

# VOICE 4

∞ Volume 32  
∞ Spring 2025  
∞ Department of English & Theatre  
∞ Acadia University



Students gather at the print edition launch of *estuary*, April 2025, Quiet Reading Room, Vaughan Memorial Library.

# VOICE 4

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## Acadia Theatre Company

### *The Melville Boys*

By Angel Percentie

On Wednesday, November 20th, 2024, the Acadia Theatre Company presented the first showing of *The Melville Boys* by Canadian Playwright Norm Foster. In Lower Denton Hall, the moving story of two brothers, Lee and Owen, unfolded as they set out for a weekend fishing trip, only to have their plans upended by the sudden arrival of two sisters. Lower Denton was transformed into a cozy cabin, complete with a kitchen in the background and a mounted deer head and couch in the foreground. Max Miller, who played Lee, and James Streatch, who played Owen, delivered powerful performances that captured the complexity of sibling

ACADIA THEATRE COMPANY (ATC) PRESENTS:

# THE MELVILLE BOYS

by Norm Foster



NOV. 21-23 & NOV. 28-30 AT 7:30PM  
LOWER DENTON THEATRE

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE ACADIA BOX  
OFFICE OR AT THE DOOR  
ACADIAU.UNIVERSITYTICKETS.COM

GENERAL - \$20  
STUDENT/SENIOR - \$10  
GROUP (6+) - \$15







relationships. The chemistry between the two actors was palpable much like the relationship between the sisters, Mary, played by Madeleine Strandberg, and Loretta, played by Adele Leger-LeBlanc. Mary represented themes of lost love and second chances, and her storyline was a compelling counterpoint to Lee's looming death. On the other hand, Loretta and Owen, the younger siblings, bubbled with a restless energy, which portrayed the joyful but uncertain journey of youth.

As the play progressed, Lee's character took center stage as he struggled with processing his impending death. Max's performance explored the existential questions that many people ask: What would I do if I knew when I was going to

die? How would I react? How should I spend the time I have left? However, despite the heavy themes, the play maintained a balance through humour. Loretta and Owen, the carefree younger siblings, captivated the audience with comedic moments of playful banter.

*The Melville Boys* is a

thoughtful meditation on life, death, and the complexities of family bonds. The audience chuckled and may have shed a tear as the actors brought to life themes of grief, love, adversity, resilience, and new beginnings. Congratulations to the Acadia Theatre Company for a deep, humorous, and profoundly moving production.

