



# English at Pitt

Fall 2006

## Dear Friends of the English Department,

Greetings. Welcome to our new online department newsletter. English at Pitt will provide a window into our current activities and offer news about faculty and alums.

We have welcomed several new faculty members: Mark Lynn Anderson (Film Studies), Jonathan Arac (Mellon Chair), Cathy Day (Fiction), Jessica Enoch (Composition), Hannah Johnson (Medieval Studies), Isaac Julien (Visiting Mellon Chair), William Scott (American/Comparative Literature), and Jennifer Waldron (Medieval Studies). Margaret Goscilo has joined the faculty as a lecturer. We are happy to have such talented colleagues join us. Please take a moment to read their professional biographies online.

Several members of the faculty have retired after long and distinguished careers: Mary Briscoe, Valerie Krips, Buddy Nordan, Don Petesch, and Bill Searle.

Other faculty actions included Kathryn Flannery's promotion to Full Professor and Paul Bové to Distinguished Professor. In addition, both Adam Lowenstein and Troy Boone were named Associate Professor with Tenure. Geeta Kothari and Fiore Pugliano were promoted to Senior Lecturer. Kathryn Flannery was appointed Director of Women's Studies. John Twyning was reappointed as Director of the Literature Program, Troy Boone as Director of Graduate Studies, and Nick Coles took

over as Director of the Composition Program.

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of two important figures in the culture and life of the department.

Bill Coles passed away in March 2005. He joined our department in 1974 as Professor of English and Director of Composition. Through his vision and energy, Pitt's Composition Program became one of the most influential and distinctive in the nation. He retired in 1998 but continued to lecture, to lead workshops, and to focus his attention on a successful career as a writer of adolescent fiction. He was one of the most brilliant and influential teachers of writing of his generation and remains a regular point of reference in the professional literature. Bill has been and will remain a constant presence as we think about composition and the writing of our students.

Richard Tobias passed away this fall. Tob was an active scholar and a well-respected Victorianist. He served as a mentor for several generations of colleagues. He was also a generous and committed member of the Pitt community who had a particular concern for the rights and responsibilities of academic life. Tob was a presence and force until the very end. In the summer, he traveled



Photo: John Twyning

and lectured in Germany, and he had prepared and begun his Shakespeare class this fall. Next year would have been his 50th year with the department. He will be greatly missed. Along with family and friends, Tob endowed the Barbara Nietzsche Tobias Dissertation Fellowship, which provides crucial new support for our graduate students. It was awarded to Jeff Aziz in its first year and to Holly Middleton in its second. We are grateful for this gift and for the occasion to honor and remember Richard and Barbara Tobias.

Our department is currently working on several initiatives. For example, at the request of the Provost and with full support of the Dean, we have begun a two-year study of writing in the undergraduate curriculum in Arts

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Inside This Issue:

- Letter from the Chair
- Visiting Faculty Biographies
- Faculty Honors and Awards
- Faculty Publications
- Writers' Café
- Writers Series



(Continued from page 1)

and Sciences. The project draws on work with focus groups, a survey of juniors and seniors, a study of existing courses, and interviews with faculty.

In another initiative, the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project (WPWP) has developed joint programs with the Wilkesburg School District and the Pittsburgh Public Schools to facilitate teachers' professional development in support of reading and writing in the middle and high school. WPWP has similar partnerships, funded in part by the Heinz Foundation, with Fox Chapel, Hampton, and New Brighton School Districts.

The Literature Curriculum Committee recently proposed and received approval for a new three-credit course called English Literature 505: Lectures in English. This course is limited to 120 students, with preference given to English Majors. The Lectures in English course consists of a weekly lecture by a course leader and guest lecturers (drawn from the department's faculty), followed by discussion in recitation sections. The recitations are led by a combination of graduate teaching assistants and undergraduate teaching fellows.

Spring 2005 marked the first graduation ceremony and reception for English majors and their families. This year's graduation ceremony took place in Alumni Hall, and the number of students more than doubled from the previous year with more than 140 students and their families in attendance. This is an event we look forward to making an annual tradition.

