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Bellocq's Ophelia

Natasha Trethewey

Ernest Zulia

Hollins University

T.J. Anderson

Hollins University, tanderson@hollins.edu

Lexi Mondor

Hollins University

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Trethewey, Natasha; Zulia, Ernest; Anderson, T.J.; and Mondor, Lexi, "Bellocq's Ophelia" (2012). *Hollins University Theatre Performances*. 6.

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Hollins Theatre Presents

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THE
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SERIES

Five productions spotlighting six of Hollins University's great writers

BELLOCQ'S



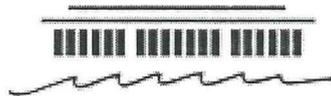
OPHELIA

Based on the book of poetry by Natasha Trethewey

Adapted for the stage by Ernest Zulia, T.J. Anderson & Lexi Mondot

February 15 – 19, 2012

Hollins University Theatre Main Stage



The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival™ 44,
part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program,
is generously funded by David and Alice Rubenstein.

Additional support is provided by
the U.S. Department of Education, the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols
Foundation,
The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein, and
the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College
Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education
program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater
production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a
regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited
to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants
and awards for actors, directors, dramaturges, playwrights, designers, stage
managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for
invitation to the KCACTF regional festival. Those productions invited to the
regional festival will be considered for national awards of distinguished
achievement, to be presented at the KCACTF national festival at the John F.
Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of
2012.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF
involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this
production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to
recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and
university theaters across the nation.

CAST

OpheliaSarah Ingel*
ConstanceLisa Brown
Countess P.....Lisa Gabourel
Mother.....Helena Brown*

Ensemble

Danielle Branche
Yazzy Boiragee*
Jeanette Florio
Natalie Johnson
Meredith Levy*
Alexandra Pell
Elaine Previs
Alia Roberts
Gabby Soto-Lemus

Time:

October 1910-March 1912

Setting:

New Orleans, Louisiana

In and around one of the most prestigious brothels in the
infamous red light district known as Storyville.

And in the imagination of Ophelia

Please Note:

In our earnest desire to honor and explore the rich poetry
and complex themes of *Bellocq's Ophelia*, **this stage
adaptation includes adult situations, nude images and
harsh language.** Please know that we have endeavored to
present this work with respect and artistic integrity.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Notes...

Director	Ernest Zulia
Technical Director.....	John Forsman
Lighting Designer	Ann Courtney
Costume Designer.....	Amanda Quivey
Stage Manager	Sadie Giles
Choreography	Lexi Mondot*
Musical Arranger	Christope Modot
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Brianne Dort
Assistant Technical Designer.....	Tenisha Reaves
Video Designer.....	Jasmine Kettenacker
Props Designer	Kara Wright
Scene Painter	Kailen Kinsey
Sound Board Operator	Katie Ward
Light Board Operator.....	Tiffany Grizzle
Costume Assistant	Rebecca Pfeil*
Scenery Construction.....	Lachelle Roddy, Tenisha Reeves, Yazy
Boirage*, Liz Shinkle*, Holly Milch*, Annemarie Westphalen*	
Theatre Dept. Assistant/Box Office Manager	Katherine Osborn*
Box Office Assistant	Lauren Buie*

One of the most positive outcomes of this adaptation process was the interdisciplinary spirit among the three of us (Zulia, Anderson, Mondot). Hopefully what emerges is a work that blends the elegance of poetry, theater, and dance into a seamless tapestry that further articulates Natasha Trethewey's powerful narrative. Thus, in adaptation, the form and lyricism of poetry gives birth to performance and movement, creating a space in which all who are present become altered. This collaborative effort heightens our awareness that we all must look simultaneously backward and forward into the vastness of history if we are to recognize its import. When the actors on stage read the lines of Trethewey's poetry, when the subtle nuances of the music weave through the story, when the sets make their transitions across the stage, when the soft lights reveal the merger between gesture and voice, we join each other as a community bearing witness to the transformative power of art.

T.J. Anderson, III
Associate Professor, Chair
Department of English

Taking the leap to create an original theatre piece such as this is probably the greatest challenge any theatre department could attempt. But risk is the main ingredient in the act of creation...so we jumped.

Having such rich material to inspire our efforts has been a tremendous gift. We would like to thank Natasha Trethewey for graciously allowing us the opportunity to translate her stunning book of poetry into another art form. Her compelling investigation of issues surrounding gender and race, and their effect on a young woman's journey to self-discovery has been enlightening and inspiring to us all.

When approaching the task of bringing poetry to the stage, we immediately went to image, music and movement; creating something we've named a "multi-media dance theatre cantata." Literal and abstract interpretations entered the equation, and storytelling that would engage an audience but also allow the space needed for poetic resonance became the challenge.

Lexi Martin-Mondot is presenting her senior thesis with the choreography for this production. She is a shining example of the joyful spirit of creation that all the students brought to Bellocq's Ophelia. They never cease to amaze and inspire me. When creating a new work, you hold your breath until you open. So as we prepare to exhale, we'd like to thank you for taking this joyful leap with us.

Ernie Zulia, Director

⌘ Denotes a Guest Artist * Denotes member of Alpha Psi Omega

Hollins Theatre Renovations Nearing Completion!



Thanks to the generous three million dollar gift from the James S. McDonnell Family Foundation, Hollins Theatre renovations are nearing completion.

The renovations to the main theatre will be complete by May 2012 when new carpeting, lighting and window treatments will be installed just in time for our spring production of *Good Ol' Girls* and the Hollins 2012 Reunion.

Last May we packed up the entire theatre building into three semi-trucks so workers could bust open ceilings and walls to install a new heating and air conditioning system. During the two previous summers we saw the installation of a state of the art rigging system over our stage, new lobby restrooms, landscaping for flood control, fire escapes, and numerous upgrades to the electrical systems. We also gained new dressing rooms with restrooms and showers, as well as a new costume shop, laundry facilities, and costume storage... plus an expanded rehearsal space adjacent to the Upstairs Studio Theatre. The conversion of the old art annex into a fully functioning educational theatre facility is now complete.

