
The 2008 Vasily Stus Freedom to Write Award

Presented in absentia to

Abdur Rahim Muslim Dost

Dost, Afghan poet and editor, spent over three years in US detention at Guantanamo Bay without charge before he was released. Dost was again arrested in September 2006 and has not been heard from since September 2007.

The American Blandscape Panelists

Carole Horne is general manager of the Harvard Bookstore, where she has worked since 1974 and was for almost 20 years vice president of merchandising with overall responsibility for buying. She has been president of the New England Booksellers Association (1995-97) and has served on the American Booksellers Association's Board of Directors as well as the Board of Directors of the Independent Booksellers Consortium. A contributor to the current edition of *Bookselling for Dummies*, she has also been on the faculty of ABA Booksellers Schools since 1988.

Linda McCarriston is from Lynn, where she lived until she was almost thirty. She is working on a collection of prose pieces called *Class-Colored Glasses*, due to be published by the University of Michigan Press "Class/Culture" Series. Her three books of poems are *Talking Soft Dutch*, Texas Tech Press, 1984, an Associated Writing Programs Award selection; *Eva-Mary*, TriQuarterly Books 1991, winner of the Terrance Des Pres Award and short-listed for the National Book Award; and *Little River*, published first in Ireland, where McCarriston is a citizen, and later in the U.S. She has taught since 1994 in the University of Alaska Anchorage M.F.A. program, and began teaching high school English in 1965 in Salem, MA. She lives in Maine.

Mark Pawlak is co-editor/publisher of Brooklyn-based *Hanging Loose Press*. Founded in 1966, it is one of the country's oldest independent literary publishers, noted for discovering new writers and championing older writers who deserve a wider audience. HL published first poetry collections by Sherman Alexie, Kimiko Hahn, Cathy Park Hong, Hayan Charara, R. Zamora Linmark, Hettie Jones, and Indran Amirthanayagam, among many others. Pawlak has edited numerous anthologies, including *Present/Tense: Poets in the World*, a collection of contemporary American political poetry; and *Shooting the Rat*, the third in a series of anthologies drawn from the legendary high school section of HL magazine. Pawlak is the author of five collections of original poetry, of which *Official Versions* is his most recent. His work has appeared in such places as *The Best American Poetry*, *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust*, *New American Writing*, and *Mother Jones*. His poems have been translated into German, Polish, and Spanish. He supports his poetry habit by teaching mathematics at the University of Massachusetts Boston, where he is Director of Academic Support Programs. He lives in Cambridge with his wife and his teenage son.

Jill Petty has worked in independent publishing for more than 15 years, serving on the editorial staffs of *New Art Examiner*, *The Nation*, and *Ms. Magazine*. Most recently, she was an editor/publisher at South End Press, the 30-year old nonprofit, collectively run book publisher based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She currently teaches publishing and literature at Emerson College.

Richard Hoffman is author of *Half the House: a Memoir*, and the poetry collections *Without Paradise* and *Gold Star Road*, winner of the 2006 Barrow Street Press Poetry Prize. He has been awarded several fellowships and prizes, most recently The Literary Review's Charles Angoff Prize. His short story collection, *Interference*, is forthcoming in 2009. He teaches at Emerson College and in the Stonecoast MFA Program at the University of Southern Maine.

PEN New England & The Cambridge Forum
present

The American Blandscape Risky Writing and the Forces Keeping it Silent

and

The 2008 PEN New England Vasily Stus Freedom-to-Write Award

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 7:30 p.m.
First Parish Church, Cambridge

Cambridge Forum,inc.

