

# Alumni Notes

Issue III

News from the English Department of Tufts University

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Meet Ichiro Takayoshi 1
- What are They Doing Now? 4
- Faculty Book Recommendations 5
- Faculty Publications 6
- Commencement Photos 7

## Notes from the Chair

It's February in Medford. The brightness of the sunlight can dazzle your eyes when it bounces off the snow on the quad. Students, mindful of icy conditions on the Memorial Steps or the stairs outside Tisch, negotiate their way without missing a word of their cell-phone conversations. Classes have been in session for three weeks now and the rhythm of the semester has taken hold.

You probably remember what that was like. The excitement of getting into those courses you feared would close before you registered starts to fade a bit as the work of reading and writing begins in earnest. But a new excitement emerges as well: the excitement of finding yourself wending your way through the echo-chamber of *Ulysses* or of riding the magnificent waves of rhetoric in one of Marlowe's plays or of meditating on



Lee Edelman,  
Chair of the English Department

Mary Shelley's thoughts about monstrosity, creation, and birth.

Those pleasures may be harder to come by now that your primary worry isn't whether or not you'll get up for your 1:30 class. But there are still opportunities to renew your connection to the intellectual life on the Hill. If you go to the English department website (<http://ase.tufts.edu/english>), you can check out the courses being offered this term (or even in the recent past). Some will be old favorites that you may have taken yourself when you were a student shuffling along on the snow-lined

paths that lead to the door of East Hall. Others, though, may make you wish that you still had some credits to fill. Why not use the reading lists that these courses most often include in order to develop your own ideas

*Continued on page 3*

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## Meet Ichiro Takayoshi, New Assistant Professor

This fall, Ichiro Takayoshi joined the Tufts English Department as Assistant Professor of English Literature. Professor Takayoshi holds a PhD from the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. A specialist in 20th century American literature and contemporary Asian American literature, Professor Takayoshi will also teach courses in war and literature and the methodology of literary history. His current manuscript, "Empire on Paper: Interventionist and Isolationist Literature

in the United States, 1939-1941," is a cultural, political, and intellectual history of American patriotism on the eve of the Second World War. In it, he looks at a variety of sources (including novels, poetry, drama, political documents, personal letters, and movies) and "reconstruct[s]" the epochal debate in which many key politicians, generals, public intellectuals, artists, academics, and journalists waged a war of ideas, words, and images, in the hope of swaying the public to their differing visions of America's soul, America's future." The

*Continued on page 2*

Fall 2008

## Takayoshi *continued from page 1*

dissertation version of his manuscript earned distinction and a nomination for the Bancroft Prize for the Best Dissertation in U.S. History.

Although his interests range widely, from war and literature to political theory to contemporary U.S. ethnic literatures, Takayoshi explains that a larger question has always shaped his research: “what kind of roles do cultural symbols and literary techniques play in political debates over America’s national character, the nation’s understanding of itself?” He explains: “Because such debates rise usually when the nation copes with some sort of national emergency, my research interests have naturally converged on those critical moments in modern U.S. history when the politics and culture of consensus broke down and the nation was divided over its identity, its origins, and its future.”

Takayoshi’s interest in American literary history occurred “quite accidentally.” Of his junior year at the University of Tokyo, Takayoshi remembers: “I met two professors, Yoshiaki Sato and Motoyuki Shibata, who happened to teach regularly courses on contemporary American fiction. Unassuming but amazingly efficacious pedagogues, they inculcated in me a deep appreciation for literature. Even before I encountered them, I knew deep down in my heart that my passion lay with literary studies....Never, though, had I even dreamed of studying American literature. Today, many years later, I am teaching and researching American literature in the U.S. It is a sobering thought that professors could literally change their students’ lives.”

Asked what he hopes students will gain from his courses, Professor Takayoshi says: “My main goals will always be the same: to help my students acquire a set of basic techniques indispensable for making insightful observations about cultural artifacts and expressing them cogently in writing and to help my students gain deep knowledge of the historical periods my courses focus

*“I knew deep down in my heart that my passion lay with literary studies....Never, though, had I even dreamed of studying American literature..”*



Ichiro Takayoshi, Assistant Professor of English Literature

on. Some of my students will surely come to class thinking these goals are easily attainable. The first thing they will learn will be that they are mistaken, and I think this discovery alone can amount to an educational experience of considerable value. To some of my students, these goals may also sound a little bit dry and humdrum; I will do everything to ensure that they realize that, like in other fields and disciplines, the basics are the hardest to master, and the most rewarding when properly performed.”

