NORMAN FISCHER

Fischer has written more than twenty-five books of poetry and nonfiction. A Soto Zen priest, he initially envisioned poetry and Zen as two separate practices. After a time, he realized that writing had unintentionally become a way of describing an intimate religious experience. As he says in an interview with Hank Thomas, "Religion is sometimes an imaginative practice. As writing is ‘not in the real’ in the sense we commonly use that word… And yet it is not ‘real’ in the sense we commonly use that word… And yet it is real, which is to say, it is an intimate religious experience. As he says in an interview with Hank Thomas, "Religion is sometimes an imaginative practice. As writing is ‘not in the real’ in the sense we commonly use that word… And yet it is not ‘real’ in the sense we commonly use that word… And yet it is real, which is to say, it is an intimate religious experience."

Here it is," writes Fischer, "the new way of living with the

Donovan's accolades include a Rome Prize in Literature, a Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, and multiple Whiting Awards. His most recent book of poems is Don't Call Us Dead, a finalist for the 2017 National Book Award, Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, and National Book Critics Circle Award. The universe of his poems is diverse and expansive: pomegranate juice describes it as writing that had unintentionally become a way of describing an intimate religious experience. As he says in an interview with Hank Thomas, "Religion is sometimes an imaginative practice. As writing is ‘not in the real’ in the sense we commonly use that word… And yet it is not ‘real’ in the sense we commonly use that word… And yet it is real, which is to say, it is an intimate religious experience."
From the Director

I’m honored and completely thrilled to begin my work as the Director of the Poetry Center. It’s all too common for poetry to be marginalized in this country, and I feel exhilarated to be joining a campus with so many students, faculty, and members of the community who are professionally and personally invested in the possibilities of the written word. And because we’re living in an age in which language is devalued on a regular basis, it seems more important than ever that the Poetry Center continue its indispensable work, while also seeking new means of connecting, collaborating, and fostering the poetic voice.

This summer, the poetry world lost another of its giants, Donald Hall (1928-2018). A keen interpreter of the natural world, Hall was also known for unflinching poems of love and grief for his wife, the poet Jane Kenyon (1947-1995). We share this Barry Moser broadside of Sharon Olds’ poem “April, New Hampshire,” as a tribute to both Kenyon and Hall.

For more information, contact Jen Blackburn at 413-585-4891 or jblackbu@smith.edu

See all of our series of fine letterpress broadsides by BARRY MOSER at www.smith.edu/poetrycenter/support/broadsidesgallery.html

I’m sure we’ll get to know each other better over the next year, but here’s a quick snapshot of where I’m coming from: I studied as an undergraduate at Vassar College, and received my MFA in Poetry from New York University. For the past fifteen years, I taught creative writing and literature courses at Santa Fe University of Art and Design, where I also chaired the department and directed our visiting writer series. I absolutely can’t wait for this season’s readings at the Poetry Center, and hope you’ll also stay tuned for more information about upcoming events. I’m so looking forward to meeting all of you, and continuing to bring a diverse range of exemplary poets to Smith and the larger Pioneer Valley community.

Matt Donovan

dein/2018-07-05

APRIL, NEW HAMPSHIRE

(for Jane Kenyon and Donald Hall)

Outside the door, a tiny narcissus had come up through rod mold. In the living room, the old buttercup coleus let me get my hand into the folds of the mural, and inside. Inside their room

Don said, “This is it, this is where we lived and died. To the center of the maple painted headboard—sheep of beauty, weight of night—there was an angel affixed as if bound to it, with her wings open.

The bed spoke, as if to itself, it sang. The whole room sang, and the house, and the curve of the hill, like the curve between a breath and a shoulder, sang, in prayer, and the ground, almost, rang, hollowed-out bell waiting for its tongue to be lowered in. At the grave site, next to the big, smooth, beveled, filled, oak home, like the hole of a Druid dirt—inside it what comes not close to being like who she was. He stood, beside, in a long silence, minutes, like the seeking harves-cracking when the waters of a full springing is feeling down into the ground, and he looked at us, at each one, and he seemed not just a person seeing people, he looked almost another species, an eagle gazing at eagles, fierce, intent, wordless, eyeball, seeing each one, seeing deep into—miles, years—he seemed to be Jane, looking for the last time on earth.

This irredeemable commune Sharon Olds’ detention at the Poetry Center at Smith College on April 5, 2017. It was designed by Barry Moser, Printer to the College and has also designed the broadsides for the project. The project was launched with the collaboration of Sharon Olds and Thomas Underhill, printed by Donald Kladbush and Kent Kladbush in November 2017. The broadside was printed by the Limited Editions Club, Roger Brown Graphics in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The broadside was printed at the University of Exeter, published by a special edition of Nelson Poetry, 2017. It was made possible by the support of the ex-owners, printed in this copy number.