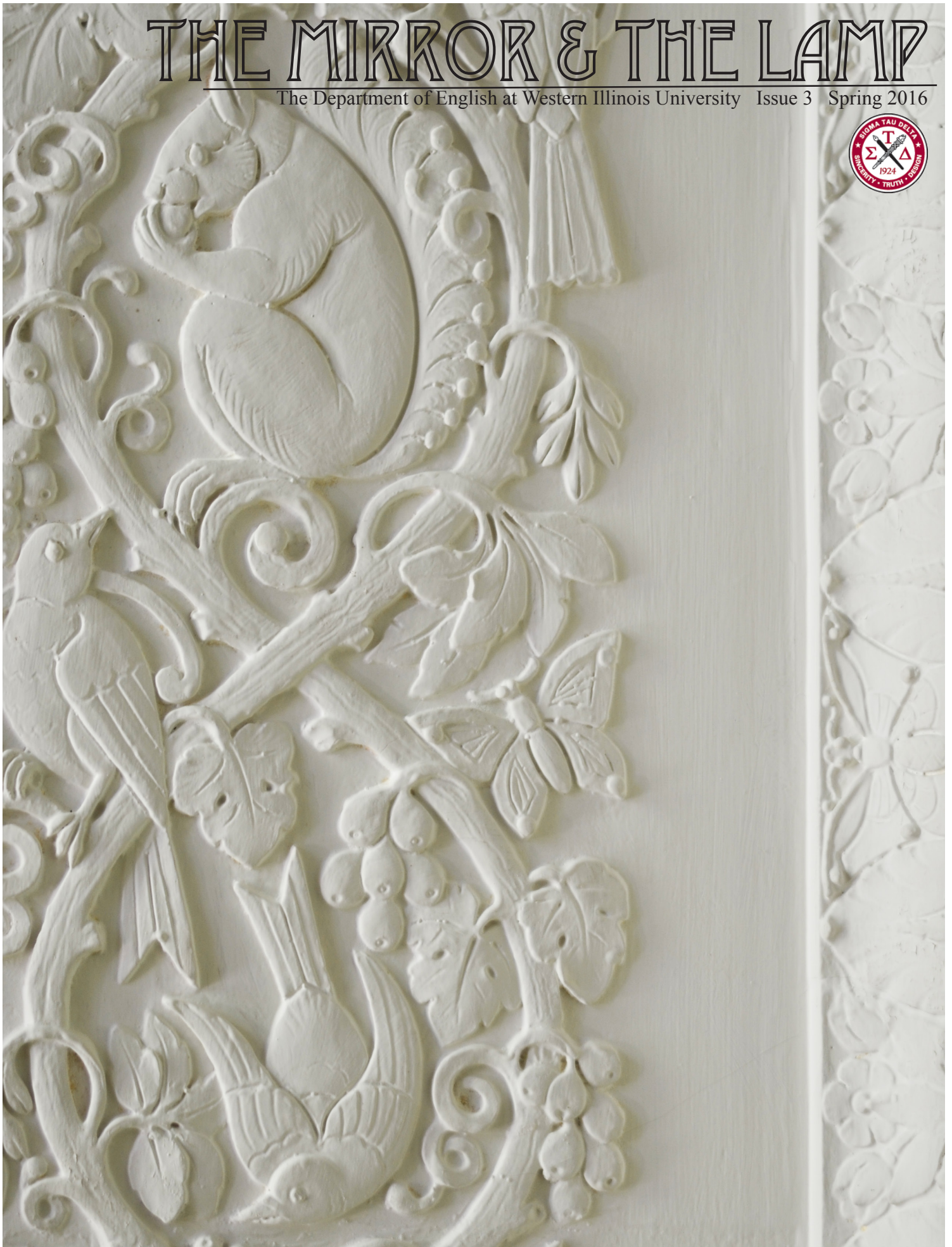


THE MIRROR & THE LAMP

The Department of English at Western Illinois University Issue 3 Spring 2016



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR—ON BEING LOST

BY

MARK MOSSMAN



I love getting lost.

I love getting lost when I am traveling somewhere, when I am talking with a friend, when I am telling a story to my daughters, when I am puzzling my way through a recipe for a great dish, when I am writing.

Like many of us, more than anything, I love getting lost in a novel, a poem, an essay, even a departmental report—anything that requires imagination or big imaginative work.

There is a special value to this particular academic, intellectual, overtly booky kind of “getting lost.” Being lost in a book is defined by complication. In terms of the imagination, it means the exact opposite of what we think of when we say we are lost: being imaginatively lost in a book means that you are being extremely focused mentally—you are enthralled, and you know exactly where you are going on some deep, barely accessible level.

It must be like what a migrating monarch butterfly feels in September, or perhaps what a honey bee knows as it is buzzing and tumbling towards its hive that is miles and miles away—you’re lost, but you kind of know where you’re going, really. There is a sensed unity, an organic coherence, and you know that.

You know that there is something waiting for you as you move through it, the journey through the meadow for the butterfly or the bee, the brimming, tumbling, stacks and stacks of intense images in the Keats or Shelley poem for us.

Also, on some level you want to become the person who can read the book, the incomprehensible poem, and you have some idea that such a person is worth becoming, and in this way, whether you believe it or not, being lost is very much connected to ambition.

And that is significant.

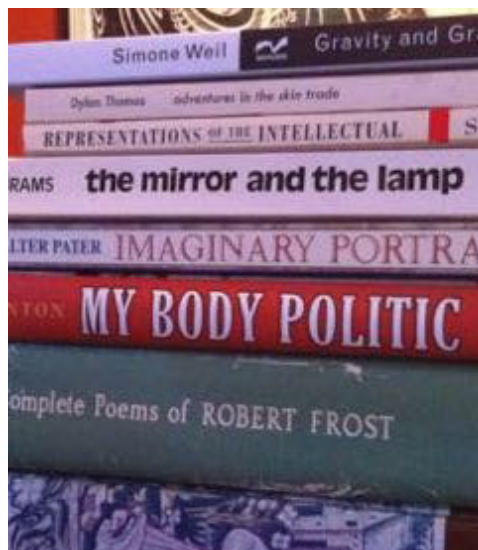
Thus I love getting lost in a book because it means I’m getting way beyond my limits, discovering something about the world and my own self that is truly new, and I know it is new because I cannot recognize where I am—I have gotten lost, and that is, again, very, very good.

With all of this in mind, I have to conclude that good readers are readers who get lost, on a regular basis and on principle. Perhaps this is also why really good readers so much love really difficult books. There is a basic recognition by us that there may not be a destination or a clear meaning at the end of the journey through the difficult text, and that is okay: no tension is really resolved, no answer is really delivered, there is nothing other than something sort of like,

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

Something like that.

Regardless, my message here to students, faculty, and alums is this: get lost this summer when you’re traveling somewhere; get lost this summer when you’re talking with your friends; get lost this summer when you’re telling a story; and get lost this summer when



you’re reading at least one really hard book.

As a bonus, and as a conclusion, I thought I would provide a list of five really hard books I plan to revisit and get lost in this summer: Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*; Dylan Thomas, *Selected Poems*; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Dante, *The Inferno*.

CONTENTS

ISSUE 3 SPRING 2016

A Letter from the Chair.....	2
A Night with Monica Berlin.....	3
Home is Not a Place.....	3
Dean Johnson: English Alum.....	4
Simpkins Puddle.....	6
Reading Comics.....	7
Boy Put your Records On.....	8
Never Mind the Bollocks.....	9
Poet Bruce Lack.....	9
Reading Is Fearless.....	10
Dinner and Globalization.....	11
Funding Our Future.....	12
Books That Helped Us.....	13
Announcements.....	14
Remembering Forrest Robinson.....	18
Remembering Laura Cripe.....	18
Proust Questionnaire.....	19

THE COVER

Each year, *The Mirror & the Lamp* features a cover image from Simpkins Hall, the home of the Department of English.

This year, our cover image is a closeup detail of the decorative moulding found in Simpkins room 014. This kind of remarkable detail is what gives Simpkins so much character, and it is part of what makes it the perfect home for English. Like our major, the building is imaginative, whimsical, and brimming with beautiful surprises if we just pay careful attention.

Thanks to Professor Bill Thompson for the fantastic photograph.



A NIGHT WITH MONICA BERLIN

BY
REBECCA GONNER



Poet Monica Berlin Reads at the Art Gallery

It was a full house on Thursday, November 19th, when Monica Berlin came to Western Illinois University's Art Gallery to read poetry from her co-authored book, *No Shape Bends the River So Long*. The author in question stood an unimposing five feet (by my rough estimation) at the front of the room, unperturbed—on the contrary, quite delighted—by the larger-than-life styrofoam head glaring down from behind her.

"What a beautiful room," she began, the art's praise quickly followed by a joke about the podium being short enough for once. After assuring us that these poems she would share with us were by no means hers, but the collective work of herself and her co-author, Beth Marzoni, she began.

The poetry Berlin shared with us sounded like it was meant to be read. Her consonants rang in the silence of the small gallery, and even the giant heads on the walls seemed to hang on her every word. There was a cadence to her reading, consistent pauses that encouraged listeners to feel the poems rather than simply hear them.

Many of the poems, Berlin confided, were addressed to a character named "So and So," often shortened to "So." So and So represented "all the people we love in the world" according to Berlin, and often helped Berlin and Marzoni through awkward transitions or moments of writer's

block. Having the faceless So and So to address their thoughts to just felt natural, explained Berlin.

Throughout the night, Berlin gave those gathered some background on her poems and her co-author, Beth Marzoni. She and Marzoni had traveled together along the Mississippi River for 18 months to gather inspiration for their collection of poems. Berlin shared anecdotes sporadically throughout the reading, describing tid-bits of their trip like how they kept track of the names of every river they crossed on the trip, and still do when they travel separately, emailing lists of the river names to the other once the trip is complete.

These side comments and stories were my favorite part of the evening: getting to see the man behind the curtain and hear the somewhat random thoughts and observations that wander through the mind of Monica Berlin. Berlin's reading was more than simply sharing her art with us; she gave the audience her wisdom—for example, excitedly stating that "we're closer now to spring than we've been in a long time"—her desires—specifically, to touch the art surrounding her though she knew she couldn't—and her refusal to apologize for what she termed an "unrelenting sadness" in her poems. Berlin shared her fascination with science, her stresses as the English Department Chair at Knox College, and her own, personal struggles as a writer, which we can all relate to.

Monica Berlin came to Western Illinois University to read poems from her co-authored collection, but instead, she gave those who had gathered small pieces of herself. I can't speak for the others seated in that tiny, beautiful space, but I felt at times that those pieces of Monica Berlin that were shared with us were also somehow pieces of myself, familiar as an old coat or a broken in pair of shoes.



