

Revise This - December 2011

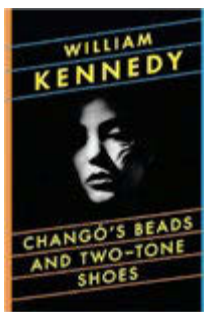
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High Praise for Advisory Board Member William J. Kennedy's Latest Book



William J. Kennedy, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Ironweed*, has seen glowing reviews for his recent book, *Chango Beads and Two-Tone Shoes*. *The New York Times*, *Paris Review*, and many more media outlets are praising Kennedy's latest publication, with USA Today calling this an "ambitious, mature work." In *Chango Beads and Two-Tone Shoes* we see Hemmingway make chatter with Castro, and a witty reporter, Quinn, settle into Cuba because it's "closer than Paris."

"The Cuban element in my book had its origin in personal experience,"

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Kennedy said in a recent interview. “I covered the Cuban revolution in Miami and later in San Juan, PR, in the 1950s as a newsman, first on the *Miami Herald*, then on the *San Juan Star*, and as a correspondent for *Time-Life*. The experience nagged me for years, and eventually I took up the challenge.” While the personal angle may have prompted the book’s creation, it did not make the journey any easier. “I witnessed much suffering and heroic behavior among people in the movement; also much repression and virulent racism, and that became central to the new novel. The book in progress turned into a story of two revolutions; and what then loomed was the reimagining of both, and fitting them into my story about a journalist and a revolutionary debutante. And nine years later I finished it.”

Wilkes writing students were honored with a featured reading at a recent residency, wherein Kennedy shared a few scenes from *Chango Beads* and *Two-Tone Shoes*. For students wishing to merge nonfiction elements with fiction, Kennedy has this advice. “The novel usually wants to be as true as possible to historical reality, but not at the expense of the story. The writer is getting at the truth of what he/she knows and wants to put on the page; but the reimagining of history, or even our own past, is necessary if this work aspires to be literature,” Kennedy said, “for such work is not the transcription of history but is experience that has passed through the center of our being, and been transformed into a story, play, novel that never was—a work created from the argument that the creative element in the writer’s brain is having with imagination, memory, and the implacable drive to be authentic.” This can prove to be a challenge for writers, young and experienced. “History is always malleable to the novelist. Being scrupulously, morally faithful to it can involve distorting or even eliminating what was actual. The writer’s quest is to be true to what is more important: the literary synthesis of all that internal torsion—the truly new story.”

With all the media and publicity, Kennedy is settling in to getting back to what matters most. “I just finished my book tour about two weeks ago and am still not quite settled into the next phase of my life, which is to get back to writing,” Kennedy said in a recent interview. “Hemingway said that after you finish a novel you have to let the well fill up again; and that’s what I’m doing. But I have resumed something I started years ago and never finished—a play. I will finish it this time, and I will be satisfied, I think. I’m never satisfied with anything, but at least this time I will not consider what I write to be a provisional draft. This will be it, and I’ll have a staged reading. Then, of course, I’ll start the rewriting.”

Alum Lori Myers' Essay Nominated for a Pushcart Prize

When *Hippocampus Magazine* published Lori Myer’s essay, “Word,” in September 2011, the author and

Wilkes alum would have never guessed so much attention would come her way. “I am beyond thrilled to receive a Pushcart nomination and be part of this select group of writers,” Myers said recently. From the year’s submissions, *Hippocampus* selected six pieces of non-fiction, including Myers’ essay exploring the power of word play. “Words can affect us, cut like a knife, or perhaps even change our lives, our philosophies, our paths,” Myers says in her essay.



An award-winning writer of creative nonfiction, fiction, essays, and plays, Myers has seen her work published in more than 40 national and regional publications. A graduate of the Creative Writing masters program at Wilkes University, she is now part of the writing faculty at York College of Pennsylvania. Even with her continued stream of success, this author is modest and appreciative of the attention she is earning for her writing—and for the genre as a whole. “Honestly, I have no idea when the winners will be announced. Just being nominated has meant so much! Besides, these types of awards place the literary arts center stage!”

