

# HOLLINS UNIVERSITY

Department of English & Creative Writing

## Spring 2024 Readings and Lectures

### Matthew X. Vernon

**Lecture:** Thursday, February 15, 2024 ☞ 7:30 pm ☞ Hollins Room, Wyndham Robertson Library  
“Unexpected Blackness and ‘Blind Matter’: Visuality, Temporality, and Race”

Vernon is the author of *The Black Middle Ages: Race and the Construction of the Middle Ages*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2018, which examines the influence of medieval studies on African American thought. Vernon focuses on nineteenth century uses of medieval texts to structure racial identity, but also considers the flexibility of medieval narratives more broadly in the medieval period, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. This book engages disparate discourses to reassess African American positionalities in time and space. Utilizing a transhistorical framework, Vernon reflects on medieval studies as a discipline built upon a contended set of ideologies and acts of imaginative appropriation visible within source texts and their later mobilizations. An associate professor of English at the University of California, Davis, his academic interests include medieval literature, travel narratives, migration, film, and comic books. He earned his B.A. from Cornell University and completed his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. at Yale University.

Sponsored by the Department of English and Creative Writing and the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Fund.

### Nickole Brown

**Reading:** Thursday, February 29, 2024 ☞ 7:30 pm ☞ Green Drawing Room, Main Building

Brown is the author of *The Donkey Elegies* (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2020); *Fanny Says* (BOA Editions, 2015), a biography in poems about Brown’s grandmother, which won the Weatherford Award for Appalachian Poetry; and *Sister* (Sibling Rivalry Press), which was first published in 2007 and reissued in 2018. *To Those Who Were Our First Gods*, a chapbook of nine poems published by Rattle, won the 2018 Rattle Prize. With Jessica Jacobs, she cowrote *Write It! 100 Poetry Prompts to Inspire* (Spruce Books, 2020). She is Hollins’ Spring 2024 Writer-in-Residence and teaches in the Sewanee School of Letters’ M.F.A. program, the Great Smokies Writing Program at the University of North Carolina Asheville, and in the SunJune Literary Collaborative. Brown received her M.F.A. from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, studied literature at Oxford University, and was the editorial assistant for the late Hunter S. Thompson.

Sponsored by the Department of English and Creative Writing and the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Fund.

### **Ethel Morgan Smith M.A. '90**

**Reading:** Thursday, March 7, 2024 ☞ 7:30 pm ☞ Hollins Room, Wyndham Robertson Library  
**Q&A Conversation about Writing – for Hollins Community only:**

Friday, March 8, 2024 ☞ 2:00 pm ☞ Lewis Reading Room, Wyndham Robertson Library

Smith is the author of three books: *Path to Grace: Reimagining the Civil Rights Movement* (University Press of Mississippi 2023), *Reflections of the Other: Being Black in Germany* (CreateSpace 2012), and *From Whence Cometh My Help: The African American Community at Hollins College* (University of Missouri Press 2000). Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Callaloo*, *STIR Journal*, *African American Review*, *The University Florida Journal*, and *Tusculum Review*. Smith adapted *From Whence Cometh My Help* into a stage play entitled *African Violets*. Smith is a Professor Emeritus at West Virginia University. She has also taught at Carlow University, Monash University (Australia), Randolph College, University of Canterbury (New Zealand), Virginia Tech, and Universität Tübingen (Germany). She is a Fulbright Scholar and a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow and has received two National Endowment for the Humanities grants.

Sponsored by the Beanstalk Fund, a collaboration between Wyndham Robertson Library and the Department of English and Creative Writing.

### **Creative Writing Reunion – A Celebration of R.H.W. Dillard**

Friday Dinner, April 5 – Sunday Lunch, April 7, 2024

A grand and bittersweet celebration with generations of Hollins M.A. and M.F.A. writers and readers and friends. A private event for the Hollins campus community and pre-registered guests only. For more details, contact [creative.writing@hollins.edu](mailto:creative.writing@hollins.edu).

Sponsored by the Jackson Center for Creative Writing and the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Fund.

### **Pauline Kaldas**

**Reading:** Thursday, April 11, 2024 ☞ 7:30 pm ☞ Hollins Room, Wyndham Robertson Library

Kaldas, professor of English and creative writing at Hollins, is the author of *Looking Both Ways*, a collection of essays (Cune Press 2017); *The Time Between Places*, a collection of short stories (University of Arkansas Press 2010); *Letters from Cairo*, a travel memoir (Syracuse University Press 2007); and *Egyptian Compass*, a collection of poetry (WordTech Communications 2006). She also co-edited with Khaled Mattawa *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Literature* (University of Arkansas Press, 2009). She was awarded a fellowship in fiction from the Virginia Commission of the Arts and has been in residency at the MacDowell Colony and the Virginia Center for the Arts. Her work navigates the geography of immigration, exploring issues of culture, identity, language, and home. Kaldas was born in Egypt and immigrated with her parents to the United States at the age of eight in 1969.

Sponsored by the Department of English and Creative Writing and the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Fund.

## **Farewell Reading – The Last Cabbage Patch**

Thursday, May 2, 2024 ☞ 7:30 pm ☞ Green Drawing Room, Main Building

An open reading by Hollins seniors and graduating Creative Writing M.F.A. students. One last chance to hear our favorite student writers read before they depart.

Note to readers: readings should be brief (i.e., 1-2 pages of poetry or 1-2 pages of prose). Readers will sign up to read at the event.

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