

# **“American Poetry”**

A Symposium Sponsored by the  
American Literature Association

October 23-25, 2014

Hyatt Regency Savannah  
Two W Bay Street  
Savannah, Georgia



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Conference Director: Richard Flynn, Georgia Southern University

Acknowledgments

The conference director wishes to express his appreciation to a number of people who provided help with planning the program. My graduate assistant, Anna Wells, has put in many hours of excellent service; my colleague Olivia Carr Edenfield, Executive Coordinator of American Literature Association, handled all the hotel logistics and arrangements; and Dustin Anderson helped in many ways, especially in giving great advice about the program. The Association thanks the Department of Literature and Philosophy at Georgia Southern University for its continued support. The director also thanks the Department of Writing and Linguistics and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences for their support. Thanks to our readers, Emma Bolden and Eric Nelson, and to our keynoters, Stephen Burt and Alfred Bendixen. Of course, I offer special thanks to Alfred Bendixen, the founder, Executive Director, and guiding light of the American Literature Association. I have known Alfred almost since the Association's inception over twenty-five years ago. Most of all, I would like to thank all the participants in this exciting symposium: your commitment to poetry and poetry scholarship is exemplary.

Presenters marked with \* are contributors to the *Cambridge History of American Poetry*

**Thursday, October 23, 2014**

**Registration: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. (Scarborough Foyer)**

**Welcome Reception: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. (Scarborough 4)**

**Poetry Reading: 6:45 p.m.**

**Emma Bolden and Eric Nelson**

**Georgia Southern University**

**Emma Bolden** is the author of *Malificae* (GenPop Books, 2013), a book-length series of poems about the witch trials in early modern Europe, and *medi(t)ations*, a book-length poem forthcoming from Noctuary Press. She is also the author of four chapbooks of poetry: *How to Recognize a Lady* (Toadlily Press), *The Mariner's Wife* (Finishing Line Press), *The Sad Epistles* (Dancing Girl Press) and *This Is Our Hollywood* (*The Chapbook*), and a nonfiction chapbook, *Geography V* (forthcoming from Winged City Press).

Her poetry and prose has appeared in such journals as *The Rumpus*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Conduit*, the *Indiana Review*, the *Greensboro Review*, *Redivider*, *Verse*, *Feminist Studies*, *The Journal*, *Guernica*, and *Copper Nickel*. Bolden has been featured on Poetry Daily and in Verse Daily's Web Weekly series.

She was named a finalist for a Ruth Lily Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation/*Poetry* magazine. An Alabama native, Bolden received a BLA from Sarah Lawrence College and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Currently, she lives in Statesboro, Georgia, where she writes and teaches creative writing at Georgia Southern University.

**Eric Nelson** has published five collections of poetry, including *The Twins* (2009), winner of the Split Oak Press Chapbook Award; *Terrestrials* (2004), published by Texas Review Press as the winner of the X.J. Kennedy Poetry Award; and *The Interpretation of Waking Life* (1991), winner of the University of Arkansas Press Poetry Award.

His poems have appeared widely in journals and anthologies, including *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Sun*, and *The Oxford American*. He has been a Featured Poet on *Poetry* magazine's website and on *Verse Daily* and *Poetry Daily*.

In 2005 he was named Georgia Author of the Year in Poetry by The Georgia Writers Association.

He is professor of creative writing in the Department of Writing and Linguistics at Georgia Southern University, where he has taught since 1989.

**Friday, October 24, 2014**  
**Late Registration: 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. (Scarborough Foyer)**

**Plenary Roundtable:**  
***Cambridge History of American Poetry Roundtable***

**9:00 – 10:00 a.m. (Scarborough 3 & 4)**

**Moderator: \*Richard Flynn, Georgia Southern University**

**\*Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University**  
**\*Stephen Burt, Harvard University**  
**\*Susan Castillo Street, Kings College, London**  
**\*Angela Sorby, Marquette University**  
**\*Siobhan Phillips, Dickinson College**  
**\*Mark Scroggins, Florida Atlantic University**

**Session One A: 10:10 – 11:30 (Savannah Room)**

**The Many Lives of Longfellow**

Chair: Dr. Elissa Zellinger, Armstrong State University.

