Welcome Friends!

We open this academic year with a bit of exciting news for those of us—or shall I say all of us—who have missed the face-to-face contact with friends and colleagues. The Friends board had its first in-person meeting in October. Although masks were required, we had the opportunity to engage in conversation, begin our plans for this new academic year, and best of all make eye-to-eye contact. This is the beginning of what we hope will be a year of resuming almost normal campus life and live events.

As this is our first newsletter of the year, I take pleasure in welcoming our new editor, Daniel Hocutt, R’92 and G’98. Daniel is a graduate of UR, earning both BA and MA degrees in English, along with a PhD in English from Old Dominion University. He is currently the web manager for the School of Professional & Continuing Studies and serves as an adjunct professor of liberal arts in the school as well. Along with the book reviews he will write, we will be adding a list of recent acquisitions in fiction and non-fiction books to our regular news items. Eventually, as things open up, we also plan to include a calendar of library-sponsored events. Our goal is to make the newsletter a valued addition to your Friends membership.

While campus restrictions have eased in general, campus libraries remain closed to the general public. As has been policy for the past year-and-a-half, books and other materials circulate through online requests, with pick-up in bins near Boatwright’s main door. The procedure as a Friend is to go on the library website and check for a book’s availability. Once established, email Cassandra Taylor at ctaylor@richmond.edu. Taylor will retrieve the book and contact you when it is available for pick-up. We are grateful to Boatwright for making the procedure so accommodating to Friends. Hopefully in the not-so-distant-future we will be able to enter our libraries and once again enjoy the experience of browsing through the stacks.

Finally, a plug about our Friends board. As members, we provide support to the scholarly activities of students and faculty, and through lectures and other events, promote the libraries to the community at-large. We currently have several openings. If you have an interest in upping your involvement, please go to uronline.net/library.

Vicky Lewkow
Friends Chair
Recent Boatwright Acquisitions
List from Kevin Butterfield, edited by Vicky Lewkow

City of a Thousand Gates: A Novel
Sacks, Rebecca
PR9199.4.S22 C58 2021

Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives are Surveilled and How to Work for Change
Hattery, Angela
HV9950 .H395 2021

A Random Walk in Physics: Beyond Black Holes and Time-Travels
Cencini, Massimo
QC24.5 .C46 2021

Riding the Continent
Laing, Hamilton M. (1883-1982), E169 .L35 2019

A Field Guide to the Mid-Atlantic Coast: Including the Jersey Shore, Cape May, Delaware Bay, the Delmarva Peninsula, and the Outer Banks
Lynch, Patrick J. (author, illustrator, photographer, mapmaker) QH104.5.M45 L96 2021

My Brilliant Life
Kim, Ae-ran
PL994.415.A37 T8713 2021

The Love Songs of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Novel
Jeffers, Honorée Fanonne PS3560.E365 L68 2021

The Glorious American Essay: One Hundred Essays from Colonial Times to the Present
PS682 .G58 2020

Divine Images: The Life and Work of William Blake
Whittaker, Jason PR4147 .W45 2021

The Best American Travel Writing 2020
PS366.T73 B478

RA644.C67 A46 2020

The Musical World of Marie-Antoinette: Opera and Ballet in 18th Century Paris and Versailles
James, Barrington ML1727.3 .J36 2021

Sabin, Paul JC574.2.U6 S24 2021

Artificial Intimacy: Virtual Friends, Digital Lovers, and Algorithmic Matchmakers
Brooks, Rob HQ21 .B873 2021

Moses, Man of the Mountain
Hurston, Zora Neale PS3515.U789 M6 2009

20 Ground-Breaking Directors of Eastern Europe: 30 Years after the Fall of the Iron Curtain
PN2859.E17 A14 2021

Cross of Snow: A Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Basbanes, Nicholas A. PS2281 .B37 2020

