



THE
Spirit
of the
Word

22nd Annual Literary Festival
October 11-15, 1999

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Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia

This year's literary festival was originally envisioned and shaped under the direction of poet Scott Cairns. When I took over for Scott, I tried to keep to the "spirit" of his vision and add mine to it.

All true writing – whether nonfiction, poetry, or fiction – should inspire. When the breath of a writer mingles with the breath of a reader, something new emerges. Literature documents, but it also discovers and enlivens, each word an exhalation that gives life to an inspired scene, a familiar world experienced as if for the first time. True writing turns us inward and outward, to re-invent ourselves and re-create the world.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORD

This year's festival has brought together a diverse group of writers who all share a common undertaking: they are men and women whose works invite readers to reflect on language and the heartbreaking and heartsome truths that poems and stories communicate. Breathe deeply: be inspired.

Michael Pearson
Director of the Festival

Rilla Askew moved to New York from her native Oklahoma in 1980 and received an MFA in creative writing from Brooklyn College in 1989. Her short fiction has been selected for Prize Stories 1993: The O. Henry Awards and her novel *The Mercy Seat* was nominated for the

PEN/Faulkner Award and received the Oklahoma Book Award and the Western

Heritage Award for Best Novel of 1997. A finalist for the Drue Heinz Literature Prize, her collection of stories, *Strange Business*, received the Oklahoma Book Award in 1993. She is married to actor Paul Austin and divides her time between the San Bois Mountains of southeastern Oklahoma and the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York.



Richard Chess, an associate professor of literature and language at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, directs the Center for Jewish Studies at UNCA. He has published one book of poetry, *Teliah* (1994). His poems have been anthologized in *Telling and Remembering: A Century of American-Jewish Poetry* and *The Sacred Place*. They have also appeared in a variety of journals, including *Ploughshares*, *Kerem: Creative Explorations in Judaism*, *Tampa Review*, *The North Carolina Literary Review* and *Judaism*.



Rita Dove served as poet laureate of the United States and consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress from 1993 - 1995. She has received numerous literary and academic honors, among them the 1987 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry and, most recently, the 1996 Heinz Award, the 1996 Charles Frankel Prize/National Medal in the Humanities, the 1997 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award, and the 1998 Levinson Prize from *Poetry* magazine. She has published the poetry collections *The Yellow House on the Corner* (1980), *Museum* (1983), *Thomas and Beulah* (1986), *Grace Notes* (1989), *Selected Poems* (1993), and *Mother Love* (1995); a book of short stories, *Fifth Sunday* (1985); the novel *Through the Ivory Gate* (1992); essays under the title *The Poet's World* (1995); and the play *The Darker Face of the Earth*. A new book of poems, *On the Bus with Rosa Parks*, was published in April 1999. Ms. Dove is commonwealth professor of English at the University of Virginia.



Margaret Gibson is the author of six books of poetry. Her book *Long Walks in the Afternoon* (1982) was a Lamont Selection, given by the Academy of American Poets. *Memories of the Future* (1986) was the co-winner of the Melville Cane Award, given by the Poetry Society of America. *The Vigil* (1993) was a finalist for the National Book Award. She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lila Wallace/Readers Digest Fellowship. Of *The Vigil*, Richard Dillard said, "For women who are trying to come to grips with the complex loves and entrapments of the mother-daughter relationship, for victims of alcoholic husbands and fathers (and complicitous mothers), for readers who like books that explore unflinchingly the darkened mazes of the human heart, and especially for readers who care for the shapings and discoveries of poetic language, I recommend *The Vigil*. Its fire burns brightly and with healing force." During the fall of 1999, Margaret Gibson will be the writer-in-residence at Old Dominion.



Jane Ellen Glasser's poetry has been published in such national literary magazines as *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Hudson Review*, *Southern Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Hollins Critic*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Georgia Review* and *Beloit Poetry Journal*. *Naming the Darkness*, her first book-length poetry collection, with an introduction by W.D. Snodgrass, was published in 1991 by Road Publishers. Her poems have garnered awards from the Poetry Society of Virginia, Puddingstone, and the Irene Leache Literary Society. She is an English and creative writing teacher at Norview High School in Norfolk.



