



The Call of Stories

31st Annual Literary Festival
September 23–26, 2008

Old Dominion UNIVERSITY
College of Arts and Letters

"The call of stories"

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



Rex Fowler from Pittsfield, Maine, and **Neal Shulman** of New York City met one "open mike" night at a Boston folk club in 1971.

They joined forces and **Aztec Two-Step** (named for a line from "A Coney Island of the Mind" by Beat poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti) was born. Signed by Elektra Records, Fowler and Shulman were in Los Angeles one year later finishing their debut album, "Aztec Two-Step." The album quickly became a staple of FM and college radio and was the foundation for an acclaimed performing and recording career. The group's 1986 release "Living in America" was named as the 1987 Best Folk Album at the New York Music Awards. Headliners in their own right, Aztec Two-Step has also appeared in concert with artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Raitt, Talking Heads, Bill Cosby, The Beach Boys, Jackson Browne and Bette Midler.



Greg Bottoms is an associate professor of English and creative writing at the University of Vermont. His books include the memoir

Angelhead: My Brother's Descent Into Madness, an Esquire nonfiction "Book of the Year" in 2000; *Sentimental*, *Heartbroken Rednecks: Stories from the New South*; and the travel book *The Colorful Apocalypse: Journeys in Outsider Art*, a Booksense Pick and one of Stride Magazine's (U.K.) best books of 2007. His new book, *Fight Scenes*, will be published by Counterpoint Press this fall.



John McManus is the author of the novel *Bitter Milk* and two collections of short fiction, *Born on a Train* and *Stop Breakin' Down*.

Born in Knoxville and raised in Maryville, Tenn., he has been the recipient of fellowships from the James A. Michener Center for Writers and the Camargo Foundation. In 2000 he became the youngest-ever recipient of the Whiting Writers' Award. He currently lives in Norfolk and teaches creative writing at Old Dominion University.



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 baboons in South Africa. He spends his summers in a small village near the shores of Lake Balaton in Hungary.



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.



Shara

McCallum has published two books of poems, *Song of Thieves* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003) and *The*

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.

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* (ecco/

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

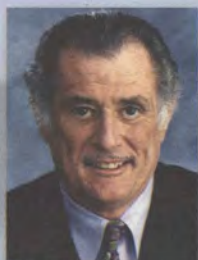
*Free bus shuttle to Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center provided.

**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 Gioia Timpanelli
- 4 p.m. · Readings by Mary Karr
- 6:45-7:15 p.m. · Author reception—University Village Bookstore