



# The English Major

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Schreiner University  
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## Mind The Gap: Brianna Rose

On my last weekend abroad, a friend and I took a final pilgrimage to John Keats's London home. We had both already been to Shakespeare's Globe and Dr. Johnson's Anchor, the house of the Bloomsbury Group and Jane Austin's home in Bath, and now it was spring and the mood was Romantic.

The neighborhood was pleasant and peaceful when we rose from the station, shaded with trees and implicitly welcoming of the two strangers marveling at the houses. For the first time, I could see living there, life with a house and a yard and a dog, with a newsagents down the street and buses and trains to take one back to central London just a block away.

Keats' house is small, quiet and loved. Feeling like trespassers, we spoke in whispers and tiptoed through it. Greatly daring, we perched hesitantly on a green couch and looked out over his garden. In Fanny Brawn's room we read a love letter and the sonnet he wrote for her, and we cooed to each other, both of us suckers for a Romantic.

The day was too lovely to go straight home, warm with a blazing sun gliding between the clouds, so we stopped at Camden Town to browse the

market and find treasures to bring back to the States with us when the term finished. The street was thick with crowds of bemused tourists and market-goers eyeing the two-foot green Mohawk of a young man, and every once in a while a vendor would tempt us with some bauble or dress ("Thirty pounds—but for you, twenty, special price.")

Eventually, we found a used book store, small and tightly packed with the space ratio clearly favoring the books on the shelves over the customers. The owner himself sat behind the till, gleefully helping anyone to find anything. He knew every title in his tightly packed shop and



when I brought my choice to the front, he smiled and said, "Ah, yes," as if pleased with where the book was going.

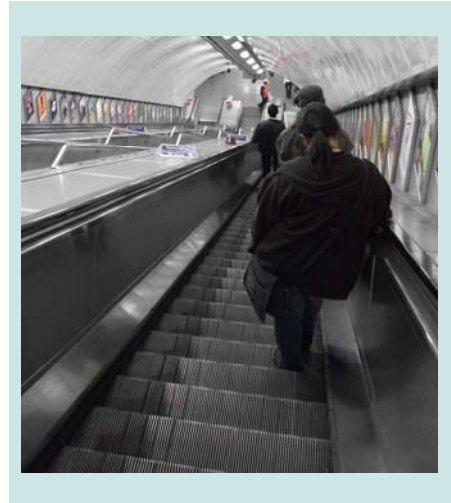
I had never owned my own

copy of the works of Shakespeare before. The leather binding is cracked at the spine, a faded green ribbon marks the former owner's place at *Julius Caesar* and the gilding around the edges of the bible-thin pages is faded and nearly worn away. I told myself that I was buying it for someone else, but as soon as I got back to the States it found a place on my own shelf.

On the train, we discussed the plays we have seen—everything from new theater to two very different productions of *Macbeth*—and which museums and special sights we would take our families to see: the Victoria and Albert or the Tate Modern, Covent Garden or the London Eye.

I decided that the underground was what I would miss the most about London; it might be packed and sometimes stinking with all of humanity, but as long as I could find a tube station the entire city was at my feet. I could (and often did) wander Soho and Bloomsbury, seeking out streets I had never been down before until I was well and truly lost, then simply find the Northern Line and make my way back to the house.

Two weeks later, the first thing I noticed about Texas as I got off the plane was the heat—May in London was pleasant



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and breezy but Dallas was already flirting with triple-digit temperatures. The second was pickup trucks (the first I'd seen in three months) and the third was the sheer amount of open space, the vast parking lots, the empty places between buildings. I could swear that I heard, in the back of my mind, a polite automated voice reminding me to "Mind the gap."

## Paris, (not Texas): Heather Stevens Shaffer

Dr. David Mulry and Heather Stevens Shaffer attended the 2010 International Conrad Conference in Paris/Versailles September 14-17. Dr. Mulry presented a paper entitled "Turgenev's 'Twin Antitypes: Conrad's Secret Sharers and Turgenev's 'Hamlet and Don Quixote,'" discussing Turgenev's influences on Conrad's 'Russian' novel. Heather presented a work in progress entitled "'Make You See': The Female Agent in Conrad's Cutting Room," a gendered, pop-culture look at character development, revision and audience expectation in literature and film. Both works, generously supported by Schreiner research grants, were well-received.

The community of Conradian scholars came from 17 countries and four continents to attend the conference, and all were exceedingly warm and

welcoming.

