



FROM THE HEAD



Bob Hasenfratz
Interim Department Head

We are very excited to launch *The English Channel* to keep you informed about what’s happening in UConn’s English Department, one of the largest and most dynamic departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Although we conceived this newsletter mainly for alums as well as our recent graduates and emeriti, even our current students and faculty may not know about all the achievements in research and teaching that we plan to highlight in these pages. Though sometimes English Departments of our size are thought of as huge service organizations that mainly teach basic skills courses, in these pages you will discover the robust research agendas of our faculty and graduate students along with a full range of their scholarly and teaching activities—teaching innovation awards,

participation in conferences, winning of grants, etc. For too long these activities have gone on in relative silence, but so much exciting and innovative work is coming out of the department that we are genuinely excited to share it with you. Our undergraduates, as you will see in these pages, are no less accomplished—you will see them emerging as writers, scholars, and thinkers.

Another focus of *The English Channel* will be to report on the life stories of our graduates and alums. Here you may read about classmates who have gone on to careers in academia, business, or nonprofit work. If you were an English major, either graduate or undergraduate, recently or long ago, we’d very much like to hear from you about where you landed and what the English major meant to you. Please email Claire Reynolds, our Communications Coordinator, with your stories (claire.reynolds@uconn.edu).

Here in the English Department we have a big-tent notion of community and want to include you in it. To that end, we’d like to invite you to attend a talk or two if you live near Storrs or are passing through. If you’d like to get notices about upcoming events, please give Claire your email address, and you’ll receive notices of talks, readings, and events we sponsor. Why not visit us for the 51st Wallace Stevens Poetry Program on April 10th, 2014? Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Paul Muldoon will be reading this year along with a number of student poets. If you do attend be sure to find me for a chat—I’d especially love to catch up with any former UConn English majors.

In this issue:

From the Head	1
New Faculty	2
Outgoing Faculty	2
Notable Events	2
Publications	3
Awards	3
Grad Landings	4
Eminent Guests	4
Prizewinning Poet: Miller Oberman	5
Writing Awards	5
Class of 2013: Alyssa Palazzo	6
Recent Grad Success: Timothy Stobierski	7





NEW FACULTY



Our department was enriched as of the Fall 2013 semester with the arrival of four talented new professors.



Bhakti Shringarpure, who received a PhD in Comparative Literature from the City University of New York, focuses on postcolonial literature and theory with an emphasis on civil wars, narratives of nation, and the figure of the “other.” She is the founder and editor-in-chief of the non-profit, online magazine *Warscapes*, which publishes art and writing from under-represented contemporary conflicts. Her current research explores revolutionary theories and leaders of decolonization and its intersections with the Cold War era. Her co-translation of Senegalese author Boris Boubacar Diop’s 2006 novel *Kaveena* is forthcoming in 2015.

Yohei Igarashi holds a PhD from New York University. His interests include poetry and poetics—particularly British Romantic poetry—literary history, 19th-century literature and science, and the histories of reading, writing, and criticism. Media studies, theories of communication, and the rhetorical tradition inform his work. He is currently working on a book manuscript, *The Poetry Channel*; an essay from this project, on Keats's negotiation of the slow process of literary reading and the comparative rapidity of modern communications, is forthcoming in *Studies in Romanticism*.



Alenda Chang received her PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. With a multidisciplinary background in biology, literature, and film, she merges ecocritical theory with the analysis of contemporary media. Current projects include *Playing Nature*, a proposed ecological philosophy of digital games, as well as new and ongoing research into economic futures in science fiction and sound in nature documentary.

Alenda maintains the Growing Games blog, a resource for game studies, environmental humanities, and ecomedia scholars, and has published in *Ant*, *Spider*, *Bee*, *The Information Society*, *Qui Parle*, and *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*.



Grégory Pierrot, whose research explores cultural production at the crossroads of French, English, American, and African diasporic influences, holds a PhD from Pennsylvania State University. He co-authored a scholarly edition of Marcus Rainsford’s *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti* (Duke University Press) and has published in *Criticism* and *The African American Review*. He is currently translating into English Philippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli’s *Free Jazz/Black Power* for the University Press of Mississippi and is working on a book project exploring the black avenger trope in Atlantic Literature.

