

*Old Dominion University
Department of English*



**COLONIAL
ENCOUNTERS**

*29th Annual
Literary Festival
October 16 - 20, 2006*

**Old
DOMINION
UNIVERSITY**

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College of Arts and Letters
207 Batten Arts and Letters Building
Norfolk, VA 23529

<http://www.lib.odu.edu/lifefest>

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COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

It is impossible to think about "colonial encounters" without confronting the idea of colonization, a word that can easily be understood as a euphemism for *conquest*. The last five centuries have seen the world transformed and, in many respects, devastated by the expansion of European interests through colonization. Our own country was born from a conquest that began with the establishment of 13 small colonies. One of them, Jamestown, was the settlement that gave rise to the commonwealth of Virginia.

However, it is also worth considering those things that could be perceived as positive exchanges or cross-pollinations resulting from these cultural collisions. Jazz—a music born of African Americans using European instruments—comes readily to mind and, of course, much of the food we eat reflects the palates of many cultures. In fact, great numbers of us wear faces whose shapes and complexions are clear evidence of the mixing of peoples who'd had virtually no contact before the colonizers arrived.

English, itself, was changed by the many non-English speakers who *encountered* it. By employing this European tongue to describe the complexities of their experience, each culture added new words and gestures to this language, making English more agile, musical, and intricately meaningful. Eventually, from among the subjugated, came those who mastered the words, who used English as a vehicle for transformation. They told the stories and wrote the poems that helped to decolonize the minds of the subjugated, that also helped to open the eyes of those who had enjoyed the privileges of power.

In every age, human beings find themselves constrained by social imperatives that no longer make good enough sense. In present-day America, many assumptions concerning race, religion, sexuality, gender, and our so-called "classless" society are under siege. No matter what their background, American writers—faced with a variety of troubles—use their words to challenge what they see and to assert what they believe is missing from the national discussion. Perhaps, at this point in history, we have all been colonized, blinded by the status quo, numbed to our own marvelous potentials. Perhaps our reluctance to read and think beyond the perspectives we are given daily by mass media is proof of our sleepy-headed complacency. It is my hope that, through our encounters with the authors featured in this year's Literary Festival, some significant aspect of our own wakefulness will be re-energized.

—Tim Seibles,
Literary Festival Director

Monday, October 16:

1:30 p.m. Tyehimba Jess
Newport News Room/Webb Center

3 p.m. Shalom Auslander
Newport News Room/Webb Center

4 p.m. Tyehimba Jess--Norfolk State University
Brown Little Theater/Brown Hall

8 p.m. Sharon Bridgforth
Chandler Hall/Diehn Fine and Performing
Arts Center

Tuesday, October 17:

9:30 a.m. Jewish Writers Panel Discussion
James-Lynnhaven River Rooms/Webb Center

1:30 p.m. Patrick Rosal
Newport News Room/Webb Center

3:30 p.m. Matt Klam
Mills Godwin Jr. Life Sciences Building/Room 102

8 p.m. Bernard Cooper
Chandler Hall/Diehn Fine and Performing
Arts Center

Wednesday, October 18:

**Noon Queen Sheba, godchild, Jeff Hewitt,
Tarika Blizzard (Spoken Word)**
North Cafeteria/Webb Center

3 p.m. Nin Andrews
Newport News Room/Webb Center

8 p.m. Dagoberto Gilb
Mills Godwin Jr. Life Sciences Building/Room 102

Thursday, October 19:

12:30 p.m. Dagoberto Gilb
Virginia Beach Higher Education
Center/Lecture Hall 244A-B

1:30 p.m. Marianne Villanueva
The Stables Theatre
47th Street/Monarch Way

3:30 p.m. Crystal Williams
Mills Godwin Jr. Life Sciences Building/Room 102

8 p.m. Rebecca Solnit
Mills Godwin Jr. Life Sciences Building/Room 102

Friday, October 20:

1:30 p.m. Michael Blumenthal
The Stables Theatre
47th Street/Monarch Way

3 p.m. Suzy Gilmont/Narissa Bond
(singer/song writers)
The Stables Theatre

8 p.m. Frank X. Walker
Kaufman Theater/Chrysler Museum

Special Appreciation--Old Dominion University thanks Mrs. Edie White for her longtime support of creative endeavors, in particular for establishing an endowment for the Literary Festival in memory of her husband, Dr. Forrest P. White.