In other department news, our Graduate Student Organization served as the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2004 Northeast Modern Language Association Meeting in Pittsburgh.

The department co-hosted a symposium in April 2005 with the Communication Department and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Don Bialostosky and Debra Hawhee organized the symposium entitled, "Revisionist Classical Rhetorics: Contemporary Practices and Pedagogies." It featured leading scholars of classical

rhetoric from around the country.

In October 2005, we co-sponsored and hosted a Comparative Post-colonialism conference with co-sponsorships from Film Studies, Asian Studies, Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, Africana Studies, Anthropology, History, French and Italian, Hispanic Languages and Literature, Art History, the Global Academic Partnership, and individual donors. This international event, convened by Shalini Puri, featured keynote speakers Kumkum Sangari (University of Wisconsin) and Robert J.C. Young (New York University), as well as a large panel of impressive scholars.

Susan Andrade coordinated a conference in October 2006 entitled, "African Novels and the Politics of Form." Speakers included Koffi Anyinefa, David Attwell, Nicholas Brown, Brenda Cooper, Eleni Coundouriotis, Olakunle George, Wail Hassan, Roberta Hatcher, Ronald T. Judy, Luis Madureira, Mohamed-Salah Omri, Anjali Prabhu and Raji Vallury. The conference addressed thematic and issues surrounding the African novel.

Colin MacCabe is organizing a one-day conference on March 23, 2007 entitled, "The Virtues of Fidelity: Film Adaptations as Literary Truths." More information will be forthcoming on the Film Studies website.

You are always welcome to attend the many events we sponsor on campus, including lectures, readings, films, and colloquia. You can find information about them by visiting our newly designed home page: [www.english.pitt.edu](http://www.english.pitt.edu).

We hope that this newsletter keeps you connected to the department and its activities. Please keep in touch. We would love to hear from you!

Sincerely,

David Bartholomae  
Professor and Chair

## Visiting Faculty

**Lynn Arner** earned her doctorate at the University of Rochester; her current research project is a book on Gower and the English Rising of 1381. She has taught at Rochester, Hobart and William Smith, and Florida Atlantic University. She has published essays on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Chaucer, Gower and feminist criticism. She has taught courses in medieval literature and culture, women's studies, feminist literary theory, and composition.

**Carol Bové** is Professor of French in the Department of Modern Languages at Westminster College. Her book Language and Politics in Julia Kristeva will appear this year with the SUNY Press. She has also published several articles and translated two books on French psychoanalytic writing. She will be teaching a new topics course in 20th century literature called "Lost and Found in Translation."

**Ross Gay** has published poems in major journals and magazines, including American, Poetry Review, Harvard Review, Atlanta Review, Columbia: A Journal of Poetry and Art, The North American Review, and Sulfur. His most recent project is The Cold Loop, a collaborative graphic chapbook made with painter Kim Thomas, slated for publication by Q Avenue Press. Ross was a recent Cave Canem fellow. He has taught at Temple and Lafayette.

**Tomaz Salamun** has published more than 30 books in Slovenia and is one of the most widely known poets of Central Europe. His books have won numerous awards and prizes. Volumes translated into English include The Selected Poems (Eccor, 1988); The Shepherd, the Hunter (Pedernal, 1992); The Four Questions of Melancholy (White Pine, 1997); Feast (Harcourt Brace, 2000), and A Ballad for Metka Krasovec (Twisted Spoon, 2001). He has held visiting positions at Harvard, Iowa, Sarah Lawrence, Columbia, and Emory.

**Cindy Skrzycki** joins us as a Senior Lecturer in Journalism. She received her MA in Journalism and Public Affairs from American University. She has worked for the Buffalo Evening News and the Washington Bureau of Fairchild Publications; she served as Associate Editor for business news for U.S. News and World Report. She currently writes a regular column, "The Regulators," for The Washington Post. She has published a collection of her columns, The Regulators: The Anonymous Power Brokers in American Political Life with Rowman and Littlefield, 2003. She has served widely as a guest lecturer and held Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowships at Grinnell, Austin College, Salem College and Willamette University. She was appointed "Journalist-in-Residence" at Pitt in Fall 2004.