The best way we know to express our gratitude to our beloved alumna, Libby McDonnell Class of 1962, is to keep this building active with meaningful events that have a powerful impact on our students and our community. *We intend to try our absolute best to honor your generosity, and look forward to seeing you in the audience during your visits to campus.*

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Samantha Macher's

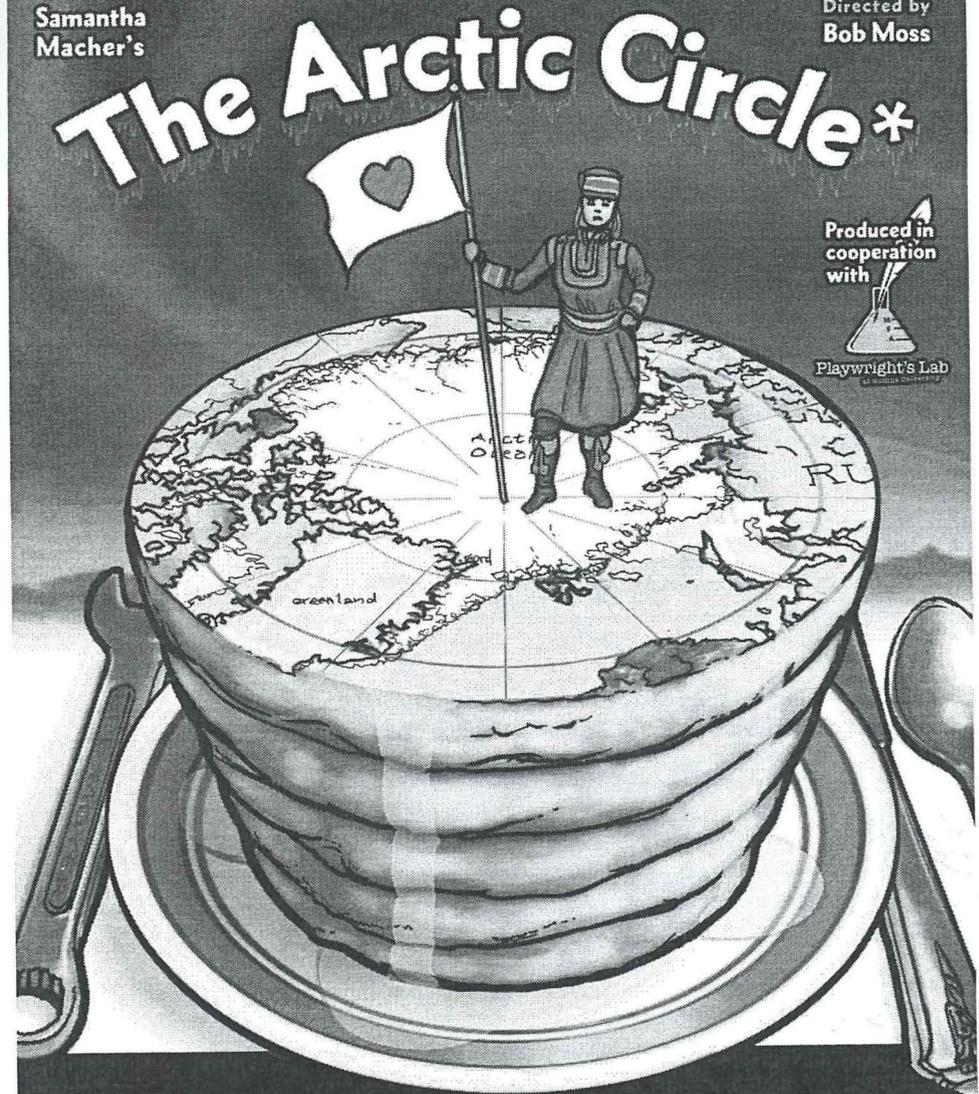
The Arctic Circle*

Directed by Bob Moss

Produced in cooperation with



Playwright's Lab



*and a recipe for Swedish pancakes

February 14-18 Tuesday through Saturday
8PM (also 2PM on Saturday)

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Mill Mountain Theatre





The Performers

Yazzy Boiragee (Ensemble) is a junior at Hollins, majoring in Theatre with a concentration in English. She is glad to be a part of this artistic project and has enjoyed working with these wonderful ladies. Many props to the wifey and my spoon is indeed too big.

Danielle Branche (Ensemble) is a senior at Hollins University. This is her second show and she is very excited to have the chance to experience the world of theatre. She is a psychology major and a business minor. She would like to thank Ernie Zulia for giving her this opportunity and her family and friends for their support.

Helena Brown (Singer/Mother) is a senior, vocal performance major at Hollins. She recently performed the title role of the new folk-opera Miss Lucy, here in Roanoke. On-campus credits include Nine, These Shining Lives, and 10 Minute Plays. Leaving Hollins in May is bittersweet – she will miss her beautiful and talented sisters.

Jeanette Florio (Ensemble) is a freshman majoring in Dance and Theatre. She was last seen as the Dish/Spoon in Goodnight Moon. She loves all the lovely ladies in the cast, and everyone else who made this show possible. Jeanette would like to thank her family for their love and support.

Lisa Gabourel (Countess P): As a junior at Choate Rosemary Hall she debuted as Reno Sweeney in "Anything Goes." Lisa received a BA in Theater from Sarah Lawrence College. She has performed in theater, television and film on both coasts. Lisa is the Artistic Director for the YOYO Players.

Sarah Ingel (Ophelia) is pursuing a B.F.A. in Dance, minoring in Theatre and Film. She has been the dance captain the past three years for Chicago, Violet, and NINE and also performed in Chicago, NINE, and Goodnight Moon. She was projectionist for These Shining Lives and A Woman of Independent Means.

Natalie Johnson (Ensemble) is a sophomore from Dallas, Texas. *Belloc's Ophelia* is her first Hollins main stage show. She's an English major with a concentration in creative writing with a passion for the arts—especially music. She truly enjoys acting and intends to audition for future campus productions.

Meredith Levy (Ensemble) is excited about *Belloc's Ophelia*, as it's been a fabulous experience in devised theatre. Special thanks to Natasha for her words, Ernie his daring vision, and TJ and Lexi for their expertise. Love to Alexandra, Patricia, Kylie, Jessica, Lilly, Liz, Eileen, Katherine, and the whole cast and crew.

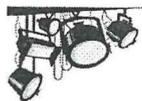
Alexandra Pell (Ensemble) is a first-year student at Hollins University, majoring in international studies and theatre. She is from Austin, Texas where she has appeared in many shows, including Six Characters in Search of an Author and Up the Down Staircase. This is her first production at Hollins.

Elaine Previs (Ensemble) is a senior Theatre and Dance major and has recently appeared on the Hollins Main stage in Violet, Goodnight Moon, Nine, and Chicago. She is [adjective] about graduation, with varying words like 'thrilled' and 'reticent' taking that place. She would like to thank [her family] for their support and involvement.

