



**Featured Speaker:**  
*Julia Spicher Kasdorf*

# The Ministry of Writing

AN ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM

OCTOBER 30 & 31, 2009  
*in*  
 RICHMOND, INDIANA



Photo by: Heidi Lynn


**EARLHAM**  
 SCHOOL *of* RELIGION

# The Ministry of Writing

AN ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM

*In memory of Tom Mullen, 1934-2009*

October 30-31, 2009

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

## Julia Spicher Kasdorf

is a poet and writer who is deeply interested in religion, culture, and the relationship between writers and communities. In her essay "Bringing Home the Work," (from *The Body and the Book: Writing from a Mennonite Life*), she writes about the tension between a writer's need to "gain deep access to her emotional life and write to make sense of it," which requires that she "assume a certain authority, a belief that her perceptions are true and worth telling," and the community's traditions, especially her own Mennonite community's tradition of humility.

Exploring this tension has resulted in two published collections of poetry: *The first, Sleeping Preacher*,

was awarded the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize and the Great Lakes Colleges Award for New Writing. Her second, *Eve's Striptease*, has been described by poet Eamon Grennan as "Crosshatched by body, spirit, and the relation between them." She recently completed a third collection, *Poetry in America*. Her poems have won a Pushcart Prize and have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. Her nonfiction publications include a biography of Joseph Yoder, and a collection of essays about memory, culture, gender and writing: *The Body and the Book: Writing from a Mennonite Life*. The latter was named 2002 Book of the Year by the MLA's Conference on Christianity and Literature. Her current non-fiction project, *Sacrficial Figures*, explores sacrifice as it is configured in various roles: mother,

soldier, religious martyr.

Julia's keynote address is "Writing as Ruin, Relic, and Resurrection."

*Julia Spicher Kasdorf*



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# The Ministry of Writing

## Steven Cleaver – Spirited Marketing: Tips for Promoting Your Book



With publishers cutting marketing budgets, what can you do to help your book gain an audience? Besides giving talks and workshops, Steven Cleaver has created postcards, developed his own website, produced videos for YouTube, created his own radio show, *Leave it to Cleaver*, and walked through New York City's Union Square dressed as the Angel of Death, all to promote his book. In this workshop, Cleaver will present some practical tips for promotion, list some helpful resources, as well as provide opportunity for thinking outside of the box.

Steven Cleaver is the author of *Saving Erasmus* (Paraclete Press, 2007), named Best Christian Fiction of 2007 by *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal* and *Independent Publishers*. Cleaver was named an Original Voice by Borders Books. He has self-published a book of poetry, *Dear God, or Whatever Your Name is Now* (Lulu.com, 2008). He is also a satisfied graduate of ESR's Ministry of Writing Program. His website is [www.savingerasmus.com](http://www.savingerasmus.com).

## Julia Kasdorf – Straw to Gold



How do memories lift beyond the merely personal to become poems? This workshop starts with a question more ancient than the alchemist's quest. Participants will engage in an exercise designed to glean memory for emblematic details. They will also share an opportunity to write and immediately respond to new work.

Julia Spicher Kasdorf has published two books of poetry, a collection of essays, and a biography, as well as co-edited a collection of poems about Brooklyn. An associate professor of English and women's studies at Pennsylvania State University, she teaches in the MFA program in creative writing.

## Marsena Konkle – Putting Words in Their Mouths: The Art and Craft of Dialogue



It doesn't take much eavesdropping to realize that most spoken conversation is boring. Hello. How are you? I'm fine. Glad to hear that. What's going on with you? Not much. Blech! These phrases serve a role in life, but in fiction, such conversations are death, plain and simple. So how do you write dialogue that's realistic, develops character and moves the story forward? We'll study examples and explore ways to make our own dialogue sparkle.

Marsena Konkle is the author of the novel *A Dark Oval Stone* (Paraclete Press, 2006), a finalist in the 2004 Paraclete Fiction

## WORKSHOPS

All of the workshops listed below will be repeated. Please choose one to attend in the morning and a different one for the afternoon session.

Contest. An excerpt of the novel was published in Brett Lott's *The Best Christian Short Stories* (WestBow 2006). She is also the author of a screenplay, *The Bridge*, currently in production. She has an MFA in creative writing from Vermont College, and lives in the Chicago area.

## Rami Shapiro – Black Fire/White Fire: Writing Between the Lines of the Bible



The ancient rabbi spoke of Torah (the Five Books of Moses) as black fire (the letters) dancing on white fire (the blank page), and taught how to interpret both. Interpreting the black fire we focus on the simple and the problematic dimensions of the text. Interpreting the white fire we move into the imaginative dimensions of investigation and mystery where we write the Torah of our souls: what the rabbi called entering Paradise. This hands-on workshop explores the ancient Jewish tools for playing with fire and entering Paradise.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro is an award winning author, poet, essayist, and educator. A congregational rabbi for 20 years, he currently teaches Religious Studies at Middle Tennessee State University, and writes a regular column for *Spirituality and Health* magazine called *Roadside Assistance for the Spiritual Traveler*. His most recent books, all from Skylight Press, are *Recovery, the Sacred Art* (2009), *The Divine Feminine* (2005), and *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness* (2006).

## David Shumate – A Hundred Ways to Kiss the Earth



The thirteenth century Persian poet Rumi said, "There are a hundred ways to kneel and kiss the earth." Surely writing poetry, and in turn reading it, are included in that list. In this workshop we will consider how the act of writing poetry can lead us closer to the essential nature of the subjects of our work and, ultimately, to ourselves as well.

