

InWriting

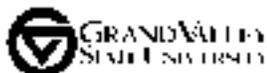
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Patricia Clark and Roger Gilles during the faculty reading.

(photo: Rachel Kishman)

Writing Series Faculty Reading: Patricia Clark and Roger Gilles

Kelly Tekiela

On February 7th, the sounds of sweet string music greeted the crowd of students and faculty piling into the Cook DeWitt Center to support Professors Patricia Clark & Roger Gilles at the Annual Faculty Reading. Once the musicians—violinist Alison Sall and cellist Nic Herman—had taken their seats, Assistant Professor Todd Kaneko greeted the audience before warmly introducing the night's first spotlight author. Patricia Clark has spent 28 years at GVSU, publishing five volumes of poetry and three chapbooks, most recently *Deadlifts*. It is clear that she truly is the champion of poetry Kaneko referred to her as. Clark stepped onto the stage, ready to kick off the event.

The inspiration behind *Deadlifts*, Clark explained, came to her when a friend pointed out an obituary for a different Patricia Clark in the newspaper. The unique book of poems focuses on honoring multiple deceased Patricia Clarks from an insider view, dealing with tough topics as Clark contemplates existence and death. Much of writing, she mused, is born out of chance, and it can be hard to understand why certain ideas seize and inspire us the way they do. "I thought—I'm not going to pursue this," Clark said, recalling the discovery of her counterparts' obituaries. "But of

See *FACULTY* on page 10

Successful Alumna: Kelsey Bowen

Ashley Benedict

There is no such thing as an average day for GVSU alumna Kelsey Bowen. As an acquisitions editor for Revell Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, she describes her workload as quite large, with a different balance each day. “I always have a manuscript—or two, or three—that I’m editing or checking author revisions on, I’m always setting aside time to look at new book proposals in my inbox, and I’m always preparing for or attending meetings.” At the end of the day, Bowen is passionate about her job, enough so to bring it home with her some days. “Acquisitions editors are quite known for taking work home with them, for better or for worse.”

When Bowen graduated GVSU in 2011, she decided she was going to work at Baker Publishing Group someday—her dream place of employment. Through intense determination, Bowen was able to snatch an entry-level position after her third interview in 2012, and has remained within the organization since that fateful day.

Bowen’s favorite part about being an acquisitions editor is “putting books into the world that deserve to be read. Finding books that I love and passing them on to readers, who I hope will love them as well, is a dream, as is working with incredible authors.” Acquisitions is all about actively searching for authors, projects, and ideas to acquire for the publishing house—not just sitting in an office receiving submissions.

“There’s no wrong way to enter publishing as long as you get your foot in the door...”

“I always knew I wanted to be an editor, but I didn’t realize what type of editor I wanted to be until I really got my feet wet,” says Bowen. For her, copyediting and proofreading weren’t as fulfilling as developmental editing. “Many companies have separate departments for acquisitions editors and developmental editors, but at Baker we are one and the same.” The perks? Bowen is not only able to work on the business side of publishing in acquisitions, but also provide in-depth feedback to the authors she works with through developmental editing.

When asked how GVSU’s Writing program helped Bowen in her career, the

class that stands out to her as most valuable is WRT 350: Business Communication. “It was especially invaluable in how I craft emails to colleagues and people outside our organization...it’s so important to me to always write very clear, professional emails because of what I learned in that class.” In addition to learning how to craft emails, Bowen states that an assignment that required students to find a job posting and prepare their resumes and cover letters for the position was originally how she found Baker Publishing Group. Other classes she credits for being most helpful to her are workshops such as fiction and creative nonfiction. “They built a foundation for me in becoming a developmental editor who critiques and helps find ways to improve or find the big-picture issues and opportunities in my authors’ manuscripts.”

“Finding books I love and passing them on to readers is a dream.”

Right now, Bowen has just finished editing a powerful memoir due out this October, titled *Once We Were Strangers: What Friendship with a Syrian Refugee Taught Me about Loving My Neighbor* by Shawn Smucker. She is also wrapping up edits on a work of literary fiction due out January 2019 called *We Hope for Better Things* by Erin Bartels. There are three publishing seasons for Baker—Spring, Summer, and Fall—and Bowen says the amount of projects she is editing at once varies on how many books she’s acquired on any given season’s list. “Right now I’m working on about two books per month for new edits, but once author revisions come in within the next month, books on my to-do list start stacking on top of each other. I’m also acquiring new books at the same time, and often that process can be considered a ‘project’ in and of itself.”