The Rise: Black Cooks and the Soul of American Food
Samuelsson, Marcus TX715.2.A47 S268 2020
Mantel Pieces: Royal Bodies and other Writing from the London Review of Books
Mantel, Hilary
PR6063.A438 A6 2020

Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times
May, Katherine
BJ1499.R4 M39 2020

Life is in the Transitions: Mastering Change at Any Age
Feiler, Bruce
HQ519 .F45 2020

WASPs: The Splendors and Miseries of an American Aristocracy
Beran, Michael Knox
E184.A1 B47 2021

The Daughters of Yalta: The Churchills, Roosevelts, and Harrimans: A Story of Love and War
Katz, Catherine Grace
D734 .K28 2020

Three-Martini Afternoons at the Ritz: The Rebellion of Sylvia Plath & Anne Sexton
Crowther, Gail
PS129 .C76 2021

JQ1519.A5 C44 2021

News from Campus Libraries
Edited by Lyons Burke

The Book Arts Studio’s Busiest Year Yet
By Jen Thomas, Book Arts Studio Director

Despite being closed to students and faculty for the last year, Boatwright’s Book Arts Studio found ways to bring book arts projects to the UR campus community in outside venues, socially distanced library spaces and virtually, through Zoom-based classroom instruction. We kicked off the spring 2021 semester with a printing event in the first-floor collaborative area of Boatwright to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. We pulled out our new, portable Provisional Presses to create poster designs (pictured right) utilizing hand-set metal type and hand-carved linoleum blocks, which students, faculty, and staff then inked up and letterpress printed their own posters inspired by the life and work of Dr. King.

When several faculty members wanted to incorporate book arts projects into their remote courses this spring but weren’t sure how, Book Arts Studio staff assembled sixty-three bookbinding kits and distributed them to students. Through several Zoom sessions, students across four classes—The Secret Life of Books, HIV in
Richmond, and two sections of Monumental Change—learned to sew their own soft cover journals using a Triple Dash Binding (pictured left). Each class spent the semester filling them with drawing, collages, text, and sewn elements to explore subjects ranging from personal histories, local monuments and buildings, and their encounters with books outside of the classroom. Students shared their handmade journals at the end of the semester and the range of approaches to their content was a joy to see.

Last spring, American Studies faculty member Nicole Sackley, and Director of Communications and Community Relations for the Equity & Community Alexandra Byrum, developed an exhibition exploring the history of tobacco in connection with Nicole’s American Studies Seminar. They reached out to the Book Arts Studio to create a tobacco leaf motif to be used on the walls throughout the exhibition. Instead of creating a wall stencil or vinyl decal, we thought it would be visually stunning to line the gallery walls with paper tobacco leaves. After several tests with Rit fabric dye, we developed a color formula that looked exactly like bright leaf tobacco. Cindy and Jen cut one hundred paper leaves out of individual sheets of Nepalese lokta paper (pictured above) and set up dye bath stations in the studio. Within twenty-four hours all one hundred leaves resembled real bright leaf tobacco ready to hang in the gallery. The exhibition (pictured below) is on view in the Carole Weinstein International Center through 2022.

Parsons Music Library Celebrates 25th Anniversary

By Dr. Linda Fairtile, Head, Parsons Music Library

On October 4, Parsons Music Library celebrated its 25th anniversary, but there has actually been a music library on the UR campus for nearly 70 years. Not long after the Department of Music was established in 1954, space was set aside on the fourth floor of Keller Hall to accommodate a library of music scores, LP records, and the equipment to play them. While this collection was assembled primarily to support the music
curriculum, right from the start it was open
to the entire campus, and from time to time
the student newspaper, The Collegian, would
announce its new acquisitions. The Keller
Hall music library was managed by Hannah
Lide Coker, a 1923 Westhampton alumna
and music professor. Miss Coker was also
passionate about gardening, and she
selected many of the flowers, shrubs, and
trees planted on campus during her tenure.

