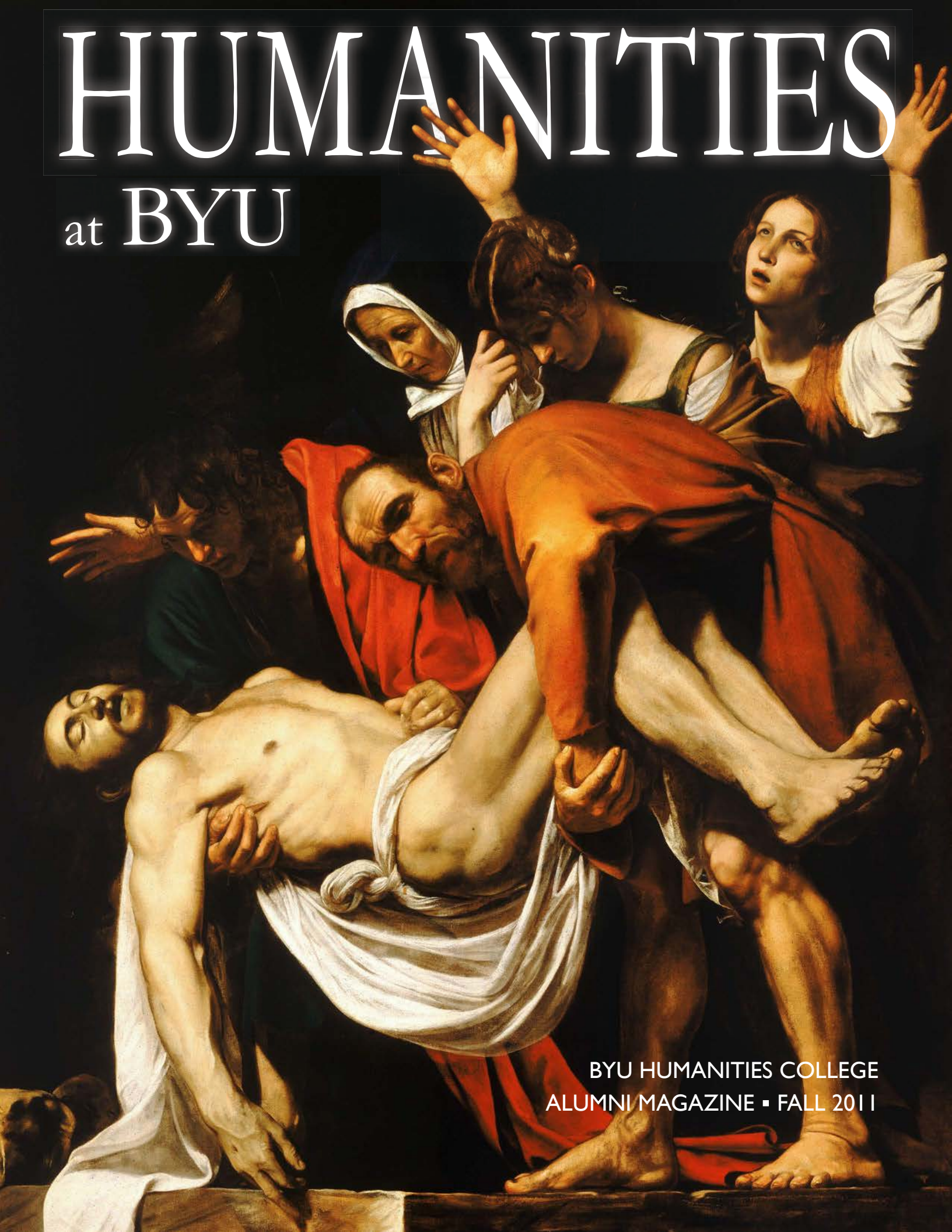


# HUMANITIES

at BYU



BYU HUMANITIES COLLEGE  
ALUMNI MAGAZINE ■ FALL 2011

# from the Dean

## Woden's Left Eye



Dean John R. Rosenberg

Seeing, it seems, has a complicated history. Our ancestors gave sight a privileged place among the senses: apparently the “mind’s eye” was a more sensible metaphor for knowledge than the mind’s taste buds. When we experience a breakthrough on a difficult concept, we achieve “in-sight,” and we celebrate leaders with vision more than those with acute hearing (though we probably get that backwards). The eye might be a passive receptor of light, or, as some romantics believed, an active apprehender that assembles its own reality. Some think of the “gaze” as fiercely masculine compared to the feminine “glance,” though sociologist Georg Simmel writes of the reciprocal gaze of lovers who must not be blind after all. As for the blind, beginning with Homer, they may not see, but they are often seers.

This summer I experienced seeing intensely during a five-week stay at Madrid’s Prado Museum. On my last afternoon I stood in a mostly empty gallery looking at Caravaggio’s *The Deposition*, newly arrived from the Vatican. The intimacy of the painted scene moved me—the way green-robed John the Beloved’s right arm braces the Savior’s torso, fingers gently brushing the spear wound, while Nicodemus with interlocked arms cradles the Lord’s bended knees. The index and middle fingers of Christ’s muscular right hand stretch reassuringly toward the angular stone slab prepared for his three-day rest—a surface suggesting that even now (in the darkest moment), especially now, he is the cornerstone and foundation of hope. Thirty minutes passed and I began to be bothered by the way the second flank of characters, all Marys, seemed to disrupt the still intimacy of the scene. One Mary’s arm juts out horizontally to the right, the second’s right hand tenses into a despairing fist, the third raises both arms against the dark sky, parentheses of lament. Another half hour slipped by and what had struck me as discontinuity now made sense. Christ’s rest is a catalyst that prods the figures around him to unwind

like the spring of a watch—Christ as immutable cornerstone *and* as activating author of faith.

The next morning my wife and daughters loaded me on an early flight to Paris and a day at the Louvre. The Tour de France was in its last weekend, and the city and its most famous museum were dripping with tourists. I had looked forward to a conversation with Botticelli, an exchange of ideas with Raphael, and at least a wink from Leonardo. But the halls were bustling with so many would-be viewers that mostly I saw rows of heads straining toward something in the distance, cameras raised like periscopes trying to capture a digital trophy of what couldn’t be seen with the eye. I couldn’t help but compare the two experiences, separated by only 24 hours, and reflect on how seeing well requires hovering in space and in time. Perceptiveness grows in a medium of patience.

