

COLLOQUIUM  
ANNUAL

# The Ministry of Writing



FEATURED SPEAKERS:  
Elizabeth Dewberry and  
Robert Olen Butler

EARLHAM  
SCHOOL of RELIGION  
OCTOBER 27 & 28  
2006  
in  
RICHMOND  
INDIANA



THE MINISTRY OF WRITING

4,500/6-06

Earlham School of Religion  
228 College Avenue  
Richmond, Indiana 47374  
765-983-1423 or 1-800-432-1377

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Alexandria, IN  
Permit No. 7

# The Ministry of Writing

AN ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM

October 27-28, 2006

## FEATURED SPEAKERS

For novelist and playwright Elizabeth Dewberry, writing is an act of worship. "Worship at its heart, is about connecting with the Divine," she says. "It's that simple, and that complicated. It can happen in church, but it can happen in a theater, and it can happen in front of the computer screen as well....Through words, we can transcend the limits of our own individual existences and connect in profound ways, to each other, to the universe, to God. That is what makes words holy."

If the writer's deepest and most creative work takes place not in the mind, but in deep imagining or "dreamspace," as Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Robert Olen Butler suggests, maybe this is where writing finds its way into the realm of worship. "Dreamspace is a place where you're neither male or female, Muslim, Christian or Jew, black or white," says Butler. Engaging the "truth that transcends these superficial differences...is not only possible, but is the profound duty of the artist."

Elizabeth Dewberry and Robert Olen Butler, this year's featured speakers at the Ministry of Writing Colloquium, are two great artists who also happen to be



Elizabeth Dewberry



Robert Olen Butler

married to one another. For each of them, writing has been a way of creating and sustaining relationship with soul, spirit, and one another.

In addition to his Pulitzer Prize winning collection of stories, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*, Robert Olen Butler has published ten novels, two volumes of short fiction, and a book of prose poems. He is also the Frances Eppes Distinguished Professor in Creative Writing at Florida State University. A collection of his lectures on the creative process, *From Where You Dream*, was published in 2005.

Novelist, essayist, and playwright Elizabeth Dewberry has published four books, including *Sacrament of Lies* and her latest, *His Lovely Wife*. She has also written two full-length plays as well as several one-acts. *The Boston Globe* wrote that Dewberry "has the gift of startling originality, a fine blend of humor, pathos and eroticism."

Come join us for an exploration of the creative process and the ministry of writing.

# WORKSHOPS

Most of the workshops listed below will be repeated.

Please choose one to attend in the morning and a different one for the afternoon session.

## The Art of Telling Stories (morning only)



The workshop will focus on the fundamentals of the creative process for any fiction writers, beginning or advanced. What is art? What is distinctive about the way the artist addresses the world, the inner self, and the objects to be created? What are the essential characteristics of fiction as an art form? These are some of the issues we'll address.

Robert Olen Butler has published ten novels—*The Alleys of Eden*, *Sun Dogs*, *Countrymen of Bones*, *On Distant Ground*, *Wabash*, *The Deuce*, *They Whisper*, *The Deep Green Sea*, *Mr. Spaceman*, and *Fair Warning*—and four volumes of short fiction—*Tabloid Dreams*, *Had a Good Time*, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*, which won the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and his most recent, *Severance*, from Chronicle Books.

## On Finding Characters (afternoon only)



This workshop will address ways of creating voice-driven characters, focusing on writing more as a listening process than a decision-making one. It will include some pre-writing exercises designed to help you get to know your characters' deepest motivations, which will become the foundation of the narrative drive in their stories.

Elizabeth Dewberry is the author of four novels: *Many Things Have Happened Since He Died*, *Break the Heart of Me*, *Sacrament of Lies*, and her most recent, *His Lovely Wife*. She has written several plays, including *Flesh and Blood*, which premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays. She received her BS from Vanderbilt and her PhD from Emory University. She lives in Capps, Florida, population two, the other one being her husband, the writer Robert Olen Butler.

## Religious Publishers: What they Want and How to Deliver It



In the first half of this session, we will talk about publishing directions in religious publishing houses (including Paraclete Press): what kinds of books/ideas they may be looking for and how to tailor a book proposal to meet the mission of each press. In the second half, we'll have a Q&A. Please feel free to bring questions, ideas, concerns on publishing topics from presenting a book proposal to working with editors and agents.

Lil Copan is senior editor at Paraclete Press. Previously, she worked as literary series editor with Shaw Publishers. She lives in Boston.

## Soul Work: Creativity and Spirituality



The creative process, if entered intentionally, is also a spiritual process. In this workshop, we will explore the spiritual aspects of creativity—from calling and craft to commitment and cost-counting—as well as experiment with creativity exercises.

Susan Yanos is the author of *Woman, You Are Free: A Spirituality for Women in Luke* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2001). Currently the Assistant Professor and Director of ESR's Mullen Ministry of Writing program, she has taught college courses in creative writing, composition, literature, and humanities; served as a religious educator; and directed women's retreats. She holds degrees in biology, literature, and pastoral theology.

Susan Yanos is the author of *Woman, You Are Free: A Spirituality for Women in Luke* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2001). Currently the Assistant Professor and Director of ESR's Mullen Ministry of Writing program, she has taught college courses in creative writing, composition, literature, and humanities; served as a religious educator; and directed women's retreats. She holds degrees in biology, literature, and pastoral theology.

## Humor as Ministry: Finding God in the Laughter



Humor provides a way to open our hearts gently as we examine the more difficult parts of life. In this workshop, writers will examine their own use of humor in making sense of the world, as part of a healing journey, or as just a way to enjoy the precious gift. Please bring a short humorous piece (one paragraph) and be prepared to laugh, write, and interact with others.