## Faculty Awards and Special Recognition

**Faith Adiele:** Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship; UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Artists Programme (Umbria, Italy; residency at the Civitella Ranieri Center); 2005 PEN "Beyond Margins" Award Winner; Hedgebrook residency. Profile: "New Morning TV," Hallmark Channel. The Boston Globe. "The Anthology of Myself," The Best Buddhist Writing edited by Melvin McLeod, 2005. "Hungry Ghosts," The Best Women's Travel Writing edited by Mary Morris, 2005.

**David Bartholomae:** Elected to the Executive Council, Associated Departments of English (ADE); President Elect, Associated Departments of English. He won the Modern Language Association's Mina Shaughnessy Award for Writing on the Margins: Essays on Composition and Teaching and The CCCC Exemplar Award.

**Troy Boone:** Elected to Scholarship Committee, Children's Literature Association.

**David Brumble:** David and Tina Bellet Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award.

**Fiona Cheong:** Sprout Foundation for "Confluence: Song & Spoken Word"; URC grant for work on novel in progress. Office of the Provost Innovation in Education Award for "Hill House Center for Creative Writing." Community Outreach Partnership Grant from the School of Social Work/Honors College to develop a research/learning course.

(continued on page 4)

## Faculty Awards and Recognition, Continued

(continued from page 3)

**Cathy Day:** Great Lakes Book Award Finalist and The Story Prize Finalist for The Circus in Winter. "Circus People," National Public Radio, "Selected Shorts" Interview with Kurt Anderson, "Studio 360," NPR.

**Toi Derricotte:** Guggenheim Fellow; Inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent. Rockefeller Foundation: Bellagio Residency

**Bruce Dobler:** RDF Grant: Research in Northern Italy.

**Lynn Emanuel:** Coal Endowed Chair of Creative Writing (Visiting), University of Alabama; Judge, The National Book Awards, 2004-2005; "The Planet Krypton," selected by the Pennsylvania Center for Books as one of four featured poems for the Public Poetry Project; Elector for "The Poets Corner," Cathedral of St. John the Divine, NY. "The Revolution" selected for The Best American Poetry, 2005, Paul Muldoon and David Lehman, editors. Three poems selected for The Oxford Book of American Poetry, David Lehman, editor.

**Marah Gubar:** Office of the Provost Innovation in Education Award; Best Article, Literary Criticism of Children's Literature (2003), from the Children's Literature Association, for "Species Trouble: The Abjection of Adolescence in E.B. White's Stuart Little," in The Lion and the Unicorn.

**Lee Gutkind:** Grants for Creative Nonfiction Foundation from National Endowment for the Arts, Jewish Healthcare Foundation, PA Humanities Council, and Falk Medical Foundation; Pittsburgh City Council declared the first week of November as "Creative Nonfiction" week; Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, Chatham College. Appointed the first Piper Center Distinguished Writer in Residence, Arizona State University (Spring 2007). Named one of "The Top 50 Creative Forces in Pittsburgh" by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

**Paul Kameen:** Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Chuck Kinder:** Invited to serve as guest fiction editor for the 2004-2005 issue of The Seattle Review; Appalachian Heritage Denny C. Plattner First Place Award for Non-Fiction for Last Mountain Dancer.

**Geeta Kothari:** Tina and David Bellet Arts and Sciences Teaching Excellence Award; Fellowship, PA Council of the Arts; "I Brake for Moose," (Massachusetts Review, Fall/Winter 2004) nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Vera Heinz Foundation Fellowship Residency, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

**Marcia Landy:** Center for West European Studies Travel Grant to lecture in Italy; Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Jeanne Marie Laskas:** The Elle's Lettres Readers' Prize 2004, Elle Magazine for The Exact Same Moon: Fifty Acres and a Family.

**Kimberly Latta:** The Ahmanson-Getty Fellowship for the Clark Center for 17th and 18th Century Studies, UCLA.

**Adam Lowenstein:** George A. and Eliza Gardner Howard Foundation Fellowship for research related to a book project. Visiting Scholar: Department of Cinema Studies at Tisch School of the Arts, NYU.

