



THE 2nd LAIRD Miscellany

Volume 8, Issue 4

Friday, October 5th, 2012



Senior Spotlight: Jacob Styburski

1) If you could take the place of a character in a novel, who would you be and why?
I would be one of Phillip Pullman's mulefa. They seem to lead very relaxing lives, and I've always been curious to find out how their claws hook into the seed pods.

2) What is the single best English class you've taken at Carleton and why?
I think I'd have to say the short story workshop. I really enjoy writing fiction, but almost never have time at Carleton--making it a part of my academic workload was therefore a very good idea.

3) Tell us something that most of the other English majors don't know about you.
I really like talking about metaphysics. I also enjoy fishing. Unfortunately, there tends to be very little crossover between the two.

4) Which book would you be okay never reading again?
Faulkner's *Absalom Absalom!*--His brilliance confounds me.

5) Six words describing your experience as a Carleton English major:
Writing, writing, writing, startling, imaginative, sublime.

Quote of the Week

"In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn"

STUDENTS! Call in to ext. 4322 with the author and the name of the week. The first person to correctly name the quotation will win a special package of cookies with a faculty signature! (A certain professor will be very sad if certain people in a certain Tues/Thurs class do not get this one)



THAT
BABY
WROTE
WHAT?

Who is this famous author? Email whiter or lanec with your answer and you get to pick next week's baby.

"Friendship? Yes, please."

Charles Dickens.

Friend the English Department on Facebook

Queries on Queries: “The Questing Hero”

Our weekly look into the English Department Argument and Inquiry Seminars
This Week: George Shuffelton and Romance

1. What is your favorite work on the syllabus for “The Questing Hero?”

My favorite text is usually whatever I’ve just taught, so I’ll pick Sir Gowther. This fabulous fifteenth-century romance features a very troubled hero. A devil rapes the Duchess of Austria, but she conceals this from everyone, including the child who is born from the rape, Gowther. He’s a true enfant terrible: he kills nine wet-nurses and then bites off his own mother’s nipple. As a teenager, he terrorizes everyone in the neighborhood (raping, murdering, arson, etc.) until his mother finally tells him of his true heritage, at which point he seeks the Pope’s absolution. But the Pope gives him the hard penance of spending his life living like a dog – not speaking, taking his food from the mouths of dogs, living under the table, etc. – until God finally forgives him. Forgiveness comes much later, after more violence, the miraculous healing of a mute princess, magic armor in three different colors, and lots of pitched battles with Saracens. Wild stuff.

2. If you could say one thing that works in the genre of romance, almost universally, do NOT include, what would that thing be?

Romances include nearly everything. But I’ve yet to read a romance (medieval or otherwise) with an ugly hero or an ugly heroine who stays ugly from start to finish. It ain’t fair, but it’s true.

3. If you were any romantic hero, who would it be? Who would you like it to be?

I’d like to be Gawain – suave, tactful, courageous, and dangerously sexy. But I’m more like the patriarchs in Shakespeare’s romances, like Prospero – a grumpy, rapidly-aging family man fascinated by obscure learning that scares most people. Alas

4. If you could put the questing knight narrative model in any cultural form, what would it be? What thing in today’s society could do with a little medieval romance?

There are a *few* college romances out there, but I’d like to see Carleton imbued with a little more medieval romance. We’re supposed to be the Knights, after all. Seeking out heroic adventure, loyalties that endure extreme tests, magic rings – we could all use a little more of that. Naturally, I would also appreciate a faithful pet lion.

5. What is your favorite thing about teaching an A & I Seminar?

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6. If you could take any A & I seminar offered in the English department, what would it be (including your own...)?

I’d take Peter Balaam’s “Occupy Wall Street: Melville’s *Bartleby*.” Capitalism is as weird and enchanting as any medieval romance, and so is Melville.

What the Dickens is a Marathon Reading?

As you may have heard, our fair department is holding a Marathon Reading of *David Copperfield* starting on common time on October 16 and ending the evening of October 17. In order to get you guys as excited about it as we are, we thought we would delve a little into this particular feat of strength.

What a marathon reading is NOT:

- Reading 26.2 miles of text (which, based on our rough calculations, is about 12,000 pages depending on the size of the type and page)
- For wimps. The faint of heart need not apply.

What a marathon reading is:

- A celebration. Charles Dickens turns 200 this year, which is a big deal. Therefore, the Carleton community is coming together to celebrate him in the most appropriate way: by reading his classic novel, *David Copperfield*. Without stopping.
- a tradition. English departments, museums and other organizations all over the world have been doing marathon readings for years. Just this year, the British Council Hosted a 24 Hour global Dickens marathon reading in which participants from 24 countries read together via the interwebs.
- A spectacle. Here at Carleton, students and professors from all departments, as well as staff members (including Stevie P) are going to participate, each reading for about a half hour. There will be costumes. At the end, there will be cake.
- Heroic. And American. See photo. If you want to be like Jimmy Stewart or have any question about this awesome event. Email Arnab at achaklad@carleton.edu