Hayley and Nathan Helgesen

HOME IS NOT A PLACE

BY
HALEY HELGESEN

Throughout my childhood, the word "home" was an unattainable, abstract concept. Teachers and mentors often described home as a permanent place inhabited by family and friends, an environment lovingly developed and nurtured over time; but I struggled with this idea, as I had never experienced permanence. Between my dad's constant relocation for the military, my parents's divorce, and other life happenstances, my little brother Nathan's and my entire adolescence was nomadic and our "home" changed consistently five times a year for sixteen years. Home was a variable dependent on any given time of year, custodial agreement, or current military tour. The reality of my home was flexible and multi-stationary, each location having its own set of governances, traditions, and histories.

As a result, the word carried little meaning in my adolescent life. The very idea of designating one single place as a home conflicted deeply with my life experience. It was overwhelmingly complex. I was incredibly jealous of my friends, who had all lived in the same location their entire lives. They didn't wrestle with redefining the word every year, or even several times a year, as Nathan and I did. This grated on me for the majority of my adolescence, until I had a sudden realization.

For me, home is not necessarily a specific place. It is not inherently defined by a building, city, state, or parent, but rather where I feel a certain state of being. Home is somewhere I feel safe, secure, accepted, loved, and needed. I found my home wasn't with either parent in whichever state they lived, but rather wherever Nathan was. It was he alone who endured our turbulent custody changes and constant moves, often travelling hundreds of hours via car or airplane with me. Consequently, he is one of the few people in the world who knows me as I truly am. Nathan is the only other person in the world who has experienced the same exact slipping definition of home. He is my family and friend, but more than that, whenever I am with him, I am home. Everything I am today, Nathan helped me to become. If home is where the heart is, then I need look no further than my brother and the concept of home that we created together.

DEAN JOHNSON: ENGLISH ALUM WRITING HIS WAY INTO THE FUTURE

BY

DAVID BANASH

When you talk to Dean Johnson (BA English '61, MA '68) about his remarkable career as a teacher, journalist, editor, and writer, he often says "I had the good luck to be in the right place at the right time." For Johnson, 1957 was the right time to come to Western, and he eventually found his way to the right place, the department of English. His experience as an English Education major and Journalism minor opened the doors to a truly remarkable career.

Johnson grew up in Oneida, Illinois, and even in high school he was an enthusiastic reader and writer. As a high school student, he had already found one of his favorite authors, Charles Dickens, arguably the greatest British writer of the nineteenth century. Johnson's passion for books, words, and people led him to Western. In 1957 he declared an English Education major, but in his love for Dickens, who was a pioneer of realism and wrote journalism and essays throughout his life, there are already hints of the abiding interests that would lead Johnson from a life of teaching into a major career in journalism.

During the late 1950s, Western's English department was developing one of the largest majors

Macomb was a world away from the small-town experience of Oneida, and he was energized by the deeply engaged faculty in the department and their enthusiasm for literature.

Johnson recalls that coming to Macomb was a world away from the small-town experience of Oneida, and he was energized by the

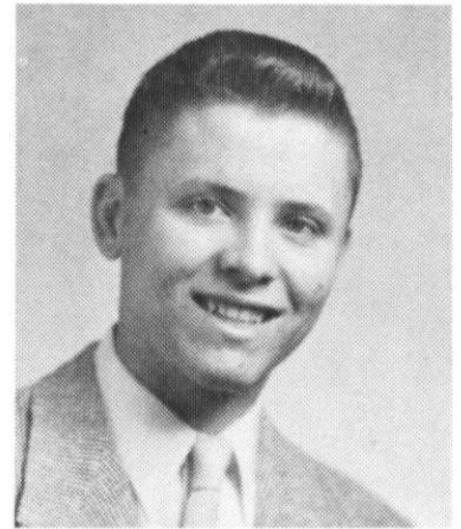
deeply engaged faculty in the department and their enthusiasm for literature. He recalls studying Shakespeare with the department chair Robert Shiley, who believed the key to understanding Shakespeare's plays was in the performance. "In class, Shiley would read the plays to us, doing the different voices, and he was very good at it." Like English majors today, Johnson was immersed in literature, discovering Jane Austen and George Eliot, as well as Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville.

While much was the same at Western in those days, there were differences. Johnson remembers that his roommate told him that early in the mornings the university president walked through campus with a rifle shooting birds. "In those days I lived in Seal Hall, and one day I did get up early. I see a guy walking with a rifle, and it is President Beu! My roommate told me he doesn't like blackbirds and shoots them. By god, he did!" One can only marvel at how much more innocent certain aspects of life at a rural campus were in those days.

While studying to be a teacher, Johnson found a mentor in English professor Reef Waldrep, the faculty adviser to Western's student newspaper, *The Western Courier*. Johnson went on to declare a minor in Journalism, and began taking courses with Waldrep.

He was also gaining important experience writing and editing for the newspaper. Waldrep was a great

mentor, and the quintessential image of an old-school professor and newspaper man. Johnson recalls that "he would smoke all the time, even in class,



Dean Johnson as a student at Western Illinois University, 1957.

lighting one cigarette after another."

A haze of cigarette smoke was not the only noxious fume one had to contend with in those days. Johnson's responsibilities at the newspaper increased, and in his sophomore year he became Makeup Editor, which included working directly on the typesetting and printing. In a world without personal computers and digital printing, that meant taking the copy downtown to the local newspaper and using their Linotype machine. These huge machines cast hot lead type for the printing press. The union Linotype operator would key in the words, and it was intense work, demanding great skill and patience. Johnson recalls that he "made corrections to proofs. I had to be able to read the lead type on the galley upside down and backwards. It was quite a chore, but a valuable skill which I used later at *The Orlando Sentinel*." A single mistake on the Linotype meant having to discard the lead slug and type the whole line again. Producing a newspaper was physical, hot, difficult, and potentially dangerous work.

Johnson graduated in 1961 and immediately found a job teaching junior high school in Freeport, Illinois. Johnson loved teaching, and eventually went on to teach high school

English. He always sought out opportunities to keep developing in his career and his knowledge of literature. While still a teacher, he returned to Western part-time, and by 1968 he completed his M. A. Degree. It might have been in part returning to graduate study at Western that inspired Johnson to think about taking a huge leap into the unknown: Florida.

In 1969, at the age of 29, Johnson decided to move to Orlando. At that time, Orlando was just on the cusp of becoming the major city it is today, and Disney World was still being built. Johnson arrived with the

considerable assets of his Western education, teaching experience, and huge ambition, presenting himself to the editors of *The Orlando Sentinel*. He had an interview in the morning and was hired on the spot for the copy desk. "They asked me if I could start that afternoon! I did. What they didn't tell me was that they had hired two of us for the same job, and only one of us would get to stay. Fortunately that turned out to be me."

Johnson had found his metier, and his skill as an editor and a writer propelled him to ever greater success at *The Sentinel*. As a young reporter, Johnson says, "I wrote everything I could and never turned down an assignment." There was ample opportunity as the city and Disney were growing. Disney World opened in Orlando in 1971 and it transformed the city.

Disney brought not only workers and tourists, but connected a now more vibrant city directly to the

Johnson had found his metier, and his skill as an editor and a writer propelled him to ever greater success at *The Sentinel*. As a young reporter, Johnson says, "I wrote everything I could and never turned down an assignment."

worlds of fashion and celebrity. One of Johnson's first assignments was the layout of the fashion and celebrity stories written by Anne Killiany. When she left for California, Johnson took over her beat and became an entertainment and celebrity reporter. He covered everyone coming to Orlando from the 1970s to the early 2000s, and he even struck up lifelong friendships

with the likes of Rosemary Clooney, the great actress and singer. Of all his encounters, Johnson was most deeply touched by Hal Holbrook, whom he met when Holbrook was

touring his famous one-man Mark Twain show. Once an English major, always an English major!

Johnson's career grew right along with his adopted city and *The Sentinel*. He went on to write feature stories, write for magazines, to edit the work of others extensively, and to write a long-running and beloved weekly column. It is

a dream career for any journalist. Today, Johnson is still writing, at work on a book about his encounters with celebrities over the years.

As Johnson continues writing his way into the future, we are fortunate that his vision of it includes Western's English Department. Johnson recently reached out to Western's development officer Bryce Dexter, explaining how he wished to support the department where his life in literature, teaching, writing, and journalism began.

This is not quite a new idea for Johnson. Many years ago, he thought of paying back his parents for all their financial support when he was in college. From the early days of his first job, he opened a small account and consistently saved, thinking he would surprise them. When his mother found out about his plan to pay them back, she would not hear of it, but he kept saving anyway. Now, instead of paying back, Johnson is paying it forward, helping to make it possible for today's English majors to have the same kind of transformative, energizing, and quality education in literature and writing that he did.

The English Department is thrilled to salute one of our most distinguished and accomplished alumni!

Rewrite Editor Dean Johnson, Photographer Ken Mietus, and Special Programs Editor Andi Alessi take a break for a minute of relaxation.



Dean Johnson and Colleagues at *The Western Courier*, 1960.

THE SIMPKINS PUDDLE

BY
REBECCA GONNER

Simpkins: home, refuge, and learning space of the English Major. Those who claim the title have a special familiarity with the random fireplaces, awkwardly short bathroom stalls, and moaning noises when the wind blows just right. We've all sat petrified as a wasp hovers over our heads while our professors insist we stop being cowards and ignore it. Each of us knows the joy of watching a professor wrestle with the Simpkins 14 projector in vain attempts to coerce cooperation.

Yes, we've bonded over many of our building's lovely quirks as we enjoy the heated floors in the hallways waiting for our classroom to open. Yet one experience is known by English Majors and non-majors alike. All who enter Simpkins' hallowed halls every week (whether for a gen ed or a grad class) know of the Simpkins puddle.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Exhibit A:



Exhibit A: Metaphorical representation of the puddle that forms outside Simpkins

The Simpkins puddle forms at each rain fall on the path to the north facing entrance of Simpkins, arguably the most frequented of all Simpkins entrances. You may be asking yourself: How does this bizarre phenomenon occur? An excellent question.

Allow me to present, Exhibit B, the Simpkins Sidewalk Dip:



Exhibit B: Metaphorical representation of the Simpkins Sidewalk Dip

The Mirror & the Lamp 6

You see friends, located at the juncture of four sidewalks sits this low point. When it rains, all the water from the surrounding area runs here. As a result, a sizable puddle forms, blocking the path to our beloved Simpkins. How, you may ask, do the students of Western Illinois University cope with such a clear obstruction to the center of English learning? Worry not, dear friends, for the Western students have found a number of ways to pass by the puddle and reach the safety of the north entrance.

