

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

**The International Writing Program
at
The University of Iowa**

The 2005 Residency

This year, the IWP hosted thirty-seven writers from twenty-nine countries. Like each year, we strove to build on previous years' successes even while setting new benchmarks and aiming to widen our reach.

What remains constant is the impressive level of talent that comes our way. As each year, a number of the 2005 participants were well-established writers with several books in print and a variety of genres on their palettes. Take Liu Heng from Beijing: born in the 1950s and—like so many of his generation—passing through a long period of enforced inactivity, he is today equally well-known for his novels *Ju Dou* and *Black Snow*, and for their immensely popular film adaptations, celebrated by cinema aficionados and popular audiences both inside and outside China. His commitment to both media domains allowed him to discuss with a great deal of sophisticated precision the tensions between writing for the solitary page and the global screen at a “Writing for Two and Three Dimensions” public panel, as well as with eager students in the “International Literature Today” class. Remarkably prolific, he wrote the better part of a new novel during his three months in Iowa City.

Austrian novelist Josef Haslinger returned for a second round at the IWP. During his 1994 residency here he had drafted the novel *Opernball*, dealing presciently with terrorism in the age of mass media. *Opernball* subsequently became a best-seller in Germany and the basis for an award-winning TV series. But he also passed on experiences gathered a decade ago in Iowa City along a different network. Joining in the mid-1990s renaissance of creative writing education at the venerable Leipzig Institute of German Literature, he went on to become a central force in organizing a European consortium of the emerging creative writing programs, comparable to the Associated Writing Programs in the U.S. His discussion of changes and differences in institutions devoted to creative literature can be found in the Winter 2006 issue of *www.91st-meridian.org*. A natural storyteller as well as a thoughtful literary critic, he surprised students and locals alike with the occasional burst of witty and polished rap poetry, mixing high German and superb English.

Besides established literary figures like Liu and Haslinger, we were also glad to host several younger, up-and-coming writers. Lidiya Dimkovska, a poet, novelist, translator, and editor, arrived from Slovenia (though born in Macedonia, she now lives in Ljubljana). She has received acclaim beyond her two home countries; prior to her arrival in Iowa City she had also been featured in the *American Poetry Review*, and had a volume entitled *Do Not Awaken Them with Hammers* forthcoming from the New York-based Duck Soup Presse. Though her five-week residency was shorter than the standard three months, she gave several much-appreciated readings, not just in Iowa City but also Chicago, Buffalo, Amherst, and New York City. This year she will return to Iowa City to read together with another IWP alumnus, the Slovenian-born Tomaž Šalamun, now among the great working poets of his generation. Given Dimkovska's considerable exposure on the international writing scene, it is easy to see her star also rising. A sample of her poetry can be found elsewhere in this report.

But she was only one among the unusually many women who enriched the 2005 residency. Out of the thirty-seven participants twenty were woman—a high watermark for the IWP. Several of them are not just writers but also driving forces in other fields. Yvonne Adhiambo Owour, a fiction writer from Kenya with a mischievous wit, has won the Caine Prize for her short fiction while functioning as the executive director of the Zanzibar International Film Festival, a popular non-profit showcasing the arts and culture of “the dhow region” around the Indian Ocean rim. In her conversations with students, Owour brought up topics ranging from Kenya’s emergent telecommunication industry, through her take on the Middle Eastern conflict’s reverberations in the Horn of Africa, to her impressions as a woman of color in Iowa City. During her residency she also initiated a co-operation between representatives from the University of Iowa and the Kenya branch of the MIHR Centre, a public-interest center for managing intellectual property. Participants would work to understand the networks that form that country’s culture of technology, and aim for an ongoing program of professional exchanges.

Like Owour, Edi Shukriu of Kosova has also devoted herself to the growth of her home country. Though she was here as a poet and playwright, she is also an archeologist, a publishing professor of ancient history, and a stateswoman. In the political realm, she established the Women’s Forum (the first women’s democratic organization in the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia), co-founded the Democratic Alternative of Kosova, and served in the autonomous region’s new Parliament and as a diplomat in its Foreign Ministry. A serious, exacting writer, she challenged the other participants intellectually and aesthetically. Her library panel presentation considered a full range of gender issues in the conflict-filled Kosovar society, calling for women to be given their place in the world and in literature—yet not at the expense of the more fundamental demand of political self-determination. Shukriu was one of the writers who made the best use of local interests and resources. She made connections with the Department of Archeology, the Iowa Historical Society, the local Albanian American community, visited the Senior College, and kept several young translators busy working on texts both newly written and resuscitated after many years in the political trenches. With her serious and well-prepared presentation, she made a strong impression on the students in the “International Literature Today” class. A dialogue from her play, *Eurydice’s Return*, was performed as a part of Global Express, an evening of staged readings from dramatic texts.

By far the most sought-after writer for outreach events was Dr. Ma Thida of Burma. Initially this was because of her dual career as a writer and physician and because of her unique personal history of activism, which included six years of solitary confinement; but in the course of her residency it was her unusual personality that made a wide variety of people gravitate toward her. Even while trying to protect precious time for her own writing, Thida responded with endless patience to the growing stream of requests to visit classes, schools, and colleges. After first making contact with the local chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, she repeatedly visited a variety of Iowa’s hospitals and clinics to absorb new medical techniques which she would need back at her half-time job as a surgeon at the Muslim Free Clinic in Rangoon—the other half of her time is devoted to serving as the editor for a magazine aimed at teenagers. As inspiring as her accomplishments was her modesty and generosity. She was explicit about the difficult current political situation in Burma, discussing it in no uncertain terms in interviews on the local radio programs, yet was also eager to draw others into the spotlight with her, refusing to dwell on what others saw as

a life of exemplary moral comportment. At the panels and readings of other writers she was always there in the audience, her camera flashing.

In an extraordinary—yet also truly characteristic—moment of the IWP circuits coming alive, Edi Shukriu recognized Thida as the woman whose birthday card she had signed during the UN Women’s World Forum in Beijing in 1995, as international activists were seeking to draw attention to and gain amnesty for the latter, isolated and severely ill in her jail cell.

Laila Neihoum, our first participant from Libya, was another writer who flourished away from the taxing political environment back home. Cheerful, passionate, and curious, Neihoum produced some two hundred pages of articles, short stories, and critical essays about new Libyan writing. She also completed thirty-some pages of a novel, a long prose-poem, and translations of seven broadcasts of a program serial for Libyan radio. In October, she took advantage of a visit by Lisa DiFranza of the Portland Stage Company to acquaint herself with playwriting. The collaborative process of writing for the stage was new to Neihoum, but she seized it with her characteristic gusto. After a series of workshops with DiFranza, she reported that she had discovered a new passion for the craft. She also wrote back to us of sharing her enthusiasm for the collaborative process with colleagues in Libya. Neihoum’s residency is an excellent example of how links can be struck between cultures.

No discussion of the “Class of 2005” would be complete without mention of what we now consider among the important functions of this writing residency, and one of the main challenges to the contemporary American culture, namely deepening mutual understanding and building bridges between the American and the Islamic societies. This year, we hosted several participants with a Muslim affiliation from both Islamic and non-Islamic countries, and created opportunities for conversations about Islam’s place in the world. Some of the commentaries can be read at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~iwp/EVEN/EVENmain.html>. Among those participating prominently in this dialogue was for instance Nihad Sirees of Syria, a novelist and screenwriter, whose most recent television series, *Al Khait Al Abiadh* (“The First Gleam of Dawn”), provided a frank depiction of the country’s tightly-controlled media. Several Arab-speaking stations in the region aired the series in 2004, generating praise for its boldness and controversy. During the residency, Sirees’ presentation called for moderation on both sides and lucidly outlined what it will take for Islam and the West to blunt their conflict. His concern for peace, and the value he placed on honest, in-depth discussion, offered a flesh-and-blood alternative to the caricatures presented by the mainstream media.

Increasingly, the West has had to engage with the Middle East not just because of its active involvement in that part of the world, but also because of immigration. The German novelist Sherko Fatah, with family roots among Iraqi Kurds, was one example of the dense connection between these two regions. His visits to Iraq have formed the emotional and thematic skeleton of his recent fiction. He spoke of his views of Islam, terrorism, violence, and migrant cultures to the fascinated students in the International Literature Today class; his experiences there and in his native Germany provided, in turn, a unique in-depth background to the novel *Snow* by the Turkish novelist (and IWP alumnus) Orhan Pamuk, the course’s assigned reading.

Another artist on the front lines of making sense of these changes is Said El Haji. While born in Morocco, he moved with his Berber parents to the Netherlands at a young age and began distancing himself from Islam as a teenager. With humor and intense flair, his fiction and essays address the inherent problems of growing up Islamic in a western culture, as well as the promise and possibility brought forth by this integration.

As the IWP's first writer from Kuwait, Estabraq Ahmad also provided insight into the Islamic world. Ahmad, a fiction writer and an investigator with the Ministry of the Interior, has taken on the responsibility of helping to create a self-sustaining literary tradition in a culture that does not yet have one. Her short stories, those she sketched out in English and those she translated side-by-side with her devoted American translators in the Translation Workshop, give an interesting glimpse into the narrative imagination of the contemporary Arabic-writing generation. Though she was quiet and a bit shy, her determination was evident, and her spirit contagious. Her "The Best Thing I Ever Read" panel presentation was a quiet exhortation to her fellow writers, reminding them that it takes time and struggle for the public to recognize brilliant but unconventional ideas and writing. She reminded us of "the larger responsibilities of inking the pages." Though living in a strictly Islamic society, she has conquered many potential setbacks, and she offered a seldom-shared perspective on the life of a highly educated professional woman from that part of the world.