In 1968 the music library moved to the first
floor of the Fine Arts Building, now known as
Booker Hall. The space was small, and since
it could barely accommodate all the music
scores, recordings, and playback equipment,
the growing music book collection had to
remain at Boatwright Library. Miss Coker
continued to run the Music Library for a few
more years, and in 1970 she hired an
assistant named Bonny Hall. Bonny had
been a nurse before moving to Richmond,
but after joining the library staff she swiftly
earned graduate degrees in both library
science and music history. In 1977 oversight
of the music library was transferred to
Boatwright Library, and Bonny Hall was
named the new Music Librarian. In the
mid-1980s she established a series of
lunchtime concerts, featuring local
musicians, that continued until her

As plans for a new campus arts center
began to take shape in the early 1990s a
solution to the music library’s space
shortage came into focus. Initial hopes for a
library serving all of the arts departments did
not materialize, but the new Modlin Center
for the Arts would include a spacious music
library with vaulted ceilings and plenty of
shelving for the entire music collection,
including the books. The new library was
named after Mary Morton Parsons, whose
charitable foundation contributed generously
to the construction of the Modlin Center. On
October 4, 1996, Parsons Music Library
officially opened its doors.

In recent years Parsons Music Library
temporarily relocated to Sarah Brunet Hall,
together with the Music Department, so that
the entire Booker/Modlin complex could
undergo renovation. The Music Library
emerged with even more study space, more
natural light, an outdoor patio, and compact
shelving that will enable our collections to
grow well into the future

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Book Review
Reviewed by Daniel Hocutt

A Single Swallow

Original Laoyan by Zhang Ling (2017,
People's Literature Publishing House,
China).
Translated from Mandarin by Shelly
Bryant (2020, Amazon Crossing, Seattle).

I’m intrigued by literature that
plays loose with narrative time
and perspective. Readers get
involved in such texts because
they’re forced to place the story
into some kind of linear structure.

I chose to review A Single
Swallow because it opens with an
intriguing, perspective-bending
premise: all three of its primary
narrators are ghosts. Pastor Billy was an American missionary preacher and doctor in Yuehu, a town in Zhejiang province in China. Liu Zhaohu was a Chinese military special operations trainee at the camp of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization in Yuehu. And Ian Ferguson was an American Naval Group China military trainer stationed in the camp at Yuehu.

While celebrating the Japanese emperor’s “Jewel Voice Broadcast” on August 15, 1945, when Japan announced its surrender to end World War II, the three living men celebrated late into the night over drinks. Liu Zhaohu proposed that “no matter which of us three died first, after death, we would return to Yuehu each year on this day. When we were together, we would drink again.” The other two agreed, and the novel opens on August 15, 2015, when the ghost of the last to die, Ian Ferguson, joins the ghosts of Liu Zhaohu and Pastor Billy at Yuehu. The novel details their conversation as they seek to make sense of what brought them together, and tore them apart, in life, before reconvening as ghosts.

One remarkable aspect of this novel is its matter-of-fact characterization of ghosts. There’s no hesitation or question about whether ghosts do or don’t exist, or whether they have souls, or whether they can traverse the earth. Instead, we read passages that explain differences between the living and the dead like this one:

The living can’t control their own days, but the dead are not thus bound. After death, the soul is no longer limited by time, space, or unexpected events. The soul’s world has no boundaries. To the soul, the entire universe and all eternity are just a thought away.

The central character in the novel, in addition to China itself, is Yao Ah Yan, “Swallow”, whom Ian calls “Wende” and whom Billy calls “Stella.” This girl-turned-woman through the course of the novel experiences brutality all through her life, yet somehow overcomes despite her ill treatment. Ian, Pastor Billy, and Liu Zhaohu take turns sharing their roles in both rescuing and abusing Ah Yan. Their tone is somber and challenging as they reflect on how their treatment of Ah Yan, often intended for good, resulted in her degradation and demise. No one ghost knows the entire story, and as each takes turns sharing, the reality of their culpability in Ah Yan’s tumultuous, yet somehow triumphant, life is revealed.