OUTGOING FACULTY

Five members of the department retired this year. With much appreciation for many years of service and friendship, we bid adieu to **Donna Hollenberg**, **Jonathan Hufstader**, **Tom Jambeck**, **Jack Manning**, and **Sam Pickering**. Also, **Sherry Harris** plans to retire this May. We wish you the best and hope to see more of you in years to come.

NOTABLE EVENTS

The **50th Annual Wallace Stevens Poetry Program** in April featured poet **Susan Howe**, who presented the 50th Anniversary Lecture and gave a reading of her poetry.

Pulitzer Prize winner **Paul Muldoon** will be our guest in Storrs at the Alumni Center at 7pm on April 10 for the program’s 51st Anniversary. Muldoon is described by *The Times Literary Supplement* as “the most significant English-language poet born since the second World War.” This event is free and open to the public.

On April 16, eminent Irish writer **Anne Enright** presented the 2013 **Elizabeth Shanley Gerson Irish Literature Reading**. **Belinda McKeon** opened with a reading, and **Colm Toibín** closed the program.

Belfast novelist **Glenn Patterson**, our 2014 Gerson reader, will join us in the Bishop Center 146 at 7pm on April 8. Author of 8 novels since 1988, Patterson also produces documentaries for the BBC. His habitual theme is reevaluation of the recent Northern Irish past, particularly “The Troubles.” His most recent novel is *The Mill for Grinding Old People Young* (2012).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Gina Barreca. *Make Mine a Double; Babes in Boyland: A Personal History of Coeducation; Vital Ideas: Sex.*
- Lynn Bloom. *The Arlington Reader: Canons and Contexts.* 3rd ed.
- Margaret Breen, ed. *Good and Evil.*
- Pam Brown, ed. *As You Like It: Texts and Contexts.*
- Julie Choffel. *The Hello Delay.*
- Martha Cutter. "Editor's Introduction" *MELUS*; "Skinship: Dialectical Passing Plots in Hannah Crafts' *The Bondwoman's Narrative*"; "White versus Black Justice."
- Joseph Darda. "When is Postwar?"
- Darcie Dennigan. *Madame X*; "The Lina Lamont Notebook: Excerpt from 'Why is Being a Female Anathema to Being an Absurdist.'"
- Anna Mae Duane, ed. *The Children's Table: Childhood Stories and the Humanities.*
- Clare Eby, ed. *Cambridge History of the American Novel.*
- Sean Forbes. *Providencia: A Book of Poems*; "Discovery"; "Survivals."
- Wayne Franklin, ed. *Norton Anthology of American Literature.* 8th ed.; *Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter 8th ed.*
- Leigh Grossman. *Sense of Wonder.*
- Christina Henderson. "Sympathetic Violence: Maria Stewart's Antebellum Vision of African American Resistance."
- Patrick Hogan. *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories*; *Ulysses and the Poetics of Cognition*; "Literary Aesthetics: Beauty, the Brain, and Mrs. Dalloway"; "Parallel Processing and the Human Mind: Re-Understanding Consciousness with James Joyce's *Ulysses*."
- Donna Hollenberg. *A Poet's Revolution: the Life of Denise Levertov.*
- Clare Costley King'oo, *Miserere Mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England.*
- Charles Mahoney, ed. *A Companion to Romantic Poetry.*
- Richard Peterson. *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson.* 2nd ed.
- Sydney Plum. "Glooscap Makes America Known to the Europeans."
- Tom Recchio. "Adapting Mary Barton: History, Research, Possibilities."
- Lisa Sanchez. *The Stories I Read to Children: The Life and Writing of Pura Belpré, the Legendary Storyteller, Children's Author, and New York Public Librarian.*
- Cathy Schlund-Vials. *Modeling Citizenship: Jewish and Asian American Writing; War, Genocide, and Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work.*
- Jeffrey Shoulson. *Fictions of Conversion: Jews, Christians, and Cultures of Change in Early Modern England.*
- Fiona Somerset. *Wycliffite Spirituality*; "Lollards, Devotion, and Knowledge from an English Perspective"; "Textual Transmission, Variance, and Religious Identity among Lollard Pastoralia."
- Kathleen Tonry, ed. *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth Century.*
- Amber West. "Second Date"; "Artifacts of our Affection."
- Sarah Winter. *The Pleasures of Memory: Learning to Read with Charles Dickens.*