Alia Roberts (Ensemble) is a senior majoring in Dance and French. This is her first production at Hollins. She has loved the opportunity to work with an incredible group of talented artists. Thank you all!

Special Thanks Too:





Production Staff

T.J. Anderson III (Adaptation) poet and percussionist is an associate professor of English at Hollins University. He is the author of *At Last Round Up* (lift books, 1996) *River to Cross* (The Backwaters Press, 2009) and a critical book on jazz poetry *Notes to Make the Sound Come Right: Four Innovators of Jazz Poetry* (University of Arkansas Press, 2004). In addition, Anderson has produced two poetry and music collaborations: *The Mask* (with William Bolcom) and *Songs of Illumination* (with T.J. Anderson Jr.) and the Spoken-Word CD, *Blood Octave*. He has appeared on the Hollins stage in the musical *Caroline or Change* and more recently in the Community High School production of the folk opera *Miss Lucy*.

Brianne Dort (Asst. Stage Manager) is a sophomore double majoring in English and History. She lives her life backstage, being involved with props for These Shining Lives and Nine, stage managing for 2010 and 2011's Ten Minute Play festivals, and lighting for Parallel Lives. She's happy to once again be in the theatre.

Ann Courtney (Lighting Designer) earned her MFA in Lighting Design from the University of South Carolina. As Lighting Designer, Assistant LD, Lighting Supervisor and Stage Manager she has worked around the United States as well as Europe and South America. Currently residing in Lexington, Va, she is the resident Lighting Designer for both the Community Dance Connection Theatre and the Rockbridge Ballet. For Washington and Lee University, she designed the 2009, 2010 & 2011 *Dance Concerts*, *The Secret Garden*, *Chicago* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. For Hollins University she designed the 2009, 2010 & 2011 *Spring Dance Concerts and the 2010 & 2011 Fall Dance Gatherings*, and the 2011 theatre production of *A Woman of Independent Means*.

John Forsman (Technical Director) is in his seventh year as technical director for the Hollins Theatre department. Originally from Omaha NE, John received his BFA from Nebraska Wesleyan University and his MFA in Theatre Technologies from the University of Virginia. He also worked as a stage crew supervisor at The Santa Fe Opera in New Mexico for two years. Upon graduating from UVA, John worked for The Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park as the Assistant Technical Director. He has a wonderful and understanding dog named Megs who tolerates his late hours during the school year as well as the summer.

Tiffany Grizzle (Light Board Op.) is a transfer student, making *Belloq's Ophelia* her first production at Hollins. As a result, she have developed many new skills ... and a healthy fear of band saws.

Krista Knauer (Run/Costume Crew) is a first year at Hollins. This is her second production with Hollins Theatre. She is grateful to have the opportunity to work with Hollins Theatre, and she hopes to continue working with the theatre for the rest of her college experience.

Kalyn McCabe (Run/Costume Crew) is a junior Theatre major and Film minor. She worked on the costumes you will all see tonight! She thanks her lovely costume comrades for revitalizing her love of turning a piece of cloth into something amazing. Much love to you all!

Christophe Mondot (Musical Composer) an innovative composer, pianist, producer, teacher and electronic engineer, Mondot has explored music inside and out. Having performed on national hit series in France such as La Nouvelle Star, Mondot mounted multiple self-produced shows in venues such as Set de la Butte, and Reservoir in Paris, France. He has composed for Jazz, Salsa, and Hip hop. He is very excited to work with the theatre on a collaborative project where all components are made from scratch.

Lexi Mondot (Choreographer) is a senior, who will finish in May with a double major in Dance and Theatre and a certificate in Arts Management. She has performed in three Hollins productions, directed a ten minute play, and produced multiple original works in the states and abroad. She is thankful for the opportunity to work with such a great cast, crew, and design team on a project that challenges the lines between dance and theatre to create a whole new experience.

Amanda Quivey (Costume Designer) is a scenic and costume designer from San Diego, CA. She just finished her M.F.A. in Theatre Design at the University of Iowa where she designed costumes for *Misalliance*, *Eye Piece*, and *sunshine*. She also designed the scenery for *Urinetown* and *The Book of Liz*. Her other favorite projects were for the Iowa New Play Festival productions of *Decline of the Front Porch* and *Las Hermanas Padilla* where she also designed costumes and projections. She has also worked the past two summers at the New London Barn Playhouse designing costumes for *Pirates of Penzance*, *Carousel*, *Sleuth*, and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. She is excited to make her home in Roanoke and her debut with Hollins University!

Kara Wright (Props Manager) is a first year student at Hollins; she isn't a newcomer to the world of theatre. A four hour's drive away is Fairfax County, where Kara attended Marshall High School; there she did scenery and running crew for school productions. Her first show here at Hollins was Goodnight Moon. Now, for Belloq's Ophelia, she takes on the intimidating responsibility of props manager.

Ernest Zulia (Director) worked as a professional theatre artist for over twenty-five years before coming to Hollins in 2004 to serve as associate professor and chair of the theatre department. In addition to his many productions on the Hollins stage, he has directed dozens of plays, musicals, operas, and world premieres in regional theatres throughout the United States, and internationally. His stage adaptation of Robert Fulghum's international best-selling book *All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten* has received thousands of productions around the world. He also created and directed the musical revue of the songs of Academy Award winning composer Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*), titled *Magic To Do*, which he directed at Ford's Theatre in Washington DC. This brought further collaborations with Mr. Schwartz, including his direction of the American premiere of *Children of Eden*. Ernie is the founding director of The International Theatre Laboratory of Crete, which, in collaboration with Virginia Tech had its inaugural season in 2001 when artists from five countries assembled to explore a global theatre language for the 21st century. He served as Associate Artistic Director at Roanoke's Mill Mountain Theatre from 1987-95, and Co-Artistic Director at The Highlands Playhouse in North Carolina from 1980-87. He was an Artistic Associate at Apple Tree Theatre in Chicago for twelve years. A member of SDC and The Dramatists Guild, Zulia holds an MFA in Directing from Northwestern University, and a BA in English and Drama from SUNY Geneseo.