Nin Andrews' poems and stories have appeared in many literary journals such as *Ploughshares* and *The Paris Review*. Her work has also been featured in the anthologies *Best American Poetry* (1997, 2001, 2003), and *Great American Prose Poems*. She won an individual artist grant from the Ohio Arts Council in 1997 and again in 2003. Nin is the author of several books including *Spontaneous Breasts*, winner of the Pearl Chapbook Contest; *Any Kind of Excuse*, winner of the Kent State University chapbook contest; *The Book of Orgasms* (Cleveland State University Press); *The Book of Orgasms and Other Tales* (published in England by Bloodaxe Books), and *Why They Grow Wings* (Silverfish Press), winner of the Gerald Cable Award. She is also the editor of a book of translations of the French poet Henri Michaux, *Someone Wants to Steal My Name*, (Cleveland State University Press). Her book, *Midlife Crisis with Dick and Jane*, is newly published by Web del Sol, and her book, *Sleeping with Houdini*, is forthcoming from BOA Editions.



Shalom Auslander is the author of *Beware of God: Stories*, which was a finalist for the 2005 Koret Award for Writers Under 35. His writing has appeared in *Esquire*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Nerve.com*, and he is a regular contributor to Public Radio International's *This American Life*. *Foreskin's Lament*, a memoir, will be published next year by Riverhead Books.



Tarika Blizzard, known as "Blizz," is a Nottoway spoken word artist from Hampton, Va. This amateur genealogist and Surry, Va. history enthusiast writes with a talent fueled by the Creator as she incorporates the gift of Spoken Word into all of her interests. Blizz has shared her verses for over 10 years in various venues and is also part of the self-titled two-person Spoken Word team "Slimm and Blizz" with local poet Juan Green. The couple's debut CD "Testimonial Vibe" is due to be released this winter.



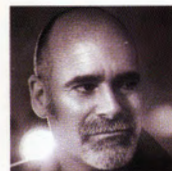
Michael Blumenthal is the author, most recently, of the memoir *All My Mothers and Fathers* (Harper Collins, 2002), and of *Dusty Angel* (BOA Editions, 1999), his sixth book of poems. His novel *Weinstock Among the Dying*, which won *Hadassah Magazine's* Harold U. Ribelow Prize for the best work of Jewish fiction, was published in 1994, and his collection of essays from Central Europe, *When History Enters the House*, in 1998. Formerly director of creative writing at Harvard, he has lived and taught in Hungary, Israel, Germany and France, mostly as a Fulbright Fellow. In 2004-05, he held the Acuff Chair of Excellence in the Creative Arts at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee, and is now Darden Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at ODU for 2006-07. He spends his summers in a small village near the shores of Lake Balaton in Hungary, and occasionally teaches at the University of Western Michigan's Summer Writing Program in Prague.



Narissa Bond's melodies and harmonies reflect their rich folk and jazz influences. She has won numerous singer-songwriter awards, including first place at the Winfield Oak Valley Music Festival. Narissa was featured on Public Radio-WHRV's inaugural singer-songwriter concert and has also been a featured artist on *Sunrise in the Morning* with Hunter Hughes on Bob FM radio. She has shared the stage with regional artists Stephen Bennett, Ron Fetner, Bob and Pam Gurley, Molly O'Brian and has opened for national recording artists David Wilcox, Lucy Kaplansky, Vance Gilbert, Richard Shindell, Alex Dobkins and Ulali. Most recently Narissa performed with Julie Clark, Susan Greenbaum and Paddy Dougherty.



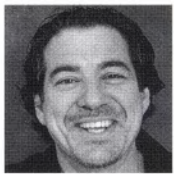
Sharon Bridgforth is the Lambda Award winning author of the *bull-jean* and the Lambda nominated performance/novel, *loveconjure/blues* (both from RedBone Press). Bridgforth has been anthologized and produced widely and has received support from the National Endowment for the Arts Commissioning Program; the National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group Playwright-in-Residence Program; National Performance Network; Rockefeller Foundation Multi-Arts Production Fund Award; and Funding Exchange/The Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media. Bridgforth is the anchor artist for the Austin Project, sponsored by the Center for African and African American Studies (University of Texas at Austin) where she teaches a course on Black Empowerment and Community Internship.



