

4-2011

The New Writing Series Fall 2011

English Department & National Poetry Foundation

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

GRANT APPLICATION

I. Applicant/Organization: English & National Poetry Foundation

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: Steve Evans

b. Title: Associate Professor, New Writing Series Coordinator

c. Campus Address (include Email and Telephone): 313 Neville; 1-3818; steven.evans@maine.edu

III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date(s):

The New Writing Series | Fall 2011

Eight events featuring seven poets and two fiction writers.

Most events take place on Thursdays at 4:30pm in the Soderberg Auditorium.

All events are free & open to the public.

Fiction writers Amina Cain and Ted Pelton.

Poets Ed Roberson, David Trinidad, Joshua Corey, Ken Irby, Pierre Joris,
Laura Mullen, and Rosa Alcala.

IV. Budget Proposal Form must be attached.

Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of reports for any previous grant awards, including final budget and attendance figures.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION VIA EMAIL TO: erinn.rossignol@maine.edu

For questions regarding the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series, please contact
Erinn Rossignol at 1-1591

March 31, 2011

Dear Members of the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee,

I write to request the Committee's support for the fall 2011 New Writing Series, an innovative literary arts program sponsored since 1999 by the English Department and the National Poetry Foundation.

The amount we request, \$5,000, is less than one-half of the projected operating budget for the fall Series of \$13,338. The majority of the financial support for the Series will be provided by the English Department through its Elliott and Ellis Funds. I am happy to report that the Honors College has renewed its collaborative agreement with the Series for another academic year, promising \$1000 per semester to support the Series; in renewing the arrangement Dean Slavin spoke appreciatively of the work the Series does to "to enrich the atmosphere of UMaine." We're grateful for the vote of confidence. The detailed budget appended to this letter provides an overview of projected expenses and revenue sources. Per the Committee's recent request, I have adopted the standard budget form and supplemented it with a spreadsheet that itemizes projected expenses.

The fall 2011 line-up will feature nine writers—seven poets and two fiction writers—in CA/DLS-supported events. Two of the poets—Ken Irby and Pierre Joris—are being carried forward from the spring 2011 schedule, when a bereavement in Joris's family forced us to postpone the event after their plane travel had already been arranged and paid for. There will be some costs associated with rebooking those flights, but the honoraria and other expenses related to the spring visit will not be drawn against already committed CA/DLS funding (Wanda Madden-Carr and I are in communication about this).

As the brief biographies appended to this letter demonstrate, the writers we propose to bring to campus represent a wide range of literary activity and achievement. I'm especially excited by a new initiative through which the NWS will collaborate with Cave Canem, the nationally-recognized center for African-American poetry based in Manhattan, to bring Ed Roberson back to campus for the first time since 2003. Roberson's *To See the Earth Before the End of the World*, just out from Wesleyan, promises to bring this exceptional poet to the wider national attention he richly deserves. In addition to writing eight books since 1970—there was a two decade hiatus between the second and third—Roberson's passionate interest in "limnology" has taken him to Alaska, Afognak Island, and Bermuda. Twice a team member of the Explorers' Club of Pittsburgh's South American Expeditions, Roberson has climbed mountains in the Peruvian and Ecuadorian Andes and explored the upper Amazon jungle. He was a great hit with our audience in 2003 and I'm delighted by the prospect of his return this fall.

Other writers on our proposed roster include the renowned New York School poet and editor David Trinidad, an important voice in gay literature; emerging poet and scholar of American poetry Joshua Corey; bilingual poet and translator Rosa Alcala; Laura Mullen, an experimental poet whose recent work engages with the Gulf Coast tragedy in startling

and enlightening ways; Amina Cain, a vibrant new voice in contemporary fiction who is based in Los Angeles; and Ted Pelton, full professor and current chair of Humanities at Medaille College of Buffalo, who has gained recognition over the past five or six years for his novel, two novellas, and short story collection.

New Writing Series programming has always been guided the principles of innovation, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and diversity. From the start we have also worked hard to maximize the impact of real-time events within the rapidly-changing new media context. For example, the NWS blog has received more than 43,000 page views since its creation in fall 2006 (up from 38,000 at the time of our last application). Our Facebook group, created in the fall of 2007, has more than 135 members and reaches many more people with event and Series information. The Flickr page on which we document events has received roughly 17,500 views (up from 5000 at the time of our last application). And we have been making NWS content (sound and video files) available both through our blog and through UMaine's iTunes U since April of 2008. (A list of the URLs for these projects is appended to this application.) The real-time event in front of a live audience remains our Series' anchor point, but using the web to extend brief visits into lasting on-line presences is an effective way of maximizing the return on the investment it takes to bring people to campus.