For writers who want to enter the publishing business, Bowen’s advice is to get your foot in the door in any department. “Publishing is a team effort no matter how you look at it. There’s no wrong way to enter publishing as long as you get your foot in the door and start learning from your colleagues in all departments as soon as you get there.”



Kelsey Bowen.
(photo: Kelsey Bowen)

**Writing Major
Scholarship
Awards**

Winner
Emily Zerrenner

Runners up
Haley Freeman
Alexandra Loyd

Dzanc Books Offers Entry-Level Editorial Internships

Jessica Harsevoort and Christine Corbett

Are you an aspiring author, editor, or literary agent looking for an internship? If you said yes, Dzanc Books, a small nonprofit publisher specializing in experimental literary fiction, offers entry-level internships for those pursuing a career in the publishing industry.

This semester, Jordan Sickrey and Tyler Fleaser joined about twenty other interns for Dzanc Book's editorial internship. They worked on a wide range of projects including proofreading ebooks, writing bookstore profiles, copyediting novels, and evaluating manuscripts. "They do rely on you and your voice does matter in this internship. They're not just giving you busywork," Fleaser says.

The majority of Sickrey and Fleaser's editorial work was reading and evaluating manuscripts. They both received three submissions per week, which



Dzanc Books logo.
(photo: Dzanc Books)

amounted to approximately 100 or more pages of reading per submission. After reviewing each manuscript, they wrote reports addressing plot summary, target audience, comparative titles, and publishing potential.

Many of the additional assignments were tailored to each individual's interests. Sickrey was interested in copyediting, so she was assigned projects where she had to look for grammatical errors and inconsistencies in short novels that have since gone to print. Sickrey is glad she asked for the opportunity, because copyediting became her favorite part of the internship.

Fleaser took initiative as well when he offered to take on marketing tasks in addition to the editorial work. "As much as you want to look at the craft and be creative with it—and you can be creative

See EDITORIAL on page 10

Poetry Textbook: "It's Yours If You Want It"

Danielle Warren

A problem that many textbooks encounter in holding students' attention is the way the voice rings distant and removed. It talks *at* the reader, not *to*. *Poetry: A Writers' Guide and Anthology* is not that kind of textbook. Written by Associate Professor Amorak Huey and Assistant Professor Todd Kaneko and published in January 2018, this textbook offers insights, instructions, and definitions of the elements of poetry with a tone that says: *We've been here. We're here with you.* This was intentional, of course. "We wanted this book to come through the lens of the writer," says Kaneko.

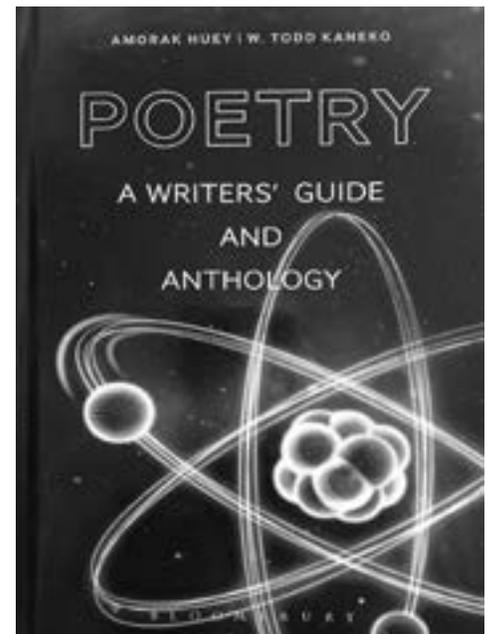
The included anthology, featuring poets like Danez Smith, Ocean Vuong, and Layli Long Soldier, further accentuates the book's modernity and accessibility.

"We wanted the poems to be contemporary, reflecting the conversation that

is happening today, right now, in the poetry world." The collection needed to be "diverse, dynamic, and robust" so that "every reader could find something in the collection that speaks to them, some poet coming from the same place," Huey explains.

Both professors have released their own books. Kaneko wrote *The Dead Wrestler Elegies*, published by Curbside Splendor. Huey wrote a chapbook called *A Map of the Farm Three Miles from the End of Happy Hollow Road*, which was published by Porkbelly Press. Both professors are published widely in journals and online platforms.

When asked if *Poetry: A Writers' Guide and Anthology* taught them anything, both professors agreed that it had. Being forced to articulate the ins



Poetry textbook by Todd Kaneko and

Amorak Huey.