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*5 Stars
and a Moon*

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Author of *Bellocq's Ophelia*
& Hollins University 2012
Writer-In-Residence

Natasha Trethewey,
Hollins M.A. Class of 1991

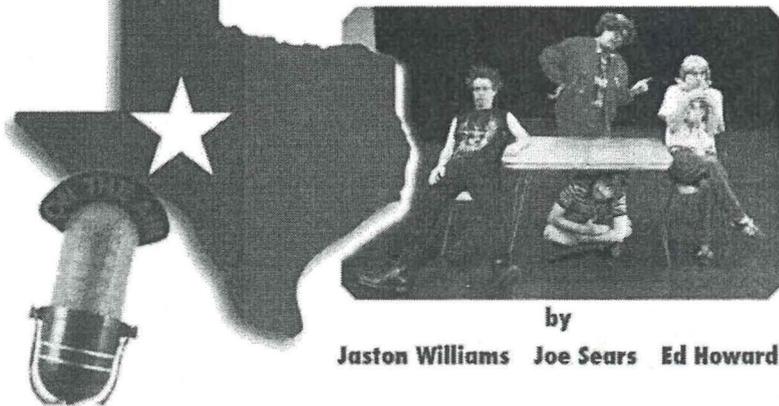


Natasha Trethewey was born in Gulfport, Mississippi. She is the author of three collections of poetry: *Domestic Work* (Graywolf Press, 2000), *Bellocq's Ophelia* (Graywolf, 2002), and *Native Guard* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006), for which she was awarded the 2007 Pulitzer Prize. She is also the author of a book of creative non-fiction, *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (Georgia, 2010). Her first poetry collection, *Domestic Work* (Graywolf Press, 2000), won the inaugural 1999 Cave Canem poetry prize (selected by Rita Dove), a 2001 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Book Prize, and the 2001 Lillian Smith Award for Poetry. Her second collection, *Bellocq's Ophelia*, received the 2003 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Book Prize, was a finalist for both the Academy of American Poets' James Laughlin and Lenore Marshall prizes, and was named a 2003 Notable Book by the American Library Association. Her work has appeared in several volumes of *Best American Poetry*, and in journals such as *Agni*, *American Poetry Review*, *Callaloo*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *New England Review*, and *The Southern Review*, among others. She received a B.A. in English from the University of Georgia, an M.A. in English and Creative Writing from Hollins University, and an M.F.A. in poetry from the University of Massachusetts. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bunting Fellowship Program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and the National Endowment for the Arts. During the 2005-2006 academic year she was Lehman Brady Joint Chair Professor of Documentary and American Studies at Duke University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and in 2009 she was the James Weldon Johnson Fellow in African American Studies at the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Trethewey is also the recipient of the 2008 Mississippi Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts and was named the 2008 Georgia Woman of the Year. In 2009 she was inducted into the Fellowship of Southern Writers, and in 2011 was inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame. Trethewey's fourth collection of poems, *Thrall*, is forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in fall 2012. Currently Trethewey is at Emory University as a Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and Creative Writing as well as the 2012 Writer in Residence at Hollins University.

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THE
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SERIES

Five productions spotlighting six of Hollins University's great writers

Coming next in the Legacy Series:
5 Stars and a Moon



In this off-Broadway hit, two of Hollins' most celebrated writers join two of Nashville's leading singer/songwriters to redefine the modern southern woman in a musical about love, loss, and laughter. In the rich tradition of great southern writing, Lee Smith and Jill McCorkle's *Good Ol' Girls* celebrates childhood through old age with big hair and bigger hearts. There's a good ol' girl in all of us. Let yours out!

April 13-14, 18-21, 2012
at 7:30 pm
April 15, 2012 at 2:00 pm

Hollins Theatre Main Stage

\$10 General Public
FREE to Current Hollins
students, faculty, and staff.

Written and adapted by Paul Ferguson from stories by Lee Smith and Jill McCorkle, with songs by Matraca Berg and Marshall Chapman, conceived by Matraca Berg.

THE
ANNIE DILLARD
 PROJECT

Hollins Theatre celebrates Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Dillard with a world-premiere production adapted from one of her many intellectually and emotionally exhilarating works. Watch for the soon-to-be announced adaptation of one of the books by the author of *The Maytrees*, *An American Childhood*, and the highly acclaimed *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*.

October 2012

Hollins Theatre
 Main Stage

\$10 General Public
 FREE to Current Hollins
 students, faculty, and staff.

Visit hollins.edu/theatre for more information or to purchase tickets

The Legacy Series: *5 Stars and a Moon*

Great writing and Hollins have been synonymous for decades, even before the highly acclaimed graduate program in creative writing officially began in 1960. Now, Hollins Theatre celebrates this literary tradition by launching the Legacy Series, showcasing dynamic plays, musicals, and original theatre pieces based on important works by some of Hollins' most recognized writers.

October 20-24, 2011

Goodnight Moon

Margaret Wise Brown, Class of 1932

November 15-18, 2011

A Woman of Independent Means

Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey, Class of 1960

February 15-19, 2012

Bellocq's Ophelia

Natasha Trethewey, M.A. Class of 1991

April 13-21, 2012

Good Ol' Girls

Lee Smith, Class of 1967 & Jill McCorkle M.A. Class of 1981

October 2012

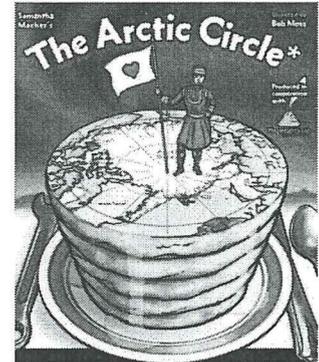
The Annie Dillard Project

Annie Dillard, Class of 1976, M.A. 1968

Five Stars and a Moon continues
 and new stars begin to rise

The Arctic Circle (and a recipe for Swedish Pancakes)
 by Samantha Macher, Hollins MFA Playwriting Candidate

The Arctic Circle (and a recipe for Swedish Pancakes) is a comedy about a woman in a troubled marriage who travels through time, space and Sweden to reexamine her past relationships for solutions to her newly found troubles. Unable to find the clear answers she needs, she must look inside herself to find what she is looking for. **Bob Moss**, founder of NYC's famed Playwrights Horizons directs a cast of professional actors, Hollins alums, grad students and faculty. Produced by the MFA Playwright's Lab at Hollins University in cooperation with Mill Mountain Theatre, and **performed on Mill Mountain Theatre's Waldron Stage as part of the Marginal Arts Festival** before transferring to New York City for six performances at the 440 Studios in Manhattan.



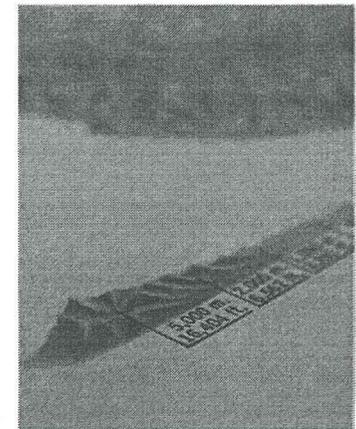
February 14-18, 2012

Visit hollins.edu/grad/playwriting for more information
 "Like" Hollins Playwrights Lab on Facebook!