AWARDS

Professor **Lynn Bloom** had a July/August Fulbright Specialist appointment to University of Waikato, New Zealand. She has since joined the University of Waikato's Doctoral Research and Writing Unit as an Honorary Professor.

Professor **Eleni Coundouriotis** was named to the editorial board of *Humanity: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development.*

Jason Courtmanche received the 2013-2014 Teaching Scholar Award for excellence in teaching from the UConn Institute for Teaching and Learning.

Joseph Darda received the 2013 Sidgel/McDaniel Award for Graduate Student Research from the Philip Roth Society.

Professor **Tom Deans** received the 2012 Provost's Early Career Faculty Award from the Office of Public Engagement. Much of Deans's teaching focuses on writing courses with direct public engagement through community/university partnerships.

Professor **Margaret Higonnet** was elected as a member of the MLA Executive Council.

Professor **Patrick Hogan** received the CLAS Excellence in Research Award for the 2012-2013 Academic Year.

Professor **Stephen Jones** was executive producer of Telemark Film's documentary *The Real McCoy*, which the National Academy for Television Arts & Sciences, Boston New England Chapter, nominated for five Emmy Awards.

Associate Professor **Clare Costley King'oo's** *Miserere Mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* won the Conference on Christianity and Literature's Book of the Year Award.

Professor Emerita **Marilyn Nelson** was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She will serve a 6-year term, acting on behalf of the Academy as an "ambassador of poetry in the world at large."

The University of Connecticut Alumni Association honored Professor **Sam Pickering** as a 2013 Alumni Association Distinguished Professor. The award, given every three years, is the highest honor the Alumni Association bestows on faculty who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Associate Professor **Cathy Schlund-Vials** received the 2013 Early Career Award from the Association for Asian American Studies.

Amber West won a Workshop Grant from *Poets & Writers* to support the NYC Puppets & Poets Festival.



GRAD LANDINGS



Lindy Brady (PhD '12) secured a tenure-track position as the Anglo-Saxonist in University of Mississippi's Medieval Studies Program.

Lauren Davis (PhD '12) accepted a Visiting Assistant Professorship at St. Lawrence University, where she will teach her specialties of US and Irish literature.

Kristin Weiss (BA '13) has a full scholarship to Wake Forest University for her MA in English.

Ivy Stabell (PhD '13) has a tenure-track position at Iona College, New Rochelle, New York.

Molly Ferguson (PhD '10) is tenure-track at Lindsey Wilson College, Columbia, Kentucky.

Monica Dimauro (PhD '12) secured a permanent appointment at Florida State College, Jacksonville.

Patti Taylor (PhD '12), **Jonathan Kotchian** (PhD '12), and **Jennifer Holley** (PhD '12) have 3-year post-docs at Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.

Mary-Elizabeth Lough (PhD '11) has a second-year appointment at Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts.

Mandy Sur-Sytsma (PhD '13) accepted a 1-year appointment at Emory University, Atlanta.

Amanda Smith (PhD '12) has a tenure-track job at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She will teach both composition and British literature.

Karen Li Miller (PhD '08) has a second-year appointment at Trinity College, Hartford.

Peter Sinclair (PhD '09) had a 3-year appointment at Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven.

EMINENT GUESTS

Michael Gardiner

Our Neag Distinguished Visiting Professor this year is Michael Gardiner, Professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. He is teaching two undergraduate classes—"Modern British Short Story" and "Fiction and the Break-up of Britain." His Neag lecture on April 16 at 3:30pm in Austin 217 (Stern Lounge) is open to the public.