There are four main techniques that students use which depend on such circumstances as time, footwear, and size of the puddle. The techniques are as follows: over, through, around, avoid.



Over



Around



Through



Avoid

First, over: when the puddle is small enough—either early in its formation or late in the drying-up process—students can safely step or leap across the puddle to the dry sidewalk on the other side. Second, through: students who come prepared and wear rain boots will happily trudge right through the murky water, not paying it a second glance.

The third technique (and my personal favorite) is to venture onto the grass surrounding the puddle and cut across to the sidewalk on the other side. The amount of breadth a student must give the puddle changes based on the size of the puddle and squishiness of the grass surrounding it.

HOW I LEARNED TO READ COMICS WITH MY CHILDHOOD SELF

BY
SHANNON NORRIS

Finally, if a student has enough time as they approach the puddle, they may simply choose to avoid and follow the sidewalk around to the west entrance instead. This is the least common technique, due to both the unlikelihood that college students would have time for such maneuvers and the fact that habits aren't broken easily, so a student who has chosen a regular path to class will stay on that path unless acted upon by catastrophic circumstances (Newton's lesser-known law of motion).

Once students have chosen and executed their technique and made it safely to the warmth of Simpkins Hall, the squeaks and squeals of shoes echo off the walls as students rush to classrooms and enter the world of English learning.

THE BOOK THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



In his own words, English major Max Keil is a “writer, runner, and lifelong lover of music and motion-pictures.”

What is the book that changed your life?

“The book that changed my life is by Haruki Murakami. It's called *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running: A Memoir*.”

How would you describe the book to someone who hasn't read it?

“The book is about the life of a successful Japanese author, and how he created a running self-philosophy. Mostly he recounts a few different marathons as he contemplates the nature of writing, of motivation, and of life itself. In the end, this book isn't about extreme sports, but rather how a lifelong commitment to physical activity can provide insight on your life's failures and triumphs.”

How did the book change you?

“Running didn't magically cure me of depression, but it's been a focal point of my recovery, and Murakami's words have formed mantras that keep me going when I want to sink back into a swamp.”

—Interview by Jared Worley

When I first walked into the English Graduate Organization conference I had no idea what I was doing or what the event was about honestly. I was just covering a story for *The Western Courier* and needless to say I'm lucky I got a name.

As I was walking around looking for the keynote speaker, I was thinking to myself: “Do I look out of place? Do they know I'm a college student? Wait, what if they think I'm a writer, oh crud, I didn't prepare anything! Well I could always just wing it and talk about the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*...that's a comic, right?”

Probably wouldn't have gotten as far as I did if it weren't for Dr. Banash. Saved my life...and my job!

Moving through the events of the day I made my way to the lunch table where I spotted him: The keynote speaker Dr. William Kuskin.

I felt like an assassin. Only, I wasn't trying to get away with murder. That is not part of my gen-ed's. I decided to wait until the time was right before I moved in for the metaphorical kill.

I disguised myself among other graduate students making smalltalk and sharing stories about writing and performing in front of people. Little did they know that I was an outsider. I think I even had my English professor fooled. Apparently she's giving me extra credit for showing up to this. I'll take what I can get. We packed up our things and start heading to the room for the keynote speaker. The room was mapped out just how I imagined it in my head, with many chairs for people to sit in and a projector of sorts to show movies or powerpoints.

I sat innocently up front so I could get a good shot of the Doctor...I mean...view... Before he even took the stage I could tell this man was a character. He already had the house laughing like it was No Shave November all over again. A couple sat behind me. I could hear them chatting about not being able to see the words on the screen.

“Why don't you ever wear your glasses?”

“...I don't know where they are at!”

I suppose that's one reason.

Dr. Kuskin began his lecture and when he started speaking, I felt like I was being read a comic book about a living breathing human being. I could literally see the panels appear as if they were an old 40s printed detective comic book in my head. The way this man spoke was so captivating. I couldn't stop paying attention. And then I noticed that I was paying probably too much attention and started taking notes. After a while, I started trying to figure out

what his speech was about before he said it. I started creating a crime board in my head of what Iron Man's Heart was about.

Was it a play on words? A metaphor for something? Mmmm, I yearned for more information on his thought process.

This man provided such a deep analysis of many of the characters that I had grown up with. Knowing them as heroes, all of a sudden I began to see them as a representation of problems in our everyday life.

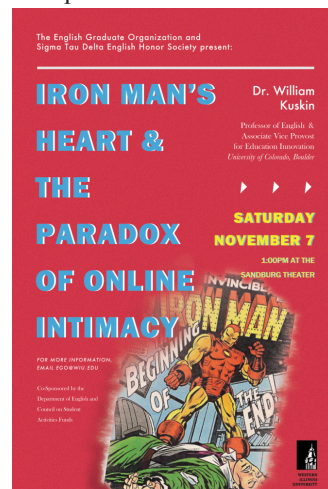
All I could think is, holy hell, this guy just walked into my life and placed me in a room to watch cartoons and read comics with my childhood self.

That's where I feel like he was getting at with this lecture. People are still viewing graphic novels and comics as if they're just a form of entertainment. That's not just what they are. Dr. Kuskin provided enough proof to show that Superman practically strips down naked “to feel super,” to feel liberated, to show that he's free and he likes who he is as a metahuman. Batman marks everything with his batman insignia to cloak the very apparent wound left by the death of his parents and uses his labeling of everything as a coping mechanism.

Iron Man did both!

Iron Man is a superhero, a man of steel...shrouded in his metal form...like Batman is with his need to label everything: batmobile, batarang, batcave.

“Iron Man's Heart and the Paradox of Online Intimacy” questions what constitutes the boundaries of realness. Dr. Kuskin let everyone know that “...with art there is always hope.” Everyone was on the edge of their seats as he said this, their eyes unblinking, and I know this because I was one of them and I felt like I'd just gone through some sort of reverse mitosis, a cell fusion of sorts. Part of his brain is now in my brain, just as he'd presented in his lecture that day.



BOY, PUT YOUR RECORDS ON: DUNCAN GINGRICH, RECORD COLLECTOR

BY
REBECCA GONNER

As any student of English knows, the English major attracts a wide variety of personalities and unique individuals. We all have our quirks, whether we be dedicated fan fic writers, comic book enthusiasts, proud wand wielders, introspective thinkers on the universe, or—most likely—some combination of it all. You are unlikely to come across a boring encounter with any who roam Simpkins Hall, home to the English major on Western Illinois University's Macomb campus.

One such wanderer and resident of Simpkins goes by the name Duncan Gingrich, a third year English Literature major. He, like his fellow English majors, is more than meets the eye, and behind the freckles, reddish-brown hair, and comedic side-commentary there is a hobby, nae, a passion that is a mystery to many who know him. Duncan is not simply a student of English, but also a record collector. Not common in the generation of iTunes, Spotify, and YouTube, but Duncan finds a value in vinyl that supersedes the convenience of 21st century inventions. "Analog tech of all sorts really turns my crank, especially on the aesthetic front. Digital's more practical and affordable, sure, but there's something about putting needle to wax that Apple just can't replicate."

If Duncan owned a handful of records, we may question whether he truly deserves the title "record collector," but for barely having reached the second decade of his life, Duncan has fostered an impressive collection. Duncan has tracked down over 200 records through donations, garage sales, antique stores, record stores, and every now and then a Goodwill.

This type of dedication does not come from a passing whimsy or fleeting interest. Duncan's memories of records in his life go back to childhood, though his collection didn't manifest until his teenage years. "My parents had a neat hi-fi stereo when I was a toddler, but I didn't get a collection of my own going until the winter of 2011. My uncle heard that I had asked for a player for my birthday that year; at Christmas, he gave me the chance to dig through an old orange crate packed to the brim with some really neat albums. I walked away with three-dozen records that year." Thus began what continues to grow into a testament to a lost art.

Duncan's collection is more than just songs on outdated technology.



Duncan Gingrich

Spanning seven decades, Duncan's tastes encompass some of the greatest artists of their age, but also many lesser known talents and hidden gems. "At the moment, I have a grand total of TWO records from this millennium: Gorillaz's *Plastic Beach* and Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*. Other than that, my crates overflow with golden oldies. From Sinatra to Pink Floyd to Pavarotti, my tastes are stylistically eclectic but consistently anachronistic." The amount of history held in the lines on those records is a value beyond \$9.99 a month for any song you could possibly hope to listen to at your fingertips.

Owning hundreds of records spanning multiple decades is one thing, but Duncan's passion goes even beyond simple ownership. Duncan doesn't simply look at or listen to his records, he knows them. For a brief glimpse into the expansive knowledge Duncan has acquired on his records and the songs they hold, he went through each decade of records he owns and gave his favorite along with a record-jacket worthy description of each:

50s: Frank Sinatra, *Come Fly With Me*, one of the swiftest, smoothest collection of tracks Old Blue Eyes ever put out. "Moonlight in Vermont," with its haiku lyrics and lush orchestral backing, is a definite must-listen from this Sinatra classic.

60s: The Beatles, *Magical Mystery Tour*. Though their least commercially successful studio release, MMT is easily my favorite of their entire discography. "The Fool on the Hill" and "Flying" are two of the Fab Four's most criminally-underrated tracks.

70s: Pink Floyd, *The Wall*. While technically not my favorite album of theirs, *The Wall* was my first proper Floyd album and (until I discovered

Meddle) my absolute favorite of their entire oeuvre. "Hey You" and "Goodbye Blue Sky" are some of their best work on both the melodic and lyrical fronts.

80s: Supertramp, *Breakfast in America*. I judge an album by how many tracks I can remember after one listen; by that criteria, *Breakfast in America* is practically a retroactive greatest hits compilation. From the deceptively sunny "Logical Song" to the jaunty "Goodbye Stranger," Supertramp are in top form on this essential part of any self-respecting music enthusiast's collection. (Seriously, "The Logical Song" is REALLY good.)

90s: Radiohead, *The Bends*. Cheating again, as *OK Computer* is so objectively superior that I've yet to pick it up on vinyl. However, *The Bends* is still rather solid, with "High and Dry" standing out amongst a slew of their usual melancholy jams.

2000s: Nnnnothing. Yeah, there's a bit of a gap between Radiohead and Daft Punk. Which brings me to...

2010s: Daft Punk, *Random Access Memories*. Sure, I was vaguely aware of the French EDM duo for a while, but it wasn't until their 2013 powerhouse dropped that I truly began to appreciate their craft. "Get Lucky" staked its claim on the airwaves, sure, but "Contact" and "Beyond" and literally everything else on that album accomplished what other artists couldn't: ending the reign of my classic rock snobbery over my collection.

