ESR’s unique emphasis on writing as a form of ministry began more than 30 years ago, when Dean Tom Mullen first offered his “Writing for the Religious Market” course. Since then, Tom’s vision has grown into an entire course of study – one that seeks to blend seminary learning with creativity, spirituality, service, and work for justice.

Tom fully retired from ESR in 1997 and passed away in 2009. The colloquium honors and carries forward his legacy. Endowed by gifts in Tom’s honor, our annual gathering features writers of creative daring, moral vision, and spiritual depth. It seeks to connect ESR to a broader community of writers – both those speaking and those attending.

New this year

Writers and Friends Dinner
Friday, Oct. 31, at 5 pm
Kick off your colloquium with a catered dinner, learn about ESR’s writing program, and hear work from our students. The $30 cost (in addition to registration) includes a small donation. Come support our writers!

Afternoon Roundtable:
What Difference Does Writing Make?
In addition to our normal slate of workshops, presenters will gather to discuss if, and how, they think their work makes a difference in the world.

Online Registration!
Mail a check or use our new online registration: esr.earlham.edu/wc2014

Schedule of Events

Friday, October 31
5:00 pm Writers and Friends Dinner ($30 additional cost)
7:00 pm Presenter readings and Mullen Writing Fellowship Award presentation

Saturday, November 1
8:00 am Registration/Breakfast
8:40 am Optional Worship
9:00 am Welcome
9:15 am Keynote - Fr. John Dear
10:45 am Break
11:00 am Workshop Session One
12:15 pm Lunch
1:45 pm Roundtable Discussion with Presenters
2:45 pm Refreshment Break
3:00 pm Workshop Session Two
4:30 pm Closing
7:00 pm Coffee House/Open Mic

The colloquium will be held in the ESR Center at the northeast corner of the Earlham Campus at 228 College Avenue in Richmond, Indiana.
In this session, we’ll discuss the ways you can use the quirky details, emotions, experiences, and characters from your religious background or affiliation to create a meaningful and publishable memoir. We’ll talk about methods for creating a complex portrait of your religious experience, allowing you to honestly and respectfully portray the positive and negative aspects of your current or former religious culture and belief system. We’ll also discuss issues of audience, such as the amount of information you need to include so that outsiders can understand your specific religious subculture.

Sarah Beth Childers is lives and writes in Richmond, Indiana, where she teaches creative writing at Earlham College. Her memoir-in-essays, Shake Terribly the Earth: Stories from an Appalachian Family, weaves together her personal story with the lives of four generations of her family in West Virginia. Her essays and stories about Appalachia have appeared in various literary journals, including Brevity, Wigleaf, ShNReview, and The Tusculara Almanac. During the past eight years, she has also taught creative writing at Colgate University, the low residency MFA program at West Virginia Wesleyan College, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth, and West Virginia University, where she earned her MFA in creative nonfiction.

David Carlson
Sharing Your “Two-Cents” Worth

Opinion pieces, editorials, and letters to the editor are often the first pieces that new writers publish. Opinion writing also allows you the opportunity to share concerns and educate the local community about an issue. Yet newspapers and periodicals welcome reader’s responses, they are often quite selective in who they choose to publish. What are editors looking for? This workshop focuses on key elements of a well-written editorial or opinion piece, as well as suggestions for establishing long-term relationships with editors.

Dr. David Carlson is the Charles O. and Kathleen B. Van Nuys Deans Fellow in religious studies at Franklin College in Franklin, Indiana. He received his B.A. in political science from Wheaton College, his B.A. in Biblical studies from American Baptist Seminary of the Midwest, and his M.Div. in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. In addition to teaching, he also writes editorials on religion, politics, and culture for the Columbia Republic, the Franklin (IN) Daily Journal, and the Indianapolis Star. David’s book, Peace Be with You: Monastic Wisdom for a Terror-Filled World, published by Thomas Nelson in 2011, was given a starred review by both Library Journal and Publishers Weekly. Library Journal also named Peace Be with You as one of the best books of 2011 in the area of religious publishing.

Lynn Domina
Appearing and Disappearing: What God’s Doing in Our Poems

A burning bush, tongues of flame, a gardener: God assumes many other forms in both traditional and contemporary poetry—from the conventional to the bizarre. In this workshop, we’ll look at several examples of poems that feature God as a character, and we’ll begin writing some of our own. What happens if you take God shopping for shoes? Or you see God at the county fair selling cotton candy—or on the street corner hawking Rolex knockoffs? Or God appears to you in a dream singing a new Christmas carol—are the words? Participants will leave with a good start on at least two new poems and ideas for several more.

Lynn Domina is the author of two collections of poetry, Corporeal Works and Framed in Silence, and the editor of a collection of essays, Poets on the Psalms. Her recent poetry appears in The Southern Review, The Gettysburg Review, The Massachusetts Review, Christianity & Literature, The Friends Journal, Poetry Daily, and many other periodicals. She teaches at the State University of New York in Delhi, NY, where she has won a Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarly and Creative Activities. She is currently completing an M.Div. at the Earlham School of Religion. For more information: www.lynndomina.com

Registration
Register online: esr.earlham.edu/wc2014
Open by US MAIL TO: Writing Colloquium 2014, Mandy Ford, Earlham School of Religion, 228 College Avenue, Richmond, IN 47374.
What gives historical fiction its enduring value? What makes it well-crafted fiction about the past? Tracy Groot will explore both questions in this workshop. Part one: Reacquaint yourself with the value of historical fiction by exploring its power and place in the literary landscape. Part two: Explore elements of the craft of historical fiction, including research techniques and characterization through period culture. You’ll learn ways to bring your findings hot to the page through Tracy’s writing mantra, “See it, feel it, write it.”

Tracy Groot’s historical fiction has won two Christy Awards. The first honored Madman (2006), a novel exploring the gospel account of the Gerasene demoniac. The second came for Flame of Resistance (2012), set in World War II. Her most recent novel, The Sentinels of Andersonville, is set in the Civil War. Currently, Groot is at work on a novel about the miracle evacuation of the British army from Dunkirk in World War II. She is the mother of three sons, loves to knit, read, hike, watch movies, drink coffee, play Settlers of Catan, and eat as many sweets as she can get away with. She lives with her husband and a manipulative Jack Russell Terrier named Murphy in Hudsonville, MI.