Bernard Cooper has written two collections of memoirs, *Maps to Anywhere* and *Truth Serum*, as well as a novel, *A Year of Rhymes*, and a collection of short stories, *Guess Again*. His work has appeared in *Story*, *Ploughshares*, *Harper's*, *The Paris Review*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and in anthologies such as *The Best American Essays* and *The Oxford Book of Literature on Aging* and the *Library of America's Writing Los Angeles*. He is the author of *The Bill From My Father: A Memoir* (February 2006), which is being made into a Warner Brothers film by director Dean Parisot. He has won numerous awards and prizes, among them the PEN/Ernest Hemingway Award, an O. Henry Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. His work has been read on *This American Life* and *Selected Shorts from Symphonyspace*. Bernard Cooper has taught at Antioch/Los Angeles and at the UCLA Writer's Program and is currently the art critic for *Los Angeles Magazine*.



Frank X. Walker the author of three poetry collections: *Black Box* (Old Cove Press, 2005); *Buffalo Dance: the Journey of York* (University of Kentucky Press, 2003), which won the Lillian Smith Book Award in 2004; and *Affrilachia* (Old Cove Press, 2000). Walker serves as a visiting professor of rhetoric, writing and communication at Transylvania University and is the publisher of the new *Journal of Affrilachian Art & Culture*, due out in spring 2007. He is also a visiting professor in the Pan-African Studies department at the University of Louisville. A 2005 recipient of the Lannan Literary Fellowship, he lives in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Dagoberto Gilb was born in Los Angeles and spent many years in El Paso, Texas. His most recent book was *Gritos*, an essay collection which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism. He is also the author of *Woodcuts of Women*, and *The Last Known Residence of Mickey Acuña*, and *The Magic of Blood*, which won the

1994 PEN/Hemingway Award and was a PEN/Faulkner finalist. Among his literary awards are a Whiting Writers' Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Anthologized widely, his fiction and nonfiction have appeared in a range of magazines including *The New Yorker*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Harper's*, *GQ*, and *Latina*. His forthcoming novel is *The Flowers*, and he is the editor of a much anticipated anthology of Texas Mexican literature, *Hecho en Tejas*. Gilb spent 16 years working as a construction worker, 12 in Los Angeles as a journeyman highrise carpenter and member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. He is currently on the faculty of Texas State University, in San Marcos, Texas.



Suzy Gilmont debuted at Urban Safari, a weekly poetry event at the Jaffe Art Center in Norfolk. This experience inspired her to study at the Menard Music School from 2001-02. For the past four years she has been performing across the Tidewater area in such venues as Station 2, The New Belmont, The Naro and has been featured at Fuzzy Wednesdays,

Hampton Roads "longest running open mic nite." Suzy has also performed at Drexlers in Houston for the 2006 Essence Music Festival and at the 2006 Akoben poetry festival in New Orleans. Suzy completed her first self-titled album, "Suzy," in 2005 and is currently working on her second album, due out early 2007.

godchild, known to some as Carlton West Jr., is an award-winning poet and recording artist. He has been a creative writing instructor for Camp Celebration, a division of the Center for Community Development in Portsmouth, for the last four years, and has taught workshops and given performances for the Newport News Public Library System. For the last two years he also has worked on a Spoken Word Development Series with Portsmouth Public Schools. His first spoken word CD, "Complex Simplicity," was a collaborative effort with Thirteen. His second CD, "Personology," won The Best Spoken Word Award at the 2006 National Underground Spoken Word Awards. He is the host of Fuzzy Wednesdays and regularly hosts other venues, both locally and abroad.



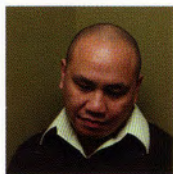
Jeff Hewitt, a poet, musician, actor, visual artist and spoken word performer, was born in Naples, Italy, in 1972. He studied acting at the prestigious Otterbein College near Columbus, Ohio. He helped found Norfolk's Slam Poetry scene in the early '90s, representing the city most recently at the 2005 South Eastern Poetry Slam. He is the author of nine collections of poetry and a member of several poetry collectives throughout the nation.