Through Estabraq Ahmad and our other writers, Islamic and non-Islamic, from all over the world, we saw both the promise and the difficulty of bringing cultures together. Gathering these writers and inviting them to share their perspectives also reaffirmed our belief that the IWP plays no small part in bridging gaps in worldview and fostering relationships between people of all languages and cultures.



Poet and art critic John Mateer.

Lidija DIMKOVSKA, "Post-Recognition,"

That's it, the day has come for me to wrap my guts on curlers,
to prepare for the great confession
that art no longer is though it should above all be massage,
should smell of the soft touch of a King Markovian hand
and slide through life like ethereal lavender oil.
What else can I do now, when in the glass of the book case door
I can measure my muscles, tense my strength,
harden my soul with toning cream,
but cannot sink into the poem as into a bathtub
if it's cracked, corroded and there's no rich foam?
Such times have come, when the widower will spend the day of mourning
in his black long johns lying between white sheets
watching a programme on extinct dinosaurs
and that era of bell-bottom trousers flapping down the corridors of music
I can only call it a cultural acquisition.
My brothers are retro-refugees in the new exile of the asylum-seekers' hostel
I am a midget among the models, my housedress is a rubbish bag.
I address the bathroom heater with "My God"
and ask how to go on through the blizzard with this hardened womb,
with my plastic jaw, with my curdled blood. Red-hot and passionate,
he licks me behind the ear, there where the core of art is hidden:
"Find yourself a water pitcher and a go-between for a muse."
Even embodied in a ship, God would still be old-fashioned,
and art—a headless fly. We are all muses to each other,
and we have curlers, but no guts. My flesh is hard, A.,
and my body as light as a page of the Bible.
At night your skin is my winning number in the Macedonian Lottery,
the American dream of every Balkan bagpipe.
I'll make myself gloves of it that will caress me during the day
at the foundations for modern artistic vision
and I will confess that art is not, but should be
a delight, an elixir, communion, massage homeopathy.

translated from the Macedonian by Ljubica Arsovska and Margaret Reid



At the Chicago Humanities Festival:
Lidija Dimkovska and Ameena Hussein.

Ameena HUSSEIN, “Islam and We”

[...]

Often the Muslim community of Sri Lanka views my writings as treacherous and ultracritical. As my Muslim pharmacist once told me—I think you are a Muslim who doesn’t like to be a Muslim. Thus any form of opinion, even mildly critical, is seen as being against the religion and community. The other ethnic communities, however, see me as the flag bearer of modern Sri Lankan Muslimness. I am acceptable to them. They understand me. I am, after all, saying what they would like to say but do not for reasons of political correctness. This leaves me as a writer in a dilemma. Believing that change is most effective when it comes from within, I am at the same time aware of the danger of being used or manipulated by the other communities. I confess there is a lot of self-censorship on my part.

It leaves me frustrated.

A writer has power. In the mid-nineteenth century the novelist Lytton wrote: *the pen is mightier than the sword*. Today, being a Muslim writer can be a powerful and yet a dangerous thing. Some writers have been banned, some imprisoned, others exiled and still others killed. I recently came across an organisation dedicated to writing about, presenting and promoting positive Islamic fiction. But should Muslim writers be dedicated to only white wash? What about the niggling doubts, the little bothersome details? Should we not write about them, debate them, discuss them? Is being a Muslim all about total acceptance? And more importantly, total acceptance of whose version?

Writers are the witnesses to their time and place. They are the voices of memory, the conscience of a people.

[...]

Program Support

The IWP can carry on its worldwide mission only thanks to the consistent support of the University of Iowa, federal, state, community, and individual sources. While it may be impossible to enumerate each of the many helping hands extended toward us in the past year—and amid all our transitions, they have been legion—we would like to acknowledge our profound debt to the individuals, entities, and institutions listed below.

At the University of Iowa

President Dr. David Skorton and his administrative staff

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Our colleagues in other departments

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The Chicago Humanities Festival: Artistic Director Lawrence Wechsler and his staff
The Des Moines School District Talented and Gifted Program: Coordinator Julia Burton
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Humanities Iowa: Executive Director Christopher R. Rossi
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KHN Center for the Arts of Nebraska: Development Director Julie Blake Fisher
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The foundations and cultural institutions that provided funding to support the participation of this year's writers

The United States Department of State
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US Embassy in Cairo, Egypt
US Liaison Office in Tripoli, Libya
US Consulate-General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Chicago Humanities Festival

*

Finally, we would like to remember two great friends of the program who passed away in this past year: Kenneth Cmiel, Professor of History and Director of the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights and Frank Conroy, Director of the UI Writers' Workshop. They will be greatly missed.

*



Liu Heng with the bust of Paul Engle at Shambaugh House.



At the Iowa House: Zoltán Pék, Ma Thida, Edi Shukriu.

MA Thida, from “A Brief Biography”

1966

I was born.

England defeated West Germany 4-2 in London to win the World Cup of soccer.

American poet Adrienne Rich publishes her fourth collection of poetry, Necessities of life, written almost entirely in free verse.

Indira Gandhi became head of the Congress Party and the first female prime minister of India.

General Suharto took power after bloody coup and civil war, and then Indonesian forests became open for foreign concessionaries resulting widespread deforestation.

1967,68,69,70

My body, mind and heart were nurtured by my dad and mom.

My body was developed.

My mind was raised.

My heart was cultivated.

Latin American author Gabriel Garcia Marquez completed his epic novel ‘One Hundred Years of Solitude’.

South African surgeon Christiaan Barnard carries out the first human heart transplant.

American women organized marches to protest the Vietnam War.

Apollo 11’s American astronaut Neil A. Armstrong became the first human being to step onto the moon’s surface.

Golda Meir became the first woman prime minister of Israel.

British and American medical researchers develop the CAT scan, which integrates thousands of X-ray images into a detailed picture.

[...]

HONOR ROLL OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THE INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM

We are very grateful to all those who have contributed to the IWP through the University of Iowa Foundation. Though we are unable to name individual contributors at this time,* please know that your gift has enabled us to foster writers from around the world, to build bridges between disparate regions and cultures, and to continue to expand our mission. We thank you for sharing those goals with us and for your support.

** At the conclusion of the University's Good. Better. Best. Iowa campaign on December 31, 2005, The University of Iowa Foundation shifted from recording and announcing fund-raising results and recognizing contributors on a calendar-year basis to a fiscal-year basis (July 1 through June 30). Due to this fiscal-year change, we will not produce an honor roll of 2005 calendar-year contributors. Instead, please watch for the eighteen-month honor roll (January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006), which will be published in our next annual report. Subsequent honor rolls will recognize contributors based on fiscal-year giving.*

**If you would like to discuss how you
can support the IWP please contact:**

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Vice President Gift Planning
The University of Iowa Foundation
P.O. Box 4550
Iowa City, IA 52244-4550
(319) 335-3305 or (800) 648-6973
david-triplett@uiowa.edu

You can also obtain more information
about the IWP or donate at our website:

www.uiowa.edu/~iwp

Laila NEIHOUM, "Marathon,"

Another morning for the sleepy girls,
Benghazian journalists
tripping along dead streets
in night's leftover darkness
in the echoes of windy dreams.
Their desks gather grime
from the nearby harbor
scattered by winter's rain
their papers are pure ice
their seats confused frost
their breaths
their ideas
their writing
the remnants of sleep
nothing
nobody
Soul's shiver waiting for them,
the years' marathon approaching
slowly
stubbornly.

Translated from the Arabic by
Ghazi Giblawi and Lauren Shapiro

Panel Discussions at the Iowa City Public Library Topics for 2005

September 7

Worlds of Letters

Mani Rao (India/Hong Kong), Ma Thida (Burma), Kristien Hemmereichs (Belgium), Sherko Fatah (Germany)

September 14

Islam and We (Iowa City)

Nadia Abduljabbar (Saudi Arabia), Nihad Sirees (Syria), Ameena Hussein (Sri Lanka), Yoo Jae-Hyun (South Korea)

September 15

Islam and We (Drake University/Des Moines)

Yvonne A. Owour (Kenya), Zahiye Kundus (Palestine/Israel), Said El Haji (The Netherlands), Josef Haslinger (Austria), Sherko Fatah (Germany)

September 21

Writing for Two and Three Dimensions

Yim Phil-Sung (South Korea), Jung Young-Moon (South Korea), Nihad Sirees (Syria), Liu Heng (China)

September 28

Lost—and Found—in Translation

Wendy Ella Wright (Australia), Zoltán Pék (Hungary), Marjan Strojjan (Slovenia), Nadia Abduljabbar (Saudi Arabia)

October 5

Books, Men and Women

Anna Rogozhnikova (Kazakhstan), Edi Shukriu (Kosova), Manju Kanchuli (Nepal)

October 12

Imagination/Fantasy/Reality

Kyoko Yoshida (Japan), Van Cam Hai (Vietnam), Josef Haslinger (Austria), Laila Neihoum (Libya), Chi Zijian (China)

October 19

The Best Thing I Ever Read Was...