1. "Longfellow, the Ballad Form, and Working Class Poets." Robin Smith, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
2. "E. Pauline Johnson and Longfellow's Indian Princess." Elissa Zellinger, Armstrong State University.
3. "Longfellow and the 'Social Problem' Film." Ben Rogerson, Savannah College of Art and Design.

**Session One B: 10:10 – 11:30 (Scarborough 1)**

**Elizabeth Bishop: Brazil and Elsewhere**

Chair: James McCorkle, Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

1. "Poetry and Motion: Notes on Timing in Elizabeth Bishop." Nausheen Eusuf, Boston University.
2. "Elizabeth Bishop's 'Manuelzinho': Power Play and Peasant Leagues in Brasil." Elizabeth Neely, Texas Wesleyan University.
3. "The Numerologist of 'Sestina.'" Armen Davoudian, Stanford University.

**Session One C: 10:10 – 11:30 (Scarborough 2)**

**Documenting Shame, Documenting Reclamation**

Chair: Jennifer Downs, Georgia Southern University.

1. "Spectral Space: Brenda Marie Osbey's Poetry of Memory, Loss, and Reclamation." Shari Evans, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.
2. "Aaron Kunin's Line of Shame." John Steen, East Carolina University.
3. "Mark Nowak and the Documentary Modality in Poetry." Anne Shea, California College of the Arts.

**Session Two A: 11:40 – 1:00 (Savannah Room)**  
**Poetry in the Context of War: Integrating War Writing into the Contemporary English Curriculum**  
**(Roundtable)**

Moderator: James Meredith, Capella University.

1. Stone Meredith, Capella University.
2. James Meredith, Capella University.
3. Jeanne Fuchs, Capella University.
4. Allen Josephs, University of West Florida.

**Session Two B: 11:40 – 1:00 (Scarborough 1)**  
**“Conflux”: North American Poets in Transnational Context**

Chair: Gillian White, University of Michigan.

1. “The Meeting of the Waters.” Bethany Hicok, Westminster College.
2. “Dialect over Dialectics in the ‘Mongrel’ Prose Poetics of Bishop, Ondaatje and Carson.” Angus Cleghorn, Seneca College.
3. “James Merrill and the Changing Lights of Greece.” Charles Berger, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

**Session Two C: 11:40 – 1:00 (Scarborough 2)**  
**Dickinson and Gilman: Skepticism, Self, and Community**

Chair: \*Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University.

1. \*“Emily Dickinson: Radical Individualism and Redemptive Community.” Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University.
2. “‘I dwell in possibility’: Emily Dickinson’s Postsecular Heuristics.” Jay David Miller, The Pennsylvania State University.
3. “Victim to Vision: Transformation of Self in the Poetry of Charlotte Perkins Gilman.” Jacquelyn Markham, Ashford University.

**Session Two D: 11:40 – 1:00 (Scarborough 3)**  
**Romanticisms and Anti-Romanticisms**

Chair: Steven Florczyk, Longwood University.

1. “The Role of British Romantics in Mary Oliver’s Trajectory.” Doni Wilson, Houston Baptist University.
2. “Deranged Archangel or Heavenly Vision? Wordsworth’s Influence on Emerson’s Conception of the Role of the American Poet.” Armida Gilbert, Georgia Perimeter College.
3. “Was Roosevelt Writing Poetry?: The Need for a New Prosody.” Dustin Junkert, Georgia College and State University.

<p><b>Lunch: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.</b> <b>(Harborside)</b></p>
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**Session Three A: 2:10 – 3:30 (Scarborough 1)**

**Hot Rocks: Songs and Verse**

Chair: Megan Sexton, Georgia State University.