Gardiner studied at Oxford, Goldsmiths, and St. Andrews, and has taught at Japan Women's University, Chiba University, and Aberdeen University. He researches British 20th-century cultural history, the politics of modernism, and comparative modernism and Euro-Japanese exchange. In addition to fiction and biography, his publications include *The Constitution of English Literature* (2013) and *The Return of England in English Literature* (2012).

Mary McGlynn

Our 2013 Neag Professor was Mary McGlynn, who taught "Film and Literature" and "Narrative Theory and British Detective Fiction" and delivered a public lecture titled "Meritocracy and Magical Thinking in Blair-Era British Films and Literature."

Department Chair and Associate Professor of English at Baruch College and co-chair of Columbia University's Irish Studies Seminar, McGlynn specializes in British and Irish literatures of the 20th century. She studies James Kelman, Roddy Doyle, and other contemporary Scottish and Irish writers, as well as film, country music, cultural studies, and Irish America. Her articles have appeared in *Critique*, *Studies in the Novel*, *Scottish Studies Review*, and other academic journals. Palgrave Macmillan published her book, *Narratives of Class in New Irish and Scottish Literature*, in 2008.

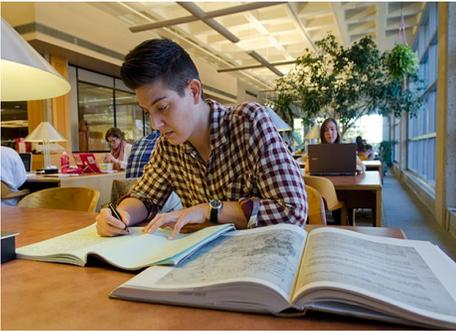
Joseph M. Flora

In February, 2013, we were glad to host our first-ever Guest Professor, Joseph M. Flora from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. At UNC, Flora served as Associate Dean of the Graduate School and as chair of the English Department. Named Atlanta Professor of Southern Culture in 2001, he has also been Acting Director for the Center for the Study of the American South and president of the Western Literature Association, the Thomas Wolfe Society, and the South Atlantic MLA.

A widely published scholar of American and British literature and the American West and South, Flora kept an active schedule, snow storms notwithstanding—meeting with grad students about academic publication and careers in editing; teaching undergrad classes; and working at several area high schools with the Connecticut Writing Project. He also visited the Avery Point campus, where he participated in the UConn Reads project on *The Great Gatsby*, and he took part in a panel discussion at the Dodd Center with Professors Ellen Litman and Anne D'Alleva on *Gatsby*, where he drew a fine connection between that book and James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Flora's extensive body of work includes bibliographical and critical studies of Southern literature, the co-edited *Southern Writers: A New Biographical Dictionary* (2006), and books on Vardis Fisher, William Ernest Henley, and Ernest Hemingway. He serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals and has published in *Sewanee Review*, *Southern Literary Journal*, and *Mississippi Quarterly*, among others. His most recent article, "Ernest Hemingway and T.S. Eliot: A Tangled Relationship," appears in *Hemingway Review* 32.1 (Fall 2012).

POETRY GRADUATE STUDENT WINS NATIONAL TRANSLATION PRIZE



When graduate student Miller Oberman heard that she had won *Poetry* magazine's John Frederick Nims Memorial Prize for Translation—whose past winners include

Pulitzer Prize-winners and National Book Award-winners—for her translation of an Old English rune poem, she was incredulous.

“At first I thought it was some sort of mistake,” says Oberman, a third-year PhD student in the Department of English. “But it also solidified something for me. Some people have asked, ‘Why are you doing this? You study contemporary poetry.’ This language is one ancestor of our language, and it can still speak to us.”

Oberman, a contemporary poet, won the national award for her translation of the 8th-century “Old English Rune Poem” by an unknown writer. She is the first student to win the award in the 13-year history of the prize. Her original manuscript of contemporary poetry was also a finalist in the National Poetry Series.