**Colin MacCabe:** Juror, 2005 Cannes Film Festival.

**Neepa Majumdar:** Third Term Research Stipend; UCIS Small Grant for travel to Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities; Grants for Indian Film Festival from FAS FRSP, A&S Dean's Office and Indo-Pacific Area Council; Traveling South Asia Documentary Film Festival with grants from FAS FRSP and Indo-Pacific Area Council.

**Sharon McDermott:** David and Tina Bellet Arts & Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award.

**Buddy Nordan:** "Wolf Whistle" chosen by Wake County, NC libraries as book of the month for March 2004.

**Marianne Novy:** Elected Trustee, Shakespeare Association.

**Jeff Oaks:** PA Council on the Arts Literature Fellowship.

**Linda Orbach:** Faculty Sponsor Award, Career Services.

**Shalini Puri:** Contributing Advisory Editor for Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal; Invited faculty member to "Interrogating the African Diaspora," Florida International University, funded by Ford Foundation, Asian Studies Faculty Conference Grant, Global Academic Partnership Grant for 2005 Postcolonial Studies Conference. Caribbean Studies Association, 2005 Gordon K. and Sybil Lewis Award for The Caribbean Postcolonial. Small Axe, a leading journal in Caribbean Studies, devoted a substantial part of an issue to The Caribbean Postcolonial with three invited essays and a response by the author.

**Chris Rawson:** Executive Committee, American Theatre Critics Association Program Chair, 2006 Annual Conference.

**Mariolina Salvatori:** Chosen by the University of Pittsburgh as a representative to the national network Teachers for a New Era, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation.

**Jim Seitz:** Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Jennifer Waldron:** Princeton's nominee for the 2005 Council of Graduate Schools/

University Microfilms Distinguished Dissertation Award.

**Michael West:** Elected member, American Antiquarian Society. Trollope Prize from Harvard University for Greg Heller-Labelle's winning essay.

**Stefan Wheelock:** Andrew W. Mellon/Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship.

**Lois Williams:** Fellowship and Residency, Vermont Studio Center; National Finalist, a Room of Her Own Foundation (nonfiction); Fellowship Award, PA Council on the Arts (nonfiction).



Photo: Geoff Bonina

## Faculty Publications

**Faith Adiele:** Meeting Faith: The Forest Journals of a Black Buddhist Nun (Norton, 2004); My Journey Home (Video, PBS, 2004) Screenwriter and Narrator.

**David Bartholomae:** Writing on the Margins: Essays on Composition and Teaching (Palgrave/Macmillan-hardcover and Bedford/St. Martins-soft cover, 2005); Ways of Reading, 7th edition, with Anthony Petrosky (Bedford/St. Martins, 2005); Resources for Teaching Ways of Reading, 7th edition, with Anthony Petrosky (Bedford/St. Martins, 2005).

**Troy Boone:** Youth of Darkest England: Working Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire (Routledge, 2005).

**Paul Bové:** Editor of boundary2: An International Journal of Literary and Cultural Criticism.

**Jean Ferguson Carr:** Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States, with Stephen L. Carr and Lucille M. Schultz (S. Illinois UP, 2005).

**Stephen L. Carr:** Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States, with Jean Ferguson Carr and Lucille M. Schultz (S. Illinois UP, 2005).

**Cathy Day:** The Circus in Winter (paperback edition, Harvest Books). Winterquartiers (German translation of The Circus in Winter, Dumont Literatur und Kunst Verlag).

**Lucy Fischer:** Design for Living: Cinema, Art Deco and the Female Form (Columbia UP, 2003); Stars: The Film Reader, with Marcia Landy (Routledge, 2004).

**Kathryn Flannery:** Feminist Literacies 1968-75 (U of Illinois Press, 2004).

**Lee Gutkind:** Forever Fat: Essays by the Godfather, a memoir in the "New American Lives Series" (U of Nebraska P, 2003); In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction (W.W. Norton, 2004); Editor of Creative Nonfiction. Editor and contributor Rage and Reconciliation: Inspiring a Health Care Revolution (SMU Press). PodLit: a weekly broadcast, written, narrated and produced by Lee, sponsored and hosted by Creative Nonfiction. Listen to PodLit at [creativenonfiction.org/thejournal/podlit.htm](http://creativenonfiction.org/thejournal/podlit.htm).