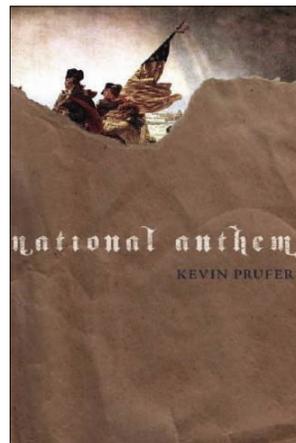
## Poetry Reading: Kevin Prufer

On Oct. 28, the English Department hosted acclaimed poet Kevin Prufer, author of the new book “National Anthem,” at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hall Lounge.

Prufer has written four books of poetry and is editor of three anthologies. He is editor of the prestigious *Pleiades: a Journal of New Writing* and Associate Editor of *American Book Review*.

Poems from “National Anthem” received the George Bogin Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of America, the Pushcart Prize, and were the basis for a 2007 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Prufer read and discussed “National Anthem,” and the book was available to purchase for a special discount at the Tufts University Bookstore.



# Tufts Graduate Student Job Placement

The job market for English graduate students has been fiercely competitive for many years, but at Tufts we are pleased that our graduate students are finding success. Last year under the guidance of the Job Placement Director, Judith Haber, the following Tufts graduate students were hired for full-time positions.

## *The following Ph.D. graduates have secured tenure-track or full-time positions:*

Nicole Aljoe (G '04), tenure-track position at Northeastern University.

Anupama Arora (G '04), tenure-track position at UMass Dartmouth.

Christopher Craig (G '07), tenure-track position at Emmanuel College.

Sean Desilets (G '07), full-time position at Westminster College.

Helena Gurfinkel (G '07), tenure-track position at the University of Southern Illinois.

Tony Lily (G '07), tenure-track position at Sweet Briar College.

Kreg Segal (G '04), tenure-track position at Regis College.

## *The following Ph.D. candidates have secured one-year visiting appointments:*

Kerri Bowen, Bates College.

Meg Toth, Manhattan College.

### **Notes from the Chair** *continued from page 1*

about what the students enrolled might be learning? Why not get some thoughts about a reading program of your own from the topics that current faculty members see as most compelling?

There are other ways of continuing your relation to Tufts and to the study of literature. Maybe you'd like to try to organize an alumni gathering of English majors at an upcoming Tufts commencement? Or use these pages as a place to start a conversation with former majors about the books or films you're reading or viewing—or to solicit ideas about other things you ought to read or view.

We'd love to have contributions for a column (I could imagine us calling it "A.T.") in which readers would offer their thoughts about the life of the mind After Tufts. You wouldn't have to make an ongoing commitment in order to send us just a few paragraphs on a topic of interest or importance to you. Feel free, as well, to submit questions for another possible feature: "Ask a Professor." Perhaps you want to know more about the research pursued by a faculty member in the department. Or perhaps you've been wondering, after graduation, what Professor X would say or think about a particular issue or problem. We can't guarantee that every professor will be willing or able to answer, but

we'd love to give you a forum in which to ask raise such questions. By the same token, there may be things you'd like to know from—or about—your peers. "Alums Want to Know" might let someone in Los Angeles connect with former English majors working in film out there—or allow an alum in Chicago to find Jumbos with interest in a reading group. So if there's something *you'd* like to know (including, "has anyone heard from X since graduation?"), don't hesitate to make use of this option.

My niece, who is about to turn 23, told me last week that she already regrets that Americans, in general, graduate from college just when they're old enough to appreciate it. One of the goals of *Alumni Notes* is to keep you connected to the academic world that graduation may well have helped you, like her, to value even more. So please be in touch to let us know how we can assist in sustaining the excitement you knew when you first read *Paradise Lost* or *Daniel Deronda*, *Dictee* or "The Rape of the Lock," Judith Butler or Frederick Douglass, Geoffrey Chaucer or Margaret Kempe. Wherever you are this February, you too can be part of the light that dazzles on this snow-covered Hill. Dream yourself into a conversation and then, like Adam in Milton's epic, awake and find it real.

# What Are They Doing Now?

Have you ever been burdened with the question “Where can an English degree take you?” These Tufts alums have the answers. While many are involved in writing and teaching, others have found their way into law, politics, and much more.