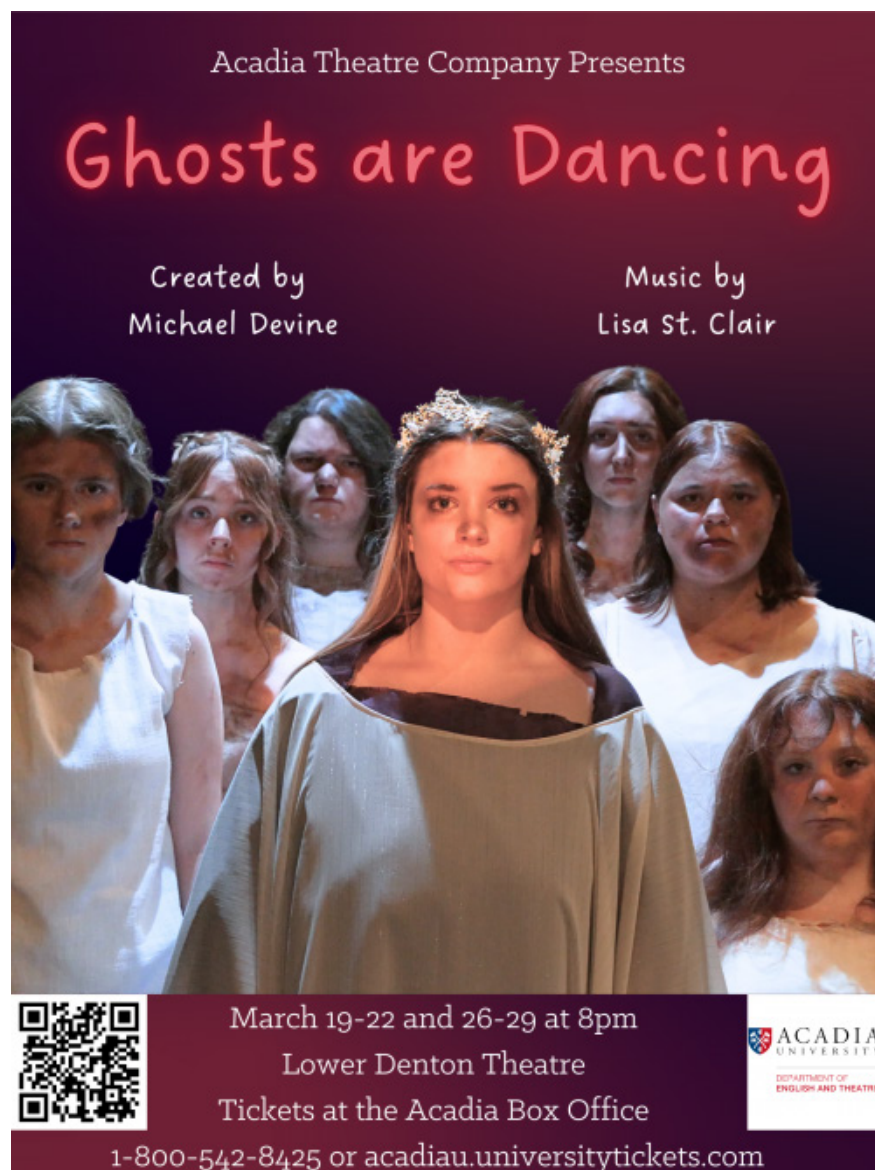


## ***Ghosts are Dancing*** **By Angel Percentie**

On March 20th, 2025 in the Lower Denton Theatre, the Acadia Theatre Company presented the second showing of *Ghosts are Dancing*, directed by Michael Devine. Originally produced in Serbia in 2023, *Ghosts are Dancing* was brought to the Acadia stage for an English rendition. The audience witnessed a fresh take on life after the Trojan War, where a new side of the story is unveiled. The women left behind after the war are broken, bruised, and ruined. They are the women history seems to have forgotten, as time and time again, their husbands and children have been taken away from them. To put an end to this bleak cycle, Queen Hekuba, the wife of the deceased Priam, takes a stand for herself, and for women like her, who exist as restless ghosts, never coming to terms with the loss of their loved ones.

The set of the play was used widely as a battlefield. The heavens, where the gods placed bets and interfered with the mortals, was situated off stage on a floor above the audience, while the side stage operated as a bathing pool for the death of Polydorus.

This powerful story of the revenge and perseverance of women is not limited to the Trojans but stretches throughout history. In the Director's Note,



Acadia Theatre Company Presents

# Ghosts are Dancing

Created by  
Michael Devine

Music by  
Lisa St. Clair

March 19-22 and 26-29 at 8pm  
Lower Denton Theatre  
Tickets at the Acadia Box Office

1-800-542-8425 or [acadiau.universitytickets.com](https://acadiau.universitytickets.com)

ACADIA UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND THEATRE

playwright and director Michael Devine emphasizes that “there is nothing ancient about women who have been forcibly displaced from their loved ones and their home”; thus, the play transcends time through music, words, and carefully crafted outfits that represent different periods. The actors donned silken garments, uniforms reminiscent of SS guards during the Nazi Regime, and contemporary

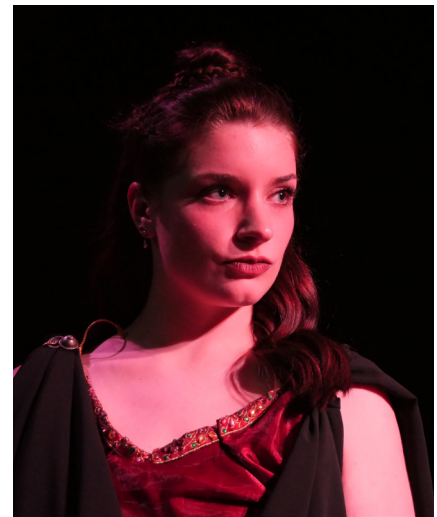
travel outfits to convey a universal theme of violence against woman. Interested in this creative choice, I consulted Avery McWilliam, Costume/Wardrobe Coordinator, and Quinton Gagnon, who acted as Talthybios. Avery suggested that the play should be understood as not limited to one period, as the subject of violence against women and children is still a contemporary matter, relevant



today. Similarly, Quinton explained, “that the characters in these kinds of plays are not just individual characters but are meant to represent archetypes of people. For example, Hekuba is the archetype of a mother.” With that in mind, this adaptation of the Greek myth is a timely piece that stays with the audience long after they’ve left the theatre.