And the truth is, these ghosts don’t know the entire story, either. The novel’s table of contents identifies narrators Pastor Billy, Ian Ferguson, and Liu Zhaohu, but it also introduces ancillary primary source “narrators” to tell more of the story: From US Navy Historical Archives, “Three Letters from Personnel in the Field;” From the East American Chinese Herald, “In Commemoration of the Seventieth Anniversary of the War of Resistance Against Japan”; and an epilogue from the Shanghai Urban News Online, “A Letter Lost in the Dust of the Centuries.” Each fills in crucial details about Ah Yan’s story, although not in the order they happened. The novel also introduces two more ghosts, this time ghosts of dogs: Ghost (Ian’s dog) and Millie (Ah Yan’s dog), who fill in more details about the connection of all three ghost narrators with Ah Yan.

The full tragedy of Ah Yan’s life isn’t revealed until the very last page. And because the novel’s narrators are ghosts no longer limited to time and space, insights about what
happened earlier in Ah Yan's life are revealed much later in the narrative. In fact, after finishing the novel, I started paging back through and realized that several passages in the book have meanings that aren't clear until finishing the book.

As the three ghosts hesitantly share their story, it becomes clear to them that Ah Yan is at its very center. Ian shares this recognition:

I know we're slowly getting to the heart of the matter. I've already seen from the glint in your eyes that the thing you most want to hear about is the woman I called Wende. No, she was a girl. In fact, she's the reason we're here. If our lives are three separate circles, then she is their intersection.

Pastor Billy offers this reflection about an especially difficult portion of Ah Yan's story in which he plays a role, but it resonates with my take on the novel as a whole:

This story is difficult, both telling it and hearing it. Each word claws its way from the narrator's heart, through the throat, over the tongue, into the listener's ear, and along the auditory nerve. When it finally reaches the brain, how much flesh will it have torn along the way, and how many bloody wounds will it leave behind? But we can't skip this story.

As a reader, I feel the narrative's pain. This is a story that can't be skipped. It's about the horrors of war and its tragic consequences for those caught in its wake. It's about the resilience of the human spirit when faced with the most brutal treatment. And it's about the way love can be twisted selfishly by even the best of us into actions with devastating, deadly, consequences. Despite its narrators, A Single Swallow isn't a ghost story. It's a story told from beyond its history to reveal the generations-long consequences of opportunities missed and taken.

Closing Notes

Friends of Boatwright Memorial Library Board

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Membership

Have you updated your membership for 2021-2022? We now have the ability to renew electronically at uronline.net/library. You can also renew by printing off the membership form on the webpage and mailing it! Visit us online to learn more about Friends and to access the membership form: library.richmond.edu/about/friends.
Boatwright Blogs
Did you know that Boatwright blogs? More than just one kind of blog, too!

Listening In - Parsons Music Library
blog.richmond.edu/parsons
See the most recent additions to the Library's CD collection (updated monthly), and find out about the latest news from Parsons Music Library.

Race and Racism at the University of Richmond
blog.richmond.edu/memory
Interdisciplinary initiative that documents, interrogates, and catalyzes community discussions on the history of race and racism at the university.

Podcasts@Boatwright
boatwrightpodcasts.urlibraries.org
Listen to faculty authors discuss their recent publications and how library services and resources played a part in their scholarly work.

Something Uncommon - Rare Books and Special Collections
rarebooks.urlibraries.org
Come discover something uncommon with Rare Books & Special Collections as we explore the collections, highlight new acquisitions, and share information about what we have and what we do.

The Newsletter of the Friends of Boatwright Memorial Library is published in the fall and spring by the Friends board.
Editor: Daniel Hocutt; Writers: Lyons Burke & Vicky Lewkow; Contributors: Kevin Butterfield, Linda Fairtile & Jen Thomas