Oberman says the theme of invention draws a strong connection between Old English and contemporary poetry.

“When people were just starting to write things down in English for the first time, they just didn’t have a word for things all the time, so they would have to make it up,” says Oberman. “So there’s constant invention, and that is really what contemporary poetry is all about, finding new ways of saying things that are exciting.”

In her translation notes, Oberman says that one unique aspect of “Old English Rune Poem” is the poet’s clear attempt to preserve the runic aspect of pagan culture. She says Old English poems, written roughly between the 5th and the 11th century, are one of the only links to the Germanic paganism that existed in England before Christianity.

“When Britain became Christian, it was right around the same time that people were starting to write things down in English,” says Oberman. “So we know almost nothing about the pagan history of Britain, which is why I think the runes are important to know about.”

Oberman explains that, unlike traditional medieval scholars, she is interested in translating Old English poems while maintaining the original poetic form.

“Some medievalists are translating this as close [as possible] to the original meaning, which is why they will translate a poem as prose,” says Oberman “Poems are more than the literal meanings of their words—they are made of

sound, form, and rhythm. I try to bring the skills of a scholar and a poet to my translations.”

Apart from her work in translation, Oberman also teaches freshman English in Storrs.

“I let my students know that no matter what, they are going to have to write and express themselves,” she says, “because you are going to have to express yourself if you want a job or even a date.”

Associate Professor of English Penelope Pelizzon says Oberman’s exceptional character and talent as a poet have contributed to her success in the classroom.

“I believe Miller will be one of the next generation’s significant poetic voices,” says Pelizzon. “This is a person whose intelligence and artistry is matched by humor, self-effacing wit, and generosity as an artist and teacher.”

Oberman hopes that more people will become interested in translation as a way of giving new meaning to poetry.

“I think people like reading because it’s a way of time travel. You can go stand in Eliot’s or Gertrude Stein’s world,” says Oberman. “But when you translate, you add to that world.”

—Samantha Ruggiero ('14), *UConn Today*, October 30, 2013



2014 CREATIVE WRITING AWARDS

Congratulations to the 2014 winners of the English Department’s creative writing awards.

Edward R. and Frances Schreiber Collins Literary Prizes:

Poetry—**Katherine Monica**; Prose—**Julie Bartoli**

Jennie Hackman Memorial Prize for Fiction:

Julie Bartoli, Kyle Piscioniere, Amy Martin

Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest:

Miller Oberman, Amber West, Katherine Monica

Aetna Children’s Literature Award: **David Smith**

Aetna Creative Nonfiction Awards:

Undergraduate: **Michael Antony Jefferson II,**

Danilo Machado

Graduate: **Kristina Reardon, Erick Piller, Abigail**

Fagan

Long River Graduate Writing Award: **Kerry Carnahan**

Edwin Way Teale Nature Writing Awards:

Undergraduate: **Rebekah Ruhe**

Graduate: **Kerri Brown**



CLASS OF 2013

ALYSSA PALAZZO, FUTURE WRITER, ADVOCATE



It is hard to imagine that award-winning non-fiction author Alyssa Palazzo, a senior English major and women’s studies minor from Glastonbury, failed her English classes in middle school.

“I was a really avid reader, but my writing was horrible,” says Palazzo. “But then in 8th grade my writing really picked up.”

Since then, Palazzo has become involved in numerous creative writing projects, including working for UConn’s Creative Writing Program, writing press releases, and coordinating events for writers visiting UConn’s campus.

Sean Forbes, acting director of the Creative Writing Program and adjunct professor in the English Department, says Palazzo is a very hard worker.

“Alyssa is just really trying to leave her mark at UConn,” says Forbes.

Aside from her work at the Creative Writing Program, Palazzo has won numerous honors, including the 2012 Aetna Creative Non-Fiction Award for a piece called “Leave-Taking,” and again this year for a piece called “End Time.” Palazzo also won the 2012 and 2013 Collins Literary Prize.