Some other reasons for supporting the NWS:

- **A cutting-edge research university with an institutional commitment to innovation deserves literary arts programming that is diverse, daring, and original.** The New Writing Series is such a program. While all modes and methods of writing fall within its ambit of curiosity, we take care to ensure that writers whose work departs from, and perhaps even challenges, dominant commercial and aesthetic assumptions are given a fair hearing. Our programming is consistently among the most diverse on the campus (and by extension in the region), foregrounding ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and sexual diversity (see the appended document "About the New Writing Series" for details). And our programming is original: no other institution in Maine, and only a few others in the country, have shown the kind of commitment the New Writing Series has toward the full-range of contemporary literary practice. We seek to confer recognition with our programming, not just to ratify judgments made somewhere up the literary food chain.

- **The New Writing Series does a lot with a little.** For what would be a modest honorarium if paid in a lump sum to a single celebrity on campus for one evening, the New Writing Series creates a coherent sequence of events that adds a distinctive dimension to the intellectual and artistic climate on campus and in the region. The honoraria we offer are low (between \$250 and \$1000) and we economize in every way we can on other expenses (see appended budget). Because the Series has an established identity—in terms of time (Thursday afternoons), place (the Soderberg Center Auditorium), and "look" (MaJo Keleshian's bold designs, echoed in our electronic publicity)—we get more out of

each individual event. This has been a key to our successful audience development. Inertia is the enemy of artistic creation: the New Writing Series creates momentum around the act of literary creation, stirring up lively conversations that resonate beyond the cube-like walls of the Soderberg Auditorium.

- **The New Writing Series has a strong local audience, but it also brings national visibility to the University of Maine.** The off-campus publicity for the New Writing Series always spotlights UMaine (rather than the English Department or the NPF): our goal is to keep Orono on the national map when it comes to the literary arts, and to emphasize that the UMS flagship campus is at the leading edge of literary artistic practice. No other college in the state or campus in the UM system can demonstrate the depth of commitment and ongoing excellence that the New Writing Series, with the Committee's support, has achieved.

- **Literary culture is an important piece in the "creative economy" puzzle.** A university campus that fails to stay in touch with contemporary literary practice is depriving itself of access to the fresh thinking that writers, often in advance of their colleagues in other disciplines, bring to the world around us. The literary arts are essential to the creation of an atmosphere of free exploration of any and all aspects of contemporary existence, an atmosphere as decisive in the sciences as in the humanities.

- **The "New" in New Writing Series.** We have been fortunate to receive Committee support for the NWS in the past and we are deeply grateful for it. But the enduring institutional framework of the Series should not mask the fact that we bring new voices and visions to campus with every fresh season of the NWS. We are, in other words, offering "new programming" for the Committee's consideration, programming that will disappear from the cultural calendar without your support.

I have included an itemized budget (using an Excel spreadsheet to supplement the also provided standard form) for the fall 2011 New Writing Series. In keeping with CA/DLS policy, we strive to offer the lowest honoraria compatible with a writer's reputation and standard fee. I will note that our typical "ceiling" of \$1000 is well below what some poets and most fiction writers (and their agents) will consider. Our standard travel policy allots to invited writers "up to \$700 for travel" and we work with individuals to minimize that expense whenever possible. Accommodations are provided by University Inn in Orono and are estimated at the appropriate seasonal rates. Meal and reception expenses **do not** factor into our request for Committee support: they are included here for informational purposes only. In those cases where scheduling or other difficulties preclude a proposed writer from participating in the Series, we seek replacements of comparable rank and reputation to fill the slot. I believe that the other items should be self-explanatory, but I am more than happy to answer any questions that may arise.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by English Department Chair Naomi Jacobs, who exercises discretion over the Elliott and Ellis Funds. It also has the unanimous the Speaker and Special Events Committee in English.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steven R. Evans
Associate Professor of English
New Writing Series Coordinator
Graduate Program Coordinator
Acting Director, National Poetry Foundation

Bio-bibliographical information (alphabetical)