(photo: Todd Kaneko)

See POETRY on page 11

Why We Tell Stories: A Visit by Vu Tran

EJ Fowler

Fiction can sometimes tell a better truth than nonfiction.” It’s a sentiment that at first feels oxymoronic: how can stories of escapism have a stronger foundation in reality than memoirs or essays? However, this was the point Vu Tran, author of the novel *Dragonfish*, presented during his craft talk on November 14 at 2:30 p.m. in Kirkhof, room 2266. In addition to *Dragonfish*, Tran has been published in the *O. Henry Prize Stories* and *The Best American Mystery Stories*.

“Even when it’s not our personal history, it is our personal history.”

The core of Tran’s craft talk addressed a primary question that writers of all ages and experience wrestle with: “Why do we tell stories?” When the audience was posed this question, there was no clear answer. Some explained that stories are based in conversation, some said it was for catharsis, and others discussed how stories help explore their identities. Tran met every answer with a smile and encouragement, nodding along as students discussed what stories meant to them. The entire room discussed stories being a ritualistic way we get to know others. We get to know people by asking about their lives. We even construct our own personal narrative, which may not always be a true reflection of ourselves, but instead the version we want others to see. Tran offered a succinct summary of this concept: “Most of us want to be interesting.”

From there, Tran posed questions of preference to the audience, centering around various genres. During each segment, he repeated the reflective question, “What does my answer say about me?” Students jumped at the chance to explain their love of fantasy, or why stories with happy endings were important to them. Tran acted more as a moderator, letting students lead gentle debates about why we enjoy the stories

we do. It made the whole experience feel less like a lecture and more like a dynamic learning experience.

As the conversation shifted, Tran talked about *The Seven Basic Plots* by Christopher Booker, a book that breaks down how every narrative we tell is rooted in one of seven archetypes. As Tran went over each one, he again opened the floor for students to offer examples. Several chimed in with examples from books, movies, and even other media.

Tran then offered the room an engaging anecdote about an experience he had in Las Vegas. He enthralled the crowd with a story about how he and his now ex-girlfriend nearly had to give up their table for Robert De Niro at a restaurant. De Niro even offered to pay for Tran’s table’s meal in exchange for moving seats. As the room sat spellbound, he made a confession: the story he told was a mix of a couple separate incidents. He explained that he wasn’t trying to mislead us, but instead do what comes naturally to story tellers: “I take in true facts about myself or people I know, or from several real, true-life stories, and I’ve added some other true facts. I’ve altered or embellished them...but the important thing is that the essential truths in that story still remain.”

Later that evening at 6:00 p.m., Tran read an excerpt from *Dragonfish* in the Cook-Dewitt Center. He introduced the excerpt by discussing his love of crime fiction and how it informed his main character, Robert. The chapter was selected from the middle of the novel, with Robert describing a memory of his ex-wife, Suzy. The scene described how Suzy insisted there was a woman in the backseat of their car which Robert could not see, blurring the lines between reality and perception. When asked about what transpired in the scene and its supernatural potential, Tran admitted with a smile: “I actually really don’t know...I decided that when I would introduce [supernatural] elements it would always be removed from the main character.” The idea that the main character is so detached from certain events in the story that not even the author can comment on their authenticity opens up the work to even more reader interpretation. His answer also showed the audience that authors don’t always need concrete answers about

their work. In fact, a story can be more engaging if the author doesn’t have all the answers.

When asked about the process of writing *Dragonfish*, Tran admitted that Suzy’s voice came more naturally than the main character’s. He discussed his issues of finding a voice for Robert without creating a white savior narrative: “I want to make him human, so my curiosity is, ‘What do you do when you can’t give the narrative that you create for yourself?’” The question also called back to the craft talk discussion about the narratives we create for ourselves, and what could happen if your narrative doesn’t line up with your life.

There are several things that writers could take away from Tran’s craft talk and reading, one of which being how narrative is not just something we create on paper. We create narratives for ourselves, and hints of that appear in our work. As Tran explained during his craft talk: “Even when it’s not our personal history, it is our personal history.” The best things we write, even the most fictional ones, are the ones that have the strongest personal connections.



Vu Tran during his reading.

(photo: Rachel Kishman)

Robert Long Foreman: Just Go With It

Abby Schnell

Sometimes, the best ideas are no ideas. According to Robert Long Foreman—nonfiction writer, former professor, and current ghost writer—sometimes the best inspiration comes from taking an ordinary sentence, book, or object, and running with it. Foreman’s craft talk on the matter took place on March 12 at 4:30 p.m. in Kirkhof 2270, and his reading took place later that evening at 6 p.m. in Cook DeWitt Center. With his book of essays, *Among Other Things*, he showed us that anything can be a story.