Palazzo’s writing, including “Leave-Taking” and “End Time,” is inspired by her desire to speak out against domestic violence.

“People just don’t talk about sexual abuse and domestic violence,” says Palazzo. “When you put a feminist twist on your work, you get criticized.”

Palazzo got a taste of negative criticism from readers when *The Hartford Courant* published her short essay about violence against women in its young essayist column called “Fresh Talk” this February.

“I had one awful comment, but then I got eight emails from people saying how happy they were that I wrote about domestic violence,” Palazzo says.

Apart from creating her own work, Palazzo also enjoys working with other authors as the editor-in-chief of UConn’s

award-winning literary magazine, the *Long River Review*. The *Long River Review*, in conjunction with UConn’s Design Center, publishes a collection of UConn students’ fiction, non-fiction, poetry, original translations, and artwork.

“We really try to publish work that makes us physically react,” says Palazzo. “We want pieces that evoke an emotion.”

Darcie Dennigan, assistant professor-in-residence in the English Department and faculty advisor for the *Long River Review*, says Palazzo has an ambitious vision for the magazine.

“The *Long River Review* is supposed to be student-run, but from what I understood from faculty who have overseen the course in the past, that meant lots of faculty intervention. Not so with Alyssa,” says Dennigan. “She has a vision for the journal, and I work with her to help her execute it if I can.”

Palazzo has been working hard to raise money to have a full color cover for this year’s magazine to be released this month. The *Long River Review* staff came up with an entertaining fundraising strategy. If they raised \$300 by March 15, they would perform Romeo and Juliet in tights in the middle of Fairfield Way.

The *Long River Review* surpassed its goal and raised over \$400, and although it was not enough to cover the expenses of a full color cover, Palazzo says they are in the process of planning what will surely be an amusing performance.

According to Palazzo, people should support the work that *Long River Review* publishes because of literature’s incalculable worth – “when you read the magazine and find these little moments of happiness,” she says. “We’re producing work that will be cherished forever.”

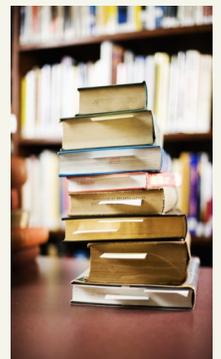
In the future, Palazzo says she is interested in pursuing a career in women’s advocacy, but immediately after graduation, she would like to go back to Manhattan and work for W.W. Norton & Co. where she interned last summer.

“I want to go into publishing; I want to be a writer; I want to go into politics,” says Palazzo. “There’s just so much I want to do.”

—Samantha Ruggiero (14), *UConn Today*, April 4, 2013

SUPPORT ENGLISH

We are grateful for the generosity of our many donors—students and their parents, faculty, staff, and others—which allows us to fund scholarships and bring a rich array of learning opportunities to the community. You may donate to the English Department on the secure giving page for **CLAS**; click “Other Gift Designation,” and type in English Department and the specific fund, if any.





The first two years after graduation have been busy for Timothy Stobierski ('11).

Stobierski's first collection of poetry—*Chronicles of a Bee Whisperer*—was released by River Otter Press in the fall of 2012. A short time later, he learned that six of his poems had been nominated for a coveted Pushcart Prize, the literary awards handed out annually by Pushcart Press to honor the best short stories, poetry, and essays published by small presses in America. And a few months ago, he was invited to talk about his book on “The Faith Middleton Show” for Connecticut Public Radio and WNPR.

Not bad for a first-time young author.

“It still doesn't feel quite real, it's strange,” says Stobierski, who, at the time of this interview, was doing freelance writing and editing jobs while working a regular gig stocking produce at a local market. “No one at the store knows [about the book or the Pushcart nominations]. I don't want them to know. I get the feeling they would look at me differently if they knew.”

Stobierski's genuine humility belies his significant talent.