Decision Height

By Meredith Levy
 A Senior Thesis Production

Decision Height is an original historical drama written by Meredith Levy that will be produced in the spring semester as her senior honors thesis project. The play follows the lives of six women as they undergo training to become members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War Two. Here at the only female airforce academy in American history, these women learn the strength of sisterhood and awaken to a deeper sense of purpose as they discover exactly why it is they fly.



May 9-12, 2012
 Presented in the Upstairs Studio
 Theatre FREE Admission

Visit Hollins.edu/theatre for more information
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INSCRIPTIVE RESTORATIONS

May 28, 2004

An Interview with Natasha Trethewey

by Charles Henry Rowell

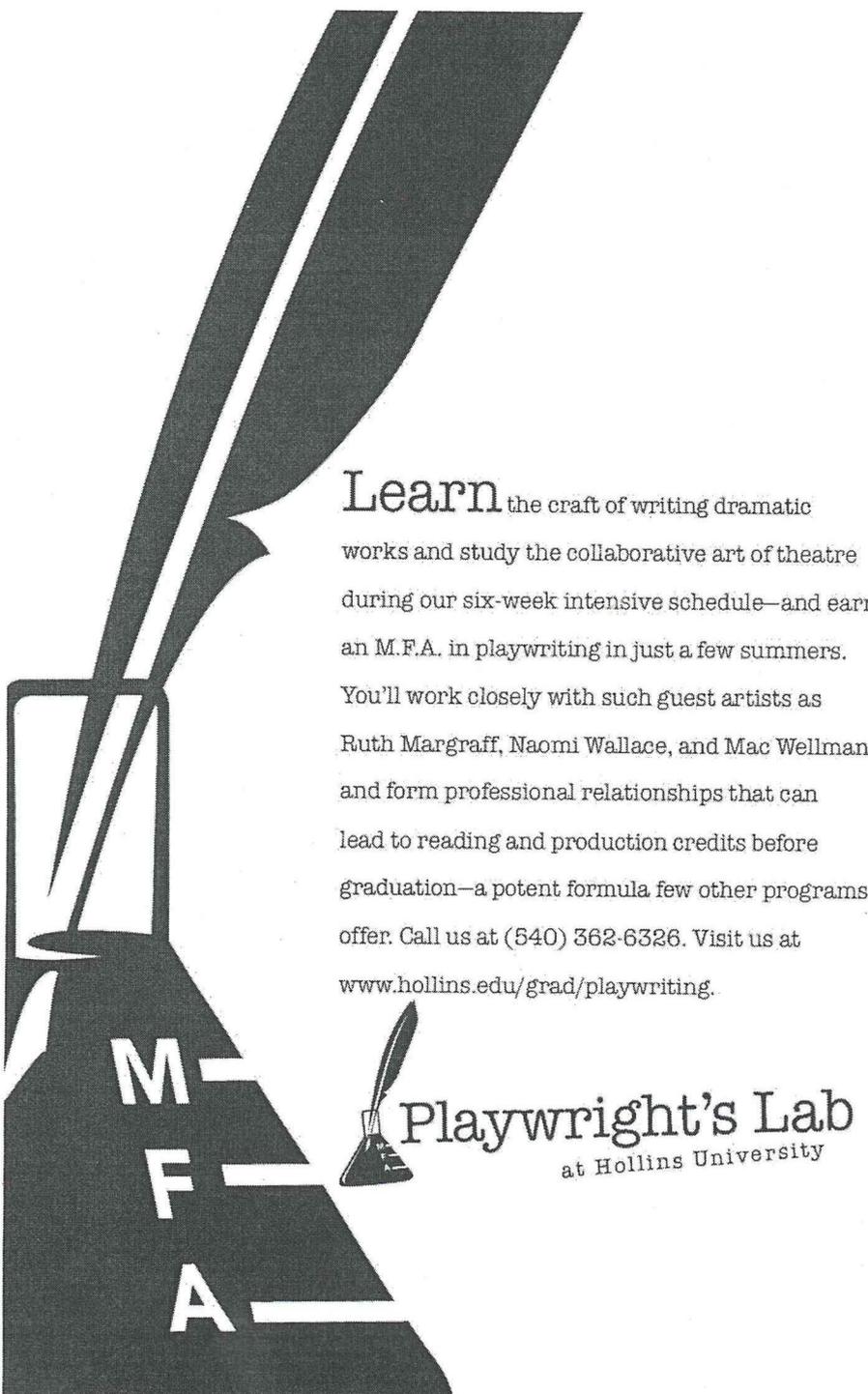
Texas A&M University, *Callaloo* Vol. 24, No. 4, Autumn 2004

ROWELL: Please talk about the autobiography of your second collection of poems, about the life of *Bellocq's Ophelia*—its origins and the process of creating it. In its focus on a single figure, it is different from, yet similar to, *Domestic Work*, which has a cast of figures, including a first-person persona.

TRETHEWEY: I found Ophelia, this character of mine in *Bellocq's Ophelia*, because I was searching for a persona through whom I might investigate aspects of my own mixed-race experience growing up in the Deep South. I believe that a persona poem can help you get closer to yourself in some ways—because the mask is even thicker than the mask in the autobiographical poems in *Domestic Work*—it allows a kind of freedom to investigate those recesses of the soul that might be harder to convey to others. And so she became, for me, not only a means to discuss and grapple with my own experiences growing up in the Deep South as a light-skinned and biracial woman, but she became her own self as well—which is what I enjoyed so much about writing *Bellocq's Ophelia*. I'd seen these photographs while I was still in graduate school at the University of Massachusetts. I was in a class called "The Materials for the Study of American Culture," and we were focusing on photography. When I saw these, I was immediately struck by the power of the images. They were stunning, they were compelling, they were filled with the "punctums" that Roland Barthes talks about—those little things within a photograph that often will draw you out of the immediate action of the photograph to contemplate all that is behind it or outside of it. When I first saw the women in the photographs, they appeared to be white. I think that they appear that way to most people who look at the photographs within our contemporary gaze. When I did a little more research, I discovered that Bellocq took lots of photographs in various brothels of New Orleans, including Mahogany Hall, which was run by a woman named Lula White—an octoroon or quadroon herself—who housed mixed race women. Janet Malcom had written a review of the most recent publication of the photographs, *Bellocq*, in which she talked about how we might not know that these women were prostitutes because of the elegant, vignette-like poses and the Victorian dresses some of them wear. She says that we know because of the wallpaper that appears in the backdrops of several of the photographs—the famous wallpaper from Mahogany Hall, which is one of the identifying aspects of the photographs. I began to speculate then, that if indeed the wallpaper confirms that these photographs were made within Mahogany Hall, it also implies that these women who look very white are not. That is that sort of luminous detail I latched onto and said, "Ah, this is a way to investigate that liminal space of appearing to be one thing to people on the outside and having an inside that's different, something that people can't see." Also, I saw it as a way to investigate the difference between the reality of her life and the images that have become art to us. So, art versus her life. I did a lot of research to find out things not only about New Orleans, but also about prostitution, photography, and art history. After I did all that, Ophelia had a voice, and I couldn't stop listening to her during the time I was writing the book.

