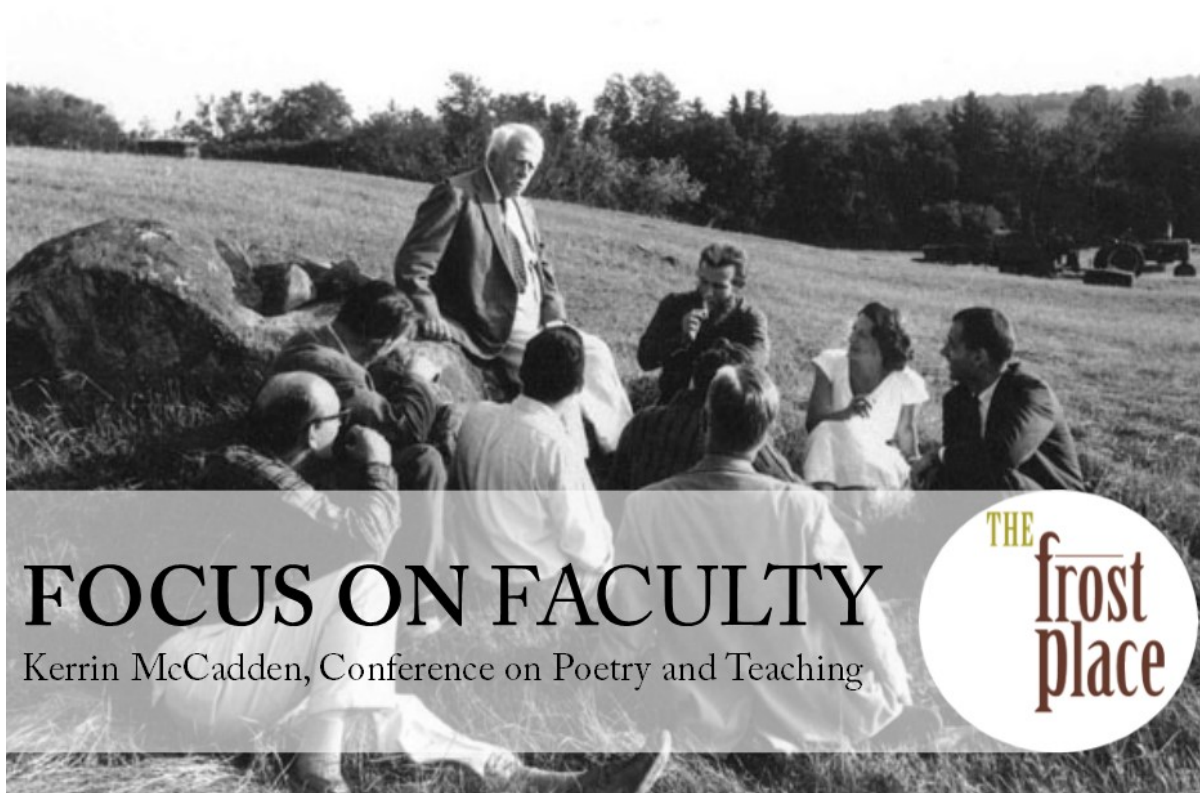


Conference on Poetry and Teaching  
Faculty, Kerrin McCadden

[View this email in  
your browser](#)



---

## In this Issue...

Explore further to find out Kerrin McCadden's thoughts on the relationship between craft and imagination, what books she's been reading lately and the work that constantly inspires her. Read about how her writing process is akin to a meditation and enjoy her poem "Passerines." Also check out Robert Frost's thoughts on the difference between scholars and artists, and other news around The Frost Place.

### Focus on: Kerrin McCadden

- [Meet Kerrin McCadden, Poet, Educator, and Faculty at The Frost Place](#)
- [On Poetry and Teaching](#)
- [What Has Kerrin Been Reading Lately?](#)
- [On the Writing Process](#)
- ["Passerines", a poem by Kerrin McCadden](#)

## Around The Frost Place

- [Robert Frost Explains the Difference Between Scholars and Artists](#)
- [More information about Summer Programs](#)
- [How to Apply](#)
- [Support The Frost Place](#)