A round of applause is due for Hekuba, played by Grace Henshaw; Achilles and Polydorus by Alex Durupt; Hektor and Paris by Ewan Fowler-Purdy; Odysseus by Gabriel Edwards; Agamemnon by Grayson Hudson; Talthybios by Quinton Gagnon; Polymestor by Sven Kage; Cassandra by Diane Troope; Polyxena by Juliet Jollymore; Zeus by Mary Delorey; Hera by Kira Bishop;

and the Chorus actors Jean Allaire and Merra Hynes. The students of Acadia’s theatre program are bursting with talent, which we hope to see more of next fall.



Photos by Audrey Eastwood  
Costumes by Ryann Farmer  
Set and Properties by Wesley Babcock  
Lighting by Susann Hudson

# Authors@Acadia

## Elaine McCluskey

By Avery McWilliam

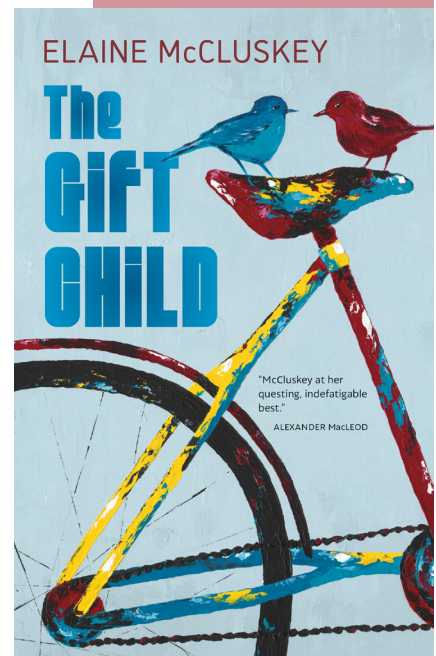
On Wednesday, September 25th, 2024, author Elaine McCluskey commenced the first segment of the Authors@Acadia series on the 1st floor of the Beveridge Arts Centre. She read from her short story collection *Rafael Has Pretty Eyes* and her latest novel *The Gift Child*. McCluskey is a Canadian author from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. She has written four acclaimed short story collections, and has had her work published in over twenty journals.

She began by reading from her novel *The Gift Child*, which follows a woman named Harriet as she uncovers the mystery of her missing cousin who disappeared with a tuna head in his bicycle basket. Her search for truth leads her down paths she never would have considered parallel: her family's story and her identity. McCluskey's writing uniquely presents the sequence of events through Harriet's memoir, wrestling with the difference between truth and what we want to believe as truth. She doubled down on this and said "some people don't get the truth they deserve. There has to be room in life for mercy and

forgiveness; sometimes the bare truth doesn't afford that."

After reading from several sections of the novel, McCluskey switched gears and discussed *Rafael Has Pretty Eyes*, stressing the importance of the title. Her writing weaves in elements of reality and fantasy, joking that there are "two categories [of people]: people who believe trailer park boys are real, and those who don't." *Rafael Has Pretty Eyes* is a collection of seventeen short stories about various people who find themselves at a four-way stop, and the various ways they react to it.

During the Q&A period at the end of the reading, audience members were eager to inquire about McCluskey's writing process. One attendee asked about the difference in writing a short story versus a novel, and how material presents itself to her. McCluskey explained how she is constantly writing scenes, dialogues, and descriptions as they come, and she keeps those tidbits in a "spare parts file" where stories sometimes grow. She stressed the importance of knowing what belongs





*“Nova Scotians—and you may not know this—are fascinated by people from faraway places. Moldova. Romania. They are, to them, like rare birds blown off course.”*

*From The Gift Child*

where, and having the heart to cut things out to save for later. Her wit and authenticity shone through as she replied to each question, joking about her real-life influences for her characters while cautioning that her characters are not her. Humour is a huge component of McCluskey’s work, with her commenting that “humour softens the blow of life,” and that she didn’t even know she was funny until someone reviewed a short story of hers and mentioned it. I was shocked upon hearing this, but it reminded me of how accustomed we become to our own awesomeness, and the importance of sharing our work and receiving feedback. McCluskey’s knowledge and passion toward writing was evident, her excitement viral and contagious. Her reading was a wonderful start to the Authors@ Acadia series.

## Tiffany Morris

### By Avery McWilliam

On October 23rd, 2024, Acadia alumnus Tiffany Morris returned to the Vaughan Memorial Library in the Quiet Reading Room for the second installment of the Authors@ Acadia series. Morris read from her swampcore novella *Green Fuse Burning* and her horror poetry collection *Elegies of Rotting Stars*.

