

# Department of English & Comparative Literature

# NEWSLETTER

San Jose State University  
Fall 2006

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## Lurie Chair James Kelman

by Sandra Pineda

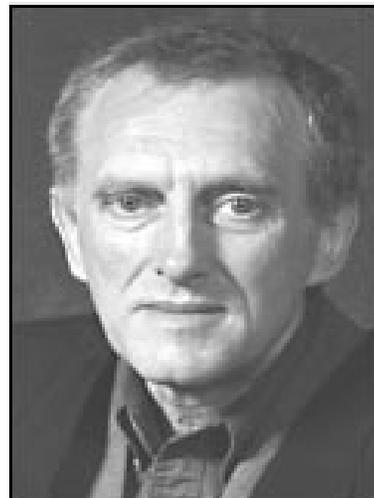
In spring 2007 students will have the opportunity to meet and take courses with the internationally well-known author, James Kelman. Writer of dramas, essays, fiction, screenplays, and short stories, and winner of the Booker Prize for fiction, Kelman will be the Lurie chair for 2007. The position, "Lurie chair," is named for Connie and Robert Lurie, whose generosity makes the position possible. The Lurie Chair was established to bring working authors to work as professors here at SJSU for one or two semesters. The visiting author then becomes "Lurie Professor" throughout his or her stay at SJSU.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Kelman's writing career took off after he joined a writing group at the University of Glasgow. His writing focuses on the working-class people of Glasgow. Because he too was part of the working class in Glasgow, he finds it important to write from his experiences because it is vital to draw from what one is familiar with.

Kelman is well known for his use of his native Glasgow vernacular language in his writing. Since his books and short essays deal with working-class people in Glasgow, he uses their language in his writings. His use of this language is something that some critics have had problems with because it is not, according to them, "the proper language for literature." Kelman's first publication was a collection of short stories, *Not Not While the Giro* (1983), described by the *Gazetter of Scotland* as "a depiction of working-class life in Scotland in a flowery

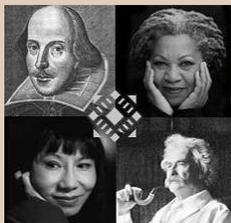
vernacular tongue, which characterizes Kelman's work." His use of the vernacular seems to be his trademark.

As the visiting professor he will be teaching one undergraduate course, English 181 (Special Topics); and one graduate course, English 241 (Seminar in Fiction Writing). Along with these courses he will be appearing on Thursday, March 1, 2007 in "A Conversation with James Kelman," which will be held at the Spartan Memorial Chapel at 12:00 pm, free admission. "A Reading with James Kelman" will be held at the University Theater 7:30 pm the same day, free admission.



Our students will benefit greatly from Kelman's knowledge and use of the vernacular language in writing. He comes from a working-class background, and this campus attracts many first-generation college students who also come from working-class backgrounds. Hard-working people from different ethnicities should therefore be able to relate to him.

With his extensive knowledge of literature and his original mind, Kelman will be a great attribute to this campus and to our department. Students who are lucky enough to be in his courses are in for a treat.



# The Center for Steinbeck Studies

by Brian McCleary

With over one and a half million items contained inside, San Jose State's Martin Luther King Jr. Library boasts of being the largest library on this side of the Mississippi. It holds not only an impressive collection of books, movies, and art; it also contains, with over forty-thousand pieces, the largest collection of Steinbeck memorabilia in the world.

The Center for Steinbeck Studies, currently located on the fifth floor of our library, was founded soon after Steinbeck's death in 1968 by San Jose State Professor Martha Heasley Cox in 1971. Her purpose in establishing the center was to preserve Steinbeck's literary legacy.

The Center displays such objects as original letters written by Steinbeck, photos, films, manuscripts, painted portraits of Steinbeck, and posters from movies that were made from his books. Some of his personal belongings are also on display, such as a typewriter, a replica of a notepad with copies of his handwriting, and various prints of his books. The Center also contains more obscure items, such as a replica of a motor Steinbeck used in his travels through the Sea of Cortez, a device used by a friend of Steinbeck's for marine biology experiments (which is rumored to have also doubled as a distillery), and a bedpan once owned by his mother's family.

Martha Heasley Cox's contribution to preserving the memory of Steinbeck doesn't end with the Center. She also funds a program called The Steinbeck Fellows, which offers \$10,000 plus housing assistance as an award to each accepted applicant, for the purpose of completing a writing project. The program is not restricted to SJSU students, but is a national competition. The program supports creative writers of genres that were pursued by Steinbeck, and includes such categories as essays, short stories, novels, theatrical plays, screen plays, and opera librettos. Poetry, however, is excluded. Another requirement is that the accepted writers reside in the San Jose area during the school year, which is September 1<sup>st</sup> through May 20<sup>th</sup>. Three Fellows are in residence this year.

Syda Patel Day, who holds BA and J.D. degrees from Yale, has had writing residencies at Headlands, Yaddo, MacDowell,

the Vermont Studio Center, and Breadloaf. She has been lately working on a screenplay and has been a Fulbright scholar. She is currently writing a novel, the working title of which is *A Waterless River*; and her work has been published in the *Yale Review* and *Story*.

Charles McLeod, who was born in Fort Worth, Texas and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, holds an MFA from the University of Virginia and was a 2005-06 Writing Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. His fiction has appeared in *The Iowa Review*, where it won a 2005 Iowa Review Award; *Eleven Eleven*; and *Carve Magazine*, where it was a finalist for the Raymond Carver Short Story Award. He is currently writing a short story collection tentatively titled *Birds of the Greater Dakotas* and a novel to be called *Plaids*.

Kara Levy received a BA in Medieval Studies from Swarthmore College and will receive her MFA from Columbia University, where she taught creative writing and was co-coordinator of Columbia Artists/Teachers. She is working on a collection of short stories about illness and other failings of the body, and on two longer projects of fiction.