ROWELL: How do you negotiate the archival work with what obviously arrives—in volumes, no doubt—from the work derived from the imagination? How do you negotiate what you discover as fact from books, letters, and other documents with what comes from your imagination?

TRETHEWEY: The photographs were the primary documents that I used, and so they were a starting point for most of the poems. I found that it was best if I began by looking at what is suggested as fact in the primary documents and then trying to describe the photographs in objective terms. I would start there, looking at them and then relying on that idea of the punctum—the thing in the photograph that draws you outside the frame.



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Playwright's Lab
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That would be the moment that allowed me to enter the realm of the imagination, away from simply describing the primary document, the photograph. And so I would begin in the photograph and move to the imagination, which is an act of interpretation. For example, the last poem in the collection is about the photograph on the cover. Initially, I was struck by how sad the woman looks, how pensive she seems. It was her furrowed brow that suggested to me the moment photographer's call "the decisive moment." A photographer will train the camera on a subject and wait until that moment happens when the subject seems most real, most unguarded perhaps. I imagine that, in this photograph, it's the moment she's no longer thinking about where she is. She's no longer aware that Bellocq is taking her picture, and she has entered deeply into her own thoughts. I looked at her and said, "What would she be thinking?" I decided that it was a moment in which she is contemplating her life and where she might go from there. Other kinds of archival research that I did included looking at the Blue Books—those advertisements of the brothels and the women in them. I read letters and autobiographies of other prostitutes to find details of their lives, their stories. One particular detail that I took from a historical document, from a letter in an archive, is the use of arsenic. One prostitute describes using it to stay pale, to be whiter. And so that becomes part of Ophelia's story—how she tries to look almost look as pale as a marble statue, as an idealized woman in art. She is trying to be what her father and her clients want—a woman who looks white on the outside, but whose value as a commodity, according to scholar Joseph Roach, is increased because of the "invisible presence of blackness" inside her.

ROWELL: The different forms in *Bellocq's Ophelia* are obviously functional. Will you talk about this volume as a coherence of functional forms? The first and final poems, in point of view, look at and comment on Ophelia. They, too, frame Ophelia's voice and person, but they also allow her to speak herself into being in her own voice. How are we to read this collection in terms of these forms?

TRETHEWEY: You said it right: notes to the world versus notes to the self. I wanted to explore the difference between the private interior landscape, the landscape of the psyche when it is kept for the self, versus the exterior self or selves—the various selves that we might try on for an audience, whomever we might be writing a letter to or speaking to at the moment. Ophelia has spent her life trying to become whatever it was she felt someone else wanted her to be. Her sense of self has always run up against what someone else perceived her to be based on her color, class, gender. I felt that in the letters she might try on various identities suggested by the shifting forms of the letters. But in her interior world, the world of her diary, there is a little bit more of an intact sense of self that is suggested in the consistent fourteen-line form of the poems. I wanted to balance those two things—the external and the internal—so one of the main things that I thought to do with this collection was to tell the same story, over the exact same time period, twice. So the letters and the diary stand side by side, yet tell slightly different versions of the same story. I also wanted to add a third kind of framing—the book is about framing in so many ways and there are so many frames around Ophelia; someone looks at her through a monocle, and that's a kind of framing. She's looked at through the lens and photographed, and that frames her. She's framed by the confines of Storyville, the district itself, out of which she's not supposed to venture. This book frames her. There are three places, at the beginning, middle, and end, where another voice comes in—the voice of the viewer, who is looking at the photographs, that voice which is closest to the poet's. And so I introduce the collection that way. "Bellocq's Ophelia," the title poem, allows for the entry into her voice. It ends with the line: "her lips poised to open, to speak." The middle poem in the collection suggests that the story is going to be told again, and then her diary follows it. In the final poem I wanted to find a way for her to exit all of the frameworks that I had created for her, so I have her stepping out of the frame of the photograph, and she steps out of the frame of the book itself and goes out into her own life, no longer shaped by someone else's gaze.

ROWELL: You speak of the gaze of another. Where is Bellocq in this book, whose title is ironic? Even before we get to the final poem in the book, we recognize that she is no longer his object; through these poems she—having been given a voice of her own to speak publicly about her circumstances—comes to possess herself. Where is Bellocq?

TRETHEWEY: That's an interesting question. He appears primarily as someone she talks about having a relationship with because not only does he photograph her, but he also becomes a mentor of sorts by teaching her the use of the camera. He helps her to learn photography, which enables her to turn the gaze outward and to not always be the object of someone else's gaze. There is one poem that can be read as Bellocq's voice, "Photograph of a Bawd Drinking Ralieggh Rye." There is a thumbprint on the glass plate negative of this photograph that could have been made by Bellocq or whoever developed the photograph. I suggest in the poem that it was Bellocq who left his own mark, which is very much what the book is about too: his name is on the photographs; his thumbprint is there. But I was also trying to implicate the viewer and the reader in that moment. Because we're looking at the photograph, too, we take part in the gaze that assesses her just as if we had held up that plate and left our own prints on it. Ultimately, Bellocq functions as a kind of disembodied eye that is always looking at her, training the camera on her.

ROWELL: But he is not in control of her?

TRETHEWEY: No he is not in control of her, no. I think that I tried to suggest that. I did not try to indict Bellocq as someone who is objectifying her because I did not want to see her simply as some victim of objectification. There are many ways in which she is a participant until she realizes that there is a way to not create herself as an object of someone else's gaze. They do not have the kind of relationship in which he is subjugating her, but he's interested in these photographs for his own reasons. And he takes her under his wing. He gives her something that helps her to free herself, eventually.