Estabraq Ahmad (Kuwait), Kiwao Nomura (Japan), K.V. Tirumalesh (India)

October 26

Why I Write What I Write and How I Write It

Ameena Hussein (Sri Lanka), Lidija Dimkovska (Macedonia), Uriel Quesada (Costa Rica/USA), Sandra Sodhy (Malaysia), Ayu Utami (Indonesia)

November 2

Literature of Evil

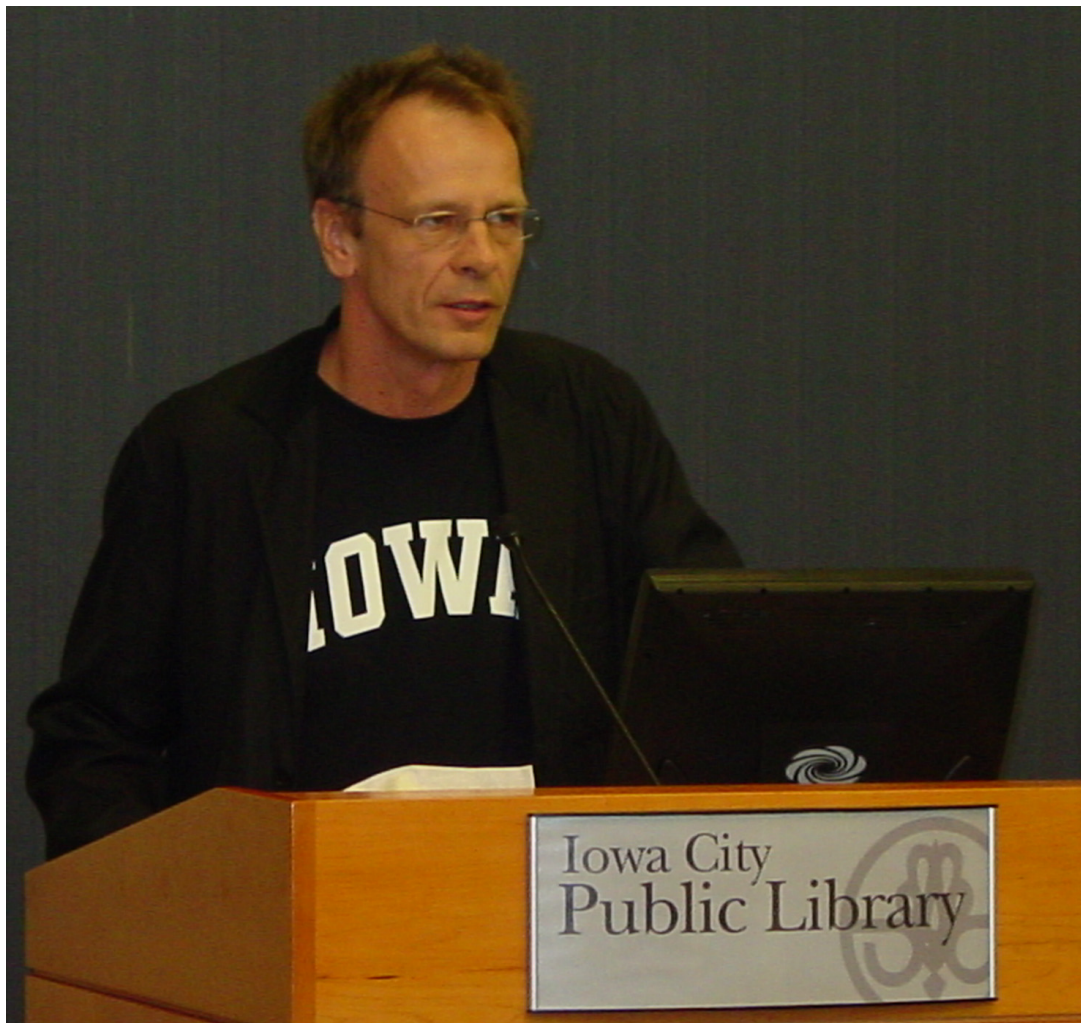
Antonio Ungar (Colombia), Yvonne A. Owour (Kenya), Said El Haji (The Netherlands),
John Mateer (Australia)

November 9

Images of America

All IWP Participants

Complete texts available at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~iwp/EVEN/EVENmain.html>



Josef Haslinger speaking at a public panel

Mani RAO, “My Place in the Universe English.”

A class presentation in *International Literature Today* [October 24, 2005]

I inherited English. I can't change that.

It's mine. Not shame or pride.

I mine it I polish it I wear it. I don't change that, I don't dispossess myself of it.

I play in English, play out my characters.

I call on the English medium for seances in which I receive the French poets and the Urdu poets.

But if English were my only property, I would not be as wealthy. I have a range of deposits. I feel intimately soothed by the sound of Sanskrit and am convinced we were together in a past life. I know Telugu and Hindi enough, feel comfortable around Tamil, Cantonese and Mandarin, go past Kannada and Marathi and keep finding many other resources in my land which nourish my composition, the composition of my self.

When I hear the respectful second person address in Hindi—*aap* (you)—I am reminded that one person is many people. If someone says she had a dream in Telugu—*kala kannanu*—I note that she did not just have a dream, she gave birth to a dream, and this instantly explodes into the thought that our children are the perpetration of our illusions. When I hear, in Hong Kong, in English, *he has not come back yet*, and I know that it really means *he has not come in yet*—although I don't understand Chinese, I absorb one of its tensions, about tense. But none of my sources are overt, because I don't write about them, I leave my door unlocked and they come play.

Here's an image that arrived from Hong Kong.

Tomorrow below today

Below tomorrow, the day after

Below on below we go

To the earth to be planted

I caught it from Chinese wall calendars, where a page/day is torn off to reveal the next page/day. This image crystallized when I met the less-popular word for tomorrow, *Xia Yi Tian*—which literally means next/below-one-day. (The more popular word for tomorrow is *Ming-Tian* i.e. tomorrow-day.)

[...]

Class Presentations in International Literature Today [181:191]

Held Mondays 3:30-5:20 PM, 140 Shaeffer Hall
Writers discuss their work in twenty-minute presentations.

September 12

Nadia Abduljabbar (Saudi Arabia), Yvonne A. Owour (Kenya), Estabraq Ahmad (Kuwait), Josef Haslinger (Austria)

September 19

Van Cam Hai (Vietnam), Anna Rogozhnikova (Kazakhstan), Ma Thida (Burma), Sherko Fatah (Germany)

September 26

Kim Ji-Woon (South Korea), Yim Phil-Sung (South Korea), Sharron Hass (Israel)

October 3

Ameena Hussein (Sri Lanka), Manju Kanchuli (Nepal), John Mateer (Australia), Laila Neihoum (Libya)

October 10

Zahiye Kundus (Palestine/Israel), Jung Young-Moon (South Korea), Kiwao Nomura (Japan), Zoltán Pék (Hungary)

October 17

Liu Heng (China), Chi Zijian (China), Kyoko Yoshida (Japan)

October 24

Ayu Utami (Indonesia), Said El Haji (The Netherlands), Mani Rao (India/Hong Kong), Wendy Ella Wright (Australia)

October 31

Edi Shukriu (Kosova), Nihad Sirees (Syria), Marjan Strojan (Slovenia), Uriel Quesada (Costa Rica/USA)

November 7

Sandra Sodhy (Malaysia), Antonio Ungar (Colombia), Lidija Dimkovska (Macedonia), Yoo Jae-Hyun (South Korea)

*

The International Writing Program holds two weekly readings: one on Fridays, in Shambaugh House's Paul Engle Memorial Lounge, and one on Sundays, in co-operation with the Writers' Workshop, at Prairie Lights Books, Iowa City's literary hub. Both draw audiences from the Iowa City community, and some are subsequently available to a world-wide audience via our digital archive at <http://iwp.info-science.uiowa.edu/cgi-bin/library>

Prairie Lights Readings (with students from the Writers' Workshop)

September 11

Ma Thida (Burma)
Josef Haslinger (Austria)
Kiki Petrosino (WW)

September 18

Marjan Strojan (Slovenia)
Wendy Ella Wright (Australia)
Kaethe Schwehn (WW)

September 25

Zoltán Pék (Hungary)
Mani Rao (India/Hong Kong)
Albert Pulido (WW)

October 9

Sherko Fatah (Germany)
Yvonne A. Owour (Kenya)
Nina Siegal (WW)

October 16

John Mateer (Australia)
Sharron Hass (Israel)
Matt Williamson (WW)

October 23

Lidija Dimkovska (Macedonia)
Said El Haji (The Netherlands)
Julia Glassman (WW)

October 30

Kyoko Yoshida (Japan)
Ameena Hussein (Sri Lanka)
Lauren Shapiro (WW)

November 6

Manju Kanchuli (Nepal)
Antonio Ungar (Colombia)
Edan Lepucki (WW)



Antonio Ungar at Prairie Lights Books.



Anna Rogozhnikova at the Des Moines Central Academy.

Zahiye KUNDUS, “Islam and We”

[...]

Although we have our differences, we Palestinians, Arabs and citizens of Islamic countries are in the position of post-traumatic nations. We, the people, still cannot believe in the fall. Why? Maybe we don't want to know the answer to the question: who will take responsibility? And then what?

This situation of misunderstanding keeps us surrounded by fantasy. Failure after failure in the twentieth century wars keeps us in certain ways looking for the next Gamal Abd El-Nasser (the Egyptian leader who carried the Arab flag in the fifties and sixties), and for Muhammad, the last prophet. This belief in one savior doesn't allow us to search for the collective power, the power within the people.

I call this situation “the romance of the proud victim.” We were so proud of our history until it became our ghost; we are haunted by our splendid past. In time we will take our victim's *jalabiya* off, and stop looking for reasons in superstitions. Then we will be able to raise our heads again.

[...]

