Poet and Essayist
JIM MINICK
(The Blueberry Years, Her Secret Song, Burning Heaven)
Thursday, February 23
Table Rock Room
Plemmons Student Union
7:30 p.m.
Craft Talk: Playing with Words:
What Poetry Can Teach About Metaphor and Word Play
Table Rock Room
2:00-3:15 p.m.

Novelist and Memoirist
DEBRA MONROE
(On the Outskirts of Normal, The Source of Trouble, Newfangled)
Thursday, March 8
Table Rock Room
Plemmons Student Union
7:30 p.m.
Craft Talk: Plot Matters: In Fiction and Memoir
Table Rock Room
11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Novelist and Memoirist
TOI DERRICOTTE
(The Undertaker's Daughter, Tender, The Black Notebooks)
Thursday, March 22
Table Rock Room
Plemmons Student Union
7:30 p.m.
Craft Talk: Poetry or Prose: Rethinking the Poetic Line
Table Rock Room
2:00-3:15 p.m.

Novelist
LEE SMITH
(Mrs. Darcy and the Blue-Eyed Stranger, On Agate Hill, The Last Girls, Fancy Strut)
Thursday, April 5
Table Rock Room
Plemmons Student Union
7:30 p.m.
Craft Talk: A Life in Books
Table Rock Room
2:00-3:15 p.m.

Poets
R.T. SMITH (Outlaw Style, Ensemble, Tresspasser)
and SARAH KENNEDY
(Home Remedies, A Witch’s Dictionary, Consider the Lilies)
Thursday, April 19
Table Rock Room
Plemmons Student Union
7:30 p.m.
Craft Talk: Historical Narrative Poems: Where Is This Voice Coming From
Table Rock Room
3:30-4:45 p.m.
Jim Minick is the author of *The Blueberry Years. A Memoir of Farm and Family*, and winner of the SIBA Best Nonfiction Book of the Year Award. Minick has also written a collection of essays, *Finding a Clear Path*, two books of poetry, *Her Secret Song* and *Burning Heaven*, and he edited *All There Is to Keep* by R. T. Smith. In 2008, the Virginia College Bookstore Association awarded *Burning Heaven* the Jefferson Cup for best book of the year. Minick has won grants, awards, and honors from the Southern Independent Booksellers Association, Southern Environmental Law Center, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Virginia Commission for the Arts, Appalachian Center for the Creative Arts, Appalachian Heritage, Now and Then Magazine, and Radford University, where he teaches writing and literature. Just recently, his poem ‘I Dream a Bean’ was picked by Claudia Emerson for permanent display at the new Tysons Corner/Metrorail Station. He’s garnered grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, and a residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Minick’s work has appeared in many publications including Shenandoah, Orion, San Francisco Chronicle, Encyclopedia of Appalachia, *Conversations with Wendell Berry, The Sun, Appalachian Journal, Bay Journal News,* and *Wind,* and for thirteen years, he wrote a column for *The Roanoke Times New River Current.* Currently he’s working on a novel about fire, healing, and Pennsylvania Dutch folklore. He lives in the mountains of Virginia with his wife and three dogs.

Debra Monroe’s first book, *The Source of Trouble* (1990), won the prestigious Flannery O’Connor Award for Fiction, and was acclaimed by Kirkus as a ‘fierce debut’ that presents ‘ever-hopeful lost souls with engaging humor and sympathy.’ Her second book of stories, *A Wild, Cold State* (1995), was described by *The Boston Globe* as ‘fine and funky, marbled with warmth and romantic confusion, but not a hint of sentimentality.’ The *Washington Post* called her first novel, *Newfangled* (1998), ‘rangy, thought-provoking, ambitious, and widely, wildly knowledgeable, teasing out the tension between pop culture and private life.’ Her second novel, *Shambles* (2004), was praised by the *Texas Observer* for ‘the depth as well as the heartbreaking particularity of the hellholes—the real and imagined—that make Shambles a novel of graceful ease and substance.’

