

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

A Place of Origin	1-2
Interview: Kristin Naca	1-2
Locality and Literature	2
October Babes	3
We like to Read	3
Happenings	4
Contact Information	4

Essays: A Place of Origin

Notes from Kayla Nussbaum's field journal taken on Prof. Wang Ping's canoe trip. Also, Amy Shaunette '10 studies Sweden through books.

Kayla Nussbaum '13 didn't expect to get into Professor Wang Ping's poetry class, "Rivers, Humans and Environmental Justice," much less embark on a journey down the Minnesota River. But when she did, she suddenly found herself pleasantly uprooted.

The class left on September 11th in the midst of a thunderstorm. The caravan, lead by Professor Ping (English) and co-instructor Martin Gunderson (Philosophy), arrived on a Sioux reservation near the mouth of the Upper Minnesota River later that day. After canoeing to the lower part of the river, the class bonded over a campfire, documenting their experiences along the way through visual and written media.

"We had to speak about something that impacted us in our life," Nussbaum said. "I got close to my classmates in a way that



Students of Professor Wang Ping's poetry class explore the Minnesota River.

seems unique for an English class. It was helpful to have that back story. It made critiquing my peers' writing an intimate process. We're all friends now. Even with the professors."

Renowned poet Allison Hedge Coke, who recently spoke at Macalester, accompanied the crew. Hedge Coke drew the students' attention to the location of their camp, where they were asked to keep a field journal of notes, poems, photos and sketches focusing on their impres-

NAME THE NEWSLETTER!

Think you have a clever name for the department newsletter? Submit to abrailov@macalester.edu.

Interviews: Kristin Naca

Professor Kristin Naca recently published her first book of poetry, *Bird Eating Bird* (HarperCollins). She is currently teaching "American Voices" at Macalester, focusing on Chicano@ writers, particularly poets. Since her arrival at Macalester she has been delighted to find that her students and fellow colleagues are open, ambitious, and excited to learn and share

their experiences. Still, Naca reports, her Filipino heritage and deep roots in Hispanic communities, most recently in Texas, did combine to produce some major culture shock upon her arrival here in Minnesota.

Professor Naca finished her book in April of 2008, and it was picked by Pulitzer Prize winner Yusef Komunyakaa for

the National Poetry Series mtvU prize. Komunyakaa is best known for his "poem myths," which describe his experiences in Vietnam and the tragic loss of friendships in that war, and Naca has long admired his work.

Naca said that she was "completely flabbergasted" when receiving the call about her award from Princeton,



Kristin Naca. Cont. from page 1

New Jersey. It caught her off guard in the best way possible.

She later had the opportunity to interview Komunyakka for mtvU (find the link to the video on the English Department News page).

Despite her Filipino background, Naca wrote her poems in both Spanish and English, reflecting the significant role Spanish played both in her graduate work and her childhood experience. But she named the Macondo Workshop in San Antonio, TX as one of the primary forces behind the linguistic choice. For Naca, writing in Spanish was important because

she felt that Latin American poetry had not been “brought up to the surface” in her coursework, which she found “disheartening.” Issues of tension between major ethnic groups and Anglos in San Antonio also inspired Naca to write in both languages. Professor Naca noted how major ethnic groups are not being “witnessed or chartered by many outsiders” within the Texan context.

Bird Eating Bird has just appeared in print in September and since then Naca has been traveling to different cities giving book readings. Support the English Department! Support our writers! Read *Bird Eating Bird*.



“When literature is contextualized by location the task of choosing a place to study abroad becomes a complex one.”

Have you studied abroad? Tell us of your experience!



sions of the river. Unfortunately, the Minnesota ranks among the top ten of the nation’s most polluted waterways. Needless to say this environmental suffering gave birth to poetry ripe with contemplation. As if the state of the river did not give the students enough to think about, the camp grounds were situated near Native burial sites.

“We had to respect the land,” Nussbaum said. “It helped to have Ping, Alison, and Martin there.”

Location was an integral part of the class’ creative mechanism. It shaped the way they created their work. Can the same thing be said about the study of literature abroad? Amy Shaunette ‘10 tried to answer this question by spending a semester in Stockholm in a program offered through Hamilton College.