She began by reading from *Green Fuse Burning*, which follows the life of Mi’kmaw artist Rita. Each chapter of the novella begins with a description of an art piece done by Rita. Though no pictures were shown, Morris captivated the room with her vivid descriptions. Lines such as “spring was an assault that arrived at the door with

flowers in hand” were equally comforting and disturbing; they sent chills across the room. Her personification of nature mixed with an exploration of the way modern humans are alienated from nature created a compelling juxtaposition that dug its claws into the listener. She said eco-horror science fiction helps her channel her anger over capitalism, colonialism, and the jarring conditions they create.

*Green Fuse Burning* is not directly an autobiography, but does contain elements from Morris’s life, expressing her struggle grieving. After the death of her father, she discovered a pond in Halifax where she encountered many different forms of life and death, noting how much growth can come from decay, especially with



mushrooms and other fungi. She said it changed her perception of death, now viewing it as a collaboration, using the pond as a medium to investigate the horrors of this cycle in her

*“Dark shining  
night sighed into  
the expanse of  
the pond. The  
Frog Croaking  
Moon Squoljikus,  
was a faint sliver  
humming into the  
sky above. It threw  
no light.”*

*From Green Fuse Burning*

novella.

She then read two poems from her horror poetry collection *Elegies of Rotting Stars*, the first depicting an unsettling house with time stuck inside the rafters. The audience was too stunned to speak, Morris’s words distorting the room into the dark silhouette of the house. The second poem was written in a mix of Mi’kmaw and English, a tribute to her heritage as she reconnects with her Indigenous culture. Morris was raised by a residential school survivor, and together, they practice their Mi’kmaw language

and engage in traditional practices, working to undo the indoctrination of colonization.

The audience was eager to inquire about her projects during the Q&A portion, with one attendee asking if she ever gets overwhelmed writing about such big, systemic problems like capitalism and the climate crisis. Morris’s vulnerability and authentic responses were especially powerful and touching, expressing how the autobiographical elements were sometimes triggering and she would have to step away. She stressed the importance of knowing when you’re pushing yourself too hard, and where you could push yourself further. Another attendee expressed their difficulty in developing interesting characters, and Morris urged them to simply write. She said figuring out what the character’s reality looks like and what makes it fall apart can reveal details of that character’s inner world. Dropping the characters into a scene and having them work through something can make it easier to see them realized.

Tiffany Morris was an incredible addition to the Authors@Acadia series. Her passion for her projects was nothing short of contagious, and her unique writing style mesmerizing; I have not stopped thinking about it since. Morris’s return to Acadia to share her work was truly a treat.

## Kate Beaton

By Avery McWilliam

On Tuesday, February 25th, 2025 at 7pm in Huggins Science Hall, Room 10, author Kate Beaton read from her graphic memoir, *Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands*. Kate Beaton was born and raised in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and earned a BA from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. *Ducks* tells the story of Beaton’s time working in the oil sands in Fort McMurray, Alberta, and has earned a place on the *New York Times* best seller list and has been internationally recognized and acclaimed.

Beaton began her presentation with background information on Cape Breton’s economy in the early 2000s when Cape Breton closed coal mines, steel mills, and pulp mills. This led to post offices and schools shutting down as well. Beaton describes it as “the whole world that you loved was falling in; the only option was to leave,” and people did leave en masse to Alberta for work. It was “so common,” Beaton explained, “that you barely even questioned it.”



AUTHORS@ACADIA



She then presented the memoir's pictures, all hand-drawn by Beaton, alongside her narration. She did a Newfie accent for her co-workers, as most of them were from Newfoundland. She often took breaks from the memoir to explain the social and political state of her environment at the time, most notably the distinct difference between the older generations, who had worked hard in Cape Breton and lost their livelihoods, and the younger workers, who were just kids then. Beaton also shared everyday harrowing experiences, including one about a highway they nicknamed the "highway of death" because so many cars would crash while driving on the road. As Beaton described, drivers would be so busy looking at the first accident, they too would slip on the ice and drive off the road; it happened nearly every day.

During the Q&A Beaton

spoke about her personal experiences and her decision to tell the book through her perspective. Though she knows more about the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the oil sands now, she chose to recount her experiences so the reader can experience and learn as she did. She encourages those interested in the topic to read more into it, as her perspective "can only provide so much knowledge," which Beaton describes as a "strength and a weakness", but we all felt the strength in her story. Her interactive presentation along with her Newfoundlander accents had the room mesmerized. Her charisma and talent for storytelling and visual art left the audience enamoured and eager to read more. This night was truly a treat and a tremendous addition to our Authors@Acadia series.