**Paul Kameen:** Editor of Reader: An Interdisciplinary Journal with Mariolina Salvatori.

**Chuck Kinder:** Les Noceurs, Une Histoire Edifiante, the French translation of Honeymooners: A Cautionary Tale (Rivages, 2003); The Italian Ghost, Italian translation (Fazi Editore, 2003); Lunas de Miel (Circe Ediciones, 2004); Last Mountain Dancer: Hard-Earned Lessons in Love, Loss, and Honky-Tonk Outlaw Life (Carroll & Graf, 2004). Uorhei Hadvash the Hebrew translation of The Honeymooners (Am Oved, Tel Aviv).

**Carl Kurlander:** Road to the Kellys, a documentary film about the Gene Kelly Awards, aired on WQED.

**Marcia Landy:** Editor of Stars: A Reader, with Lucy Fischer (Routledge, 2004); Monty Python's Flying Circus, TV Milestone Series (Wayne State UP, 2005).

**Jeanne Marie Laskas:** The Exact Same Moon: Fifty Acres and a Family (Bantam Books, 2003). Growing Girls: The Mother of All Adventures (Bantam/Dell).

**Adam Lowenstein:** Shocking Representations: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film (Columbia U Press) in the series "Film and Culture" by John Belton, editor.

**Colin MacCabe:** Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at 70 (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2004).

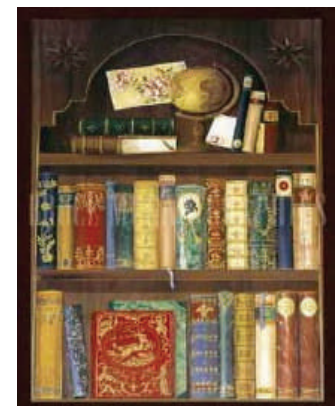
**Marianne Novy:** Imagining Adoption, paperback edition (U of Michigan P, 2004). Reading Adoption: Family and Difference in Fiction and Drama (U of Michigan Press).

**Shalini Puri:** The Postcolonial: Social, Equality, Post/Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2004).

**Ann Ronchetti:** The Artist, Society and Sexuality in Virginia Woolf's Novels (Routledge, 2004).

**Kellie Robertson:** The Laborer's Two Bodies: Labor and the 'Work' of the Text in Medieval Britain, 1350-1500 (Palgrave/Macmillan).

**Mariolina Salvatori:** Pedagogy: Disturbing History, paperback edition (U of Pittsburgh Press, 2003); The Elements (and Pleasures) of Difficulty, with Patricia Donahue (Pearson/Longman, 2004).



## Pitt Alumna and Prizewinning Author Visits the Writers' Café

by Ellen Smith

A little over seven years ago, Sharon G. Flake (B.A., English, 1978) had a completed novel in manuscript and wasn't quite sure what to do with it. Leafing through a copy of *Essence* magazine, she came upon a feature on leading African-American women editors in the publishing world. She decided to contact one of them about her novel. Her timing couldn't have been better: Hyperion was about to launch a brand-new imprint, Jump at the Sun, targeting young African-American readers. And so, Flake's first novel, *The Skin I'm In*, whose protagonist is a dark-skinned black girl grappling with racist ideas of beauty, became one of the flagship titles for that new imprint.

The novel outperformed its modest initial print run, earning a prestigious Coretta Scott King Award as well as a place on middle-school reading lists across the country. Recently, it was reissued as part of the *Sharon G. Flake Collection*, a box set of three novels that also includes

the books *Money Hungry* and *Begging for Change*.

After working in public relations for the University of Pittsburgh for most of the past two decades, Flake has attained the dream of many writers. She now works full time as a fiction writer, publishing up to two titles a year and speaking to audiences all over the United States.