In her reflection on words and their weighty meaning, Myers has this to say in her essay: “Like a rock thrown into the literary pool, words cause the waters to ripple; they have power and weight, which is why writers ache and moan and starve and revise, revise, revise to make certain they use just the right words in a scene, in dialogue, in verse.”

To read the full essay, visit Hippocampus Magazine at <http://www.hippocampusmagazine.com>.

More information about the Pushcart Prize may be found online at <http://www.pushcartprize.com/index.htm>.

Faculty/Staff Notes

Robert P. Arthur has again been nominated for Poet Laureate of Virginia. He was a runner up for the post in both 2008 and 2010.

Taschen Press has just published a new, revised edition of Norman Mailer’s 1973 biography, conceived by Advisory Board member Larry Schiller, and edited by J. Michael Lennon, who also contributed a biographical note on Mailer. The new edition contains heretofore unseen photographs by the great photographer, Bert Stern, from the last sitting with Monroe just before she died in 1962. The oversize, clamshell-boxed, limited edition of 125 copies sells for \$1,000. A trade edition is six languages for a much lower price will appear in a few months. Go to

Taschen.com for details. Lennon reports that he is six months from completing a draft of the authorized biography of Mailer, to be published by Simon & Schuster next year (or maybe early 2013).

Nancy McKinley's short story "Navidad" appears in Issue 53 of *The Cortland Review*.

Thom Ward has given a number of readings around the country, and has scheduled more for 2012, for his new poetry book, *Etcetera's Mistress*, published by Accents Publishing. A review written by Brian Fanelli is available at pankmagazine.com.

Student/Alumni Notes

M.F.A. alum Chris Bullard's second poetry chapbook, *O Brilliant Kids*, was recently released by Big Table Publishing. His poem "Miss Ross" was selected for inclusion in the poetry anthology, *Best of the Barefoot Muse*. His poems currently appear in *32 Poems*, *Plainsongs*, *Pleiades* and *Think Journal*, and have been selected for future publication by *River Styx*, *New York Quarterly*, *Unsplendid*, *fourteen magazine* and *Blue Unicorn*.

M.A. student Kait Burrier's poem, "The Angler's Gaze," was accepted into *Dionne's Story: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose for the Awareness of Relationship Violence, Volume 2*. Proceeds from anthology sales benefit Dionne's Project for Safe Relationships.

M.A. student Christopher Campion had two short stories, "Debt" and "Opened," accepted by www.fiction365.com for 2012 publication.

M.F.A. alum Craig Czury has been named Laureate and Honorary Member of the largest Albanian celebration of poetry in the world, the XV "Days of Naim" International Poetry Festival in Tetovë, Macedonia. Czury is the first poet from the United States to be awarded this laureateship.

M.A. alum Alessandra Djordjevic has two poems, "Love's Androgynous" and "Poetic Countenance" published on the website wordathering.com. He also has a short story, "Black Agate," published in an anthology of short stories, *The Smartest Kid in the Bronx*.

M.F.A. alum Brian Fanelli's poem "After Work" has been accepted for publication in the winter issue of *Harpur Palate*, and his poem "How I Remember Her" is forthcoming in the next issue of *Evening Street Review*.

M.F.A. alum Patricia Florio's memoir, *My Two Mothers*, is now

available. She is working on a follow-up, with the working title *Sundays with My Father*. Her short story, "The Blonde I Loved to Hate," has also been recently published.

M.A. student Lori A. May was a guest presenter at the fall College Student Literary Magazine Conference in Danville IL. She also had a recent poetry reading at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, during the Michigan College English Association conference.

M.F.A student Vicki Mayk's essay "Verismo" was awarded third prize in *Hippocampus Magazine's* "Remember in November" contest.

