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Spring 2022

Syntax, Newsletter of the Suffolk University English Department, Issue 9, 2022

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English Department, "Syntax, Newsletter of the Suffolk University English Department, Issue 9, 2022" (2022). *Syntax Newsletter of the Suffolk University English Department*. 9.
<https://dc.suffolk.edu/syntax/9>

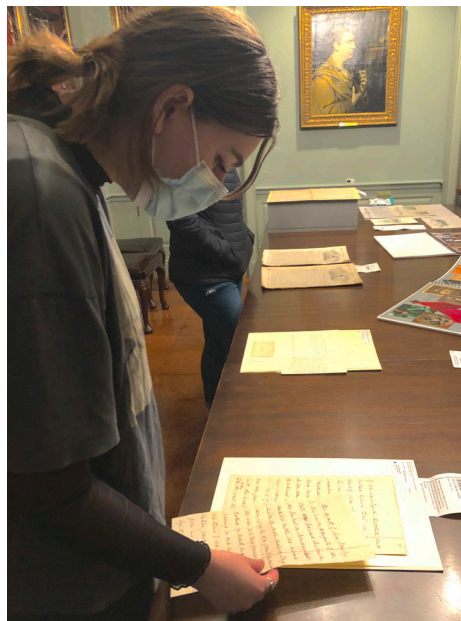
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Syntax

Newsletter of the
Suffolk University
English Department

Issue 9 Spring 2022

In the rare books room



On March 30, Leslie Eckel's ENG 356: Whitman and Dickinson class took a field trip to Harvard University's Houghton Library, whose collections specialize in rare books, manuscripts, and archives of literary and performing arts. Left: Cianna Doub examines an 1886 obituary for Emily Dickinson written by her sister-in-law, friend, and possible lover Susan Gilbert Dickinson. Right, Sarah Hernandez reads the second edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1856). For more information about the Houghton Library and its resources, visit <https://library.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton>.



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Trauth to lead First-Year Writing

The Suffolk English Department's latest full-time hire, Professor Erin Trauth, will take the lead as Director of First-Year Writing starting in Fall 2022.

With a doctorate in rhetoric and technical communication and prior experience directing or otherwise administering first-year writing programs at several other institutions, she brings just the experience and expertise the role calls for.

"Looking at the job description, and the mission of Suffolk University to be a leader in experiential learning, I saw the same things that have been the platforms for my own pedagogy and my own professional work for the last decade," Trauth said. "And with the potential to help grow the Public and Professional Writing concentration, it feels like a perfect fit."

Trauth joins us from High Point university in North Carolina, where Public and Professional Writing has been part of her job title, and is offered as a minor within the English Department.

But she's not exactly new to Boston. Born in Beverly, MA, and still having friends and family living throughout the region, she's glad that the too-often-itinerant life of an American academic has brought her back here.

It's too early to expect her to have plans for what specific steps she'll take in this leadership role, but her background, expertise, and interests all point to the promise of building further on what we've already been building. She promises to start with a lot of listening, and a lot of empathy.

She's had a successful record with service learning courses, and in writing grants toward curricular and faculty professional development. For a fuller biography, her CV, and more on her other professional activities, visit erintrauth.com.

From the department chair, Quentin Miller

Change is always the most reliable thing

It's a mistake, I've learned, to expect anything to be the same the second time around. Despite the cliché, history doesn't repeat itself. When my second son was born, I thought, "We can just hand down the same toys." Alas, younger son rejected books, puzzles, and Legos because they weren't spherical and couldn't be kicked into a goal. A slow learner, I became chair for a second term after an interlude we call "The Terrifying Term of Tyrannical Trabold." I thought I knew what to expect.

Uh, yeah. 2021-22 was full of surprises. The vaccinations arrived, but the coronavirus seemed to shrug. Zooming, masking, pivoting... all the verbs we thought would fade became vivid again. Signs of fatigue are all too apparent, and not just for those of us who have experienced it as the first symptom of a covid bout. I could go on, but this is all self-evident: we're still in the throes of a global pandemic, and Suffolk's English department is part of the world. As I write this, we're approaching the inconceivable number of American losses: one million. And that's just here. And we're undercounting.

There's a grim Groundhog Day feeling. Look at any of the rollercoaster graphs in the news and they look like the graphs from a year ago, or two years. How often have you heard someone say, "What's time anymore?" In the midst of all this sameness, though, we've experienced some changes.

There have been departures. CAS Dean Maria Toyoda drove westward last summer and brought with her Lisa Celovsky, a senior member of our department who was hired the same year as Rich Miller and me (back before smart phones existed). A couple months later, our director of first-year writing, Pamela Saunders, also lit out for the territory. At the end of this academic year Kaylin O'Dell, our specialist in British-literature-from-when-people-talked-funny, joined this train of covered wagons westward. And our Administrative

Manager Lauren Burch is about to leave for present-day England to study graphic design. Some band-aids in the form of interim appointments were hastily applied to stop some of this bleeding. A new dean, Edie Sparks, will join us in August and a new first-year writing director, Erin Trauth, in July.

Professor Trauth has been teaching at a university that has a program in public and professional writing, the very title of our own newest concentration within the English major. This concentration is off and running, with real, live students enrolled in it, and will grow exponentially as word gets out.

Beyond the new concentration, we've tweaked our requirements for our two minors and are hoping to add a third next year, also in public and professional writing. Our major also got a makeover, to be fully implemented next year.

Look at us! We've made these changes while short-handed, too. We also had a record four colleagues on sabbatical leave this year in addition to a parental leave and a professional leave. We patched together a new structure for our students who wrote honors theses. There were fewer personnel available to complete the service obligations necessary to keep the place running. Professional conferences were less reliable venues for us to develop our scholarship.

And yet. And yet. The fact that we're still fulfilling the many and various obligations of our vocation despite all these challenges (and many more) is a testimony to the utter dedication and spirit of the department. We're graduating talented and well-prepared seniors and accepting steady numbers of first-year students. We're contributing meaningfully to governance and committee work throughout the university. We're publishing and giving talks and readings at impressive rates. In short, we're the Suffolk English department, and we sing our full-throated anthem: Can't touch this.

A hopeful goodbye to English department members

As the changes sometimes come too quickly to count or cope with, we try to take what moments we can to celebrate our friends who walked with us for a while, but whose paths have now led in separate, hopeful directions.

Last year, we said a fond farewell to First-Year Writing Director Pamela Saunders in a small, private ceremony led by Professor Rich Miller. Those in attendance performed Miller's version of that Styx song "Come Sail Away," signing it badly, but joyfully. Though a parody of a New Orleans funeral, it wasn't really. She's just in San Diego.