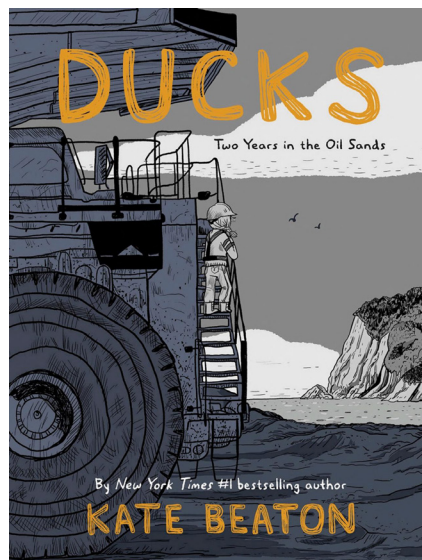


Image from *Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands*

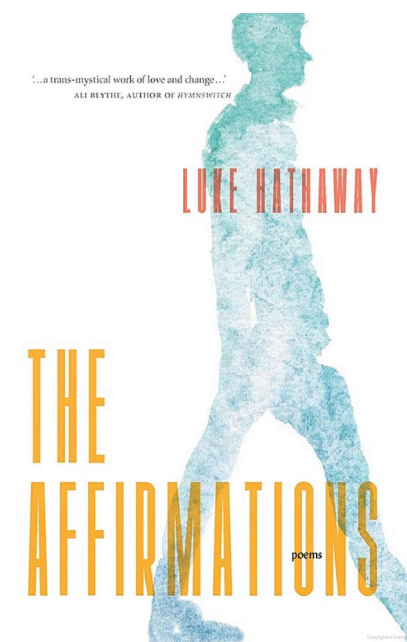
# Luke Hathaway

## By Angel Percentie

On March 19th, 2025, trans poet Luke Hathaway gave a reflective reading to conclude the 2024–2025 Authors@Acadia series. An audience of students, faculty, and community members gathered in the Quiet Reading Room to hear Hathaway read from his collections *Years, Months, and Days* (2018) and *The Affirmations* (2022).

Hathaway explained that *Years, Months, and Days* was originally written for the page but later set to music. He described his interest in how “words and song hang out together,” emphasizing the interplay between music and text. The collection features substantial use of blank space, which represents the “ignorance” or limitation of the human mind. Much of his work was inspired by a German hymnal he was drawn to in his childhood. Thus, his poems reflect a spirituality that is not strictly religious but rather open to any soul willing to meditate on the divine as a friend.

In *The Affirmations*, Hathaway takes an interdisciplinary approach by using seasonal changes, liturgy, and classical mythology to explore themes of love, transition, and spirituality. His reverence for words, sound,



and space was evident as he read. Although he expressed a longing to be more musical, his words carried the essence and cadence of a hymn. Two poets that inspired his work were Oscar Wilde and W.H. Auden. Hathaway described himself as someone who merges the sacred and the secular, in a “psalmist meets Emily Dickinson” style. This concept of contrafactum, writing new lyrics to old melodies, is unique to Hathaway’s poetry, and is an interesting way of exploring the ongoing conversations between music and poetry.

Currently teaching Creative Writing and English at Saint Mary’s University, Hathaway responded thoughtfully when asked by students about his writing process. One student asked, “How does one know when a poem is finished?”



In response, he shared that form can guide a poem to its natural end, acting as a “lyrical container” that holds the work together. Therefore, he suggests that it is “not so much about when the poem ends, but when you have.”

Hathaway also spoke candidly about using poetry to come to terms with his identity, having published his first collection under a different name. When asked whether he still has conversations with his past self, he responded with openness and vulnerability. He shared that he does, and that even in the past, the androgyny of poetry and classical mythology gave him space to explore ideas of transition.

Hathaway’s mellow afternoon reading, with the bare trees and fading skies as a backdrop, offered a delightful close to the year.



# AAUEC STUDENT REFLECTIONS



Left to Right: Nick Lundrigan, Chy Webb, Vivien Kelly, Sophie Ashton, Alexa Wilcox, Nico Hernando, Dr. Tom Laughlin

## Nico Hernando

Having come to Acadia's English department from a science background, I had never had the opportunity to participate in an English conference—and the AAUEC exceeded all of my expectations. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to share my work, to bond with fellow classmates and my professors, and to hear all of the interesting projects being conducted by undergrads across the Maritimes. More than this, I found the conference to be a much-needed change of pace and scenery in the midst of a long semester, a short literary vacation to get us ready for the homestretch. If you're an undergraduate English student

## Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference, UNB Fredericton, March 14-16

at Acadia, I don't think there is a more valuable (or enjoyable) academic experience!