David Shumate is the author of *High Water Mark* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), winner of the 2003 Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize and the 2004 Best Books of Indiana, poetry category. His second collection of prose poems, *The Floating Bridge*, was

published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 2008. His poetry has appeared widely in literary journals and has been anthologized in *The Writer's Almanac*, *Good Poems for Hard Times* and *The Best American Poetry 2007*. He is the recipient of a 2009 NEA Poetry Fellowship. He teaches at Marian College in Indianapolis.

## Patty C. Willis – Exploring Point of View for Writers of Children's Books



When I attended the Bologna Children's Book Festival in 2006, I asked an editor, "What are editors looking for in children's books?" She said quickly, "Strong characters and point of view." What is point of view? Come learn how to wear your narrator's shoes on the journey to creating a compelling story. We will look at examples and then do some practical writing exercises to develop this important aspect of fiction.

Patty Christena Willis is known in Japan for her youth novel *The Village Above the Stars*, published in Japanese and recommended reading by the Library Association of Japan. Her theater work has been performed at international festivals in Edinburgh, Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Los Angeles and New York. Her play *Yugetsu* received a national playwriting award. Her work was celebrated in an award-winning television documentary.

## Amy Lyles Wilson – Pitch-Perfect Proposals



Well-crafted proposals sell books. Knowing which information to include and how to package it can set you apart from countless other authors trying to get published, and will be the subject of this morning only workshop. During the afternoon, writers who have prepared a book proposal may schedule a brief conference. To be considered for an afternoon conference, submit your proposals to Amy ([www.amylyleswilson.com](http://www.amylyleswilson.com)) two weeks prior to the colloquium. For guidelines on preparing proposals, visit <http://www.freshairbooks.com/writers-guidelines/>.

Amy Lyles Wilson is the acquisitions editor for Fresh Air Books, an imprint of Upper Room Books in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition, she is a columnist and blogger for *Her Nashville* magazine and leads writing workshops for women as an affiliate of Amherst Writers and Artists. Her essay "The Guts to Keep Going" was featured on NPR's *This I Believe* and is included in the published collection of essays from the series. Wilson was the 2003 writing fellow at ESR, and holds degrees in journalism and theological studies.

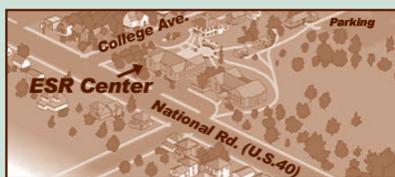
## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Friday, October 30

- 6:30 p.m. Registration
- 7:00 p.m. An Evening with the Presenters: *Session Leaders Read from Their Works*

### Saturday, October 31

- 8:15 a.m. Registration/Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Keynote Address by Julia Kasdorf: *Writing as Ruin, Relic, and Resurrection*
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. Workshop Session One (choose one)
  - Spirited Marketing: Tips for Promoting Your Book*—Steven Cleaver
  - Straw to Gold*—Julia Kasdorf
  - Putting Words in Their Mouths: The Art and Craft of Dialogue*—Marsena Konkle
  - Black Fire/White Fire: Writing Between the Lines of the Bible*—Rami Shapiro
  - A Hundred Ways to Kiss the Earth*—David Shumate
  - Exploring Point of View for Writers of Children's Books*—Patty Willis
  - Pitch-Perfect Proposals*—Amy Lyles Wilson
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Workshop Session Two (choose one)
  - Spirited Marketing: Tips for Promoting Your Book*—Steven Cleaver
  - Straw to Gold*—Julia Kasdorf
  - Putting Words in Their Mouths: The Art and Craft of Dialogue*—Marsena Konkle
  - Black Fire/White Fire: Writing Between the Lines of the Bible*—Rami Shapiro
  - A Hundred Ways to Kiss the Earth*—David Shumate
  - Exploring Point of View for Writers of Children's Books*—Patty Willis
  - Author/Editor Meetings*—Amy Lyles Wilson (proposal submission required)
- 2:45 p.m. Break
- 3:00 p.m. Closing Gathering
  - Announcement of Mullen Writing Fellowship
  - Autograph Party and Refreshments
- 4:30-6:30 p.m. Coffee House/Open Mic



**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.

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Colloquium *prior to Oct. 16*: \$65  Colloquium *after Oct. 16*: \$70

Colloquium: undergrad/grad student: \$25

I would like a vegetarian meal Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Workshop One preference (number first and second choice)

- \_\_\_\_\_ *Spirited Marketing: Tips for Promoting Your Book*—Steven Cleaver
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Straw to Gold*—Julia Kasdorf
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Putting Words in Their Mouths: The Art and Craft of Dialogue*—Marsena Konkle
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Black Fire/White Fire: Writing Between the Lines of the Bible*—Rami Shapiro
- \_\_\_\_\_ *A Hundred Ways to Kiss the Earth*—David Shumate
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Exploring Point of View for Writers of Children's Books*—Patty Willis
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Pitch-Perfect Proposals*—Amy Lyles Wilson

### Workshop Two preference (number first and second choice)

- \_\_\_\_\_ *Spirited Marketing: Tips for Promoting Your Book*—Steven Cleaver
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Straw to Gold*—Julia Kasdorf
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Putting Words in Their Mouths: The Art and Craft of Dialogue*—Marsena Konkle
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Black Fire/White Fire: Writing Between the Lines of the Bible*—Rami Shapiro
- \_\_\_\_\_ *A Hundred Ways to Kiss the Earth*—David Shumate
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Exploring Point of View for Writers of Children's Books*—Patty Willis
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Author/Editor Meetings*—Amy Lyles Wilson (proposal submission required)

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 2009, Mandy Ford, Earlham School of Religion, 228 College Avenue, Richmond, IN 47374. 1-800-432-1377, E-mail: [fordma@earlham.edu](mailto:fordma@earlham.edu)

**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. He passed away in June, 2009. 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. 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.