Nihad SIREES, “Waiting for the Widow: A Story”

The hour approached quarter to eight, so I set my breakfast near the window and sat down there. Breakfast was made up of a plate of black eyed beans, an onion, a cup of strong tea (in the style of my maternal grandmother) and a flour halaweh, as I had become used to something sweet in the morning after having beans. Down below, the neighborhood was opening in front of me like a hand; from my spot behind the shutters I could see clearly the patio of the coffee shop and the wicker chairs, next to each one a green metal table, where the regulars usually sat, with their cups of tea and coffee off to the side, out of the way. At that exact moment, everyone from Abd el-Atheem to Abu Musareea to the Golden Boy, took their place in the shop, waiting for the widow to leave her house and get into the government car that comes to take her to work at precisely five to eight. The owner of White Angel Laundromat also took a seat, outside his store, as a boy brought him his morning hookah, while Abd el-Buqal took a break from opening up and began fiddling with his crates of vegetables, his eyes on the entrance of the widow’s building. Even Subhee the pigeon keeper brought out his cane, around which he had wrapped a rag to attract his colored birds, and leaned against the railing of the roof. He spent most mornings there, waiting for the widow to come out. She had blonde hair, which she had started hiding behind a scarf after more and more men waited for her to come out. For a while now, I’ve noticed that the street vendors have begun stopping their carts and making a ruckus about their goods, waiting for her to come out. As for me, many months have passed since I first discovered the pleasure of eating breakfast by the window and watching everyone so interested in the widow. But I also realized that I had joined them, so that the number of her admirers had increased by one.

[...]



Nihad Sirees and Sharron Hass in front of Shambaugh House.

Shambaugh House Readings

September 2

Liu Heng (China)
[with interpreter Hua Jiang]

September 9

Kristien Hemmerechts (Belgium)

September 16

Mona Prince (Egypt)
Nihad Sirees (Syria)
Laila Neihoum (Libya)

September 23

John Kinsella (Australia)

September 30

Zahiye Kundus (Palestine/Israel)
Nadia Abduljabbar (Saudi Arabia)
Estabraq Ahmad (Kuwait)

October 7

Jung Young-Moon (South Korea)
Van Cam Hai (Vietnam)

October 14

Chi Zijian (China)
Sandra Sodhy (Malaysia)

October 21

Anna Rogozhnikova (Kazakhstan)
Edi Shukriu (Kosova)

October 28

Robert Kehew (*Lost and Found in Translation Series*)
Ayu Utami (Indonesia)

November 4

Yoo Jae-Hyun (South Korea)
Kiwao Nomura (Japan)

Antonio UNGAR, “Literature of Evil”

[...]

In the “First World,” full of comfort and order, a world standardized by the multinationals’ brand names and by the Internet, by exact artificial environments and controlled temperature, a writer’s nationality and the place where he writes are not important issues. It’s not significant whether you are from Belgium, Germany or Sweden. It’s practically the same to produce your work from LA, London or Rotterdam. Writing in the “Third World” means confronting conflicts that deal with essential human needs, pure passions and life-or-death problems. Human needs, as well as passions and vital problems, are not the same in Afghanistan, Kenya or Colombia. That is the reason why the question “What does it mean to write in our countries?” is so meaningful for Third World writers like us, and that’s also why the answers are multiple.

[...]

Readings and Events Sponsored or Co-Sponsored by the IWP

April 29-30	French/American Poetry Reading and conversation with David St. John, Jean-Patrice Courtois, Christiana Pugh, Emmanuel Laugier, Cole Swensen, Nicolas Pesques, Robyn Schiff, and Esther Tellerman, Shambaugh House
September 8	Nathalie Stephens (French/English), <i>Lost and Found in Translation</i> Reading and Q&A, Shambaugh House
September 9	Text and Context
September 13	Text and Context: Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath
September 15	Screening of <i>Ju Dou</i> , screenplay by IWP participant Liu Heng, Drake University, Des Moines
September 20	Text and Context: John Raeburn on Grant Wood and American Regionalism
September 22	Carolyn Wright (Bengali/English), <i>Lost and Found in Translation</i> Reading and Q&A, Shambaugh House
September 23-25	KOLORS Film Festival: Focus on the work of IWP participants Kim Ji-Woon and Yim Phil-Sung, Film Screenings and Q&A, 101 BCSB
September 26	Gregory Rabassa (Spanish/English; Brooklyn College), Ida Beam Speaker, <i>Lost and Found in Translation</i> Reading and Q&A, Prairie Lights Books
October 4	Text and Context: Current Trends in American Prose and Poetry
October 13	K.V. Tirumalesh (Kannada/English), <i>Lost and Found in Translation</i> Reading and Q&A, Shambaugh House
October 15	"Global Express": work by IWP participants Kyoko Yoshida, Marjan Strojan, Nihad Sirees, Ameena Hussein, Yvonne A. Owour, Edi Shukriu and Sandra Sodhy performed by UI students and faculty. Theatre Arts Building
October 20	Rosamund Bartlett (Russian/English; Cambridge U), <i>Lost and Found in Translation</i> Reading and Q&A, Shambaugh House
October 23	IWP Cinematheque 05: <i>Kosova 9/11</i> , <i>Heart of a Lioness</i> , and <i>Opernball</i> , introduced by IWP participants Edi Shukriu, Yvonne A. Owour and Josef Haslinger. Iowa House
October 25	Text and Context: Grants, residencies, workshops--a survey
October 28	Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo (Spanish; Equatorial Guinea), a Bilingual Reading and Q&A, Shambaugh House
October 28	Robert Kehew (Provençal/English), <i>Lost and Found in Translation</i> Reading and Q&A, Shambaugh House
October 28	Mai Mang (China), Reading, Prairie Lights Books
October 30	IWP Cinematheque: <i>Sepet</i> and Q&A with IWP participant Sandra Sodhy. 105E Adler Journalism Bldg
October 31	U Sam Oeur (Cambodia), Reading, Prairie Lights Books
November 1	Hwang Sok-Yong (South Korea), Reading, Shambaugh House
November 2	IWP Cinematheque 05: <i>Before the Rain</i> introduced by Lidija Dimkovska, Pappajohn W151
November 3	MFA Translation Program's Fall Workshop Reading, Shambaugh House

November 3-9	IWP Cinematheque 05: <i>Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress</i> , Bijou Theater. IMU
November 5	Poets Against the War, Reading featuring UI Writing Faculty Marvin Bell, James Galvin, David Hamilton, Mary Ruefle and Dean Young; Mary Swander (Iowa State University); James McKean (Mount Mercy College); Jan Weissmiller (Prairie Lights) and David Morice, with IWP participants Mani Rao and John Mateer. Shambaugh Auditorium
November 12	Chicago Humanities Festival Reading, with IWP participants Lidija Dimkovska, Ameena Hussein, Mani Rao, John Mateer, Said El Haji, and Kyoko Yoshida
November 18	Hirshhorn Museum Reading, with IWP participants Laila Neihoum, Van Cam Hai, Nihad Sirees, Yvonne A. Owour and Ameena Hussein. Washington D.C.
December 1	David Albahari (Canada), Reading, Prairie Lights Books
December 2	David Albahari, Q&A with Chris Merrill, Shambaugh House



Estabraq Ahmad at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin
(Spring Green, WI)



At the “Images of America” Panel: L-R: Lidija Dimkovska, Sharron Hass, Nadia Abduljabbar, Van Cam Hai and Laila Neihoum.

Nadia ABDULJABBAR, “Islam and We”

[...]

One final word which we should repeat to ourselves, as well to others, is that if we consider different religions as different windows towards Heaven, we should never hate or feel threatened by other nations who are different just because they chose different windows than ours in order to be connected with Heaven. For if God wished, He could have created us with one color and one tongue and ordered us to follow one religion. But He wished us to be different, yet we are not to fight because of this difference. We are to defend ourselves when attacked or invaded, but under civilized regulations, even if the enemy is not civilized—or so Allah says in the Qur’an.

[...]

Field Trips, Reception, and Cultural Events

Nature Walk	August 28, Redbird Farm
Kernels Baseball Game	August 29, Cedar Rapids
Welcome Party	August 31, Merrill Home
Farmers' Market	September 3, Iowa City
Coral Ridge Mall	September 3, Iowa City
IWP/Writers' Workshop Reception	September 4, Merrill Home
Hike/Swim	September 5, Lake MacBride
Library Tour	September 6, UI Main Library
CIVIC Annual Picnic	September 7, Upper City Park
Tri-State Rodeo	September 10, Ft. Madison, IA
Council on Islam	September 10, Des Moines, IA
"Islam and We" Panel Discussion	September 15, Drake University, Des Moines, IA
"Grant Wood at 5 Turner Ally" Exhibit	September 22, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
Meskwaki Indian Settlement	September 27, Tama, IA
U.S. Bank Reception	September 29, U.S. Bank, Iowa City
Fall Retreat	October 1-2, Effigy Mounds National Historic Monument, IA; Taliesin, Spring Green, WI; National Mississippi River Museum, Dubuque, IA
Amana Colonies and Dinner	October 8, Amana Colonies & Rettig Home
Prison Tour	October 11 & 18, Iowa Medical & Classification Center, Oakdale
Workshop with playwright Lisa Di Franzia	October 11-14, IMU 217
"Global Express" Reception	October 15, Conroy Home
Kalona Fall Draft Horse Sale	October 17, Kalona, IA
The <i>New Yorker</i> Tour	October 17-19, IMU
Dinner at UI President's House	October 24, Skorton/Davisson Home
Dawn Upshaw Performance	October 27, Hancher Auditorium
Hayride and Harvest Party	October 29, Dane Farm
Farewell Party	November 6, Shambaugh House
Chicago Humanities Festival	November 10-13, Chicago, IL

