

Bringing the world's voices together

International Writing Program • 2014 Annual Report



THE UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA

iwp International
Writing Program



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Letter from the Director

The International Writing Program (IWP) is always seeking to bring together voices—and the individualities they embody—in fresh ways. In the pages to follow, you will see innovations to our camp for young writers, *Between the Lines*, as well as to our flagship program, the *Fall Residency*; our theater exchange, *Book Wings*, expanded to include the University of Baghdad; and our *Overseas Reading Tours*, in exciting new ways, introduced American writers and artists to their counterparts in Cuba, Haiti, the United Arab Emirates, China, Armenia, and Turkey. Proud as we are of these ongoing and well-established programs, I want especially to draw your attention to—and tell you a bit more about—three groundbreaking initiatives: an unfolding series of Massive Online Open-Enrollment Courses (MOOCs), a brand-new Silk Routes project, and a comprehensive Media Gallery.

A year ago, we were celebrating the success of a year-long effort to bring online all fifty-two parts of Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," in multiple translations, with scholarly prefaces, poetic afterwords, and audio renditions. And even as we approached those final lines, "Missing me one place search another,/ I stop somewhere waiting for you," we were creating a new "place" where the world could discover Whitman, a six-week course in early spring open to anyone with an internet connection. "Every Atom: Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself'" attracted over 2400 students, performed (compared to the average retention rates of currently available MOOCs) disproportionately well, and set the IWP on track for developing other MOOCs. In the summer, we offered "How Writers Write Poetry," featuring video lectures by leading American poets; and in the fall, we followed with "How Writers Write Fiction," in a matching format, which enjoyed an amazing enrollment

of 9000 students. These successes have encouraged us to continue, and several more MOOCs are on the way in 2015. We also began an ambitious three-year voyage called *Silk Routes: Heritage, Trade, Practice*, which will build links, both within countries and multi-nationally, between younger writers in South and Central Asia. In 2014, a symposium in the Maldives brought together some of the regions' leading writers and arts entrepreneurs to brainstorm in-country and cross-border projects based around literature and creative writing. These projects, which will run through 2015, range from a short-story competition in Afghanistan to recording folk narratives along the Nepalese sections of the historical Silk Road. Meanwhile, we are assembling an online creative writing resource and updating a dynamic new website featuring new works and videos from writers stretching from as far west as Turkey and as far east as Hong Kong. Year Three of the project is equally exciting, but we'll leave that news for the future.

Finally, I'm excited to announce that we have pooled all of our videos and films into a single, easy-to-navigate gallery. Film and video have been an integral part of our programming for the last ten years, creating a record of each event's unique conversations and international perspectives. Here are dozens of interviews with writers from our *Fall Residency* and with students at *Between the Lines*; full recordings of the *Book Wings* performances; and documentary films on our *Overseas Symposia* and *Reading Tours*, on the 2014 *Fall Residency*, on Paul and Hualing Engle—and much, much more. The IWP archives continue to grow with the writings that are at the heart of literary exchange, but these films and videos offer viewers a refreshing new angle on the featured authors' works and on the spirit of connection that brings our participants together.

In short, even as the IWP tries to bring the world's writers closer together, we want everyone to be a part of the story, and not just through social media. This report is just a taste—I encourage you to [visit our website](#) and peruse the many pieces of great writing from our *Fall Residency* writers, or explore our [Media Gallery](#), or follow the new work appearing through the *Silk Routes* project, or consider [signing up](#) for one of the MOOCs we offer in 2015. Connecting with the IWP has never been easier, and I think you'll be amazed at the range of interesting projects and the voluminous resources we've marshalled for the public's use. ■



— Christopher Merrill
Director, IWP



The 47th annual *Fall Residency* brought together in Iowa City 29 writers from 29 countries— poets, fiction and nonfiction writers, and playwrights—to write, research, and translate new work in a like-minded community, to show their talents, to share with each other the literary possibilities incubating in traditions around the globe, and most of all to connect.

The pages that follow should give a sense of the enormous number of connections that stemmed from the writers' time in Iowa City and during travels around Iowa, and beyond, to Chicago, San Francisco, New Orleans, Washington, D.C. and New York. In addition to writing collections of poetry, short stories, novellas, and novels, as well as plays, newspaper columns, and magazine pieces, the writers participated in scores of readings, programs, and events, many of which were designed to promote collaboration with other artists, and to introduce them to the diversity of American cultures.

In the service of bringing the writers and the public closer together, the IWP gives one writer a Community Engagement and Outreach Fellowship. This year, Romanian poet Andra Rotaru embarked on two projects: *All Together*, a documentary of the 2014 *Fall Residency* was filmed and produced in collaboration with Iowa City writer Raj Chakrapani; and a photo-letter project, created with the help of numerous IWP writers and UI student Jared Krauss, will bring literature and photography to the post boxes of dozens of Iowa City residents.

The writers are in residence from late August until mid-November, but in some ways the 2014 *Fall Residency* has not finished: in recent months, Cuban poet Omar Pérez, invited by Taiwanese poet Chen Li, traveled to Taiwan's International

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"To me, the IWP reminded me that to write well, one needs to dive very, very deeply into oneself. And that to do so, a sheltering environment is called for, not one that is constantly instable, brutal and wild (read, Israel)."

— Boaz Gaon, Israel

Poetry Festival. Poets Ali Cobby Eckermann (Aboriginal from Australia) and Yeow Kai Chai (Singapore) reconvened in Jaipur, India for the Jaipur Literary Festival. Poets Daren Kamali (New Zealand), Mujib Mehrdad (Afghanistan), and Anja Utler (Germany) have shared their work with audiences in Baghdad, courtesy of the Flying Carpet Project, organized by poet Sadek Mohammed (Iraq). Meanwhile, mutual translations are in progress—from Spanish to Setswana, from Dutch to Afrikaans, from Spanish to Chinese, from German to Lithuanian, and from Lithuanian to Arabic. And this new community of writers is also collaborating to create two anthologies, one focused on the theme of identity, and one a collection of writing from present and past IWP Myanmar/Burmese writers. We're sure it's only the beginning. ■

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"After I invent a time machine, first thing I'll do is go back to the period of my residency in Iowa. That is the best moment in my life."

— Myay Hmone Lwin,
Burma/Myanmar

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

8/23	Writers arrive in Iowa City
8/24	Iowa City walking tour
8/24	President's Block Party
8/25	IWP Orientation
8/25	International Literature Today begins
8/25	IWP Opening Party
8/26	IWP Cinematheque: <i>What's Eating Gilbert Grape?</i>
8/29	International Translation Workshop
8/29	IWP / MFA mixer
8/31	Prairie Lights Reading Series begins: Andra Rotaru and Ahmed Shafie
8/31	Anthology Reading Series
9/1	Labor Day field trip to Lake Macbride and Wilson's Orchard
9/2	IWP Cinematheque: <i>Life Show</i>
9/3	Text and Context: The Iowa Model
9/4	67th Annual Tri-State Rodeo
9/5	International Translation Workshop
9/5	Shambaugh House Reading Series: Enrique Serrano and Natasha Tiniacos
9/6	Barbeque & Open Mic
9/7	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Omar Pérez and Laurynas Katkus
9/8-9/18	Franca Treur attends film release in Holland
9/8	International Literature Today
9/9	IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
9/9	IWP Cinematheque: <i>Opium War</i>
9/11	Visit to Meskwaki Settlement
9/12	Text and Context: Translation and Publishing
9/12	International Translation Workshop
9/12	Shambaugh House Reading Series: Chi Li and Tang Siu Wa
9/13	Cooking Session & Potluck on Lake Macbride
9/14	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Mujib Mehrdad and Gerður Kristný
9/15	International Literature Today
9/16	Center for the Book tour
9/16	IWP Cinematheque: <i>El estudiante</i>
9/18	Global Express
9/19	Shambaugh House Reading Series: Sadek Mohammed and Adbullah Al Wesali
9/19	International Translation Workshop
9/20	UI English Department Fall Reception
9/20	7th Annual Secrest Barn Potluck and Music Jam
9/21	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Auguste Corteau and Ali Cobby Eckermann
9/22	International Literature Today
9/23	IWP Cinematheque: <i>Semangat Insan: Masters of Tradition</i> and <i>Return to Haifa: The Other's Story</i>
9/24	Brown Bag Lunch with Ida Beam Distinguished Professor Maureen Freely
9/24	Bowling with Hoba Hoba Spirit
9/26	International Translation Workshop

