

# Christy Desmet



August 30, 1954 - July 25, 2018

## **Words of Welcome**

Michelle Ballif

(Head, UGA English Department)

## **Remembrances**

Clark Desmet

(Christy's Brother)

Anne Williams

(Friend and Colleague; UGA Professor of English, Emerita)

Tricia Lootens

(Friend and Colleague; UGA Professor of English)

Sujata Iyengar

(Friend and Colleague; Co-Editor and Co-Founder of *Borrowers & Lenders*)

Lisa Starks

(Colleague; Department Chair, Verbal and Visual Arts, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg)

Darlena Ciraulo

(Graduate Student; Professor of English at University of Central Missouri)

Robby Nadler

(Graduate Student; Graduate Writing Specialist, UC Santa Barbara)

Miriam Jacobson

(Friend and Colleague; UGA Associate Professor of English)

## **Concluding Remarks**

Dr. Michelle Ballif

## **A Note on the Music**

**By David Schiller**

The pre- and post-service music is from a set of Lute Songs titled *Funeral Teares for the Death of the Right Honorable the Earle of Devonshire* (1606), by John Coprario (c. 1570 – 1626). The Earl of Devonshire, Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, was the lover of Penelope Devereux Rich. Penelope is best known as Sir Philip Sidney's poetic Stella, but Mountjoy was the true love of her life. In these songs, Copario renders Penelope as the singer of the songs.

The recorded performance is from a compact disc titled *My Lady Rich, Her Teares and Joy*. The soprano soloist is Emily Van Evera, the alto is Caroline Trevor, and the lutenist is Christopher Morongiello.

# *FVNERAL TEARES*

IOHN COPRARIO

(c. 1606)

1

Oft thou hast with greedy eare,  
Drunke my notes and wordes of pleasure;  
In affections equall measure,  
Now my songs of sorrow heare.  
Since from thee my griefes doe grow,  
Whom aliue I pris'd so deare :  
The more my ioy, the more my woe.

Musicke though it sweetens paine  
Yet no whit empires lamenting:  
But in passions like consenting,  
Makes them constant that complaine:  
And enchantes their fancies so,  
That all comforts they disdain,  
And flie from ioy to dwell with woe.

2

My ioy is dead, and cannot be reuiu'de.  
Fled is my ioy, and neuer may returne :  
Both of my ioy, and of my selfe depriu'de,  
Far from all ioy I sing, and singing mourne.  
O let no tender hart or gentle eare  
Partake my passions, or my plainings heare.

Rude flintie breastes that neuer felt remorse,  
Hard craggy rocks that death and ruine loue,  
Those onely those my passions shall enforce,  
Beyond their kind, and to compassion moue.  
My grieffe shall wonders worke, for he did so  
That causde my sorrowes, and these teares doth owe.

3

O sweete flower too quickly fading,  
Like a Winter sunshine day :  
Poore pilgrim tir'd in the midway,  
Like the Earth it selfe halfe shading.  
So thy picture shewes to mee,  
But onely the one halfe of thee.

O deare Ioy too swiftly flying  
From thy lovues enchanted eyes :  
Proud glorie spread through the vast skies,  
Earth of more then earth enuying:  
O how wondrous hadst thou been,  
Had but the world thy whole life scene.

4

*Canto.* Foe of mankind why murderest thou my loue ?

*Alto.* Forbeare he liues.

*C.* Oh where?

*A.* In heau'n aboue.

*C.* Poore wretched life that onelie liues in name.

*A.* Man is not flesh, but soule, all life is fame:

*C.* That is true fame which liuing men enioy.

*A.* That is true life, which death cannot destroy.

*Chorus.* Liue euer through thy merited renowne,  
Faire spirite shining in thy starry crowne.

## A tribute to Christy Desmet, written by Sujata Iyengar

Christy Desmet, Josiah Meigs Professor of English, Director of First-year Composition and Director of the UGA Writing Centers, co-founder and co-General Editor of *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* and Associate Editor, *International Journal of ePortfolio*, joined the UGA English Department in 1984, having earned her PhD at UCLA under the direction of Richard Lanham. She reached the rank of Professor in 2008 and was appointed Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor of English in 2011, in acknowledgement of her outstanding and life-changing work with students of all levels, ages, and abilities.

Brilliant, tenacious, and always intellectually curious, Christy excelled in all three of the scholarly fields in which she read, published and taught: Renaissance Studies, Rhetoric and Composition, and Digital Humanities. Her first book, *Reading Shakespeare's Characters: Rhetoric, Ethics, and Identity* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1992) elegantly integrated rhetorical theory and its applications by classical, Renaissance, and twentieth-century critics with Shakespeare's characters as they are "read" in performance and criticism. She is perhaps best known among Shakespeareans, however, for the germinal collection she edited with Robert Sawyer, *Shakespeare and Appropriation* (Routledge, 1999) and its companion, also edited with Robert, *Harold Bloom's Shakespeare* (2001). "Shax and App," as she liked to call it, defined and legitimized a new field in Shakespeare studies – the study of adaptations, appropriations, off-shoots, riffs, remixes, mash-ups, remediations – readers', writers', performers' and other creators' ongoing *what you will* with Shakespeare's plays, poems, characters, words, and biography. Shax and App argued that such adaptations could be worthy objects of scholarly study and that these objects could themselves transform the ways in which we read and performed Shakespeare, notably by drawing attention to historically under-appreciated aspects of Shakespearean performance, rhetoric, characterization, and plot. Christy's own scholarship and teaching on Shakespeare and appropriation branched out into everything from science fiction, YouTube, music (with her beloved husband, musicologist David Schiller), Gothic (with her friend and former Department Head, Romanticist Anne Williams), and Nineteenth-Century literature (with her friend, Victorianist Tricia Lootens).