Funding Agencies of the 2005 IWP Participants

Nadia Abduljabbar (Saudi Arabia) Poet	U.S. Department of State
Estabraq Ahmad (Kuwait) Poet, Fiction Writer	Private
Chi Zijian (China) Fiction Writer, Novelist, Essayist	Freeman Foundation
Lidija Dimkovska (Macedonia) Poet, Novelist, Essayist, Translator	CEC/ArtsLink
Said El Haji (The Netherlands) Fiction Writer, Novelist, Editor	U.S. Department of State
Sherko Fatah (Germany) Novelist	IWP Writers Fund
Van Cam Hai (Vietnam) Fiction Writer, Poet, Journalist	U.S. Department of State
Josef Haslinger (Austria) Novelist, Nonfiction Writer	Austrian Cultural Forum, IWP Writers Fund, Max Kade
Sharron Hass (Israel) Poet, Essayist, Editor	US-Israeli Educational Foundation
Kristien Hemmerechts (Belgium) Novelist, Editor	Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren/ Flemish Literature Fund
Ameena Hussein (Sri Lanka) Editor, Publisher, Fiction Writer	U.S. Department of State
Jung Young-Moon (South Korea) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Translator	Korea Literary Translation Institute
Manju Kanchuli (Nepal) Poet, Translator, Fiction Writer	U.S. Department of State
Kim Ji-Woon (South Korea) Playwright, Screenwriter, Director	Freeman Foundation
Zahiye Kundus (Palestine/Israel) Translator, Fiction Writer	U.S. Department of State

Liu Heng (China) Fiction Writer, Novelist	Freeman Foundation
Ma Thida (Burma) Fiction Writer	Open Society Institute/Burma Project
John Mateer (Australia) Poet, Art Critic	Australian Council and the Chicago Humanities Festival
Laila Neihoum (Libya) Journalist, Poet, Editor, Translator	U.S. Department of State
Kiwao Nomura (Japan) Poet	Freeman Foundation
Yvonne A. Owour (Kenya) Fiction Writer, Playwright	U.S. Department of State
Zoltán Pék (Hungary) Fiction Writer, Translator	Hungarian American Enterprise Scholarship Fund
Mona Prince (Egypt) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Essayist	U.S. Department of State
Uriel Quesada (USA/Costa Rica) Fiction Writer	University of Iowa/Private
Mani Rao (India/Hong Kong) Poet	Private
Anna Rogozhnikova (Kazakhstan) Editor, Fiction Writer	U.S. Department of State
Edi Shukriu (Kosova) Poet, Playwright	Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation and the William B. Quarton International Writing Program Scholarship
Nihad Sirees (Syria) Novelist, Screenwriter	U.S. Department of State
Sandra Sodhy (Malaysia) Playwright, Producer	U.S. Department of State
Marjan Strojjan (Slovenia) Translator, Poet, Journalist	IWP Writers Fund

K.V. Tirumalesh (India)
Poet

Private

Antonio Ungar (Colombia)
Novelist, Fiction Writer, Journalist

U.S. Department of State

Ayu Utami (Indonesia)
Novelist, Editor

Freeman Foundation

Wendy Ella Wright (Australia)
Poet, Novelist, Translator

Private

Yim Phil-Sung (South Korea)
Screenwriter, Director

Freeman Foundation

Yoo Jae-Hyun (South Korea)
Fiction Writer, Columnist

Korean Culture and Arts Foundation

Kyoko Yoshida (Japan)
Fiction and Nonfiction Writer, Translator

Keio University



Manju Kanchuli reading at Prairie Lights.

Marjan STROJAN, “Lost—and Found—in Translation”

[...]

And it so happens that the work of the translator comes (in my view, anyway) very close to the work of a poet. Poetry’s chief function—and I put this up as my underlying belief or, as the Greeks would say, the *hypothesis* of anything I may say on the subject—poetry’s chief function and its very purpose in life is one of protecting the thing it presents (thus making it—as much as it can—inaccessible to appropriation). But, mind you, I say close, and this is all I say. No touching is allowed. As writers, we are within our own potentials all citizens of the world, as translators we only belong to one country and to one language—our own.

[...]



Marjan Strojjan on the Shambaugh House porch.



Van Cam Hai at the Des Moines Central Academy.

Van Cam Hai, "The Rivers Have Not Only Me,"

Vietnamese rivers are often contemplative
 cloud levels of memories
 slurp the sad grass a mouthful of blue river
 on the body convulsed with laughter bomb craters reflect back at the sun
 from high above a tongue wanders
 her language is a tireless light spread evenly, in spite of the sleepwalking rain,
 the roof of a church, a pier, a dry log like death leaning against your porch
 my pain does not have a flowering or fruit-bearing season
 night barks at a face with countless pimples
 a rose holds a gun
 my heart
 a flame-blowing tube
 a time when words fall asleep drunk next to the wood-burning stove
 a hand spits out a well-chewed death expression
 my brother's previous life
 a blind tv
 still I watch till the end of the card game
 a cigarette burns a naked body
 a car collapses on its knees having won the eternity prize
 even if someone does howl a dirge tomorrow
 O my scent don't you borrow from a deficit
 to the rivers is added a little sister's waist
 filled with the self-confidence to seduce the map of the world.

In *Three Vietnamese Poets* (Tinfish Press, Kāne'ohe, 2002),
 Translation from the Vietnamese by Linh Dinh

Participant Biographies

Nadia ABDULJABBAR (poet; b. 1957, Saudi Arabia) studied literature, and now lectures, at King Abdul Aziz University in the Department of European Languages and Literature. She writes her poetry in English. *Women with Wings*, a bilingual collection for which the author provided free verse Arabic translations, was published in 2003. A new bilingual collection, *Prisoner of Poems*, is due out in the next year.

Estabraq AHMAD (pen name of Estabraq Alfaraj; poet, fiction writer, investigator; b. 1971, Kuwait). After graduating from law school, Ms. Alfaraj became an investigator at the Ministry of the Interior. She also joined a writers' league and attended seminars, both of which enabled her to begin publishing articles in newspapers and magazines. In 2004 her short story "Darkness of the Light" won first place in a competition sponsored by the prominent Kuwaiti writer Lila Al-Othman. Ms. Alfaraj continues to work at the ministry.

CHI Zijian (fiction writer, novelist, essayist; b. 1964, China). A graduate of the Lu Xun Academy in Beijing, Ms. Chi has published over thirty books. Her work presents the time-honored practices of her northern village of Mona from a feminist perspective. At the same time, in novels such as *Silver Plates*, *The River Rolls By*, and *Beloved Potatoes*, she weaves fragments of the old and new to show a rapidly changing country. Little of her writing has been translated into English, beyond a short story collection *Figments of the Supernatural*, which won the 2004 Suspense-Sentence Fellowship from the James Joyce Foundation in Australia.

Lidija DIMKOVSKA (poet, novelist, essayist, translator; b. 1971, Macedonia; r. Slovenia) studied comparative literature at the University of Skopje, then earned a Ph.D. in Romanian literature from the University of Bucharest, where she taught Macedonian language and literature. Now she lives in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her books of poetry include *The Offspring of the East*, *The Fire of Letters*, *Bitten Nails*, *Nobel vs. Nobel*, and an edited anthology of recent Macedonian poetry. Her first novel, *Candid Camera*, won the "Stale Popov" award for best prose work. In 2006 Ugly Duckling Presse (New York) will publish a selection of her poetry.

Said EL HAJI (fiction writer, novelist, editor, columnist; b. 1976, Morocco; r. The Netherlands) debuted in 2000 with *The Days of Shaytaan*, a novel depicting the void between emigrant parents and their westernized children, and has since written many short stories, including "Little Hamid," which won the El Hizjra Literary Prize. His most recent work, "Nobody has a Program for the Concert of Life," appeared in a collection of short stories from leading Dutch writers. He is writing a commissioned script for a film about derailed youth.

Sherko FATAH (fiction writer, novelist; b. 1964, Germany), the son of an Iraqi Kurd father and a German mother, grew up in Berlin but often visited Iraq for extended periods of time, impressions of which influence much of his work. His first novel, *Im Grenzland* (*At the Borderline*), is the story of a smuggler operating in the border triangle between Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. The book won the 2001 Aspekt Prize, which recognizes the best German debut novel. His subsequent works, *Donnie* and *Onkelchen*, continue to explore the bitter tension, displacement, and violence he observed in the Middle East.

Van Cam HAI (poet, fiction and non-fiction writer; b. 1972, Vietnam) made his Vietnamese publishing debut in 1995 with a collection of poems titled (in English) *Man Who Tends the Waves*. His work has appeared in several American publications, including *Tinfish*, *The Literary Review*, *Vietnam Inside-Out: Dialogues* (2001), and the anthology *Three Vietnamese Poets* (2001). He has also written several works of prose, such as *Following on the Trail of Pinion to the Mild-Zone* (2003) and *Tibet-Bloom Drop in the Sunshine* (2004). A member of the Vietnamese Association of Writers and of the Vietnamese Association of Journalists, Mr. Hai works for Viet Nam Television and has thrice received the Gold Prize for his work on documentary films.

Josef HASLINGER (novelist and nonfiction writer; b. 1955, Austria) first participated in the IWP in 1994. In his home country he is respected for his willingness to confront Austria's past in writing that contemplates the last world war's effects on Europe's current social and political forces. *Opernball* (1995), a best-seller in Germany, was translated into thirteen languages and adapted for television. A subsequent novel, *Das Vaterspiel*, portrays Holocaust survivors and perpetrators living in the United States. He is currently a professor of Literary Aesthetics at Leipzig University.