In January of this year, Flake visited the Writers' Café, an undergraduate creative writing and workshoping forum housed at Pitt's Writing Center. "I'm a writer in spite of myself," she told her audience, recalling how, for much of her post-college life, she had the nagging feeling that she should be writing but often hesitated to do so for fear that she wasn't good enough. "I didn't fit in anywhere. There was no model for me."

Little of the information about writing—such as tips about keeping notebooks or plotting novels in advance—seemed to validate Flake's own writing process. "People often think that you're leading a parade [when

you're] writing, but I always feel like I'm following a parade," Flake said, referring to her own process of immersion, or sitting down at the computer and letting the work's direction unfold. Over time, Flake has grown more comfortable with her process, as well as with her sense that book ideas will come to her when the time is right.

As well she should. Her process works. Since publishing *The Skin I'm In*, Flake has published three books, and a fourth was due out in fall 2005. All are novels except for the short story collection, *Who Am I Without Him? Short Stories About Girls and the Boys in Their Lives*, a project she started shortly after her daughter began high school. *Bang!* is Flake's first attempt to write from a male point of view.

Flake's appearance at the Writers' Café provided insight into a literary market not often considered in academic writing programs—the adolescent book market. Flake was emphatic about the need to "take kids seriously" and walking the seemingly paradoxical line of writing "simplistically complex" material that will engage the adolescent mind.

The Writers' Café serves students from a variety of undergraduate majors by holding biweekly informal writing sessions led by English Department faculty. The Writing Center uses this forum as a way to create space for writing practices not typically represented in the classroom. For more information, visit the Writers' Café website at [www.pitt.edu/~wcafe](http://www.pitt.edu/~wcafe).



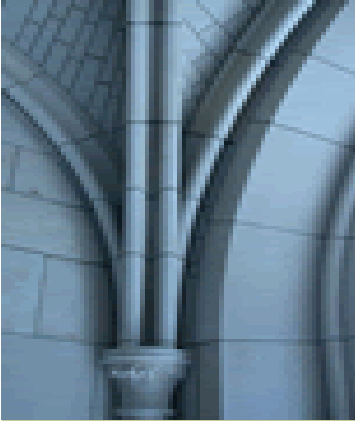


Photo: John Twynning

## The Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series

This year, as always, the Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series is bringing an engaging and brilliant group of writers to the Pitt campus.

The series launched in the fall with a day of events honoring Cave Canem's tenth anniversary, featuring a performance by the Black Took Collective, a panel discussion, and a reading with Nikky Finney and Terrance Hayes. The series also co-sponsored readings by Buzz Bissinger and Kathryn Harrison in conjunction with the 412: Creative Nonfiction Festival. Other writers this academic year have included Gabeba Baderoon and Dan Chaon.

In Spring Term 2007, Patrick McCabe, David St. John, and Cole Swenson will be featured writers.

Since its inception in 1998, the Pittsburgh Contemporary Writer's Series has sponsored readings and short term residencies by John McPhee, Maxine Hong Kingston, John Edgar Wideman, Mark Doty, Tess Gallagher, Richard Ford, Jayne Anne Phillips, Jane Kramer, Chuck Palahniuk, and dozens of other writers of national and international reputation. It is regularly featured in the local media and provides major dates on the Pittsburgh

cultural calendar. During their visits, all writers meet with both graduate and undergraduate students. The writers attend classes, go to lunch with students, and participate in question and answer sessions.

The 2004-2005 season was especially packed with visiting writers, including Eve Alexandra, Tracy Smith, Dionne Brand, Jen Hofer, Christina Rivera-Garza, Ofelia Perez Sepulveda, Chuck Rosenthal, Denise Giardina, Tomaz Salamun, Eddy L. Harris, Z.Z. Packer, and W.D. Snodgrass. The year also included a travel writers panel with Tom Haines, James O'Reilly and Kate Wheeler.

After such a hectic year, a more intimate line-up was planned for the 2005-2006 season, which featured Charles Baxter, Michael Ondaatje, David Berman, Anne Carson, and Natasha Tretheway.

If you would like more information on the Writer's Series events, call the front office at (412) 624-6506 or look at the events calendar on the English Department website. These readings are free and open to the public!

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