Students understand time’s relativity when fifty-minute classes last an eternity, sixteen-week semesters overstay their welcome, and graduation day is a 25-watt bulb beckoning at the end of a very long tunnel. But every minute is a teacher because time on task opens eyes; when earned, insights come in time. Eyes require several minutes to adjust to a semi-dark room; the eyes of the educated citizen strain for years to see things as they really are. Those who prematurely divert their gaze from the painting, or play, or book, or from “things which are abroad . . . and the perplexities of nations” (D&C 88:79), or those who think that graduation is the end rather than the beginning of disciplined seeing, risk experiencing life as if through a dim mirror, knowing in part (see 1 Cor. 13:12) and not knowing as they are known (see D&C 76:94).

John Gardner’s polemical 1978 essay *On Moral Fiction* begins with a charming story:

It was said in the old days that every year Thor made a circle around Middle-earth, beating back the enemies of order. Thor got older every year, and the circle occupied by the gods and men grew smaller. The wisdom god, Woden,

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We invite readers to update their email addresses with us. Please send updates to Carol Kounanis at [cek@byu.edu](mailto:cek@byu.edu)

## DEAN CONTINUED

went out to the king of the trolls, got him in an armlock, and demanded to know of him how order might triumph over chaos.

"Give me your left eye," said the king of the trolls, "and I'll tell you."

Without hesitation Woden gave up his left eye. "Now tell me."

The troll said, "the secret is, Watch with both eyes!"

Each of us might assign a different meaning to the metaphor of Woden's left eye: language and literature, art and science, reason and revelation. Seeing things in focus requires complex stereoscopic vision, and the process of learning to see well is the fruit of timeless education. In *An Anthropologist on Mars* neurologist Oliver Sacks describes a patient who had been blind since childhood, and who had to learn to see again when his sight was restored in his fifties: "He would pick up details incessantly—an angle, an edge, a color, a movement—but would not be able to synthesize them, to

form a complex perception at a glance. . . . the cat, visually, was so puzzling: he would see a paw, the nose, the tail, an ear, but could not see all of them together, see the cat as a whole."

We cannot form syntheses and complex perceptions (learning outcomes of a liberal arts education) "at a glance." Sacks describes what we hope BYU humanities students experience in our classrooms: "We are not given the world: we make our world through incessant experience, . . . memory, reconnection."

"Alas, my master! how shall we do?" cries the young man when things look darkest. And Elisha prays, "Lord . . . open his eyes, that he may see" (2 Kings 6:15,17). Let us thank the Lord for BYU—Woden's left eye, and an answer to Elisha's prayer. ♦

# Moving *on*

The service of the faculty members highlighted over many years of teaching has been appreciated. To wish them well, please email Karmen Smith ([karmen\\_smith@byu.edu](mailto:karmen_smith@byu.edu)) for contact information.



◆ JAY FOX (English) received his PhD from Purdue University in 1971 and has taught a variety of courses in British literature and in literature and film for over four decades—ten years at BYU–Hawaii and thirty-one years at BYU in Provo. He has trained many student

interns, worked for several years as a writing consultant to private and public corporations, and taught writing and course development workshops for BYU faculty. In 1994 he received the Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Teaching Award; in 2005 he was named Nan Osmond Grass Professor of English; and in 2008 he was given the English Department's Outstanding Teaching Award. He served as department chair, division chair, dean, and academic vice-president at BYU–Hawaii; and as director for London Study Abroad, associate department chair, and department chair at BYU in Provo. He is the former director of the Center for the Study of Christian Values in Literature and editor of its journal, *Literature and Belief*. Jay was a member and chair of the Utah State Board of Mental Health for seven years. He and his wife, Dawn Webb, have received several awards for their work as teacher trainers for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Jay is remembered by colleagues for his “genuine support and interest in our individual work,” “his keen administrative skills as department chair and his willingness and ability to tackle big issues,” and his “splendid example of creative and engaging teaching.”

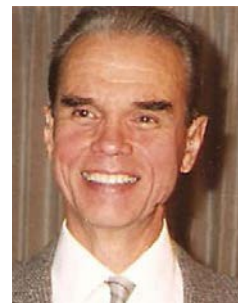
◆ DAVID PAULSEN (Philosophy) has taught at BYU since 1972. He graduated summa cum laude from BYU in 1961 with a BS in Political



Science, and he delivered the valedictory address at the university commencement. Subsequently, he graduated from the University of Chicago Law School and practiced law in Salt Lake City for four years. David later earned a PhD in philosophy from the University of Michigan where he specialized in philosophy of religion. David has taught introductory philosophy courses and ethics, but his primary teaching focus has been beginning and advanced courses in the philosophy of religion. He served as the Richard L. Evans Professor of Religious Understanding and as an Eliza R. Snow Fellow. Published widely in academic journals, he has made a point of involving undergraduates as co-authors or contributors in his books and in scores of other publications. David has been active in the Society of Christian Philosophers, founding and serving as coordinator of the Intermountain Region of the society. For over a decade, he has been actively involved in interfaith dialogue with a group of evangelical theologians. His latest book, *Are Christians Mormon? Reassessing Joseph Smith's Theology in His Bicentennial*, is forthcoming. David and his wife, Audrey Lucille Lear, are the parents of six children and eighteen grandchildren. One colleague says of David, “He is not only a thoughtful, careful scholar, but also one of the kindest teachers and colleagues I have ever seen.” Another adds, “David is the very epitome of a New Testament Christian. My life—and certainly our department—is forever the richer because of him, and his stabilizing influence and cheerful demeanor will be sorely missed.”

## EMERITUS DEATH

◆ RICHARD ELLSWORTH, Professor Emeritus of English, died on July 21, 2011. After naval service during World War II and a mission to Sweden, he pursued an academic career. BA and MA degrees in English at BYU were followed by a PhD in American Civilization at Maryland. Brother Ellsworth was a strong proponent of study abroad and helped direct the London program several times. His university service included chairing the University Studies program for several years. He taught at BYU from 1958 to 1989.



