

New Writers Award Newsletter



Great Lakes Colleges Association
This newsletter is available online at www.glca.org

November 2018

Albion • Allegheny • Antioch • Denison • DePauw • Earlham • Hope • Kalamazoo
Kenyon • Oberlin • Ohio Wesleyan • Wabash • Wooster

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the GLCA New Writers Award Newsletter! We have created this venue for faculty members and others who are involved in the teaching of creative writing at member colleges of the GLCA. Our purpose is to provide enhanced knowledge of the New Writers Award, its winning authors, and the opportunities for scheduling these writers for visits to your campuses.

In reporting visits that winning writers of fiction, poetry, or non-fiction have made to our GLCA colleges, we hope to underscore the impact that this program can make on students and faculty of your writing community. We seek to generate heightened enthusiasm about the potential of this program to help interested students learn from the achievement of literary artists who have published a first volume in one of these genres. From its inception in 1970, the NWA's goal has been to

help undergraduate students be inspired by literary artists, learn more about the craft of writing in different genres, and better understand the life of writing from authors who are often in early stages of a literary career.

The audience for this newsletter includes faculty from across our GLCA institutions. Specifically it includes all current faculty members who have served as judges of the New Writers Award, faculty members we know who teach creative writing, faculty who serve as Campus Contacts for the Award, and chief academic officers.

Some of these groups are overlapping, and we'll make sure you don't receive a mailing twice. On the other hand, there may be some interested faculty whom we do not know. Please send us names of any of your colleagues who should be added to our list.

THIS YEAR'S WINNING WRITERS AND SCHEDULED VISITS, TO DATE

The winners of the 2018 New Writers Award for fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction are beginning to make their visits to GLCA campuses, where they give readings, meet and talk about writing with students and faculty members.

The 2018 winner for Creative Non-fiction is **Hilary Plum**, *Watchfires*, published by Rescue Press. Our GLCA judges note, "It's a fascinating and intimate work that can be read as memoir, as essay, as poetry, as history, or as meditation. It is important in terms of craft and in subject. Compelling, moving, and formally inventive narrative, it is a book that bears rereading."

The 2018 winner for Poetry is **Chen Chen**, *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities*, published by BOA Editions, Ltd. Our GLCA judges note, "This collection is by turns comic, dark, self-obsessed, playful, and restless. This is a book whose narrator is bursting at the seams with energy

because he has so much to say."

The 2018 winner for Fiction is **Emily Fridlund**, *History of Wolves*, published by Atlantic Monthly Press. Our GLCA judges note, "*History of Wolves* presents a strong narrative voice that brilliantly interweaves dramatic actions, emotional upshots, and character development. The subject matter is difficult and significant. Fridlund depicts the beauty of the natural world and the frailty of the human one. Layered, raw, and heartbreaking, *History of Wolves* tells a story that is both intimate and monumental."

A fuller account of the judges' statements and the list of last year's judges may be found at [this link](#).

An author's appearance on campus proves to be an engaging and invigorating experience for the students, faculty, and the authors. The authors have scheduled or conducted visits at the campuses listed below.



Hilary Plum (Creative Non-fiction)

Kenyon, Nov 7
Denison, Feb 14-15
Hope, March 7-8
Albion, April 8
Earlham, TBD



Chen Chen (Poetry)

Denison, Oct 16 (past)
Earlham, Oct 18 (past)
Albion, Feb 14
Hope, March 7
DePauw, April 10
Kenyon, April 24



Emily Fridlund (Fiction)

Kenyon, Nov 8
Wabash, Nov 28-29
Denison, Feb 14-15
Albion, March 14
Earlham, TBD

CAMPUS VISITS: SCHEDULED, AND AVAILABILITIES

The chances of finding a suitable date greatly increase when a campus can offer two or three dates that work. Allowing lead time for the requests can also be helpful in securing dates for the writers. A useful planning tool is the online New Writers Award calendar, available by clicking [here](#). The calendar allows a Campus Contact or others to see likely dates when a visit from a writer could be scheduled. Please contact [Colleen Monahan Smith](#) at GLCA to initiate scheduling requests.

Potential Savings: One Outing, Two Visits

If a writer's visit to the Midwest involves air travel, considerable cost savings can result if two or more colleges work to invite a writer to their campuses on consecutive days. For a current list of Campus Contacts for the New Writers Award,

please contact the GLCA office.

If you know that your college wishes to invite a given writer to visit, we strongly encourage you to reach out to the Campus Contact of a nearby college to see if it would be possible for the two colleges to schedule a writer's visit on two consecutive days. When that arrangement succeeds it reduces travel cost as well as wear and tear on a writer. The GLCA can help explore options for coordinating visits.

SHARE YOUR STORIES!

Last year we asked faculty members who have been involved with NWA campus visits to describe the impact of a writer's presence on campus. We received several moving testimonials in response. Some samples of what our faculty members wrote:

I have found it invaluable to bring GLCA New Writers Award winners to campus to visit classes, give readings, and have dinner with small groups of students. It is an extraordinary opportunity and very inspiring for budding writers to read new excellent work in the genre they're studying and then get to engage with the writer in deeply meaningful ways. Students often let me know this is the kind of experience they'd hoped to have in choosing a small liberal arts school.

The visit by Randall Horton (author of "Hook", the 2017 GLCA nonfiction New Writers Award), had a HUGE impact on two of my courses. Horton was an especially fantastic presence here as a writer of color; it's clear from the number of students of color who asked questions during his presentation and/or spoke with him afterwards that his visit meant a lot to them.

Angela Pelster (author of the GLCA nonfiction New Writers Award-winning "Limber") visited campus in Spring 2016.

As one of the judges who gave her the award, I was delighted by the opportunity to host this marvelous writer. In anticipation of her reading and campus visit, I gave students in one of my seminars her essay "Meditations on a Tree Frog" from Limber. In addition to a close reading for discussion with the author when she visited the class, I also gave them a writing assignment: "Write a piece between 250 and 300 words that is inspired in form and approach by Pelster's essay. The essays written in response to Limber, some of which we had the exciting experience of discussing with Pelster at the seminar table, were without exception excellent work. Later that day, Angela Pelster's wonderful reading, to a packed house, concluded with a very lively Q&A. What a rich experience for us all.

We ask that you consider writing a brief passage that describes the effect that the New Writers Award, or a given writer's visit, has produced on your campus. You might also ask your students to write a short account of what it meant to read and meet with a particular writer. This newsletter could be an apt forum for sharing selections from these accounts. We invite you to send your reflections to [Greg Wegner](#) or [Colleen Monahan Smith](#) of the GLCA.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

This year there were 155 submissions to the New Writers Award. Three panels of judges, each consisting of three faculty members who teach creative writing at our GLCA colleges, will begin their deliberations later this fall with a goal of identifying

a short list of contenders and then choosing a winning author in the categories of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction.

Winners of the upcoming year will be announced in January of 2019.

If you are interested in having an author visit your campus, please contact [Greg Wegner](#) (wegner@glca.org) or [Colleen Monahan Smith](#) (smith@glca.org) at the GLCA.