ROWELL: If you had to think back and interrogate yourself, how would you describe the politics of her freedom and his presence at the same time? Or have you already answered that?

TRETHEWEY: No, I haven't answered that. But when you put it that way it sounds very much like the men in *Domestic Work*. Their presence is felt most palpably because of their absence.

ROWELL: And that's a decision that you had to make as artist, as creator.

TRETHEWEY: Yes. That is probably connected to own my experience in a lot of ways—that the men were often revealed by absence. My grandmother's father, who abandoned the family, was absent. My mother's father was absent after divorce and because he chose not to be part of her life. My parents were also divorced, and my father, though not absent emotionally, did not live with us. I only saw him when I went to visit for part of the summer. Something happened once that I think illustrates the idea of absence and freedom. I came home one day and my grandmother had a stack of photographs that she wanted to cut my stepfather out of. She was sitting at the kitchen table going through our family photographs and cutting—just like you would cut out a paper doll—him out of each of the photographs. She wanted to get rid of him. She wanted to cut him out of our lives.

ROWELL: What had he done?

TRETHEWEY: He had killed my mother. So there was my grandmother cutting him out, and I could see the light shining through the holes in the photographs where she had removed him. That absence was stunning to me too because I was happy not to see his face, but he was still there—his absence made palpable by his outline. I think that for Ophelia there are male presences that she talks about that loom in her consciousness as well as in her subconscious. Her father is an absent figure, someone whom she remembers from being a small child but who disappeared, and all the men who've had any kind of power over her life—the owner of the farm where she worked as a sharecropper, Bellocq with his photographs—that are attributed to him and not her. For her to be free she had to inscribe her own presence.

She had to take up the camera and her voice had to be the primary voice. I didn't want other voices, particularly the voice of Bellocq, getting in the way of her story. I wasn't interested in his story. We know his story. We know much more about him than we know about the anonymous women that appeared in his photographs. We have his photographs. He has left some record of himself. We have no record—

ROWELL: And he's always sort of inscribing the history. . . .

TRETHEWEY: Yes. So this is a way for her to inscribe a history, a history that has been lost or overlooked. The book is also grounded in a history that, as you said earlier, has been erased but still exists.

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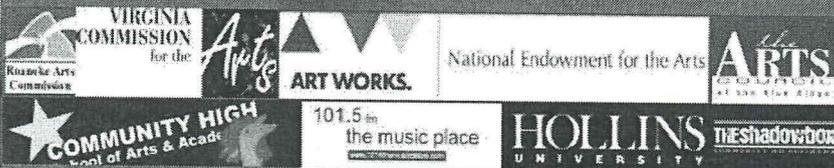
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Celebrate and Support Hollins Performing Arts!

Hollins Dance Events

Hollins Spring Dance Show
May 3,4,5 2012

Hollins Music Events

Sunday, February 26, 3:00 pm
Talmadge Recital Hall

Hollins music faculty, Judith Cline, soprano, and William Krause, guitar.
A reception follows in the Green Drawing Room.

Thursday, March 15, 7:00 pm
Talmadge Recital Hall

Join us as Hollins students present a recital of music for family and friends.

Monday, March 26, 7:30 pm
Green Drawing Room
Enjoy a pianoforte recital by Les Tung

Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 pm
Green Drawing Room
Masterclass by Les Tung

Sunday, April 1, 3:00 pm
duPont Chapel
The Hollins University Concert Choir and Talmadge Singers with the Pan Divas, Hollins' steel pan ensemble.

18th Annual Galbraith Event - Phillip Keveren
April 12, 13

Talmadge Recital Hall
Thursday, 10:00 am Hollins University students' master class
Thursday, 6:30 pm Hollins Academy of Music Music students' master class
Friday, 9:00 am Coffee social (Bradley Conference Room)
Friday, 10:00 am Workshop for piano teachers
Friday, 7:30 pm Recital

Saturday, April 21, 7:30 pm
Talmadge Recital Hall
Laura Woodrum '12 will present a recital of works in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the B.A. degree in piano performance.
A reception follows in the Green Drawing Room.

All Music events are free & open to the public
Sponsored in part by the Sallie Gray Shepherd Fund

A Note about the Music ...

The two spirituals featured in this play are "Guide my Feet," arranged by Jacqueline Hairston (1938 - present) and "I'm a Poor Lil Orphan," arranged by Julia Perry (1924 - 1979). Both women are prominent in having added to the rich heritage of the Negro spiritual, without disrupting the important melodic line.

Bellocq's Ophelia also features the music of Jelly Roll Morton, and Scott Joplin, which is woven throughout the performance. These two African American composer-songwriters left an indelible mark on American music and have come to represent an entire era in our history. This music is interpreted and performed by Christophe Mondot along with his own original compositions.

Jacqueline Hairston - an African-American pianist, composer, and teacher born in Charlotte, North Carolina, whom received her training from prestigious colleges and universities including Juilliard, Howard University, and Columbia. She has helped to concertize and provide better access to the Negro spiritual by creating arrangements for renowned singers, Leontyne Price and Kathleen Battle. Adding to her legacy, she has received many awards such as the 2007 Jefferson Award in San Francisco for "Preserving Negro Spirituals." Miss Hairston currently resides in the Bay Area of California, continuing to teach and compose.

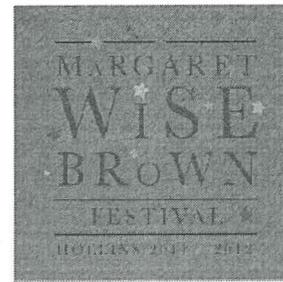
Julia Perry - an African American composer born in Lexington, Kentucky whom studied under Nadia Boulanger. Her works, including an opera and symphonies, tended to embrace a neoclassical style and African-American heritage. She was acknowledged with major awards such as a Guggenheim Fellowship, honorable reviews, and works published by major publishers.

Helena Brown, Mezzo Soprano Senior Recital

With Kerry Morgiewicz, piano

Featuring: Music from Carmen; African-American spirituals and art songs by H. Leslie Adams and John Carter; Hugo Wolf; and Xavier Montsalvatge

**Sunday, April 29, 2012
3:00 PM, Talmadge Recital Hall
Free Admission**



Hollins is featuring a yearlong series of events that are open to the public and family friendly in honor of one of America's best loved children's authors and 1932 Hollins graduate, Margaret Wise Brown

February 16

Founders Day speaker Candice Ransom M.A. '08 will give her address on Margaret Wise Brown, 4:30 pm, duPoint Chapel.