# *of* Note

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♦ The Department of French and Italian is involved in several outreach programs. In June, the department sponsored a French summer camp for forty high school students. This program drew on faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students majoring in French Studies. Another camp is planned for the summer of 2012. Also in June, the department held a French Teachers' Workshop for junior-high and high-school French teachers. Department faculty made several presentations to the teachers in this first annual workshop. Next summer's workshop will include three weeks on campus and three or more weeks in France.

♦ The 2011 Humanities Honored Alumni Lecturer is Lew W. Cramer (English '73), founder of the World Trade Center Utah, an organization created to help Utah companies expand into profitable global markets. His past accomplishments include, among many others, founding a Washington, DC, international consulting firm, serving as vice president of US West International, and serving as US Assistant Secretary of Commerce. He previously held the positions of international chair of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society and president of the BYU Management Society, Washington, DC, chapter. He and his wife, Barbara Welch Cramer, are the parents of six. He delivered his lecture on campus during October.

♦ What is the chemistry behind the food we eat? In April, two faculty members from BYU's Chemistry Department demonstrated the science of food at BYU's Spanish Resource Center. Professor Richard Watt and his father, Professor Emeritus Gary Watt, fascinated fifty students by explaining in Spanish how a liquid base can be combined with nitrogen to create ice cream. Participants were happy to confirm the results of this delicious research. This event was part of a series of culinary activities offered by BYU's Spanish Resource Center, which is a partnership between the Spanish Embassy and BYU that provides cultural experiences to assist students in learning about the rich and diverse heritage of different Spanish-speaking cultures.



A young girl experiences the science behind ice cream.

## *H*onors

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**Congratulations to College of Humanities faculty members who were recently awarded college or university professorships, lectureships, and awards.**

Religious Education Transfer Professor Award  
Penny Bird  
English

Young Scholar Award  
Kimberly Johnson  
English

Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award  
Johanne Hillam  
French and Italian



(WORK IN  
PROGRESS)

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# Through the Lake District with *Wordsworth* as Our Guide

by Rachel Wise and Emily Young  
Undergraduates Students in English

In 1810 the English curate and amateur painter Joseph Wilkinson published a collection of his depictions of the scenery of England's Lake District, hiring the local poet William Wordsworth to write the edition's introduction anonymously. While Wordsworth initially signed on to this project almost wholly for money, he would eventually revise and republish his essay several times under his own name. By 1835 it had become the book-length *Guide through the District of the Lakes*, a tourist handbook combined with pronouncements on everything from architectural aesthetics to ecologically responsible landscaping.

Despite the fact that Wordsworth is widely considered the most important nature poet in the British tradition, his *Guide through the District of the Lakes* remains relatively unknown, even among literary scholars. A major problem has been access, as editions of the *Guide* have been few, and most editions that do exist make no attempt to incorporate Wilkinson's engravings or other key textual features. Accordingly, in the summer of 2010, BYU graduate student Shannon Stimpson and Professors Nick Mason and Paul Westover of the English Department began exploring the viability of producing an online edition of Wordsworth's *Guide* that would allow readers to track the development of the

text, from its earliest incarnation as a complement to Wilkinson's engravings to its final form as a stand-alone tourist guide.

Thanks largely to a Mentoring Environment Grant (MEG) from the university, the research group grew to include two undergraduate English majors, Emily Young and Rachel Wise, and a third English Department faculty member, Professor Billy Hall. In addition to paying for student wages and supplies, the MEG funds allowed most of our group to travel to the Lake District to research Wordsworth's manuscripts, homes, and landscapes.

In the *Guide*, Wordsworth writes that one should visit the Lake District during the last week of May to enjoy



Rachel Wise, Paul Westover, Emily Young, Nick Mason, and Shannon Stimpson, tracing Wordsworth's literary steps in the Lake District.



the “best combination of long days [and] fine weather,” so in May 2011 we went, packed into a rental minivan, navigating narrow and twisty Lake District roads, letting Wordsworth’s words guide us through his homeland.

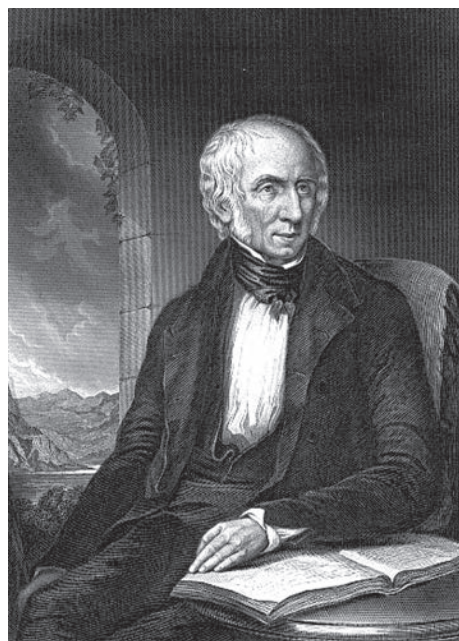
We stayed in Ambleside, a quaint town surrounded by green fields spotted with lambs and stone cottages, with convenient access to the many excursions Wordsworth mentions in his *Guide*. We hiked to Loughrigg and Easedale Tarns, looked for Roman ruins in a cow pasture, searched for larch plantations, and explored Kirkstall and Furness Abbeys, and watched the play of light and shadow on the mountains. On other days we visited Wordsworth’s homes and key sites near Keswick and Ulverston.

On our most adventurous day, we scaled Scafell Pike, the tallest mountain in England, in thick gray clouds and sixty-mile-per-hour wind gusts. Wordsworth’s *Guide* warns of the fickleness of the weather near the top, but even Wordsworth could not have prepared us for the effect of clambering over slick, lichen-covered rocks through sudden, but frequent, downpours of rain, accompanied by wind and palpable mist. Fortunately, at various times, the wind would suddenly blow the clouds away, allowing us to see breathtaking views of emerald green mountains and gray sea, stretching all the way to Scotland.

Visiting these sites was vital, as Wordsworth’s *Guide* is deeply rooted in a sense of place. The poet describes the lakes not only in touristic terms (e.g., take this road, here’s a good inn) but also in aesthetic terms (the picturesque, the sublime, and the heresy of whitewashed houses).