Those interested in more information about the Steinbeck Fellows Program should contact The Center by phone at 408-808-2067, by FAX at 408-808-2069, or by email at [steinbeck@sjsu.edu](mailto:steinbeck@sjsu.edu); or by emailing Professor Paul Douglass of the Department of English and Comparative Literature at [pdouglas@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:pdouglas@email.sjsu.edu).

For anyone who would like to know about Steinbeck's life and accomplishments, The Steinbeck Center offers free tours during its open hours:

Monday	11:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Tuesday	11:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Wednesday	11:00 AM - 8:00 PM
Thursday	11:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Friday	11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Saturday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Sunday	Closed

The Steinbeck Center offers a number of readings and presentations by Steinbeck enthusiasts and scholars throughout the academic year. Check its website at <http://steinbeck.sjsu.edu/center/h0103> for more information.

# The 20th Annual Author Series

by Alejandra Hernandez

For twenty years the Center for Literary Art's Major Authors Series has been the most significant literary series in the region, presenting Nobel Prize, National Book Award, and Pulitzer Prize winners to the community. The CLA's main goal is to spread the influence of, interest in, and appreciation for literature throughout the South Bay area. Through readings, lectures, and seminars, the CLA allows San Jose State students and community members to interact with contemporary writers who demonstrate an exceptional literary vision.

The CLA is one of the many programs on campus that does a wonderful job of holding events that bring prestige to the SJSU community. Students and community members are very lucky to have the opportunity of interacting with writers of such great caliber.

With the Major Authors Series in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, The CLA is bringing several exciting authors to campus this academic year.

Neil Gaiman, bestselling author of *Good Omens* and *American Gods*, as well as the creator of the landmark comic *Sandman*, will be the first of four major authors to kick off the Major Author Series, which in the past has included authors such as James D. Houston, Salam Pax, and Julie Otsuka.

The CLA will host two events with Gaiman as a part of its Major Authors Series. The first session with Gaiman will be a conversation with Mitch Berman, CLA Director, followed by a public question and answer session at noon on Thursday, November 16, 2006, with a book-signing session to follow after the reading. Location to be announced. Free Admission.

A second session with Gaiman will take place on Thursday, November 16, 2006 at 7:30 p.m., with a reading and book signing to be held in the Barrett Ballroom at the Student Union, SJSU. Admission charge to be announced.

Other major authors that will be featured this coming season are James Kelman, Khaled Hossein, and Carolyn See.

James Kelman, author of the novel *A Disaffection*, winner of the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction) and the Booker

Prize, and holder of the Lurie Distinguished Chair in Creative Writing at SJSU for 2007, will be the second major author in the Series.

As the 2007 Lurie Professor, James Kelman will hold a teaching professorship that will bring him into close contact with SJSU students. Students as well as the public will have the opportunity to hear Kelman speak, as he will be making a series of public appearances on campus. The first Kelman event will be a conversation with Mitch Berman, followed by a public Q&A on February 13, 2007 at noon. Location to be announced. Admission Free. The second Kelman event will feature a reading and a book signing on February 13, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. Location to be announced. Free Admission. The third Kelman event will be a visit to Mt. Pleasant High School in San Jose. The event is open to the public. Date to be announced. Free Admission.

Khaled Hosseini, author of the classic tale *The Kite Runner*, in which he provides an eye-opening account of the political turmoil in Afghanistan, will be the third author in the Major Authors Series. Hosseini will be on campus on March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 2007. Time and location to be announced. Free Admission.

Carolyn See, author of six novels, including *There Will Never Be Another You*, *The Handyman*, *Making History*, and *Golden Days*, will be the fourth author in the Major Authors Series.

The CLA will host three Carolyn See events moderated by Mitch Berman on March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007. The first event with See will be a conversation session with Berman, followed by a public Q&A at 12:00 noon on March 21, 2007. Location to be announced. Free Admission. The second session with See will be a reading and book signing at 7:30 p.m. on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007. Location to be announced. Free Admission. The third event with See will be a visit to Mt. Pleasant High School in San Jose. This will be held at 3:15 p.m. and is open to the public. Date to be announced. Free Admission.

More information on the Major Authors Series can be found at the Center for Literary Art's Web site at [www.litart.org](http://www.litart.org).

# The English Society

by Sandeep Pabla

If reading Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, researching Shakespearean tragedy, tackling *Beowulf*, composing a sonnet, all the while trying to write a ten-page paper on the character of Achilles, has drained the energy out of you and killed the last neuron in your brain, the English Society is the place to "refuel" and regain your sanity.

Located in Faculty Office Building room 113, the English Society Lounge is home to English majors, minors, and graduate students. Students from other majors are also welcome. It is a refuge where students can hangout, study, unwind between classes, hold meetings, meet-up with old friends and make new ones.

"Once I discovered the English Society, it gave me a place to hang out and English majors like myself to hang out with," says Tanja Nathanael, a student in the English Graduate Program. "It [the English Society Lounge] was always a place to go to cheer myself up and have lunch with friends," adds Andrew Weiglein, an alumnus with a double degree in Psychology and English.

Part of the student-run organization, the English Society Lounge got its start after the donation of its first furniture from Abir Ward Richani, an alumna of the English Department. Her donation transformed the once empty office into a hospitable "refuge" for students. Donations of furniture from Mary Williams, a student in the English Graduate Program, and book donations from various donors helped to enhance the lounge. "The English Society as it exists today is the result of the tireless work of many individuals," says Michelle Perry, a student in the English Graduate Program and president of the Society. Over time, the English Society has grown to a group of over a hundred members and the numbers continue to grow every semester as new students find their niche in the circle of people, who, as Perry puts it, "respect the written word."

The Lounge shares its hallway with the English professors. Professors often stop by to say hello or join in the discussion, which allows students to build relationships with them outside of the classroom. An organization like this is a must in a commuter-school where rushing from class to

class can take away from making connections.

"As a member of the English Society, not only do you make friends with a really great bunch of people, but you are also given the opportunity to establish a network of support, whether it's hearing about a new job opening or a call for papers, or just giving you a space to vent about classwork," asserts Nathanael.