Right now, we say goodbye to Professor Kaylin O'Dell and Administrative Manager Lauren Burch. O'Dell joined us four years ago, teaching classes including Shakespeare, Medieval Literature, and her popular "Sex & Power in the Middle Ages." Her next change

was a tough decision. Her husband, Dakota, is making his own upward move as an engineer, which will take them to Saratoga Springs, NY. His family lives there, and O'Dell's parents will be able to move nearby as well from their home in Oklahoma (something Boston-area real estate prices prohibited), eager to be close grandparents to O'Dell's son Jamie, who just celebrated his first birthday.

She may teach at local institutions, but she's also looking to use those universally-applicable English skills in other careers, like educational technology, in which she has published research.

"I love teaching," she said. "It gives me life. But I'm excited to use my skills in new ways. I love our department—it's brilliant and healthy. I'm lucky to feel a little regretful leaving."

Burch is leaving for a master's program in graphic design at Leeds Arts

University in the U.K. She joined us five years ago, and has been taking graphic design courses in Suffolk's certificate program, building skills and a portfolio that allow her to take this next step. But that wasn't always her plan.

"When my high school teachers would ask me what art schools I was applying to, I laughed in their faces," she said. "It was 2010, the economy was bad, and I was convinced that art wouldn't be a stable career. Ten years later, I'm embracing the creative part of myself." After high school, she got licensed to be an English teacher for grades 5-12. Having now worked in administration, where she says she uses what she gained from her English degree and teaching experience every day, she doesn't feel like she's exactly changing direction, but building one, combining the skills she has with those she's pursuing next.

Brief Interviews with English Alums

Kyle Dunne, BA 2006

STX: When did you graduate from Suffolk, and with what degrees, minors, concentrations, etc.?

KD: I graduated from Suffolk in 2006 with an English degree and a Film Studies minor.

STX: Tell us about any graduate work and professional positions you have held since you graduated from Suffolk. What has your career trajectory looked like? What are you doing now?

KD: After graduating from Suffolk, I worked in New York City at a TV production company before moving to Los Angeles in 2008. I spent two years in LA working on TV and film sets, mostly as a production assistant, but occasionally getting the chance to write scripts and operate the camera. After a couple years I moved back East to my home state of Connecticut and spent some time bartending while I figured out my next move. Eventually, I discovered copywriting as a way to put both my English degree and my creativity to use while making a good living. I'm currently an Associate Creative Director with Catapult Marketing/ Arc Worldwide writing for clients like Heineken, Dunkin', Dos Equis & Beam Suntory.

STX: In what ways has your course work/degree in English helped you professionally? What skills or knowledge do you regularly draw from in your professional life?

KD: Being an English major at Suffolk taught me the power of writing with a deadline. It sounds basic, but it was the first time I had to write under the pressure of a deadline, and it laid the foundation for my deadline-driven career in copywriting. Another skill I developed as an English major at Suffolk was confidence in my creative writing. As a writer in advertising, presenting and selling your work to clients is crucial. Suffolk helped shape my confidence in sharing work, putting myself out there, and being open to criticism and feedback.

STX: What advice can you offer for students who are interested in an English major, but whose parents are skeptical of its value toward their future careers?

KD: I actually switched from a Film Studies major to an English major halfway through at Suffolk because I wanted a degree that could open more doors after college. And I believe an English degree does just that. I know many English majors that have gone on to pursue such different careers—lawyers, teachers, novelists, copywriters, etc.

STX: What advice do you have for current English majors as they think about transitioning from college to the workforce?

KD: My uncle once said to me, "Nothing is ever as good or bad



as it first appears." I look at a lot of things in life through that lens, but I think it's extremely true when entering the workforce. My advice would be to try different things to discover what you love doing. There's no right or wrong path. Tell your parents I said so.

STX: Describe something you learned the hard way that your advice here could help current undergrads learn the easy way.

KD: Don't be afraid to try something that scares you. Take risks (within reason) while you're young, because the older you get, the harder it becomes. Experience is the greatest teacher in life. You may fail at some things. You may thrive with other things. But in each case, you'll learn something.



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A half step makes it minor key

Araguz writes from many in-betweens

You'll notice that some of the individual poems in Professor José Angel Araguz's latest collection *Rotura* look physically familiar as examples of contemporary American poetry. But in other poems, and throughout the book as a whole, you'll notice a lot more blank space than you might be used to. It's certainly more blank space than Araguz has been used to.

What does blank space mean? Just like words themselves, that empty territory only means whatever it means in context of how it's used.

Sometimes a poem's separate stanzas or even individual lines are given their own full page, the stark emptiness surrounding each one like a wide matting on a small photograph. But each piece is not in isolation, and carries the echoes of the parts ringing before and after. In that way, some single poems—like "A Question Before the Election," the first piece in this collection—stretch across many pages, slowing the rhythm, the pacing, the experience of the poem as a whole while giving room to focus and contemplate the words living on each one. Here's a page from "Question:" "a year later/ it will hit me/ that these years of looking over my shoulder/ are a list inside me that inventory,/ that make space for,/ stop to see/ the fear inside me—"

Elsewhere in the poem, lists are made. Elsewhere in the poem, he also looks over his shoulder. Elsewhere in the poem what, almost, hits him, is a shattering glass bottle and what does hit him is the full contact of drive-by yelling "Go back to your country!" It's the echoes of the elsewheres and the spaces between them that make a somber match to what the poem remembers, grapples with, carries with it into whatever might reverberate from the fraught past into the next blank page.

"This does feel 'next-level' in form and content for me," Araguz admitted. "It continues the same conversation from a lot of my earlier work, but I wouldn't have gone there this way even just five years ago. This is the first time I've let myself take up that much space."

Of course, for each of us, just existing and continuing to exist, as ourselves, especially in public, is a political act. This is acutely true for members of marginalized communities. Still, it's a delicate operation to be more explicitly political when making literature, rather than to only embody or symbolize a politics. Nothing is outside politics, but punditry isn't art.

"Politics is about the group," Araguz said. "Literature is about the individual. It's a challenge of not just ranting but also not holding back. A poet or a writer needs to be evocative of the stakes and of the conditions they're living under. It can be unsettling, in the way good literature does, for others to empathize with that experience. We have to ask, 'What will risk making others uncomfortable in a productive way?'"

These are not a slam poet's jeremiads. A self-described nerd about poetic forms, Araguz relies on carefully chosen

formal constraints, but finds it more important how people respond to them. So they are accessible even if you don't know the first thing about poetic forms. The material in them is largely autobiographical, and politics in them are the politics of a life being lived across multiple liminal spaces and identities, a perspective continually ill at ease because the surroundings are all ill at ease with the marginal, the in-between, the not-fully-and-only-one-category.