Even after poring over the *Guide* and supplementary materials in Provo, we couldn’t truly begin to understand the text until we were on the ground in Northern England. There we saw how, as Wordsworth insists, gray slate buildings and natural evergreens fit better into the landscape than bright white houses and nonnative larch trees. And, on that rainy, windy hike up Scafell Pike, we discovered the sublime.

Being in the Lake District not only enabled us to visit the spots Wordsworth mentions in his *Guide* but also gave us access to the valuable archives held at the Wordsworth Trust. As a team we were able to study Wordsworth’s manuscripts, various published editions



William Wordsworth in 1839.

of the *Guide*, and the originals of Wilkinson’s sketches. Working closely with Jeff Cawton, the library’s curator, we made a range of discoveries about the *Guide*’s original print run, Wilkinson’s artistic method, and Wordsworth’s sequential changes. We also took in the Trust’s current exhibition on sketches and paintings

of the Lake District, which enhanced our understanding of art as a means of tourism in the Lake District.

All in all, the trip to the Lake District was educational on many levels. Beyond engendering a greater understanding of

*There we saw how, as Wordsworth insists, gray slate buildings and natural evergreens fit better into the landscape than bright white houses and nonnative larch trees. And, on that rainy, windy hike up Scafell Pike, we discovered the sublime.*

Wordsworth’s *Guide*, it allowed us to research alongside experts and with materials found nowhere else and enabled us to discover the joys of original literary scholarship. Not only was our visit invaluable because of the information we gathered for our annotations and textual comparisons, but also because it provided an important mentoring experience as we students learned from our professors how to do text-based field research. With that mentoring, we became more than a group of students with their teachers; we became scholars with a common goal. In traveling, working, and eating together for a week, we also came to be colleagues and friends. ♦



# Study Abroad in Berlin 2010



by Nathan Bates  
Graduate Student in German Studies

**B**erlin has been center-stage for two world wars and the cold war. But aside from its obvious historical significance, Berlin also houses some of the finest art and antiquities collections, and it is a classical music powerhouse and the government seat of the strongest economy in the European Union. All of this in a city that was physically divided for nearly thirty years.

For one who has been fascinated since adolescence with the tremendous tragedy of twentieth-century German history, being set free on the streets of Berlin was like a weight watcher being turned loose in a chocolate factory. Many of these historical relics have begun to recede. Much of the infamous Berlin Wall can now be discerned only by a cement line on the sidewalk. Instead of barbed wire, skyscrapers stand at Potsdamer Platz, as

if capitalism were decidedly gloating over the ruins of its spiteful nemesis, communism. There are few places like Berlin for coming to terms with the past.

A short distance east of Potsdamer Platz, one of the new city centers, are the scattered remains of the Nazi Regierungsviertel or “government quarters” from which the most devastating war in history was conducted and where countless thousands were tortured in the S.S. and Gestapo headquarters. In the opposite direction, one stumbles upon the Bendlerblock, where Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, organizer of the July 20 assassination plot against Hitler (immortalized by the Tom Cruise film, *Valkyrie*) was executed. A few miles to the north lies Plötzensee Prison, where Helmuth Huebner, a young Mormon resistance fighter, was executed.

Berlin is a city haunted by its own history and we BYU students spent two and a half months right at the heart of it. In addition to our historical explorations and



cultural experiences, we were able to study at the Goethe Institute, one of the finest German language institutes in the world. We stayed with native German families and attended local LDS wards on Sundays. Many of us also conducted ORCA-funded research and other student research projects. BYU Professor Hans Kelling was our guide, and one special adventure was our trip to Schwerin where Professor Kelling was born. As if he were once again a young schoolboy, he guided us through his hometown, telling us where his house used to be and where his family members lived.

After our adventures in Berlin, our group was privileged to take a whirlwind bus tour of middle Germany. We visited the cities of Dresden, Leipzig, Weimar, Eisenach, Nürnberg, Bamberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Heidelberg, Wetzlar, and Goslar, and drove along the castle-encrusted Rhein River Valley. For me and many others in the group, the highlight was the visit to the famous Wartburg castle near Eisenach. The following is an excerpt from my journal:

We are spending the night in Eisenach, where Johann Sebastian Bach was born and Martin Luther lived as a boy, attending Latin school in preparation for joining the ministry. Later in his life, Martin Luther was exiled to the hilltop cas-

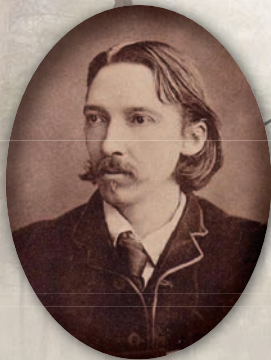
tle here, the Wartburg, in order to be protected from the Pope and Kaiser who would have much liked this annoying little German monk just disappear. While imprisoned in the Wartburg, he translated the New Testament into German, making it available to the German people en masse. I got to see the room where Martin Luther lived and where his tremendous translation effort was carried out. You could feel a sacred spirit in that space, and the importance of that endeavor in the chain of events that led to the restoration of the gospel in these latter days was confirmed to me. Interestingly enough, it took him only 11 weeks to translate the New Testament; almost the exact same space of time in which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. Surely the hand of God was in both works.

Of course this is just one perspective on the tapestry of educational enrichment that our group of about thirty-five students experienced in our study of a new people, culture, and land. Charlemagne said, "To have a second language is to possess a second soul." Certainly the souls of our study abroad group were expanded greatly by our experiences in Berlin. ♦





# Finding Stevenson

A circular, sepia-toned portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson, showing him from the chest up, with a mustache and dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a white shirt and tie.

