Long Island University

Word's Worth

Newsletter of the Graduate English Department



An Interview with Visiting Writer Kaylie Jones By Asja Parrish

Catching visiting writer Kaylie Jones before class, I was able to interview her about her life, which she recently wrote about in her memoir *Lies My Mother Never Told Me*, and about her writing and teaching style.

AP: How is it different teaching memoir, being that most of your books are novels?

KJ: I hated memoir! I had a friend, a couple of very good friends who are memoirists. One is Beverly Donofrio who wrote a book called *Riding in Cars with Boys*. She teaches memoir and has been teaching memoir for years and I'm like, "What are you crazy? Why would you want to teach memoir, it's awful, it's so hard!" And then finally I wrote a memoir and suddenly that book got a lot of attention and I was suddenly hired all over the place to teach memoir.

So I called her and said, "How do you teach memoir?" and she said, "The same as fiction,

don't worry about it. There's one less barrier between the student and the work." You know, we're not writing Fantasy. So everybody assumes anyway that it's you, but now you say "you" instead of the character. So there's one less frontier.

AP: So you clearly see the correlation between memoir and novel. But, was making the jump scary?

KJ: Teaching it was scary, yeah. Writing it was like...I just pretended I was writing a novel. And then later when people said things like, "How's Kevin?" that's my husband, I'd be like, "How do you know Kevin?" "Oh, I don't know Kevin, I read your book." And I'd be horrified. Oh my God, they know all these things about me, but in truth, though, as soon as you write it down, you're once removed from it anyway. It becomes a story. So that kind of helps. A little, you know.



AP: So, speaking of your family - How was it growing up with parents who were so well known (James and Gloria Jones)?

KJ: You don't notice. You don't know. I mean, Liza Minnelli, who's a good friend of mine, always says that, you know, they worked basically. They went to bed, they got up, they went to work.

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LIU Writing Center Reaches Forward with Innovations By Micah Savaglio

The Writing Center at LIU has long been a place where students can workshop their pieces before turning them in and become more successful writers, and a program through which graduate students and exceptional undergraduates can hone their own writing and teaching skills through serving as

tutors. Over the past couple of years, however, innovations in the Center have been put in place in order to improve accessibility, breadth of impact, and use of technology.

Distance tutoring, a program that has been growing since 2010, al-

lows students who cannot come into the Center during regular hours to access tutors via the internet and phone. For students who work, who have kids, and who are in Global College in places as far as Costa Rica and India, this is a great option.

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Meet Almond

Tan lined Dust encrusted toes Towel draped back Hot days outside Playing after siesta

Armed with wooden gun
Shooting bottle caps
Hunting
Hand made tirador carved from Bayabas trees
Sling

Stretch

Shoot

Little brown birds drop

Smiles

Sour sun sweat forehead

Bright yellows at the Sari-sari store "PABILI" Coin tans linoleum-covered

Coin taps linoleum-covered deck Coke poured in mini plastic bag with straw dripping

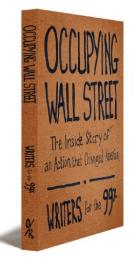
bare hands

"Eto ang sukli mo"

Rusty hand smell
Holding rear rail
Standing
Head protruding at the end of the roofline
Dirty wind grazed face
On a jeepney ride
To the dirty walk home\

By Kyle D'Ocera

Student and Alumni News



Christine Gans ('11) is an adjunct in the LIU English department, and is also coaching several girls' soccer and basketball teams.

Jon L Peacock ('10) collaborated on the recent "Occupying Wall Street: The Inside Story of an Action that Changed America". He is also adjunct teaching at several NYC colleges and participated in a series of short plays at LIU.

Sarah Wallen and Lisa Rogel continue to edit Brooklyn Paramount, a literary magazine featuring work from the MFA community.

Other updates and events can be found throughout the semester on our blog, thelongestisland.blogspot.com.