"The friends that I have made through the English Society have meant more than any possible honor or award that I could receive. I even met my fiancé through an English Society 'Dionysian Symposium,'" says Perry. "I met many people that I truly call friends and will for the rest of my life," adds Gillian Hertzter, a recent English major graduate and a former vice president of the Society.

The Society presents an array of events each semester. Some of the past events have included field trips to Monterey Bay Aquarium, movie nights, Brother's Grimm readings, a dodge-ball tournament on the lawn outside the Faculty Offices, and traditional bonfires at twin lakes beach, which are held every semester. The Society also participates in the Department Teas and fields a softball team that challenges the faculty in an end-of-the-academic year fun afternoon in May. This semester, the organization has held an Open House and a Department Tea, and has an Edgar Allen Poe open reading scheduled for November 1st. The time and location for such events can be obtained from the Society's List Server (see instructions for joining the List Server on the next page) and from printed announcements posted throughout the Faculty Office Building. Another way to join is by adding your "name and email address to the list on the bulletin board outside of the lounge," informs Perry.

Senior English major David Montgomery declares, "The events that the English Society puts together have given me a chance to interact with faculty outside of the classroom or office hours."

Becoming a member is only a step away. Perry points out that if you're an English major or minor, you are considered "a member by default." All you need to do is poke your head into the Lounge and join in

the conversation or simply have a seat and hangout. There is no membership fee or application process.

“All we really require is enthusiasm and a desire to be a part of the group. We also ask that each member maintain their ‘active’ status by attending at least one ES event per semester and by volunteering two hours at an event or department tea,” says Perry.

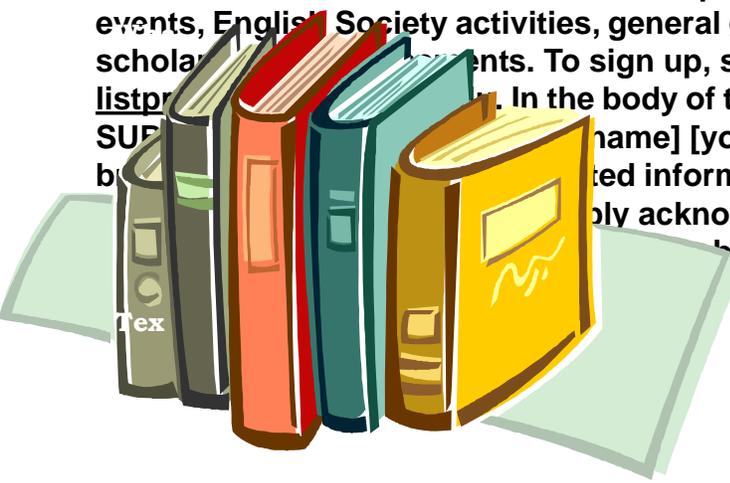
The meetings for this semester will be held each third Wednesday of the month from 12am to 3pm in the Lounge. The meetings mainly focus, as Nathanael states, “on gathering ideas for ES events and then putting those ideas in motion.” Take time out to attend one of these meetings and see where it takes you. “The more people who attend the meetings, the more ideas to share, as well as more volunteers to do the work to get it done,” adds Nathanael.

“It [English Society] has changed my college experience from one of detachment to one of camaraderie,” claims Perry. “Getting involved with ES was one of the best things I ever did in college,” admits Weiglein. Hertzler adds, “I had the college experience that I always wanted because of the ES.”

The English Society welcomes you. Come unwind your mind or join in the discussion. As Nathanael confesses, grinning, “you have no idea how much fun can be had with the *Oxford English Dictionary*.” Come see what the English Society has to offer you.

### Want to know what's going on?

To Receive important announcements from the Department Office and our Chair, Scott Rice, please sign up for the English Department listserv. Announcements include upcoming performances/ events, English Society activities, general graduation information, and scholarship opportunities. To sign up, send an email message to: [listserv@oxford.edu](mailto:listserv@oxford.edu). In the body of the text, type the following: **SUBSCRIBE [your name] [your last name]**. Replace the bracketed information without the brackets. Please reply acknowledging your successful subscription. You may unsubscribe any time you wish.



# New Librarian

by Sunshine Frandsen

Our beloved Judy Reynolds has retired, and the English Department has a new librarian, Toby Matoush.

Toby grew up in Ashland, Oregon, the home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She has a BA and MA in Japanese Literature and Language, and she is fluent in Japanese. She has done quite a lot of research in her career, but her favorite research topics have included contemporary Japanese female authors, women in Japanese popular culture, Japanese folklore, and gender studies. Currently, she is working on a translation of *Cruel Fairy Tales for Adults* by the Japanese author Kurahashi Yumiko. Toby has been writing all her life, and although she has mainly written poetry, she is currently branching out into short stories.

An experienced librarian who can help in many different ways, Toby is very excited about working with all English majors, and offers research assistance to students primarily in English, Comparative Literature, and Foreign Language courses. (If she's not available and a student needs help with database researching, the second floor of the library is the best place to go; on this floor there are reference librarians ready to help anyone who is willing to ask for it.)

Toby is also excited about working with the faculty. She is willing to provide Library Research Classes for Literature and English Classes when requested. For English 1B and 100W, Toby can coordinate, schedule, and teach the class session that involves the library. If faculty members need the use of any books or films on English literature and/or related subjects for their classes, they can contact Toby and she can order them for the library. Toby can also make arrangements for a faculty reading to take place at the King Library. Her services are also available to any faculty member who needs help finding library resources on a subject or would like advice on using the databases.

To the whole English Department, Toby suggests checking out the SJSU Research English Page for English and Comparative Literature Resources, which is located at [www.sjlibrary.org](http://www.sjlibrary.org). Once at the

website, select SJSU Research Topics, select English, and go from there. Both students and faculty should take full advantage of all the services that Toby has to offer.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library houses a variety of different collections, has designated "quiet floors," and offers accessible technology that is useful to English majors.