Steven Cleaver is a graduate of the Earlham School of Religion who believes that humor and laughter are gifts to be opened and enjoyed. His novel, *Saving Erasmus*, (Paraclete Press; 2006) chronicles the story of a man who, with the help of Golden Age Comedians and other odd assorted characters, attempts to save a town and to resolve the traumas in his own past.

Steven Cleaver is a graduate of the Earlham School of Religion who believes that humor and laughter are gifts to be opened and enjoyed. His novel, *Saving Erasmus*, (Paraclete Press; 2006) chronicles the story of a man who, with the help of Golden Age Comedians and other odd assorted characters, attempts to save a town and to resolve the traumas in his own past.

## Where Words Come From



Once, in a conversation with Quaker John Woolman, a Delaware Indian leader named Papunehang had this to say about worshiping in silence: "I love to feel where the words come from." The words that matter are the ones that come from our souls. That's the kind of writing that matters, too. This workshop will look at the power of words that come from deep inside.

J. Brent Bill is the author of 15 books, including *Minding the Light* (Paraclete; 2006), *Holy Silence: the Gift of Quaker Spirituality* (Paraclete; 2005) and *Imagination and Spirit: A Contemporary Quaker Reader* (Friends United Press; 2003). He has written more than 100 fiction and non-fiction articles and is a writing instructor and coach.

J. Brent Bill is the author of 15 books, including *Minding the Light* (Paraclete; 2006), *Holy Silence: the Gift of Quaker Spirituality* (Paraclete; 2005) and *Imagination and Spirit: A Contemporary Quaker Reader* (Friends United Press; 2003). He has written more than 100 fiction and non-fiction articles and is a writing instructor and coach.



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## Friday, October 27

- 6:30 p.m. Registration/Reception
- 7:00 p.m. Reading: Robert Olen Butler, and Elizabeth Dewberry

## Saturday, October 28

- 8:15 a.m. Registration /Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Worship
- 9:45 a.m. Opening Remarks: Robert Olen Butler
- 10:45 a.m. Morning Workshops (choose one)
  - The Art of Telling Stories*—Robert Olen Butler
  - Religious Publishers: What they Want and How to Deliver It*—Lil Copan
  - Soul Work: Creativity and Spirituality*—Susan Yanos
  - Humor as Ministry: Finding God in the Laughter*—Steven Cleaver
  - Where Words Come From*—J. Brent Bill
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:45 p.m. Afternoon Workshops (choose one)
  - On Finding Characters*—Elizabeth Dewberry
  - Religious Publishers: What they Want and How to Deliver It*—Lil Copan
  - Soul Work: Creativity and Spirituality*—Susan Yanos
  - Humor as Ministry: Finding God in the Laughter*—Steven Cleaver
  - Where Words Come From*—J. Brent Bill
- 3:15 p.m. Refreshments /Autobiography
- 4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks: Elizabeth Dewberry
- 7:30-9:30 p.m. Coffee House/Open Mic

## The Ministry of Writing Colloquium

"The Ministry of Writing" colloquium was endowed by individuals in honor of Tom Mullen at the time of his retirement as Dean of Earlham School of Religion in 1990. Tom retired from ESR in 1997. His "Writing for the Religious Market" class, first offered over 20 years ago, was the beginning of ESR's unique emphasis in the ministry of writing. This colloquium is one way the school demonstrates its commitment to the written word as an important form of ministry. Previous keynote speakers for the Colloquium have been:

1992—William Zinsser	1997—James M. Wall	2002—Phil Gulley
1993—Sam Keen	1998—Noel Paul Stookey	2003—Scott Russell Sanders
1994—Keith Miller	1999—Will D. Campbell	2004—Li-Young Lee
1995—Walter Wangerin	2000—Donna Jo Napoli	2005—Diane Glancy & Lauren Winner
1996—Madeleine L'Engle	2001—Elizabeth Cox	

### Parking:

Please turn south on College Ave. off National Road West. Turn west on "D" St. into Earlham campus. Turn right at the stop sign, then right again into parking. Walk to the ESR Center.



The colloquium will be held in the ESR Center at the northeast corner of the Earlham Campus. A finalized schedule and room assignments will be available at registration.

# REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Colloquium *prior to Oct. 1*: \$65  Colloquium *after Oct. 1*: \$70

Colloquium: undergrad/grad student: \$25 Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a vegetarian meal

Workshop One preference (number first and second choice)

- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Art of Telling Stories*—Robert Olen Butler
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Religious Publishers: What they Want and How to Deliver It*—Lil Copan
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Soul Work: Creativity and Spirituality*—Susan Yanos
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Humor as Ministry: Finding God in the Laughter*—Steven Cleaver
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Where Words Come From*—J. Brent Bill

Workshop Two preference (number first and second choice)

- \_\_\_\_\_ *On Finding Characters*—Elizabeth Dewberry
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Religious Publishers: What they Want and How to Deliver It*—Lil Copan
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Soul Work: Creativity and Spirituality*—Susan Yanos
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Humor as Ministry: Finding God in the Laughter*—Steven Cleaver
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Where Words Come From*—J. Brent Bill

A \$65 registration fee covers all colloquium events, including Friday night readings, all plenary sessions and workshops, Saturday continental breakfast and lunch (please indicate vegetarian preference) and refreshments, and the reading/open mic Saturday night.

Send registration to: Writing Colloquium 2006, Rita Cummins, Earlham School of Religion, 228 College Avenue, Richmond, IN 47374. 1-800-432-1377, E-mail: cummiri@earlham.edu