From a talk at the English Department  
Awards Banquet, April 5, 2011

by Jay Fox  
Department of English



As I reflected on what I might include in my remarks to students and faculty in English studies, my thoughts turned to Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) mainly because a few months ago I published a review of some of his letters. For years I have been intrigued by his novels, especially *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and enamored of the poetry in his *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Just recently I thought of Stevenson when I read our own Paul Westover's enlightening article on necromanticism. Paul helped me understand that at many times in my professional life, I have pursued the role of the necromantic tourist, one who makes pilgrimages to the graves of the literary dead. To such tourists, Paul writes, "books and the dead are inseparable; sympathy with the dead underwrites community; ergo, cultural continuity and national thinking depend upon necromanticism, whether manifested by reading or

visiting the dead" (315). I have made many such treks. One of the most memorable was taking students to visit the grave of the poet Thomas Gray at Stoke Poges, in Buckinghamshire, England, and while the mist hovered over the cemetery at St. Giles's churchyard and dew dripped from the yew trees, we surrounded Gray's tomb and read his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." It was a numinous experience. One of the most unusual pilgrimages, however, was in trying to find the grave of Stevenson in Western Samoa.

I was living in Hawaii at the time and wasn't in the best of health, having just barely recovered from a case of the mumps on one side of my face. Before the mumps, I developed a serious bronchitis that lingered, then I contracted shigella—a type of dysentery—from a local restaurant, then my foot became infected after minor surgery. So I was coughing, on crutches with



throbbing pain in my foot, and frequently hopping to the bathroom.

Stevenson lived in the South Pacific for several years at the end of the nineteenth century and for a short time in Hawaii. I visited his little house while it was still standing in Manoa Valley on Oahu. Stevenson himself had suffered poor health from childhood. He knew much of endurance, but had difficulty staying affiliated with formal religion even though he had been devout as a child. Early in his twenties he claimed he was an agnostic, although he embraced Christianity again later in his life. Needing a warmer climate, he finally bought over 300 acres in Samoa and built a house where he lived with his wife, Fanny, until he died of a stroke in 1894, at the young age of 44.

The morning that three of us set out to see Stevenson's grave at the top of Mount Vaea, two of us were seriously ill, suffering from extreme gastrointestinal problems. I questioned our Australian guide, Chris, as to how I could be sick when I had been so careful to drink only bottled drinks and to eat canned food. After running through a series of possibilities, he asked if I had let the shower water hit my lips. Replying that I had, he said, "Well, there you have it!" So despite our weakened state, we were determined to climb to Stevenson's grave. Vaea seemed moderate in size, and what was that to someone who had climbed mountains in the Oquirrhos near Tooele, Utah, all of his life; had scaled Mt. Deseret in the Stansburys; and had roughed the rocks and rattlers of the East Fork of the Sevier in Black Canyon, an initiation required of all potential sons-in-law who wanted to marry one of the Webb girls. Besides that, I had been a Scoutmaster in my early years and had survived long hikes even after choking down the stuff young Scouts had concocted for their Second-Class cooking requirement.

A footpath in the tropics is actually a contradiction in terms. Remember that Samoa is the locale of dense rain forests, and whatever path you machete your way through today may be swallowed up by the jungle tomorrow. Needless to say, we lost the elusive trail very quickly. Imagine

the scenario: two sick mainland haoles being led by a navigationally-impaired Aussie. My mistake was that I had to have a rest stop and told the other two I would catch up with them. As soon as I finished, I realized I had no idea where my two chums were and had no idea of direction.

The vegetation was not only dense, it was also very wet and it took all my strength just to pull myself along. Besides that, I had lost my water bottle. I wondered what might lurk in that thick foliage. I knew that Hawaii had no snakes, but what about Samoa? And what about centipedes, the foot-long variety? Just as I was becoming apprehensive, something large, black, and breathing heavily was rustling near me in the underbrush. Tennyson's words, "Nature, red in tooth and claw," from *In Memoriam* came to mind (36). But then instinctively, I started repeating to myself Wordsworth's lines from "Tintern Abbey," "Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her" (262). Then I said, "Believe me, I love you, I love you." Then the mass passed within a couple feet of me—a gargantuan wild pig with huge white tusks. The evocation to Wordsworth must have helped, because once he saw me the boar took off in the opposite direction. He probably sensed too that I was very experienced in turning pigs into kālua pork.

I called out to my friends, but received no reply. Surely they were just joking with me. After what seemed to me an inordinate amount of time, I was very sobered by the situation I was in and it was now no longer a laughing matter. It was like drowning in a sea

Mt. Vaea, the burial place of Robert Louis Stevenson, on the island of Upolu, Samoa.



of vegetation. I was making virtually no progress at all. Weak and humbled, I prayed in earnest. Still no help. At that point I could not catch my breath and I think I had a panic attack. I prayed again and this time it was affirmed that despite the maze I was in, the only way out was to keep struggling up—at least what seemed to be up. I stopped many times from exhaustion.

After extraordinary effort—one of perhaps three times in my life when not making it seemed a real possibility—I finally came at last to a clearing and there was the rock tomb of Stevenson, and further along the summit were my two friends. They had tried to find me and had been just as lost as I was; but at least they had had each other. What was supposed to be a short trip had taken most of the day.

On the tomb were the lines from Stevenson's poem "Requiem." Thankfully *his* requiem, not what came close to being mine. The closing lines on the tomb read, "Here he lies where he longed to be; / Home is the sailor, home from the sea, / And the hunter home from the hill." As in other near misses in my life, I was grateful to come "home from the hill" and live to tell about it. And although badly scratched and shaken, I

*After extraordinary effort—one of perhaps three times in my life when not making it seemed a real possibility—I finally came at last to a clearing and there was the rock tomb of Stevenson.*



Stevenson's tomb on Mt. Vaea, ca. 1909.



The burial service for Stevenson, 1894.

felt the view was nearly worth it. Samoan chiefs had brought Stevenson's body here, chiefs who were grateful for his devotion to them and their social causes, chiefs who had named him *Tusitala*, the teller of tales, and who had built a road to his house that they called "The Road of the Loving Heart."

Now, although this traumatic experience took place in an exotic locale, it is perhaps to you not really very remarkable. After all, I was not on any important moral quest nor significant service project; I was just a necromantic tourist trying to find the last resting place of a dear literary friend. It was not until some years later that the experience took on symbolic meaning for me. It was at a time when our family experienced twelve deaths in our extended family in five years. I spoke at six of the funerals. It was at this time I found Stevenson's "Verses Written in 1872." In trying to give comfort to someone who had lost a loved one in death, he wrote that

Though he that ever kind and true,  
Kept stoutly step by step with you  
Your whole long gusty lifetime through  
Be gone a while before,  
Be now a moment gone before,  
Yet, doubt not, soon the seasons shall restore  
Your friend to you.