Presentations covered the gamut from cannibalism to the ongoing process of creating a website of digital images of Conrad's works in newspapers and magazines (no small feat—he was published in at least 150 publications around the world during his writing career).

Whew! Okay, now that the boring business stuff is all taken care of...PARIS WAS FANTASTIC!!!

The stereotypical view of "unfriendly" Parisians is highly over-exaggerated, as is the idea that all the food is fantastic (most of it is, yes; however, university cafeteria food is still...cafeteria food).

Never having been to France, I made sure to give myself a couple of days to be a tourist. I rode trains and subways, walked for miles. Saw Notre Dame, where



the conference was based one day, as well as the palace of Versailles (the other days of the conference took place at the university there). I was surprised to discover the Eiffel Tower is entirely worthy of awe. I also got to do un-touristy things as well, including attending a concert/reading given at the Abbey of Port-Royal de Champs outside Versailles. An actress read the short story upon which the film "Babette's Feast" was based interspersed with acapella music sung by a choir from the Faro Islands.

This last event was made possible by the wonderful couple who took me into their home for a couple of days. They are members of two organizations of people around the world who let travelers stay in their homes: Hospitality.org and Couchsurfing. The idea is to create the opportunity for cultural ex-

change as opposed to "tourism" and it is absolutely worth looking into if you are considering a trip somewhere. My hosts, Christine and James, have traveled the world and invited the world into their home through these organizations.

In closing let me say: if a professor ever comes to you and says, "You should submit a paper/abstract to this conference,"

DO IT!

**"... unlike anything else you will get to experience and ... something you remember the rest of your life."**

The entire process from writing to the conference itself is unlike anything else you will get to experience and will be something you remember the rest of your life.



## Women Warriors: Silke Feltz

Silke Feltz will read some of her creative work again. In November, she packed up her flip flops and presented poetry at California State University in Fullerton,

and in April she will read at the PCA (Creative Writing Pedagogy) conference in San Antonio. Silke's small collection is called "Women Warriors" and the lines are based on women who have influenced and touched her life

in various ways. Over the course of the last months, Silke collected ideas for these poems and can now present a nice little variety that ranges from an unborn child to a near-death experience

during World War II. This opportunity continues to allow Silke to share her creative work with peers in her field and to hear other poets.

## "Life Surfing": Sally Hannay

Professor Sally Hannay, currently teaching advanced creative writing, enjoyed the publication of some of her poetry in "CCTE Studies" in September.

**"I could call back  
I just want to be  
told what to do.  
Yes I can hold  
No, I'll keep  
holding"**

The poems, from a group collectively called "In the Great Big Middle" and including a Schreiner favorite "Bitch Kitty," were published as a result of Professor's Hannay's Creative Writing award from the Conference of College Teachers of English Beaumont conference.

They start with the achingly sad "Reporting a Lost Child," which constructs a one sided telephone conversation about an older child who has gone 'missing.' The reader soon discovers that the other side of the conversation is missing too, a technique that draws us ineluctably in, until we are the person

to whom the heartbreaking tale of loss is told, "I could call back/I just want to be told what to do/Yes I can hold/No, I'll keep holding."

The reader is kept holding through a series of poems that take us through experiences both personal and universal, specific and mythic.

The scope of the poems is broad, with comedic elements, too, in "Bitch Kitty," and "It's Only Fitting," where finding a good pair of jeans is compared to a courtship.

Family is a dominant theme, along with the vagaries of life

that we experience: whether in the ravages of cancer or the hope-sustaining view from an "Upstairs Window."

Professor Hannay, a California gal at heart, takes us into the terrors of "Every Ninth Wave," which will crush you if you don't submit to it and face it: "swim to it.../Kick hard, and dive under and through it," with its lessons about life, and surf, and endurance.

New material is being presented soon at CCTE in Stephenville, and at the Popular Culture Association conference in San Antonio in the spring.

## Mountaineering: Bri Hamlyn

The first issue of "the Mountaineer" came out in the third week of October and was a big improvement upon previous publications.

Led by editor-in-chief Bri Hamlyn, a graduating English major this year, the student

newspaper is comprised of submissions from Professor Linda Byrne's journalism class as well as students who chose to become part of the informal newspaper staff. Each published piece earns the writer or photographer \$25 journalism grant.

Designed by Cody Weiss, the new front page with its color and graphic elements is the publications biggest improvement and is sure to turn more heads than previous issues.

