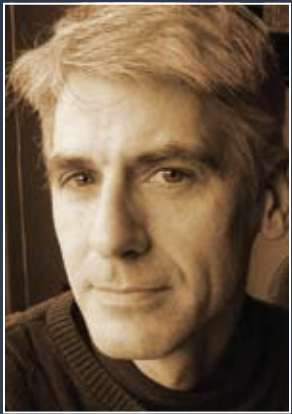


DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

James McCullough and Richard Tillinghast first planned the Bear River Writers' Conference as a place where writers from outside northern Michigan could enjoy the beauties of this place and where they could meet the writers who live here. They hoped to bring people with general literary interests together with those who were interested in writing about place and the natural environment. They hoped the mix would create new ideas that would send all the writers home with good work to continue... And they thought the shores of Walloon Lake—which had already inspired one American classic—would be a good place to help accomplish their idea. I'm pleased to report that so far it seems to be working!

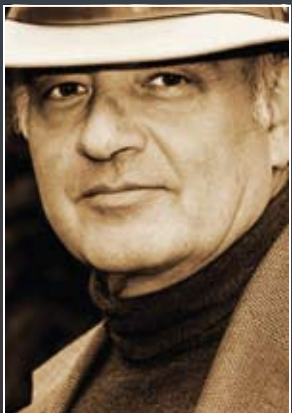


POETRY

Borrowing Matches: Writing Poetry in Response to Music and Visual Art

As writers, we are used to being inspired by our reading—look at the large number of poems with epigraphs quoting other writers. But there's also a long history of poetry's links to music and to the visual arts, and I'm hoping in this workshop to inspire poets to try new approaches that might cross over into other art forms in new and creative ways, to steal a little bit of the magic, the fire, from an artist or musician and transform it into an entirely new work of art, a poem.

Jim Daniels won the Blue Lynx Poetry Prize for his book, *Revolt of the Crash-Test Dummies* (2007). Two other books were published in 2007, his third collection of short fiction, *Mr. Pleasant*, and his eleventh book of poems, *In Line for the Exterminator*. *Street*, a book of his poems accompanying the photographs of Charlee Brodsky, won the Tillie Olsen Prize. In addition, he has edited or co-edited four anthologies, including *Letters to America: Contemporary American Poetry on Race*. He has received the Brittingham Prize for Poetry, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and two from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His poems have appeared in the Pushcart Prize and Best American Poetry anthologies. He directs the Creative Writing Program at Carnegie Mellon.



FICTION

Writing Fiction by Imitation

As my book, *The Sincerest Form: Writing Fiction by Imitation* suggests, an excellent way to improve one's own work is to pay attention to the work of others; close reading and careful writing are two sides of the one coin. We will look at examples of prose from such modern masters as Raymond Carver, Ernest Hemingway, Bernard Malamud and Flannery O'Connor, along with present-day practitioners such as Andrea Barrett, Richard Ford, Jamaica Kincaid and Lorrie Moore. The article of faith on which this workshop will be based is that Imitation is not only the sincerest form of flattery, but also a good way to grow.

Nicholas Delbanco is the Robert Frost Distinguished University Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, where he also directs the Hopwood Awards Program. His new novel, *The Count of Concord*, is his twenty-fourth book. His previous works of fiction and non-fiction include the novels, *What Remains* and *Spring and Fall*; the essay collections, *The Lost Suitcase* and *Anywhere Out of the World*; and such travel texts as *Running in Place: Scenes from the South of France*. His work has won numerous literary awards—among them the J.S. Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship and, twice, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Fiction; he was the Michigan Author of the Year in 2002. Delbanco was the Founding Director (together with the late John Gardner) of The Bennington Writing Workshops. For many years he was a regular member of the staff at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference and The New York State Writers Summer Institute.



NATURE WRITING

The Writer in Nature

Essayist and poet Mary Oliver says that she must “surround and surmount” a subject before she can write about it. We'll explore that idea and many others that can help us discover, through writing, personal connections with the natural world and fresh perspectives on our places in it. Participants will be encouraged to complete daily writing exercises and offer them for critique, with the goal of completing work suitable for publication.

Jerry Dennis has been a full-time writer since 1986 and has published essays and stories in *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Orion*, *Audubon*, *River Teeth*, and many other publications. His ten books, including *A Place on the Water*, *It's Raining Frogs and Fishes*, and *The Living Great Lakes*, have won many awards and have been translated into five languages.



POETRY/FICTION

Stepping into the Scene: How to Write with the Full Imagination

By experimenting with writing processes, and discussing the mechanics of the “scene,” we'll see how the writing experience is one that can fuse reality and dream, life and death, logic and illogic in ways that precisely render the experience we have of ourselves as both physical and time-bound beings; as beings existing in a psychological and spiritual realm that seems to have no barriers or laws. Literature can create a space between those places where “the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and incommunicable...cease to be perceived as contradictions...” (Andre Breton).

Laura Kasischke has published four novels (most recently, *Be Mine*, Harcourt, 2007), six collections of poetry (most recently *Lilies Without*, Ausable 2007), and a novel for young adults. She has published writing in *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The New England Review*, and elsewhere, and been the recipient of several Pushcart Prizes and two fellowships for the National Endowment for the Arts. Her third novel is being made into a film starring Uma Thurman, directed by Vadim Perelman. She teaches at the University of Michigan.



FICTION

Fiction and Painting(s)

What can the visual act offer us as fiction writers? How does the act of putting color on canvas resemble or differ from the act of putting thought into words? Is it possible to describe a painting? In this workshop, we'll explore some of the many ways in which painting and painters can function as subject or inspiration for fiction. In the process, we'll look at works by A. S. Byatt, Alex Miller, Chaim Potok, and Oscar Wilde, among others, and will work on short and long fiction of our own. Bring along a sketchpad (absolutely no drawing experience necessary) and a reproduction of a painting that fascinates you.

Elizabeth Kostova was born in Connecticut in 1964. She holds a B.A. in British Studies from Yale University and a M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Michigan. Her work has appeared in *Mississippi Review*, *Poets & Writers Magazine*, and *The Best American Poetry*. Her first novel, *The Historian*, (Little, Brown, June 2005) was a #1 New York Times Bestseller and is being translated into 40 languages. It has been optioned by Sony Pictures as an upcoming film. She is also co-author of a travel book entitled *1927: The Good-Natured Chronicle of a Journey*. Kostova is co-founder of the Elizabeth Kostova Foundation, which assists contemporary Bulgarian writers and translators.