- ◆ **Lauren Cahn ‘87**—Writes a column for the Huffington Post. Her archived columns can be found at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lauren-cahn/#blogger\\_bio](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lauren-cahn/#blogger_bio).
- ◆ **Duy Linh Tu ‘97**—Appointed to full-time faculty at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He teaches classes in new media journalism and is the coordinator of the school’s new media program. He’s also the proud father of a 10 month old girl and lives with his wife and daughter in Brooklyn.
- ◆ **Marilyn Kallet (Zimmerman) ‘68**—As the Lindsay Young Professor of English at the University of Tennessee, she directs the creative writing program. Her fourteenth book, *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems*, will be out from Black Widow Press in 2009. Consider visiting her blog on poetry and the writer’s life at <http://www.redroom.com/author/marilyn-kallet>.
- ◆ **Roma Torre (Friedman) ‘80**—Works as a news anchor at NY1 News in NYC. She’s the station’s chief theatre critic, which has afforded her wonderful opportunities these past 21 years.
- ◆ **Amy Vellucci**—Works as a publisher of a small group of weekly newspapers and a women’s magazine in southern New Hampshire.
- ◆ **Jennifer Gerson ‘06**—After working as the associate editor at Jezebel.com and as an editorial assistant at *Elle*, she now works as the Style Editor at RalphLauren.com.
- ◆ **Deb Miller ‘93**—After graduation, she worked at a small magazine, *Soccer America*, and led bike tours with Backroads, Inc. She now organizes Jewish day trips abroad. See [traveljewish.com](http://traveljewish.com) for more information.
- ◆ **Robin DeRosa**—Is an Associate Professor of English at Plymouth

State University in New Hampshire, where she teaches early American literature, literary theory, and Women’s Studies courses. She enjoys seeing Tufts graduate alums at conferences and has done some co-authoring with some as well. The book version of her dissertation on the Salem witch trials will be published by McFarland this coming year.

- ◆ **Richard O’Brien ‘59**—Served for five years as a US Naval officer and later worked in retailing for thirty years. He is now a real estate broker.
- ◆ **Jim Cullen ‘85**—Earned a doctorate in American Studies and has written ten books. He currently teaches high school history at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School in NYC.
- ◆ **Jennifer Covell ‘86**—Director of Closing and Client Services at Legacy Benefits, LLC, a small financial services company.
- ◆ **Linda Buchwald ‘04**—Assistant editor at Scholastic MATH Magazine, a magazine for middle- and high-school students that uses real-life situations and celebrities to make math fun for students.



- ◆ **Jeanne Smith ‘89**—Portrait and landscape painter in Sudbury, Mass. Her next solo show will open at the Post Road Art Center in Marlboro, Mass. on Oct. 30.
- ◆ **Sarah Knowles Eisenklam ‘91**—Worked as freelance reporter, assistant to a children’s book agent and at a law firm. Currently home raising three children; serves as PR director for childrens’ preschool.

## 2007-2008 Undergraduate Prizes

### The Morse Hamilton Fiction Prize

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Kyle Machado

*Honorable Mentions: Garret Bowen & Michael Nachbar*

### The Ginny Brereton prize for First-Year Writing

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Alex Gomez

### The Academy of American Poets Prize

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Ezra Furman

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Nan Lin

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Olga Rukovets

*Excerpt*

## Coast to Coast: Patriotism in a Time of National Disgrace

By Professor Linda Bamber  
from her book, "Metropolitan Tang"

Published in 2008 by Black Sparrow Books and available online.

O beautiful sky this  
flying day, it makes me want to wave  
at their majesties,  
the people of these  
plains mountains, woods beneath our wing.  
My country, 'tis definitely  
thee down there, on whom God shed His grace;

but God is not a *He*

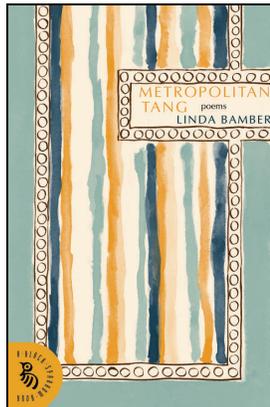
it's more an amber-purple prayer for change  
since these days thou  
seem'st nuts. Damn! I spent my childhood  
poring over place-mat maps of thee!  
Capitol cities in yellow, principal crops in red.  
Friends talk of emigrating; I

could never go.  
The seat belt sign is on again; below

unannounced, a famous place slides by  
like a celebrity in street clothes or the  
daylight moon. Oxbows, valleys, lakes  
I recognize;  
earth's loved crust  
shoved, exploded, bunched,  
watered, drained: I'm thine, thee's mine.  
O window seat, o spacious day, o books I've brought along,

say, what are we to do? O ruined country,  
yet I sing of thee.  
If all goes well tonight I'll see

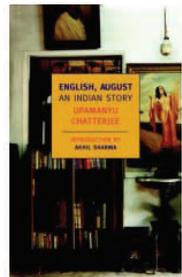
thy other shining sea.