“I’m a believer in just writing a bunch of stuff.” Indeed, “a bunch of stuff” would be descriptions of Foreman’s busy life. While tackling new phases in life such as marriage, career changes, and the birth of his two daughters, Foreman was struggling with finding time to write. “When it comes to raising children, you have to think in five minute intervals—maybe that’s generous... more like thirty seconds.” Working and parenting by day, he began to reserve time to write at night. While his family slept, Foreman would lock himself in a room with a vintage record player and typewriter and force himself to write. His focus would be on those single moments.

“I’m a much better writer when I start with a sentence than with ideas.”

All too often, writers aim for long projects that often go unfinished. Yet in just ten minute intervals, Foreman would complete separate projects. His ten-minute theory generated pieces. Those pieces became essays. And those essays became his first book, *Among Other Things*.



Robert Long Foreman.
(photo: Robert Long Foreman)

When he used to teach, Foreman encouraged this trend with students. “I’m a much better writer when I start with a sentence than with ideas.” As a joke, he said that he, “forbids [students] from having ideas.” Riffing off sentences from an old book, or from anywhere, Foreman uses his ten-minute theory to bring himself to places he never thought he could go. This showed in his reading, where his essays started off in calm places, only to take us by surprise with a joke about his children or veer into his family’s dark history. Listening to Foreman’s work kept the audience on their toes.

What makes creative nonfiction so intriguing to Foreman is that it’s new. With any kind of art, there’s often a distinction between highbrow and lowbrow art, pieces for the tabloids versus essays for the intellectual. “What gets in...and what has to stay out.” An example of this is his love/hate relationship with what he calls “the trashy memoir.” With Elizabeth Gilbert’s *Eat Pray Love*, Foreman feels that the book was written to “perform” for a general audience instead of a literary one. Yet he admires how Gilbert can perform, be self-aware of her performance, then continue performing. This “trashy” memoir isn’t like other literary pieces like *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald, but both are art. In the genesis of creative nonfiction, no topic is off-limits.

What lies ahead for Foreman is a mystery. He sees himself heading into a variety of directions, always keeping an open mind. His newest job as a ghost writer provides him with interesting clients and ideas. His next book remains to be written. His children continue to grow. His next steps may not be planned, but he’ll write them out, one sentence at a time.

Writing Department Student Awards

Writing Department Outstanding Student

Annie Livingston

Venderbush Leadership Award Nominee

Kathryn Davis

Niemeyer Award Nominee

Dan Goubert

AWP Conference: Learning and Connecting to the World of Writing

Emily Zerrenner and Joslyn Mara

Meeting someone new at the Association of Writers and Writers' Programs Conference elicits three basic questions: what's your name, where are you from, and what is your preferred genre? AWP is a gathering of multiple genre authors, publishers, professors, and writers who want to expand their knowledge and professional networks. It is held in shifting major cities across the country. GVSU students Joslyn Mara, Riley Collins, Maria McKee, Emily Zerrenner, Kathryn Davis, Cole Gross, Schyler Perkins, and Tyler Fleser attended this year's conference in Tampa, FL, attending panels that featured creative craft talks, discussions about editing and publishing, and professionals speaking about their experiences.

Many of the panels during the conference focused on the craft of a particular genre. Zerrenner attended various panels about creative nonfiction. One of the first panels she went to was "Putting Her Back in the Narrative: History and Herstory," which featured authors such as David Ebershoff who had published books about lesser known female figures. The panelists read from their books, explained the research and funding process, and elaborated on their enthusiasm to tell these women's stories. Ebershoff used to be an editor for these kinds of books and provided illuminating insight on how to succeed on writing and publishing narratives about glossed-over historical figures.

One of the last panels Zerrenner went to was "Creative Writers, Composition Teachers". It explored the persona of a creative writer and what they bring to the first-year writing classroom, as well as being honest about the struggles that come with it. Those pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing have the option to teach undergraduate writing courses to fund their education, so this is an option for many writing students who want to pursue this higher degree. Each panelist ran their classroom differently, but an agreed upon strength is the creative writer's belief in the process of revision.

Another student, Mara, attended a panel called "Narrative Audio & Podcasting: Crafting Stories for the Ear", which explored how to push the storytelling of podcasts to a more complex, literary level. The talk focused on how to work around different interviews, sound bites, voice-

overs, sound effects, and music. Creators were encouraged to shape stories on what the heart of "the tape" was hitting instead of their own goal. In doing so, the story they finished with was more organic and unique.

"I always leave inspired by the incredible calibre of writers I've gotten to hear."