The Lower Level of the library contains a wide assortment of little-known treasures. This semester there are two new scanners for scanning books, periodicals, and microfilms; once students have scanned an item they can send the copied item to their own email for future use. Also in the depths of the lower level are government publications, historical children's collections, and historical texts from the State of California. The periodical section ranges from our own *Spartan Daily* to well known newspapers like the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. There is also an area called the SJSU Student Computer Service Center where a student with a student ID can check out laptops for up to four hours.

Another useful level is the third floor where there are various collections ranging from language to sociology, including the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil Rights collection. On the fifth floor are the SJSU Masters Theses dating from 1987 to the present. Included on the fifth floor is the Music Research Collection along with sound recordings of record albums, CDs, and cassettes. Also located on the fifth floor are the California Room, the Steinbeck Center, the Beethoven Center, and the Cultural Heritage Center. Each of these rooms and centers is accessible to all students and faculty by simply walking through the doors; however, none of the items that are located within can be checked out. And if silence is what is needed, that can be obtained on the sixth, seventh, and eight floors.

Toby Matoush is easy to reach by phone and email, and she responds promptly to both. Her office is on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, #14041. At this time she does not have set office hours, but an appointment can be made by emailing her. Her contact information is as follows: Voice: (408) 808-2096; Fax: (408) 808-2009; Email: [tmatoush@sjsu.edu](mailto:tmatoush@sjsu.edu).



# Writing = \$\$\$\$

by Holly Moore

Want tons of money and recognition for your most prized writing? As English majors we all know that the hard work we invest in writing takes heart and soul and many sleepless nights, but it's all worth it in the end when we have a kicka\$\$ piece of writing. So don't be modest; take some credit. Put your writing out there and get noticed. Make some major moolah. Here's your chance.

We're incredibly lucky to have amazing scholarship and award opportunities available within the SJSU English Department. Departmental awards are given via two roads: by student application and by faculty nomination.

Scholarships that students may apply for, which include the James Phelan Creative Writing Awards, cover a wide range of writing genres, styles, and topics, including creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, familiar essays, humor and satire, reminiscences, critical essays, reviews, short stories, and literary criticism. There's something for everybody. Last year the Phelan Awards alone handed out a total of \$2,500 to student winners. Start thinking now about what you're writing in your classes this year, and about what types of things you want to submit.

Awards by faculty nomination are given for outstanding academic excellence in a number of different categories:

- Scholarly achievement as an undergraduate major in English and Comp. Lit.
- Scholarly achievement as a graduate student in English & Comp. Lit.
- Scholarly Achievement in the writing and study of poetry
- Scholarly achievement in Chaucer or Middle English
- Scholarly Achievement in the study of the language of Beowulf or Old English

So work extra hard in class and show those professors what you're really made of.

The deadlines for student entries and faculty nominations won't be set until early in the Spring 2007 semester, but it's not too early to start writing. All of the awards require students to be registered for six or more units; and some awards require students to have completed a minimum of

24 semester units at San Jose State University.

Don't hesitate to take advantage of all the scholarship money that the English Department is offering. English majors are supposedly poor. Let's rebel. The amount of money that can be made on a single scholarship can range anywhere from \$75 to a cool \$1,000! Can't you just smell the sweet scent of cash?

With so many opportunities, there's no time for excuses or for doubting yourself. The potential is there! Check out the impressive array of award opportunities. The English Department Office is located in the Faculty Office Building, room 102. There you will find all the information you need about applications: deadlines, eligibility requirements, procedures, and a lot more. Also, right across from the Department's office, you'll find a bulletin board displaying last year's winners. Visit the English Department's website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/award.htm> for contact information and a comprehensive listing of all of the Department's awards.

Go that extra mile! Take a chance! Earn those big bucks! Not only does applying give you the opportunity for personal growth and money, but winning a scholarship or an award adds some pizzazz on a resume, inviting further opportunities for future writing successes.



# Life After Graduation for Daisy Luu

by Nichole Lee

For many of us, our primary goal is to graduate from San Jose State University and find a rewarding career. Often our peers earn their degrees, and we never see them again. On the last day of class we wish them success, and hope that they find a use for their English degree, whether it is teaching, editing, or writing; and occasionally we wonder how they are surviving out there in the “real world.” If Daisy Luu is an example of what SJSU English major graduates are doing today, then we have nothing to fear.



Some of you might remember Daisy because not only was she a student here at SJSU, but she was also the smiling face behind the front desk of the English Department office for almost a year. Daisy received her B.A. in English, accompanied by a Certificate in Technical writing in 2002; she then earned a M.F.A. in Creative Writing in 2005.

She “just got lucky,” she says, when, while working as Administrative Assistant for the English Department, she received a job posting for a Technical Writing Internship at Lam Research Corporation, a supplier of wafer fabrication equipment. She faxed her resume and got the job. As an Intern, she was trained by a Senior Technical Writer on Adobe FrameMaker, and began to write user guides and installation manuals.

Armed with this technical writing experience on her resume, she “got lucky again.” Her internship was ending, and she answered a few ads for Technical Writers. She faxed her resume to TeleNav, a company who provides turn-by-turn GPS navigation for mobile phones and got a call back that same day.

Today, she writes release notes, pocket guides, quick-start guides, and website guides for TeleNav. While this might not be the type of creative writing that Daisy intended to do, she says she is “ultimately happy just writing.” She also says that “the respect is nice.” She feels that she receives more respect than she would have had as a teacher, but she is sometimes frustrated when she wonders if anybody is actually reading the instructions she is writing.

It's refreshing to hear that someone with a passion for words is writing manuals and guides. Few things can be as frustrating as attempting to decipher and follow poorly written directions. I am sure that those who are reading her instructions are thankful for her ability to communicate those directions effectively.

Daisy, who chose to be an English major because of her “love of languages,” says that she still gets a shiver down her spine when she reads or writes something good. Her education at SJSU taught her “How to write for specific types of audiences. How to respect deadlines, think critically, and take criticism.” All of these are important in technical writing, where, according to Daisy, “people edit your work, and you've got to be willing to revise it, even take out sections that you've worked hard on.” Her skills have served her well because the technical writing field can be a financially rewarding one. According to Daisy, the initial salary of a technical writer might be as little as \$35,000 a year, but within five years he or she can make as much as \$95,000 a year.