1. “The Land Beyond the River, Learning to Speak Figuratively: A Talk and a Reading.”  
David Bottoms, Georgia State University.
2. “The Musical Muse: Jazz and Blues in the Poetry of William Matthews.” Greg Fraser, University  
of West Georgia.
3. “The Fantastic in Poetry and Rock: Cesar Vallejo and Leonard Cohen.” Mike Mattison,  
Independent Scholar and Musician.

**Session Three B: 2:10 – 3:30 (Scarborough 2)**

**Locality and Illocality in Civil War Poetry**

Chair: James Meredith, Capella University.

1. “The Place of Praise in Whitman’s Civil War Poetry.” Kerry Larson, University of Michigan.
2. \*”Ready to Strike and Signalize the Hour’: The Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> in Poetry and Journalism.” Eliza  
Richards, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
3. “Emily Dickinson and the Illocality of War.” Cody Marris, University of Georgia.

**Session Three C: 2:10 – 3:30 (Scarborough 3)**

**Contemporary Poets on Race: History, Dialogue and Ekphrasis**

Chair: Aldon Lynn Nielsen, The Pennsylvania State University.

1. “Ekphrasis, Amputation, Race.” Anne Keefe, University of North Texas.
2. “The Necessary Dialogue: Poets on Race.” Wesley Rothman, Suffolk University.
3. “How to Interpret History: Marilyn Nelson’s *The Freedom Business* and the Early Slave  
Narrative.” David Anderson, University of Louisville.

**Session Four A: 3:40 - 5:00 (Savannah Room)**

**New York Style**

Chair: Michele Rozga, Savannah State University.

1. "Camp Consolations: Frank O'Hara's James Dean Elegies." Chad Bennett, The University of Texas at Austin.
2. "Here Comes Nobody: Frank O'Hara's Anonymous Technologies." Seth Perlow, Oklahoma State University.
3. "The Anti-Poundian Poetics of James Schuyler." Mikolaj Wilniewski, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw.

**Session Four B: 3:40 - 5:00 (Scarborough 1)**

**The New American Poetries in Black and White**

Chair: Briona Jones, Georgia Southern University.

1. "Mind the Gap: Corresponding with Denise Levertov and Al Young." Aldon Lynn Nielsen, The Pennsylvania State University.
2. "Rediscovering Russell Atkins: *Heretofore* and the Rhetoric of Rebirth." Tom Jesse, Texas Christian University.
3. "William Carlos Williams, Amiri Baraka, and the New American Poetries." John Lowney, St. John's University.

**Session Four C: 3:40 - 5:00**

**(Scarborough 2) Levity and Lyric**

Chair: Brad McDuffie, Nyack College.

1. "Shocked at my Levity." Rachel Trousdale, Northeastern University.
2. "Anti-lyric in the Age of the Brain." Nikki Skillman, Indiana University at Bloomington.

**Session Four D: 3:40 - 5:00 (Scarborough 3)**

**Frost, Moore, and Literary History**

Chair: Charles Berger, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

1. "Mangling Marianne Moore." Robin Schulze, University of Delaware.
2. "Putting in the Seed': Robert Frost's Forgotten Sequence on Sex." Jonathan Barron, University of Southern Mississippi.
3. "Robert Frost After American Exceptionalism." Siobhan Phillips, Dickinson College.

**Opening Reception and Keynote Address: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
(Harborside)**

**"On Extended Wings Again:  
The Raven and the Mockingbird in American Poetry"  
Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University**

## Saturday October 25, 2014

**Late Registration: 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (Scarborough Foyer)**

### **Session Five A: 9:10 –10:30 (Savannah Room)**

#### **Poetry of Asian Immigrants: Voices from a Different Shore, Voices from Within**

Chair: Kenneth Brandt, Savannah College of Art and Design.

