

Dr. Rabas Prescribes Poetry to FHSU Students

Jeremy Lovin

Poet Kevin Rabas, PhD, an English professor from Emporia State University, introduced himself to the Topics in Writing: Poetry class with a burst of positive energy when he visited campus on March 6, 2010. One-by-one he had members of Amy Cummins's class state their names, interest, and passions at the beginning of class.

Rabas read several of his poems during the class period, including "Liza's Flying Electric Piano," "Slow Words," "Spare Change," and "Fall Up." The class asked questions about meanings, origins, and structures of his poems. The class members submitted poems for Rabas to review, and he stated during class that he would mail them back to the students with comments.

Rabas enjoys a mixture of music and poetry. In class, he played a recording from blues singer Mingus, with the poet Langston Hughes, called *Weary Blues*. He also discussed the poetry of Jack Kerouac, who recited his poetry (Haiku) to the music of a saxophone. Rabas also emphasized the importance of using different types of sentence structure.

Two main styles, end-stopped lines and enjambed lines, are used for effect when writing poetry. In the course of his class presentation, he mentioned that he lost \$35 in taxes on his first poetry book and made about \$200 off his second poetry book, *Liza's Electric Flying Piano*.



Later that day at the Hays Public Library Rabas started with *Liza's Electric Flying Piano*. During the poetry readings, Rabas read poems from all of his books, including one poem, "The One-Legged Man," to the beat of an electric drum. Rabas read several new poems, one about Michael Jackson and the other comparing his father's run-down shack to the Garden of Eden myth.

After the poetry reading, some members of the poetry workshop class, other students, and a few faculty members, including the head of the English department, Steven Trout, met at Gellas's

restaurant. They enjoyed dinner and a chance to extend Rabas's visit just a bit longer.

2010-2011 Scholarship Recipients

Roberta Stout Scholarship

Michelle Webb

Alice McFarland Scholarship

Whitney Linenberger

Jenny Shriwise

James R. & Ruth Start Scholarship

Paige Kincade

Adrienne Samia

Non-Traditional Student Scholarship

Nanette Brown

Elizabeth Jane "Betty" Lenz Scholarship

Graduate Student English Award

Nicole Thibodeau

English Department Scholarships

Traci Bamber

Ciara Hespe

Kelsie Johnston

Chelsi Nolan

Colleen Pennington

Regan Ochs

English Department Freshman Honor Scholarship

Bryan Baxter

Anne Drees