If the idea of writing for instructional rather than entertainment purposes interests you, or if you just have to find a way to pay off those student loans, Daisy recommends getting to know publishing software such as FrameMaker, and an image capturing tool like Photoshop or SnagIt and then check out what what companies are looking for in a technical writer at websites like [www.monsterjobs.com](http://www.monsterjobs.com), [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org), or [www.hotjobs.yahoo.com](http://www.hotjobs.yahoo.com); and you can contact Professor Cox, Career Writing Program Coordinator, for more ideas about careers like Daisy Luu's.

Daisy can still be seen on campus, at events held by the Center for Literary Arts, and she stays connected with some of her professors through email. She has made some “close friends” in the English Department whom she still keeps in touch with, and she misses school “very much.” She also shared what we already knew, which is that “English majors are a fun bunch to be around, especially at parties because you never run out of things to talk about.” At least we know that, even if we don't get as “lucky” as Daisy, we will always be fun at parties!

# Grant-Writing Alumna

by Aaron Guido

Many San Jose State University students who have received their BA in English have taken interesting paths in their careers. This can certainly be said of Tanja Nathanael, a recent San Jose State University alumna, who has taken a road less traveled by becoming a grant writer. Her success story is a testament to the variety of careers that are open to English majors.

After obtaining her BA in English from San Jose State, Tanja didn't want to start a teaching career just yet. She had had a bad experience when she had to teach in a classroom filled with a bunch of "Bart Simpsons." "What other options were opened for her?" she wondered.

Well, after reading a notice about a grant-writing position, and with a recommendation from Bonnie Cox, a professor at San Jose State University, Tanja applied for the job. The Steinway Society, the non-profit organization that had posted the grant-writing job, hired her.

What exactly is a grant or a grant writer? A grant writer basically writes a grant document, called a "grant proposal." It's a document that asks a funding agency (a city, a company, a foundation, etc.) for money to bring something special (such as certain types of art) into the community. A grant proposal is therefore a document that is both informative and persuasive.

Tanja, now one of these grant writers, works for the Steinway Society, which, she explains, is a non-profit organization trying to get the art of piano music into the Bay Area. This organization doesn't profit money-wise when it receives money to bring piano music to the Bay Area.

In fact, Tanja has recently been part of a group effort to bring piano music into downtown San Jose. She excitedly elaborated how they have just asked for and received support from the city. This was all done through grants that Tanja helped write.

For the time being, Tanja enjoys grant writing. It's something different;

something a bit creative; and something that helps the community, which is a good thing.

Grant writing does, of course, have a downside that Tanja hates. Deadlines! "But what writing job doesn't?" she concedes. While she does enjoy writing, grants also have to be researched, and they have to be written within a tightly specified time frame. Because of this, her grant writing has to be done more quickly than when she writes stories.

Nonetheless, she feels fortunate to have landed the job, and enjoys working with grants. It's a rewarding experience for her because it's for a good cause and

brings something good into

the community (not to mention that it pays the bills).

Although she works full time writing grants to bring piano music into the community, Tanja is still with us at San Jose State, as she is currently enrolled in the MA

English Graduate Program. Her favorite subject is folklore; she is obsessed with folklore. In fact, she still wants to teach one day, and she hopes that career will include teaching a college-level course in folklore.

How how this alumna spends her time amazes me. Not only is she a graduate student with a full-time grant-writing position, but she is also a full-time mother, raising a son. Being a mother, student, and writer is stressful, yet she endures, proving that it is possible to have it all—just bit by bit.

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*"It's something different; something a bit creative; and something that helps the community, which is a good thing."*

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# Spring 2007 Course Descriptions

## **English 56A: English Literature to Eighteenth Century**

Shakespeare! Chaucer! Milton! The three GREATEST writers in the English language—and all in a single course! Plus one of the scariest monster stories ever: *Beowulf*. What more could an English major want? Join us in a lively romp over a thousand years of English literature. You'll love it!

**Professor Pollock: TR 1030-1145**

## **English 56B: English Literature, Late Eighteenth Century to Present**

Something for everyone in the greatest hits of Brit Lit for the past two-hundred-odd years, covering the Romantics, Victorians, Modernists, and Postmodernists, their poetry, fiction, drama, and prose.

**Professor Mesher: TR 1330-1445**

## **English 68A: American Literature to 1865**

Native American oral literature, colonial narratives, poetry, and autobiographical writings plus the greats of the romantic period: Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Poe, Melville, Hawthorne, Whitman, Dickinson. High points: Tyler's play *The Contrast*, Rowson's novel *Charlotte*, Douglass's Narrative, Melville's *Billy Budd*. Two exams, one paper.

**Professor English: F 0900-1145**

## **English 68B: American Literature 1865 to Present**

Survey of American literature. Emily Dickinson to the present.

**Professor Karim: TR 1200-1315**

## **English 71: Creative Writing**

In this course, we read, discuss, and write poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction. During class, we discuss craft by focusing on "reading like a writer." We also engage in in-class writing activities and writing workshops to respond to each others' writing. Several published writers will visit class to talk about their work and take questions from students. By the end of the course, students will have written a minimum of one memoir piece, two short stories, and four poems.

**Professor Evans: MW 0900-1015**

## **English 71: Creative Writing**

This section of Introduction to Creative Writing will be taught online using the WebCT instructional platform. The course will involve both the reading and writing of poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction. Students will read published works—contemporary and historical—of poetry, creative non-fiction, and fiction. Students will write original works of poetry, creative non-fiction, and fiction in response to works by published authors that students will use as models. The course will explore the traditions of poetry, creative non-fiction, and fiction as they have evolved over the last few centuries. Students will examine these traditions in the light of understanding the historical and cultural contexts from which they have arisen. The course will be taught using a combination of online small writing groups (organized as learning communities) and online writing workshops. In discussion, published works of creative writing will be closely read and analyzed. In the writing workshops, creative work by class members will be analyzed and critiqued for revision. Students are required to participate in all workshops dedicated to the discussion of class members' writing.