Sharron HASS (poet, essayist, editor; b. 1966, Israel) lectures on literature and poetry at the Kerem Institute in Jerusalem. A co-founder of a writing program for gifted youth at the Matan Arts and Culture Project, she has taught in the Creative Writing Program of Ben-Gurion University, and in 2006 will be a visiting poet at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. *The Stranger and Everyday Woman* and *The Mountain Mother is Gone* are her first two collections; a third volume of poetry, *Subjects of the Sun*, is forthcoming. She has represented Israel at poetry festivals in Macedonia and Rotterdam. In 2003 Ms. Hass' contributions to Israeli life and letters were honored with the Prime Minister of Israel Award for Writers.

Kristien HEMMERECHE (novelist, editor; b. 1955, Belgium) lives in Antwerp. She is a part-time lecturer of English literature at the Catholic University of Brussels and a writer of novels and short stories. She also reviews contemporary English language fiction for Dutch and Flemish newspapers. Her most recent novel, *The True Story of Clara and Victor Rooze*, was published to coincide with her fiftieth birthday.

Ameena HUSSEIN (editor, publisher, fiction and non-fiction writer; b. 1964, Sri Lanka), a consultant for several international human rights NGOs, has published two short-story collections, *Zillij* and *Fifteen*. In 2003 she co-founded the Perera-Hussein Publishing House (<http://www.ph-books.com>) to present emerging and established Sri Lankan writers. She edits *Netbra*, a journal published by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, which addresses issues of violence, governance, and development.

JUNG Young-Moon (novelist, fiction writer, translator; b. 1965, South Korea) has translated more than forty English titles into Korean, including Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, Lee Chang-Rae's *Aloft*, Nicholson Baker's *Fermata*, and Germaine Greer's *The Boy*. After publishing his novel *A Man who Barely Exists* (1997) and the collection *Black Chain Stories* (1998) he received the Dongseo Literary Award in 1999. In the last five years, he has published four more collections of stories, a novella, and two novels, and taught creative writing at Korea's Seongsin University.

Yvonne A. OWOUR, from "The Knife Grinder's Tale"

[...]

Because of DJ Otieno, "*My son with an occupason in Nairobi city*", Ogwang owned the first cell phone in Nyabondo. After DJ gave it him, the village, including those who would have preferred not to know, endured daily public demonstrations of the cell phone's marvels performed by Ogwang, in-between his knife-grinding work. The finale, when he had credit, was calling DJ. Ogwang's cell phone operated at maximum volume. He altered its ring tones daily. Eventually, disdainful clansmen mouthed any one of Ogwang's stock phrases when a phone rang.

"DJ *my son in Nairobi...my mobile is expensif but I'm affording.*"

"*Am I phoning you or are you phoning me?*"

"*Gi ngur.*" They growl. He confided to his son, cackling, his saliva sprinkling passer-by.

"*But do I say?*"

Ogwang adjusted his tie and twisted his moustache. Ogwang's chubby face sat incongruously on his lanky frame. His slightly protuberant eyes glittered with eternal inquisitiveness. He moved quickly, gesticulated wildly and chortled at everything.

Ogwang lowered his voice and settled into a conversation that was his and DJ's alone.

"*Nyabul oyeng mathoche tindo...*"

An odd contentment song had poured out of his heart when he held DJ, then a small, slimy-from-the-ordeal-of-birth creature. The song had become their talisman, shattering silences distance wrought; always an invitation to laugh.

"My-outside-eyes, my-medicine-man". Ogwang intoned. Sometimes, DJ cried because the city had broken him again. Ogwang his voice carrying laughter-disguising-fear, said;

"*Babu...*your baba is as constant as a *sap star*. Come home. We *sall* carry out our enterprise together."

Another night DJ called his father to tell him about Mama Lucy, a woman he had met in Kawangware. She had a fish shop—pronounced *fis sop* where *obabmbila*, *fulu*, *fuani*, *nyar mami*, *mbuta*... fish bounty of Lake Victoria could be eaten. "Baba... I'm thinking ... she's like...Arosi?"

[...]

Manju KANCHULI (poet, translator, fiction writer; b. 1951, Nepal), lecturer in English and psychology at the Lalit Multiple Campus, is also a clinical therapist and counselor for trafficked women, and the author of *Kebi Maya, Kebi Paridi* ('Some Love, Some Limits') and *Manju Kanchulika Katha* ('Stories by Manju Kanchuli'), alongside other volumes of short stories. The poems in her collections *Two Sisters, My Life My World*, and *Inside & Outside Eyelids* bypass the traditional modes in their layered readings simultaneously of men's exploitative power and of women's thwarted desire.

KIM Ji-woon (playwright, screenwriter; b. 1964, South Korea) is one of the most prominent directors of the so-called Korean Post-New Wave. He began his career as a stage actor and director, with *Hot Sea* (1994) and *Movie Movie* (1995). His move to screenwriting brought quick success: in 1997 his screenplays *Wonderful Seasons* and *The Quiet Family* both won first prizes at festivals. *The Quiet Family*, Kim's directorial debut, also won top honors at the Portugal Fantasporto Film Festival and was an official selection at the Berlin International Film Festival. His next movie, *The Foul King*, which he wrote and directed, rose to become the number-one movie in Korea for six months—sealing his reputation as one of his country's leading directors.

Zahiye KUNDUS (translator, fiction writer; b. 1980, Israel/Palestine) received her B.A. in history and comparative literature at Hebrew University this year. She works for an Israeli-Palestinian NGO, Windows, whose educational and cultural programs aim to promote understanding and reconciliation between the people from both nations. She is a translator for Windows' bi-lingual youth magazine, and contributes articles to the book supplement of *Ha'aretz* newspaper and the literary journal *Ma'ayan*. She is writing a novel about life in Jaffa.

LIU Heng (fiction writer, novelist; b. 1954, China). Mr. Liu's work exposes society's bleak side in the fashion of the great writers of the realist tradition. His works are mostly novella-length, the best known of which, *Fuxi Fuxi* (1987) was adapted into the motion picture *Ju Dou*. Three novellas were published in English in the volume *The Obsessed* (Beijing, 1991). His novel, *Hei de xue* was translated into English as *Black Snow* (Atlantic Press, 1993), and made into an eponymous feature film; *Green River Daydreams* was published by Grove in 2001. His latest work, adapted for television, is a long novel titled *Pinzui zhang damin de xingfu shenghuo* ('The Happy Life of Chatter-box Zhang Damin').

MA Thida (fiction writer, physician, activist; b. 1966, Burma) was in medical school when Burma's military junta shut down the universities. She then served as a health care provider as well as an editor for the non-violent National League for Democracy. Her many short stories containing disguised criticism of the Burmese government led to six years in solitary confinement, without access to reading or writing materials. In 1999 she was pardoned and released on humanitarian grounds. She is now the editor of a youth magazine as well as a surgeon at the Muslim Free Hospital, which treats patients at no cost.

John MATEER (poet, art critic; b. 1971, South Africa; r. Australia) has published five collections of poetry. He has won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry in 2001, and the Centenary Medal for his contributions to Australian literature. His most recent book of poems, *The Ancient Capital of Images*, details his experiences living in South Africa, Australia, and Japan. In 2004 he also published *Semar's Cave: An Indonesian Journal*, a travel

account from Sumatra and Java, and contributes regularly essays and articles on contemporary art to *Art Monthly Australia*.

Laila NEIHOUM (journalist, poet, editor, translator; b. 1961, Libya) contributes to many of Libya's publications, including *Albait* (which she directs) and the magazines *Almoutamer*, *Almajal*, and *Four Seasons*. She oversees the *Kol El Fenoun* newspaper and writes a weekly column on English-language authors for the daily *Al Jamahiriya*. Ms. Neihoum has put together a collection of poems by young Libyans, *Teseneon* ('Poets from the 1990s'), and a collection of global short stories, *Ofoq min lazaward* ('Azure Horizons').

Kiwao NOMURA (poet; b. 1951, Japan), a graduate of Waseda University, has published ten books of poetry, most notably *Under the Sun without Character*, which received the Rekitei Prize; *Distribution of the Wind*, which won the Takami Jun Prize; and *New Inspiration*, which earned the Gendaishi-Hanatsubaki Prize. Known for his critical work, his performances and his translations, Mr. Nomura is among the most creative Japanese poets working today.

Yvonne Adhiambo OWOUR (fiction writer, playwright; b. 1968, Kenya; r. Tanzania) won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2003 for "Weight of Whispers," a story told from the perspective of a Rwandan fleeing after the 1994 massacres. She has written several screenplays, such as *Kit Luanda*, *Shadows of Silence*, and *Bokor's Drum*; her short stories include "My Mother, My Muse" and "The State of Tides." She serves as the executive director of the Zanzibar International Film Festival, a non-profit organization that showcases Indian Ocean arts and culture through the ZIFF Festival of the Dhow Countries.

Zoltán PÉK (fiction writer, translator; b. 1971, Hungary) received an M.A. in English from Eötvös Loránd University, where he now teaches courses on the English novel and the theory of literary translation. While working as a jazz musician, Mr. Pék wrote short stories for such Hungarian publications as *Holmi*, *Liget*, *Magyar Napló*, *Jelenkor*, and *Újforrás*. He has published two collections, *Barátok és egyéb utánfutók* ('Friends and Other Accessories') and *Elbújik a fénybe* ('Hiding in the Light'); his more than thirty translated titles from the English include Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Big Country* and Paul Auster's *Oracle Night*.