3 Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. 617-495-2727. email: director@cambridgeforum.org. www.cambridgeforum.org

THE AMERICAN BLANDSCAPE: Risky Writing and the Forces that Silence it
Moderator: RICHARD HOFFMAN Panel: CAROLE HORNE, LINDA MCCARRISTON, MARK PAWLAK, and JILL PETTY

For further reading on tonight's Forum topic, may we suggest:



LINDA MCCARRISTON, EVA-MARY

This prize-winning volume is McCarriston's meditation on suffering and change, cruelty and innocence, love and endurance. "[H]er poems are charged with undeniable passion, intelligence, and truth while suggesting another vision of life." --Hudson Review

"Eva-Mary derives its authority from the same psychological sources as the transformations that conclude many fairy tales. Even the most harrowing traumas can seed miraculous reflowerings." --Steven Cramer, Poetry

"[I]t is to McCarriston's credit that these poems do not strive to transform or transcend their material, but rather to give testament to this personal and collective life." --Harvard Review "This is an immensely moving book, fearless in its passion. Linda McCarriston accomplishes a near miracle, transforming memories of trauma into poems that are luminous and often sacramental, arriving at a hard-won peace." --Lisel Mueller

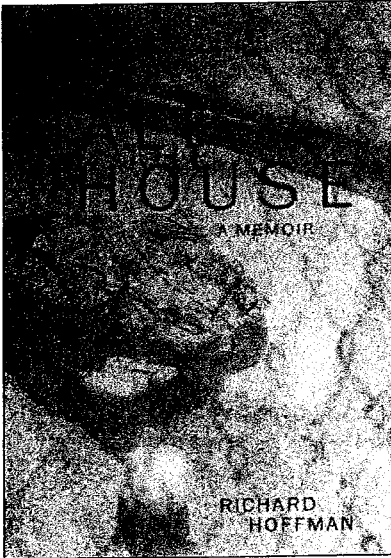
Winner of the Terrence Des Pres Prize for Poetry.

Linda McCarriston is professor of creative writing and literary arts at the University of Alaska.



MARK PAWLAK, OFFICIAL VERSIONS

"Mark Pawlak's poems document a literary journey charged with the sheer joy of words and often with fierce irony. He finds poetry in day-to-day common language, and makes his poems from snippets of remembered conversations and comment, from restaurant serving mats, the phone book and, most pointedly, from the news. Pawlak's sophisticated use of irony allows him to precisely slice through governmental double-talk and the slanted reportage of our time to expose the brokers and political spin doctors. He is our most politically conscious poet and, as such, puts conscience back into poetry where it is sorely needed." --Michael Basinski. "Pawlak is an up-beat, up-town (sometimes out-of-town, off-beat) guy who knows the real world but is still on top of it. On top of it, too, with his language, style and versatility. His native urban resilience, his techniques and his genuine interest in everything around him, enables him to move easily from the vernacular to the elegant.... [Official Versions is] a feast of sensuality, mystery, poetic processes and a sense of urgent being. It contains love and beauty, horror and war, creations and recreations, all the universals are there."- Patricia Prime, New Hope International Review (UK). **Mark Pawlak** is Director of Academic Support Programs and teaches mathematics at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Author of five poetry collections and editor of four anthologies, he has received two Massachusetts Artist Fellowship awards.



RICHARD HOFFMAN, HALF THE HOUSE

The publication of this memoir resulted in the arrest of an alleged child molester and the following headline: "Author's Writing on Abuse Brings New Victims Forward." In a new afterword to this tenth-anniversary edition, Richard Hoffman writes about the events his book set in motion and the talk he had with an 11-year-old boy who thanked him "for making it stop." But this autobiography, about a blue-collar family struggling to care for two terminally ill children as the third child, the author, is subjected at age 10 to sexual abuse by his coach, is also a moving work of literature and a testament to the healing power of truth telling. It is a "spare, poignant" memoir (*TIME*) that "offers heartening evidence . . . of the human capacity to endure and prevail" (*The Washington Post*). **Richard Hoffman** is currently writer-in-residence in the Department of Writing, Literature, and Publishing at Emerson College; he also serves on the faculty of the Teachers as Scholars Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS