

# Natalie Diaz opens Columbia Writers Series



Natalie Diaz. *Photo credit: Rachel Eliza Griffiths*

*Angels don't come to the reservation.  
Bats, maybe, or owls, boxy mottled things.  
Coyotes, too. They all mean the same thing—  
death. And death  
eats angels, I guess, because I haven't seen an angel  
fly through this valley ever.*

*—excerpt from "Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination  
of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian  
Rezervation," by Natalie Diaz*

This year's Columbia Writers Series kicks off with Natalie Diaz, the award-winning author of *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, a book of poetry which *New York Times* reviewer Eric McHenry described as an "ambitious ... beautiful book." Diaz will be reading from her book at 1 p.m. on November 10 in PUB 161 on Clark's main campus. This event is free and open to the

public.

Diaz's honors and awards include the Nimrod/Hardman Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, the Louis Untermeyer Scholarship in Poetry from Bread Loaf, the Narrative Poetry Prize, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship.

Natalie Diaz was born in the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California. She is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian community. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Old Dominion University, where she received a full athletic scholarship. Diaz played professional basketball in Europe and Asia before returning to Old Dominion to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree.

Diaz now lives in Mohave Valley, Arizona, where she works with the last speakers of Mojave and directs a language revitalization program. In a PBS interview, she spoke of the connection between writing and experience: "For me writing is kind of a way for me to explore why I want things and why I'm afraid of things and why I worry about things. And for me, all of those things represent a kind of hunger that comes with being raised in a place like this."

Directions and maps to Clark are available online. Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services (DSS) Office at or (VP). The DSS office is located in room 013 in Clark's Penguin Union Building.

The Columbia Writers Series was launched at Clark College in 1988, bringing local, national and international authors to the college and the region. Information about the Columbia Writers Series is available at [www.clark.edu/cc/cws](http://www.clark.edu/cc/cws).

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# Clark Welcomes Jess Walter



Award-winning author Jess Walter reads at the 2015 winter quarter installment of Clark College's Columbia Writers Series.

During the 2015 winter quarter installment of its renowned Columbia Writers Series, Clark College will welcome best-selling writer Jess Walter, whose award-winning work was recently deemed "captivating" by the *New York Times* and "bad-ass" by *Esquire* magazine.

A former National Book Award finalist and winner of the Edgar Allan Poe Award, Jess Walter is the author of six novels, one book of short stories, and one nonfiction book. His 2012 novel, *Beautiful Ruins*, was both a No. 1 *New York Times*

Bestseller and a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2012, as well as *Esquire's* Book of the Year and NPR Fresh Air's Novel of the Year. His 2009 novel, *The Financial Lives of the Poets* was *Time* magazine's No. 2 Novel of the Year. His most recent book, the 2013 collection of short stories called *We Live in Water*, was described by the *Seattle Times* as "[s]tories that twist and plumb, delivering unexpected laughs while playing with what it is we think we know ... Walter has emerged as one of the country's most dazzling novelists ... so freakishly, fiendishly good, it isn't fair."

Walter's work has been translated into 30 languages, and his essays, short fiction, criticism and journalism have been widely published, in *Best American Short Stories*, *Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *Harper's*, *Esquire*, *McSweeney's*, *Byliner*, *Playboy*, *ESPN the Magazine*, *Details* and many others. He lives with his wife Anne and children, Brooklyn, Ava and Alec in his childhood home of Spokane, Washington.

Walter will read from some of his works and discuss his writing process from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11, in Foster Auditorium on Clark's main campus. The event is free and open to the public. Directions and maps are available online. Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services (DSS) Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP). The DSS office is located in room 013 in Clark's Penguin Union Building.

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# Bright Talents, Dark Tales

Clark College will host award-winning authors Benjamin Percy and Wells Tower in two separate installments of the college's renowned Columbia Writers Series. Percy will read from his work and discuss his writing process on October 21; Tower, on November 3.