Unfortunately, Duncan rarely has the opportunity to listen to his impressive collection, as he lives at home with a family of five. "My opportunities to listen in peace are few and far between. However, I make a point of throwing on a neglected album whenever I find a moment of solitude."

Some may say collectors such as Duncan are living in the past, but from the sound coming off that vinyl, it seems like a great place to live. Similar to the controversy over the printed book versus the ebook, or the painting versus the photograph, digital music will not force records to extinction. Technological advances may increase convenience and affordability, but the original sound, look, and feel of that first invention are an art that we will never truly outgrow.

"Record collecting has made me appreciate just how potentially rewarding trying something new can be, in an intellectual sense. There's nothing to be lost in stepping just outside of one's comfort zone, but quite a lot to gain; stumbling upon some new and wonderful concept or idea is always an enriching, edifying experience. The risk is low—on average, no more than ten dollars an album—and the reward is priceless."

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS: A LEGACY BEYOND THE MUSIC

BY
DAKOTA T. CARLSON

Many cite the Sex Pistols as the greatest punk rock band of all time. With the release of their first and only studio success *Never Mind the Bollocks: Here's the Sex Pistols* in 1977, the world was shaken by the experience of the mighty punk movement.

The Sex Pistols will forever be revered as the original fire starters of the punk subculture. In a recent lecture, the English Department's own Dr. Rebekah Buchanan discussed a number of topics in relation to the Sex Pistols' impact on pop-culture. From the controversial music that shook a generation to the band's poisonous relationship with manager Malcolm McLaren, much to my personal pleasure, we discussed everything Sex Pistols.

It would be unjust of me to begin discussing the Sex Pistols without first addressing the music itself. During the lecture, I had the pleasure of experiencing *Never Mind the Bollocks* in the purity of vinyl for the first time. Many of the tracks discussed were played on an old model 328 record player. While in an hour presentation it would be impossible to make it through the album's entirety, Buchanan highlighted some of the more controversy-driven tracks.

She explored the themes behind various "Pistols" hits. Songs like "Anarchy in the U.K.," "God Save the Queen," "Bodies" and "Holidays in the Sun" and the instrumentation and lyrical content behind them were discussed. Whether it be a statement against Monarchy in "God Save the Queen," raising the awareness of abortion in "Bodies," or presenting issues with the division of the Berlin Wall in "Holidays in the Sun," the lyrics of Johnny Rotten shook people to

their very core. By listening to this record, one may never realize that the band was formed before any of its members could even play their chosen instruments (with the exception of Glen Matlock on bass).

Having been a longtime fan of the Sex Pistols, I knew prior to the presentation that manager Malcolm McLaren's relationship with the band was very tainted. But, I did not truly realize just how manipulative and self-preserving McLaren was at the time. A struggling filmmaker at the time, McLaren saw the Sex Pistols as his golden ticket and took on a managerial role to the band.

While youthful egos within the band clashed anyway, McLaren's chaotic tendencies were a great attribution to the band's early demise.

He planted seeds for the band mates' twisted perceptions of one another. It wasn't long before Glen Matlock, the only real musician in the band at that time, was forced out of the band, only to later be replaced by the reckless and inexperienced Sid Vicious.

The basis for McLaren's calculated manipulations of the band have often been credited to the self-preservation of his own success. It is suggested that he viewed the Sex Pistols not as a rock and roll band, but a Situationist-style art project. McLaren had even been quoted as saying: "I decided to use people, just the way a sculptor uses clay" (Legacy). Much of these accounts have been recorded in the 1980 mockumentary *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*.

One of the biggest questions that arose during the presentation regarded the true nature of what the punk movement really meant. For some it merely revolves around a genre of music. However, Buchanan suggests that it is a sub-culture

that is much greater than music. The Sex Pistols were the voice of a lost generation in a time of future-less concern for England. While the "in your face" style of music were all the band was concerned about at the time, the mark that was left is irreplaceable. They crafted a scene and were the voice for a voiceless and frustrated youth. Even in the face of adversity and being stamped with the stigma of controversy, the Sex Pistols' impact reached far beyond the realm of music. While the music still remains relevant forty years later, it was the uprising of a movement that will always embody the legacy that is the Sex Pistols.

POET BRUCE LACK VISITS WIN

BY
JARED R. WORLEY



On Wednesday, September 23, veteran and poet Bruce Lack made a visit up at the Quad Cities campus to read excerpts from his new book, *Service*. That night he made his way down to Macomb for his Thursday reading.

I was lucky enough to be invited to English Professor Barb Harroun's house that night to have dinner with Mr. Lack, alongside Professor Harroun, Jacque Wilson-Jordan. Also attending were Ryan Bronaugh, Dan Holst, and Kathy Meyersm, all editors for last year's inaugural *Veteran's Voices*, which was the brainchild of Kathy Meyers of the Veteran's Resource Center and Professors Harroun and Wilson-Jordan. Needless to say, the dinner was nothing short of amazing: savory meatloaf, melt in your mouth mashed potatoes, asparagus, bread.

On Thursday at noon in the Multicultural Center, Lack read his poetry that can only be described in a way I think Mr. Keating of *Dead Poets Society* could appreciate: he let it drip from his tongue like honey. Along with his poetry, Lack read some of his nonfiction. One piece in particular was titled "On Sleep" in which Lack masterfully describes adjusting to sleeping back at home after being in combat. It was powerful, moving, and nothing short of inspiring.

Bruce Lack's book *Service* can be bought online on Amazon or you can order a copy from New Copperfield's up on the square in Macomb. It is a roller-coaster ride of emotions and experience that looks into the world that many veterans face every single day. Even if you are not a veteran, read it, appreciate it. You will not be disappointed.

READING IS FEARLESS: A BOILER ROOM READING SERIES EXPERIENCE

BY
ALYSON EAGAN

This is my last week as an undergrad. When I signed up for the April Boiler Room Reading Series I thought, "I want to do this one last time before I leave."

The first time I read at the Boiler Room Reading Series, last year, I was terrified. I was new at Western, but I was still happy to get my work out there. I read a piece of fiction that I had workshopped in Barb Harroun's intro to creative writing class. That first reading is a bit of a blur, I know my legs were shaking as I stood at the podium. The art gallery was packed full that Friday. People in the back had to stand.

The April Boiler Room was a special poetry addition, celebrating poetry month. The turnout was much more casual than my first reading. As an end-of-the-year event, a huge crowd isn't expected; everyone is cramming at this point in the semester.

Standing in front of your peers and professors and reading your work is rather nerve racking. You hope people laugh when you expect them to laugh. You hope people sigh when you read a particularly powerful line. And they do. You know Barb Harroun will give you each reaction you'd hoped for.

"Alyson, that was fearless," Barb said to me after the reading. I read eight poems. Eight poems that I had been working on for months leading up to April. I wanted to showcase my best work. I wrote about sex, masturbation, sexism, being an outcast, wanting

The Mirror & the Lamp 10

to quit, and about my family. Three of my poems were about my little brother and his drug addiction.

Dakota Carlson, Dr. Merrill Cole, and Alyson Eagan stand proudly around a metal rooster after reading at the final Boiler Room Reading Series of the school year. "... And when I write a memoir it won't be about me." As I finished reading the last line of the last poem I read, my absolute favorite, I looked up at Dr. Merrill Cole to see him beaming.

I am proud of myself. These are the moments I live for. Standing in front of my friends and favorite professors, surrounded by artwork. These people come for art. They come because they love it just as much as me. These are my people.

Dakota Carlson and Dr. Cole read their own collections of poetry, which were deeply moving. The first poem Merrill had for us was presented by a team of student readers, including Dakota, each reading a different line as a character in the work. It was sort of a postmodern technique and I thought it really stood out as something deep with many voices.

"Do you want to hear a sex poem?" Merrill jokingly asked. I smiled, knowing that I had already set the stage for this type of reading, already having covered the bases of masturbation and promiscuous sexual activities.

Apart from the artwork and the reading, there were delicious baked goods, as always (thanks Barb), and afterward, Dakota, Merrill, and I posed for photos next to a lovely metal rooster.

I am cripplingly shy and I hate public speaking, but I love reading out loud. It's always terrifying and exhilarating, and I never regret it. I strongly encourage any writers out there who are serious about sharing, and hearing others as well, to read for the Boiler Room Reading Series.



Dakota Carlson, Dr. Merrill Cole, and Alyson Eagan at the University Art Gallery

THE BOOK THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



Professor Chris Morrow teaches Shakespeare in Western's English department.

What is the book that changed your life?

Mr. William Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* (1623). Obvious answer for the Shakespeare professor, right? Well, let me clarify. The book that changed my life is not the collected works of Shakespeare but this particular, physical, book.

How would you describe the book to someone who hasn't read it?

It represents an enormous economic and labor-intensive undertaking. And, of course, it is filled with some of the most amazing language written in English. Reading this book carries a proximity not to Shakespeare but to the Renaissance itself.

Where/How did you first encounter this book?

In the Reading Room of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. I have two facsimile copies in my office, but they lack much of the presence and materiality of real thing.

How did the book change you?

It completely changed the way I look at and understand Shakespeare. We cannot separate the work of *Hamlet* from the printed text of *Hamlet*. I feel awe in the presence of this book.

—Interview by Jared Worley

DINNER AND GLOBALIZATION

BY
MOLLY CAMERON

April eighth saw another of Sigma Tau Delta's Dinner and Conversation events. The featured speaker of the evening was Dr. Roberta Di Carmine, a film professor here at Western, presenting an informal look at her extensive world travels.

As always, the event began with an array of free food and enlightening conversation, both of which flowed forth abundantly. Students talked amongst themselves about upcoming WIU theatre productions, faculty discussed conventions, and Dr. Helwig flitted about the room attempting to cajole newer chapter members into applying for available officer positions.

Slowly people made their way to the parlor where we all sat in a friendly circle, which is great for discussion but not ideal for viewing a slideshow. Dr. Di Carmine began in her thick Italian accent to do a bit of show-and-tell of her many international experiences which included Christmas on Easter Island, conferences in Japan and the UK, fun trips to Australia and South America, and her home in Italy. Because of where I was sitting I found it impossible

to see any of the pictures on her laptop presentation, but in a way I was glad of this because I got to focus on her thoughts and memories rather than be distracted by beautiful photographs.