Andrew Hudgins is the author of five books of poetry and a book of essays. Presently a visiting professor of creative writing at The Johns Hopkins University, he has been the recipient of many prizes including the Thomas H. Carter Prize from *Shenandoah* for the best essay published in the magazine in 1998, the Frederick Bock Award from *Poetry*, and the Hanes Poetry Prize from the Fellowship of Southern Writers in 1995. *The Never-Ending* (1991) was a finalist for the 1991 National Book Award in Poetry. In 1998, he published *Babylon in a Jar*. The poems in *Babylon in a Jar* extend the forceful explorations that Andrew Hudgins began in his earlier work, particularly in *Saints and Strangers*, his first book and a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize in 1985. In this volume Hudgins's poems revel in the "either/or" in life, reducing specific conflicts to the old, all-encompassing one between order and disorder. Ray Olson said in *Booklist* in 1998, "Hudgins teases ponderable sensual and psychological pleasures out of such things as gardening and walking the dog" and he calls Hudgins "one of America's most accessible, natural poets."



Luisa A. Igloria, who formerly published as Maria Luisa A. Cariño, is currently a visiting associate professor of Filipino and Filipino-American Studies at Old Dominion University. Igloria is a poet, essayist and fictionist, and has five published books



including *Blood Sacrifice*, which received the 1998 National Book Award for Poetry from the Manila Critics Circle. She received the 1998 George Kent Prize for Poetry and a 1998 Illinois Arts Council Award. She has been the recipient of the Carlos Palanca Award for Literature, the Philippine equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. Carlos Angeles has praised her work saying, "Maria Luisa A.

Cariño's poetry inhabits the heart first, then the mind, and the soul . . . Her work contains some of the most extraordinary and most polished poetry written by a Filipino poet writing in English today."

The WORD

Mike Kelly has worked at *The Bergen Record* in northern New Jersey for 24 years, the last 12 as a columnist. He has written about topics as diverse as Cuban refugees in Guantanamo Bay, terrorists in Northern Ireland, and AIDS victims in East Africa. He has taken the controls of an Air Force F-16, walked the Broadway stage where "Chorus Line" was performed for 15 years, and witnessed a Ku Klux Klan cross burning. His interview subjects range from presidential candidates to the real "Soup Nazi" who inspired the famous "Seinfeld" episode. His 1995 non-fiction book, *Color Lines: The Troubled Dreams of Racial Harmony In An American Town*, was called "American journalism at its best" by *The Washington Post*, and a "stunning piece of American social history" by Pulitzer Prize-winning author J. Anthony Lukas.



E. Ethelbert Miller has been the director of the African-American Resource Center at Howard University since 1974. He is the author of *Andromeda* (1974), *The Land of Smiles and The Land of No Smiles* (1974), *Migrant Worker* (1978), *Season of Hunger/Cry of Rain* (1982),

Where are the Love Poems for Dictators? (1986) and *First Light* (1994). He is also the editor of *Synergy: An Anthology of Washington D.C. Black Poetry* (1975), *Women Surviving Massacres and Men* (1977), and *In Search of Color Everywhere* (1994), which was awarded the 1994 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award. The anthology was also a Book of the Month Club selection. In 1979, the mayor of



Washington, D.C., proclaimed Sept. 28, 1979, as "E. Ethelbert Miller Day." Miller was awarded the Mayor's Art Award for Literature in 1982. He received the Public Humanities Award from the D.C. Humanities Council in 1988. His most recent book of poetry is *Whispers, Secrets and Promises* (1998).

Erin McGraw is the author of two works of fiction, *Bodies at Sea* (1989) and *Lies of the Saints* (1996), which was listed as a Notable Book for 1996 by *The New York Times*. *Kirkus Reviews* said that her first collection displayed "a sure hand and an even voice busily at work documenting the struggles of regular people trying to lead ordinary lives. At her best, McGraw encourages us to see sainthood in its human context, relevant to the most mundane experiences.... Without rancor, these poignant moral tales gently go beyond most family fiction; they would merit our attention even if that were their only distinction." She is presently an associate professor in the Department of English at the University of Cincinnati.



