The Call of Stories

31st Annual Literary Festival
September 23–26, 2008

Old Dominion UNIVERSITY
College of Arts and Letters
I've appropriated the phrase from the Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles, who found narrative to be the best way of communicating with his patients. In his words, "Their story, yours, and mine - it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them."

The instinct to shape experience into story, using the most human of tools, language, may be one of our primal drives. For most of us, especially for writers, the door to the world was opened with tales we heard. As Flannery O'Connor once remarked, "I think the writer is initially set going by literature more than life." Literature is essentially a story made universal through the mysterious, mythic power of the right words in the right order.

Most of us yearn for stories, not because they will save us from the consequences of the world, but because they help us to find our humanity in facing those moments, both expected and surprising. For me, Cormac McCarthy explains succinctly and gracefully the importance of telling and listening in the concluding volume of the Border Trilogy, Cities of the Plain: "Every man's death is a standing in for every other. And since death comes to all there is no way to abate the fear of it except to love the man who stands for us. We are not waiting for his history to be written. He passed here long ago. The man who is all men and who stands in the dock for us until our own time comes and we must stand for him. Do you love him, that man? Will you honor the path he has taken? Will you listen to his tale?"

The tales to be shared in Old Dominion University's 31st annual Literary Festival come from world-class storytellers, be they musicians, poets, essayists or novelists. Listen.

Michael Pearson
2008 Festival Director
Peter Meinke's most recent books are *The Contracted World* (2006, poems); *Unheard Music* (2007, stories); and *The Shape of Poetry* (2008, essays on writing). His work has received many awards, including O'Henry and Best American fiction, three prizes from the Poetry Society of America, and two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships. He held the Mina Hohenberg Darden Chair in Creative Writing at ODU in 2003-05, and earlier this year, he was Distinguished Poet in Residence at Wichita State University.

Michael Blumenthal is the author of the memoir *All My Mothers and Fathers* (2002) and of *Dusty Angel* (1999), his sixth book of poems. His seventh book of poetry, *And*, will be published in 2009. His novel, *Weinstock Among the Dying* (1994), won a Hadassah Magazine prize for the best work of Jewish fiction. Formerly director of creative writing at Harvard, Blumenthal currently holds the Mina Hohenberg Darden Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at ODU. He has lived and taught in Hungary, Israel, Germany and France; in May 2007, he worked with orphaned infant chacma babbons in South Africa. He spends his summers in a small village near the shores of Lake Balaton in Hungary.

Shara McCallum has published two books of poems, *Song of Thieves* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003) and *Water Between Us* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999, winner of the 1998 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize). Her poems and personal essays have appeared in numerous literary journals and been reprinted in over 20 anthologies of American, African American, Caribbean and world poetry. Originally from Jamaica, McCallum directs the Stadler Center for Poetry and teaches at Bucknell University.

Claudia Emerson was awarded the 2006 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for her book *Late Wife: Poems* (LSU Press, 2005). She is also the author of the poetry collections *Pharaoh, Pharaoh*, and *Pinion: An Elegy*; all volumes are published in Dave Smith's Southern Messenger Poets series. Her poems have appeared in Poetry, Southern Review, Shenandoah, TriQuarterly, New England Review and other journals. Emerson is the recipient of a Witter Bynner Fellowship from the Library of Congress and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Virginia Commission for the Arts. She is an associate professor of English at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va.

Lenore Hart is the author of the novels *Waterwoman* (a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Authors title), *Ordinary Springs*, and *Black River*. Her recent novel, *Becky: The Life and Loves of Becky Thatcher* (2008), follows Twain's characters Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn and Becky Thatcher — as adults — through Civil War-era Missouri, the Comstock mines of the Sierra Nevada and San Francisco. Her books for children include *T. Rex at Swan Lake* and *The Treasure of Savage Island*. She lives on the Eastern Shore of Virginia with her husband, novelist David Poyer.

Writers in Community (WinC), the outreach organization sponsored by Old Dominion's MFA in Creative Writing Program, has promoted literacy and creativity in the Hampton Roads community for nine years with organizations such as the Virginia Beach Rehabilitation Center, Girls Inc. Center For Youth, the Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk Botanical Garden and the Norfolk Juvenile Detention Center. Christian Gerard, the 2007-08 WinC director, invites ODU students and faculty, literary guests, and community members to join in a moderated discussion concerning the importance of bringing the roots and spirit of creative written work back where it's needed most.
Gioia Timpanelli is one of the founders of the worldwide revival of storytelling. Often called the “Dean of American Storytelling,” she is today considered one of the world’s foremost storytellers—widely respected as both a master and scholar of the ageless art. She won two Emmy Awards for her series of programs on storytelling, “Stories from My House” on educational television, where she created, wrote, produced and appeared in eight series of literature programs shown on PBS stations across the United States. She received the 1999 American Book Award for Sometimes the Soul: Two Novellas of Sicily (W.W. Norton).