So rich was this new field of Shax and App that in 2005 Christy and her UGA colleague Sujata Iyengar co-founded a new scholarly periodical devoted solely to the study of Shakespearean adaptations: *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*. The journal, which went on to win the "Best New Journal" award from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals in 2007, innovated not only in its content but also in its form and platform. It was the first online scholarly humanities periodical to integrate rich multimedia including image, video, and sound, printable dynamic pdfs, and deep electronic "markup" to allow future indexing and classification.

The journal's platform was built from another ground-breaking project in which Christy (along with UGA academic professional Ron Balthazor) was instrumental: the English Department's electronic markup and management application, known as "emma," an immersive online writing environment that allows students and instructors to create, mark up, review, and archive streamlined and elegant online writing portfolios. Christy and her colleagues in UGA's Writing programs published widely on student writing, in part using the invaluable data about student learning that emma allowed them to gather. In later years Christy's work on electronic portfolios, innovation in adaptive learning, and teaching Science Writing through UGA's Writing Centers garnered her plaudits from the National and International Cohorts of Electronic Portfolio research and the Council on Basic Writing Award for Innovation, while her dedicated, ethical, and high-minded direction of UGA's first-year writing program won her the University System of Georgia's Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Departments and

Programs (2012) and the unswerving loyalty of the graduate students and contingent or non-tenure-track faculty who predominantly staff the program and for whose rights she fought stubbornly – and usually successfully.

A beloved instructor and longtime member of the UGA Teaching Academy, Christy was more than once invited to educate schoolteachers at the Folger Shakespeare Library's summer Teaching Shakespeare Institute. At UGA, she served as resident expert on the collaborative development of adaptive learning technologies and was a member of UGA's first cohort of Online Learning Fellows. She also received a Fulbright Distinguished Fellowship in Humanities in 2015 to teach Shakespeare at Yonsei University in South Korea, multiple Improving Teacher Quality Grants, an NEH/Folger micro-grant on Teaching Shakespeare to Undergraduates, and won 2018's Outstanding Professor Award from UGA's Student Government Association. Students enjoyed the humor and kindness with which "Dr. D" always tempered her rigor and dedication.

Many of Christy's friends knew, and teased her about, the "I'm busier than you" game – the joke being that Christy was *always, always*, "busier than you" – busy writing articles, editing articles and collections, commissioning new work for the journal, mentoring graduate students, training writing program administrators, developing new grant proposals, learning yet another image- or video-capture program or adaptive learning system, reading and responding to yet another emerging or established scholar. Similarly, we also appreciated her habit of meticulously keeping her CV up to date and telling us proudly how many items she had published that year. Since she's not here to do it herself, then, let me tell you that in academic year 2017-2018 Christy Desmet published one co-edited essay collection, nine essays in scholarly collections, and five anonymously-reviewed journal articles; gave ten talks at academic symposia or conferences; and edited two-and-a-half journal issues. At the time of her passing, she was involved in co-editing at least two scholarly essay collections and journal issues, co-authoring two books, co-investigating several grants, and completing several articles. She often told us that she felt she was "writing for her life" – that her scholarly work had pulled her through two life-shattering bouts with cancer and that as long as she was writing, grading, and editing, she knew she was still alive and could fend off Death once more. She also loved, and made time for: watching college sports, especially football; walking the dog around Lake Herrick; trips to her adored ocean, especially the Barrier Islands; and the friends she cherished and supported loyally.

I imagine her as one of the series of terriers she owned – determinedly, doggedly holding on to life and shaking off the cancer as a terrier plays tug-of-war, worrying a toy in its teeth and gripping hard. Or, in a more literary vein, as Menelaus holds on to the shape-shifting Proteus even as the latter turns into fearsome or ungraspable forms – snakes, lions, dragons, water, fire – to demand a safe return home. But cancer shifted shape once too often for her, manifesting at the end of May 2018 as sudden heart failure caused by scarring from previous bouts of chemo- and radiotherapy.

Christy rallied miraculously over the summer, managing to write, travel to the beach one more time, edit, and plan her graduate seminar for the Fall semester as usual. But late in July Christy suffered a second, and fatal, heart attack. She passed away quietly on Wednesday, July 25th, with her loving husband David Schiller, devoted brother Clark Desmet, and faithful terrier Ascot Rosemary Plum Desmet at her side.

Please join us down the hill on the front patio of Park Hall for  
a reception following the service



Christy's friends and family are establishing  
**The Christy Desmet Memorial Fund**  
to support graduate students working  
in British Literature prior to 1900.

In lieu of flowers or other gifts, you may make a tax-deductible gift to this new fund by going on-line to [gail.uga.edu/christydesmet](http://gail.uga.edu/christydesmet) or by sending checks made payable:

The Christy Desmet Memorial Fund.  
Attn: Kate Arnold  
The Franklin College of Arts and Sciences,  
124 Old College, University of Georgia,  
Athens, GA 30602