Rosa Alcalá received her MFA from Brown University and her Ph.D. in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo. In 2003, *Some Maritime Disasters This Century* was published as a limited edition by Belladonna/Boog Books (New York). *Undocumentaries*, a selection of poems, is forthcoming from Dos Press. Her poems have also appeared in *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry*, edited by Francisco Aragón (U of AZ Press, 2007), and *Cinturones de óxido: de Buffalo con amor / Rust Belt Encounters: From Buffalo with Love*, translated by Ernesto Livón-Grosman and Omar Pérez (Torre de Letras, La Habana, Cuba, 2005). Alcalá has translated Cecilia Vicuña's *El Templo* (Situations Press, 2001) and *Cloud-net* (Art in General, 1999). Her translation of Vicuña's essay-poem, "Ubixic del Decir, 'Its Being Said': A Reading of a Reading of the Popol Vuh," was published in *With Their Hands and Their Eyes: Maya Textiles, Mirrors of a Worldview*, Etnografish Museum (Belgium, 2003). Alcalá's translation of *Bestiary: The Selected Poems of Lourdes Vázquez* was published by Bilingual Press in 2004. Forthcoming is a co-translation (with Mónica de la Torre) of Lila Zemborain's *Malvas Orquídeas del Mar/ Mauve Sea Orchids* (Belladonna). She has also translated poems for the forthcoming *Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry*. Her poems, translations, and reviews have been published widely in a variety of literary journals, including the *Barrow Street*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *tripwire*, *Kenyon Review*, and *Mandorla*. She has held artist residencies and has given talks and readings in the U.S., Spain, Cuba, and Scotland.

Amina Cain is the author of *I Go To Some Hollow* (Les Fignes Press), a collection of stories that revolves quietly around human relationality, landscape, and emptiness, and an upcoming chapbook, *Tramps Everywhere* (Insert Press/PARROT Series). She is also a curator (most recently for *When Does It or You Begin? Memory as Innovation*, a month long festival of writing, performance, and video) and a teacher of writing/literature.

Joshua Corey was born in Manhattan and grew up in northern New Jersey. He received his B.A. from Vassar College and went on to earn an M.A. in English literature and an M.F.A. in creative writing (poetry) at The University of Montana. For two years he was a Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford University before moving to Ithaca, where he completed his Ph.D. in English Language and Literature at Cornell in December 2007. During his time at Cornell Corey published two full-length books of poetry: *Selah* (Barrow Street Press, 2003) and *Fourier Series* (Spineless Books, 2005), and two chapbooks: *Compos(t)ition Marble* (Pavement Saw Press, 2006) and *Hope & Anchor* (Noemi Press, 2007). He also maintains a weblog, *Cahiers de Corey*, at <http://joshcorey.blogspot.com>. Corey is assistant professor of English at Lake Forest College and lives in Evanston, Illinois with his wife Emily Grayson and their daughter, Sadie Gray Core

Ken Irby was born in Bowie, Texas, in 1936 and grew up in Fort Scott, Kansas. He received degrees from Harvard, Berkeley, and the University of Kansas. After a stint in the Army (1960-62), Irby managed a tailor shop in San Francisco, then began teaching at Tufts in the early 1970s. In 1973 a Fulbright took him to Denmark, where he taught at the English Institute of Copenhagen University. He is Associate Professor of English at the

University of Kansas, Lawrence. His life's work has recently been gathered under the title *The Intent On: Collected Poems, 1962-2006* (North Atlantic Books, 2009). This will be Irby's first appearance in the New Writing Series.

Pierre Joris, born in Strasbourg, France in 1946 and raised in Ettelbruck, Luxembourg, is a poet and translator. He left Luxembourg at nineteen and since then has lived in the US, Great Britain, North Africa and France. In 1992 he returned to the Mid-Hudson valley and teaches in the Department of English at University at Albany. He has published more than twenty volumes of poetry and is a well-known translator, notably of Paul Celan's work, and anthologist, co-editing with Jerome Rothenberg the two-volume *Poems for the Millennium* for the University of California Press. Joris last read in the New Writing Series in the spring of 2006.

Laura Mullen is a Professor at Louisiana State University. She is the author of three collections of poetry—*The Surface*, *After I Was Dead*, and *Subject*—and two hybrid texts, *The Tales of Horror* (Kelsey Street Press 1999), and *Murmur* (futurepoem books 2007). Prizes for her poetry include Ironwood's Stanford Prize, and she has been awarded a Board of Regents ATLAS grant, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Rona Jaffe Award, among other honors. She has had several MacDowell Fellowships and is a frequent visitor at the Summer Writing Program at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa. Her work has been widely anthologized and is included in *American Hybrid* (Norton). Recent prose has been collected in *Civil Disobediences: Poetics & Politics in Action*, among other anthologies. Jason Eckardt's setting of "The Distance (This)" (from *Subject*) premiered at the Miller Theater in New York and was performed at the Musica Nova festival in Helsinki. She was invited to participate in the Taipei International Poetry Festival in 2009. Her fourth collection of poetry, *Dark Archive* is available from the University of California Press. Mullen is the special interest delegate in Creative Writing for the Modern Language Association 2012-2014. New work is out or forthcoming in *Action Yes!*, Cerise Press, *Ghost Town*, and *New American Writing*.