LIU Writing Center Reaches Forward with Innovations Con't from page 1

Currently, students send their papers in via email, then communicate directly with a tutor via phone; they get a full, hands-on tutoring session without having to make the trip to campus. Director Harriet Malinowitz says, "We are going through a learning curve on this, and we're still refining our system. We hope to soon be using Skype and Google Docs to make the process even easier."

To make the bridge from classroom to Writing Center smoother, and to spread tutors' expertise beyond their appointment work, the Center also offers professors the opportunity to have teams of tutors go into their classes.

There, the tutors lead writing, and sometimes reading, workshops to support a given assignment. Full-class workshops and small group sessions round out this program, which gives students extra support and tutors the chance to practice their teaching skills in a group environment. Professors who are interested in this program can contact Harriet Malinowitz at harriet.malinowitz@liu.edu.

Many students opt to schedule a weekly appointment to meet with a tutor on an ongoing basis throughout the semester; this allows for a relationship to be formed and the tutor to help with growth over time. Increasingly, however, students are seeking one-time tutoring sessions to tackle particularly tough

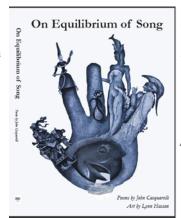
or culminating projects. The Writing Center has expanded its services so that students can schedule these one-time appointments up to a week ahead. This allows students to get the help when they need it without committing to coming for an hour every week. This has proven to be a very popular option, and the Center plans to increase access to this service.

Finally, although the Writing Center has always housed a wealth of writing and teaching resources, new resource files will allow writers and tutors even greater access to mechanical and stylistic enrich-

Book Release: Department Collaboration Births New Publication By John Casquarelli

On Equilibrium of Song is a collaboration consisting of my first collection of poems and Lynn Hassan's amazing art. The poems can be read as a series of fragments and/or experiences that move beyond the limitations gle eternal moment simultaneof time, or, in the very least, our general understanding of time. In fact, what I am trying to convey with this collection is a kind ity through fragments.

of emotional dance that takes place between the internal and external experiences, away from the notion that yesterday, today, and tomorrow are somehow separate. That we live in a sinously experiencing the internal/external duality, even if we only recognize this eternal dual-



It's the vibrancy and aliveness that startle in Casquarelli's first book. And in this collaboration of stunning poetry, and artwork by Lynn Hassan, we discover how each breath has its/own sound. These are poems that seemingly, without hesitation doubt. There is a confidence that comes because, as the poem says: there are forms/of communication/beyond language/a satisfaction that/extends across/borders cies/and belongs to/everything. And yet it is precisely the humanness of language and image, their effort to reach be-yond the seen that connects in this belonging to everything, as if both poet and artist knew, even before creating them, that these pages belong to you.

- John High

LIU-Brooklyn Invites Alumni to Stay Connected

By Laurel Schumacher

Graduation is often a bittersweet experience for graduate students; they are moving on to bigger and better things, but stepping away from the vigor and collaboration that an academic environment offers. For LIU-Brooklyn students, connection to the campus does not have to end when they walk across the stage, and the Alumni Association offers several benefits and opportunities for graduates.

In addition to discounted access to campus activities, alumni can also take part in social and creative gatherings where they can network, have fun with like-minded people, and stay abreast of happenings in their career fields. The most recent Alumni Happy Hour, held in October, featured Liliana Almandarez ('09) reading an excerpt from the

riveting science fiction novel she is currently drafting. A GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade) Advisory Committee has been formed as a result of this and similar events, and they will be charged with setting up future GOLD programming.

If you are interested in participating on this committee, contact Laurel Schumacher at alumni@brooklyn.liu.edu.

For more ways to get involved with LIU alumni, for further information on alumni benefits, or to update your contact information, please contact the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at the above email address or at (718) 488-1016.