Debra Monroe is the author of three books of fiction: *The Source of Trouble* which won the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction in 1990; a second story collection published in 1995, *A Wild, Cold State*, which appeared on best books lists in *Vanity Fair* and *Elle* magazine; and a novel, *Newfangled*, which was nominated for the National Book Award. Evelin Sullivan of *The San Francisco Chronicle* praised the novel as being "written with the seemingly effortless grace that is the hallmark of true mastery." Monroe is an associate professor in the MFA program at Southwest Texas State University.



Jay Paul chairs the Department of English at Christopher Newport University. He has published about 200 poems, as well as critical studies, book reviews and short fiction. *Going Home in Flood Time* is his first poetry collection. Henry Taylor said, "Jay Paul keeps a well-stocked toolbox. He combines quiet tone and witty invention, and he responds with a considerable variety of formal techniques to a world that might be called 'ordinary' if his language hadn't lifted so many bright moments into a higher realm."



Michael Pearson is the director of the creative writing program at Old Dominion University. He has published essays and stories in *The New York Times*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *The Journal of American Culture*, *The Southern Literary Journal* and *Creative Nonfiction*, among others. He is the author of four books. His first book, *Imagined Places: Journeys Into Literary America*, was published in 1991 and listed by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the notable books of the year. His new book, *Dreaming of Columbus: A Boyhood in the Bronx*, was published in 1999. Willie Morris, the former editor of *Harper's*, said, "Michael Pearson is one of our nation's finest memoirists. *Dreaming of Columbus*... should give him the reputation among American writers he so richly deserves."



Janet Peery's stories have appeared in *Best American Stories*, *Pushcart Prize Anthology*, *American Short Fiction*, *New Virginia Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Shenandoah* and other magazines. Her first book, *Alligator Dance*, appeared in 1993; her novel, *The River Beyond the World*, published in 1996, was a National Book Award Finalist. She has received awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Whiting Foundation, and the Guggenheim Foundation. Dorothy Allison, in *The New York Times Book Review*, said, "The people in Janet's first collection of stories pull you in, startle you, stay with you long after you have finished the book . . ." Peery teaches in the MFA program at Old Dominion University.



David Poyer is the author of 19 books, including *The Med*, *The Gulf*, *The Circle* and *The Passage*, best-selling Navy novels; *The Dead of Winter*, *Winter in the Heart* and *As the Wolf Loves Winter*, ecological novels; and *Hatteras Blue*, *Bahamas Blue*, *Louisiana Blue*, and *Down to a Sunless Sea*, underwater adventure narratives. *Thunder on the Mountain*, a historical novel, was published in 1999. Poyer attended the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and his naval service included sea duties around the world. He has taught or lectured at colleges and universities across the country. He was a founding editor of the *New Virginia Review* and is currently a consulting editor for the *State Street Review*. His fiction is required reading in the U.S. Naval Academy's "Literature of the Sea" course.

Sheri Reynolds has published both poetry and fiction in such venues as *Chant* and *Allegheny Review*. Her first novel, *Bitterroot Landing*, published in 1994, was nominated for the GRANTA Young American Author Award. Her second novel, *The Rapture of Canaan*, was published in 1995 and was an Oprah Book Club selection. Her third novel, *A Gracious Plenty*, was published in 1997 to high acclaim. *Publishers Weekly* said of *A Gracious Plenty*, "Reynolds's lyricism and the gentle voice of her heroine carry this poignant but redemptive story." Ms. Reynolds teaches in the MFA program at Old Dominion University.



Tim Seibles is the author of five books of poetry – *Body Moves* (1988), *Hurdy-Gurdy* (1992), *Kerosene* (1995), *Ten Miles an Hour* (1998) and *Hammerlock* (1999). A National Endowment for the Arts Fellow in 1990, he received the Open Voice Award from the National Writers Voice Project in 1993. His poetry has appeared in *Kenyon Review*, *Black American Literature Forum* and *New American Poets in the '90s*. Jack Myers said, "Seibles is a natural, gliding up in long sleek poems, crooning the creamy and glamorous politics of need." Seibles teaches in the MFA program at Old Dominion University.



