



The Coast Line

Spring 2005



Newsletter of the Department of Creative Writing of the University of North Carolina Wilmington

Margaret Shannon Morton Fellowship

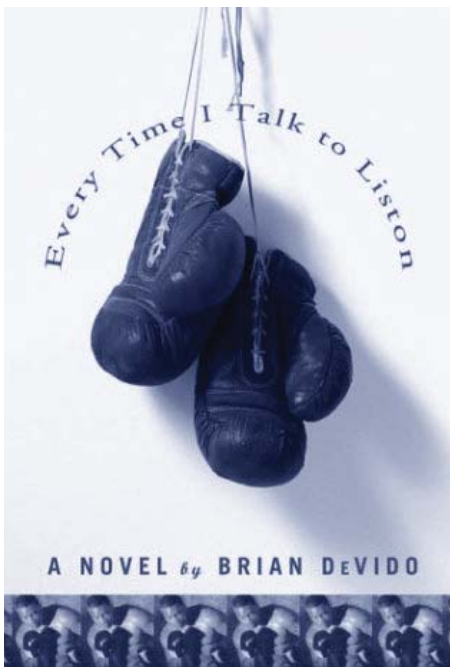
The Margaret Shannon Morton Fellowship has been created by Doug and Susan Morton in memory of his great aunt, Margaret Shannon Morton, one of the original faculty members at Wilmington College. Miss Morton was the first professor in the Department of English (1947-1963) and the first Chairman of the English Department; from 1955-1965, she was the Dean of Women, as well as the advisor to the writing club, "Pen Pushers," the fledgling ancestor of what has become UNCW's flourishing Department of Creative Writing.

"I know there is a building named in honor of my great aunt," said Mr. Morton, "but my wife and I felt that an endowed scholarship in her memory would be more tangible and certainly of more immediate help to graduate students. We chose creative writing because we have a young friend who recently went through a graduate creative writing program and made us realize what creative writing can be. It was only later that we learned of my great aunt's sponsorship of the writing club. What a perfect tribute, if somewhat by accident."



The fellowship will assist a second-year graduate student in the MFA program. The fellowship is considered a graduate merit scholarship, with financial need a consideration in the selection process. The first award will be available fall semester 2006.

DeVido KOs Readers, Critics With First Book



Creative Writing MFA 2001 alumnus Brian DeVido appeared by invitation of the department at Bristol Books on Friday, October 15, 2004, where he read from his novel *Every Time I Talk to Liston*. Published by Bloomsbury, DeVido's work was praised by *The New York Times Book Review* for "...showing quiet purpose in every move, carrying its insider knowledge with easy confidence."

A former Golden Gloves heavyweight champion, DeVido drew from extensive personal experience to create his page-turner about a boxer on the downside of his career who helps a troubled but talented contender make his way to the top. *Kirkus Reviews* said of his writing, "DeVido has a flair for tough, street-wise characters, and his intelligent insider's view of the fight game is absorbing as well as convincing...well-written and fast-moving: a strong debut."

Every Time I Talk to Liston started in Philip Gerard's workshop as a short story about a sparring partner nearing the end of his career who pays periodic visits to Sonny Liston's grave. "I wasn't sure if anybody would like it—who in an MFA workshop likes boxing," DeVido admitted, "but to my surprise I received a lot of encouraging words on the piece. Both Philip and many students in the workshop encouraged me to keep writing and to turn the story into a novel."

According to DeVido, "the most gratifying thing about having the book out is getting e-mails from readers who enjoyed it. It's nice to connect with readers in that way. Other than that, my life has stayed pretty much the same. I still write every day and deal with the same issues that other writers deal with—making the effort to get words on the page."

Ecotone Hits the Streets

Ecotone: reimagining place, a new national literary journal published bi-annually by the Creative Writing Department, launched its first issue with a reception at SimmonsWright Gallery. Editor-in-chief David Gessner opened the reception by acknowledging the crucial efforts of founding editors Kimi Faxon and Heather Wilson and designer Emily Self in shepherding the publication from inception to completion.

The launch featured a humorous reading by the department's own Clyde Edgerton and a thoughtful talk from acclaimed Western writer Reg Saner. The first issue included poetry from Mark Doty and Gerald Stern, fiction from Bill Roorbach, creative nonfiction from Ann Zwinger, and a special feature from John Hay.