## Faculty Book and Film Recommendations

**Ichiro Takayoshi**

"I'm currently reading Adam Tooze's *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*. A book of stupendous scholarship, it has fundamentally changed the way I think about the Second World War and America's role therein."



**Linda Bamber** suggests *Why We Fight*, a 2006 documentary by Eugene Jarecki.

**Jay Cantor** recommends *Theater of War*, a movie about a new stage production of *Mother Courage* with Meryl Streep. It features an interview with Cantor and filmed portions of his class at Tufts.



I premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival this May.

## Congratulations!

The English Department would like to congratulate graduate student Ashley Shelden, who is one of two graduate student fellows at Tufts's newly formed Center for the Humanities. As a fellow, she will receive a fellowship stipend and will be an active participant in the center's work.

[Learn more at ase.tufts.edu/chat](http://ase.tufts.edu/chat)

## What are YOU doing now?

Have you written a book? Did you pursue another degree? Are you a lawyer, publisher, professor, full-time parent or TV producer?

Did you major in English and then become a doctor? Airplane pilot? Scuba instructor? Professional musician?

*We want to hear about it!*

Send us an e-mail at [English@tufts.edu](mailto:English@tufts.edu) and tell us what *you're* doing now!

## Stay Connected: Visit Our Website

Visit [ase.tufts.edu/english](http://ase.tufts.edu/english) to keep in touch with the department. We regularly post news, events, and other information relating to English at Tufts.

# Faculty Publications and News

**Carol Flynn** is writing two articles - one for the revised Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen on Austen's letters and one for a collection edited by Kevin Cope on language assimilation in Burke, Boswell, Equiano, and Sancho titled "Learning the Lingo and Losing the Accent." She's also busy working on her London project.

**John Fyler** has been awarded two fellowships for the coming year: an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship at the Huntington Library and a Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship at the Liguria Student Center for the Arts and Humanities. He hopes to finish a book project on "Linguistic Division and Divisiveness" during this sabbatical leave.

**Elizabeth Ammons's** article, "The Myth of Imperiled Whiteness and *Ethan Frome*" was published in the March 2008 issue of *New England Quarterly*.

**Sonia Hofkosh** read papers at conferences in Baltimore, Bologna, Portland OR, and the UK. Her essays on Austen ("The Illusionist") and Hazlitt ("Broken Images") will be published in 2008-09, and she continues her work on a book about the signifying function of material objects in British Romanticism. She has also developed a new course, "Visual/Narrative," offered this fall, so she has been exploring a lot of exciting new material, including ekphrastic poetry, early photography, and graphic novels.

**Jonathan Strong's** new novel *Drawn from Life* was published late last summer by Quale Press. Another novel *Consolation* is in the works. This past summer he taught fiction-writing at the Bread Loaf School of English. He is halfway through the twenty Rougon-Macquart novels by Zola, alternating with such Trollope novels as *He Knew He Was Right* and *The Way We Live Now*. He has contributed an entry (along with spouse Scott and colleague Jonathan Wilson) to the somewhat scurrilous anthology *Dirty Words*, edited by Ellen Sussman, class of '76, published by Bloomsbury.

**Linda Bamber** has recently published a book of poems, *Metropolitan Tang*. It's available at the Tufts Bookstore, at numerous bookstores in Cambridge, and online.

**Judith Haber's** new book, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England*, has been accepted by Cambridge University Press. It is currently in production and should be appearing in May of 2009. She is also contributing a chapter on *The Duchess of Malfi* to *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*.

**Joseph Litvak** spent the first month of the summer in Paris, where he was doing research on Jewishness in contemporary French philosophy. While in France, he wrote and published an article on the alleged anxiety of American Jews about the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama. The article, entitled "Quand les juifs américains 'ont peur'" ("When American Jews 'Are Afraid'"), can be found on the website of the newspaper *Libération* in the archives of the blog called "24 Heures Philo": <http://philosophie.blogs.liberation.fr/noudelmann/2008/06/les-juifs-ont-p.html#more>. His new book, *The Un-Americans: Jews, the Blacklist, and Stoolpigeon Culture*, will be out this summer from Duke University Press.



Special thanks go to doctoral candidate Emily King as well as undergraduate student Matthew Skibinski for compiling, designing, and writing much of the material for the third edition of Alumni Notes.

# COMMENCEMENT 2008

*The English Department would like to congratulate the 98 undergraduates and 7 graduate students who were awarded degrees in English last spring. Photos from the ceremony are below.*