"Rotura" wasn't the working title. That was a suggestion from former U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, who also wrote a blurb for it. Herrera said that one word was at the heart of the collection. It means a rip, a rupture, a breakage.

"I'm circling different ways people can break," he said. "I look at my own breaking and the breaking of a country."

When he was in high school, Araguz didn't want to be called Hispanic. It didn't feel like it fit. In college, slam poets said he wasn't Chicano enough because he occasionally cited Nietzsche. Throughout his career, and more directly in this collection, he wrestles with his citizenship nationally, culturally, and as a poet, all three categories telling him he was too much of something or too little of something else. He wrestles with how his higher education defined art and who got to make it, of what language or languages it was made or couldn't be made. He wrestles with the authority of family, of culture, of country, of poetry, each one insisting on something else he ought to be and some other way he ought to be it.

From his poem "Conditioning (Run Study)," "Conditioning is being told to drink only white milk/so that your skin might change; this from someone/ whose skin matches yours, down to the shame./ I must run or else I'll always be taking off/ my hat in nice neighborhoods, smoothing down my hair,/ always trying to look

acceptable, but feeling off."

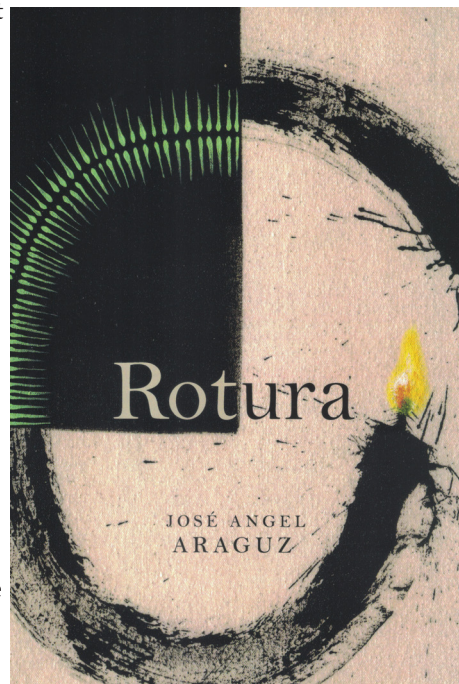
All this conflicted pulling in multiple directions, all this breaking, all this distance across the space of things, can start to feel a little hopeless.

"There's hope in just the striving," he said. "Hope is in writing poetry in spite of it all. Hope is that my mom told me the story at all, and that now I carry that too. Just asserting a true thing is hopeful. So is taking up space."

He said he finds hope in the high school student who approaches him after a reading and says "You're the first poet I've ever met who's Hispanic like me." And that there's hope in not needing to correct them about the nomenclature.

From his poem "En la colonia I cannot find," "...We counsel/ each other in Spanish and English,/ we say we do not know, no sabemos,/ what the country would be like,/ nor what would happen there./ We walk amidst changing walls,/ our steps marking the path,/ and the path marking our soles,/ the earth molding to where/ I relive nights of winter,/ of not knowing/ this is the nature of longing,/ of faith, of not being satisfied."

Published by Black Lawrence Press, *Rotura* is available at <https://blacklawrencepress.com/books/rotura/>.



New England Greek

Poems of family, myth, and memory

Professor George Kalogeris has written his way into a poetic trilogy. First, in *Guide To Greece* (LSU Press 2018, see *Syntax* Issue 4, Spring 2019), he looked to the Greece that had shaped each of his parents, as well as to the Classical Greece he studied as an artist and as an academic, and the Greece that shaped second-century writer Pausanias, who wrote the meticulous travelogue from which this poetry collection takes its title.

With Pausanias as his imagined guide, just as Dante had Virgil, Kalogeris looks to the old country, reverberating research against his parents, himself, to explore an identity both inherited and cultivated, repeatedly across generations. Now, *Winthropos* (LSU Press 2021) picks up with a local focus on the same material. These poems work largely as first-person nonfiction, anchored to Kalogeris's childhood in Winthrop, MA. The latest title, taken from its opening poem, is his father's joke. It's a scene of the father quizzing the son on what to do should he ever get lost. He'd find an adult, he says, tell them his name and where he lives. He recites their address. "Winthrop, Yorgáki?" his father asks, "Or is it Winthropos..."

The first book in the series focused on there with echoes of here. The second one focus here with echoes of there. The third, still in the works, will work toward the kind of synthesis that much diasporic literature pursues: an identity that assembles all the experiences and influences, a reconciliation, a unification, a new third thing.

There are things that run across all three books. First, the fact that Kalogeris grew up in a Greek-American world between languages and cultures, with great physical and psychic distance between where he lived and where so many of the old family stories took place.

Second is poetry itself, and the watershed of poetic traditions he became a confluence of. His father came from a rural village in Arcadia, his mother from a small village in Sparta.

"There was a liturgical rhythm to the world I grew up in," he said. "My initial exposure to poetry was the Greek folk songs my parents new well and my grandparents knew very well. It was a very musical household."

Those folk songs were the basis for his PhD thesis in comparative literature. Higher education was the place where he studied the classical Greek literature, connecting the speech of his family to the more cosmopolitan Athenian Greek world.

Third is translation, both in the sense of recasting art and story from one language to another, and in all the other things a child of immigrants tries to bring across the other borders that fragment identity and scatter the self. The series works to reconcile the blue collar family with academic work, the Greek with the American, Greek with English, the village Greek of his parents with the Athenian Greek privileged in American neoclassicism, his scholarly and poetic influences like Cavafy, Leopardi, Rilke, Wittgenstein whose work he uses

to help focus what he learned in his family life.

Often, *Winthropos* reads like a lamentation. It holds moments with aging, dying, dead father, mother, uncles, aunts, relatives, friends, mourning what was lost by sitting us in the time just before it was lost: the people themselves known and loved intimately, and the worlds across borders of both time and distance those lives had given passage to. There is "Open Casket." There is "The Source of the Styx." There is "Lethe." It finds the moments encoded with so much unspoken trauma. In "Calchas Reading the Signs," a younger Kalogeris works in his father's store, stamping prices on baby food while his father, a butcher fills pails with offal as the radio crackles news of Vietnam, not wanting his son to be drafted, having escaped with his brother a poor village that had survived centuries of Otto-

man occupation, both of them having been drafted in WWII, fighting in Guadalcanal, not knowing that at that exact moment, Nazis were occupying his mother's house. It is there, in Ákovos, where their mother, Kalogeris's grandmother, died in a way no one can verify. "RCA Victor" retells this family story. Maybe it was that the Nazis, as they were burning furniture and houses, were about to burn the phonograph when she stopped them, so they threw her on the fire instead. Or maybe, as his aunt says, she died of a stroke. A cousin found the gravestone with the date: 1946.