Steve Almond is the author of two story collections, My Life in Heavy Metal and The Evil B.B. Chow, the novel Which Brings Me to You (with Julianna Baggott), and the non-fiction book Candyfreak. His new book is a collection of essays, (Not That You Asked), which includes tributes to Kurt Vonnegut, Barry Hannah and other heroes of the human heart. He lives outside Boston with his wife and daughter, who has recently learned to walk and shows no signs of ever slowing down.

Mary Karr, elegantly irreverent memoirist, captures a voice that is equal parts faith and cynicism. Her first memoir, The Liars’ Club, won the PEN Martha Albrand Award and held a spot on The New York Times best-seller list for more than a year. The sequel about her adolescence, Cherry, made top best-seller lists and excerpts ran in The New Yorker. Her third memoir, Lit, will be published in 2008. Sinners Welcome (2006) is Karr’s fourth volume of poetry. Karr’s poetry grants include The Whiting Writer’s Award, a National Endowment for the Arts, and Radcliffe Bunting and Guggenheim fellowships. She is the Jesse Truesdell Peck Professor of Literature at Syracuse University.

Rishi Reddi was born in Hyderabad, India, and grew up in England and the U.S. She is the author of Karma and Other Stories (eccolo HarperCollins, April 2007). Her fiction has been performed at Symphony Space and read on National Public Radio. Her short stories have been published in Harvard Review, Louisville Review and Prairie Schooner, and her English translation of Telugu short fiction has appeared in Partisan Review. In addition to being featured in Best American Short Stories 2005, her work received an honorable mention in Pushcart Prize—Best of the Small Presses in 2004. She is also the recipient of an individual artist grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. She lives in Brookline, Mass.

Douglas Kearney is a poet, performer and teacher. His poetry has appeared in journals including Callaloo, nocturnes, jubilat, Gulf Coast, as well as several anthologies. He has written and performed for a number of audio recordings as well as for television. A featured performer at venues across the country, including the New York Public Theater, the Orpheum in Minneapolis, Locus Arts in San Francisco and the World Stage in Los Angeles, Kearney has received commissions from the Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis and the Studio Museum in Harlem to create poetry in response to art installations. His first full-length collection of poetry—Fear, Some—was published by Red Hen Press in October 2006.

Richard Bausch is the author of 10 novels and seven collections of short stories, including Take Me Back (1981), which was nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award; Hello to the Cannibals (2003); and Thanksgiving Night (2006). His short stories have appeared in numerous anthologies, including Best American Short Stories, O. Henry, and Pushcart. He has received National Endowment for the Arts and Guggenheim fellowships, the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Writer’s Award, and the Award in Literature from the Academy of Arts and Letters. Previously professor of English at George Mason University, Bausch holds the Lillian and Morrie A. Moss Chair of Excellence at the University of Memphis.
Schedule

Tuesday, September 23

11 a.m. Greg Bottoms
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

2 p.m. John McManus
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

7:30 p.m. Aztec Two-Step
Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center

6:30-7:15 p.m. Author Reception*
University Village Bookstore

Wednesday, September 24

11 a.m. Peter Meinke and Michael Blumenthal: A Conversation
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

2 p.m. Lenore Hart
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

4 p.m. Shara McCallum
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

8 p.m. Claudia Emerson
Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center

7:00-7:45 p.m. Author Reception*
University Village Bookstore

Thursday, September 25

11 a.m. Writers in Community
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

2 p.m. Gioia Timpanelli
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

4 p.m. Steve Almond
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

8 p.m. Mary Karr
Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center

7:00-7:45 p.m. Author Reception*
University Village Bookstore

Friday, September 26

11 a.m. Rishi Reddi
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

2 p.m. Douglas Kearney
University Village Bookstore-lawn tent

8 p.m. Richard Bausch
Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center

7:00-7:45 p.m. Author Reception*
University Village Bookstore

*Free bus shuttle to Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center provided.
Old Dominion University’s 31st Literary Festival and 2008-09 President’s Lecture Series Present

“Sports: The Hype and The Hoopla”

Featuring Author, Commentator and Columnist Frank Deford

Thursday, September 25, 2008 7:30 p.m., North Cafeteria, Webb University Center

Frank Deford is the author of 15 books, with his newest, “The Entitled,” a novel about celebrity, sex and baseball, published in 2007. Deford may be heard as a commentator every Wednesday on NPR’s “Morning Edition” and he is a regular correspondent on the HBO show “RealSports with Bryant Gumbel.” He is also senior contributing writer at Sports Illustrated. Deford was elected to the Hall of Fame of the National Association of Sportscasters and Sportswriters, and six times was voted by his peers as U.S. Sportswriter of the Year. The American Journalism Review has likewise cited him as the nation’s finest sportswriter, and twice he was voted Magazine Writer of the Year by Washington Journalism Review. The recipient of many honorary degrees, Deford also has won the National Magazine Award for profiles, a Christopher Award and journalism Honor Awards from the University of Missouri and Northeastern University.

Please Note the Following Revised Schedule for Thursday, September 25.
The readings will be held in the University Village Bookstore Lawn Tent on Monarch Way.

2:00-3:45 p.m. Readings by Steve Almond and Giola Timpanelli
4 p.m. Readings by Mary Karr
6:45-7:15 p.m. Author reception—University Village Bookstore