1. "Shirley Geok-lin Lim and the Poetics of Elsewhere." Mary Aswell Doll, Savannah College of Art and Design.
2. "Readings from *38 Parallels*, a Poetry Collection in Progress." Mary C. Kim, Savannah College of Art and Design.
3. "Savannah's Famous Poet: Gerald Chan Sieg." Weihua Zhang, Savannah College of Art and Design.

### **Session Five B: 9:10 –10:30 (Scarborough 1)**

#### **The Legacy of Allen Grossman. (Roundtable)**

Moderator: Norman Finkelstein, Xavier University.

1. "Solitude and Sociality in Grossman's Poetry and Criticism." Norman Finkelstein, Xavier University.
2. "Allen Grossman: Three Voices." Hilene Flanzbaum, Butler University.
3. "The Story of Grossman's Voice: On 'The Woman on the Bridge Over the Chicago River.'" Daniel Morris, Purdue University.

### **Session Five C: 9:10 – 10:30 (Scarborough 2)**

#### **Performance, Activism, and Ritual**

Chair: Megan Flanery, Georgia Southern University

1. "COINTELPROsody." Jennifer Russo, Montclair State University.
2. "Symbolism, Ritual, and the Dramatic Impulse in American Poetry." Andrew Walker, Florida State University.
3. "'People Get Ready': Umbra, Nuyorican, Mission District and the Cross-Cultural Conversations that Defined the 1960s." Jean-Phillipe Marcoux, Université Laval, Quebec.

### **Session Five D: 9:10 – 10:30 (Scarborough 3) Reticence, Repetition, and Selective Amnesia**

Chair: Nicole Camastra, University of Georgia.

1. "Removal of the Self: Personal and Literary Reticence in the Poetry of Marianne Moore." Elizabeth Threatt, University of West Alabama.
2. "On Prolonging: Repetition and Variation in the Poems of Donald Justice." Christian B. Schlegel, Harvard University.
3. "'You Must Think About Sad Things': Alleviating Selective Amnesia and Restoring History in Contemporary Literature." Diana Filar, University of New Mexico.

**Session Six A: 10:40 – 12:00 (Savannah Room)**

**Reimagining the Poetic Catalogue**

Chair: Alyson Elam, Georgia Southern University.

1. "I am the Clock Myself: Incantatory American Catalog Poems and the Ritual of Being Absorbed." Michele Rozga, Savannah State University.
2. "Conversations with Longfellow: The Aftershocks of His Poetry." E. Thomas Finan, Boston University.

**Session Six B: 10:40 – 12:00 (Scarborough 1)**

**How Free Can (Children's) Verse Be? (Roundtable)**

Moderator: Joseph T. Thomas, San Diego State University.

1. \*"Rearguard and Kindergarde." Joseph T. Thomas, San Diego State University.
2. \*\*"The Work of Play in Early Nineteenth-Century Children's Poetry." Angela Sorby, Marquette University.
3. "The ABCs of Innovation (in Children's Poetry)." Katie E. Strode, University of California, Riverside.

**Session Six C: 10:40 – 12:00 (Scarborough 2)**

**Literary Responses to the Haitian Revolution**

Chair: David Anderson, University of Louisville.

1. "Revising the Haitian Revolution: George Boyer Vashon's 'Vincent Ogé.'" Nathaniel A. Windon, The Pennsylvania State University.
2. \*\*"Slavery and Colonialism in Juan Francisco Manzano's Zafira." Susan Castillo Street, King's College London.

**Session Six D: 10:40 – 12:00 (Scarborough 3)**

**Poets In and Out of War**

Chair: Dustin Anderson, Georgia Southern University.

1. "'Real Poetry': The American Poets' Committee and the First World War." Steven Florczyk, Longwood University.
2. "Wallace Stevens and the Gastronomic Sensibility." Nicole Camastra, University of Georgia.
3. "'I would like to bring back momentum and movement in poetry on a grand scale': Robert Lowell's Circle at Boston University." Brad McDuffie, Nyack College.