9/26	Shambaugh House Reading Series: Kinana Issa and Daren Kamali
9/26	Cyborg Support Group Reading Series
9/27	Kalona Fall Festival
9/27	Center for Asian and Pacific Studies Reception
9/27	Anthology Reading Series
9/28	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Mamle Kabu and Binayak Banerjee
9/29	International Literature Today
9/30	Chinese Calligraphy Demonstration and Reading
9/30	IWP Cinematheque: <i>The Deep</i>
10/2	Visit to Iowa City Senior Center
10/2	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: World Novel Today
10/2	The Marriage of Words and Music Collaborative Performance
10/3	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: Writing in a Country at War
10/3	International Translation Workshop
10/3	Iowa City Book Festival Reception
10/4	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: Breaking In, Breaking Out
10/4	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: Writing as Recovery
10/4	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: A Sense of Place
10/4	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: Loyalty and Betrayal
10/5	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: At Language's Edge
10/5	Iowa City Book Festival Panel: Religion and Writing
10/6-10/12	Mid-Residency Travel Period: Residents Travel to either New Orleans or San Francisco
10/8	Reading at Adobe Books in San Francisco
10/8	Reading at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and Creative Writing Class
10/9	Class visit at Bard Early College, New Orleans
10/13	International Literature Today
10/13	Forms of Literary Drama class at Kirkwood Community College
10/14	Chinese translation roundtable with Steve Bradbury and Ye Mimi
10/14	Visit by Des Moines' Central Academy
10/14	IWP Cinematheque: <i>Lost in the Mountains</i> and short films by Ye Mimi
10/15	African Studies Reception
10/17	Shambaugh House Reading Series: Chen Li
10/18	Visit to the Effigy Mounds
10/19	Dinner at the home of Anna Barker
10/19	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Sabah Sanhoury and Bernice Chauly
10/20	International Literature Today
10/21	IWP Cinematheque: <i>Confetti Harvest</i>
10/23	Visit to the Iowa City Senior Center
10/23	UI Center for the Book Presentation
10/24	International Translation Workshop
10/24	Anthology Reading Series
10/24	Shambaugh House Reading Series: Myay Hmone Mokae and Heekyung Eun
10/25	Visit to the African American Museum of Iowa
10/26	Fall Harvest Party at the Dane Farm
10/26	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Sabata-mpho Mokae and Anja Utler
10/27	International Literature Today
10/28	Ali Cobby Eckermann reads at Prairie Lights Bookstore
10/28	IWP Cinematheque: <i>The Sapphires</i>
10/29	US Bank Reception for IWP and Visiting Writers
10/30	Department of Spanish and Portuguese IWP Reading at Prairie Lights Bookstore: Cynthia Edul, Omar Pérez, Natasha Tiniacos, Enrique Serrano
10/30	Visit to the Iowa City Senior Center
10/31	Shambaugh House Reading Series
10/31	International Translation Workshop
10/31	What We Saw: Images of America Panel for IWP Writers to share experience in the US
10/31	IWP and U of Iowa Dance Department Collaboration Performance
11/3	"From Away" theatre performance in Portland, Maine
11/2	Prairie Lights Reading Series: Franca Treur and Yeow Kai Chai
11/2	Fall Residency Closing Party
11/3	International Literature Today
11/6	Reading and Showcase for IWP Writers at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
11/8	Reading at Mellow Pages in New York City
11/10	Reading at Poets House in New York City
11/14	Writers depart for home

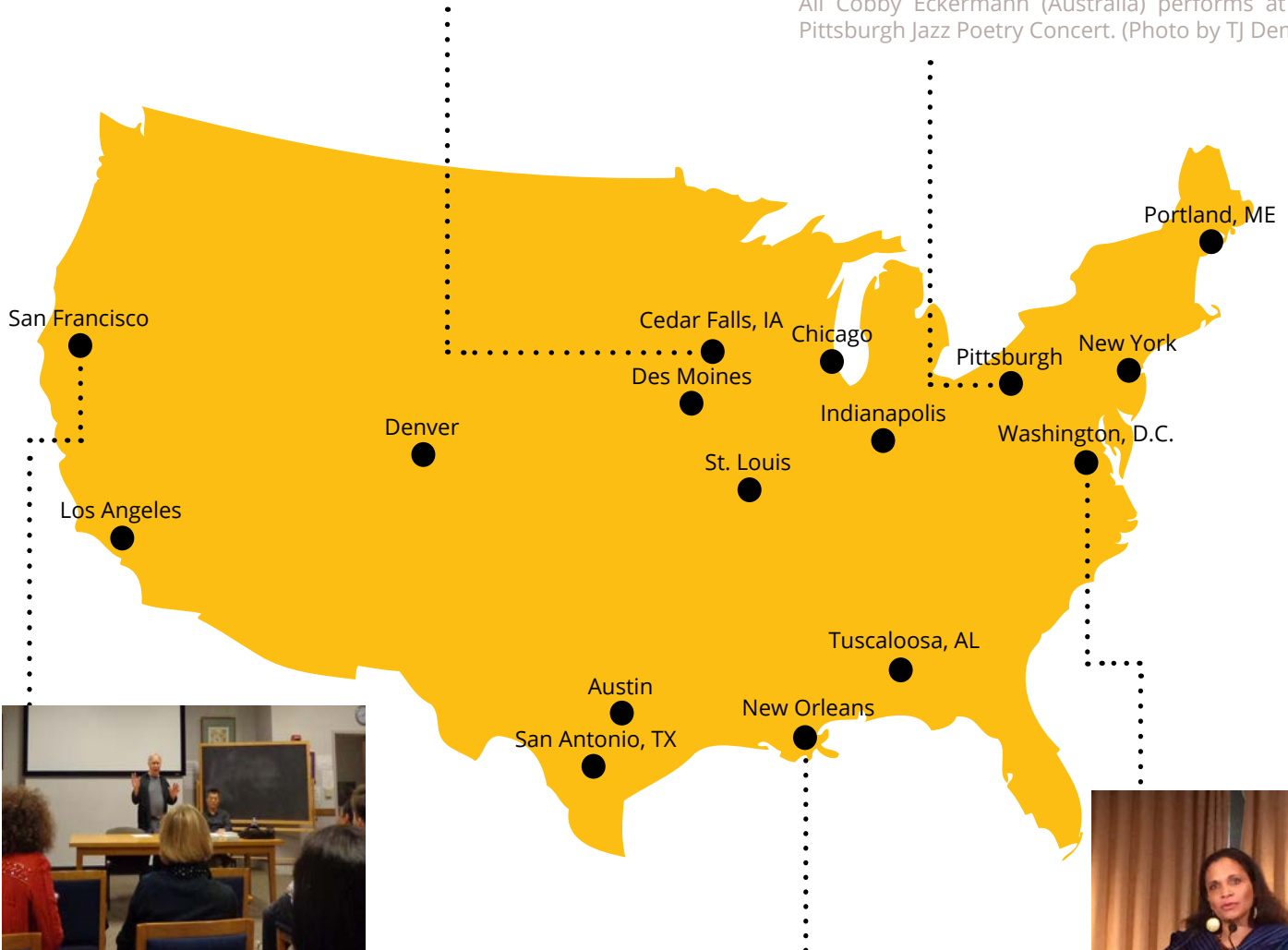
HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONWIDE OUTREACH



Enrique Serrano (Colombia) and Tang Siu Wa (Hong Kong) visit the University of Northern Iowa to give lectures in various language and culture courses.