Mona PRINCE (novelist, fiction writer, essayist; b. 1970, Egypt) earned a Ph.D. in English Literature from Ain Shams University, Cairo. She has served as a lecturer in English literature at Suez Canal University, and as a language instructor at Cairo University. In 1995, Ms. Prince traveled to the TESOL Institute at St. Michael College in Vermont, courtesy of a Fulbright Scholarship. Her work includes two selections of short stories, *Shortsightedness* and *The Last Piece of Clay*, and the novel *Three Suitcases for Traveling*. She has published essays on writing in Egyptian and other Arab newspapers and literary magazines. She is at work on a new novel.

Uriel QUESADA (fiction writer; b.1962, Costa Rica; r. USA) is an assistant professor of Spanish at Loyola University in New Orleans. His scholarly work spans several fields including Central American and Caribbean literatures, cultural studies, popular culture, and gay and lesbian studies. His previous publications are the novella "Si trina la canaria" (1999) and four short story collections entitled *Ese día de los temblores* (1985), *El atardecer de los niños* (1990), *Larga vida al deseo* (1996), and *Lejos, tan lejos* (2004) for which he received the 2005

Ancora national award in Costa Rica. His novel *El gato de sí mismo* came out in November 2005. Quesada is currently completing a book on Central American detective fiction.

Mani RAO (poet, b. 1965, India; r. Hong Kong) worked in the commercial creative field for twenty years, during which she published six books of poems: *Echolocation*, *Salt*, *The Last Beach*, *Living Shadows*, *Catapult Season*, and *Wingspan*. Her work has been translated into French, German, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean, and she has performed at international literary festivals. Rao has co-edited an anthology of poetry and co-founded a poetry reading series. She presents a radio program about poetry on RTHK and does occasional reviews and interviews. Some of her performance work can be seen at www.manirao.net

Anna ROGOZHNIKOVA (editor, fiction writer; b.1979, Kazakhstan) is the IWP's first writer from Kazakhstan. She studied Russian philology at Almaty State University and English philology at the Kazakh State University of Foreign Languages. She is an editor at *Cosmo Kazakhstan* magazine, and contributes short stories to *Apolinary* magazine.

Edi SHUKRIU (poet, playwright, professor, politician; b.1950, Kosova), one of the first Kosovar women to publish poetry in the Albanian language, teaches archeology and ancient history at the University of Pristina. Her literary work includes seven books of poetry, among them *Eternity* and *Night's Eye*, and the plays *The Return of Eurydice* and *Little Red Riding Hood from the Hood*. She has served in the Kosovar Parliament, as a diplomat in the Foreign Ministry, and as a member of the presidency of the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK); she established the region's first women's democratic organization, the Women's Forum, and co-founded the Democratic Alternative of Kosova.

Nihad SIREES (novelist and screenwriter; b. Syria) is a civil engineer who lives in Aleppo. His novels include *Cancer*, *The North Winds*, *A Case of Passion*, and *Noise and Silence*. Of his many television dramas the most widely acclaimed, *Silk Market*, set in Aleppo during the political turmoil of the 1950s, was shown throughout the Middle East, in Germany, and in Australia. His latest series, *Al Khait Al Abiadh* ('The First Gleam of Dawn'), provides a frank depiction of the country's government-controlled media. Many Arab-speaking stations aired the series in 2004, generating praise for its boldness and controversy. He is at work on a thirty-episode series about the early life of the Lebanese-born artist and poet Kahlil Gibran. His website is < www.syriagate.com/nihadsirees/about >

Sandra SODHY (playwright, producer, publicist; b.1957, Malaysia) is a founding member of Malaysia's foremost political satire troupe, the Instant Café Theater Company. She has performed in many productions for stage, in television, and in films. She is also a promoter of commercial and charity stage productions, and a speech and English teacher. Currently, Ms. Sodhy is the executive director of a musical she wrote to raise money for two homes for special children.

Marjan STROJAN (translator, poet, journalist, film critic; b.1949, Slovenia). In translating such works as *Beowulf* and *The Canterbury Tales*, and the complete works of Robert Frost, Mr. Strojan has brought to Slovenian audiences an array of canonic works of English-language literature. His version of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, published in 2004, has been turned into a twenty-five-episode radio play and adapted for stage. He recently edited and co-translated Slovenia's first comprehensive anthology of English poetry, and is the author of four poetry

collections, including *Streamers in the Rain* (1999) and *The Day You Love Me* (2003). He is the literary officer for RTV Slovenia.

K.V. TIRUMALESH (linguist, poet; b. 1940, India) is a distinguished professor of linguistics at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages in Hyderabad. His many published essays deal with topics in linguistics, literary theory, translation, and the teaching of English. Also a well-known Kannada poet, he has published several collections of poetry and translated the works of poets such as Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens into Kannada.

Antonio UNGAR (novelist, fiction writer, journalist, translator; b. 1974, Colombia). His collections of short stories, *Trece Circos Comunes* ('Thirteen Common Circuses'), *De Ciertos Animales Tristes* ('Of Certain Sad Animals'), and *Las Mejores Familias* ('The Best Families') are ranked among the most innovative pieces of Colombian literature in recent decades. In *Zanaborias Voladoras* ('Flying Carrots') he breaks from folkloric tradition and offers an honest account of his country's political scene. He is also the co-author of a non-fiction book titled *Contar Cuentos a los Niños* ('Telling Stories to the Children'), and writes for magazines such as *Escala*, *Sobo*, and *Gatopardo*.

Ayu UTAMI (novelist, editor; b. 1968, Indonesia). A co-founder of the union of freelance journalists, she was banned from writing in 1994, succeeding nonetheless in completing a black book on corruption in the Suharto regime. Her debut novel *Saman* (1998) treats freely love and sexuality, and addresses the difficult relationship between Muslims, Christians, and the Chinese minority. It received the prize for the best Indonesian novel in 1998, with a companion novel *Larung* coming out in 2001. Both have been published in Dutch. Since 1998 Utami has been a radio host and co-publisher of the cultural magazine *Kalam*.

Wendy Ella WRIGHT (poet, novelist, translator; b. 1961, Australia) lived in Japan for sixteen years, which inspired her novel *The Air of Tokyo* (2002). She received a B.A. in Comparative Culture from Sophia University in Tokyo, and is a Ph.D. candidate in creative writing at the University of Adelaide. The *Tokyo Journal* published her first poem in 1985. Her prose, poetry and translations of Japanese literature have appeared, often in her own performances, on the Australian Broadcasting Commission's "Poetica" Program, Writer's Radio 5UV, and SBS Japanese Radio.

YIM Phil-sung (screenwriter, director; b. South Korea) is -known for his distinctive short films *Souvenir* (1997), *Baby* (1998) and *So Nyeon Gi* (1999, *Brushing*), all shown at the Clermont-Ferrand, Chicago, and Venice international film festivals. After completing the short *Mobil* (2004, part of the omnibus feature *Show Me*), presented at Puchon Fantastic Film Festival, he embarked on his first full-length feature *Antarctic Journal*, based on his eponymous novel and starring Song Gang-Ho. This mystery thriller, revolving around a Korean expedition to the continent, was released this summer in Korea and Japan.

YOO Jae-Hyun (fiction writer, columnist; b. 1962, South Korea) studied electronic engineering at Ajou University, then devoted himself to Korea's labor movement, serving as chief editor for two national unions' publications. He made his literary debut in 1992 with "Rolling Stones" in the Korean magazine *Creation & Criticism*, and several stories followed. After a ten-year hiatus, he returned to writing with a novel, *Sibanoukville Stories*, and two long

essays, “The Sad Shadow of Mekong: Indochina” and “SweetTropics.” He contributes articles, columns, and serializations to various magazines.

Kyoko YOSHIDA (fiction and non-fiction writer, translator; b.1969, Japan) earned a Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The title story of her dissertation, “Kyoto Panorama Project,” was published in *The Massachusetts Review*. Other publications in American journals include “Chick Sexing School,” “Movie Dog,” and “Between the Imperial Garden and Temple Street.” She lectures on topics in American literature, and is currently Assistant Professor of English at Keio University in Tokyo.

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Samples from all the writers' work can be found at < www.uiowa.edu/~iwp/WRITERS >



Mani Rao at the 'Poets Against the War' Reading.