She explained that one of the reasons that she enjoys taking so many pictures is that in all of the places that she's been, the colors are always vibrant and fundamentally different from the ones she's used to. When Dr. Di Carmine mentioned the fact that she inex-

plicably ends up in cemeteries whenever she wanders, Zoe Detlaf chimed in with an anecdote about her experience in France. Comments like hers were interspersed throughout the presentation and it was clear that everyone felt a connection to the topic and those around them.

After listening to the presentation for a while, several clear themes in Dr. Di Carmine's travels became apparent. She takes every opportunity to travel even for short periods of time, she loves penguins and hiking, and she generally travels alone. When asked about her solitary travel tendencies, she said that she likes the freedom that comes with being alone. When traveling with her sister she has to make sure that she doesn't get bored or uncomfortable, while when traveling alone she tends to wander and do things in her own time. For her it is easier to plan things loosely and not be afraid of spur of the moment decisions.

Listening to her tell us the story of her travels, it was easy to see what a positive impact they have had in her life. She is incredibly adaptable, having moved



Dr. Roberta Di Carmine presenting at Dinners and Conversations

from Italy to live and work in the United States at a relatively young age. She is level headed through challenges, managing to overcome the language barrier in Japan through determination and vigorous gestures. Most importantly she is culturally aware: she has lived briefly with many people from cultures vastly different from her own, and she has developed an outside perspective of the world, examining it from all angles. That is the benefit of this presentation.

THE BOOK THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



Justin Kim. Occupation: Student. Formerly a lonely freshman, now the president of Sigma Tau Delta.

What is the book that changed your life?

One book that changed my life, as there are many, is *The Truth about the Truth: De-confusing and Re-constructing the Postmodern World*, a collection of essays edited by Walter Truett Anderson.

How would you describe the book to someone who hasn't read it?

I would say that this book is a perfect introduction for people not well versed in postmodern critical theory. The book includes essays and excerpts by prominent intellectuals like bell hooks, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. It is a fantastic gateway to immersing yourself in these types of formulations and analyses.

How did you first encounter this book?

This book was a required reading for the Postmodern Thought honors course taught by Professor Sandage of the Sociology department.

How did the book change you?

It encouraged being highly suspicious of the things you hold most dearly or that which seems most apparently true. Reading through this book allowed me to ask questions and address tensions which were previously impossible for me to access. I was able to understand what critical thinking actually entails.

—Interview by Jared Worley

FUNDING OUR FUTURE

BY
JUSTIN KIM

I arrived at the march 30 minutes early. I milled around the vacant west entrance of the Donald S. Spencer Student Recreation Center, checking the compass app on my phone to make sure that, yes, it was the west entrance and no, I was not in the wrong place.

I was waiting for the start of the Fund Our Future March, an event hosted by the local teacher's union, University Professionals of Illinois (UPI). The march was organized to advocate the passing of a bill which would have the state of Illinois fund students' MAP grants. The bill, SB 2043, had passed both houses of the Illinois General Assembly and only needed the Governor's signature to come into effect. But Governor Rauner pledged to veto the bill. Faculty, students, and community members were to band together on an overcast Tuesday, the 16th of February, 2016.

The first signs of life were the media and a lone professor, Professor Sandage of the Sociology Department. I had taken one of Professor Sandage's classes in the past, and I was immediately impressed by her thoughtfulness and passion. We caught up, and I mentioned my anxiety over the lack of people. "I'm planning on writing an article about this," I told her, gesturing to the camera crews setting up for a ghost crowd. "I hope it's not going to end up being a sad one."

Governor Rauner's refusal to fund student MAP grants is not an unforeseen aberration but rather follows a larger pattern of defunding higher education and the liberal arts. UPI's involvement in the protest is unsurprising; many students at Western are able to attend because of their MAP grants.

If students are no longer receiving their MAP grant money, then the entire university and Macomb will be affected. The message Illinois politicians are sending to students is clear: you are not important.

The Mirror & the Lamp 12

When the rest of the protesters arrived, they did so in droves. Groups of professors drifted towards us—some joking and laughing, others more somber. Students arrived in nervous solitude or excited pairs. Alumni and community members also added themselves to the growing mass of people, and signs were handed out.

The English Department in particular was out in force—I saw English undergraduate and graduate students, along with almost every single English professor I've taken. In minutes, the west entrance of the Recreation Center was swelling with around 200 people so vastly different but so intimately connected: all of our lives are choreographed by the nation's higher education system.



Students and faculty protest Feb. 16th, 2016 on the Macomb campus

All politicians are quick to emphasize the importance of higher education, but some merely pantomime support while displaying, through their actions, a shocking lack of empathy for underprivileged students.

Frustration and a sense of betrayal latently saturated the atmosphere of the march as we began to rally across campus to Sherman Hall before looping around to the University Union. But there was also a sense of pride: in our university, in the achievements of our students and faculty members, and in the protesters who refused to sit in the comfortable

rhythms of apathetic normalcy. Students who usually had class, or homework, or other obligations took the time to disrupt their own busy schedules to tell Illinois politicians that yes, we do matter and no, we will not accept duplicitous promises.

When the march reached its final destination at the University Union, concerned community members gave impassioned speeches about their own perspectives on the MAP grant funding and the state of higher education. As each person went up in front of the crowd and started speaking, flanked by a small cadre of recording journalists, there was a palpable sense of agency. As I stood there and listened to all their voices float through the chilly air, I thought this: on a dreary Tuesday afternoon we had all

marched, chanted, and spoken out against powerful people who care so little. We had traded in defeated shrugs and forlorn sighs for signs and speeches. But I also I stood there and thought, would they listen?

On February 19th, Governor Rauner officially vetoed SB 2043. It seems that politicians continue to favor their games over an atrophy-ing educational system. Marches and rallies all across the state, even in Springfield, had gone completely ignored. We are in a sad state of affairs; intellectual communities vibrant with critical thought, diver-

sity, and expertise have been atrophy-ing while politicians hover protectively over their bloated political games. It is sad that entire areas of study critical to a well-rounded education are going to be discarded like useless trash. It is sad that the voices of students, the future of our state, matter so little. It is sad that 200 passionate and dedicated community members rallied together on a busy Tuesday afternoon, but many others couldn't bother to stop for just a moment, and listen.

BOOKS THAT HELPED US THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

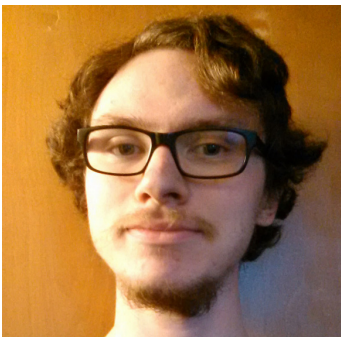
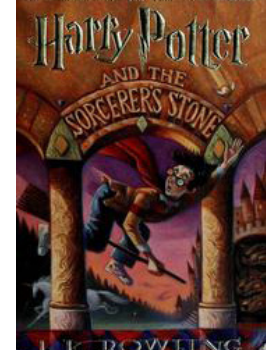
BY
RACHEL TROYER

This was a tough question for me because I used books in general to escape during my childhood and teenage years. However, the series that impacted my life and my reading journey was the *Ramona* series by Beverly Cleary. As a child, I struggled with reading because of a learning disability that I still have to overcome to this day. My mother constantly read to me and the *Ramona* series was one that helped me become the rapid reader I am now.

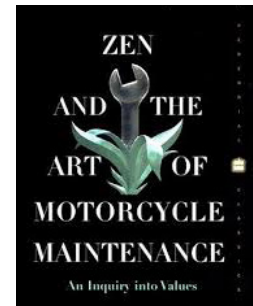
I asked a few other English Majors this difficult question and received some interesting answers.



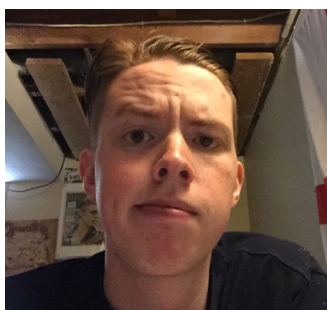
Tanya Nimz said that *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling was the novel that helped her through a tough time. She received the novel as a gift and she said that "I read it and, for the first time in quite some time, I fell asleep without crying. I quickly became engrossed and found that I was able to forget my problems while I was reading." Tanya also commented that the novel helped her find her love of reading, and she said "By the time I entered 6th grade two years later, my reading level had skyrocketed to 'College and up.'"



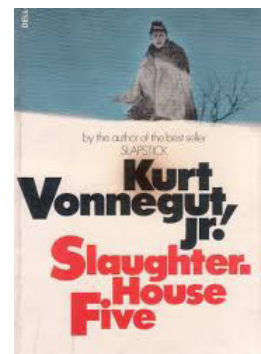
Michael Frederiksen told me that the novel that impacted his life was *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values* by Robert M. Pirsig. He commented, "maybe that book came at just the right time, but it opened my eyes to what I actually value in life. It's the kind of book which can compel you to drop everything to travel cross-country with nothing but a typewriter and a longing for personal discovery."



Katelin Deushane shared the novel that influenced her life was *The Ruins of Gorlan* by John Flanagan. She commented that the reason why it was important to her: "This kind of writing, with such excellent character development, helped inspire me to write. The book inspired me because my mother was the one who gave it to me. Now, don't get me wrong it's not like it was super special because she gave it to me; it was super special because she actually got it right."



Duncan Gingrich states that the book that helped him was *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. He stated that "I consider myself to have somewhat odd tastes—as in, I enjoy media that operates on a logic all its own, rather than adhering to typical narrative structures. Thus, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is right up my alley. Between the non-linear plot and the surreal happenings that Billy Pilgrim stumbles through, Kurt Vonnegut's magnum opus provided a much-needed oasis of oddity in the sea of dullness that was my 2012."



2015-2016 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Award Winning Students

Each spring, the English Department awards \$20,000 in scholarships and fellowships for our graduate and undergraduate students. We are pleased to announce the following students were awarded English scholarships this spring for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Undergraduate Scholarship and Award Winners

Barbara & John Blackburn Scholarship— **Annie Gortowski**; Paul Blackford Scholarship — **Katelin Deushane and Haley Helgesen**; Olive Fite Scholarship — **Arielle Henry**; Irving Garwood Scholarship — **Bryce Swain**; Robert Hodges Scholarship — **Lindsey Nebergall**; Lila Linder Scholarship— **Molly Cameron and Dakota Carlson**; Karen Mann Award — **Katelin Deushane**; Alfred Lindsey Scholarship — **Rachel Troyer**; John Merrett Scholarship — **Zoe Detlaf**; Beth Stiffler Scholarship — **Jessica Burke** — Nai-Tung Ting Scholarship — **Becky Graham**; Lowell N. Johnson Foundation Scholarship — **Rebecca Graham and Anna Tegatz**; — Western Commitment Scholarships — **Anna Tegatz and Samantha Lindholm** — Michaela Rae Romano Scholarship — **Ben Ferrell and Laura Winton**; Norman & Carmelita Teeter Undergraduate Research Award — **Tanya Nimz**.