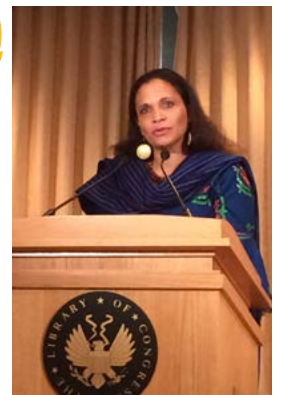
Ali Cobby Eckermann (Australia) performs at the Pittsburgh Jazz Poetry Concert. (Photo by TJ Dema)



Chen Li (Taiwan) gives a reading with American poet Robert Hass at the University of California, Berkeley.



Ahmed Shafie (Egypt), Gerður Kristný (Iceland), and Yeow Kai Chai (Singapore) teach a class on utopia to students at Bard Early College, New Orleans.



Mamle Kabu (Ghana) reads at the Library of Congress.

INDIVIDUAL RESIDENT EVENTS



ABDULLAH AL WESALI

Saudi Arabia • Fiction Writer

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
9/19 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
10/2 Class Visit, "Senior College" at Iowa City Senior Center
10/5 Panel: Religion and Writing, Iowa City Book Festival
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
10/24 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
10/30 Reading, U of Iowa Arabic Forum
11/3 Presentation, International Literature Today

Participated courtesy of the U.S. Consulate in Dhahran.



BINAYAK BANERJEE

India • Fiction Writer, Poet, Playwright

9/17-27 Reading, Harvard Business College and Ananda Mandir Hindu Temple and Cultural Center
9/28 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
10/5 Panel: Religion and Writing, Iowa City Book Festival
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period:

San Francisco
10/13 Presentation, International Literature Today
10/16 Visit to Cornell College
10/18-27 Southern Reading Tour
11/5 Company E Dance Performance, Meridian International, D.C.
11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



BERNICE CHAULY

Malaysia • Non-Fiction & Fiction Writer, Playwright, Poet, Filmmaker

9/3 Visit to Acting I class at Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
9/8 Presentation, International Literature Today
9/11 Visit, Meskwaki Settlement
9/20 Interview, On the Map Series
9/23 Cinematheque Presentation: *Semangat Insan: Masters of Tradition*
9/24 Nazareth Class
9/26 Cedar Rapids Kirkwood Acting Class
10/3 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
10/4 Panel: A Sense of Place, Iowa City Book Festival
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
10/8 Class Visit and Reading, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
10/16 The Lit Show Interview
10/19 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
10/23 Class Visit, "Senior College" at Iowa City Senior Center
10/29 Reading, US Bank Reception for IWP and Visiting Writers
11/6 Reading at State Department
11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

11/7 Reading at American University, D.C.
11/8 Reading at KGB Bar, NY
11/10 Asian American Writers Workshop meeting, NY

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



CHEN LI

Taiwan • Essayist, Poet, Translator

8/31 Reading, Anthology Reading Series
9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
9/13 Hosted for dinner by Ramon and Victoria Lim, Iowa City
9/19 Reading, Voices from the Warehouse
9/26 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
9/30 Reading for Chinese Calligraphy Demonstration
10/3 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
10/7 Class Visit and Reading at University of California, Berkeley
10/13 Presentation, International Literature Today
10/17 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
10/26-28 Reading at Trinity University
10/31 University of Iowa Dance performance
11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
11/10 Reading at Poets House in New York City

Participated courtesy of Taiwan's Ministry of Culture.



CHI LI

China • Fiction Writer

9/2 Cinematheque Presentation: *Life Show*
 9/12 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 9/27 Visit, Kalona Fall Festival
 9/30 Reading for Chinese Calligraphy Demonstration
 10/4 Panel: Loyalty and Betrayal, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/27,29,31 Distance Learning Class
 11/3 Presentation, International Literature Today

Participated courtesy of The Paul and Hualing Engle Fund.



AUGUSTE CORTEAU

Greece • Fiction Writer, Playwright, Translator

9/3 Visit to Acting I class at Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
 9/21 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 9/26 Cedar Rapids Kirkwood Acting Class
 9/27 Visit, Kalona Fall Festival
 10/4 Panel: Writing as Recovery, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/14 Central Academy class
 10/15-19 Reading, University of Texas, Austin
 10/20 Presentation, International

Literature Today
 11/6 Reading at the U.S. State Department
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
 11/8 Reading at Mellow Pages in New York City.

Participated courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Athens.



ALI COBBY ECKERMANN

Aboriginal from Australia • Poet

9/4-7 Reading, Pittsburgh Jazz/Poetry Concert
 9/11 Visit, Meskwaki Settlement
 9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
 9/17 Reading, Waterloo East High School
 9/20 Interview, On the Map Series
 9/21 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 9/24-26 Tennessee visit
 10/4 Panel: Breaking In, Breaking Out, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/14 Central Academy class
 10/16 Class Visit, "Senior College" at Iowa City Senior Center
 10/20 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/28 Reading at Prairie Lights Bookstore
 10/28 Cinematheque Presentation: *The Sapphires*
 10/29-11/4 Reading and class visits at Denver University & St. Louis University Prison Program
 11/6 State Department and Library of Congress Reading, D.C.
 11/10 Reading at Poets House in New York City

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



CYNTHIA EDUL

Argentina • Fiction Writer, Playwright

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/16 Cinematheque Presentation: *El estudiante*
 9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
 9/20 Interview, On the Map Series
 10/4 Panel: A Sense of Place, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/23 Reading, Washington Public Library
 10/24 Reading, Anthology Reading Series
 10/27 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/29 Class visit at Grinnell College
 10/30 Reading, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Reading Event
 10/31 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 11/2-4 "From Away" Portland Stage Co. performance, Maine
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



HEEKYUNG EUN

South Korea • Fiction Writer

9/17 Visit, Waterloo East High School

10/4 Panel: Writing as Recovery, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/14 Cinematheque Presentation: *Lost in the Mountains*
 10/20 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/23 Attended a Presentation at the UI Center for the Book
 10/24 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Arts Council Korea.



BOAZ GAON

Israel • Fiction Writer, Playwright

9/3 Visit to Acting I class at Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
 9/8 Presentation, International Literature Today
 9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
 9/23 Cinematheque Presentation: *Return to Haifa: The Other's Story*
 10/3 Panel: Writing in a Country at War, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/9 Respondent, "Wrestling Jerusalem," San Francisco
 10/26-27 Chicago visit: Lecture at Northwestern Law School; lecture at University of Chicago, Hillel; and lecture at University of Chicago.
 10/31 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 11/2-4 "From Away" Portland Stage Co. performance, Maine
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the United States-Israel Education Foundation.



KINANA ISSA

Syria • Fiction Writer, Playwright

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/20 Interview, On the Map Series
 9/26 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 10/4 Panel: Loyalty and Betrayal, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/13 Class Visit, Forms of Literary Drama at Kirkwood Community College
 10/27 Presentation, International Literature Today
 11/5 Company E Dance Performance, Meridian International, D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



MAMLE KABU

Ghana • Fiction Writer

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/11 Visit, Meskwaki Settlement
 9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
 9/17 Reading, Waterloo East High School
 9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
 9/20 Interview, On the Map Series
 9/28 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 9/29 Presentation, International

Literature Today
 10/2 Panel: World Novel Today, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/16 Visit to Cornell College
 10/25 Visit to the African American Museum of Iowa
 10/30 Class Visit, "Senior College" at the Iowa City Senior Center
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
 11/6 Africa Access Review event

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



DAREN KAMALI

New Zealand • Poet, Performer

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/26 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 10/2 Class Visit, "Senior College" at Iowa City Senior Center
 10/4 Panel: A Sense of Place, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/14-15 Class Visit, Buena Vista University
 10/27 Presentation, International Literature Today
 11/5 Workshop Visit, Split This Rock, D.C.