Ted Pelton has a Ph.D. in American literature from University at Buffalo and an M.A. in creative writing from University of Colorado. He is the author of four books of fiction: *Endorsed by Jack Chapeau*, a short story collection; *Bhang*, a novella; *Malcolm and Jack* (and other Famous American Criminals), a novel; and most recently, *Bartleby, the Sportscaster*, a novella.

Ed Roberson is the author of eight books of poetry, including *Voices Cast Out to Talk Us In*, a winner of the Iowa Poetry Prize, and a recent collection, *The New Wing of the Labyrinth* (Singing Horse Press, 2010). His *Atmosphere Conditions* was selected for the National Poetry Series and nominated for the Lenore Marshall Award from the Academy of American Poets. His latest book, *To See the Earth Before the End of the World*, is forthcoming from Wesleyan University Press in fall 2010. A recipient of the Lila Wallace Writers' Award and the 2008 Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, he is Distinguished Artist in Residence at Northwestern University.

David Trinidad was born in Los Angeles, California. In the early 1980s, he was one of a group of poets who were active at the Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center in Venice, California. Other members of this group included Dennis Cooper, Bob Flanagan, and Amy Gerstler. As editor of Sherwood Press, he published books by Cooper, Flanagan, Gerstler, Tim Dlugos, Alice Notley, and others. In 1988, Trinidad relocated to New York City. He received his Master of Fine Arts from Brooklyn College in 1990. He taught at Rutgers University, the New School, and Princeton University. His collection *Plasticville* (2000) was a finalist for the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize of the Academy of American Poets. In 2002, Trinidad moved to Chicago to teach at Columbia College Chicago, where he co-founded the literary journal *Court Green*. His personal papers are archived at Fales Library at New York University. In addition to his own books of poetry, Trinidad has edited *Powerless*, the selected poems of Tim Dlugos (1996), *Holding Our Own: The Selected Poems of Ann Stanford* (with Maxine Scates, 2001), and *Saints of Hysteria: A Half-Century of Collaborative American Poetry* (with Denise Duhamel and Maureen Seaton, 2007).

About the New Writing Series — A Brief History

The New Writing Series was formally inaugurated in the spring of 2000 when a proposal drafted by Steve Evans in consultation with Benjamin Friedlander and Burton Hatlen received unanimous approval from the English department's Speaker and Special Events Committee, then chaired by Welch Everman. In the twenty semesters of its existence, it has served as an instrument for investigating the state of contemporary writing here in Maine, in the U.S. and Canada more broadly, and to some extent the world (Nigerian, Australian, Jamaican, English, Chilean, and other writers have come to Orono through the Series). The Series receives primary funding through the English Department's Lloyd H. Elliott fund and has received consistent administrative support from the National Poetry Foundation, matching funds through the Cultural Affairs Committee, and co-sponsorships from a wide variety of departments and programs (the Honors College, Art, Multicultural Programs, Women in the Curriculum, Wilde Stein, Modern Languages & Classics, and others).

The primary objectives of the New Writing Series are (i) to make contemporary poetry and fiction a valued part of the cultural life at the University of Maine, (ii) to broaden the University's local, national, and international reputation as a site of vibrant cultural exchange and creativity, and (iii) to cultivate links within the University as well as between the University and area secondary schools that foster imaginative approaches to thinking about contemporary literary practices. Whereas developing an audience for individual events can be difficult, a Series creates an ongoing context for the exploration of contemporary writing and signals a more serious level of commitment to the inclusion of the literary arts in the cultural repertoire of campus and community life.

Since 2000, the Series has hosted more than 160 events, featuring more than 210 individual writers, and it has earned a loyal local audience (typical event attendance ranges between 40 and 150 people) as well as a strong national reputation. Extended residencies by Robert Creeley (between 2000-2003) and Alice Notley (2004) have been coordinated in conjunction with the Series, as has a Libra Professorship that brought four African American poets—Jay Wright, Jayne Cortez, Lorenzo Thomas, and Amiri Baraka—to campus in 2001.

A Series weblog was created in the fall of 2006 and a substantial archive of materials of research and pedagogical value (countless hours of sound recordings, videotapes of live readings, forty professional quality digital-video "Poet Profiles" of NWS participants) has been carefully gathered and organized over the years.