Scholar of the Year — **Haley Helgesen**

Writing Awards

Bruce H. Leland Essay Contest: *English 100, Introduction to Writing* 1st Place, **Megan Hilt**; 2nd Place, **Torrill Marshall**; 3rd Place, **Kayla Woods**. *English 180, College Writing I* 1st Place, **Aaron Saenz**; 2nd Place, **Filip Czarnecki**; 3rd Place, **Evangalina Zguri**. *English 280, College Writing II* 1st Place **Rachel Sampson**; 2nd Place, **Jasbir Kaur Bhangal**; 3rd Place, **Christine Jordan**. Lois C. Bruner Creative Nonfiction Awards 1st Place, **Justin Kim**; 2nd Place, **Alyson Eagan**; 3rd Place, **Jared Worley**. Cordell Larner Award in Fiction 1st Place, **Katelin Deushane**; 2nd Place; **Jocelyn James**; 3rd Place; **Jon Naskrent**. Cordell Larner Award in Poetry 1st Place, **Jon Naskrent**; 2nd Place, **Jocelyn James**; 3rd Place, **Katherine Garon**.

Graduate Scholarship, Fellowship, and Award Winners

John Mahoney Research Fellowship — **Cody Cunningham**; Ron & Leslie Walker Graduate Fellowships — **Sheldon Gaskell and Stephanie Hoover**; Synda M. Conger Essay Award — **Julianne J. Kaiser**; Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award — **Christopher Ivy**.

Departmental and College Scholar Awards

The Departmental Scholar awards are sponsored by the Illinois Centennial Honors College. Each semester, departments select the top student in each of their majors graduating that semester. Students are selected based on g.p.a. as well as honors and activities. Those selected receive a medallion to be worn at graduation. Our winners for this year are **MaryBeth Hornbaker** and **Justin Kim**

The Mirror & the Lamp 14

Cecile A. Christison Sterrett College Scholar for Fall 2015—
MaryBeth Hornbaker

Announcements

Jacque Wilson-Jordan and **Barbara Harroun** co-advised the student veteran's magazine, *SITREP: Veteran Perspectives on Combat and Peace*, Volume II. We worked with student editors **Ryan Bronaugh** (fiction editor, grad student, English), **Daniel Holst** (poetry editor, grad student English QC), **Luke Cummings** (art editor, grad student, English, QC) and **Jared Worley** (undergrad-English). The magazine includes fiction, non-fiction, poems, and photographs from several WIU-affiliated contributors, including students, alumni, faculty, and staff, who represented all the major branches of the service and served in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan as well as other locations stateside and overseas. The magazine launched May 11, 2016. In Fall, 2015 the *SITREP* team was invited and presented at local venues Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Macomb, Macomb Women's Club. Stories about our work have appeared in the *McDonough County Voice*, *The Macopolitan*, and Tri-States Public Radio. Last year's magazine, Volume I, has gone through three printings and is now available at the University Union bookstore.

Students in English represented at The 2nd annual WIU-QC Student Research Conference. Presenters included posters by English majors **Haidee Cardoso**, **Becky Graham**, **Sean Harrison**, **Stephanie Hoover**, **Di Ann Vulich**; and podium presentations for students in English classes by **Zachary Almquist**, **Janae Arnold**, **Haidee Cardoso**, **Kirsten Dillender**, **Kaleb Rorbakken**, **Laura Winton**, and **Loren Yeager**.

Eight students presented their creative and critical work at this year's Sigma Tau Delta international convention in downtown Minneapolis: **Molly Cameron** - critical paper - sponsored by **David Banash**; **Kirsten Dillender** - creative writing - sponsored by **Barbara Ashwood**; **Haley Helgesen** - critical paper & roundtable presentation - sponsored by **Tim Helwig**; **Justin Kim** - critical paper - sponsored by **David Banash**; **Natasha Morgan** - creative writing - sponsored by **Magdelyn Helwig**; **Tanya Nimz** - creative writing - sponsored by **Magdelyn Helwig**; **Brandon Nizzio** - creative writing - sponsored by **Barbara Ashwood**; **Jared Worley** - creative writing & roundtable presentation - sponsored by **Barbara Ashwood**.

Current Undergraduate Students

Victoria Anderson was accepted to the School of Library and Information Science at University of Iowa.

Adam Colgan is currently in post-production on his first short film, a documentary entitled *RX-Pot*, a look into the medical use of marijuana in Illinois.

Kirsten Dillender interned with the Putnam Museum and was accepted and funded in Western's English M.A. program beginning in the fall of 2016.

Presley DiNardi will teach at Bushnell-Prairie City Jr. High School in Bushnell, IL.

Rebecca Gonner has a summer internship at Prime Publishing in Northbrook, IL.

Ashley Grady presented on the panel “Exploring Diversity with Aristotle and Dante: Discover the Secrets of the Universe” at IATE (Illinois Association of Teachers of English).

Ashley Hill will teach at Bushnell High School in Bushnell, IL. Her courses will include Junior English Language Arts, Greek Mythology, Short Story, and Poetry.

Jessica Hill had library internships in the Rock Island and Davenport school systems, as well as Moline Public Library.

Molly Hall won a \$2,000 capacity building grant to improve a teen center and secured a summer internship at Prime Publishing in Northbrook, IL.

Meghan Haupers presented on the panel “Exploring Diversity with Aristotle and Dante: Discover the Secrets of the Universe” at IATE (Illinois Association of Teachers of English).

Haley Helgesen was elected to serve as the Midwestern Student Representative for Sigma Tau Delta, a one-year position that involves duties at the national and regional levels of the organization. She will serve alongside Dr. Tim Helwig, the organization’s Midwestern Regent. This summer, she has a prestigious, paid internship at EA games.

MaryBeth Hornbaker will teach at Hamilton Jr-Sr High School in Hamilton, IL. Her courses will include English I, English III, English IV, Digital Media/Yearbook, Drama.

Tamika Robinson will teach at United Township High School in East Moline, IL. Her courses will include General Freshman English Language Arts and College Prep Junior English Language Arts.

Austin Thompson, a Film and Creative Writing minor, is currently working on his second short film. His first short film *The Break In* was awarded at the Fault Line Film Festival in Missouri.

Ashley Wilson had a library internship in the Rock Island school system and was accepted to the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Current Graduate Students

Chelsea Brotherton accepted a position at TriMed Media Group as a News Writer in Chicago, IL.

Cody Cunningham traveled to Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and conducted archival research in the J. M. Barrie papers.

Matthew Harrington was accepted and funded in the Ph.D. program in English at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Lucas Marshall accepted a position as a Contract Medical Marketing Copywriter at WebToMed, a Schaumburg-based medical marketing firm.

Laura Winton presented papers at numerous conferences, including: the English Graduate Organization Conference, Macomb; Popular Culture Association in Albuquerque; the Graduate Research Conference, Macomb; Craft, Critique, Culture Conference in Iowa City; Radical Writes Conference in Cape Girardeau. She won the Iron Pen Award for creative nonfiction from the Midwest Writing Center and she contributed zines and to a public exhibition called Spin Jam in Iowa City. She received the grant from Quad City Arts to start an online journal, and she served as president of IDEAS.

Alumni

Alex Ayers (M. A. 2015) accepted a position as Writing Specialist at University of Illinois, Springfield.

Thomas Boyd (B.A. 2013) is a Proofreader and Editor at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, IL.

Hayleigh Covella (B. A. 2014) is Executive Assistant to the Rock Island County Administrator and a freelance writer for *Radish*.

Jacob Davis (B. A. 2007) is Area Social Media Manager at TGP Hospitality in Chicago, IL.

Charlie Davitt (B.A. 2015) was accepted into the graduate program in Counseling at DePaul University.

Elizabeth Geib (B. A. 2015) is finishing her first year of the M.A. in English at Purdue and will work in the Purdue Writing Lab next Fall.

Maggie Hammond (B. A. 2015) is a Corporate Recruiter at SelectQuote in Kansas City, MO.

Christina Holt (B.A. 2010) was accepted for a fully funded position to teach and study in Western Washington University’s M.F.A program in Creative Writing.

Christine Masters (M.A. 2010) Christine completed her Ph.D in Writing Studies at Purdue University, and she has accepted a tenure-track position at Frances Marion University in South Carolina.

Ashley Jones (B.A. 2012 and M.A. 2014) is an Editorial Apprentice for Prime Publishing in Northbrook, IL.

Veronica Popp (B.A. 2012 and M.A. 2015) was accepted to a Ph.D. program at Texas Woman’s University with a fully funded GA-ship and a TWU Graduate Student Scholarship Ph.D. award.

Rayvon Shelton (M.A. 2015), who wrote his MA thesis in film studies, is a social media strategist and content creator for a local park district in Chicago, IL.

Alex Mocaby (M.A. 2014) works as a Service Desk Analyst at Intelliteach

Anjali Pattanayak (M.A. 2014) is Academic Enrichment Program Coordinator in the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at the University of Wisconsin, Platteville.

Kevin Rach (M. A. 2010) is the Marketing Communications Manager at Officite in Naperville, IL.

Abigail Tichler (M.A. 2015) is a Content Architect at Clear Digital Media in Naperville, IL.

Hayley Zertuche (M. A. 2011) completed her Ph.D. at Clemson University. Her work focuses on nonhuman animal rhetorics, visual/digital rhetoric, continental philosophy, and new material theories and pedagogies. She is also an Assistant Director of First Year Composition.

Faculty

Barbara Ashwood presented “Using Low-Stakes Creative Writing Assignments to Engage Students” at The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research, Western Illinois University and was a panel member for “Jane Eyre Talk Back.” Panel Member. She also chaired the panel “Narrative Play: Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy” for the EGO conference.

Neil Baird and former English department faculty member **Bradley Dilger** published “How Students Perceive Transitions: Dispositions and Transfer in Internships.” *College Composition and Communication*. He presented “Contextual and Individual Influences on Writing Transfer: Implications for WPAs” at the Council of Writing Program Administrators and “Diversifying Research Institutionally” at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. He also presented “Supporting Students Learning to Write in the Disciplines: Effective WID Course Design” at Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research Workshop.