Ecotone publishes high-quality works of creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry, as well as interviews with new and established authors with a specific focus on the idea of place in literature. For more information about subscribing or submitting work, visit the web site at www.uncw.edu/ecotone.

Gaga for GAWA



Late 2003, Creative Writing MFA candidates Snežana Žabić, Hoang-Anh L. Tran and Ranjan Adiga decided to formalize a discussion they'd been having informally the past few months about the quality and quantity of multilingual and multicultural literature in North America, particularly in its schools. They created GAWA, the Global American Writers' Association, with the immediate goal of bringing together writers and scholars of different backgrounds and pursuing a dialogue about multi-ethnic issues in literature.

The idea quickly grew from a local proposition to an inter/national one. Žabić and Adiga submitted a proposal to the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) to present at the 2005 Annual Conference in Vancouver. It was accepted. The two then garnered funds from Chancellor DePaolo, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, Diversity Programs, the International Student Organization and the Department of Creative Writing. Next was a web site, www.uncw.edu/writers/gawa (March 2005), inter/national membership recruitment, and the setting of long-term goals.

GAWA means "to do" in Tagalog. It can also mean "a writer's work." Ultimately, GAWA will do both. The group plans to organize its first conference in 2006 and launch a journal for creative and academic writing in 2007.

McDaniel Farms and the Ice Cream Cow



"There was once a quaint house in a far away land / Where a charming young family made ice cream by hand. / Their delightful young cow gave the sweetest, fresh milk / Always making the ice cream as smooth as fine silk."

So begins the winning entry to the McDaniel Farms Creamery children's storybook contest sponsored this winter by Creamery owner Nathan Sanders. The winning entry is a poem in anapestic tetrameter (Dr. Seuss and limerick rhythm) by undergraduate student Lisa DuChene.

The storybook contest was promoted solely to the Department of Creative Writing, and was followed by a similar contest to find a student artist to illustrate the book. Mr. Sanders will publish *McDaniel Farms and the Ice Cream Cow* to sell in the Creamery and has plans to turn it into a coloring book, with pages available to young patrons to color as they dine.

"We've had the best time working with this program," Mr. Sanders said. "I had high expectations, and all of them were met."

Faculty News

Lavonne Adams won the Randall Jarrell/Harperprints Chapbook Competition, which led to the publication of *In the Shadow of the Mountain*. She has poems appearing in *Cimarron Review*, *Comstock Review*, *Cooweescoowee*, and *Hurricane Review*.



Tim Bass was named "General College Adviser of the Year" by unanimous choice of the selection committee.

Karen Bender's story, "Refund," is in the spring issue of *Ploughshares*. She also had an essay in the February 2005 issue of *Child Magazine*.

Barbara Brannon's essay "The Pioneering Journey of the Hampshire Bookshop: The First Ten Years" was one of three published as *Paradise Printed & Bound: Book Arts in Northampton and Beyond* (Northampton, Mass.: The 350th Anniversary Committee, 2004), a digitally-printed chapbook that showcases the art of Gehenna Press and other influential book-related institutions in western Massachusetts.

Wendy Brenner's essay "Jamie's Wedding," about serving as maid of honor in a gay wedding, was included in *The M Word*, a new anthology about gay marriage published by Algonquin in fall 2004. "Love and Death in the Cape Fear Serpentarium," her profile of snake collector, artist, writer and Sinatra-tribute singer Dean Ripa, appeared in the newly relaunched *Oxford*

American magazine (December 2004).

Mark Cox's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Autumn House Book of Contemporary Poetry*; *Never Before: Poems of First Experience* (Four Way Books); *Blues for Bill: Tributes to William Matthews* (University of Akron Press); *The Giant Book of Poetry* (Prentice-Hall); and *Poetry Daily: 366 Poems from the World's Most Popular Poetry Website*. The title poem of his new book, *Natural Causes*, was recently used in The Academy of American Poets Online Poetry Classroom.