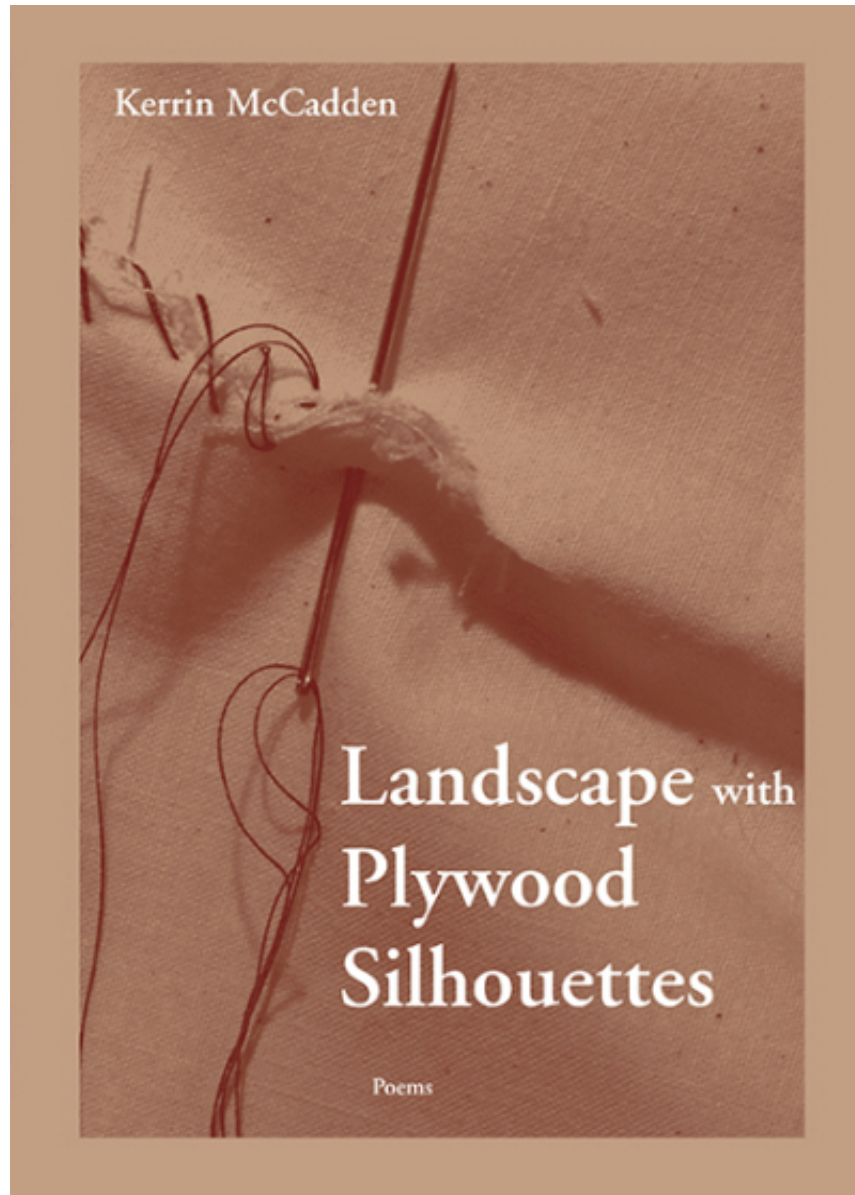
## Meet Kerrin McCadden, Poet, Educator, and Faculty at The Frost Place



Check out Kerrin's website [read more...](#)

**Kerrin McCadden** is the author of *Landscape with Plywood Silhouettes*, winner of the 2013 New Issues Poetry Prize and the 2015 Vermont Book Award. She is the recipient of fellowships and awards from The National Endowment for the Arts, The Vermont Studio Center, The Frost Place, The Sustainable Arts Foundation, The Vermont Arts Council, and The Vermont Arts Endowment Fund. Her poems have appeared in *Best American Poetry*, The Academy of American Poets' *Poem-a-Day* series, *Verse Daily*, and in such journals as *American Poetry Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Collagist*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Rattle*. A graduate of The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College, she teaches at Montpelier High School and lives in Plainfield, Vermont.

Kerrin is closely involved with [Poetry Out Loud](#) and has traveled to the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in Washington D.C. with Montpelier's Vermont State Champion. She is on the faculty of the New England Young Writers' Conference at Bread Loaf and the Champlain College Young Writers' Conference. She was a fellow at the Kenyon Review Writers Workshop for Teachers.