"There was something in the way my father and all of them talked about her," Kalogeris said. "The tonal truth that may or may not have been fact, but it became the narrative. In the end, it's my uncle's extreme emotion that carries the day."

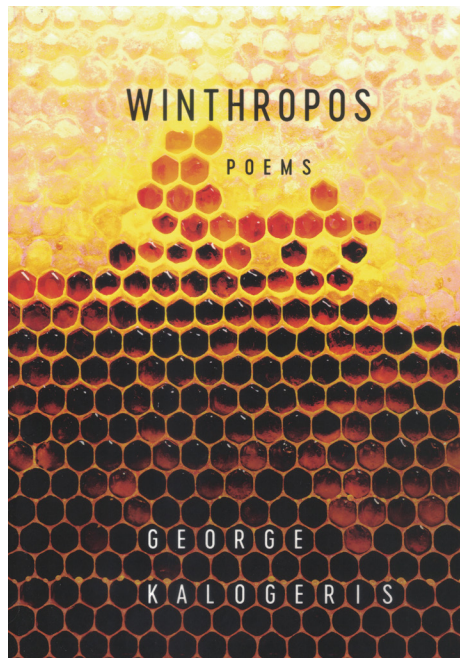
Kalogeris doesn't really work in the immediacy of his own experiences, but

keeps returning to moments from his earlier life, seeing ever more things encoded into them. He had a desk at school; his father had a butcher's block. Though Kalogeris had his share of the family work, like spreading sawdust on the floor to soak up the blood from the butchering.

In "Hades," a boy Kalogeris watches his cousin fly a kite in their yard. The cousin taunts him to throw a rock at it. He does, and it smashes the windshield of the family car:

My father kneels before me. 'Look me here.' / I lift my head. Beholden to what his index / Finger won't let me avoid: those disappointed / Eyes of my immigrant father, who never struck me, / but whose old world admonitions always / Left me badly shaken—as if I'd betrayed / His grave injunction: *You my right hand*. But this time / He winks, and says instead: 'Do you like Mamá / To make for you a baby sister, Yorgo?

And in his mother's laughter, and in his father's joining hers, he finds them again. "I can break the silence like the windshield and hear my parent's laughter," he said, "The broken English, the familial speech, and see them intelligent and clever and well spoken, not in the limited way they may seem—it's not what you hear from classical poets—but both the demotic speech and the classical coexist as part of the same music."



Bowlin writes stories from life, even when he doesn't

We all know that the dark non-secret behind most fiction is that it comes from facts. Whether thinly-veiled memoir, inventive autofiction, a mythologized version of history and experience, or thoroughly researched living conditions for some character to navigate, the invention wouldn't hold us so if it were not somehow recast as an anagram of how we live and whom we live among.

Unlike the characters in his new short story collection *Ghosts Caught on Film* (winner of the 2021 Bridge Eight Press fiction prize), Professor Barrett Bowlin has never been a chef or a surgeon's grandmother during the lightning storms of a climate apocalypse or a Frankenstein-mother to an animate gummy bear. He has been a teenage boy, a college student, someone who's met enough "badass women and shitty dudes who think they're doing good," to populate his stories with them. He saw his father-in-law through two years of cancer, hospice, and what inevitably comes after. He was a pre-med student throughout undergrad, worked for four years as a tech in a psychiatric ward, then worked another two years with an oncology group doing x-rays and helping with minor surgeries. Mostly, these patients were children and adolescents.

He thought he was going to be a psychiatrist. The backup plan was pediatric oncologist. Across his medical experience, he'd work with patients and build relationships with them, only to have many of them die anyway. It's a lot to carry, especially for someone as obviously empathetic as he is.

"It became a routine of going to work, having a patient die, then coming home and playing violent video games until late at night," Bowlin said. "I eventually realized I liked words and books more than I liked people dying on me."

He writes from the loss and the grief, both personal and professional, and though some doom, large or small, is frequently the backdrop of his stories, that high exposure to death also leads him to focus on life, and even joy, such as it can be found in ill circumstances.

His obsession with science, medicine, and technology means a lot

of his characters have professions with very technical expertise, and if Bowlin doesn't have it, he goes and gets it. He's well equipped for researching a fictional role. This is his first full length short story collection, and he's been steadily building them for fourteen years.

"You're either researching something, or you lived through it, or you were adjacent to it," Bowlin said. "I'll get a story idea and trap future Barrett into learning the history of Coumadin."

The protagonist in "New Careers in Science" is that surgeon's grandmother, and she's like a med student in that she's only getting her training on the job, mid-apocalypse. She befriends, then loses a young patient. Yet there's beauty in the burn patterns the lighting made on his body. Even more in the tender moments that pass between people before their passing.

The protagonist in "But I Can Only Do It Once" copes with the full arc of his firefighter father's decline and death from cancer, but also with the awkwardness of adolescent boyhood as he and his friends grapple in goofy filthy ways with their own sexual immaturity.

In these stories and others, we learn a lot about masses removed from bodies, about the mechanics of photography, about real balsamic vinegar, about x-rays, about the tools and the physics and the specialized vocabulary of one professional tribe or another. The challenge in using that in fiction, though, is not to overdo it with raw information.

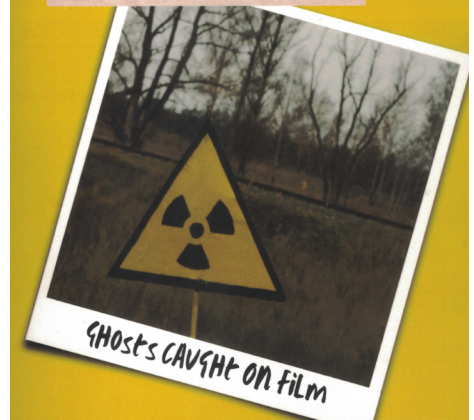
"For a long time I thought I had to get the exact description of every part of this lab or of that procedure," he said. "It was in the PhD program at Binghamton that my friend Angie Pelekedis and I traded stories together. She had to remind me to tamp it down. It took a while to get a feel for what should be text and what should be subtext."