This is the first time the series will feature two separate events with different authors during the same quarter. "We've been really fortunate in that the Associated Students of Clark College have supported our efforts to expand this series," says CWS co-director Alexis Nelson, who teaches English at Clark. "Bringing two authors to campus on two different days (and at different times of day) will hopefully allow us to reach a wider audience. I know Clark students can have packed class schedules and often have work and family obligations on top of that, so this gives them more than just one chance to attend a reading this term."

As writers, Percy and Tower have some things in common. Both explore themes of the natural world, violence, fathers and sons, and men struggling with failure and redemption. Both have successful careers in magazine writing as well as in fiction (Percy is a contributing editor at *Esquire*, while Tower is a contributor to *GQ*). Each has two Pushcart Prizes and one Plimpton to his name.

But each writer has a very different voice and style. Tower is known for his depictions of gritty American realism; Percy is perhaps best-known for his most recent novel, *Red Moon*, which author John Irving called a "literary novel about lycanthropes [werewolves]" and which earned praise on Twitter from none other than horror great Stephen King himself.

“Both Percy and Tower are writing fun, energetic stuff and working in multiple genres,” says Nelson. “Percy is a great crossover author, someone who writes literary fiction yet can also attract a wider audience of readers interested in horror, fantasy, or suspense. And I love Tower’s work for how funny and serious it can be at the same time, and for his exuberant and original use of language.”

Benjamin Percy will read at 12:30 p.m. on October 21 in PUB 258C. Wells Tower will read at 2 p.m. on November 3, also in PUB 258C. Both events are free and open to the public.

### **About Benjamin Percy**



Benjamin Percy.  
Photo by Jennifer  
May.

Benjamin Percy is the author of two novels, *Red Moon*, an IndieNext pick and Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection, and *The Wilding*, winner of the Society of Midland Authors Award for Fiction; as well as two books of stories, *Refresh, Refresh* and *The Language of Elk*. Percy is currently adapting *Red Moon* as a series for FOX TV with Oscar-winner Akiva Goldsman (*A Beautiful Mind*, *I am Legend*, *Winter’s Tale*) and *The Wilding* as a film with director Tanya Wexler (*Hysteria*). Percy’s next novel, *The Dead Lands*, a post-apocalyptic reimagining of the Lewis and Clark saga, is forthcoming in April 2015 with Grand Central. He also has a

craft book, *Thrill Me*, due out by Graywolf Press in 2016.

His fiction and nonfiction have been read on National Public Radio; performed at Symphony Space; and published by *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Time*, *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, the *Paris Review*, *Tin House*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Orion*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Ploughshares*, *Glimmer Train*, and many other magazines and journals. His honors include a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Whiting Award, the Plimpton Prize, two Pushcart Prizes, and inclusion in *Best American Short Stories* and *Best American Comics*. He writes for DC Comics, and his story "Refresh, Refresh" was adapted into a screenplay by filmmaker James Ponsoldt and a graphic novel by Eisner-nominated artist Danica Novgorodoff.

### **About Wells Tower**



Wells Tower.  
Photo courtesy of  
the author.

Wells Tower is the author of the short story collection *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned*. His short stories and journalism have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, *Harper's Magazine*, *McSweeney's*, *The Paris Review*, *The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, and elsewhere. He received two Pushcart Prizes and the Plimpton Prize from *The Paris Review*. His magazine journalism has been



shortlisted for the National Magazine Awards. He divides his time between Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Brooklyn, New York.

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## Affairs of the Art



May 14 was a particularly artful day at Clark College, as the afternoon saw both the unveiling of the 2014 *Phoenix* as well as the opening reception and awards presentation for the 2014 Art Student Annual.





Mike Shank read his poem  
“Small Things Cost the  
Most.”