Participated courtesy of Creative New Zealand.



LAURYNAS KATKUS

Lithuania • Essayist, Fiction Writer, Poet, Translator

9/7 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/15 Presentation, International Literature Today
 9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
 9/26 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
 10/2 Panel: World Novel Today, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-16 Trip to Berlin for Literary Festival
 10/23 Visit to University of Iowa Creative Writing Seminar
 10/29 Reading, US Bank Reception for IWP and Visiting Writers
 10/30 Class Visit, "Senior College" at the Iowa City Senior Center
 11/2 Reading at Balzekus Museum, Chicago
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



GERÐUR KRISTNÝ

Iceland • Fiction Writer, Poet

9/14 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series

9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
 9/17 Visit, Waterloo East High School
 9/30 Cinematheque Presentation: *The Deep*
 10/5 Panel: Religion and Writing, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/8 Class Visit and Reading, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/13 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/16 Reading and Campus Visit, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
 10/25 Visit to the African American Museum of Iowa
 10/31 International Translation Workshop
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of The Paul and Hualing Engle Fund.



MUJIB MEHRDAD

Afghanistan • Playwright, Poet, Translator

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/9 Cinematheque Presentation: *Opium War*
 9/14 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 9/19 Reading, Voices from the Warehouse
 9/21 Interview, On the Map Series
 9/29 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/3 Panel: Writing in a Country at War, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/8 Reading, Adobe Books in San Francisco
 10/10-14 L.A. & Berkeley Visit
 10/15 Spoke at Iowa City Foreign Relations Council
 10/19-21 Class Visit, Indiana University

10/24 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



SADEK MOHAMMED

Iraq • Poet, Scholar, Translator

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/11 Visit to Collaborative Performance class at UI Dance Department
 9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
 9/19 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 9/21 Interview, On the Map Series
 9/22 Presentation, International Literature Today
 9/25-30 Visit, UNESCO Meeting in China
 10/3 Panel: Writing in a Country at War, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/14 Central Academy Class Visit
 10/31 What We Saw: Images of America
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



SABATA-MPHO MOKAE

South Africa • Fiction & Non-Fiction
Writer, Poet

9/11 Visit, Meskwaki Settlement
9/15 Presentation, International Literature Today
9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
9/17 Reading, Waterloo East High School
9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
9/21 Interview, On the Map Series
9/25-27 Class Visit, Chatham University
10/5 Panel: At Language's Edge, Iowa City Book Festival
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
10/8 Class Visit and Reading, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
10/25 Visit to the African American Museum of Iowa
10/26 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
10/31 International Translation Workshop
11/6 Africa Access Review event

Participated courtesy of the U.S. Consulate General in Cape Town.



MYAY HMONE LWIN

Burma/Myanmar • Fiction Writer, Poet, Translator

9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
9/27 Visit, Kalona Fall Festival

10/4 Panel: Breaking In, Breaking Out, Iowa City Book Festival
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
10/8 Reading, Adobe Books in San Francisco
10/24 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
10/25 Visit to the African American Museum of Iowa
10/27 Presentation, International Literature Today
11/2-4 "From Away" Portland Stage Co. performance, Maine

Participated courtesy of private funders.



OMAR PÉREZ

Cuba • Essayist, Poet, Translator

9/7 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
9/23 Drake & Des Moines Social Club reading
9/29 Presentation, International Literature Today
10/2 Collaborative Performance with UI Music Department, The Marriage of Words and Music
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
10/12 Reading in Chicago
10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
10/20-24 University of Alabama class visit
10/30 Reading, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Reading Event
10/31 University of Iowa Dance performance
11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
11/9 Reading at Loisaída, NY
11/10 Reading at Poets House in New York City

Participated courtesy of the William B. Quarton Fund through the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.



ANDRA ROTARU

Romania • Journalist, Poet

8/24 Panel, Landlocked Film Festival: Documenting Kahlo in Film and Poetry
8/31 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
9/8 Presentation, International Literature Today
9/19 Reading, Voices from the Warehouse
9/21 Interview, On the Map Series
10/4 Panel: Breaking In, Breaking Out, Iowa City Book Festival
10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
10/16 Reading and Campus Visit, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
10/23 Attended a Presentation at the UI Center for the Book
11/10 Reading at Poets House in New York City

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



SABAH SANHOURI

Sudan • Fiction Writer

9/12 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop

9/22 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/4 Panel: Writing as Recovery, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/19 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 10/21 Reading at Kirkwood Community College
 10/31 International Translation Workshop

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

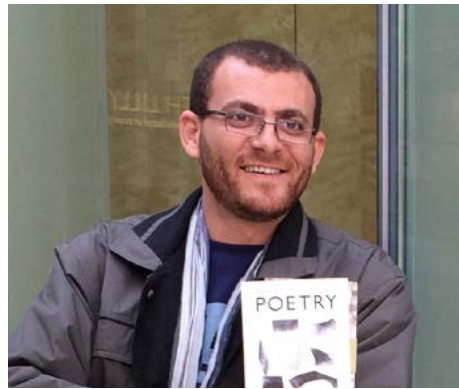


ENRIQUE SERRANO

Colombia • Fiction Writer

9/5 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 9/18 Visit, Kirkwood Community College Spanish Class
 9/19 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
 10/5 Panel: Religion and Writing, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/23 Class Visit, "Senior College" at Iowa City Senior Center
 10/29 Reading and Campus Visit, University of Northern Iowa
 10/30 Reading, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Reading Event
 11/3 Presentation, International Literature Today
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



AHMED SHAFIE

Egypt • Fiction Writer, Poet, Translator

8/31 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 9/15 Presentation, International Literature Today
 9/23 Drake & Des Moines Social Club reading
 10/3 Muslim Studies Association Visit
 10/4 Panel: Writing as Recovery, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/8 Reading and Class Visit, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/23 Attended a Presentation at the UI Center for the Book
 10/24 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
 11/8 Reading at Mellow Pages in New York City

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



TANG SIU WA

Hong Kong • Essayist, Poet

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/12 Reading, Shambaugh House

Reading Series
 9/13 Hosted for dinner by Ramon and Victoria Lim, Iowa City
 9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
 9/23 Drake & Des Moines Social Club reading
 10/4 Panel: A Sense of Place, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/20 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/29 Reading and Campus Visit, University of Northern Iowa
 10/30 Lecture on Hong Kong at Drake University, Des Moines
 11/3 University of Iowa lecture, "On the Ground and In the Air"
 11/10 Asian American Writers Workshop meeting, New York City

Participated courtesy of the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation.



NATASHA TINIAÇOS

Venezuela • Poet

9/5 Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series
 9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/19 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
 9/22 Presentation, International Literature Today
 9/27 Reading, Anthology Reading Series
 10/5 Panel: At Language's Edge, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/8 Reading, Adobe Books in San Francisco
 10/23 Attended a Presentation at the UI Center for the Book
 10/26 Attended the Fall Harvest Party at Dane Farm
 10/27 Visit to a Spanish Class at Kirkwood Community College
 10/30 Reading, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Reading Event
 11/5 Company E Dance Performance, Meridian International, D.C.

11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
 11/8 Reading at Mellow Pages in New York City

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



FRANCA TREUR

The Netherlands • Fiction Writer

9/8-18 Holland visit for release of film adaptation of her book
 9/29 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/3 Class Visit, International Translation Workshop
 10/4 Panel: Loyalty and Betrayal, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in New Orleans
 10/16 Class Visit, "Senior College" at Iowa City Senior Center
 10/21 Cinematheque Presentation: *Confetti Harvest*
 10/24 Reading, Anthology Reading Series
 10/25 Film Screening in Pella, IA
 11/2 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 11/6 Reading and Panel Showcase at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Participated courtesy of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



ANJA UTLER

Germany • Poet, Translator

8/31 Reading, Anthology Reading Series
 9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/22 Presentation, International Literature Today
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: San Francisco
 10/8 Reading, Adobe Books in San Francisco
 10/26 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 10/31 What We Saw: Images of America

Participated courtesy of the Max Kade Foundation.