2005 Residency Activities by Individual Writer

Nadia ABDULJABBAR (poet—Saudi Arabia)

Reading, Shambaugh House

Panel, “Islam and We,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Lost and Found in Translation,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Presentation/Reading, “Women and Islam,” Kirkwood Community College

Presentation/Reading, “Women in the Middle East,” Iowa City Foreign Relations Council

Reading, U.S. Bank Reception

Presentation, Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids, IA

Estabraq AHMAD (pen name of Estabraq Alfaraj; poet, fiction writer—Kuwait)

Panel, “The Best Thing I Ever Read Was...,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Shambaugh House

Presentation/Reading, “Women in the Middle East,” Iowa City Foreign Relations Council

Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

CHI Zijian (fiction writer, novelist, essayist—China)

Panel, “Imagination/Fantasy/Reality,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Shambaugh House

Lidija DIMKOVSKA (poet, novelist, essayist, translator—Macedonia)

Panel, “Why I Write What I Write and How I Write It,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Presentation, Iowa Writers Learning Community

Reading, Prairie Lights Books

Discussion of the film *Before the Rain*, IWP Cinematheque 05

Reading, Chicago Humanities Festival

Reading, University of Buffalo

Reading, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Reading, Poet’s Club, Ugly Duckling Presse, New York

Reading and Presentation, Consulate General of Macedonia, New York

Said EL HAJI (fiction writer, novelist, editor, columnist—The Netherlands)

Panel, “Islam and We,” Drake University

Panel, “Literature of Evil,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Prairie Lights Books

Reading, Chicago Humanities Festival

Reading, Legion Arts/CSPS, Cedar Rapids, IA

Collaborative Playwriting with Lisa Di Franzia
Presentation, Des Moines Public Schools: Central Campus

Sherko FATAH (fiction writer, novelist—Germany)
Panel, “Worlds of Letters,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Islam and We,” Drake University
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Van Cam HAI (poet, fiction and nonfiction writer—Vietnam)
Panel, “Imagination/Fantasy/Reality,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Shambaugh House
Reading, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Josef HASLINGER (novelist and nonfiction writer—Austria)
Panel, “Islam and We,” Drake University
Panel, “Imagination/Fantasy/Reality,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Discussion of the film *Opernball*, IWP Cinemath’que 05
Presentation/Reading, UI Senior College
Presentation, Iowa Writers Learning Community
Reading, U.S. Bank Reception
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Sharron HASS (poet, essayist, editor—Israel)
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Presentation/Reading, “Women in the Middle East,” Iowa City Foreign Relations Council

Kristien HEMMERECHTS (novelist, editor—Belgium)
Panel, “Worlds of Letters,” Iowa City Public Library
Reading, Shambaugh House

Ameena HUSSEIN (editor, publisher, fiction and non-fiction writer—Sri Lanka)
Panel, “Islam and We,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Why I Write What I Write and How I Write It,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Staged Reading at “Global Express”
Reading, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.
Reading, Chicago Humanities Festival

Presentation, Senior College, Iowa City
Reading and Presentation, UI International Thursdays Series
Presentation/Reading, Iowa City Foreign Relations Council
Presentation, University of St. Louis, Center for International Studies
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

JUNG Young-Moon (novelist, fiction writer, translator—South Korea)
Panel, “Writing for Two and Three Dimensions,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Shambaugh House
Collaborative Playwriting with Lisa Di Franzia

Manju KANCHULI (poet, translator, fiction writer—Nepal)
Panel, “Books, Men and Women,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Presentation/Reading, Elizabeth Tate High School
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

KIM Ji-Woon (playwright, screenwriter—South Korea)
Presentation, International Literature Today
Screenings and Discussion, KOLORS Film Festival

Zahiye KUNDUS (translator, fiction writer—Palestine/Israel)
Panel, “Islam and We,” Drake University
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Shambaugh House
Presentation/Reading, “Women in the Middle East,” Iowa City Foreign Relations Council
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

LIU Heng (fiction writer, novelist—China)
Panel, “Writing for Two and Three Dimensions,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Screening and Discussion *Ju Dou*, Drake University
Reading, Shambaugh House

MA Thida (fiction writer, physician, activist—Burma)
Panel, “Worlds of Letters,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Discussion, WSUI Radio Show, “Talk of Iowa”
Meeting with Physicians for Social Responsibility
Presentation/Reading, Harvest Writers, Elizabeth Tate High School
Presentation, “A Story from Burma,” Iowa City Foreign Relations Council
Presentation/Reading, Kirkwood Community College

Presentation, UI International Thursdays Series
Discussion with UI Department of Women's Studies
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

John MATEER (poet, art critic—Australia)
Panel, "Literature of Evil," Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Reading, Poets Against the War, Shambaugh Auditorium
Discussion, WSUI Radio Show, "Talk of Iowa"
Reading, Chicago Humanities Festival
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Laila NEIHOUM (journalist, poet, editor, translator—Libya)
Panel, "Imagination/Fantasy/Reality," Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Shambaugh House
Reading, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.
Group Discussion with UI Faculty, "African Literature"
Reading, UI English Department
Collaborative Playwriting with Lisa Di Franzia

Kiwao NOMURA (poet—Japan)
Panel, "The Best Thing I Ever Read Was...", Iowa City Public Library
Panel, "Images of America," Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Shambaugh House
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Yvonne Adhiambo OWOUR (fiction writer, playwright—Kenya)
Panel, "Islam and We," Drake University
Panel, "Literature of Evil," Iowa City Public Library
Panel, "Images of America," Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Staged Reading at "Global Express"
Discussion of the film *Heart of a Lioness*, IWP Cinematheque 05
Reading, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.
Presentation, Elizabeth Tate High School
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Zoltán PÉK (fiction writer, translator—Hungary)

Panel, “Lost—and Found—in Translation,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Prairie Lights Books

Presentation, “American Genres in the Popular Music of Socialist and Post-Socialist Hungary,” with Gyorgy Toth, American Studies Friday Lecture

Reading and Presentation, “Slavic Writers,” Kirkwood Community College

Presentation, UI School of Music, Ethnomusicology

Mona PRINCE (novelist, fiction writer, essayist—Egypt)

Reading, Shambaugh House

Discussion, WSUI Radio Show, “Talk of Iowa”

Uriel QUESADA (fiction writer—Costa Rica/USA)

Panel, “Why I Write What I Write and How I Write It,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Legion Arts/CSPS, Cedar Rapids, IA

Presentation, Iowa Writers Learning Community

Mani RAO (poet—India/Hong Kong)

Panel, “Worlds of Letters,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Prairie Lights Books

Reading, Poets Against the War, Shambaugh Auditorium

Reading, Chicago Humanities Festival

Reading, U.S. Bank Reception

Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Anna ROGOZHNIKOVA (editor, fiction writer—Kazakhstan)

Panel, “Books, Men and Women,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Shambaugh House

Presentation, “Slavic Writers,” Kirkwood Community College

Collaborative Playwriting with Lisa Di Franzia

Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Edi SHUKRIU (poet, playwright—Kosova)

Panel, “Books, Men and Women,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Staged Reading at “Global Express”

Discussion of the film *Kosova 9/11*, IWP Cinematheque 05

Reading, Shambaugh House

Presentation/Reading, Elizabeth Tate High School

Collaborative Playwriting with Lisa Di Franzia
Presentation/Reading, “Slavic Writers,” Kirkwood Community College
Presentation, Longfellow Elementary School
Presentation/Reading, Senior College, Iowa City
Presentation, “Kosova’s Archeological Heritage and Most Recent Discoveries,”
 UI Department of Anthropology
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Nihad SIREES (novelist and screenwriter—Syria)
Panel, “Islam and We,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Writing for Two and Three Dimensions,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Staged Reading at “Global Express”
Reading, Shambaugh House
Reading, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.
Collaborative Playwriting with Lisa Di Franzia
Reading, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, IA

Sandra SODHY (playwright, producer—Malaysia)
Panel, “Why I Write What I Write and How I Write It,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Discussion of the film *Sepet*, IWP Cinematheque 05
Staged Reading at “Global Express”
Reading, Shambaugh House
Presentation/Reading, Elizabeth Tate High School
Reading, Legion Arts/CSPS, Cedar Rapids, IA
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Marjan STROJAN (translator, poet, journalist, film critic—Slovenia)
Panel, “Lost—and Found—in Translation,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Staged Reading at “Global Express”
Presentation/Reading, “Slavic Writers,” Kirkwood Community College
Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

K.V. TIRUMALESH (linguist, poet—India)
Panel, “The Best Thing I Ever Read Was...,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, “Translating With the Ear of the Other: the Case of *Samskara*,”
 Lost and Found in Translation Series, Shambaugh House

Antonio UNGAR (novelist, fiction writer, journalist, translator—Colombia)
Panel, “Literature of Evil,” Iowa City Public Library
Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library
Presentation, International Literature Today
Reading, Prairie Lights Books
Reading, UI Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy

Ayu UTAMI (writer, editor—Indonesia)

Panel, “Why I Write What I Write and How I Write It,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Shambaugh House

Wendy Ella WRIGHT (poet, novelist, translator—Australia)

Panel, “Lost—and Found—in Translation,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Prairie Lights Books

YIM Phil-Sung (screenwriter, director—South Korea)

Panel, “Writing for Two and Three Dimensions,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Screenings and Discussion, KOLORS Film Festival

YOO Jae-Hyun (fiction writer, columnist—South Korea)

Panel, “Islam and We,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Shambaugh House

Kyoko YOSHIDA (fiction and nonfiction writer, translator—Japan)

Panel, “Imagination/Fantasy/Reality,” Iowa City Public Library

Panel, “Images of America,” Iowa City Public Library

Presentation, International Literature Today

Reading, Prairie Lights Books

Staged Reading at “Global Express”

Reading, Chicago Humanities Festival

Presentation, Des Moines Central Academy



Chi Zijian shows her local spirit with a Hawkeyes cap.

Sherko FATAH, “Islam and We”

[...]

There is one point I would like to draw attention to: watching the pictures of 9/11, it occurred to me that those who did this had realized the tremendous importance of media pictures. Each of them from a middle-class background, I would call them something like MTV-Muslims. Influenced and to some extent educated by the so-called first world, they responded to the problem I've mentioned in the beginning, the gradual loss of their roots, in the most aggressive way. Maybe the main achievement of their ideological leaders was the creation of a new unifying concept of Islam which conceals all the other aspects of this religion and culture. For young people all over the world, whether they are wealthy or underprivileged, it provides a way to become part of a movement.

Though Islam may seem to be resistant, in my opinion what we are seeing is a cultural transformation. In Iraq, for instance, one of the problems after the fall of the dictatorship has become the internet. All over the country new technologies (also cable and satellite TV) are now available. But the older generation is deeply concerned about the torrent of all kinds of pictures they have to face now. This beginning of a new time means a break between them and later generations. And somehow it turns out to be similar to the slowly ongoing process in other parts of the world.

[...]