**Lunch: 12:00- 1:00 p.m. (Harborside)**

**Session Seven A: 1:10 – 2:30 (Savannah Room)**  
**After Objectivism?**

Chair: Norman Finkelstein, Xavier University.

1. \*"Objectivists' to Objectivism: The Objectivist Poets in Literary History." Mark Scroggins, Florida Atlantic University.
2. "Noise Poetics: Modernist Poetry in the Age of Technological Reproduction." Seth J. Forrest, Coppin State University.

**Session Seven B: 1:10 – 2:30 (Scarborough 1)**  
**The Poetic Impact of Adrienne Rich**

Chair: Timothy O'Keefe, Piedmont College.

1. "Imagining what is 'humanely possible': Adrienne Rich's Later Work." Jeannette E. Riley, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.
2. "Adrienne Rich and the Poetics of the Archival Impulse." Meredith Benjamin, The Graduate Center, City University of New York.
3. "'try telling yourself / you are not accountable': Adrienne Rich as Citizen Poet." Maggie Rehm, University of Idaho.

**Session Seven C: 1:10 – 2:30 (Scarborough 2)**  
**Body, Memory, and Voice**

Chair: Anna Wells, Georgia Southern University.

1. \*"Orality and *Copia*." David Bergman, Towson University.
2. "Charles Wright and Memory: Work in the Late Poems." James McCorkle, Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
3. "Too Good a Word: Learning to Say Goodbye in the Medicine and Elegy of Dr. William Carlos Williams." Marissa Grunes, Harvard University.

**Session Seven D: 2:10 – 3:30 (Scarborough 3)**  
**Elegy, Memory and Music**

Chair: Janie Malson, Georgia Southern University

1. "Living in more than one more dimension' in the Late Poetry of Robert Penn Warren." Jennifer Lewin, Sewanee, The University of the South.
2. "Not Knowing the Words': Michael Donaghy's Elegies." Jonathan Ellis, University of Sheffield.
3. "Musicality Without Music: Langston Hughes's *Ask Your Mama*." Benjamin Lempert, Stanford University.

**Session Eight A: 2:40 – 4:00 (Savannah Room)**  
**The Long. . . Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Poem**  
Chair: E. Thomas Finan, Boston University.

1. \* "American Poetry in the 'Age of Realism.'" Elizabeth Renker, Ohio State University.
2. \* "In Search of the Great American Epic Poem: Pluri-bus-tah and the Apocalypse." David E. E. Sloane, University of New Haven.
3. "More Ancient Than the Monarchy": Thomas Paine and Poetry of the Early American Republic. Scott Cleary, Iona College.

**Session Eight B: 2:40 – 4:00 (Scarborough 1)**  
**"Where the Muses Haunt": Strange Genealogies in American Poetry**  
Chair: Lindsay Shalom, Georgia Southern University.

1. "The Real Sun No One's Ever Seen: New Blakean Gnosticism in Susan Howe & Donald Revell." Geoffrey Babbitt, Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
2. "Writing the Museum: An Intersection of Conceptual Art and Poetry." Kathryn Cowles, Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
3. "A Miserable Philosophy: The Poetics of the Real in Bishop and Rankine." Christine Marshall, Davidson College.
4. "The Light of Jamesian Perception: Lyn Hejinian and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge." Timothy O'Keefe, Piedmont College.

**Session Eight C: 2:40 – 4:00 (Scarborough 2)**  
**Poetic Worlds: Immersive, Imaginative, Embodied**  
Chair: Bridget Stephens, Georgia Southern University.

1. "'The World is Round and Flat': The Poetics of Immersion in *The World Is Round* by Gertrude Stein." Adrienne Raphel, Harvard University.
2. "'The World in a Verse': The Poetic Imagination's Global Reach." Gül Bilge Han, Stockholm University.
3. "Contemporary American Poets write the Body: Kate Daniels, Felecia Caton Garcia and Robin Silbergleid and the New Feminist Poetry of Motherhood." Alison Umminger, University of West Georgia.