Alumni Benefits (*Partial Listing*)

- *Access to Campus Library and computer labs
- *15% discount at Long Island University Bookstore and Long Island University Children's Academy
- *Membership to the Wellness Recreation and Athletics Center (\$320/year)
- *Discounts at the Tilles Center and Kimble Theater for select performances
- *Alumni Career Services and MyCareerKey (exclusive job and internship bank)
- *Graduate Admissions Preparedness Program (up to 12 undergraduate credits for free!)

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Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition of Word's Worth.

To send story ideas, news or announcements, to find out how you can write for Word's Worth, or for information about the programs offered in the English department at Long Island University, contact Marilyn Boutwell, Advisor and Coordinator of Graduate Studies in English, at Marilyn.Boutwell@liu.edu.

Jessica Wedge

An Interview with Visiting Writer Kaylie Jones

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They were professionals. Every once and a while they'd be like, "Oh God, I have to go to a premiere." So it was like being raised by circus folk, you know. Like if you're in the circus and your parents are liontamers, you're going to be a lion tamer. Maybe you'll take up acrobatics, but generally speaking you'll be a lion tamer. Generally speaking, writers are pretty anonymous, so growing up with these people I had no idea how famous they were until I went to college.

AP: Did you feel like you had a choice other than to become a writer?

KJ: No. And I don't think if you're the children of lion tamers you generally consider that being a doctor is a good choice. I don't think you learn that, I don't think your mind works that way. Maybe I'm wrong, but most writers I know, their kids are writers. Most musicians I know, their kids are musicians. But Norman Mailer has nine children and I think one of them is a banker. One. One is making money. Everyone else is completely broke. I just don't think our minds work that way. I don't know, maybe that's not true. My daughter's very good at math. I'm hoping for the best.

AP: You talk about "the censoring voice", the one that says, "You're not good enough. No one wants to read you." What would you tell other writers who experience this voice?

KJ: I used to drink. As much as possible to silence that voice. And it worked pretty well for a long time, until it stopped working. I really love the idea that you can silence the censor through meditation. And all my students laugh at me because I make that part of the syllabus. But it's more like a kind of warm up exercise to get you focused so that you don't have that voice. They always say, "I can't do this. I'm scared. I can't sleep." And what that voice is I don't know. I'm sure it's Freudian or, or our parents, the voice of our parents. We have built in censors in our own psyches and in our cultures that tell us that we can't tell the truth in the sense that you have to be silent. You can't just walk around telling people what you really think.

AP: Did you feel "the voice" when you were writing the memoir? Were you scared about what your relatives were going to say?

KJ: Yeah, but I was mad enough that I didn't need too much pushing. It was almost like the flood gates had opened up, the key had been turned, a door opened. Because one of the dynamics of severely alcoholic families is that you're not allowed to talk about it. You're not allowed to say that that's what's going on and so the silence, this sort of mythologizing was so intense and it got worse and worse as my mother got worse and worse that by the time she was dead, when I sat down to actually tell what had happened

from my perspective, I was ready to tell it.

AP: You just finished a new novel. Do you have a title?

KJ: Yeah, *The Anger Meridian*. I had this fantastic yoga instructor who said that the anger meridian is that time when you wake up at three and you can't go back to sleep. That's this character, she wakes up every night at three and she can't get back to sleep. And she doesn't even know she's angry.

AP: Do you have any advice for our Word's Worth audience?

KJ: I've had the experience time and again where somebody arrives with a manuscript and says, "I've done this work, I've sent it to 50 agents and 50 publishers and nobody wants to publish it and I want you to tell me it's perfect." They don't want you to tell them what they need to do to fix it. And I don't know if that's ego or if a kind of insecurity or what it is. The best thing you can do as a writer is not take it personally. That whatever revisions are required you just do. Whatever process it takes to revise, you just revise. And you just do what you need to do to make it better.

Also, read. A lot of people think that they're going to write a book, but they've never read anything. And I don't think you can. How are you going to write if you haven't read in the genre you're writing? You have to read.