Her latest book, *On the Outskirts of Normal: Forging a Family Against the Grain* (2010), is a memoir about being the white mother of a black daughter in a small, rural Texas town. Published in June 2010, the book has garnered much media attention, including *The Oprah Magazine, Elle, Vanity Fair,* and *The New York Times.* It appeared on Best Ten Books of 2010 lists in *Barnes & Noble Review, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution,* and *The San Antonio Express.* Twice nominated for the National Book Award, Monroe has published poems, stories, and essays in many magazines and journals. She now lives in Austin, Texas, and teaches in the MFA program at Texas State University In San Marcos.

Toi Derricotte was born in Hamtramck, Michigan, in 1941. Her books of poetry are *The Undertaker’s Daughter* (2011); *Tender* (1997), winner of the 1998 Paterson Poetry Prize; *Captivity* (1989);* Natural Birth* (1983); and *The Empress of the Death House* (1978). Her *The Black Notebooks,* a literary memoir (N.W. Norton, 1997), won the 1998 Antifield-Folk Wolf Award Book for Non-Fiction and was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. Her essay, *Beginning Dialogues,* is included in *The Best American Essays* 2006, edited by Lauren Slater. Of her poems, Audre Lorde wrote, “Because the power of her images breeds visions which are neither easy nor inescapable, Toi Derricotte moves us...The pain does not exceed the power.” Her honors include the Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America; two Pushcart Prizes; the Distinguished Pioneering of the Arts Award from the United Black Artists; the New York Graduate School of Arts & Science Alumni Achievement Award; the Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award from Poets & Writers, Inc.; the Elizabeth Kray Award for service to the field of poetry from Poets House; and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation and the Maryland State Arts Council.

With Cornelius Eady, in 1996, she co-founded Cave Canem Foundation, North America’s premier ‘home for black poetry.’ She is a Professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh.

Lee Smith was born in 1944 in Grundy, Virginia, a small coal-mining town in the Blue Ridge Mountains. After spending her last two years of high school at St. Catherine’s in Richmond, Virginia. Smith enrolled at Hollins College in Roanoke. It was 1966, during her senior year at Hollins, that Smith’s literary career began to take off. She submitted an early draft of a coming-of-age novel to a Book-of-the-Month Club contest and was awarded one of twelve fellowships. Two years later, that novel, *The Last Day the Dog Buses Bloomed* (Harper & Row, 1968), became Smith’s first published work of fiction. By 1971, though, she’d completed her second novel, *Mrs. Darcy and the Blue-Eyed Stranger.* It garnered generally favorable reviews. But her next novel, *Fancy Strait* (1973), was widely praised by critics as a comic masterpiece.

In 1974 Smith moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she taught high school and finished *Black Mountain Breakdown* (1981), a much darker work than her readers had come to expect. Because of that, and despite her earlier successes, it took Smith five years to find a publisher for her next novel. So she turned her attention to short stories, for which she won O. Henry Awards in 1978 and 1980.


Smith reached a wider audience with *New York Times* bestseller *The Last Girls* (2002), which was inspired by an actual raft trip she made down the Mississippi River with other Hollins girls in 1966. The *Last Girls* was also a “Good Morning America” Book Club pick. On *Agate Hill,* an historical novel set in piedmont North Carolina during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, was published in Fall 2006. Her latest collection of new and selected stories, *Mrs. Darcy and the Blue-Eyed Stranger,* was published in March 2010.


Sarah Kennedy is the author of six books of poems, including *Home Remedies* (LSU), *A Witch’s Dictionary* (Elixir), *Consider the Lilies* (David Robert), *Double Exposure* (Cleveland State University Press), and *Flow Blue* (Elixir), and her seventh, *The Gold Thread,* is due out from Elixir Press in 2012. She is a professor at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, and has received grants from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the Virginia Commission for the Arts and is currently a contributing editor for *West Branch* and *Shenandoah.*