YEOW KAI CHAI

Singapore • Fiction Writer, Poet

9/9 Participant, IWP-UI Dance Collaboration Workshop
 9/15 Presentation, International Literature Today
 9/16 Visit, UI Center for the Book
 9/17 Visit, Waterloo East High School
 9/18 Performance, Global Express Theater Collaboration
 9/26 Reading, Cyborg Support Group Reading Series
 10/4 Panel: Writing as Recovery, Iowa City Book Festival
 10/6-12 Mid-Residency Travel Period: New Orleans
 10/9 Class Visit, Bard Early College in

New Orleans
 10/14 Central Academy class
 10/23 Attended a Presentation at the UI Center for the Book
 10/25 Visit to the African American Museum of Iowa
 10/28 Class Visit, Peter Nazareth's English Literature
 10/28 Radio interview, by John Busbee, The Culture Buzz
 10/31 University of Iowa Dance performance
 11/2 Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series
 11/10 Reading at Poets House in New York City

Participated courtesy of the Singapore National Arts Council.

A special thanks to Thomas Langdon, who photographed many of the residents' headshots, which appear in this report. You can find his other work at www.visualsupportgroup.com/.

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"The residency has been an eye-opener – it has pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me more comfortable in public speaking. Being in a community of writers and people who love and value the power of words also solidifies my conviction that writing is a calling."

— Yeow Kai Chai, Singapore



Left: Tang Siu Wa (Hong Kong) and Bernice Chauly (Malaysia) meet with Ken Chen and Jyothi Natarajan of the Asian American Writers' Workshop.

Below: Omar Pérez (Cuba) performing with students from the UI Theatre Department at Global Express: A Night of Theatre and Writing.



Writers sharing a meal in San Francisco's China Town.



Sabata-mpho Mokae tours UI's Center for the Book.



Taiwanese writer Chen Li reads at the Shambaugh House.



Above: Gerður Kristný reads at Prairie Lights Bookstore.



3 Distance Learning

The *Distance Learning* (DL) program offers year-round web-based programming whose goal is to encourage worldwide cultural and creative exchange, especially among writers and readers in underserved communities. Delivered through live online classrooms, live and recorded videos, synchronous and asynchronous online discussions, and social media, DL programming invites writers of all levels to form new international networks for sustained dialogue and fellowship.

OPEN-APPLICATION COURSES

The IWP's open-application courses are dedicated to the theory and practice of creative writing; live online classrooms complement the guided study of selected themes and techniques within various genres. In 2014, the Advanced Nonfiction Seminar brought together writers from Lebanon, Egypt, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Germany, Singapore, Pakistan, Argentina and the United States for an extended exploration of creative nonfiction that included readings and workshopping.

Because the communities created through open-application courses carry on beyond a courses' conclusions, the IWP created a new Facebook group "Distance Learning Alumni," offering an online space for continued discussion of creative endeavors and professional opportunities.

OUTREACH COURSES

More frequent in 2014 were targeted courses developed in collaboration with international institutions. *Longing, We Say: Distance in the Literary Imagination* brought together



A map of the How Writers Write Fiction MOOC participants.

teachers in Iowa City with students and professors at the University of Kirkuk, through live video lectures and workshops, supplemented by online readings. In a series of lectures called *Here She Comes: Chi Li's Come and Go*, the acclaimed Chinese novelist Chi Li, while participating in the IWP's Fall Residency, was connected to students back in China, at Sichuan TV and Film College and at Beijing Normal University, via live videoconferencing, in lively sessions that elaborated her writing practice and the adaptation of one of her novels for film. And *Electric Bodies: An Introduction to Form and Craft*, a course for aspiring teenage writers from Moscow and Smolensk (Russia) and Des Moines, Iowa, served as a testing ground for a creative writing MOOC designed specifically for high-school students, projected to be rolled out in 2015: in response to guest video lectures, students in this class shared and critiqued one another's writing with teachers in Iowa City through live online discussion forums.

EXCHANGES

In addition to courses, the DL program facilitates collaboration through online technologies. The writers and photographers participating in *Narrative Witness: A Caracas-Sarajevo Exchange* reflected on and documented the political and economic unrest in Venezuela and Bosnia and Herzegovina, molding their experiences into creative work. There were collective online workshops, and as the exchange evolved, some participants were inspired to create new work in response to their fellow artists' contributions. Texts written in Bosnian and Spanish were translated into English and shared as parallel text to ensure inclusive discussion. The exchange's truly impressive results will be anthologized online in a new *Narrative Witness* publication in early 2015. ■



Instructors Van Choojitarom and Mary Hickman in a video class lecture for the teen writing course, *Electric Bodies*.

SPRING

"Longing, We Say: Distance in the Literary Imagination" (Kirkuk, Iraq)

"Every Atom: Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself'"

Advanced Nonfiction Seminar

SUMMER

"How Writers Write Poetry"

"Narrative Witness: A Caracas-Sarajevo Collaboration"

FALL

"How Writers Write Fiction"

"Here She Comes: Chi Li's Come and Go" (Beijing and Chengdu, China)

"Electric Bodies: An Introduction to Form and Craft" (Moscow and Smolensk, Russia | Des Moines, USA)



EVERY ATOM



CLASS SESSIONS

1. Origins
2. Structure
3. Live Breakout Session #1
4. Main Characters
5. Democracy
6. Live Breakout Session #2
7. Compost
8. Sexuality and the Body
9. Live Breakout Session #3
10. Science
11. Politics
12. Live Breakout Session #4
13. Title and Revision
14. Beginning of the Poem
15. Live Breakout Session #5
16. Catalogs
17. Onward and Outward

Walt Whitman's Song of Myself



Status: Complete

Course Dates: Monday, Feb 17 to Saturday, Mar 29

Provided by: The International Writing Program

Instructor(s):

Christopher Merrill Ed Folsom Micah Bateman Stephanie Bialock Blake Bronson-Bartlett Timothy Robbins

Every Atom: Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* will take a collective approach to a close reading of America's democratic verse epic, first published without a title in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* and later titled *Song of Myself* in the 1881 edition. The poem expresses not only Whitman's all-encompassing poetic vision, but also a radical imagining of a new kind of democracy for America and elsewhere. Published on the eve of the U.S. Civil War and revised

4 MOOCs

In 2014, the IWP opened the University of Iowa's first Massive Online Open-enrollment Courses, known familiarly as MOOCs. With two courses on literary craft, and one on Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," this first series focused on themes fundamental to our mission and capitalized on our long-standing commitment to international dialogue. The UI's Virtual Writing University hosted the courses, and in a landscape dominated by non-profit providers like Khan Academy and edX, and for-profits like Udacity and Coursera, it was risky for a sole university to present its own MOOCs through its own platforms—would students find their way to what we were offering? It turned out they could: 15,789 students enrolled in these first three courses. More importantly, a huge percentage finished; because of a hands-on design, including a large number of moderators who kept forums running often round-the-clock, retention rates exceeded industry averages by as much as a factor of ten.

These initial successes have spurred us to keep going. New MOOCs and new installments of some of these first three courses are in the design phase and slated to be rolled out in 2015 and early 2016. For courses that have already closed, anyone who wishes can register online and watch the videos.