**Session Eight D: 2:40 – 4:00 (Scarborough 3)**  
**Elegy and Ephemerality**  
Chair: Rebecca Kennerly, Georgia Southern University.

1. "Ampersands & Analysands. John Berryman's Elegiac *Dream Songs* for his Contemporaries." Sally Connolly, University of Houston.
2. "'Like a drowning at a baptism': Franz Wright's Poems about His Father." Nick Halpern, North Carolina State University.
3. "'Absolutely Temporary': Spicer, Burgess, and the Ephemerality of Coterie." Mande Zecca, Johns Hopkins University.

**Session Nine A: 4:10 – 5:30 (Savannah Room)**

**“Alternative Romanticisms: American Poetry”**

Chair: Steven Florczyk, Longwood University.

1. “Emily Dickinson’s Giddiness.” Nelly Lambert, Trinity Washington University.
2. “Kenneth Koch’s Ottava Rima.” Gavin Sourgen, Florida Atlantic University.
3. “Ted Berrigan’s Organicism.” Yasmine Shamma, Brasenose College, Oxford University.

**Session Nine B: 4:10 – 5:30 (Scarborough 1)**

**Mothers and Others: Epic, Lyric, Gender, and Genre**

Chair: Anne Shea, California College of the Arts.

1. “Disobedient Work: Alice Notley and Poetic/Reproductive Labor.” Lindsay Turner, University of Virginia.
2. “Continuity and Change: Alice Notley’s *The Descent of Alette* and the Epic Tradition.” Andrea Quaid, Bard College.
3. “My Life Is Only One Life’: Turning to Other People in American Lyric Poetry.” Adam Scheffler, Harvard University.

**Session Nine C: 4:10 – 5:30 (Scarborough 2)**

**Poetic Communities: Conflict and Resistance**

Chair: Brad McDuffie, Nyack College.

1. “Theses on the Poetics of History/History of Poetics: The Trajectory of Poetry from Modernism to a Future Present.” Matthew Landis, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.
2. “‘Hear the Sounds Go Round’: Poetry In and Outside the Classroom.” Mirja Lobnik, Georgia Institute of Technology.
3. “Poetry Protests as Poetry Discourse: How Conflicts in Poetry Communities Mean.” Rebecca Weaver, Georgia Institute of Technology.

**Session Nine D: 4:10 – 5:30 (Scarborough 3)**

**New Readings of George Oppen**

Chair: Allen Josephs, University of West Florida.

1. “‘Curious Connections’: Walt Whitman and George Oppen’s Lateness.” Anton Vander Zee, College of Charleston.
2. “Towards an Emotion of Things: The Self and the Motions of its Mind in Relation to the Things of the World in the Poetry of George Oppen.” Logan Burns, Middle Georgia State College.

**Closing Reception and Keynote Address: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
(Harborside)**

**“Is American Poetry Still a Thing?”  
Stephen Burt, Harvard University**



## **Call for Papers**

### **ALA Symposium: God and the American Writer** February 26-28, 2015

Sheraton Gunther Hotel  
205 E. Houston Street  
San Antonio, TX, 78205

Conference Directors:  
Steven Frye, California State University – Bakersfield  
Eric Carl Link, University of Memphis  
Jeanne Campbell Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio

Deadline for Proposals: November 1, 2014

Please see the ALA website for further details and instructions  
[www.americanliterature.org](http://www.americanliterature.org)

### **American Literature Association** **26th Annual Conference** May 21-24, 2015

The Westin Copley Place  
10 Huntington Avenue  
Boston MA 02116-5798

Conference Director: Olivia Carr Edenfield  
Georgia Southern University

Deadline for Proposals: January 30, 2015

The ALA website contains further details and instructions for submitting proposals as well as important information for representatives of participating author societies.

[www.americanliterature.org](http://www.americanliterature.org)

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