Oct. 18, 2005

Cal Poly Faculty Members to Present A Night of Poetry, Fiction Oct. 27

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly English faculty members Todd J. Pierce and Lisa Coffman will read their poetry and fiction at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 27, in Phillips Hall in the Christopher Cohan Performing Arts Center.

Pierce, a native of the Central Coast and former professor of English at Clemson University, began teaching just this fall in Cal Poly's English Department and serving as the department's resident fiction writer for its creative writing program.


Publishers Weekly praised Pierce's "The Australia Stories, saying the author's "ability to offer a fresh, compelling take on Australia is impressive and noteworthy. Written in clean, understated prose, his debut has plenty of depth and staying power."

Pierce has also published a fiction writing textbook, "Behind the Short Story." He is the recipient of a Kingsbury Fellowship and the Angoff award. He earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from UC Irvine in 1995 and a Ph.D. from Florida State in 2003.

Coffman is the author of a full-length collection of poems titled "Likely," published in 1996. She has won grants for her poetry from the National Endowments for the Arts and the PEW Charitable Trust.

Her work has appeared in many journals, including The Southern Review, Beloit Poetry Journal, and River City, and in the anthologies Fine Excess: Best of the Beloit Poetry Journal and Listen Here: Women Writing in Appalachia.

"What this poet does best, and what I like best," said fellow poet Brad Bostian, "are those sensual affairs, complete unbroken lyrics which may or may not be stretched like fabric across a frame of story, because the story would only be a frame, and the leaps they make from color to color are only texture."

Coffman has taught at Penn State, Erie, and the prestigious Deep Springs School. She has also served as resident poet at Bucknell University. She works as a free-lance writer and journalist. She earned a master's degree in creative writing from New York University in 1989.

The reading is sponsored by Cal Poly's English Department as a fund raiser for its literary annual, "Byzantium." The suggested donation is $5, with all proceeds going toward the production costs of "Byzantium" 2006.

For more information, contact Byzantium coeditors Jessica Barba at (661) 618-3633 or jbarba@calpoly.edu, or Shawn Magee at (925) 286-8883 or smagee@calpoly.edu.

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