In all prose, it's a constant decision making process of sorting out what exposition will serve the goals of the piece, and what will just clutter up the place. In a narrative that goal will be the experience and the growth (or lack thereof) of a character. Non-narrative essays build their arc of ideas, but it's

"Barrett Bowlin's stories are dance songs made from nightmares and lightning..."

Dan Chaon, author of *Sleepwalk*

BRIDGE EIGHT PRESS FICTION PRIZE WINNER



BARRETT BOWLIN

very much the same. Loosely associated information (as students often say "putting in background") is inert. It's clutter. Incorporating both can help clarify this.

Bowlin's First-Year Writing students often ask if they can use personal narrative as part of their research writing. So many students have acquired the assumption that if they've lived through something, they are somehow less qualified to write about it. They've been given some vague misunderstanding of "bias" that makes them feel like they can't develop their own expertise. But their experiences, observations, and interpretations are as valid (or as potentially flawed) as anyone else's, and acquire new depth when put into the context of other research. It tests their experiences against further evidence, simultaneously deepening their understanding of the topic and of their own relationship to it.

So Bowlin, as many of us do, offer first-person research essays as options. One of his richest classroom experiences was offering students an exercise to write about their experiences during COVID. His sections of WRI-102 were themed around science and medicine, so research was already there in the course readings, and students could see themselves as individual case studies within that larger body of knowledge.

"Everyone was rapt," he said. "They really wanted to work with what they were going through and to find ways to situate themselves in this much bigger conversation."

ENG 156-SL Immigrant Stories

Active Learning, Acts of service

During Spring '22, Professor Leslie Eckel ran the first Service Learning version of her established ENG 156 Immigrant Stories course. This version kept the same literary assignments as the previous one (see Syntax issue 7, SP21), but added some public service requirements that connected the work of the classroom to real people's lives outside.

The class partnered with Project Citizenship (PC), a Boston-based nonprofit focused on helping immigrants hopeful for U.S. citizenship finish and file their applications.

The usual readings and course work had students analyze immigrant stories in literature, and to situate them in the historical contexts of U.S. culture and immigration policy as it progressed over time. They also worked in teams to research the seven largest immigrant groups in Boston, the home countries and cultures of those diaspora, and the local and federal immigration laws, policies, and programs that determine so much about actual people's lives. To prime them to work with real people, students did training with another organization partnered with PC called Re-Imagining Migration on gathering people's stories. They did risk management training with Suffolk's Center for Community Engagement. They did multiple trainings with PC on how best to help people properly complete their citizenship applications. All that culminated in one daylong event where students worked one-on-one with hopeful citizens themselves.

"They were pretty anxious about it," Eckel said. "They're helping people who have to pay \$750 to file these applications, and they can be rejected for so many reasons. They felt a lot of responsibility, but after they got through the first one, they realized it was manageable and deeply rewarding."

Inevitably, working with others also teaches you about yourself, and about the differing positions you all have within the same systems. Some students were also in the citizenship process themselves. Some were first generation or had other close connections to immigrant experiences. Some used what they learned in this class to help family members with their citizenship applications. Some of the students were multilingual, and so could work with applicants more intimately in their first language. Tamika Altema was one of the few on site that day who spoke Haitian Creole, so her help was in high demand throughout the event.

"Some reconnected with their own backgrounds, language, and families," Eckel said. "Those born in the U.S. realized their privilege, saw just how difficult and involved the citizenship process is, and recognized 'this is my responsibility too.' Those are just the kinds of outcomes I was hoping for."

This classroom of students met two groups of people this semester. The first included members of PC, along with the people they serve. In the second group were two former U.S. congressional representatives who came to speak about their experiences in government. It should surprise no one—though it rightly appalled our students—that the first group understood far, far more about immigration than the second one.

It's a necessary and powerfully disillusioning moment when, as an undergraduate, you realize that—because you've read, you've studied, you've listened, you've met people—you've earned more knowledge about a topic than some authority figures who were once partially responsible for it. There



In addition to working with citizenship applications, this group of students recorded oral histories from those applying for citizenship, and had to learn on their feet not just how to listen, but how to convince people to tell their stories at all. Project Citizenship will use these recordings in its media, programming, and fundraising efforts. Counterclockwise from left, Danny Nollkamper, Charlotte Cartelli, Luther Eisaman, and Kyrell DePina.

was a palpable tension between the students and the ex-politicians, largely because of what our students knew and what our visitors didn't.

Thus, this was a valuable illustration to our students exactly why anyone aspiring to shape public policy needs a working history and understanding of the issues, and grounded and empathetic education that exposes them to the people those policies would most affect.

Seeing an authority figure unable to summon basic facts or even take the issues of immigration and citizenship seriously begs the question of what might happen if all lawmakers and public servants could take a class like this one, if they could meet real people who are in more vulnerable situations different from them, if they could hear their stories, if they could see concretely how many lives could turn and have turned in so many directions—whether toward hope or disaster—on the phrasing of a single clause in a single law.

It also promises that a better future is coming because our better-informed students will go on to become our better-informed leaders.

Faculty interested in the challenge of developing a service learning course or adapting an existing course should contact Suffolk's Center for Community Engagement. Grants are available. Eckel received one to develop this course. She'll teach it again in FA22. For more on PC, visit projectcitizenship.org.

Postcard from Ireland

By Quentin Miller

ENG 120 Takes Spring Break Trip to Dublin

I'd been planning this unusual class for a few years. The idea was to study Irish and Irish-American literature as a combined tradition. Irish literature is about leaving. Irish-American literature is about wanting to return. The push-and-pull factors of emigration and immigration make this a pretty fertile field of inquiry. Add Boston, one of America's most Irish cities. Add the Suffolk archives, which house the papers of Irish-American congressman Joe Moakley and Irish-American playwright Eugene O'Neill. Add the experience of a lifetime: a trip to Dublin during Spring Break. That, my friends, is a recipe for success. Nothing uncertain about it.

Oh, but it was. Pandemic.

Eighteen students had to run through a gauntlet of international travel regulations to get there and back. But we took a chance. It worked out. It worked out well. It worked out spectacularly. If you were lucky enough, as I was, to read the reflections of my students after the trip, you would have gotten the warm, fuzzy feeling that I had. I've been teaching college for thirty years (holy crap!). I've had highs before. This was the highest. Don't take my word for it; here are some student reflections:

(1) "I went into this trip with high expectations and the trip honestly went above and beyond [them]."

(2) "The week in Ireland was a life changing experience and one I will never forget. Studying literature from Irish authors and experiencing Irish culture opened my eyes to how much more there is to Ireland than what is presented in literature."

(3) "This was the best experience and week of my life. I left Ireland with a new understanding of the world, so many amazing connections and memories that I will hold onto for the rest of my life, and a new perception of my own capabilities as a lifelong learner and person."