Tyehimba Jess' first book of poetry, *leadbelly*, was a winner of the 2004 National Poetry Series. The *Library Journal* and *Black Issues Book Review* both named it one of the "Best Poetry Books of 2005." Jess received a 2004 Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and was a 2004-05 Winter Fellow at the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center. He won a 2000-01 Illinois Arts Council Fellowship in Poetry and the 2001 Chicago Sun-Times Poetry Award. Jess is an assistant professor of English at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Cave Canem fellow.



Matthew Klam was named one of the Twenty Best Fiction Writers Under Forty by *The New Yorker* in 1999. He is a recipient of a PEN/Robert Bingham Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Grant, a Whiting Writer's Award, and an O'Henry Award. His first book, *Sam the Cat and Other Stories*, was a New York Times Notable Book and a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book of the Year. He is a contributing writer for the *New York Times Magazine* and *GQ*.



Patrick Rosal is the author of two full-length collections of poetry, *Uprock Headspin Scramble and Dive* (Persea Books, 2003), which won the Asian American Writers' Workshop Members' Choice Award, and *My American Kundiman* (2006). His chapbook *Uncommon Denominators* won the Palanquin Poetry Series Award from University of South Carolina Aiken. His work has appeared in many journals and anthologies, including *North American Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Black Renaissance Noire*, *Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Non-Fiction*, and *The Beacon Best*. He is currently on the MFA faculty at Goddard College.



Queen Sheba's works have been published in several anthologies and periodicals including, *Griot* (2005), *Skipping Stones Anthology of Hampton Roads Poets* (2004, 2005), *Vibe*, and *Essence*. She is currently on the second-ranked poetry slam team in the country and is the Red Bull Word Clash champion '05-'06 and two-time Southern Fried Regional Grand Slam Champ. She is one of the most highly demanded performance poets and lecturers and is a 106&Park and Apollo favorite. Her national radio and television appearances include BET, VH1, Apollo, Robert Townsend's

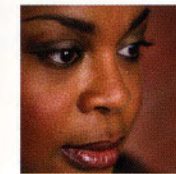
The Black Family Channel, Clear Channel, Radio 1, and Infinity Radio. In addition, Queen Sheba has a cameo in "Spit," a major motion picture about the different paths of Spoken Word. Queen Sheba founded Oya Xclusive International, a record label for poets, and also founded Akoben, the only international music and poetry festival created for people of color.



Rebecca Solnit is a writer, historian, and activist with a particular interest in geography, landscape, slowness, insurrection, photography, indirect routes and subjects that escape category. She lives in San Francisco, has received various awards, including the Lannan, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Western Writers of America Spur Award, and is the author of 10 books, including most recently, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* and *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*.



Marianne Villanueva has published two collections of short stories—*Ginseng and Other Tales From Manila* (Calyx Books), which was a finalist for the Philippines' National Book Award; and *Mayor of the Roses* (Miami University Press). She is also the editor of *Going Home to Landscape* (Calyx Books), a collection of writings by Filipino women. Her short fiction and book reviews have appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *ZYZZYVA*, *The Threepenny Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Hyphen*, and many anthologies both here and abroad. Her short story, "Silence," which appeared in *The Threepenny Review*, was a finalist for the 1999 O. Henry Literature Prize. The recipient of fellowships from the Stanford University Creative Writing Program, the California Arts Council, Fundacion Valparaiso, the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and the Bread Loaf Writers Conference; Villanueva has taught in the Masters in Writing Program at the University of San Francisco, the Santa Clara University Creative Writing Program, the San Francisco State Creative Writing Program, and Foothill College.



Crystal Williams is the author of *Kin and Lunatic*. Williams' poetry has appeared in *Callaloo*, *The Indiana Review*, *Court Green*, *Salt River Review*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Oregonian*, *5AM*, *The Crab Orchard Review*, *Pleiades*, *Obsidian III*, *Ellipsis*, *WV*, *The Potomac Review*, *American Poetry: The Next Generation*, *Poetry Nation*, *Short Fuse*, *Sweet Jesus*, *Poetry 30*, and *Beyond the Frontier*, among others. Her essays can be found in publications like *Willamette Week*, *The Organ*, and in the anthology *Children of the Dream: Growing up Black in America*. A member of the 1995 New York Slam Team, Williams holds degrees from New York University and a master of fine arts from Cornell University. Currently at work on her third collection of poems, she lives and teaches in Chicago.

Special thanks to Natalie Diaz for her artwork for this brochure.