**Professor Soldofsky: Online**

## **English 71: Creative Writing**

Examinations of works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction as expressions of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and cultural contents, and recognize issues related to writing by men and women of diverse cultural traditions. Students will also write poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction.

**Professor James: MW 1330-1445**

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**Professor Miller: TR 1030-1145**

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**Professor Maio: TR 1200-1315; T 1900-2145**

**English 100W: Writing Workshop**

Writing workshop for English Studies.

**Professor Wilson: R 1600-1845**

**English 100W: Writing Workshop**

Writing workshop for English Studies.

**Professor Krishnaswamy: MW 1330-1445**

**English 100W: Writing Workshop**

A writing class to help you learn to write creatively and beautifully about literature. We will study poetic forms, short stories and the play *Big Love*, being produced this spring by SJSU's Theater Program.

**Professor Stork: F 0900-1145**

**English 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism**

Study and application of various historical and contemporary approaches to literature, such as formalism, structuralism, new criticism, cultural studies, new historicism, post-structuralism, Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism, etc. Application of these approaches to works of literature. Prerequisite: 100W.

**Professor Krishnaswamy: MW 1030-1145**

**English 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism**

Do you see hidden meanings in literary texts? Billboards? Movies? Advertisements? Can you come up with three variant meanings for Pound's poem "In a Station of the Metro"? There are many possible readings of all literary and visual texts. Even your own mental baggage governs your interpretations of the material. For this course, we will discover and apply critical methods to various literary, visual, and dynamic texts. Critical models will include foundational twentieth-century theory as well as contemporary approaches to literature (feminism, Queer theory, Marxism, post-colonialism,

and more). We will apply this critical theory to texts across several historical periods or literary genres. Prerequisite: English 100W.  
**Professor Harris: TR 1030-1145; TR 1200-1315**

**English 102: History of the English Language**

The history of the English language from its earliest written forms to today. Learn why when we fall in love we are struck by Cupid's arrow, but when we lose love we are stricken with grief. This and many more fascinating facts about English!

**Professor Stork: TR 0900-1015**

**English 103: Modern English**

This course provides a survey of Modern English phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. During the course we will also spend time on some recurring problems of "usage" and/or "correctness," regional and social varieties of English, and the historical development of English, especially as it affects the language today. Gain a new understanding and respect for why we do what we do with this wonderful tool. Required for Credential Candidates.

**Professor Cox: MW 0900-1015**

**English 103: Modern English**

We will look at the sights, shapes, sounds, syntax, and sociology of Modern English. Learn why Hank rhymes with think in Texas and where software and blogs really come from. I love grammar, and so will you after taking 103! Required for Credential Candidates.

**Professor Stork: TR 1030-1145**

**English 106: Editing for Writers**

Perplexed by punctuation? Grieved over grammar? Overwhelmed by organizational problems? Take English 106 for a solid review of diction, syntax, grammar, and punctuation. Also learn document-editing skills: how to organize papers, evaluate graphics, and perfect document design. This course will help anyone who wants to be a better writer.

**Professor Baer: MW: 1030-1145**

**English 112A: Children's Literature**

Study of literature for elementary and intermediate grades.

**Professor Krishnaswamy: MW 0900-1015**

**English 107: Professional Technical Writing**

Learn how to write proposals, resumes and job application letters, instructions and procedures, reports, abstracts, and executive summaries. Learn how to analyze prospective readers and write to meet those readers' needs. Learn how to work collaboratively to create a document for a real client on campus, at a non-profit organization, or a Silicon Valley Company. Learn how to put together a professional writer's portfolio.

**Professor James: F 0900-1145**

**English 112A: Children's Literature**

We will read, become acquainted with, discuss, and write about many genres of Children's Literature. Among the selections for the core novels in the course are *Danny the Champion of the World* by Roald Dahl; *Crossing Jordan* by Adrian Fogelin; *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech; *The Giver* by Lois Lowry; *Forgotten Fire* by Adam Bagdasarian; *Becoming Naomi Lee* by Pam Munoz Ryan; *Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli, and *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. Students will be required to read and write about one Children's Literature classic, one Newbery or Orbis Pictus Winner, and present a book talk; they will either create a picture book or prepare an annotated bibliography of picture books as we explore that genre; and do an oral presentation related to the genre of fantasy, fairytale, folklore, myth and legend.

**Professors Lovell and Warner: M 1600-1845**

**English 112B: Literature for Young Adults**

The goal of this course is to acquaint students with as many YA books and authors as possible. We will read five books as a class: *After the First Death*, *First Crossing* (a collection of short stories), *Witness*, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, and *Whale Talk*. For three of the five novels, students will do a literary-analysis paper. For background on the genres and resources of YA Literature, we will use *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning* and a course pack of essential components from *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. Using Book Talks, each student will present a novel and resources about the author, the book, and its connection to YA Lit. Depending on students' focus in the English major, course participants will also

do a unit plan or annotated bibliography on a novel/author/category in YA Lit. In each class session, we'll do a Sustained Silent Writing to integrate what we're reading, discussing, and learning about the rich field of YA Lit.

**Professor Warner: W 1600-1845**

**English 117: Film, Literature, and Culture**

Using film and literary works, students will appreciate and understand the narratives (myths and other stories) that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and culture over time.

**Professor Harris: F 1000-1245**

**English 117: Film, Literature, and Culture**

Reading works of literature and screening films based on those works. Focus on how literary and film narratives depict cultures. A research project, a critical essay or creative screenplay project, and several essay tests. Elective in English major; required of single-subject credential candidates. Area V upper-division General Education.