*Phoenix* staff distributed free copies of the award-winning annual arts and literary journal to students in PUB 161. Clark student Mike Shank read from his moving poem, “Small Things Cost the Most,” which earned Editors’ Choice Award for literary work in the journal. Afterward, guests headed downstairs to Archer Gallery to view works by student artists, many of whom also had work published in *Phoenix*. Seventy-five students showed a total of 127 works in the show, in media as varied as watercolor, photography, welded metal, ceramics, and video. Awards were announced and presented during the reception.

For more photos of these events, visit our Flickr albums of the unveiling and art show.

### **2014 Art Student Annual Awards**

Joy Margheim “Gate”, welded sculpture

Best Welded Sculpture award

Sponsored by Airgas and the Clark College Welding Department

Irina Burchak “Self Portraits”, photography

Excellence in Photography Award

Sponsored by Knight Camera



The 2014 *Phoenix* staff.

Erin Merrill, "Columbia River Series", photography  
Excellence in Photography Award  
Sponsored by Pro Photo Supply

Shelby Warner "Drawing Room Chair", photography  
Photography Award  
Sponsored by Pro Photo Supply

Garry Bastian "The Act of Characterization", photography  
Darkroom Photo Award  
Sponsored by Blue Moon Camera and Machine

Anthony Abruzzini "There's Nothing Wrong with Having Only One  
Eye...", drawing  
Works on Paper Excellence Award  
Sponsored by Frame Central Framing

Sherrie Masters "Greys", watercolor  
Works on Paper Excellence Award  
Sponsored by Frame Central Framing



Students at the *Phoenix* unveiling waited patiently until the end of the program to open the paper wrapping around the new publication.

Jenny Avens "Flour Effect", photography  
Holga Camera Award  
Sponsored by Freestyle Photographic Supplies

Lauren Dwyer "Organic Free Form", ceramic  
Best Ceramics Award  
Sponsored by Georgie's Ceramic and Clay Company

Luke Entwistle "Puntitled", painting  
Muse Art Award  
Sponsored by Muse Art and Design

Krista Zimmerman "Self Obstruction", painting  
Muse Art Award  
Sponsored by Muse Art and Design

Liz Alexander "Out of Place", video  
Film and Video Award  
Sponsored by the NW Film Center

Anni Becker "John", video  
Film and Video Award  
Sponsored by the NW Film Center



Director of IT Services, Phil Sheehan was the asked to juror the student show this year. He has been a supporter of student work throughout his time at Clark.

Riley Donahue, "The Day I Became a Man", installation  
Best Contemporary Art Award  
Sponsored by the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art

Belinda Luce "Type in The City", typography  
Best Graphics Award  
Sponsored by Intel

Filip Popa "Matches", painting  
Painting Award  
Sponsored by Dick Blick Art Materials and the Clark College Bookstore

Jeremy Crane "Germ Evolved", painting  
Painting Award  
Sponsored by Dick Blick Art Materials and the Clark College Bookstore

Elise Cryder "Thank Your Mother", painting  
Best in Show Award  
Painting Award  
Sponsored by the Clark College Bookstore and the NW Film

## Center



After the awards are presented, students had an opportunity to talk to each other about their work.

Mariah Lewis "Muse", painting

Painting Award

Sponsored by the Clark College Bookstore

Martin Stone "Still Life #2", painting

Painting Award

Sponsored by the Clark College Bookstore

Megan Ostby "30 Minute Pose", drawing

Drawing Award

Sponsored by the Clark College Bookstore

Jason Cardenas "The Island", drawing

Drawing Award

Sponsored by the Clark College Bookstore

Lauren Pucci "Botany", watercolor

Special Recognition Award

Sponsored by Kiggins Theater and Anna Banana's Café

Grace Edwards "Sun Color", watercolor

Special Recognition Award

Sponsored by Kiggins Theater and Anna Banana's Café

Sara Robison "Hipster George", digital illustration  
Special Recognition Award  
Sponsored by Kiggins Theater and Anna Banana's Café