The student newspaper has thus far not been an integral

part of campus life, but the development in staff is the first step to making it a legitimate voice for students and staff alike.

## Monterrey Shadows: Liz Stewart

With the support of Dr. Kathleen Hudson, I presented my independent research project on the Jungian archetype of the Shadow in popular culture at the opening session of the Young Rhetoricians' Conference (YRC) in Monterey, California on June 24, 2010. My presentation was highly interactive, engaging the audience in a dynamic discussion regarding their impressions of the four featured characters, how those characters fit the Shadow archetype, and concluded with an open discussion on other examples of the

Shadow in popular culture figures.

The YRC is generally a conference for instructors and graduate students, resulting in me and one other presenter acting as the voices of the undergraduate division. For this reason, we offered a unique point-of-view on several subjects at the individual workshops.

Above all, the most rewarding experience of the conference was learning from and conversing with the diverse group of educators in attendance, as well as the networking possibilities they offer. I observed

the fresh enthusiasm in graduate students who would find themselves teaching for the first time in the fall and the practiced diligence of veteran instructors who patiently wait for students to discover their own potential. I absorbed the energy of passionate commitment, a desire to shape the minds of tomorrow.

I will be expanding my research and presenting at a national conference sponsored by the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association in San Antonio, Texas this coming April.



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## You Can Quote Me On this:

"The Zangiaco band was not making music; it was simply murdering silence with a vulgar, ferocious energy."  
(Joseph Conrad, "Victory")

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**Pop Culture Symposium**  
**Dr Woods is looking for your paper for the PCS (November 12). So dig out those thoughts on "Twilight" or "Jersey Shore" or even something cool! Submit by October 29**

## Write, Write, "Muse": Jonathan Fletcher

Can't think of anything to write about? Then write about having nothing to write on.

Convinced that you have nothing to say that hasn't already been said a million times before? Then write the millionth-and-one version of it.

Think that your writing just isn't good enough yet? Per-

fect! Because we want your writing in all its blemishes, freckles, and imperfections:

*Writer, worshipper, lover of leaving.*

*It doesn't matter.*

*Ours is not a caravan of despair.*

*Write, even if you have broken your vow*

*a thousand times,*

*Write, yet again, write, write*

As the Sufi poet Rumi said, and would have urged Schreiner students had he worked for the *Muse*, Schreiner's journal for student writing and creativity.

All work (including essays, photography, poetry, and short stories) should be submitted to [smuse@gmail.com](mailto:smuse@gmail.com).

## Lithu... Lithu... Lithuwhereia?: Jessica Roberts

When I was initially approached about traveling to Lithuania this past summer the biggest joke came with the fact no one knew where it was. Europe, that was for certain, but where was Lithuania and why would anyone travel there? Friends would Wikipedia it and find out information like it was the geographic center of Europe or that its language was the closest to Sanskrit, but I never truly knew anything about the country until I finally arrived there.

Lithuania is, for a lack of a better word, odd. Wonderfully odd, of course, but odd nonetheless, and to go there to study War in Film and Literature, a class being taught there by our own Dr. Kua-lapai, was probably most fortuitous for me. The country remains war-torn from the end of World Wars I and II, as as

the Cold War, and native Lithuanians are undergoing a profound identity crisis. They are, since the war, in their 25th year of independence, able to be their own country with their own language and traditions.

I stayed in Vilnius, the country's capital, for several days and it was here that I had the most amazing experiences walking the huge city on my own at five in morning. Jet lagged and disoriented by the early rising sun, which stayed high in the sky for what seemed like 18 hours a day, I walked around the city soaking in the art and architecture of a Europe that I had never seen before. Churches in the midst of reconstruction still showed the scars of damage from fire bombing during World War II, and whole sections of the city housed the artistic ponderings of graffiti artists, sculptors, and the musically inclined. I sat one after-



noon toward the end of my journey listening to flute renditions of Fleetwood Mac and ABBA being played by a young girl on the streets. "Fernando" has a new place in my heart now.

I learned a lot from my journey to Lithuania this summer, but the thing that really stands out to me as I look back is how much Americans can get so caught up in being labeled a tourist that they forget the country is all around them. Never

once was I labeled an "American." In fact, I was mistaken for French and German several times, but Lithuanians, when they did find out I was from Texas, were so shocked and honored that I took my time to visit their country that I was humbled completely and would go back there in a heartbeat. Looking for country to travel? Try one you've never heard of before, you won't be disappointed.