## Alexa Wilcox

The AAUEC was the most exciting part of my semester. I was honoured to be able to attend this year for a second time, and I was thrilled to see how much my presentation skills have improved from one year to the next. To my great excitement, both of the other students on my panel had also written about women in medieval literature—a topic which I have grown to love dearly over the course of my

studies. I had a wonderful conversation with the student who wrote about female domination in *Le Morte Darthur*. It brought me much joy to be able to connect with students from other universities who share my passions. By the end of the weekend, I had heard many presentations from a variety of perspectives on topics that were both familiar and unknown to me. I also developed a sense of camaraderie with the other Acadia students after spending so much time with them at the conference (and also on the five-hour-long drive in either

direction). Winning trivia on the second evening certainly made us feel like a team! I will cherish these memories that I have made.

### **Nick Lundrigan**

I am so thankful for the opportunity to have shared my research by attending AAUEC in Fredericton this year. I loved listening to all of the other students' amazing ideas and research as well as hearing Dr. Robinson's keynote presentation. I left feeling inspired (as well as with a long list of new texts to read!). However, my favourite part of the weekend was the opportunity to connect with the other students from Acadia throughout the conference. We got to go to each others' panels, cheer each other on, and destroy in trivia against the other Atlantic universities. I'm walking away from this experience feeling proud of myself, of our Acadia A+ team, and of being a part of the field that I'm passionate about.

### **Vivien Kelly**

I had a lot of fun attending the AAUEC this year in Fredericton. I was nervous going into the experience, but my peers at Acadia, professors, and students from other schools at the event itself were so supportive and kind. It was a unique experience to see and hear so many different perspectives all talking about literature and creative writing.

All the panels and keynote speakers were so engaging, and I had a wonderful time getting to know fellow English students—and professors!—better. The Conference was inspiring, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to experience it.

### **Sophie Ashton**

It was such an honour to be able to attend the AAUEC this year. After presenting a creative piece at the conference last year, I was very excited to be able to attend again and present an academic piece. The environment at the conference was so friendly and supportive, and each of the panels I attended were incredibly interesting. There is something so special about listening to people talk about what they are passionate about, especially when everyone else in the room is also interested in literary studies. If someone had told me a year ago that I would get a chance to present on a panel that was all about L.M. Montgomery, I probably would have thought it was too good to be true!

One of the most special parts of the conference was getting to know fellow Acadia students and professors better. After travelling to the conference together and attending each other's panels, we developed a strong team spirit that carried us through winning a trivia contest against all the other schools! The experience of attending the AAUEC was a great opportunity to learn more

about my field of study and feel the strong sense of community we have at Acadia. I am so grateful for having had the opportunity to attend and am excited for future students to do the same.

### **Chy Webb**

The 2025 AAUEC was the first time I experienced being surrounded by people with the same passions as me when it comes to academia, and it was the best first experience I could have had! I had the opportunity to get to know my Acadia peers better, creating what may be some of my favourite university memories, and I even got to know more about Dr. Laura Robinson and Dr. Tom Laughlin. There were so many amazing panels and papers that were read throughout the weekend and I walked away with a list of books I need to read, some new and some with a new perspective! My personal favourite panel, while hard to choose, had to have been the Women, Reading, and Community one, where there was a presentation about Sylvia Plath, Female Angst, and Schrödinger's teenager! I am beyond grateful to have had the chance to attend this conference and to share a creative piece that I love, and I urge anyone who has the chance, to consider submitting a work! You never know if it'll be your year to attend!



# estuary

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Faculty Advisor to Acadia's creative arts journal *estuary*, Wanda Campbell, congratulates editor Angel Percentie on another successful year. This photo was taken by Diane Chin whose compelling work "Life with My Mother" that combines knitting and text, was featured on the Spring 2025 cover. The launch of this year's print edition was held in the Vaughan Library Quiet Reading Room on April 3, and many of the print issue's 25 contributors read their work aloud to an appreciative audience.



## ACADIA ENGLISH ASSOCIATION EVENTS

### FALL 2024

The Acadia English Association held four events in the fall semester. For our first event, we put together a meet and greet for new English students to meet current ones and get to know their department better!

Our second event was a Halloween-themed book club, centred around Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart."