He has but turned a corner; still  
He pushes on with right good will  
Thro' mire and marsh, by heuch and hill  
That self-same arduous way,—  
That self-same upland hopeful way,  
That you and he through many a doubtful day  
Attempted still.

He is not dead, this friend; not dead,  
But, in the path we mortals tread,  
Got some few, trifling steps ahead  
And nearer to the end,  
So that you, too, once past the bend,  
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend  
You fancy dead.

Push gaily on, strong heart! The while  
You travel forward mile by mile,  
He loiters with a backward smile  
Till you can overtake. . . (296–97)

In an affirmation of hope, Stevenson reminds us that a loved one who has died is just ahead, has "turned the



corner” in the eternal scheme of things, but we will eventually “overtake” that person in the next life.

My own struggles on Mt. Vaea become a metaphorical experience for me. My own friends had gone before me and my hope was to catch up with them. I thought I was prepared, but was surprised by the difficulty of what seemed a relatively simple task. As we try symbolically to climb the Mt. Vaea’s of life, we may experience the struggles, confusion, fatigue, loss, and near despair I felt in my climb that day. We may overestimate our own preparation for such a climb and we may need to prepare more effectively.

The jungle of everyday life may seem more impenetrable than the Samoan landscape, slippery and potentially full of hostile creatures. We may lose sight of our guide, and feel as if we are directionless and alone. As Sondheim says in his musical, “Sometimes people leave you / Halfway through the wood.” What is most remarkable to me about the Samoa experience is that I was able to link the lived experience with the literary experience—the consolation I later found in Stevenson’s poem. The literary experience was meaningful to me because I could place it in a larger, cosmic picture. Neil Postman, in his article in *Atlantic Monthly* several years ago, called this “Learning by Story”:

*The jungle of everyday life may seem more impenetrable than the Samoan landscape, slippery and potentially full of hostile creatures. We may lose sight of our guide, and feel as if we are directionless and alone.*

Human beings require stories to give meaning to the facts of their existence. I am not talking here about those specialized stories that we call novels, plays, and epic poems. I am talking about the more profound stories that people, nations, religions, and disciplines unfold in order to make sense out of the world. For example, ever since we can remember, all of us have been telling ourselves stories about ourselves, composing life-giving autobiographies of which we are the heroes and heroines. If our stories are coherent and plausible and have continuity, they will help us to understand why we are here, and what we need to pay attention to and what we may ignore. A story provides a structure for our perceptions; only through stories do facts assume any meaning whatsoever. This is why children everywhere ask, as soon as they have the command of language to do so, “Where did I come from?” and, shortly after, “What will

happen when I die?” They require a story to give meaning to their existence. Without air, our cells die. Without a story, our selves die. (122)

Once we have the “story” that Postman describes here—and believing Latter-day Saints have such a story—then the “specialized” literature that he mentions can be given meaning because of the larger construct. Thornton Wilder helps me further understand my critical reaction to Stevenson’s poem when he writes in one of his prefaces, “The response we make when we ‘believe’ a work of the imagination is that of saying: ‘This is the way things are. I have always known it without being fully aware that I knew it. Now in the presence of this play or novel or poem (or picture or piece of

music) I know that I know it.” Wilder attributes this to Platonic “recollection” and thinks “the theatre is best endowed to awaken” it (vii–viii). Brigham Young

would agree: “Upon the stage of a theatre,” he said, “can be represented in character, evil and its consequences, good and its happy results and rewards. . . . The stage can be made to aid the pulpit in impressing upon the minds of a community an enlightened sense of a virtuous life, also a proper horror of the enormity of sin and a just dread of its consequences” (*JD* 9: 243). You can understand why he said the Saints would “go to hell” if they continued to read the kind of novels he thought they were reading (*JD* 15: 225) or be sent to Tooele, my hometown, to herd sheep.

Alfred Harbage also believes that the theater can provide a synthesizing story with moral implications. He says that Shakespeare “succeeded in synthesizing the disparate elements of ‘Elizabethan tragedy’” because in the major tragedies,

Death is the central mystery. . . . From awareness of mortality comes the conception of immortality; and from the life-death antinomy come ultimately all religious and moral codes, including Shakespeare’s eclectic code of affirmation. What is on the side of life is good. What is on the side of death is evil. Good men believe in life after death—if not life for themselves, at least life for others. Evil men believe that the universe ends when they end. (301)

Harbage then goes on to list the values of good and evil espoused in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*. This is not an intentional fallacy on Harbage's part to ascribe this moral universe to Shakespeare. He maintains that if we analyze the characterizations and tone of these plays a pattern emerges: "The tragedy of life is the persistence of death and evil. The consolation is that good survives, and life goes on" (301). I agree for the most part with Harbage's analysis, mainly because it relies on a moral/philosophical interpretation that belief or non-belief in transcendence and its inevitable accountability help shape the behavior of human beings. Harbage's construct is an example of that framing story that Postman describes.

It is one thing to understand these concepts intellectually; it is another thing to feel them and empathize with them. It is not enough that imaginative literature, including theater and film, should help us understand and see with the head. No, they should help us know how to see with the heart. "It's the heart," William Faulkner reminds us, "that has the desire to be better than man is; the up here can know the distinction between good and evil, but it's the heart that makes you want to be better than you are. That's what I mean by to write from the heart" (qtd. in Leary viii). Part of the wanting "to be better than you are" that writing "from the heart" fosters can be the creation of empathy for those very different from ourselves. I once heard Elder Marlin Jensen of the Seventy describe empathy as "feeling your pain in my heart."

Joyce Burland, a clinical psychologist and one of my teachers and mentors, defines it as "The intimate comprehension of another person's thoughts and feelings without imposing our own judgements or expectations" (7).

One of my former students led me to this statement by Bruce Young (evoking Levinas) to explain the motivating power of empathy: "the Other troubles my complacency and contests my egoistic possession of the world. . . . The Other, by his or her very presence, calls me to responsibility and service and thus endows my existence with ethical meaning. Indeed . . . to be myself means to be responsible to others and to be in a position to serve them" (33).