Clyde Edgerton will make his non-fiction debut with *Solo, My Adventures in the Air*, coming from Algonquin Books in September 2005. *Walking Across Egypt* was named the "Tale for One City" for Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Phil Furia's biography of Johnny Mercer, *Skylark: The Life and Times of Johnny Mercer*, came out in paperback from St. Martin's Press December 2004. He was a consultant to and appeared in "Broadway: The American Musical," a six-part PBS series that aired October 2004. April 2005 he will write and emcee "Starring Jerome Kern," a gala benefit for the New York Historical Society. June 2005, he will write and emcee a WHQR fundraiser concert, "I Get a Kick Out of Cole," with chanteuse Banu Gibson and her New Orleans jazz combo.

Philip Gerard's essay "Adventures in Celestial Navigation" was selected for *IN FACT: The Best of Creative Nonfiction* (Norton), edited by Lee Gutkind with an introduction by Annie Dillard.

David Gessner's essay "Trickster in the City," originally published in *Harvard Review*, was a notable selection in this year's *Best American Essays*. His work appears regularly on the *Boston Sunday Globe* "Ideas" page. His essay "Benediction" was published in *Georgia Review* Spring 2004. His new book, *The Prophet of Dry Hill*, will be published by Beacon Press this October.

Bekki Lee's first book, *The City Is A Rising Tide*, will be published by Simon & Schuster Spring 2006.



Sarah Messer will be promoted to tenured associate professor as of July 1, 2005. She has poems forthcoming in *PEN America Journal*, *Indiana Review*, and two anthologies. Her book, *Red House*, will be released in paperback by Penguin late June 2005.

Michael White is the winner of the 2004-05 Vassar Miller Prize, judged this year by Paul Mariani. His collection, *re-entry*, will be



published next year by the University of North Texas Press. He also has poems published or forthcoming in *Paris Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *North Carolina Literary Review*, and elsewhere.



Alumni & Student News

Alumni:

Anne Barnhill has published several articles and book reviews in *Our State* magazine. Her story "Quilting Bee" is forthcoming in June 2005 from *The Antietam Review*.

George Bishop, Jr. ("Beau") is finishing his second year as a teacher trainer with the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute in Baku, Azerbaijan. His textbook, *Introduction to Academic Writing: From Sentences to Paragraphs*, is being published this spring by the Open Society Institute, Azerbaijan.

Beth Burt Cagle's poem "Cleaning Crappie" was accepted for publication in *Oxford Magazine*. Also published were "Sunset Mountain at Twilight" and "Tiger Lilies" in the Winter 2004 issue of The Society of American Poets' quarterly magazine *The Poet's Pen*, and the sonnet "Electroshock Therapy" in *Rockford Review*.

Poet **Shana Deets** was accepted into two month-long fellowships/artist colonies: Vermont Studio Center and Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

Elizabeth King Humphrey's review of *On Deadline: Managing Media Relations* appeared in the November 2004 edition of the PIONet newsletter, an international monthly Web publication for public information officers in higher education.

Kelly Hutchison will be poetry instructor for Converse College's Second Annual Young Writers' Workshop.

Emily Kruse had three poems in *The Exquisite Corpse*: "Taking Out the Trash," "An Evening With Myself," and "Her Insides in a Special Receptacle." *Third Coast* magazine published her poem "The Psychological Implications of Sex."

Ken Meyers's story "The Battle, and the Cais do Sodr " was published in *Absinthe Literary Review*, Spring 2003. In April 2004 he gave a reading and was interviewed by Nile

TV as part of the American University in Cairo's "Emerging Literary Voices" series.

Derek Nikitas's story "Wonder" was selected by Joyce Carol Oates for publication in *Ontario Review*. "Waiting" was published in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. He is currently directing and producing the short film "Casanova Doppelg nger," which he co-wrote with fellow alumnus **S. Craig Renfroe Jr.**, and was based on Renfroe's short story collection *You Should Get That Looked At* (Main Street Rag Publishing Company, 2004).

Bryan Oesterreich has had more than fifteen pieces published in *Our State* magazine since July 2003.

Allison Parker's one-act comedy, "Things to Do in Lizard Lick," had a staged reading at UNCW in November 2004. Her poems "Resolution" and "The Earring" will appear in Chicago's *Poetry East* Spring 2005.

Laura Taylor's story "Homespun" received an honorable mention from Red Hen Press' *The Los Angeles Review* 2004 fiction contest.

Jesse Waters is Evening Director/Assistant Director of Education for Miller-Motte Technical College and is finishing his first novel, *FACE*.

Student:

Patrick Culliton's poem "Called After" will be featured in *Verse Magazine's* online edition.

