have To: A Writing Life*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2012, won the *Fore-Word Reviews* Silver for its Book Of The Year Award competition! **Kelly Daniels'** (BA 1994) memoir, *Cloud-break, California* was published by Owl Canyon Press, April 2013. **Don Waters** new novel, *Sunland*, is forthcoming from the University of Nevada Press in October 2013. **Ben Black** (MFA 2012) was a runner-up for the 2012 Omnidawn Fabulist Fiction Chapbook. **Jan Ellison** (MFA 2007) first novel *A Small Indiscretion* will be published by Random House in 2014. **Scott Stokes'** (MFA 2012) first book of poetry, *A History Of Broken Love Things*, will be out in the Fall of this year on Punk Hostage Press. **Brandon Downing** (MFA 1997) published his fourth book of poetry, *Mellow Actions*, from Fence Books, New York.

Students

MFA Fiction candidate **Matthew Ankeny's** *The Rink* was released on August 15. It is the first flash novel available from Bartleby Snopes Press. **Emily Wilson**, MFA candidate, has three essays on SFMOMA's Open Space Blog. **John Haggerty's** (MFA candidate) novel-in-progress *Saline Springs* is a

finalist for the James Jones First Novel Fellowship. MFA candidate **L. Dani Blue** has a story published in the online journal *The Stoneslide Corrective*. **Carolyn Ho** (MFA candidate) received the 2012 San Francisco Foundation James D. Phelan Award for her poetry manuscript, *Wake*. Her poetry/artist book collaboration is the first project chosen for the new Book Arts program, coordinated through the CW Department and the Art Department.

Congratulations to these outstanding students and alumni. For more student (and alumni) publications, visit our website, creativewriting.sfsu.edu. Please email us if your publication isn't listed, and we'll be sure to include it in the newsletter, and the website.

MILESTONES

Jack Gilbert, at the age of 87 in Oakland, winner of the 1962 Yale Younger Poets Award.

ADVISING:

All Creative Writing professors, assistant, associate and full professors, are advisors; the list is posted at the department office, HUM 380. See any of them during their office hours for any questions about your degree program.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Prospective applicants to our **graduate programs, you will receive admission decisions mid to late March.**

Students, past and present, faculty past and present: your Creative Writing Department wants to hear from you! Please send us your news for the next Newsletter.

BIG THANK YOU'S to all of you who have been so generous in your giving; without your help, the department would have to do out without the many things that make our lives easier. **And as our department continues to receive no operating budget, we are dependent as ever upon your generosity, for not only scholarships for our deserving students, our membership fee for AWP, journal subscriptions, the occasional honorary stipend for guest speakers, judges, etc. but also for basic office supplies like paper, whiteout, and post-its**

Your tax deductible contribution to The Creative Writing Department Fund, literary journals and scholarship accounts may be mailed; make the check payable to University Corporation, San Francisco State and be sure to indicate on the memo line and in a brief cover letter the account to which you wish to contribute (a list of our account names following). Please mail your donations to

San Francisco State University
Office of University Development
Administration Building 153
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

Our **other donation accounts** are: *14 Hills Literary Journal, *Ann Fields Poetry Award, *Bambi Holmes Award, *Clark-Gross Novel Award, *Creative Writing Scholarship Fund *Tillie Olsen Award for Socially Conscious Writing, *Transfer Magazine, *Wilner Short Fiction Award, *Wordsmith Guild. Remember to write the appropriate account on the memo line of your check.

Additional donations maybe be made to one of our **endowment accounts**, which fund other scholarships and awards. The **mailing address is the same, but make your check payable to San Francisco State Foundation**. On the subject line please indicate one of the following accounts: *James Milton Highsmith Endowment, *Miriam Ylvisaker Endowment, *Manoogian Endowment *William Dickey Endowment.

EVENTS: Add your voice to the Creative Writing Department by attending events and contributing to the department magazines and contests. Be sure to sign up for the email list and to watch our bulletin boards outside the department office (HUM 380) and by HUM 128 for news of local events, publications, and contests.

Also, check out the Poetry Center Schedule online: www.sfsu.edu/~poetry.

Students, to start receiving email notification about events, contests, advising, etc, send an e-mail to cw-students-request@sfsu.edu, no subject; in the body of the message, type the word subscribe. (And to get off the email list, do the same thing, except type "unsubscribe" in the message.) **Alumni**, do you who want to be on our Alumni e-mail list? Email us, cwritng@sfsu.edu, with your e-mail address, requesting to be added to the list.

All best wishes for a happy and productive Fall 2013

Barbara Eaton, administrative assistant
Creative Writing at SFSU