EVERY ATOM: WALT WHITMAN'S "SONG OF MYSELF"

February 17 – March 31, 2014 • 2,145 participants, 24% retention rate, more than 2,300 discussion posts

Our first MOOC, "Every Atom: Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself,'" built upon the IWP's successful *Whitman Web*, an online resource containing annotations of each section of "Song of Myself." *Every Atom* was conceived as a conversation, a spirited exchange about how this challenging and mind-altering poem accretes new meaning for every reader. Poet, translator, and IWP Director Christopher Merrill and preeminent Whitman scholar Ed Folsom led the conversation, giving historical context on such topics as democracy, sexuality and the body, science, politics, nature, and the cosmos; then, crucially, the ground was laid for an exchange of views that course participants could enter into: how to read and translate the poem today. With robust course materials, resources like the Whitman Archive and the *Whitman Web*, and a teaching team of four

moderators, the course's discussion boards were alight with lively and generous interactions; a community of participants was propelled into new ways of reading the poem, and new ways of looking at ourselves and our world.

HOW WRITERS WRITE POETRY

June 28 - August 9, 2014 • 4,669 participants, 34% retention rate, more than 50,000 discussion posts

"How Writers Write Poetry" was the first MOOC to try to bring the teaching style of creative writing workshops into a large-scale online format. As a further challenge, the course was designed both to welcome beginning poets, just starting to put words on the page, and to inspire advanced poets looking for new entry points, thoughts about process, and/or teaching tips.

The primary course material was a curated collection of short, intimate talks on poetry-writing pre-recorded by two dozen acclaimed poets. Christopher Merrill and Mary Hickman, author of *This Is the Homeland* and editor of Black Rainbow Editions, contextualized the videos and offered writing assignments. And then a teaching team of poetry moderators joined Hickman in the discussion forum to lead analysis of the video talks' content and provide feedback on participants' poetry, participants having been encouraged to post their writing exercises and questions for community discussion that ran 24/7 to support international participation and ensure that users in all time zones had access to live instruction. The moderators also hosted 20 writing workshops of selected participant work per week, which everyone was welcome to join.

HOW WRITERS WRITE FICTION

September 27 - November 21, 2014 • 975 participants, 27% retention rate, more than 55,000 discussion posts

"How Writers Write Fiction" presented a diverse collection of video craft talks from contributing authors, offering a set of philosophies and recommendations on how an aspiring writer might develop his/her approach to the craft of writing fiction. Class topics included character, structure, theme, dialogue, voice, and revision. The course was co-taught by Merrill and by R. Clifton Spargo, author of *Beautiful Fools: The Last Affair of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald* and Dixon Professor of Creative Writing at Wittenberg University.

The teaching team hosted in-depth forum discussions of the challenges, discoveries, and philosophies presented in the video talks and assignments. To create an inclusive environment, a dedicated community moderator created a series of welcoming spaces within the course forum for late registrants, inexperienced users, less confident writers, and non-native speakers of English to ensure that these participants were able to make full use of the content and community available to them. The moderators also led three all-inclusive live fiction workshops per week. ■



5 Book Wings

In 2014, the bilingual theater project *Book Wings* expanded to include both Iraq and Russia, bringing together the worlds of literature, theatrical performance, and new media to produce unified dramatic performances in realtime across borders, time zones, and languages. In total, 13 original plays were commissioned for the project, sparking new literary ideas and enabling cross-cultural communication between the U.S. and the partner countries.

With around 350 audience members and many more livestreaming the event online around the globe, the performances were viewed in a total of 30 countries. Audience members engaged with hosts and playwrights through Twitter by asking questions and tweeting their support.

In 2015, an e-book featuring all 20 *Book Wings Russia* plays, along with technology specifications, will be made available on the IWP website. The next iteration of *Book Wings* will feature a collaboration with South Africa, supported by partnerships with the African Arts Institute, Artscape Theatre Centre, and the University of Cape Town. ■

LIVE TWITTER FEED

.....

Enjoying #bookw in DC - Moscow was great, now onto the Iowa Performances! Loving the intercultural dialogue #internationalexchange

— Elaine
@EinDMV



Actors perform a scene from “Seven Minutes in Heaven” by Robin Romm during *Book Wings Russia* (Photo credit: Vladimir Kulikov).

.....

My family in Illinois and Israel all were able to watch my show in Iowa live streaming to Iraq. #technologyiscool #bookw

— Adhii Crahven
@whatchucraven

.....

#bookw well done. Humans are the same in every culture and country.

— Ali Mahdi
@alidbs

.....

Wow! Did they do all of that with only 5 Iraqi actors?! #bookw

— LeeAnn Yeckley
@LeeAnnYeckleySM

From top to bottom: A scene from "Assembling a Fluginflabinlug at a Military Black Site" by Anthony Marra (Photo credit: Vladimir Kulikov); A screenshot from the livestream of "My Right" by Ammar Ali.



BOOK WINGS: RUSSIA PLAYWRIGHTS

Michelle Carter • US
Ksenia Dragunskaya • Russia
Anthony Marra • US

Maksim Osipov • Russia
Robin Romm • US
Herman Sadulaev • Russia



BOOK WINGS: IRAQ PLAYWRIGHTS

Amir Al-Azraki • Iraq
Ammar Ali • Iraq
Sarem Dakhel • Iraq
Catherine Filloux • US

David Kranes • US
Heather Raffo • US
Hassab Allah Yahya • Iraq



6 Between the Lines

In 2014 *Between the Lines* for the first time combined its Russian and Arabic World camps, bringing together Russians from nine cities, Americans from nine states, and Arabic-speaking students from nine countries across the Middle East and North Africa. The session took cultural exchange to another level, with students discussing the merits of rhyming in some forms of Russian poetry versus the popularity of free verse in America, and eating tabbouleh and learning basic Arabic.

LITERATURE AND WRITING WORKSHOPS

Each weekday morning, visiting faculty led region-specific sections of the "Global Literature Seminar," featuring contemporary and classic texts. Afterwards, students shared and critiqued each other's work in creative writing workshops conducted in their native languages. Participants also tried their hands at playwriting with guest dramaturg Kim Euell, and experimented with slam poetry in a workshop led by Malcolm London. Finally, students read from their work at the Dey House, home of the famed Iowa Writers' Workshop.

LASTING FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS BORDERS

Outside of the classroom, students created community through various extracurricular activities. The Russian and Arabic students introduced famous authors from their countries in the student-created workshop, "Russian and Arabic 101." Students recited poems at the Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids while enjoying a Ramadan dinner. Teams competed on a literary scavenger hunt to find literary landmarks in Iowa City, such as Kurt Vonnegut's former home. Participants also experimented with a phonetic translation activity that promoted all languages

.....

"From cultural exchange at the Russian and Arabic 101s to learning about Russian hipsters (Stilyagi) and eating dinner at a mosque, I realized that there's a whole entire universe out there just waiting to be explored."

— Ruohan (Hannah)
Miao, Arizona

as valuable and equal. They wrote ekphrastic poems (poetry inspired by another piece of art) at the Figge Art Museum, and got back to nature at Wildcat Den State Park. The last night of the camp, participants came together for a Fourth of July celebration before tearfully returning to their own writing desks scattered around the world.

As one participant wrote, “Я люблю вас всех – مكنجأ – I love all of you”. ■



From left to right: Participants hike at Wildcat Den State Park; Students participate in a traditional Russian game during the student-led Russian 101 workshop; Kaotar Ait Ali writing during a workshop.