Nina de Gramont's story "When Quakers Speak" was on Nerve.com January 2005, and "Now It's Clean" will be in *Post Road Magazine*.

Louisa Jonas previewed her upcoming documentary about Smith Island on WHQR Radio (91.3).

Shawna Kenney appeared on WHQR's "ArtReach" February 2005 and on the cover of *Star News' "Today"* section the same week. In addition, her essay "Alpha Centauri"

was second runner-up in the Rose Post Creative Non-Fiction Contest sponsored by the North Carolina Writers' Network.

Rory Laverly's essay "A Tale of Two Bars" appeared in the December 2004 issue of US Airways' *Attach * magazine. "My Life of Crime" was published in the December 2004 issue of *Post Road Magazine*.

Bryan Sandala's essay "The Transformative Properties of Rock Baseball" won the 2004-05 *Touchstone* prize for graduate nonfiction. *Touchstone* is published by Kansas State University, and the prize is for the best piece submitted during the year.

Adam Shobert's poem "Sheathing" was accepted by *Iron Horse Review*.

Emily Smith's poem "Close of Season" won second place in the Beullah Rose Poetry Prize from *Smartish Pace*.

Sally Smits won the fourth Biennial Greensboro Award for poetry.

Tara Thompson and **Mallory Tarses's** short stories were among sixteen finalists in this year's North Carolina State University Short Story Competition, judged by Randall Kenan. Tarses was also a finalist, and Thompson a semi-finalist, in the "short-short" category.

Eric Vithalani's poem "Denim Pants" was accepted for publication in *Lilies and Cannonballs Review*, a new literary magazine out of NYC.

BFA candidate **Brian Tucker** will have two short stories published spring 2005: "En Route to Colby" in *Albion Review*; and "Leaves of Autumn, Leaves of Spring" in *Aries*.

Work from the following were the department's nominations for the 2004-05 Associated Writing Programs Intro Award: Nina de Gramont; Jay Varner; Christopher McSween; Emily Smith; and Jessica Toy.

“On the Cusp”

Due to tremendous popularity and reader feedback, *Wilma!* magazine continued its “On the Cusp” series, in which the selected work of female MFA students is published. The gift from the George Link Charitable Trust that supported the series was renewed. Since September 2004, the following students have been featured:

Tara Thompson (Sept '04)
 Jennifer Rose (Oct '04)
 Snežana Žabić (Nov '04)
 Stephanie Anderson (Dec '04)
 Caitlin M. Warde (Jan '05)
 Xhenet Aliu (Mar '05)



Community Creativity Update

Department of Creative Writing graduate students continue to give back to the community, fostering the growth of successful programs like Young Writers' Workshop and Writers In Action.

The Young Writers' Workshop will celebrate its fourth year this summer. Workshop organizers Nick Fedoroff and Caitlin Warde have already put out the call for counselors and presenters. To participate, email youngwriterscamp@hotmail.com.

Writers In Action, led this year by Emily Self, continues its efforts with the following: Blair, Johnson and College Park Elementary schools, Cape Fear Center for Inquiry and Noble Middle School. In addition, Stephanie Andersen and Emily Gorman-Fancy are conducting a similar program in Leland's Lincoln Primary School. In April, their fifteen students will give a public reading of poems and monologues they've written and make a visit to UNCW.

CRW GSA Corner

By Emily Gorman-Fancy

From planning the AWP Reader visit to securing funds for refreshments at readings, the Creative Writing Graduate Student Association (CRWGSA) had a busy year.

This year, vice presidents Jason Frye and Ashley Talley coordinated the MFA Reading Series. In addition to the annual Halloween party reading, MFA readings were held at SimmonsWright Gallery, UNCW's Madeline Suites, and Bristol Books. In March, MFA students read at an event sponsored by the Friends of Brunswick County Library. Additionally, refreshments at readings were funded by a grant from the Graduate Student Association.

By a vote of the student body, CRWGSA invited poet Kim Addonizio to read at UNCW on January 13, 2005. Ms. Addonizio read her provocative poems from the books *What Is This Thing Called Love* and *Tell Me*, which was nominated for the National Book Award. Second-year poet Chris McSween “opened” by reading from his work. While in town, Ms. Addonizio also visited a Forms of Poetry class and had lunch and dinner with MFA students. Her visit was made possible by Special Activity Funding from SGA.