Mara's grasp on navigating the sensitive collaboration between author and editor was solidified in "The Art of the Uncomfortable Conversation: Editing Memoir and Personal Essays". In this panel, publicists big and small laid out the most common problems they run up against and how to get ahead of them. They answered questions and solved problems that a hopeful editor wouldn't have to face until much later in their career, giving our GV students a leg up in the professional world.

Another focus during the conference

was the communication and relationships embedded within writing communities. McKee found solidarity in "a community of literally thousands of intelligent, empathetic, and thought-provoking individuals who are able to provide guidance and inspiration through the words we share face-to-face and the words we write down."

Students consistently find incredible value in going to AWP; it offers connection to a larger writing community outside of GVSU. Kathryn Davis, a senior, has attended AWP for two years now. "I always leave inspired by the incredible calibre of the writers I've gotten to hear, and really excited about the fact that I'm lucky enough to be allowed to write at all. AWP just reminds me how big and important writing really is at its core," she said when asked about her experiences.

GVSU has annual funding dedicated to sending students to this conference. In the Fall Semester, an application is sent out by the Writing Department, and hopeful students can get their own chance to experience AWP by answering a couple of short questions.

Joslyn Mara and Emily Zerrenner.
(photo: Todd Kaneko)



New One-Credit Special Topics Courses

Hannah Terry and Emily Reed

GVSU is now offering one-credit writing courses, called WRT 180: Special Topics in Writing, that will allow writing students to not only gain a deeper understanding of the writing major and its department, but to also explore topics in writing that interest them. Four different sections of WRT 180 will be offered in the upcoming academic year.

In Writing Mosaic, students unfamiliar with the Writing major will be introduced to “a wide array of contemporary applications of writing in creative and professional contexts.” Different than any other course, this class will be taught by a rotating forum of several writing professors: Palmer, Toth and Horrocks (to name a few), and each week will feature a different genre, technique, or technology taught by the professor who specializes in it. This class is based on participation and reflection and will be offered with the pupose of attracting more students to the Writing major in Fall 2018.

One section, based entirely on NaNoWriMo, is the perfect opportunity for students searching for a way to put their current novel projects to the test. Because NaNoWriMo (or National Novel Writing Month) occurs during November, this class will be introduced in Fall 2018. The months of September and October will be spent gaining an overview of “fiction writing techniques and novel structure” for the upcoming contest in November. Though other writing classes include creative writing already, this class focuses specifically on novel writing and allows students the freedom to write their own story in their own style and share their work with other students doing the same.

Social Justice Poetry is another section of WRT 180 that will explore “how poets and spoken-word artists give voice in response

to contemporary social issues” which will include discussions about movements such as Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, #NeverAgain, and the issue of drone strikes. This class will be offered in Fall 2018.

In Creative Writing and Pop Culture, students will be examining “creative writing as a vehicle through which writers examine, analyze, and reinvent the world.” Students will evaluate the importance of pop culture and ask themselves how creative writers not only work within, but shape this sphere. They will look at works by writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry and how pop culture influences them, while participating in short writing activities to develop their own “pop culture inspired” works. This class is an opportunity for students to practice creative writing while being engaged in the contemporary world. It is open for Winter 2019.

Additionally, another one-credit course being introduced is an extension to WRT 150 called Applying Strategies in Writing. This course is “designed to reinforce and support the work that first-year students are doing in WRT 150.” In this class, students will “expand, develop, and reinforce writing, research, and revising processes” within their writing. It will be offered for both Fall 2018 and Winter 2019.

The Writing Department hopes students will take advantage of these opportunities to explore and develop a new perspective on their own writing.

WRT 180: Special Topics

NaNoWriMo (Fall 2018)

Prerequisite: WRT 219.

Sec 01: Wednesdays, 11-11:50am,
Henry Hall 115,
Instructor: Caitlin Horrocks

Social Justice Poetry (Fall 2018)

Sec 02: Tuesdays, 11-11:50am,
Mackinac Hall D2123,
Instructor: Amorak Huey

Writing Mosaic (Fall 2018)

*Prerequisite: First year or
Sophomore standing.*

Sec. 05: Mondays, 12-12:50pm,
Mackinac Hall B1112,
Instructor: Zsuzsanna Palmer
and others

Creative Writing and Popular Culture (Winter 2019)

Sec. 01: Wednesdays, 10-10:50am,
Mackinac Hall D1227,
Instructor: Todd Kaneko

The Worst They Can Say Is “No”

Taylor Crowley

Award-winning poet and he Writing Department’s Full Professor, Patricia Clark, has a new chapbook of poems out called *Deadlifts*. Additionally, this year she was honored by GVSU with an award for Distinguished Contribution in a Discipline, a prize celebrating her writing career and her outstanding contributions to poetry.