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Nada Abdelhamid • Egypt
 Kaotar Ait Ali • Morocco
 Noora Al-doseri • Bahrain
 Fatima Atma • Israel
 Imen Bouhestine • Tunisia
 Jalal Dlimi • Morocco
 Muhannad Darraj • Syria
 Kirill Dyshlovoi • Russia
 Alissia Khoroshavina • Russia
 Artem Kondratev • Russia
 Iuliia Kozlovskaja • Russia
 Kirill Kuchinskii • Russia
 Anastasiia Kurganova • Russia
 Tatiana Lepkovich • Russia
 Anton Meshkov • Russia
 Mustafa Elsheikh
 Mustafa • Sudan
 Yazan Omari • Jordan
 Alena Piksaeva • Russia
 Dana Radhi • Bahrain
 Megry Tchangoulian • Lebanon
 Merna Wahba • Egypt
 Alina Vasilyeva • Russia

US PARTICIPANTS

McKenna Coon • IA
 Nicholas Datta • CA
 Dani Lipman • IA
 Johnny Lorenzana • IL
 Kerry Luo • CA
 Katrina Manrique • PA
 Ruohan (Hannah) Miao • AZ
 Griffin Neal • IA
 Oskana Snell • IL
 Matias Sosa-Wheelock • FL
 Jada Thomas • TN
 Raina Wellman • NM

INSTRUCTORS

Alan Cheresov • Bulgaria
 Iman Humaydan • France
 Kiki Petrosino • US



Overseas Reading Tours

In its eighth year, the IWP's *Overseas Reading and Lecture Tour* program continues to foster unique face-to-face exchanges with American writers, artists, and their counterparts around the globe. This year the IWP expanded its focus and collaborated across disciplines, with delegations that included a composer, dancer, and painter. Each tour focused on introducing American artists to the literary and cultural landscapes of the host country while creating opportunities for the rich artistic traditions and creative pedagogy of the United States to be shared with local students, professors, writers, and artists. Highlights of the tours included: a full day of workshops at the PEN Haiti Center with young writers and students from Port-au-Prince and the surrounding regions of Haiti; a live interview and portrait session in Havana, Cuba conducted by Félix de la Concha and featuring Cuban filmmaker Arturo Sotto; a three-day creative writing, dance, and music collaborative workshop with over 100 Chinese participants from the disabled and professional artist community in Guangzhou, China; and a joint public reading in Istanbul, Turkey featuring an Armenian-American writer alongside Turkish writers. ■



Above: Student reads a poem during a workshop in Haiti.



Left: Angie Cruz leading a character development exercise at the American Corners in Port Au Prince, Haiti.



JANUARY: HAITI

Angie Cruz • Fiction
 Todd Boss • Poetry
 Gabrielle Calvocoressi • Poetry
 Christopher Merrill • Poetry,
 Non-Fiction

MAY: CUBA

Edward Hirsch • Poetry
 Carmen Giménez • Poetry,
 Memoir
 Félix de la Concha • Painting
 Christopher Merrill • Poetry,
 Non-Fiction

SEPTEMBER: CHINA

Stephen Kuusisto • Poetry,
 Memoir
 David Gompper • Composer,
 Musician
 Michelle Pearson •
 Choreographer, Dancer
 Christopher Merrill • Poetry,
 Non-Fiction



OCTOBER: ARMENIA & TURKEY

Maureen Freely • Fiction,
 Literary Translation
 Peter Balakian • Poetry,
 Memoir, Non-Fiction
 Greg Orfalea • Fiction, Memoir,
 Non-Fiction
 Gish Jen • Fiction
 Christopher Merrill • Poetry,
 Non-Fiction

From left to right: Participant has a question during a workshop at the American Corners in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Stephen Kuusisto meets students at the Guangzhou English Training Center for the Handicapped in China; Peter Balakian being interview at the American University of Armenia.



8 Silk Routes

This past year the IWP launched a new three-year initiative, *Silk Routes: Heritage, Trade, Practice*. The goal is to empower writers as creative entrepreneurs, and to cultivate them across borders.

SILK ROUTES SYMPOSIUM

In March 2014, to get the conversation started the IWP invited writers, teachers, experts, and literary organizers from Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to a five-day *Silk Routes Symposium*, in the Maldives, one of the stops on the Maritime Silk Route. Participants discussed the state of literature in participants' countries and what it means to travel the Silk Routes as writers today, and brainstormed ways to increase the cultural and literary connectivity both within and beyond South and Central Asia.

STENGTHENING CULTURAL NETWORKS

From these discussions has arisen a slate of local projects. Each writer from the *Silk Routes Symposium* developed, proposed, and initiated a mini-grant project. The goal of these projects is involves writing that engages target constituencies, works to strengthen local creative and cultural networks, and promotes cross-border connections. Each project will be visited by a *Silk Routes* program mentor sometime during its enactment. All grant materials will be archived on both the IWP and *Silk Routes* websites.

STENGTHENING CULTURAL NETWORKS

In parallel with these on-the-ground projects is the development of a virtual Silk Routes website. The site, once



Jamby Djusubalieva travels to remote regions of Kyrgyzstan for her "Djailoo Reading" project, which brings books and literary events to youth.

complete, will map multi-sensory creative materials from *Silk Routes* participants, IWP alumni, and a broad network of contributors from 34 cities in 23 different countries or territories. This will provide a resource for writers, translators, educators, students, and interested Internet users. For more information on the website, local projects, and to follow our journey, visit our website. ■

SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS

Kelly Bedeian • IWP Staff
 Ron Carlson • US
 Jamby Djusubaliev • Kyrgyzstan
 Ameena Hussein • Sri Lanka
 Amma Raj Joshi • Nepal
 Christopher Merrill • IWP Staff
 Shandana Minhas • Pakistan
 Kavery Nambisan • India
 Farkhonda Rajabe • Afghanistan
 Barbara Ras • US
 Suvani Singh • Nepal
 Sridala Swami • India
 Bilal Tanweer • Pakistan



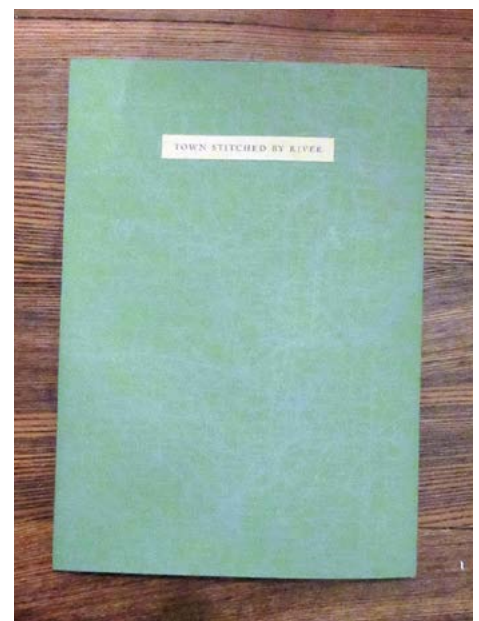
Clockwise: *Silk Routes* working group in the Maldives; A photograph of a date shop in Saudi Arabia, which is a part of the virtual *Silk Routes* website; Jamby Djusubaliev shows a family a photograph during a walking tour around the Maldives.

9 Publications

To mark Iowa City and Dublin's shared designation as UNESCO Cities of Literature, the IWP collaborated with Dublin-based Arlen House Publishers to produce a limited-edition letter-pressed volume featuring the work of eleven of the Fall Residency's Irish alumni, including Thomas McCarthy (1978), Eavan Boland (1979), and Martin Dyar (2013). Borrowing its title, *Town Stitched by River*, from an Iowa City poem by Nell Regan (2011), the delicious mix of prose, non-fiction and poetry is held together by the unmistakable hum of the spoken (Irish) voice.

The end of 2014 also saw the completion of *Book Wings: A Virtual Drama*, a volume gathering twenty pieces commissioned for the three-year (2012-2014) collaboration between the UI Theatre Arts Department and the revered Moscow Arts Theater, the home stage of Chekhov and Stanislavsky. The texts range from Terrance Hayes' poetic instructions for "a séance with Vladimirs," through IWP alumna Ksenia Dragunskaya's (2002) laugh-out-loud funny sketch of a Russian village council pondering an unexpected trickle of migrants in the middle of typhoon season, to a micro-drama by Anthony Marra in which two grunts at a base somewhere in Afghanistan negotiate over the phone with a customer service representative as they try to assemble a table intended for ominous purposes. This first-rate collection is available at Autumn Hill Books.