After decorating a classroom with thematically appropriate spooky decorations, we chatted about the story and its themes. A spirited discussion about the identity of the infamously unreliable narrator ensued, though a definite highlight was having one of the students (our resident Poe enthusiast) share their insights and knowledge about the tale!

For our third event of the semester, we decided to host a book-to-movie night to give everyone a break from the onslaught of November essays. Students voted to watch *Pride and Prejudice* from a list of movie adaptations of famous books. We had a wonderful

evening cheering on Keira Knightley (as Elizabeth Bennet) and watching her fall in love with the mysterious Mr. Darcy, complete with popcorn and tea.

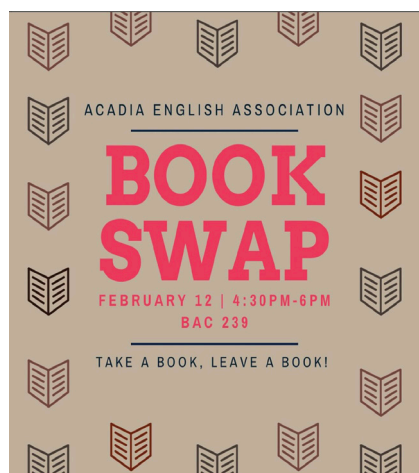
Our holiday social was our most successful event of the semester. Held the evening of the last day of classes, the event attracted a small crowd of both familiar and new faces. Literary trivia was a hit (the group requested a second game halfway through the event) and the winners went home with a "blind date with a book" as a prize. Other activities included assembling mini gingerbread houses and a comical game of Clue. All in all, it was a great semester for the AEA!

## WINTER 2025

The winter semester was full of fun events and opportunities for students in the English department. In February, we hosted a book swap where students were welcome to donate old books and help themselves to as many new-to-them books as they could carry. Any English major's dream!

This semester, we were also able to offer some English department merch for our students and faculty. From hoodies to tote bags, students will now be able to show off the beautiful Acadia English crest wherever they go!

In March, we helped to send six students to the Annual



Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The students each presented an essay or a creative piece, and their professionalism and intellect made them incredible representatives of Acadia's English department.

They even won trivia against all the other universities in the Maritimes!

We ended the year with one final social at Paddy's Pub. This was our most memorable event of the whole year, with a turnout of nearly thirty students, faculty, and friends. Though it was tight to squeeze everyone into our reserved space, we all had a blast celebrating another fun and successful year with literary trivia, prof superlative awards, and lots of laughs.

Thank you to everyone who came to our events this past year! Keep an eye out for our new and improved AEA executive team in the fall!

## THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & THEATRE WELCOMES



### Dr. Thomas Laughlin By Avery McWilliam

During the winter semester, I had the privilege of interviewing Dr. Thomas Laughlin, the newest member of Acadia's English department. Laughlin specializes in nineteenth century literature, and has numerous scholarly articles and essays published on the matter. He completed his undergraduate at Trent University, and continued his education at Carleton University, where he earned his MA. Laughlin furthered his

education and achieved a PhD from the University of Toronto. Laughlin became increasingly interested in nineteenth century British literature because it was a century of huge changes and revolutions that paved the way for the world we live in today. The nineteenth century birthed political, industrial, and social revolutions, and he grew passionate in his research on how our modern societies have inherited the problems of the past. Dr. Laughlin's current project, which is still in the early stages, focuses on the life of workers in

the nineteenth century getting caught up in the life of letters. He explained to me how there was a compulsion for Victorian writers to address the effects of the industrial revolution and the class antagonisms that arose out of it. Thus, writers felt duty-bound to come up with solutions that encompass the working-class experience. The workers grew more distracted from their work as they read more of these letters; therefore, the life of workers got caught up in the life of letters. His passion for the project is





immense, and he is excited to sprinkle in his newfound knowledge into his teaching.

At Acadia, Dr. Laughlin teaches Writing and Reading Critically and Nineteenth Century Fiction. He expressed excitement over the possibility of discovering a fresh idea inside or outside of the classroom, elated by the possibility of discovery in itself. His research interests tend to dovetail with his teaching interests, and most of his research comes out of his teaching in some way. One idea he is very committed to is that literature isn't just telling stories, it's strong thought and actually thinking about things in a serious way.

Dr. Laughlin's advice for students is to read. One thing that led to his maturity as a scholar was reading the entire book, instead of just the required two pages, to gain deeper knowledge on the subject. He also emphasized the importance of discovering a niche. "It's important to find an area that's been underresearched or

underdeveloped," Dr. Laughlin said, "and that means maybe identifying authors that haven't been thought about that much or offering those understudied authors in combination with popular ones." With that, he emphasized being brave, as it requires emotional vigour to "face the possibility that it may not work out the way you want it to."