“On the one hand, I did what I do here,” she said. “And on the other hand

studying literature in the country it’s from illuminates it in a unique way. That’s the advantage of going abroad. I know that studying Swedish literature in America wouldn’t be the same as studying it there.”

“It was interesting,” said Shaunette, “to read about a landmark or a street from a book and then see it on the way to school. Everyone has a sense of national identity that is very different from the US. That may be in part because Sweden is a Socialist State. The government takes very good care of you. But it might also be because of the people’s relationship to culture. Everyone reads. There seems to be a lot of value placed on literature there. I mean, there’s a fictional character printed on their money.”

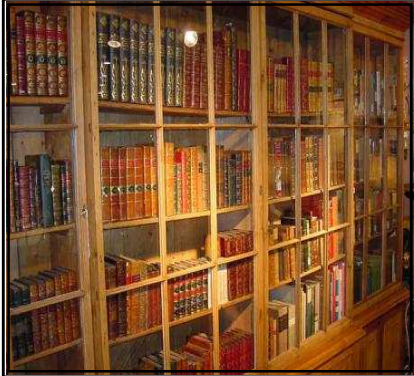
But the study abroad experience for Shaunette was not without its downsides. “We only had classes with other people in the program,” she said. “I felt iso-

lated from the city.”

The question of locality is of course central to the study of literature. When literature is contextualized by location the task of choosing a place to study abroad becomes a particularly complex one for English majors.

Although many places like France, Spain, South America and Germany offer rich material in the way of literary history and culture, English students often mistakenly assume they need to major in those languages in order to benefit from studying there. Few other English speaking countries present themselves as worthwhile destinations for the study of literature—flying to Madagascar to study British Literature, for example, can seem problematic to say the least. But this is not cause for despair. The question of location for the English major may be a difficult one, but it hasn’t stopped Mac English students from spending a semester in Russia, Austria, Japan, or Morocco. Check this column next month for more reports from abroad, and explore all your options at the International Center.

October Babes



Harvey Kurtzman-October 3, 1924
founder, *Mad Magazine*

R. L. Stine- October 8, 1943
author of *Goosebumps* series

e e cummings- October 14, 1962
American poet

Jack Anderson- October 19, 1922
investigative journalist

Michael Crichton- October 23, 1942
author of Jurassic series

Dylan Thomas- October 27, 1914
Welsh poet

Ezra Pound- October 30, 1885
American expatriate poet



Four lively souls play a rousing game of Boggle at Treat Day

Model Behavior

Please send a photo for the English Major picture board to abraiлов@macalester.edu.



BE MY FRIEND

Become a fan of the Macalester English Department!

Stay updated. Stay tuned.

You can find our link on the Macalester English Department News page, www.macalester.edu/english/

We Like To Read



Kiki Ferguson '10

Top 5 Book List

- *Master and Margarita*- Mikhail Bulgakov
- *Lolita*- Vladimir Nabokov
- *The Story of Ferdinand*- Munro Leaf
- *Franny and Zoe*- J. D. Salinger
- *London Fields*- Martin Amis



What I'm Reading Now...

Robinson Crusoe- Daniel Defoe

Emma Colón '12

ENGLISH



Stop in anytime.

We have coffee!

Happenings

- **WHET YOUR WHISTLE!** Food and games in the English department lounge every **Wednesday from 5-7PM**
- **GET A JOB!** Look out for our English Department Internship Panel in mid **November**
- **Submit!** to Chanter at chanterful@gmail.com

CAREER PANEL WITH ALUMNI

Friday, October 23
12 - 1 pm
Lunch will be served
Location to be announced

Newsletter designed and written by Jens Tamang and Meghan Wilson
Managing editor, Anna Brailovsky (Department Coordinator, x6387; abrailov@macalester.edu)

If Adults Still Make You Anxious...

Hi, we're Jens and Meghan.

We need your help. Please tell us what kind of food to have at Department gatherings. We don't know what kind of food writers eat anymore.

We understand that you're an English Major, so you have a lot of feelings. If you want to talk about them then you can email us at jtamang@macalester.edu and mwilson4@macalester.edu.