Matthew Caravaggio "Abstract Revelation", drawing  
Special Recognition Award  
Sponsored by Kiggins Theater

Michael Jasso "For the Glory of Rome", ceramics  
Special Recognition Award  
Sponsored by Kiggins Theater

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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**Subtext  
Russell**

**Features**

**Karen**



Author Karen Russell will appear in the spring 2014 installment of the Columbia Writers Series on May 29. *Photo credit: Michael Lionstar*

During the spring installment of its renowned Columbia Writers Series, Clark College will welcome writer Karen Russell, author of *Swamplandia!*, *Vampires in the Lemon Grove*, and *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*.

This event is part of "Subtext," a three-day festival of words and literary arts. Other events include a free book exchange and a reading by students and faculty, including Clark County poet laureate Christopher Luna. All of these events are free and open to the public.

Karen Russell, a native of Miami, won the 2012 National Magazine Award for fiction, and her first novel, *Swamplandia!* (2011), was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She is a graduate of the Columbia MFA program, a 2011 Guggenheim Fellow, and a 2012 Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin. In 2013, she was a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "Genius



Grant.” Her short stories have been featured in *The Best American Short Stories*, *Granta*, *The New Yorker*, *Conjunctions*, *Oxford American*, and *Zoetrope*.

“We are extremely pleased to be able to host Karen Russell for our spring reading since she is not only a fabulously talented fiction writer, but has been nationally recognized by critics as an American author of true significance,” said Clark College English professor James Finley, director of the Columbia Writers Series. “It is not every day that we can bring a writer of this stature to Clark. Her writing—with all its cleverness, jaunty energy, and searing insights into the human condition—are a perfect match for college-age audiences, and I hope Clark students and the community at large take advantage of the opportunity to hear Russell read from her work in a live setting.”

Russell will read from some of her works and discuss her writing process from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, in Foster Auditorium. The book exchange takes place in the Cannell Library commons area on Wednesday, May 28, 10 a.m. to noon. Crossroads, the student/faculty reading, takes place Friday, May 30, noon to 1 p.m. The theme for this year’s Crossroads is “Plants and Animals.”

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# Clark hosts writer Jon Raymond



Jon Raymond appears in the Columbia Writers Series on February 13. *Photo: Courtesy of Jon Raymond/Justine Kurland*

Clark College welcomes the award-winning fiction author and screenwriter Jon Raymond during the winter quarter installment of its renowned Columbia Writers Series.

Raymond, whose work has garnered both critical acclaim and prestigious awards, will read from some of his most recent works and speak about writing from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 13, in PUB 258C.

Raymond is the author of the novels *The Half-Life* (a *Publisher's Weekly* Best Book of 2004) and *Rain Dragon* (2012). His collection of stories, *Livability*, won the 2009 Oregon Book Award for Fiction. An accomplished screenwriter,