The poet and playwright Archibald MacLeish describes the need to understand with feeling this way:

*It is not enough that imaginative literature, including theater and film, should help us understand and see with the head. No, they should help us know how to see with the heart.*

This divorce between the knowledge of the fact and the feel of the fact exists in our world whether we like its existence or not. . . . Not until mankind is again able to *see feelingly*, as blind Gloucester says to Lear upon the heath, will the . . . [flaws] at the heart of our civilization be healed. And to see feelingly . . . poetry . . . (which stands, in their essential likeness, for all the arts) . . . can teach us. (qtd. in Mack 373)

When we see the Other with empathetic feeling, we are less likely to reify the Other—see that person as an object rather than an individual human being. Each of us can do better at using language mindfully that does not stereotype, stigmatize, or belittle others. At times we use words almost mindlessly, relying as Joseph Conrad astutely reminds us on the "commonplace surface of words: of the old, old, words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage" (27).

Stevenson was outraged by the language that was used in 1890 in a letter by a Reverend Hyde to denigrate Father Damien, the Catholic priest who ministered for years to the victims of Hansen's disease (leprosy) at Kalaupapa on the island of Molokai in Hawaii. Stevenson had empathy for Damien and those with that illness and so wrote a long letter to Hyde asking him "Is it . . . at all clear to you what a picture you have drawn of your own heart?" Stevenson not only empathized with Damien and those at Kalaupapa but also with those he lived with and nurtured in Samoa. It is little wonder that his casket was passed Samoan to Samoan up Mount Vaea on a trail that in effect became another "Road of the Loving Heart."

Another compassionate person who paved his own road through his loving heart was Spencer W. Kimball when he was president of the Church. He showed profound empathy for those at Kalaupapa. Kalaupapa is a colony on a peninsula separated from the topside of the island of Molokai in Hawaii by steep cliffs. Those with leprosy were sent to the peninsula from 1866 on. They were referred to as lepers. It was thought to be a highly contagious illness. Father Damien spent many years ministering to those at Kalaupapa. In 1873, Armauer Hansen discovered that leprosy was caused by a bacillus bacteria and for many years after it was referred to as Hansen's disease—which for many people seemed less stigmatiz-



ing. Because of Hansen, we know that this disease isn't from sin, ritual uncleanness, or demon possession. And it is not highly communicable. Sulfone drugs were eventually (in 1946) used to arrest the disease and eventually those diagnosed were no longer sent to colonies.

Jack Sing had leprosy and was treated with sulfone drugs, but not before the disease had done a lot of damage. He was the branch president in Kalaupapa for 31 years. In 1978 he was given a distinguished service award at BYU–Hawaii. When he came to campus in his tennis shoes and baseball cap to receive the award, President Spencer W. Kimball attended the ceremony. By this time Jack's face and hands were severely disfigured from the disease and you could see that many of those attending the meeting were standoffish and even reluctant to shake hands with him. I saw President Kimball come up to him, put his arms around him and say, "Jack, you are my brother!" He then kissed Jack Sing on the cheek. This was one of the most compassionate acts I have ever witnessed and a great example to all of us. President Kimball was the supreme stigma-buster. May we follow his example and fight stigma by embracing those less fortunate as our brothers and our sisters.

So, to my fellow teachers and students in English studies, with all the skills we hope you have acquired in critical reading, writing, and research, I hope you will reflect on the attitudes that come from remembering the big story that the gospel of Jesus Christ gives our work, on the need to see those different from ourselves with genuine feeling, and on the need for those feelings to motivate us to reach out and serve others. Most of these are exemplified in the work and life of Robert Louis Stevenson. With all of the learning-outcomes assessments that we have been involved in as a department over the last several years, one of those goals ought to be that stated by Wordsworth at the conclusion to *The Prelude*: "we to them will speak / A lasting inspiration, sanctified / By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved, / Others will love, and we will teach them how; / Instruct them how the mind of man becomes / A thousand times more beautiful than the earth / On which he dwells" (483). If what I have said here seems old school to some, these ideas are for me what Robert Frost calls "the truths we keep coming back and back to" (61). ♦

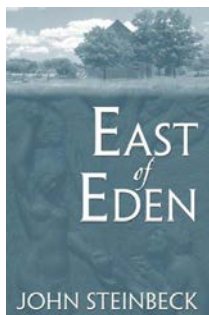


Father Damien with the girls' choir at the Kalaupapa leprosy colony.

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# Books that made

## *a difference*



### **East of Eden ♦ by John Steinbeck**

In my eleventh-grade English class, *The Grapes of Wrath* was required reading, and I was at best only ambivalent about it. But Steinbeck's picture on the back cover made him look like a real tough guy (which he was), and this intrigued me. So I

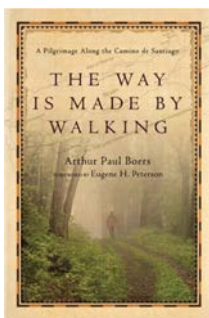
decided to pick up something else, anything else, he had written, and it turned out to be *East of Eden*. I could not put it down. The characters and places were so vivid I felt like I knew them and lived with them myself. Harder, more adult literature was suddenly in my reach, and I felt brave enough to say I wanted to be an English major. I didn't know how it would help me get a job, but I knew I wanted to keep reading and discussing and learning about this stuff for as long as possible.

Lauren Bauer  
Burbank, California  
English, 2008

### **The Way Is Made by Walking ♦ by Arthur Paul Boers**

So many books have influenced me. Most recently, it's *The Way Is Made by Walking* by Arthur Paul Boers, who writes about pilgrimage, not just the foot travel he undertook on the 500-mile Camino de Santiago in Spain, but the act of consecrating each day's steps. He talks about making life itself a dedicated pilgrimage. It doesn't have to be a large journey or major project. Everyday life can be made holy simply by the frame of mind in which we view it. Ordinary places can become sacred by the way we approach them. So instead of fuming over the 2,989th school lunch I have to pack, I can choose to see it as an act of love and service for my children. And the task itself is instantly transformed from drudgery to beauty.

