
Faculty Presenters: Dr. Mary E. Martin, Dr. Jane Smith, Susan Ludvigson, and Evelyne Weeks.

Graduate Student Presenter: Alex Muller, a graduate of Winthrop, currently a graduate student at Wake Forest University.

Title: Water in Poetry: Five Poets Explore Water Images and References in their Work.

Topic: Each of the five poets will read and discuss the role of water in specific poems they have written. Dr. Mary E. Martin will focus on the healing associations of water in her poems, the inherent calming of being near and in water as well as the uncertain journeys to discover bodies of water. She also writes about the disaster of a flood from the perspective of the water, written shortly after Hurricane Katrina.

For almost twenty years, Dr. Jane Smith has been writing a series of poems from the perspective of a Nantucket woman whose husband is the captain of a whaling ship; the poems, often in response to excerpts from his letters, see the ocean as potential as livelihood, but also as a barrier and ongoing threat.

Susan Ludvigson’s poems reflect her having grown up in Wisconsin with lakes and rivers that attracted her. She recounts the transforming experience of her first visit to see the lilies of Landsford Canal. Her home town, Rice Lake—named for the wild rice that used to grow in the lake—has many associations for her that are captured in her poems. The lake itself is large with many islands that hole many adventures, such as driving cars out over the frozen lake in the winter, swimming in the summers, including the dangerous swimming on horseback during the warm weather.

Evelyne Weeks also grew up around water. Her poems carve a large exploration of water as noted in her quote, “The river gives direction to the road…and the world.” Her poems about water invoke meditation and memory as well as the real effects of erosion.

As a lover of the sounds of words, Alex Muller looks for new music as much in the water as anywhere else. His motet poems, in particular, evoke the structure of the ripple; with movable lines, these poems construct an intricate polyphony of concentric voices, which slip into each other and echo simultaneously, moving toward the mutability and fluidity of language.