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6-10-2013

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Recommended Citation

Cleary, Rebecca Lauck, "Joshua Kryah Selected as Summer Poet in Residence" (2013). *University of Mississippi News*. 2611.

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Joshua Kryah Selected as Summer Poet in Residence

Reading set for 5 p.m. June 26 at Off Square Books

JUNE 10, 2013 BY REBECCA LAUCK CLEARY

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Josh Kryah

OXFORD, Miss. – Poet Joshua Kryah has been chosen as the seventh annual Summer Poet in Residence at the University of Mississippi.

Kryah is the author of two poetry collections, “We Are Starved” (2011), published by the University of Colorado Press as part of its New Mountain West Poetry Series, and “Glean” (2007), selected for the 2006 Nightboat Books Poetry Prize. His poems have appeared in American Poetry Review, FIELD, Gulf Coast, The Iowa Review and Ploughshares, among others.

Kryah said he is “stoked” to come to Oxford.

“I learned about the Summer Poet in Residence program from an old friend, and past SPiR, Jake Adam York,” Kryah said. “Jake told me how wonderful the program was, how much time he had to write and how much he enjoyed interacting with the community, both students and other folks, there at Ole Miss. This all sounded wonderful to me, so I decided to apply.”

The Summer Poet in Residence program is designed to provide ample writing time to the poet while also allowing the University of Mississippi’s summer course offerings to be enriched by the presence of an active poet on campus. Kryah will also be invited to serve as judge for the Yalobusha Review’s Yellowwood Poetry Prize.

He will also give a reading, which is free and open to the public, at 5 p.m. June 26 at Off Square Books.

“To have the opportunity to dedicate myself for an extended period of time to writing is incredibly supportive and encouraging,” Kryah said. “I’m just incredibly excited to have the time and space to write.”

Beth Ann Fennelly, associate professor of English and director of the MFA program, said Kryah had applied to the program twice before and both times had been a finalist; this year he applied again with a new work sample.

“My colleague in poetry, Ann Fisher-Wirth, and I were thrilled to select Joshua Kryah for this year’s Summer Poet in Residence,” Fennelly said. “I’m amazed by the facility of his mind and imagination. In his sequence of poems about John Clare, the British peasant poet, he’s written ‘a call-and-response verse drama,’ which is to say, Clare speaks to his home, inhabitants, woodland creatures, etc., and they respond. The way Kryah inhabited the imagination of this revered yet troubled poet is profound.”

Kryah was also an attractive candidate because of his interdisciplinary interests.

“He’s taught Interdisciplinary Studies at UNLV and George Mason for the last five years,” Fennelly said. “One of the SPiR’s duties is to make class visits, because partial funding comes from summer school, and Josh has so many interests that I know the students will respond to his offerings.”

Since Kryah has two small children, in addition to teaching a heavy course load, his month here will provide time to focus on his craft while enjoying and enriching the university and Oxford communities.

“His reading at Off Square Books will be June 26, and all who attend will be glad to brag in years to come at having heard a major American talent early in his career,” Fennelly said.

Kryah received his MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and his PhD from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, where he was a Schaeffer Fellow. He has been poetry editor of Witness magazine since 2007. He lives with his wife and two children in the Washington, D.C., area, where he is at work on two manuscripts: “Closen,” a verse drama about the life and work of the British peasant poet John Clare and the English Enclosure Acts of the 19th century, and “Holy Ghost People,” a meditation on glossolalia.

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OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children’s play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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Previous summer poets include Traci Brimhall, Jay Leeming, Sandra Beasley, Jake Adam York, Tung-Hui Hu and Paula Bohince.



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