Kristen McKendry  
Toronto, Canada  
Linguistics, 1988



### **A Grief Observed ♦ by C.S. Lewis** **Making Loss Matter: Creating Meaning in** **Difficult Times ♦ by Rabbi David Wolpe**

The summer before my sophomore year at BYU, my younger brother drowned in a canal near my house. He was 15. His death changed my life, and I found myself trying to find healing and solace in many different sources. I listened to music, talked to many people, and read many books on the subject of death, loss, and healing. Two books stand out in my mind that truly touched my heart. The first, *A Grief Observed*, by C. S. Lewis, captured what I was feeling inside. Lewis does a great job of writing his raw feelings about death and God, and that is why I so easily connected to his book. The other book, *Making Loss Matter: Creating Meaning in Difficult Times*, by Rabbi David Wolpe, is one I have given away many times and is a staple in my library. Rabbi Wolpe does a brilliant job of talking about all kinds of loss, such as loss of home, loss of self, and loss of dreams. He also talks about death, grieving, and healing. My copy of his book is tattered, dog-eared, and marked up with love. I treasure both of these books for helping me in my healing process.

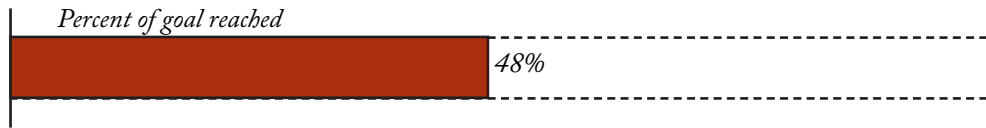
Kylee Shields  
Gilbert, Arizona  
English BA, 1994



Readers: We're running low on submissions!  
Let us hear from you about a book, or several,  
that made a difference for you.  
Email [ron\\_woods@byu.edu](mailto:ron_woods@byu.edu)



## “A Math Assignment”—It's Beginning to Add Up



We appreciate all who have contributed to the Humanities internship initiative thus far. In the Winter 2011 issue of Humanities at BYU magazine, Dean Rosenberg appealed to each of our readers to contribute \$3.69 (or more) in order to raise \$100,000 to support internships for students in the Humanities. We're pleased to report that we are nearly half way to the total fund-raising goal. To date we have received \$47,858, with individual gifts ranging from 25¢ to \$10,000.

Many alumni have taken the dean's request to heart and have given \$3.69, including one anonymous donor who hand-delivered a roll of nickels and the remainder in assorted change in a recycled spice jar. Another admittedly dyslexic alum sent \$3.96, and other creative donors gave \$36.90 and even \$1,003.69. Thank you for your support.

However, even though we've made great strides towards our overall dollar goal, we have only scratched the surface when it comes to percent participation from alumni. So far, we've only heard from 856 of our more than 27,000 Humanities alumni, and we hope to hear from the rest of you soon.

We know we have Humanities alumni in all 50 states and we've heard from alumni in about 80%

of states, but not from Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Vermont. And how about our alumni from outside the United States? We hope to hear from you, too.

We're also pleased to report that alumni from every major and minor in the college have contributed—except Hebrew. So, to our Hebrew graduates, we say:

### תבחרו לתת

Surprisingly, all of these gifts were sent in despite the fact that we inadvertently neglected to give you information on how and where to give. Anyone wishing to make a donation should make the check out to “BYU” and write “Humanities internships” in the memo line. Checks should be sent to:

Carol Kounanis  
4019 JFSB  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, UT 84602-6704

If you need assistance on how to give or have any questions, please send an email to [cek@byu.edu](mailto:cek@byu.edu).

## Humanities Home Evening: Dead Sea Scrolls with Dr. Parry

In August, Dr. Donald Parry, Professor of Hebrew, spoke to a full house of Humanities alumni and friends about his research on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Alumni from Idaho to Texas, North Carolina to California, and even from as far away as Denmark and Australia, joined us for the hour-long presentation during the second annual Humanities Home Evening, held in conjunction with BYU Campus Education Week. Dr. Parry shared many interesting details about the Dead Sea Scrolls,

and he showed the audience a 500-year old scroll he personally owns (not a Dead Sea scroll). He read from the scroll and let audience members touch and handle it themselves. The evening concluded in true “home evening” style with refreshments and mingling. It was great to reconnect with so many alumni, and we hope you'll make plans now to join us next year for another presentation by one of our Humanities faculty members at a Humanities Home Evening.

# How I have been *blessed*

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## Lindsay Brown, English

My name is Lindsay Brown, and I'm an English major and editing minor from Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. When I turned eleven, my mom took me horse-back riding for the first time—and I was hooked! Since that time

I was convinced that my future career needed to be involved with horses.

When it came time to look for internships, a professor encouraged me to look for an internship with a horse magazine, so I could utilize my riding experience and editing knowledge. I applied for an internship with *Dressage Today*, a magazine that I have read since high school, and was accepted; I was thrilled.

The only thing that was holding me back was that the internship was unpaid, and since I support myself financially in college, it was not practical for me to take time away from work to do the internship. I also had no way of covering my costs while I worked at the maga-

zine, since it was based outside of Washington, DC, and would require me to find a place to stay while I was there. But thanks to internship stipends through the English and English Language Departments, my dream was able to become a reality, and I obtained the funds to complete the internship.

The internship turned out to be one of the best experiences of my life: I learned a ton, got the chance to enhance my undergraduate career, and had the time of my life writing about and reading about horses. While at my internship, I wrote a feature article for the November 2011 issue of the magazine. The skills I learned and the connections I made through my internship launched my career into a realm I didn't think possible as an undergraduate.

When I graduate, I plan to pursue a career with a horse magazine and hope to be doing all of the things I did as an intern. I honestly couldn't have had this opportunity without the help of internship stipends, and as a result I would have missed out on the experience of a lifetime. I am so thankful to those who donate to internship support.

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English



(WORK IN  
PROGRESS)



# *Convocation*

in the College of Humanities

*August 2011*



Brittany Call



Tyler Brock Beckstrom, Kayleen Barlow, and Charlie Baggett



Hongyi Jia



Tyler Brock Beckstrom



Photos by Jessica Trewartha



## *feedback?*

We'd like to hear your views, your memories of campus experiences, or an update on your life since leaving BYU. Please email [ron\\_woods@byu.edu](mailto:ron_woods@byu.edu).

*Humanities at BYU is the alumni magazine of the College of Humanities.*

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