Clark admits she has been rejected many times, but stresses that as a writer, she has to continue sending her manuscripts out. *Deadlifts* is one of three additional chapbooks. After an elongated sigh, Clark says, “It’s hard getting your first one published. You have to hunker down and keep sending your manuscript out.”

“Rejection is a part of life — overcome it.”

Clark’s first book, *North of Wondering*, is the first book she ever tried to get published. After being rejected several times, she finally landed the book with a publisher. Clark says, “I ended up sending *North of Wondering* to a place out West that I had never heard of. They called me up and said, ‘We picked your book.’” The manuscript was chosen out of a pool of 100 other manuscripts, and the judges were well known poets from New York and elsewhere. Clark called them to ask if she should take any of the weak poems out of her manuscript, and (to her amazement) they responded that there were no weak poems. “It’s still one I’m very proud of,” she says.

Even after many rejections and challenging publishers, Clark continued to pursue writing and submitting her work to various places. Today, her work has been featured in many magazines and literary journals, including *The Atlantic*, *Gettysburg*

Review, *Poetry*, *Slate*, and *Stand*. Her poems have also been featured on *Poetry Foundation*, *Poetry Daily*, and *Verse Daily*.

In her early work, Clark focuses on themes of the natural world. She writes beautifully about nature and animals, including their interactions. Clark has shown she knows how to find beauty in the small things through her detailed work. Now, she claims she wanted to try something new with her most recent chapbook, *Deadlifts*. The idea for the book was inspired by a friend from a weekly exercise class. While doing deadlifts, her friend showed up and said, “Patricia, I’m so glad to see you here. I thought you were dead.”

Clark was shocked and didn’t know how to reply to this absurd comment, but learned that her friend had seen an obituary in the newspaper for another Patricia Clark and had assumed that it was for her.

This piqued Clark’s interest and she wanted to find out how many dead

Patricia Clarks there were out there. At the time, she was on sabbatical, ready to work on another project about gardens, but felt like this idea was something she had to work with. Over the course of a few months, she gathered up every obituary for a Patricia Clark she could find and wrote poems about them.

Clark describes this book as having a different style of writing for her, as she usually focuses on the natural world. *Deadlifts*, as featured on *Verse Daily*, has been described as “witty, masterful, and powerful.” To stay on her new spark, Clark says she has future goals of trying to write a novel and wants to travel back to France, a country she loves.

For young writers, she advises to keep pursuing their dreams while focusing on the payoff. Rejection is a part of life—overcome it.

“It’s hard getting your first one published. You have to hunker down and keep sending your manuscript out.”

Patricia Clark is a writer that understands the struggles of rejection and keeps moving forward. The poet relates to young students and shares her thoughts, explaining that she understands it is frustrating when publishers just keep saying no. She describes rejection as “depressing” but it keeps her motivated. The advice she gives to young writers is to just keep at it and keep sending your work out there—the worst they can say is no.



Patricia Clark.
(photo: Rachel Kishman)

Bringing Poetry to Life: Writing Senior and Library Present Interactive Exhibit

Matthew J. Senn

When the word “poetry” comes to mind, the word tactile doesn’t always come along with it. But that was what GVSU Library Scholar Morgan Hayden and Library Program Manager Erin Fisher aimed for this past January for a special exhibit, “Arranged objects: a few good bones” which was held at the Mary Idema Pew Library.

“We hoped a participatory poetry exhibit would provide visitors with the space to connect with all of those elements. The participatory component was critical. We wanted visitors to have an active and tactile way to engage with the work,” says Fisher, who helped with the project and hoped for some time to feature an exhibit that focused on the poetic arts.

Visitors to the exhibit were invited to the exhibit to read three poems from poets attending the Grand Valley Writers



A featured poem in the interactive exhibit.

(Photo: Todd Kaneko)

Series. “We wanted to present the poems of the writers in order to promote upcoming events, but also to create a sense of familiarity with the poems,” says Hayden.

A poem from Maggie Smith, one from GVSU Full Professor Patricia Clark, and another from Ander Monson (who visited in the fall before the exhibit) were displayed on the walls of the exhibition space, accompanied by etched wood of those works on a table that allowed visitors to stencil their own personal copies of the featured poems.