## Dr. Zohreh Ramin

### By Avery McWilliam

During the winter semester, I had the honour of interviewing Dr. Zohreh Ramin, a visiting scholar from the University of Tehran in Iran. Dr. Ramin earned her MA and PhD at the University of Tehran, and has worked as a faculty member there ever since. She specializes in nineteenth century women's literature and is working with Dr. Richard Cunningham and Dr. Jon Saklofske in using digital humanities in literature.

Dr. Ramin teaches American literature at the University of Tehran, and, during her visit at Acadia, is pursuing more in-depth research into women's participation in the early short story tradition. She highlights author Judith Sargent Murray and her book *The Gleaner*, which contains one of the first early short stories written by a female author. As Dr. Ramin develops research on this contribution of women's writing in American

history, she is also conducting a similar study on Iranian women writers throughout history that have contributed to the evolution of the short story.

Before coming to Acadia, Dr. Ramin researched travel writing and its link to comparative literature. She published an essay that conducts a review on Shakespeare, Persia, and the East. The book is a comparative study that includes travel writing as well. As Dr. Ramin explained, before globalization, travel writers documented their day-to-day experiences as objectively as possible. Nowadays, people may jot things down while traveling, but then they come home and rewrite the entire experience and fill it with story. It's become a very rich area of study for English scholars because it deals with people's real, tangible experiences. Postcolonial scholars have also found travel writing a useful tool in unpacking how they've formulated their approach to Eastern traditions.

*"I encourage [students] to be critical about what they study and what they do."*

Dr. Ramin is passionate about teaching, and it really came through as she described the various perspectives her students will offer. "It gives me a thrilling feeling," said Dr. Ramin. "A short story or novel for instance—I take

it to class and my students are able to give me perspectives I would've never thought of myself, and that is so interesting to me." She also expressed her love for students countering her ideas with concrete justification. "I always find it surprising, but I encourage them to be critical about what

they study and what they do."

Dr. Ramin's advice for students is to read extensively and read critically. She also emphasized having confidence in giving your own voice. "Your voice matters," said Dr. Ramin. "Be confident in providing your own critical perspective."



Voice 4 is printed at the Acadia Print Shop. The online version and more about Acadia's Department of English and Theatre can be viewed at: [english.acadiau.ca](http://english.acadiau.ca).

## BAC TALK

### Dr. Sheena Bernett "Multiplicity in Motion: A Transdisciplinary Research-Creation PhD Experience"

In her BAC Talk on October 25, 2024, Sheena Bernett presented *Composing with the Event—Moving Toward Neurodiverse Perception/Sensation*, a neurodiverse research-creation PhD project, which was awarded the 2023 Governor General's Gold Medal for its groundbreaking approach. By writing through neurodiversity, the project challenges borders and conventions, pushing toward the avant-garde and expanding the possibilities of research-creation. Rather than conduct her talk with a linear, speaker-led approach, Bernett wanted a collective experience. She encouraged audience participation, interruptions, and diversions. While presenting

high-pitched audio clips, she even encouraged participants to walk out of the room if overwhelmed. Her work, she explained, is not about making people feel comfortable; it's okay not to engage with sections of the presentation, all reactions are invited. Bernett seeks to challenge the ways we establish academic and artistic boundaries. In research, what's important is not necessarily (or not only) what comes into existence, what ends up on the page. What's important is what might happen, "the potentiality." Bernett's presentation invited reflection on how neurodiverse processes defy traditional frameworks and offer new pathways for arts research.



### Dr. Wanda Campbell: "Monuments, Music, and Metaphors: Remembering December 6 National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women"

2024 marked the 35th Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre on 6 December 1989, when an armed man walked into École Polytechnique and killed fourteen women, mostly engineering students. In her BAC Talk on November 22, 2024, Wanda Campbell invited commemoration by exploring creative responses to this tragedy. As Campbell explained, monuments, music, and metaphor allows us to reflect on how best to remember those taken from us. For a decade now, Campbell has written poems for Acadia's annual December 6th ceremony. Every year, in seeking the

right words to pay tribute to women who have lost their lives to femicide, she has thought not only of the young women murdered in Montreal, but also of how, three and half decades later, the violence against women continues around the world as does the fight against it. Campbell introduced Emma Morgan-Thorp's "The Politics of Memory" to remind us that feminist memorials "run the risk of serving as a palliative instead of a provocation" and that we must combine commemoration with calls to action.