**Professor Engell: T 1500-1745**

**English 123B: Literature for Global Understanding: Africa**

This course examines the literary production and cultural heritage of Africa. Issues addressed may include Afrocentism, the scramble for Africa, slavery, the middle passage, colonialism and decolonization, the black Atlantic, the African Diaspora, ethnic violence, religion, economics, modernity, class, gender, human rights, and indigenous movements, as exemplified in the writings of significant writers from various countries of Africa. For Spring 2007, the class will study a variety of texts and authors, including *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, *Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic*, Olaudah Equiano, Leopold Senghor, Camara Laye, Chinua Achebe, Bessie Head, Wold Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ben Okri, Ken Sara-Wiwa, Naguib Mahfouz, and others. Presentations, short papers, research project, and exams required. Satisfies Advanced G.E. area V.

**Professor Chow: MW 1330-1445**

**English 129: Career Writing**

Practice in various professional writing tasks. Study of models and application of techniques to achieve given stylistic effects. Publication of two newsletters.

**Professor Miller: TR 1330-1445**

**English 130: Writing Fiction**

Workshop in short stories or other short fiction. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: English 71 or instructor consent.

**Professor Berman: MW 1200-1315**

**English 131: Writing Poetry**

Workshop in verse forms. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: English 71 or instructor consent.

**Professor Karin: TR 1500-1615**

**English 133: Reed Magazine**

Student edited and managed literary magazine. Open to all majors. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor James: M 1900-2145**

**English 139: Visiting Authors Seminar**

Study of works by contemporary writers including those participating in the Major Authors Series sponsored by the Center for Literary Arts. Includes meetings with writers in the Major Authors Series. Prerequisite: instructor consent.

**Professor Berman: R 1600-1845**

**English 141: Introduction to Medieval Literature**

From knights in shining armor to the black death of plague, medieval literature has it all: mystery and adventure, romance and riddles, bawdy burlesque and biblical allegory, lilting lyrics and savage sagas. Join our combined undergraduate/graduate class and read some of the most beautiful and fascinating works ever written. Undergraduates will write weekly reader responses, a take-home midterm exam, a research-informed paper (8-10 pages), and a final essay exam. Graduate students will write weekly reader responses; write an evaluation of and present a scholarly article; lead the class discussion of one assigned reading; write a scholarly critical paper (18-20 pages) using both primary and secondary

sources; and prepare, present, and distribute to the class an informational abstract of their critical paper, with an annotated bibliography. Graduate students sign up for English 216. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor Cox: M 1600-1845**

**English 144: Shakespeare I**

Major plays. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor Baer: R 1900-2145**

**English 145: Shakespeare and Performance**

This course examines in-depth several of Shakespeare's plays, specifically addressing issues of performance and interpretation. Placing each play in a double context—that of its original performance in Shakespeare's time and that of its life on stage and screen in the ensuing centuries—encourages an engagement with the ways in which re-imagining Shakespeare's works help them retain their vitality and cultural relevance. Paying particular attention to modern productions, we will analyze the ways in which production elements such as setting, casting, staging, costuming, editing, and individual performances shape and create meaning (or fail to do so) for the audiences of today. Placing these plays within this context of performance raises larger issues about the complex relationships between the Shakespearean canon and its ever-changing audiences. Students will respond to each Shakespearean play text through both writing and oral interpretation, integrating speech and dramatic performance with an understanding of the complexities of plot, characterization, and dramatic form. Note: this course is required for the English Single-Subject Credential. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor Eastwood: TR 0900-1015**

**English 154: British and Irish Fiction**

Study of British and Irish fiction since 1900. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor Wilson: T 1900-2145**

**English 162: American Literature 1830-1865**

Studies in American Romanticism through analysis of works by four pairs of writers: Black Hawk and Frederic Douglass; R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau; Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville; Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Works include autobiography, essays, short stories (tales) and short poems. (No novels.) Several short Reader Response essays. Mid-term and Final essay tests. Research essay (8-10 pages for undergraduates, 15 pages for graduate students). Writers studied in this course represent the foundations of American Literature. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor Engell: R 1900-2145**

**English 166: American Literature Since 1945**

Major works. Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

**Professor Maio: TR 1330-1445**

**English 167: Steinbeck**

For many, John Steinbeck is the quintessential California novelist—a writer who captures a sense of place, of people on the land, of ecological awareness, of a Western identity. This course considers Steinbeck's California roots as well as his range—the many genres he embraced, the ceaseless experimentation. From 1929-1966, he published works that embraced American social issues, and in this course we will examine Steinbeck as social historian, western writer, and experimental prose stylist. The organization will be thematic rather than chronological. Texts: *The Pastures of Heaven*, *Tortilla Flat*, *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Moon is Down*, *Cannery Row*, *East of Eden*, *The Winter of Our Discontent*.

**Professor Shillinglaw: TR 1200-1315**

**English 169: Ethnicity in American Literature**

Beginning with Native American oral literature and ending with contemporary novels, short stories and poems, the class will survey representations of ethnic identity in American literature roughly chronologically. Topics will include assimilation, internalized oppression, the effect of gender and class on ethnic identity, and the uses of literary and cultural innovation.

**Professor Brada-Williams: MW 1200-1315**

**English 169: Ethnicity in American Literature**

This course studies multicultural literature by immigrant, culturally under-represented, and Native-American writers. Specifically, we will read works by African-American, Asian-American, Chicano, Latino, Islamic-American, Jewish-American, and Native American writers. We will explore varied representations of and responses to ethnicity in the cultural context of a diverse country. The theme for the semester will be "Crossing Borders." We will examine how matters of ethnicity, cultural displacement, cultural expression, cultural repression, racism, and anti-Semitism are explored in the genres of fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, film, and drama. We will read the following authors: Sherman Alexie, James Baldwin, Louis Erdrich, Allen Ginsberg, Jessica Hagedorn, Khaled Hosseini, Garrett Hongo, Gish Jen, Maxine Hong Kingston, Li-Young Lee, Andrew Lam, Toni Morrison, Bharati Mukherjee, David Mura, ZZ Packer, Ishmael Reed, Adrienne Rich, Gerald Stern, Louis Alberto Urrea, Luis Valdez, Alfred Vea, and Lois Ann Yamanaka. Besides reading these works for their literary values, we will also examine how these works facilitate the construction of self-identity and cross-cultural understanding. Prerequisites: completion of lower-division GE core; for students who began continuous enrollment at a CCC or a CSU in Fall 2005 or later, completion of or concurrent enrollment of a 100W course is required.