CRWGSA secured funding from SGA to help students attend the AWP Conference in Vancouver and is financially supporting the Young Writers' Workshop.

Current leadership terms expire at the end of the spring term, so CRWGSA will be looking for new officers. If you're interested in being president, vice president, or treasurer for 2005-06, please contact Emily Gorman-Fancy at eagorman@hotmail.com.

Visiting Writers

In addition to Writers' Week 2005, the Department of Creative Writing hosted several visiting writers for extended periods. Rick Bass, a writer whose works consider the nature of the human heart and the heart of nature, taught a creative nonfiction workshop. Randall Kenan, author and columnist, and Donna Tartt, acclaimed author of *The Secret History*, each taught fiction workshops. Robert Creeley, who gave the keynote reading during Writers' Week, taught a poetry workshop.



The 2005-06 Katherine K. Buckner Distinguished Lecture Series will feature a visit by acclaimed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. His 1990 mini-series for public television, *The Civil War*, was a pop culture sensation in America when it aired in 1990. Burns's signature techniques—particularly his use of a moving camera to explore still photos—were quickly adopted by other filmmakers and led to a renaissance in documentary films. Burns's other major mini-series for public television include *Baseball* (1994), *Jazz* (2001) and *Mark Twain* (2003). He won Academy Award nominations for his documentaries *Brooklyn Bridge* (1981) and *The Statue of Liberty* (1986). He will give a talk on Thursday, September 22 at 8:00 p.m. in Kenan Auditorium.

Fifth Annual Writers' Week February 7-11, 2005

The Creative Writing Department's fifth annual Writers' Week was again an unqualified success and featured a series of readings, panel discussions, workshops, and craft seminars with writers, editors, and publishers from around the country, including:



Robert Creeley, an acclaimed and prolific poet who has received numerous awards, including the Robert Frost Medal, the Lannan Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award. He is the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships and a Distinguished Fulbright Fellowship.

Virginia Holman, a Rosalynn Carter Mental Health Journalism Fellow and award-winning author of *Rescuing Patty Hearst*. She has written for *Self*, *Redbook*, *Glamour*, *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, and *O Magazine*, among others. Her first novel is forthcoming from Simon & Schuster in 2006.



A. Van Jordan, the author of *Rise*, which won the PEN/Oakland Josephine Miles Award, and *M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A*. In 2004, he won a Whiting Award and was the Robert Frost Fellow at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.

Michael Parker, author of *Hello Down There*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year (1993), and a finalist for the Pen/Hemingway Award; *The Geographical Cure*, a collection of stories and novellas, which won the 1994 Sir Walter Raleigh Award; and the novels *Towns Without Rivers* and *Virginia Lovers*. His new books—*If You Want Me To Stay*, a novel, and *Novice Males*, a collection of stories—are forthcoming from Algonquin Books.



Dana Sachs, the author of *The House on Dream Street: Memoir of an American Woman in Vietnam*. She has written essays, reviews and articles for such publications as *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Mother Jones*, *Sierra*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Boston Globe*,

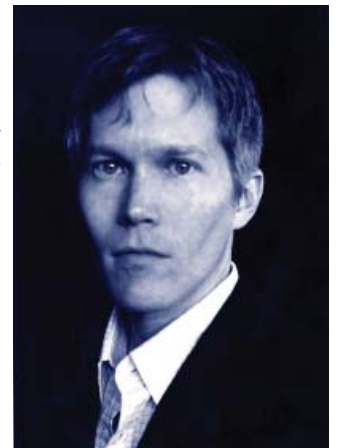
and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In 1994, she produced *Which Way is East*, a documentary film about contemporary Vietnam.

George Singleton, whose stories have been published in *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Playboy*, *Book*, *Zoetrope*, *Southern Review*, *Georgia Review*, *North American Review*, and *Shenandoah*. He is author of two collections of short stories: *The Half-Mammals of Dixie* and *These People Are Us*. *Why Dogs Chase Cars: Tales of Beleaguered Boyhood* was published by Algonquin Books in June 2004. *Novel*, his forthcoming novel, is due spring 2005.