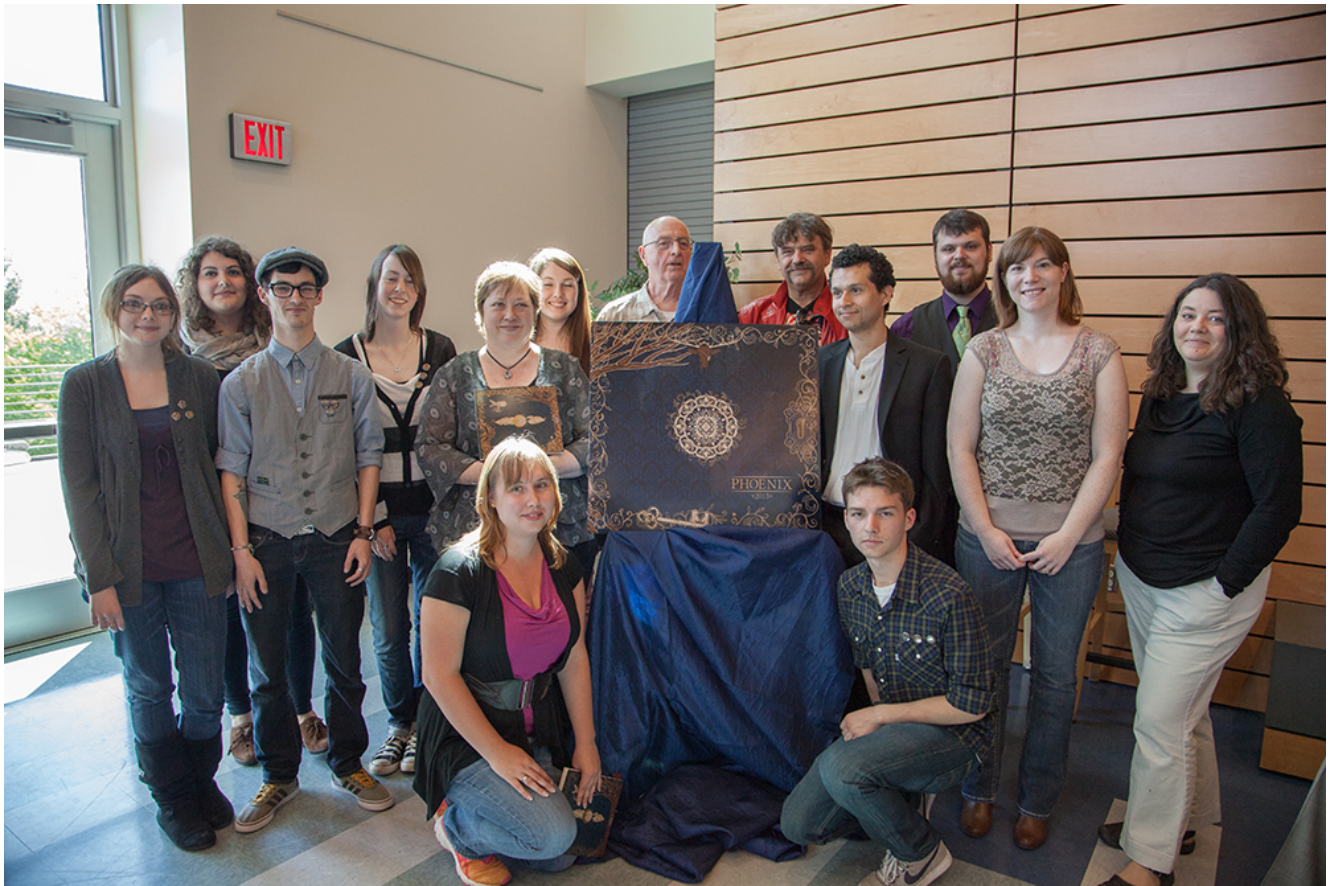
Raymond's credits include *Old Joy*, *Meek's Cutoff*, *Night Moves*, and *Wendy and Lucy*, a movie based on the short story "Train Choir" from *Livability*. He earned an Emmy Award nomination for his work on the 2011 HBO miniseries *Mildred Pierce*. He lives in Portland with his family.

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## **Phoenix Flies High**



The staff of the 2013 *Phoenix* posing during the journal's unveiling in spring. Art professor Kathrena Halsinger, *far right*, is their advisor.

Congratulations to the staff of *Phoenix*. Clark's literary and art journal just won third place in the Western-Pacific division of the Community College Humanities Association's 2013 Literary Magazine Competition.

"I think the quality of *Phoenix* is a reflection of the quality of the strong arts program that the college, and the greater community, continue to support," says art professor and *Phoenix* advisor Kathrena Halsinger. "The arts are the stuff of life and therefore are relevant to all. We really work hard to be inclusive and get people across campus to be involved. We've also been fortunate to be supported by our departments and the ASCC to keep the program strong."