**Professor Soldofsky: TR 1330-1445**

**English 174: Literature, Self, and Society**

This discussion course invites readers who like to write (and vice versa). Readings will be drawn from interesting, well written contemporary American literature, presenting multiple perspectives on significant subjects and events or contemplating the world through prisms of race, religion, class, geography, history, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Importantly, none will be "about" any of those things in any single-minded or polemical way: they will be "about" what it means to be alive in the world.

**Professor Heisch: MW 0900-1015**

**English 177: Twentieth-Century Fiction**

For Spring 2007, we'll be reading six or seven outstanding modern novels by women, all dealing with dysfunctional families as a theme, including most of the following: Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (1918); Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927); Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979); Keri Hulme, *The Bone People* (1983); Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club* (1989); Isabel Allende, *The House of Spirits* (1993); Ronit Matalon, *The One Facing Us* (1995); Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997). This is the sort of great literature that may make you want to go home and hug a parent (or child). Contact the instructor with your preferences from among those novels listed, or to suggest another title.

**Professor Mesher: TR 1500-1615**

**English 181: Special Topics in Literature: Literary Assimilation and Death: From a Writer's Perspective**

There is necessity and there is style. People confuse the two. Writers never should. If you have a story to tell, you find a way to tell it. But what if a way to tell it does not exist? There are different kinds of stories. Some concern the stories themselves. The writer needs to tell a story about the story, of the difficulty experienced in telling the story. Some stories press so hard they cannot be told. The short fiction of Ralph Ellison, William Saroyan, Erskine Caldwell, Meridel Le Seur, Tillie Olsen, Zora Neale Thurston, Isaac Bashevis Singer will provide a basis. Among other "foreign" English-language writers we shall consider Ming Sher (*Spider Boys*), Sam Selvon (*Lonely Londoners*), Duncan McLean (*Bucket of Tongues*) and Amos Tutuola (*My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*). Students should expect to essay around the arguments and do their best to produce two stories (or plays).

**Professor Kelman: MW 1200-1315**

**English 193: Capstone Seminar in Literature and Self-Reflection**

In this course we shall consider your years as an English major and reexamine your writing over the past few years. In addition, the class will read novels, essays, poems, and plays about the process of self reflection, considering the artists' perspectives and students' own. Texts include *Long Day's Journey Into Night* by Eugene O'Neill; *Refuge* by Terry Tempest Williams; Robinson Jeffers' poetry; *In Our Time* by Ernest Hemingway; *Absalom, Absalom!* by William Faulkner; *Housekeeping* by Marilynne Robinson; and selected essays.

**Professor Shillinglaw: T 1500-1745**

**English 193: Capstone Seminar in Literature and Self-Reflection**

Culminating course for English majors, requiring students to reflect on their experience and their progress toward meeting the Department Learning Goals. Each student will 1) submit a portfolio of writing from at least five other courses taken in the major; 2) significantly revise one of those portfolio selections; 3) add other written work to the portfolio based on readings and activities during the semester; and 4) write an introduction to the portfolio evaluating its contents in relation to the Department Learning Goals. Readings will include fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama addressing the theme of reflection and self-evaluation. Some of the works under consideration for inclusion in the syllabus are Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, Lillian Hellman's *Pentimento*, H.G. Wells' *Experiment in Autobiography*, Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," Doris Lessing's *Under My Skin*, William Golding's *Rites of Passage*, and Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood*.

**Professor Douglass: TR 1200-1315**



# Chair's Message

by Scott Rice

This coming spring will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of our Department's Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, an international literary parody competition that challenges entrants to compose bad opening sentences to imaginary novels. The BLFC was inspired by Edward George Bulwer-Lytton who began his 1830 novel *Paul Clifford* with the immortal opener, "It was a dark and stormy night" and then rambled on for 51 more words. Entries come from all over the world, and each year the results are covered by entities like the BBC and Reuter's, and by newspapers in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.



Here is a brief sampling of some favorites:

"The sun rose slowly, like a fiery fur ball coughed up uneasily onto a sky-blue carpet by a giant unseen cat."

"The horizon coughed up the morning sun much as if Atlas had lowered the world from his mighty shoulders and given it the Heimlich maneuver."

"Just beyond the Narrows the river widens."

"Her ample bosom quivered in the night air like a whale trying to scratch its back."

"With a curvaceous figure that Venus would have envied, a tanned unblemished oval face framed with lustrous thick brown hair, deep azure-blue eyes fringed with long black lashes, perfect teeth that

vied for competition, and a small straight nose, Marilee had a beauty that defied description."

"I suggest you stick to painting, Mr. Van Gogh—you sure don't have an ear for music."

"God, I'm tired," thought Jim-Bob as he jammed the seventeen-speed road ranger into double-compound fifth gear and gracefully swung the big rig into the right lane, effortlessly flattening the front end of a '69 LTD, making it resemble a giant green metallic spatula with wheels on the handle."

"Mike Hardware was the kind of private eye who didn't know the meaning of the word 'fear,' a man who could laugh in the face of danger and spit in the eye of death—in short, a moron with suicidal tendencies."

"The poor little wooden boy could only sit helplessly and watch while the old puppet maker, who was now his father and whom he had just told how a good fairy had turned him into a living boy without strings, worked on a life-sized puppet of a young woman with really big hooters."

"The surface of the strange, forbidden planet was roughly textured and green, much like cottage cheese gets way after the date on the lid says it is all right to buy it."

"As a scientist, Throckmorton knew that if he were ever to break wind in the sound chamber he would never hear the end of it."

"Guido Marishino looked at his Thompson sub-machine gun with its gentle spiral of smoke climbing from the once-flaming muzzle, then looked back at the crumpled, bullet-ridden body of the street performer with his blood-spattered makeup, and realized with sadness that no matter how much money they had paid him to do it, a mime was a terrible thing to waste."

The *Department of English and Comparative Literature Newsletter* is written and produced by students in English 129.



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