Our students, isolated for more than two years, needed this. They needed connection, community, travel, deep inquiry, exploration, new experiences, the opportunity to connect words on the page with places, the Abbey Theatre, Guinness, history museums, air travel, pubs, a drag bar, a parade on

St. Patrick's Day, autonomy, poetry, and lipid-rich, salty breakfasts with steaming hot tea. They needed the Emerald Isle.

So we went, Bryan Trabold and I and eighteen lucky students who will never be the same again. I spent a year in Ireland when I was a young(er) man, and during that year I saw about seven days without a drop of rain. During our week we saw six. We were being smiled upon for our efforts. I had taught abroad before, in Paris and Madrid, and know that a lot that can go wrong. I did my best to prepare us. Every class from mid-January through our departure in March, before we dug into the texts, I talked about what to expect. I told them it was better to exchange dollars for Euros at a bank than at the airport. I explained the virtues of rolling one's socks to make packing more efficient. I demonstrated how to work an umbrella. I warned all vegetarians that, in Ireland, bacon was considered a vegetable.

We got to the airport and I took out a deck of playing cards and threw it into the middle of the group. They opened it and started up a game. The bonding had begun. The bonding continued. The bonding developed. The bonding became profound. I have never seen eighteen students form the deep connections I witnessed during this week. Bryan and I deliberately held back. We checked in at breakfast. We led them through the tours, museums, and cultural sites. We were on call, but at the end of the day, we did what all teachers do: we pointed them in interesting directions and left them alone.

Was it perfect? Well... international travel regulations were in place, so we all had to test negative for you-know-what within twenty-four hours of our return trip. The transmission rate at that time was about 0.1%, so we rolled the dice. The dice won. One student tested positive and had to stay in Ireland. Seventeen (plus Bryan) flew home; the other chaperone (called Quentin) stayed, made sure the quarantined student was okay, and checked out all the sites we couldn't fit in during our week, knowing that we would return in a couple years with a better sense of what we could fit in within a week. Setback? No: opportunity. And the Irish sun kept shining. ❖

QM: There's a magic in being in a place where a work of literature was written, or where it takes place. We'd done some excellent work interpreting one of the greatest short story collections, James Joyce's *Dubliners*. During our tours, I'd point to landmarks and remind students where they'd seen references before. You could practically see the light bulbs over their heads. The whole semester was a jigsaw puzzle. The Abbey Theatre was directly related to the Easter Rebellion of 1916. The famine was related to emigration. The beauty of the place and undeniable allure of the Irish people fostered a desire for repatriation. You could see the students assembling the puzzle.

BT: I agree. Part of their puzzle-assembling process: Seeing how the literature was connected to Ireland's history, culture, food, people, and landmarks. They also learned a lot about themselves, and some of them were really transformed personally. Quite a few had never been out of the country before, and you could see their confidence growing as the trip went on. It's hard to describe. It's easy to lapse into clichés and some of the best stories are ones you can't really write because they're so intensely personal.

QM: The night at the Abbey Theatre was special: our group was split in two and we got a backstage guided tour of the historic venue before a live performance. Although W.B. Yeats was a founder of the theater, I don't know that his influence hit home until the next day when we visited a Yeats exhibit organized by the national library, full of manuscripts, photos, films, and his actual Nobel Prize. One student who had never written a poem before wrote one (about Yeats) on the spot and read it to Bryan and me.

BT: At Kilmainham Gaol, the students, who were usually laughing and boisterous as a group, were noticeably more quiet during and after the tour. That space really had a profound impact.

QM: I did suggest a traditional music pub, but they discovered a drag bar called The George where some of them went every night, and everyone went at least once. They were disappointed that Bryan and I never joined them, but we were too busy going to church and buying souvenirs for our loved ones.

On a free day half of them went to Newgrange, a prehistoric site that predates the pyramids. Those who went

described a profoundly spiritual experience. One got a tattoo commemorating it. The other half went to Croke Park, the largest sports stadium in Ireland (rugby, mostly) and were equally moved by the intersection between the entertainment and its hidden history. The entire group went to the Guinness factory, which is truly one of the more amazing cultural and historical tours in Dublin.

BT: Yes, Newgrange had a deep impact. More than one student was moved to tears at this site. From the website:

[This ancient temple is], a place of astrological, spiritual, religious and ceremonial importance, much as present day cathedrals are places of prestige and worship where dignitaries may be laid to rest.

It's over 5,000 years old. That kind of history is overwhelming, particularly, I think, for Americans. Those who went to Croke Park learned about the day that British soldiers went to the stadium and killed several civilians. Part of that puzzle-assembling experience: Irish history is linked to Irish sports.

QM: Most of these students had never been abroad before, and half of them received generous travel scholarships from a donor who only required a thank-you note. Study abroad is so valuable and shouldn't be reserved for trust fund kids. Over my two decades at Suffolk, I have asked virtually all of my advisees if they were thinking about an educational experience overseas. The vast majority answer, "I would love to, but I can't afford a year or a semester away." This class was designed with them in mind.

I witnessed the growth of a community and the growth of eighteen individuals in the space of a week. I know most students who pass through our classrooms grow and develop into better people while they're here, but we don't always witness it in real time. It was worth every minute of effort.

BT: To go from such intense isolation and anxiety during the pandemic to such intense community and joy during this trip was in many ways cathartic for everyone, students and professors alike.

QM: Part of me never wants to teach the course again because it went so wonderfully this time that I think all future iterations are going to have a tough time living up to this experience, but yes: I hope to offer it every two years. The next iteration is planned for Spring, 2024.