John Jeremiah Sullivan, recipient of a 2004 Whiting Writers' Award. His memoir, *Blood Horses: Notes of a Sportswriter's Son*, was named Book of the Year by *The Economist*. His writing has appeared in *Paris Review*, *New York*, *The New York Times*, and *Harper's*, where he spent four years as a senior editor (winning a National Magazine Award for Feature Writing in 2003). He is a writer-at-large for *GQ* and recently completed a fellowship at the New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers.

Mark Wunderlich, author of *The Anchorage*, which received the 1999 Lambda Literary Award, and *Voluntary Servitude*. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, the Wallace Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University, the Amy Lowell Traveling Fellowship, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. He has published poems, essays, reviews and interviews in *Paris Review*, *Yale Review*, *Boston Review*, *Fence*, *Ploughshares*, and numerous other publications.



Dusty, Ace and the Propellers Fly Again



Creative Writing faculty Clyde Edgerton (aka Dusty) and Philip Gerard (aka Ace) returned to Kenan Auditorium this March for another musical reading extravaganza. This year the performance was a fundraiser to support the many free, public events such as readings and workshops sponsored by the Department of Creative Writing.

Why music? “We both feel that music livens up a reading and helps to comment on it,” said Gerard. “A reading should be entertaining, the kind of experience that makes you want to both read the writer’s work and also go to another reading. Same goes for humor—no reason everything should be deadly earnest, even though the writing is obviously serious at some level.”

The theme for this year’s performance was “All-American Heroes.” Gerard explained “the theme came out of our current work and also a desire to claim the flag for heroes of all sorts. While we want to honor the troops (Clyde is a Vietnam veteran, and I have written extensively about heroic soldiers of all kinds), we don’t want patriotism just to mean supporting war. Sometimes ordinary men and women rise to the occasion, dare greatly, do extraordinary things, and in so doing they illustrate our own possibilities. They become exemplars of our cultural values. We write about them.”

Edgerton and Gerard’s musical efforts were supported by back-up singers The Propellers, aka MFA students Renée Dixon, Rebecca Petruck, and Heather Wilson.

Notes from a Visiting Writer

By Rick Bass

I had dreaded being away from Montana in the last weeks of summer and first of fall, but was almost embarrassed upon arriving at how much I enjoyed being in Wilmington. Faculty, staff and students were, despite their own crazy schedules, so helpful in accommodating my homesickness that it faded quickly, and I ended up having a wonderful time, which was not what I had bargained on. I had thought it would be work, not play. It was play, all play.



The students’ critical abilities exceeded my own, which challenged me as a teacher, forcing me in workshop to explain in the English language “gut instincts” and abstract emotional responses to stories. To their credit, they would not accept the notion that something “just worked because it worked” or “didn’t work because, well, it didn’t work.” Additionally, their writing was smart, but also the rarer thing, heartfelt. I found that I would dream of their stories some evenings, so much had I absorbed them and enmeshed myself in them—which is surely one of the hallmarks of very fine writing, and very fine storytelling. They humored, tolerated, in that icebox meat locker of a classroom, my blackboard sketching—crude narrative diagrams and symbols, part frustrated football coach and part Paleolithic cave-drawings—and they tolerated the severity, the directness, of my criticisms, which were not often tempered with praise (the latter far more dangerous at this advanced stage of the game than the former, in my opinion)—and best of all were not just supportive of each other, but liked each other, which is—again, that word, rare—and valuable. I liked them (and faculty and staff) as people more than I did as writers, which was a relief, and a vital priority. When I challenged their courage to reach deep and try harder, they responded. I am deeply admiring of this characteristic in each of them, and recognize that it is an attribute they brought with them to the program, but one which the program has nurtured and encouraged, as well. Everyone was kind to me and my family, and to each other. You don’t learn to become a better writer by being aloof or envious or negative. You learn to become a better writer by daring to open your heart further and farther—to engage the senses more deeply—and the students excelled at this. I predict fine things for all of them, in their careers and in their lives. I’m grateful to everyone. I don’t want to name names, not because I would leave any out, but because it would seem too final-like, too conclusive, too goodbye-ish. I had a great time, thank y’all.



Department of Creative Writing
601 South College Road
Wilmington, NC 28403-3297

Address Services Requested

Web: www.uncw.edu/writers
Email: mfa@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.7063
Fax: 910.962.7461



I will master something, then the creativity will come.
Japanese Proverb