David Banash and alumnus **John Degregorio** (M.A 2012) co-edited the issue and co-wrote the introduction for “The Aesthetics of Trash,” a special issue of *NANO: New American Notes Online*. 7 (2015). He published “Hitchcock and the American Dream,” a review of *Must We Kill the Thing We Love? Emersonian Perfectionism and the Films of Alfred Hitchcock* by William Rothman in *Screen* 56.4 (2015). He also presented a talk entitled “Re-conceptualizing Vocation, Utility, and The Value of Liberal Arts Education” at Western’s first TEDx event.

Rebekah Buchanan published “The Moon Over Money” in *Midwest Writing Center Newsletter*; “Death in a Small Town,” in *Winner Penny Fiction*; “Money, Mississippi,” in *Blotterature Literary Magazine*; “There’s a Monster in My Closet,” *Noctua Literary Magazine*; “What’s In a Name,” *Straylight Lit Mag* “Dragons,” *Aberration Labyrinth*. She won round three of Penny Fiction Flash Fiction Writing Competition, won in poetry at Iron Pen Contest, Midwest Writing Center. She broadcast six radio essays on Tristates Public Radio, including “The Force Awakens a New Feminist Generation” and “Heroism and Activism of Mamie-Till Mobley.” She presented “Collaboration in the Classroom: Preservice, Classroom, and Methods Teachers Teach (and Learn) Together” at the Conference on English Leadership (CEL); “Prison Writing as Social Activism” at the Conference on Community Writing; and “The Feminist Punk” at the Popular Culture Association-American Culture Association. Locally, she presented “Never Mind the Bollocks: Here’s the Sex Pistols (The first boy band)” at the Malpass Library Album Discussion Series.

Roberta Di Carmine was the speaker for the “Dinners and Conversation” event organized by the Sigma Tau Delta. Her talk was entitled “The Wish to Travel: Reflections on Experiencing the World through Traveling.” She also was the organizer and speaker at the “Writing Festival with High School Students,” for the Category: “Documenting the World Around You.” She presented “Crime Films and Women’s Changing Roles in Society: the Case of American Television Crime Series *The Killing*” at the Women, Narrative and Crime conference in the UK. She presented “Gender and American Crime Television Series” at the Midwest Popular Culture Association conference. She organized several screenings on campus, including “October Horror Month” and “The Film Trivia Nights,” and she advised the Film Club in many events, including screenings and talks by contemporary filmmakers.

Merrill Cole gave a TEDx talk, was the featured reader at the Boiler Room Reading Series, and gave the Last Lecture. His poem, “Lex Talionis” was published by, and featured at, *The Good Men Project* in November. He organized the panel, Poetry & Revolution, and read a paper, “The Queer Event,” for the Modernist Studies Association Conference in Boston. He is currently under contract with Cambridge UP to contribute an essay on Jacques Lacan and queer theory for the collection, *After Lacan*. He is also engaged in a book project for Cambridge UP, “The New Love: Lesbian and Gay Modernist Poetry.”

Everett Hamner presented “Postsecular Imbrications of Religion and Science Fiction,” a response to “Heavens Above: Envisioning Religion in Science Fiction,” at the Forum on Religion and Literature, Modern Language Association.

Barbara Harroun continued her remarkable pace of publications, presentations, and awards. Her publications in poetry include, “Offerings,” *Bloodstone Review*; “Nicotine Dreams,” *Hermeneutic Chaos Literary Journal*; “River Stone,” *Slip Stream*; “The Fluidity of Love,” *The Watershed Review*; “Mirage,” *Spelk*; “Labor,” *Empty Sink Publishing*; “Here and Here,” *HockTock*; “Rapture,” *The Sonder Review II*; “You Are Here,” “Like Lazarus,” “Black Powder,” “Last Effect,” *The Circus Book*; “Driving Back From Iowa City, 1976,” *New Madrid: Journal of Contemporary Literature*; “Two Mornings,” “Something Salvaged,” “Wild Origins,” *Emerge Literary Journal*. Her publications in fiction include, “Carnival,” *Iron Horse Literary Review*; “A Lonely, Cold Place,” *Rappahannock Review*; “Back Roads,” *Penny Fiction*; “72 Hours: Part Three,” *Text*; “From Adam,” *Fiction Southeast*; “Feast,” “Composition of Tears,” *Typewrite*; “Premeditation,” *The Long Leaf Pine*; “The Town You Are Buried In,” *Blink Ink*; “Merging,” *Foliate Oak Literary Magazine*; “Going Home,” *In-flight Literary Magazine*; “Church Dance,” *Postcard Poems and Prose*; “72 Hours: Part Two.” *Text*; “Empty,” *The Wardrobe*; “The Anatomy of Love,” *Rum Punch Press*; “Into the World,” *Eastern Iowa Review*; “Accumulation,” *Per Contra: An International Journal of the Arts, Literature, and Ideas*; “72 Hours: Part One.” *Text*. Her nonfiction publications include “The Story Behind the Story,” *Fiction Southeast*; “McNabb, IL.” *There’s This Place I Know* (New Jersey: Serving House). She won the President’s Excellence in Diversity Leadership Award; Outstanding Large Student Organization, WIU Leadership Award for Unity; “Death’s Fabulous Remains” won the *Pacifica Literary Review* “Look and Leap” Contest; “Elvis Resurrected” won for *Blotterature*. She presented “Rectify: The ‘Resurrection’ of the Southern

Gothic as Episodic Television” at Popular Culture Association National Conference. She presented “What Would de Tocqueville Say? How to Disrupt the Prison Pipeline,” with Rebekah Buchanan, Jim la Prad and Shaka Rawls at the Dealing With Differences Institute; “*Veterans Voices: The Genesis and Development of a Literary Journal for the WIU Community*,” with Jacque-Wilson-Jordan and Ryan Bronough at the Dealing With Differences Institute; “Veterans Voices: Stories of Combat and Peace,” with Dr. Jacque Wilson-Jordan, Brandon Mooney, and Ryan Bronough. Macomb Rotary Club; “Attempts at Integration and Activism,” Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Macomb; and “Writing Prompts: Writing Play,” at the English Graduate Organization Conference.

Magdelyn Helwig presented “Making It as a (Pre) Tenured Woman Writing Program Administrator: Using Collective Action to Transgress Gendered Boundaries” at Feminisms and Rhetorics in Tempe, Arizona; “Ephemeral Material: The Textuality of a Gallery Exhibition” at Convergences and Divergences: A Joint Conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship and the Association for Documentary Editing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and “War Memoranda: Collaborating with Whitman 150 Years Later,” at the 26th Annual American Literature Association Conference, Boston. She won College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching with Technology Faculty Award.

Tim Helwig published the book chapter “Crime and American Romanticism” in the collection, *A History of American Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016) and “A Key Role in Helping to Develop My Professional Identity” appeared in *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 25:1 (Spring 2015): 77-79. He presented “Cross-Racial Labor Reform: Literary Notices of Cheap Fiction in Frederick Douglass’ Paper,” at the American Literature Association Conference, Boston, Massachusetts.

Bill Knox presented “Perceptions of Honors, Accurate and Not: Building from the Best and the Rest” at Confluence and Conflict: Upper Midwest Regional Honors Council Conference, Minnesota State University-Mankato. He also presented “Workplace Writing,” a Clerical Staff Training Presentation for the Human Resources Division at Western.

Dan Malachuk published “Disinterestedness and Liberalism” in L. Behlman and A. Longmuir, eds., *Victorian Literature: Criticism and Debates* (New York: Routledge, 2016); “Liberalism” in D. Felluga, P. Gilbert, and L. Hughes, eds., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2015). He reviewed William James and the Transatlantic Conversation: Pragmatism, Pluralism, & Philosophy of Religion, eds. Martin Halliwell and Joel D. S. Rasmussen (Oxford, 2014) for the *Journal of American Studies* 49.4 (2015). He presented “Lincoln and Emerson: Preparing the Public Mind” at the Center for American Studies, Universität Heidelberg, Germany. In 2015, he was the Max Kade Visiting Professor, Universität Heidelberg, Germany. Mark Mossman published “Academic Capitalism and the English MA” in *The MA at Work*, ed. Peggy Strain (NCTE, 2016).

Brenda Porter published “Grant Us Peace” in *Relief: A Christian Literary Expression* 8.1.

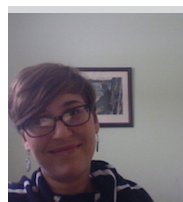
Shazia Rahman visited Athens, Greece with her family in

November 2015 where she enjoyed wandering through ancient ruins, exploring museums, and eating the most amazing olives! In January 2016, she presented “History, Violence, and Nationalism: Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Migratory Birds” at the 2016 MLA Convention in Austin, Texas. While in Austin, she not only listened to live music but also marched through downtown to protest campus carry with other faculty and students from the University of Texas.

Margaret Sinex published “Wounded by War; the Male Body in the Prose Tradition of The Children of Hurin” in *Baptism of Fire: The Birth of the British Fantastic in World War I*, ed. Janet Brennan Croft (Altadena CA.: Mythopoetic Press). She presented “Nay, not Ninie!”: the Wounded Psyche in the Prose Tradition of The Children of Hurin” at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference, New Orleans.

Jacque Wilson-Jordan presented a paper entitled “Veterans’ Voices: The Genesis and Development of a Literary Magazine for Western Illinois University Students and Alumni” at the Conference on Community Writing in Boulder, Colorado. She published flash non-fiction entitled “The Wind” in *The Mulberry Fork Review* and a poem called “Washing Deborah’s Hair” for *The Fem*. She partnered with Neil Baird, Director of the Writing Center, and graduate student Elizabeth Wells to pilot a Writing Fellows program for English 100. She also served on the committee to select the first NIU Scriber Scholar.

Alisha White presented with undergraduate students Ashley Grady and Meghan Haupers at IATE (Illinois Association of Teachers of English) in the fall: “Exploring Diversity with Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe” She also presented in another session at IATE, “Disrupting the ability binary: Interpreting YA Literature with Disability Studies” She published “Teaching Disability Studies with Five Flavors of Dumb” in *English Journal*, 106(6) and “It’s a Sad, Sad Story’: Teaching Emotional Connections and Tone in Literature” in *The Educational Forum*, 79.3



THE BOOK THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Barbara Harroun teaches creative writing at Western. When she isn’t writing, reading, or teaching, she can be found walking her beloved dog, Banjo, or engaging in literacy activism and radical optimism.

What is the book that changed your life?
The Neverending Story by Michael Ende.

How would you describe the book to someone who hasn’t read it?
Originally penned in German, it’s the fantastically imagined tale of Bastian Balthazar Bux who escapes bullies, the recent death of his mother, and his father’s neglect via an antique store and a wonderful novel he finds there. This book is about finding our potential to love and be loved, to change the world, and the power of the written word.