English professor Regina Barreca—who mentored Stobierski as a student in her creative non-fiction class and authored the preface to his book—has this to say about her former student's first published work: “Stobierski's insight into the shadowed corners and sealed-off cupboards of family life ... illustrate both his knowledge of and his willingness to subvert conventional form. ... While Stobierski has a remarkable perspective on the potential claustrophobia of family and familiarity, the flashing sharpness of his wit, his awareness of the dangers of intimacy, and his fierce involvement with the nuances of language guard his poems against sentimentality. The undercurrent of possible—even if unpremeditated—savagery is rarely far from the surface of even his lightest pieces.”

Chronicles of a Bee Whisperer is filled with bits and pieces of Stobierski's life fused with dreamscapes from his imagination that are at times beautifully romantic and, at others, hauntingly dark. Stobierski says his poetry often gives a voice to characters that otherwise might not be heard. Themes of family, sustenance, and loneliness emerge in poems both poignant and playful. Stobierski, who cites Billy Collins as one of his favorite artists, admits he has a fascination with words. His playful style is evident in poems like “Falling to Pieces”:

I fell to pieces today in the kitchen/where a shard of me got stuck/in my older brother's toe./I asked him if it hurt and he said no;/I asked if I could have it back and he said/finders keepsers/and scampered away/to compare it to the other bits of me/he's hoarded over the years.

The piece ends on a soft note.

I'm going to fall to pieces tomorrow in the bedroom/somewhere in the void between the sheets,/and you're going to do the same./We'll look at the pieces and trade with each other/and if you end up with the green of my right eye,/I'll take your irrational fear of socks and say/fair trade/and we can work on putting each other back together,/stronger for the glue.

Stobierski plays with the reader again in “Gastronomica,” where he offers a new take on a boyfriend sampling his girlfriend's cooking.

My girlfriend puts her heart and soul/into everything she cooks,/and it's nice to know she loves me enough/to tear out those essentials and share —/don't get me wrong —/but I don't think she realizes just how chewy valves can be,/or how difficult it is to eat a waffled soul,/however much syrup is applied./Some things go down easier than others, /and Eggos are certainly kinder on the stomach.

Stobierski says he wrote most of the poems featured in the book during his last two years of college, when he was working for UConn's literary journal, the *Long River Review*. He credits Barreca, associate professor Penelope Pelizzon, and English professors-in-residence Sharon Bryan and Darcie Dennigan with having the most significant influence on his writing.

The title of the book comes from a poem that Stobierski wrote while attending classes at UConn. While *Chronicles of a Bee Whisperer* tells us the story of the first time Stobierski was stung by a bee, it also reflects a larger tale of a young man's struggle to find himself and his place in a world fraught with bees of all sorts.

There was a brother once—whether he was mine/I can't recall—but he taught me the syntax/the secret language of bees./I was eight, and he had just scooped /a bumblebee out of our dog's water dish,/and it sat there in his palm, vibrating itself dry./It was a wet cat of a bee;/it had gone too close to the water's edge and fallen in/and would have drowned, /save this brother fished him out./It stayed nestled in his hand 'til dry,/and that next spring my mother's roses bloomed/with a fervor I've not seen before nor since.

Some men wear a beard of bees,/some harvest honey,/some acupunct their clients with a sting on the joints/to relieve a decade-old arthritic ache./To each his own./I sit in the clover and listen to bee songs—/their hungry songs, their happy songs,/their working songs, their lusting songs—I listen/and whisper my response and we are brothers, sisters/in the clover.

“The poem that the book takes its name from is about a character that grows up surrounded by bees in various ways,” Stobierski says. “It is sort of mystical in its feel and aspect, and I think the title and the poem best capture the overall sense of the book.”

Looking forward, he says he would love to make a living as a writer and that he will always write. He has had several internships in the publishing world and enjoyed them, but is currently employed as an assistant to a project manager at a software development firm. He misses the college atmosphere.

“UConn was extremely influential on me,” Stobierski says. “It was a big four years of my life. It helped me come to terms with myself as a writer and as a person. It's your first time away from home, you're experimenting with different personalities, who you are and who you want to be. I can't think of a place I would have rather spent those years than at UConn.”

—Colin Poitras, *UConn Today*, May 24, 2013