M.A. alum Lori Myers' short story "Maneuvers" was published in the anthology *Off Season*. Her children's musical GLEE-ful Rapunzel was staged at Gretna Theatre, Mt. Gretna, PA, and her short play Sight Unseen was staged at Gamut Theatre, Harrisburg, PA as part of Sonnet Inspirations. She also had sketch-plays *Miss Information* and *No Way* staged at The Academy Theater, Meadville, PA.

M.F.A. alum Taylor Polite's *The Rebel Wife* has been named one of the best southern reads for 2012 by *The Atlanta Journal – Constitution*.

M.F.A. alum William D. Prystauck's dramatic horror *Ravencraft* was a Top-20 Finalist at Shriekfest in Hollywood and a review of his screenplay *Risen* appeared on Horrorphilia.com. He has also recently published reviews in *Hippocampus Magazine* and *PANK Magazine*, and presented the paper, "The Kids Aren't All Right: Horror Movies Remind Us that Protecting Our Children in the Home is a Delusion" at the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association's Annual Conference this past November in Philadelphia.

M.A. student Joseph Schwartzburt's literary group Seersucker Live ran a successful event that brought out more than 110 literary lovers to Kevin Barry's Bar in Savannah, GA. Featured writers were novelist Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket), poet Patricia Lockwood, novelist Jonathan Raab, and poet/memoirist Chad Faries.

M.F.A. student Sandee Umbach's full-length poetry collection, *The Pattern Maker's Daughter*, is being released in February of 2012 by Bottom Dog Press

Program Note

The Write Life blog welcomes guest posts from faculty, students, and alumni. Email lori.may1@wilkes.edu for details. Weekly interviews and literary news are shared online at <http://wilkeswritelife.wordpress.com>.

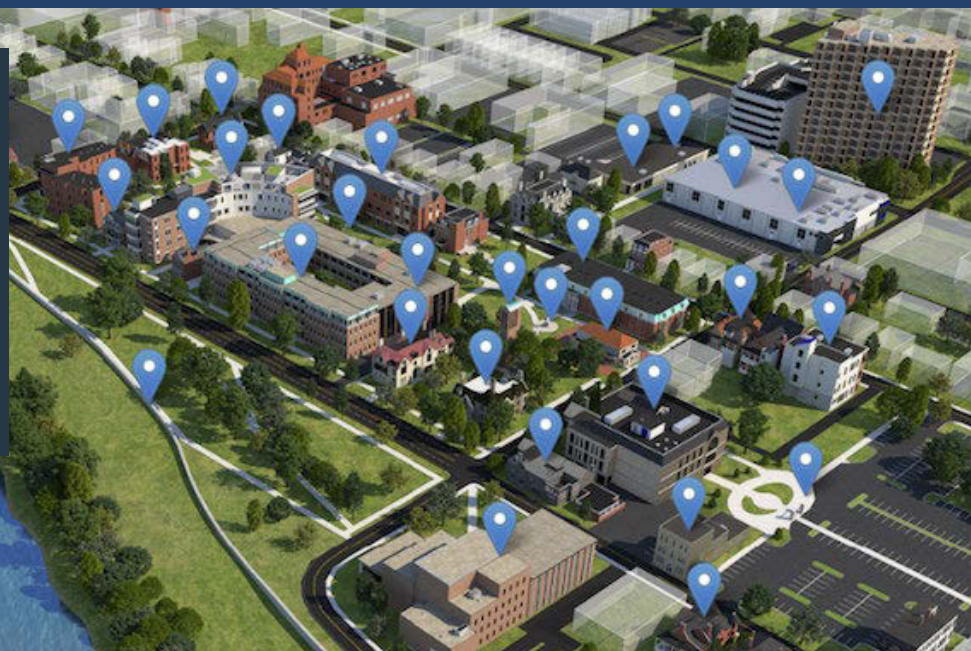
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