Fred Viebahn has published seven books in his native German. He has also written for German radio, television and theater, and worked as a journalist and editor. Among his honors are the German Book-of-the-Month Award for his first novel, *Die schwarzen Tauben* (*The Black Doves*) in 1969, the Cologne Prize for Younger Writers, grants from the city of Berlin and the German Academy in Rome, and a residency at Jerusalem's Mishkenot Sha'ananim. He met his wife, the poet Rita Dove, in 1976 when he was a Fulbright Fellow in the University of Iowa's International Writing Program. *The Stain*, the revised American version of his 1979 novel, *Die Fesseln der Freiheit*, was published in 1988. He is currently at work on his first novel in English.



Shelly Wagner's first collection, *The Andrew Poems*, was written four years after her youngest son drowned. Since its publication, her work has been anthologized in literature textbooks such as *Writing About Literature* and *Approaching Poetry*. Her work also has been used in psychology textbooks such as *Death & Dying*, *Life & Living*. Her poems have appeared in such journals as *Poetry East*, *American Poetry Review* and *Triquarterly*. Wagner is a graduate of Old Dominion University.



We would like to thank the African-American Cultural Center, the College of Arts and Letters, the English Department, the Department of Foreign Languages, the Institute for the Study of Minority Issues, Norfolk Commission for the Arts and Humanities, the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost and the Women's Studies Department.

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.

FESTIVAL

Monday, October 11

- 7 p.m. Prologue to the Literary Festival:
Celebrating Local Poets: Jane Ellen Glasser,
Jay Paul and Shelly Wagner
Kaufman Hall—Room 100

Tuesday, October 12

- 11 a.m. Mike Kelly, nonfiction
Webb Center—Hampton/Newport News Room
- 2 p.m. Erin McGraw, fiction
Webb Center—Hampton/Newport News Room
- 4 p.m. Round Table: "Writing Race." Writers,
Luisa A. Igloria, Mike Kelly and E. Ethelbert
Miller; responder—Juanita Comfort, Imtiaz
Habib and Charles Wilson
Webb Center—Hampton/Newport News Room
- 8 p.m. Andrew Hudgins, poetry
*Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center—
Chandler Recital Hall*

Wednesday, October 13

- 11 a.m. David Poyer, fiction
*Webb Center—Chesapeake/Portsmouth/
Virginia Beach Room*
- 2 p.m. E. Ethelbert Miller, poetry
Webb Center—Cape Charles/Isle of Wight Room
- 8 p.m. MFA Faculty Reading: Luisa A. Igloria,
Michael Pearson, Janet Peery,
Sheri Reynolds and Tim Seibles
*Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center—
Chandler Recital Hall*

SCHEDULE

Thursday, October 14

- 11 a.m. Richard Chess, poetry
Webb Center—Cape Charles/Isle of Wight Room
- 2 p.m. Margaret Gibson, poetry
*Webb Center—Chesapeake/Portsmouth/
Virginia Beach Room*
- 4 p.m. Panel Discussion: "How Should Literature
Inspire?" Writers: Richard Chess, Margaret
Gibson, Debra Monroe; Phil Raisor,
Moderator.
*Webb Center—Chesapeake/Portsmouth/
Virginia Beach Room*
- 8 p.m. Debra Monroe, fiction
*Diehn Fine and Performing Arts Center—
Chandler Recital Hall*

Friday, October 15

- 11 a.m. Rilla Askew, fiction
- 2 p.m. Fred Viebahn fiction
- 4 p.m. Tim Seibles, poetry
- 8 p.m. Rita Dove, poetry
*All events on Friday: Diehn Fine and
Performing Arts Center—Chandler Recital Hall*

Campus Map—
Parking for all events
is available in Lot 27,
which is adjacent to
the Health and
Physical Education
Building and across
the street from the
Diehn Fine and
Performing Arts
Center.