“Creating an exhibit from the ground up takes an immense amount of ideating. We went around and around when considering meaning, materials, and other details before deciding on the final exhibition design. I worked alongside Morgan to listen to ideas, give feedback, and assist in whatever ways

See EXHIBIT on page 11

AWP Intro Award GVSU Winners

Fiction

“Salt” by Ashley Benedict

Nonfiction

“The Death Instinct” by Zach Sheneman

Poetry

“Portrait of an Alter Ego” by Liv Baker

“If you are going to build an exhibit of prairie dogs” by Cayla Dwyer

“The only reason I unpacked was the insomnia” by Annie Livingston

FACULTY continued from page 1

course, I did.”

The Canopy, Clark’s second most recent publication, was finished in 2017. At the center of the collection is Clark’s late sister, to whom *The Canopy* is dedicated. Clark discussed the ability of her poetry to help her grieve the loss and ultimately heal; instead of pushing away the thoughts that little things would stir up about her sister, Clark found solace in writing poems about those little things. “Fig, Strawberry” is one such poem. “It’s best to taste the jam / over many days,” Clark read, “letting your tongue / and taste buds / take you to Hungary, Moravia, / places she will not travel to now. / You will have to go / for your sister.”

Clark finished her reading, leaving the room filled with emotion, and a brief intermission graciously allowed the audience to wipe away their tears. With the calm restored, Kaneko again took to the stage to cordially present Roger Gilles. Gilles’ past works have focused on placement and assessment in writing programs, including volumes he has co-authored such as *College Composition and Communication*. Gilles’ most recent achievement comes in the form of his exciting new book, *Women on the Move: The Forgotten Era of Women’s Bicycle Racing*. Gilles chose to read an article he had written about the topic for *Michigan History Magazine*, a publication he had always dreamed of being featured in.

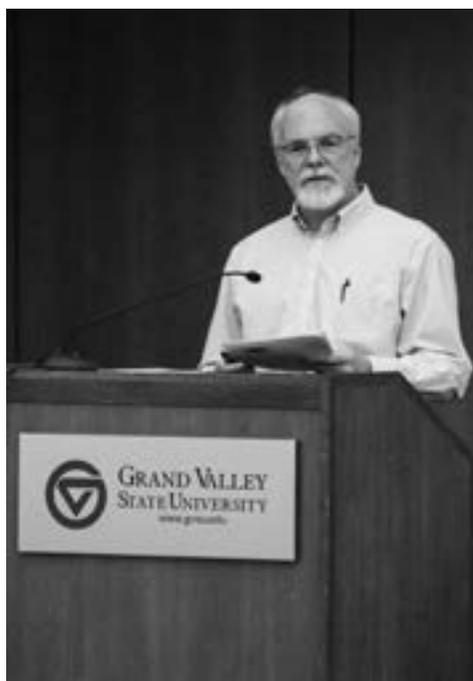
“Both authors nodded to the role of chance, a recurring subject, in helping to find the right material to write about.”

Women’s bicycle racing, Gilles explained, became one of America’s top spectator sports in the 1890s. What began as a fascination with the idea of women putting on funny costumes and trying a man’s sport quickly converted to respecting the women as “serious athletes who were competing at the highest level.”

The sport was wildly exciting and highly dangerous, drawing huge crowds and resulting in many injuries. Gilles talked about “The Terrible Swede” Tillie Anderson, a record-breaking cyclist, as one of his inspirations for taking on the project. The article, both exciting and educational, was a highly entertaining listen.

“How do you notice things calling out to you?” a student asked. Clark answered, simply, ‘Practice listening.’”

Before wrapping up the evening, Clark and Gilles answered questions from the audience and offered bits of helpful advice. Both authors nodded to the role of chance, a recurring subject, in helping to find the right material to write about; sometimes, they explained, something will call out to you, and you must grab the opportunity. “How do you notice things calling out to you?” a student asked. Clark answered, simply, Practice listening.”



Roger Gilles at the Faculty Reading.
(Photo: Rachel Kishman)

EDITORIAL continued from page 3

with marketing—you have to do these fundamental things so [we] can actually sell these books and keep giving authors a platform,” Fleaser says.

Since the internship is remote, Sickrey and Fleaser participated in weekly group Skype calls with Michelle Dotter, the editor-in-chief and publisher of Dzanc Books. “We learned all about the different jobs at a publishing house and the life of a manuscript in a publishing house. As somebody who wants to be published someday and be a part of the publishing process, it was really helpful,” Sickrey says.

Along with changing the dynamics of communication, the virtual aspect of this internship also allows for flexibility, where interns can work around their own schedule. This enables them to learn time management skills in addition to other abilities, so they can develop as professionals.

“Your voice does matter in this internship.”