March 3

Saturday Morning Story Hour with reading by a Virginia Tech athlete. Get your photo taken for a READ poster. 10am, Wyndham Robertson Library.

March 8

International Woman's Day, Join international students at Hollins as they read from Margaret Wise Brown books that have been translated in their native languages.

April 2

April Fool's celebration of Margaret Wise Brown parodies (adults only) with Dan Smith. Bring your own parodies to share during an open mic session. 7 pm, Green Drawing Room, Main Building, Front Quadrangle

April 14

Saturday Morning Story Hour with Hollins President Nancy Gray. Get your photo taken for a READ poster. 10am, Wyndham Robertson Library
Immediately following, two simultaneous treasure hunts will be offered for children ages 3-5 and 6-10. Front Quadrangle.

April 28

The Runaway Bunny Family Concert, in the style of Peter and the Wolf, with David Stewart Wiley, musicians from the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and a surprise narrator. 11am and 1 pm, Taubman Museum of Art.

May 31-September 8

Eleanor D. Wilson Museum exhibition, Goodnight, Hush: Classic Children's Book Illustrations. Free and no appointment required for individuals. Museum hours: Tues-Fri.: 10am to 4pm, Sat.: 1-5pm.

June 1-3

Festival Conclusion at Hollins' Alumnae Reunion, celebrating Brown's 80th reunion and the 65th anniversary of the publication of Goodnight Moon

Please visit www.hollins.edu for more information on coming events!

The Library Corner

A look into the life of the each author being honored in the
Five Stars and a Moon Series

Natasha Trethewey (MA '91) is the child of an interracial marriage. Identity, along with the notion of boundaries and the moments in which we cross them are important themes in her work. In *Bellocq's Ophelia*, she imagines a young woman who leaves her life of hard labor in the country for another type of servitude in a brothel; she also leaves existence as a black woman for life in an "Octoroon Club," where women are advertised for their light skin, which carries a status somewhere mid-way along the color line. Ophelia poses for a photographer, then learns to take photographs herself. Are the changes in her the signs of a new freedom or merely changes in position, a shifting of the pose before the next click of the shutter?

The history behind Bellocq's photographs and the themes so richly explored in Trethewey's poems lead us back into the past, to a house in Storyville where women are captured in time by men's expectations, and by one man on glass plates. Taking a quick trip through some of the library's collection, we can follow the trail to new impressions:

Storyville: The area New Orleanians just called "The District" was a place where visitors could consult the *Blue Book* directory and find "sporting houses," richly decorated and catering to an equally comfortable clientele with music, entertainment, gambling, and women. At No. 235 Basin Street Lulu White, "The Octoroon Queen," advertised her establishment with marble interior, an elevator, hot and cold water in all of the rooms, and "none but the fairest of girls – those gifted with nature's best charms." (Rose) Al Rose's book *Storyville, New Orleans* explains that in the late nineteenth-century, New Orleans' long tradition of prostitution ran into well-organized moral opposition. Alderman Sidney Story wrote the ordinance for a regulated red light district, and to his chagrin saw it promptly named after him by the local press.

Prostitutes: Reading *Prostitution: an illustrated social history*, we learn that prostitutes in America's large cities were often women who had immigrated from Europe or migrated from the country. If they could find employment, they found the work back-breaking and the pay extremely low. Some became prostitutes to survive, while others saw it as a temporary situation and a possible way to find a husband. Prostitution was viewed by many as a necessary evil to preserve the virtue of "proper" women, but this tolerance did not extend to society's treatment of the prostitutes themselves: they were unfailingly portrayed as corrupt, diseased, sexually promiscuous and morally bankrupt. (Bullough)

Natasha
Trethewey

M.A. Class of 1991



Special Thanks to
Maryke Barber
Outreach and Arts Liaison
Librarian
Wyndham Robertson Library
Hollins University

Mulattoes, Octoroons, and Passing: Homer Plessy was an octoroon, a person of one-eighth African ancestry. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme court denied his claim to be accorded the rights of a white person. The court upheld Louisiana's racial segregation statutes, despite the fact that in appearance he could not be distinguished from anyone recognized as white. Jim Crow was in full swing, new laws putting an end to interracial marriage and integrated public spaces. In *The Encyclopedia of African American History*, Karl Rodabaugh describes how in New Orleans, the community of light-skinned mulattoes who had previously enjoyed higher status and more liberty than those with darker skin, now found themselves redefined as black under the "one-drop rule." For many, this loss became an impetus to "pass": to choose a new racial identity, escaping slavery and racism. (Rodabaugh) Passing had been part of American life as long as slavery, and it is estimated that hundreds of thousands left their families and communities in search of better social and economic opportunities. Stories of those who crossed the color line have been told in novels such as Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929), James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), and on the screen in dramas such as *Pinky* (1949) and *Imitation of Life* (1959).

Photography: the poems in *Bellocq's Ophelia* look beyond the captured moment into the subject's private hopes, fears and dreams. The article on portraiture in the *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography* leads to considerations of what portraits mean to us. Portrait photographs identify us, they represent; like Trethewey's poems, they invite contemplation of the subject. André Breton wrote: "The portrait of a loved one should not only be an image at which one smiles but also an oracle one questions." Placed together in collections, portrait photographs become larger, their significance growing until they are a cultural archive, "a tool for seeing, studying, and documenting how the individual is shaped by and placed within culture and history." (Lamm). In the *Encyclopedia's* nineteenth-century companion we find Joseph Auguste Belloc, who began his career creating another kind of portrait: the painted miniature. His photographs of Storyville prostitutes now serve both as a cultural archive, and as an oracle to be questioned about so many women's lives inside the frames of race, sex, and social class.

Natasha Trethewey in the Library
Beyond Katrina : a meditation on the
Mississippi Gulf Coast
University of Georgia Press, 2010
Native guard
Houghton Mifflin, 2006
Bellocq's Ophelia: Poems
Graywolf Press, 2002
Domestic Work: Poems
Graywolf Press, 2000

The above books are also available in the Hollins Authors collection, which is located in the Hollins Room. Trethewey's thesis, "Working roots : a collection of poetry and prose" is held by the Hollins Archives.

Sources:

Bullough, Vern and Bonnie. *Prostitution: an illustrated social history*. New York: Crown, 1978.
Lamm, Kimberly. "Portraiture." Warren, Lynne. *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006. 1288-1292.
Rodabaugh, Karl. "Passing." Finkelman, Paul, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 60-63.
Rose, Al. *Storyville, New Orleans: being an authentic, illustrated account of the notorious red-light district*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974.