From left, front: John Heeran, Caleb Pongratz, Madison Hardy, Erin Field, Samira Kerkach, Darcie Billena; back: Ally Leeming, Emma Olson, Elizabeth Sherlock, Luke Starr, Hunter Berube, Hayley Gervais, Quentin Miller, Rob Stevenson, Cailee Lavoie, Katie Kilbride, Hoaka Hashimoto, Hannah Graves. Alas, Ellen Marcello is not pictured here. She had passport problems and didn't arrive until Wednesday. This was, I believe, Tuesday. —QM



That's the Kilmainham Gaol (Irish for "jail") where Irish political prisoners were held and executed (in the very yard where we stood). Tour guide (one of the best I've ever seen) is the beefy back-of-head in the foreground. From left: Samira (looking in purse), Emma (in mask), Hannah, Bryan, Elizabeth, Rob (obscured behind her), Hayley, Cailee (obscured), Caleb, John, Luke, Katie, Hoaka. Many students described this as the highlight of the cultural activities. One was moved to tears. —QM One of the highlights for me as well. Extremely powerful to be standing in the prison yard where so many of those involved in the Easter Rising were executed while a very knowledgeable tour guide provided gripping details about their final moments. One of them, James Connolly, was too injured to stand for his execution so they tied him to a chair for the firing squad. Remarkable experience. —BT



This is one of my fave photos from the trip, partly because none of these five seemed to hang out much before the trip, and partly because of the kitschy Irish stuff. This was in one of their hotel rooms: the balcony behind them overlooked Dame Street where the St. Patrick's Day parade (first in 3 years) passed by. Dude, it was mayhem. We were told by the hotel management not to go out on the balconies. (Yeah, right). That's Darcie, Hunter, Elizabeth, Cailee, and Erin. —QM One interesting fact (not the photo): the strong show of support for Ukraine during the St. Patrick's Day parade. The Irish, well, they know suffering, and their identification with and support for the Ukrainian people was truly moving. Lots of Ukrainian flags during the parade (and throughout Dublin). Also, too bad we can't include the video I took in the basement of the restaurant/bar that was attached to our hotel, in which a bartender gives me a tour of the number of kegs they ordered for St. Patrick's Day — so many they had to stack them "three high," but he said it "tree high." —BT

Publications, awards, talks, teaching news, conferences, travel

JOSÉ ANGEL ARAGUZ

Readings: from his recent book, *Rotura* (Black Lawrence Press) virtual readings at the Pandora's Box series, Pagination Bookstore series, Poetry at the Library series hosted by the Concord Free Public Library, and Warren Wilson College.

Social media: He participated in a week-long Instagram account takeover for *Bear Review*. BR invites writers to spend a week posting and sharing about their reading and writing life, including writing advice and advocacy.

Interview: *Poetry Spoken Here* podcast episode #187. <https://soundcloud.com/poetry-spoken-here/episode-187-jose-angel-araguz-on-latinx-poetics-and-his-new-book-rotura>

Poems: Recently had a total of five poems published across the following journals: *THRUSH Poetry Journal*, *The Shore*, and *Poetry is Currency*.

His latest book, *Rotura*, was reviewed by poet, scholar, and activist Urayoán Noel in "'La Treintena' 2022: 30+ Books of Latinx Poetry" for *The Latinx Project*.

BARRETT BOWLIN

Short Story: "Milk Teeth" in *Cutleaf Journal*, 22(1). <https://cutleafjournal.com/fiction/milk-teeth/>

Short Story Collection: *Ghosts Caught on Film*. Bridge Eight Press. April 2022. Print, Ebook. <http://www.bridgeeight.com/shop/ghosts-caught-on-film-april-22/>

Flash Essay. "Nails." *The McNeese Review*, 59(1): Spring 2022. Print.

LESLIE ECKEL

Paper presentation on "Editing Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century for the Next Generation(s)" at the American Literature Association conference in Chicago in May 2022.

Roundtable at the screening of *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Revolutionary* at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord. This is the first professional society presentation of the 2021 documentary film for which she was interviewed along with fellow scholars Charles Capper, Katie Kornacki, and Megan Marshall.

PETER JEFFREYS

Paper presentation: "Gothic 'In Broad Daylight': Cavafy's Debt to Poe" at the Fifth International Edgar Allan Poe Conference: Poe Takes Boston" held at the Omni Parker House, April 7-10, 2022.

Full-length biography: *Alexandrian Sphinx: C.P. Cavafy—A Poet's Life* (co-authored with Gregory Jusdanis) was accepted for publication by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. It will be the first biography of the poet to appear since 1974.

GEORGE KALOGERIS

Interview: *Recall This Book* podcast Episode 74 "George Kalogeris on Words and Places," discussing his latest poetry collection *Winthropos*. Brandeis University, February 3, 2022. <https://recallthisbook.org/2022/02/03/74-george-kalogeris-on-words-and-places-ef-jp/>

Poems: "Frigidaire," "Grape Leaves at Chloe's," "Roget's Thesaurus," "The History of the Peloponnesian War," "Teléfonos," and "Umbrella," "Memorial Day" in *Ergon: Greek /American Arts and Letters*, Spring 2022.

"The Evening Star" in *Harvard Review*, Spring, 2022. "The Evening Star" also appeared on *Poetry Daily* on May 19.

"Veil" in the anthology *Tree Lines: 21st Century American Poems*, May 2022.

Reviews: Review of *The Foreign Connection: Writing on Poetry, Art, and Translation*, (Legenda) by Jamie McKendrick, in *Essays in Criticism*, Oxford University Press, Spring 2022; Review of Anastasia Vassos's, *Nike Adjusting her Sandal*, (Nixes Mate Books) in *Lily Poetry Review*, forthcoming; Review of Carmen Bugar's *Poetry and the Language of Oppression* (Oxford University Press) for *Literary Matters*, forthcoming.

JON LEE

Essay: "Complicity & the Rise of the Post-Human Poem," *The Writer's Chronicle*, vol. 54, no. 3, Feb. 2022, pp. 62-71.

QUENTIN MILLER

Article: "John Edgar Wideman" in *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Fiction 1980-2000* (Wiley Blackwell).

The essay is an overview of Wideman's career and contributions to contemporary American literature with an emphasis on his works published since 1980, notably *Homewood Trilogy* (1981-83) and *Brothers and Keepers* (1984).

AMY MONTICELLO

Essay: "How To Tell The Story of an Ordinary Death" in *Los Angeles Review of Books* February 2, 2022. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/how-to-tell-the-story-of-an-ordinary-death/>

SALAMANDER

Salamander published its 53rd issue this spring with work by Anindita Sengupta, Inez Tan, Kathleen Winter, Minadora Macheret, Seth Leeper, Aneska Tan, Alejandro Lucero, Sarah Cedeño, and Charlotte Gross, among others.

Salamander is happy to announce the annual Louisa Solano Memorial Emerging Poet Award, generously funded by the Ellen LaForge Memorial Poetry Fund. Awarded retroactively and selected by a guest judge from the latest two issues (starting with #54 and #55), it includes a monetary prize, an announcement in a future issue, and an e-portfolio of the poet's work made available for free on the journal's website. Awardees will also be invited to participate in a virtual reading with the guest judge and virtual class visits at Suffolk.