“The biggest thing I hope they leave with is a demystifying of the whole publishing process,” Dotter says. “The other thing I would most hope they come away with is respect for the editorial process. That’s one of the things we really emphasize during the internship: author relationship management and how to edit conscientiously.”

Still interested? There are three twelve-week internship sessions: February to April, June to August, and September to November. Although the internships are unpaid, Dzanc Books will work with GVSU students who hope to receive college credit and gain hands-on experience with editing, marketing, and publishing.

For more information or to apply, visit www.dzancbooks.org/internships.

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and outs of poetry was an experience of introspection. “I can’t help but apply that thinking to my own poems. That’s part of the joy of being a writer, always learning and discovering new things about the art,” says Kaneko.

To see the book for yourself, you can find it at Mary Idema Pew Library, the Writing Department’s office, or order it online from Amazon or Barnes & Noble. If you’re a beginning poet—or contrarily, someone who is weary of the art form—what should you take away from this book? Huey proposes, “The confidence that their voice matters. The belief that they have something to say...for any who begin the book with a resistance to poetry, I hope it helps them see poetry not as some inaccessible puzzle, but as a way of using words to build works of art.” Kaneko has an equally encouraging hope. “You can write poetry. Everyone can. There are no secret handshakes to learn or official codes you have to break...It’s yours, if you want it.”

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were necessary.”

Hayden, part of University Libraries’ inaugural cohort of Summer Scholars, was assigned to spearhead the exhibition after the discovery of her skills as a writer and visual artist demonstrated to Fisher how perfectly she paired with the project.

The room was filled with whitespace, aside from the text and wood etchings, and visitors were provided colored pencils for their own personal etchings. “It was a collaborative effort, spearheaded by myself,” says Hayden, “but Erin’s expertise and skill taught me so much about the logistical nature of organizing an exhibition like this... It was a deeply rewarding experience and I am so honored to have had this opportunity, especially working with Erin, who was incredibly kind and informative.”

Fisher states she hopes the exhibit allowed students to connect with poetry. As many students are fans of poetry, here’s hoping this isn’t the last exhibit we see dedicated to the craft.

**Writing Major
Scholarship
Applications due
March 1, 2019. See the
Writing Department
Website for details
about availability,
eligibility & how to
apply**

Entrance to the poetry exhibit in the library.

(Photo: Todd Kaneko)

**Bear River
Writers’ Conference
Scholarship Winners:**

Emily Zerrenner
Cullen Dunning



Alumni News

2017

Tessa Dane-Henry works as a concept and cost development technical writer at JR Automation.

Kelly McMillen works as a document control specialist at JR Automation.

Sam Stebbins currently works for Talent 2025 in Communications and volunteers at the Creative Youth Center in Grand Rapids. She also writes poems, which have appeared in or are forthcoming from *formercactus*, *Cease*, *Cows*, *the 3288 Review* and elsewhere.

2015

Larissa Babak is currently pursuing her MA in Rhetoric and Professional Writing at Michigan State University where she also has an assistantship at the Writing Center.

Shardae Rudel is currently pursuing her MFA at Kingston University in London, England, where she lives happily among the double-deckers and tea enthusiasts. She is also working on the final edits of her first novel, which she hopes to shop around early next year.

2012

Kristina Pepelko is currently back at GVSU pursuing a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Nonprofit Management and Leadership and works at the Johnson Center for Philanthropy as an Agard-Orosz Fellow. She also works as a freelance writer and editor for small businesses, nonprofits and entrepreneurs. Previously, she worked as Development Manager for the Michigan League of Conservation Voters.

2010

Susan (Kieda) Howard is the Assistant Director of Communications for Alumni Relations for GVSU. She manages a team of three student workers, collectively producing all of the copy, graphics, and videos needed to communicate with the university's alumni. Social media, emails, e-newsletters, postcards, invitation, webpages, and magazine articles are the main mediums used to achieve the team's communication goals. She earned her M.A. in English from GVSU in 2015. She uses the skills she learned in the writing program every day.

2009

Nancy Finney works at the National Environmental Health Association as a technical editor in Denver, Colorado. Finney edits learning materials, manages public relations and communications, designs online courses, and writes articles and press releases for the association. Her writing was featured in an international publication, *Food Safety Magazine*, she was the managing editor of the book *Professional Food Manager*, Fifth Edition, and her poetry has been featured on the radio. Finney received her Master of Public Administration degree from Grand Valley, and her thesis was published in the *SPNHA Review*.

Got an alumni update?

Email Professor Todd Kaneko at kanekot@gvsu.edu so we can spread the word about your success.

InWriting

Winter 2018

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