Where/How did you first encounter this book?
My mother read it aloud to me and my brothers when I was seven (we didn’t have a television, but my mom was the best reader—performing voices for each character, plus she always gave in and read us one more chapter) but I reread all 448 pages when I was eight, and again when I was nine.

How did the book change you?
I was distraught when it ended, so captured was I by the world encompassed within its pages and the characters that inhabited that world. I had cried at the end of other books, but I remember understanding that the next time I read it, I would know what was coming. But it was the first book I wanted to figure out—how did Ende do it?

REMEMBERING PROFESSOR

FORREST ROBINSON

BY

BARBARA HARROUN

In the Fall of 1994, I took ENG 200: Introduction to Poetry with Professor Forrest Robinson. He wore tweed coats with patches on the elbows, dress shirts unbuttoned at the collar, and pressed khaki pants. His white hair was carefully combed. He wore glasses, a perpetual air of calm, and a spectacular smile when a student's comments pleased him.

He was organized and ordered, and he returned graded work promptly. I remember him vividly too because he was unabashed in his love for poetry, and in his recitation of his own work and the work of others, he'd often close his eyes. He was in class with us, but he was also somewhere else. I would close my eyes and try to go into the poem too.

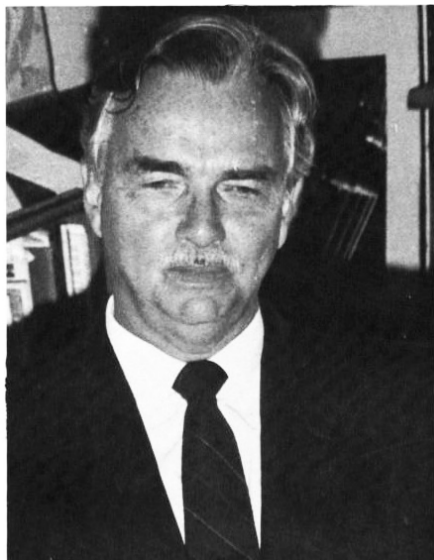
In this way I fell in love with Li Young Lee, Adrienne Rich, Sylvia Plath, and Carl Sandburg, to name a few poets I remember reading for class. Presenting on an author and three specific poems was part of the class, and after reading and discussing Young's, "Persimmons," Robinson clapped his hands together mid-way during my presentation and declared, "Delicious, Barbara." He insisted on calling me by my full name, and it sounded better somehow coming out of the mouth of a poet.

Sometimes, he would share his own work, and this was the first class where a professor shared his own mysterious process. One poem that lives in me still was about imagining where all of the lost items from our lives go. It thrilled me, but it also gave me courage. He was the first person at WIU that I confided my dreams of becoming a writer to. I admitted I wrote poetry too, and after our conference he walked me down to John Mann's office explaining I needed to take a poetry workshop. He referred to me as a poet, and did so with a straight face and

even voice. That alone was a gift.

How much I owe to Professor Robinson. The course of my life would have been a very different, crooked path had he not introduced me to Dr. Mann, who after visiting with me gave me permission to jump into his Spring Intermediate Poetry Workshop. I wouldn't be here, at WIU, teaching, as I owe an extraordinary debt to the creative writing faculty (John Mann, David Stevenson, and Tama Baldwin) who taught, mentored, and supported me far beyond the classroom.

Although I only had Professor Robinson for one class, he wrote me a lovely congratulatory note when I graduated from WIU, and again when he heard I had successfully completed my MFA, although I had not seen him for years. His kindness and generosity have never left me, and I mourn his passing and celebrate his rich life and work. As we enter into a truly busy time in the academic year, and as students prepare to graduate, Robinson's exemplary example reminds me of the worth, value, and



Forrest Robinson

importance of the work we do in Simpkins hall, within our department, and in community with our students.

REMEMBERING LAURA CRIPE

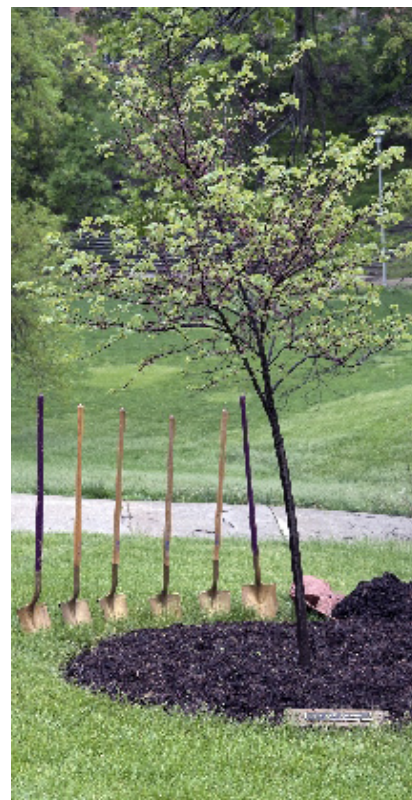
BY

DAVID BANASH

The department is deeply saddened this year by the death of Laura Cripe. Laura had just joined us as the Staff Clerk for the Writing Program and the Graduate Program in fall of 2015.

Laura was a joy to work with. She greeted everyone with a smile, and she made even the most mundane of tasks bearable with her kindness and good humor. She was sweet with the students who needed guidance, even when they were often a bit stressed, and so, sour. She brought good humor to everything, and she had friends throughout campus. Indeed, students, faculty, other clerks, everyone it seems, had love for her. People would go out of their way to stop by her desk everyday just to say hello.

She is much missed by everyone in English.



Western's Memorial Grove

PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE

The Proust Questionnaire is a form of interview, popularized by French novelist Marcel Proust, that is focused on the interviewees personality.

Sheldon Gaskell is a first-year English Master's student at WIU. He is a graduate of Cornell College and hails from Enfield, CT.

Who are your favorite writers?

So many authors and poets, but I will narrow it down to meals. For an appetizer, quick literary satisfaction, I love to delve into poetry: Frost, Billy Collins, Adrienne Rich, Borges, Federico Garcia Lorca, Maya Angelou, Andrea Gibson, Kevin Coval, Danez Smith. My go-to steak and potatoes novelist is inarguably John Steinbeck. I love his passionate narrative voice, complex characters, imagery, and focus on nature. *East of Eden* is my favorite of his novels, but I also love *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* of course. I'm also a big fan of Ken Kesey, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Sherman Alexie, Tolkien, Mary Shelley, and Hemmingway. My favorite contemporary novelist is Donna Tartt for her novel *The Goldfinch*, and for dessert, my guilty pleasures, I have to admit once I start reading *Silverwing* by Kenneth Oppel or anything by Suzanne Collins (especially her *Gregor the Overlander* series), I can't stop. Recently, I've been inspired by Paul Harding and postmodern writers like Steve Tomasula and Mark Z. Danielewski.

Who is your favorite hero/heroine of fiction?

Tom Joad from *The Grapes of Wrath*, hands down. But, I also love Randle P. McMurphy and Chief Bromden from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Who are your heroes in real life?

My mom, dad, grandmother (Erline), late grandfather (Richie), and late great uncle Buddy (both Richie and Buddy served in the Korean War). I admire their struggles and selflessness, and I am inspired by their stories daily. I am especially in awe at my grandmother who fought the glass ceiling throughout her professional career and continues to brighten my life with her humor, creativity, and forcefulness.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A life filled with simultaneous silence in solitude and soul-lifting noise. Living every moment with meaning, working to always better myself creatively and intellectually, and bringing happiness to others.



Sheldon Gaskell

Which historical figure do you most identify with?

I feel like my answer to this question always changes, but I am going to have to say Frederick Douglass because I cannot think of anything more bad-ass than teaching yourself to read, escaping slavery, writing a book, and starting an abolitionist movement. I admire his cleverness, mental strength, creativity, and passion to fight the system.

What is the trait you most loathe in yourself?

I can be pretty slothful sometimes, and I hate it. I also have a big appetite, which causes problems, but if I loathed this I would be too heavy with self-hate to operate.

What is the trait you most loathe in others?

Lack of respect for other people. Treat others how you'd like to be treated, and we'd have a lot less problems in the world.

What do you enjoy most about Western?

The people are great! So welcoming and fun to be around. I also love the passion of the professors and the fascinating reading lists.

Describe Macomb in one word?

Crumbling. All the buildings seem to be in a state of decay, like a once-great castle slowly receding to dust. It's actually comforting to me because it reminds me a lot of my hometown, Enfield, CT. Macomb has a lot of character, and I love the art scene and frequent events on the town green. It's nice to see flowers growing up through the shattered bricks and cracked concrete.

What is your dream occupation?

A writer and professor of English and Cre-

ative Writing. I would love to teach during the year and write, travel, and tour various writer retreats/workshops over summer breaks.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

Money. Just kidding. My family and creative drive are simultaneous greatest loves of mine.

Which talent would you most like to have?

The ability to breathe underwater so I can dive deep into the ocean or underwater caves and explore.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Writing a story titled "Kineo" about my dad and spreading my grandfather's ashes in Maine. It won the CT Young Writers Contest in 2010. I have not since been able to write a story that has made grown mountain men cry.

What is your motto?

Ever since taking Jim VanValen's beginning acting class at Cornell College, I have adopted the motto: Every moment has a meaning all its own. It has helped me to react to every experience, good or bad, truthfully and without shame.

What is your current state of mind?

Nearly neurotic. I have recently been pummeled with so many creative ideas for writing pieces that I do not have the time to preserve on paper. I feel great stories slipping through my fingers like shiners in a stream.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

A bear because that is my spirit animal. Long story.

If you could choose what to come back as, what would it be?

A shark or an orca. I would love to tour the seas with little to no worry of being eaten by other fish.

How would you like to die?

If I don't die from a heart attack as result of my insane daily caffeine intake and wild, irritated demeanor, I would like to grow old until I am nearly unable to function, and then I would buy a boat and sail out into the sea, like Robert Redford in the film *All Is Lost*, and die battling the waves of a hurricane.

—Interview by Kate Kellner

We hope you enjoy the third print edition of *The Mirror & the Lamp*. The goal of our magazine is to bring together students, faculty, and alumni of Western Illinois University's Department of English.

Please keep us informed of your recent activities and achievements. Please email your news to our faculty adviser, Dr. David Banash: d-banash@wiu.edu.

You can also find more stories in our online edition: <https://mirrorandthelamp.org/>

The Mirror & the Lamp is a publication of the Phi Delta chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at Western Illinois University

The Mirror & the Lamp
The Department of English
Simpkins Hall
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL. 61455

THE MIRROR & THE LAMP

Managing Editor Rebecca Gonner

Undergraduate Editors Justin Kim
Molly Hall
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