The New Writing Series on the Web

The New Writing Series blog (main source for NWS news)

<http://nwsnews.wordpress.com/>

The New Writing Series on Facebook (registration required)

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2511086192>

The New Writing Series on Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thirdfactory/>

The New Writing Series on UMaine's iTunes U

<http://www.umaine.edu/itunesu/>

(click "Open Umaine on iTunes U" in upper right, then scroll to
"Courses—English—New Writing Series")

The New Writing Series on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/npfvideo>

The New Writing Series on LibraryThing Local

<http://www.librarything.com/venue/18404/UMaine-New-Writing-Series>

Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Fund Budget Proposal Form

Applicant/Organization: English Department & National Poetry Foundation
 Responsible Officer: Steve Evans, Assoc. Prof., New Writing Series coordinator
 Event Title: The New Writing Series, Fall 2011
 Event Date: Thursday afternoons throughout the fall semester

Total Program Budget: \$13,338
 Amount Committed by Applicant Organization: \$7338
 Total Amount Requested from Other Funding Sources: \$1000
 Please List Sources & Amounts below:
Honors College \$1000

Amount Requested from CA/DLS Committee: \$5000*
 Revenues, if any, expected (fees, ticket sales): \$0

Budget Breakdown of Expenses and funds to be used:	CADLS	OTHER
Honoraria/Services (explain below)	\$2000	\$2000
<i>Please see attached</i>		
Travel	\$2500	\$3000
<i>Please see attached</i>		
Lodging	\$500	\$1138
Meals	\$0	\$900
Advertising	\$0	\$250
Printing	\$0	\$250
Supplies and Materials	\$0	\$0
Other (must specify below)	\$0	\$800
<i>Digital videotaping through the University Relations office</i>		

Total Expenses from CA/DLS funds: \$5000*
 Total Expenses from other funds: \$8338
 (These two totals should equal the "Total Program Budget" listed above)

*These amounts should be identical and should not exceed 50% of the total program/event budget. Please note that CA/DLS funds may not be used for receptions and do not normally fund UM employee wages. If an award is granted based on this proposal, reimbursement of expenses will not exceed the total CA/DLS request and will be limited to the types of expenditures outlined above.

my copy

Cultural Affairs Committee
and
Distinguished Lecture Series
c/o Erinn Rossignol
201 Alumni Hall
University of Maine

April 21, 2011

To: Steve Evans

From: Melissa Mayard & Dan Sandweiss, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives us great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, The New Writing Series Fall 2011, has been awarded \$5000.00.

Please contact Erinn Rossignol at 1-1591 to discuss the procedures in place for the submission of financial expenses related to this award at your earliest convenience.

The following acknowledgement is required on ALL promotional material: ***This event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series.***

Attached is a form for your use to summarize the benefits derived from this grant. This form should be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the event. Timely submission of your summary will be considered as part of any future funding requests.

The Cultural Affairs Committee members congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.

cc: Stella Santerre

CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES
GRANT REPORT FORM
New Writing Series Fall 2011

The UMaine New Writing Series received a commitment of \$5,000 from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee in support of literary programming in the fall semester of 2011.

The New Writing Series hosted seven CA/DLS-supported events in the spring, featuring poets Laura Mullen and Kathleen Ossip (September 22), Ken Irby and Pierre Joris (September 29), Ed Roberson (October 13), Joshua Corey (November 10), David Trinidad and Jason Canniff (November 17), and fiction writers Amina Cain (September 15) and Ted Pelton (November 3).

The only discrepancy between our projected line-up and the actual one was that poet Kathleen Ossip, whose *The Cold War* has been receiving national attention of late, was substituted for poet Rosa Alcala, who was unable to accept our invitation. The pairing of Ossip and Laura Mullen turned out to be a good one and the two writers, who hadn't previously met, left Maine as friends.

Total event attendance was approximately 395 people, with a very healthy average of 57 per event (which is quite large for a campus-based reading series). Both the Irby/Joris and the Trinidad/Canniff readings strained the capacity of Soderberg Auditorium. The least well-attended events still brought out approximately 40 people each.

All events were documented on digital videotape and will continue to reach interested members of the local and national community through on-line archiving.

The total operating costs for the fall season are still be calculated at this time. I will present the committee with a full expense report before the close of the calendar year.

The English Department's Elliot and Ellis Funds and the Honors College provided the remainder of support for the Series.

Detailed event information is archived for public access on the NWS blog at

<http://nwsnews.wordpress.com/category/events/>

and photographic documentation is available at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thirdfactory/>

Respectfully and gratefully submitted by Steve Evans, Associate Professor of English and NWS Coordinator.