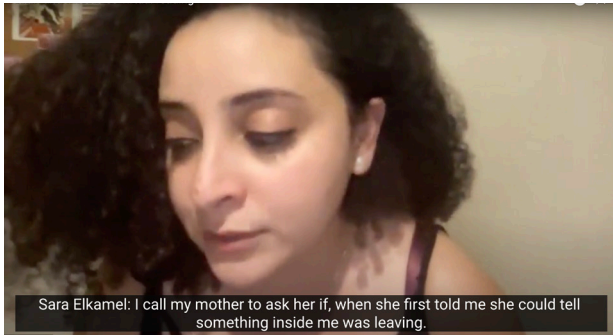
BRYAN TRABOLD

Paper presentation: "Critical Race Theory and Conservative Misrepresentation of Martin Luther King, Jr." at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. It examines how conservative opponents of critical race theory (CRT) selectively quote from King's "I Have a Dream Speech" to misrepresent his actual beliefs and teachings, and explores how teachers in states where CRT has been banned can teach King's writings and speeches in ways that are consistent with the core principles of CRT.

GERRY WAGGETT

Short stories: a Sherlock Holmes story "The Adventure of the Shared Dream" in *Mystery Magazine*, and "Operation Rat Poison" in Archer Publishing's *Dark Mirror* anthology of LGBTQ+ horror fiction, both forthcoming in October.

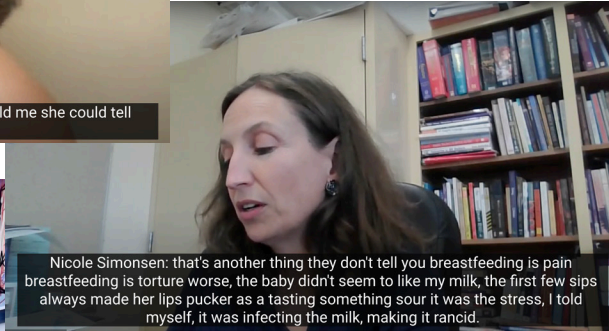
Salamander Issue 53 Virtual Reading



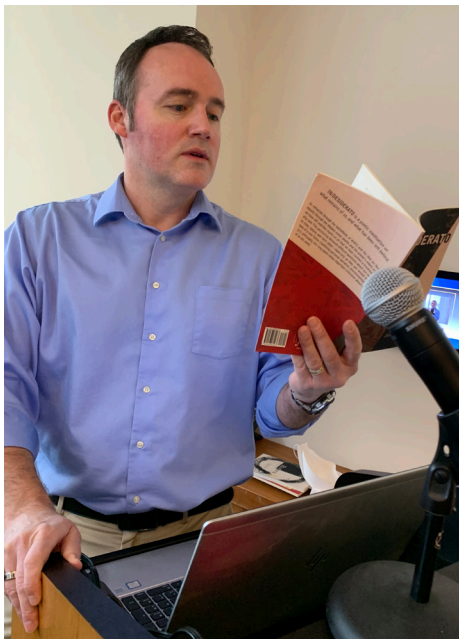
Salamander literary journal celebrated the publication of Issue 53 with virtual reading on April 7 featuring its 2021 Fiction Contest First Prize Winner Nicole Simonsen, who won for her story "Lucky, Lucky, Lucky." Joining in the event were poets Katie Marya and Sara Elkamel, along with the host, *Salamander* editor-in-chief and Suffolk Professor José Angel Araguz. You can watch the recording, along with mostly-accurate autogenerated

closed captions at <https://youtu.be/wXb3XsSBcSI>.

Visit the journal's website at <https://salamandermag.org/>.



Jon Lee's craft talk



On March 24, as part of the English Department's Faculty Lecture Series, Professor Jon Lee discusses poetry craft and the processes for writing his new poetry book, *IN/DESIDER-ATO*, a book-length poem that combines personal narrative, environmental ethic, and lyric philosophy. He also shared his poetic influences and compellingly performed work from his next collection.

A Hybrid Senior Brunch



Keeping a longstanding annual tradition, English Faculty gathered with graduating senior English majors on May 20. Many assembled in person in Suffolk's Poetry Center, while those who couldn't come to campus joined via Zoom, though they missed the excellent spread from Tatte Bakery. Above: counterclockwise from left (those whose faces are visible) Professor Bryan Trabold, Ally Peters, Isabel Abdallah, Gabriella DeComo, and Olivia Azzanto. Right: from left, Emily Piken, Samantha Chase, and Zoe Phillips.





Jacob: Portrait of Picasso 1944

I felt I was having a bifocal vision of society's betraying democracy.

28:51 I felt that my own country was going into a kind of political convulsion that terrified me and continues to terrify me, I felt I was having a bifocal vision of society's.

29:04 betraying democracy, so what I was reading and feeling and writing about 1930s France had i'm not saying it's the same thing as what was happening in the last few years here, but there were some.

29:17 unpleasant echoes the undermining of faith in basic democratic institutions in court in voting the violent repression of dissent, the persecution of minorities, xenophobia and the

Resume Transcript Auto-Scroll

During her reading and talk on April 13, Rosanna Warren, winner of the David Ferry and Ellen LaForge Poetry Prize at Suffolk University, read from her poetry and discussed her biography of French writer, poet, and painter Max Jacob (*Max Jacob: A Life in Art and Letters*) published by W.W. Norton in October 2020. Currently teaching at the University of Chicago. She is the author of six books of poetry, most recently *So Forth* (2020) and *Ghost in a Red Hat* (2011). She has published a book of literary criticism, edited a volume of essays about translation, and has received awards from the Academy of American Poets, The American Academy of Arts & Letters, the Lila Wallace Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the New England Poetry Club, among others. In her talk about Jacob, as seen in the mostly-accurate auto-generated transcript above, she described her historical research as taking on a striking and somber relevance to present-day events globally and in the U.S. "[Jacob] was arrested by the gestapo in February 1944 and died of pneumonia on March 5, 1944, at the camp at Drancy. His name was on the list for the next transport to Auschwitz." Read more from the excerpt from Warren's biography on Jacob published in *The Paris Review*: <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2020/10/14/the-death-of-max-jacob/>

Watch the full talk at: https://suffolk.zoom.us/j/649883683000?startTime=1649883683000&_x_zm_rtaid=07udz-VjsQPOTFHudQZ6WJg.1652818706927.24ff37f8ae55a6f62dcf9777a115c9d4&_x_zm_rhtaid=927



Honors thesis readings

English Honors students shared from their thesis projects in a Zoom event on April 29.

Hayley Gervais's thesis is titled "Proto-Feminist or Misogynistic Stereotype: Understanding Medieval Perceptions of Chaucer's Wife of Bath," and was advised by Professor Kaylin O'Dell.

Jordan Perry's thesis is titled "Progressive Female Heroines: A Study on Ann Radcliffe," and was advised by Professor Hannah Hudson.