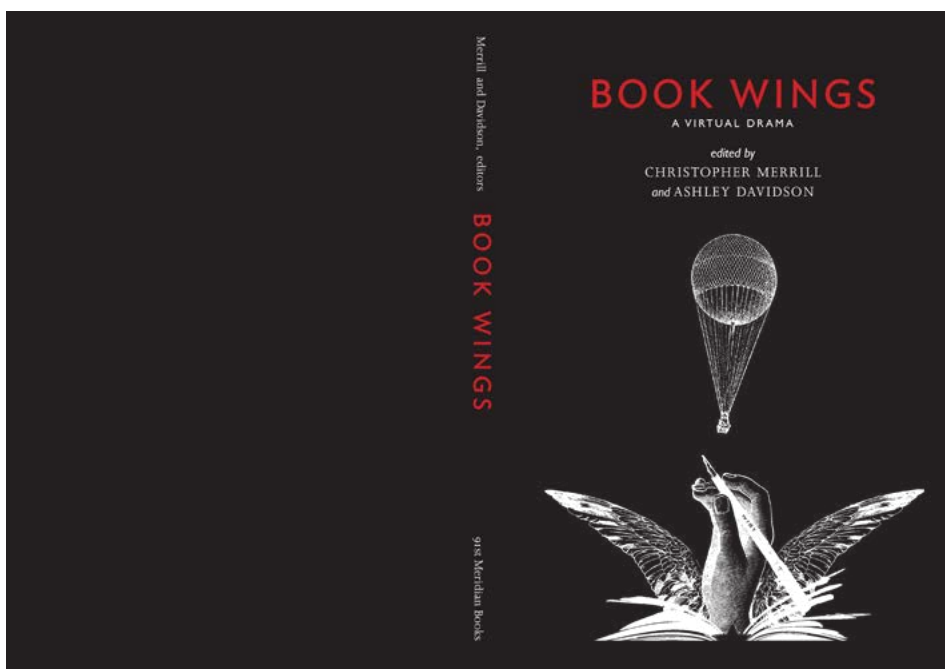
In a more academic vein, we have created a digital space where colleagues working on the fault-line of creative writing, creative writing pedagogies, and translation can share their ideas: the new IWP Publishing Gallery currently includes essays on teaching creative writing in English to students in Lebanon and



The cover of *Town Stitched by the River*.

in Kurdistan, and on self-translating from English to Chinese as an essayistic technique.

And as with years past, video interviews have been commissioned for our ongoing 'On the Map' series with ten State Department-sponsored participants at the 2014 Fall Residency. Bernice Chauly (Malaysia), Ali Cobby Eckermann (Australia), Cynthia Edul (Argentina), Kinana Issa (Syria), Mamle Kabu (Ghana), Mujib Mehrdad (Afghanistan), Sabata-mpho Mokae (South Africa), Sadek Mohammed (Iraq), Andra Rotaru (Romania), and Natasha Tiniacos (Venezuela) can now be seen not only on the program's YouTube channel but also in our new IWP Media Gallery, a platform intended to make searching our collection of nearly 100 videos both easier and richer. ■



The cover of *Book Wings: A Virtual Drama*.



TOMAŽ ŠALAMUN (1941-2014)

By Christopher Merrill

When Tomaž Šalamun arrived at a poetry festival in San Miguel de Allende two years ago with a bad back, which he had hurt tobogganing down the Great Wall of China, I was not surprised to learn that he had risked life and limb to have a little fun. The Slovenian poet seemed to possess the gift of eternal youth until he passed away on December 27, 2014, at his home in Ljubljana. He was always alert to what young poets were doing—they fed his imagination—and they repaid him in kind with translations and imitations of his work; it is a great irony that although he wrote in a language spoken by less than two million people English versions of his poems have for several decades profoundly influenced American letters. What surprised me about his Chinese adventure was that he had not escaped unscathed. I had imagined him to be indestructible.

He was born in Zagreb, Croatia in 1941, raised in the coastal city of Koper south of Trieste, and studied art history at the University of Ljubljana. Jailed when he was twenty-three for editing a literary journal, he was released after five days, thanks in part to pressure from the international media, and in his newfound celebrity decided to devote his life to poetry. Robert Hass notes that his is “a poetics not of rebellion but of quest,” influenced by Rimbaud and Lautréamont, French Surrealism, the Russian Futurists, and the New York School. In one of his first poems, “Eclipse,” he established the terms of an aesthetic argument that he would conduct in his improvisatory style through scores of books: “I grew tired of the image of my tribe/ and moved out.” His would be “a world of sharp edges./ Cruel and eternal.” Here is the second section of “Eclipse”:

I will take nails,
long nails
and hammer them into my body.
Very very gently,
very very slowly,
so it will last longer.
I will draw up a precise plan.
I will upholster myself every day,
say two square inches for instance.

IN MEMORIAM

Udupi R Ananthamurthy (1924-2014)
Nina Cassian (1926-2014)
Pat Amadu Maddy (1936-2014)

Then I will set fire to everything.
It will burn for a long time,
it will burn for seven days.
Only the nails will remain,
all welded together and rusty.
So I will remain.
So I will survive everything.

He did indeed survive, though for some time the Yugoslav authorities forbade him from holding a regular job. At one point he was reduced to selling encyclopedias and how-to books door to door, without much success. One woman told him she was not interested in the books he was peddling. What do you like to read? he asked her. I only like Kafka, Proust, and Šalamun, she replied. I am Šalamun, he said. Meanwhile he exhibited environmental and conceptual art in Yugoslavia and at the Museum of Modern Art, and in 1970 he was awarded a fellowship to our program, about which he later wrote: "It gave a lot of light, huge joy to all of us who rambled here around." The friendships he forged here with Anselm Hollo and Bob Perelman, who translated his poems into English, along with his discovery of the work of Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery, Walt Whitman and Wallace Stevens, expanded his sense of possibility. For the rest of his life he would take advantage of every opportunity to return to this country—for residencies at artist colonies, visiting teaching positions, reading tours.

The vast spaces in America opened his cells, he said, insisting that his poems did not begin to breathe until they had been translated into English. The publication of an edited selection of his work in 1988 introduced him to American readers, just as Yugoslavia was imploding. It seemed as if he had prophesied the wars of succession: "No one is allowed on my land," he wrote in "Eclipse." And he was in despair when I met him in Ljubljana in the summer of 1992: Serbian-run concentration camps for Bosnian prisoners had come to light; the cruel, sharp-edged world he had glimpsed in a poem was taking shape all around him; he did not write for four years.

After the carnage ended, though, poetry returned to him, as he once said, dropping "like stones from the sky," and soon he was named the cultural attaché at the new Slovenian Consulate in New York City. "Tomaž Šalamun, please," was how he answered the phone, as if he were the Muse himself. I visited him on his first free day, which we spent translating his poems. His wife, the acclaimed painter Metka Krašovec, had warned him not to rent the first apartment we were shown after we had finished working, knowing that breathing life into his poems in English would leave him so exhilarated that his judgment about real estate would be impaired. Which is exactly what happened. Whenever I visited them in their small flat on 14th Street Metka would tease me about our working methods, which sometimes resembled a comedy routine. If I asked Tomaž what a certain line or image meant, he might reply, "Apparently," or "I don't know." Rational logic was the enemy of his poems, which ricocheted in every direction:

Tomaž Šalamun is a monster.
Tomaž Šalamun is a sphere rushing through the air.
He lies down in twilight, he swims in twilight.
People and I, we both look at him amazed,
we wish him well, maybe he is a comet.
Maybe he is punishment from the gods,
the boundary stone of the world.

Tomaž Šalamun was in fact a gift from the gods, a soft-spoken man blessed with the gentlest soul, and this gift, his poems, will keep on giving for a very long time. They will survive. ■



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