---

## On Poetry and Teaching

*"I don't approach workshop as if it were the final nail being hammered into the poem, or the place where it might receive its blessing, but as a place where the poem can be*

I prize imagination, but I am also highly interested in how craft serves imagination in a poem. In trying to meet the intention of a poem, I aim to test various craft elements in consideration of their

***reopened, reconsidered."***

effectiveness in service of  
imagination.

I like to consider where the poet might get out of the way of the poem. I approach every poem asking myself what the poem might still want, as if revision is in process. I don't approach workshop as if it were the final nail being hammered into the poem, or the place where it might receive its blessing, but as a place where the poem can be reopened, reconsidered.

---

## **What Has Kerrin Been Reading Lately?**

I've been reading Anna Journey's *If Birds Gather Your Hair for Nesting*, which is one of those collections I've been wanting to read for years, but have delayed getting to, which can lend any reading a certain sweetness—but this collection needs no help. I feel indebted to these poems as I make my way through them. Recently, I've also read Danez Smith's luminous *[Insert] Boy*; Alison Prine's *Steel* (forthcoming), a gorgeous and heartbreaking collection; and a chapbook by Christopher Shipman, called *The Movie My Murderer Makes*, which I read aloud, delighted, in one sitting.

***"I feel indebted to these poems as I make my way through them"***

***"I'm mesmerized by imagination when captured by language that is itself surprising—but fully under control."***

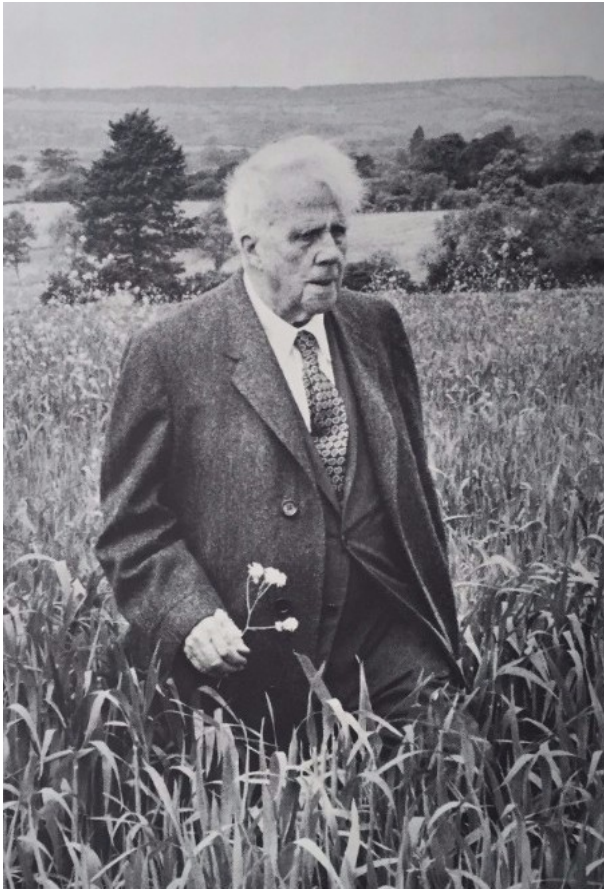
Books I return to again and again include Sylvia Plath's *Crossing the Water*, everything by Elizabeth Bishop, and Brigit Pegeen Kelly's collection *Song*. I'm mesmerized by imagination when captured by language that is itself surprising—but fully under control. Brigit Pegeen Kelly's work is singular to me.

---

Robert Frost approaching Little Iddens, Dymock, 1957 (Howard Sochurek, Life Magazine © Time Inc.)

"Scholars and artists thrown together are often annoyed at the puzzle of where they differ. Both work from knowledge; but I suspect they differ

---



most importantly in the way their knowledge is come by. Scholars get theirs with conscientious thoroughness along projected lines of logic; poets theirs cavalierly and as it happens in and out of books. They stick to nothing deliberately, but let what will stick to them like burrs where they walk in the fields." -Robert Frost's 1939 Essay "The Figure a Poem Makes"; Preface to *Collected Poems*

---

## On the Writing Process

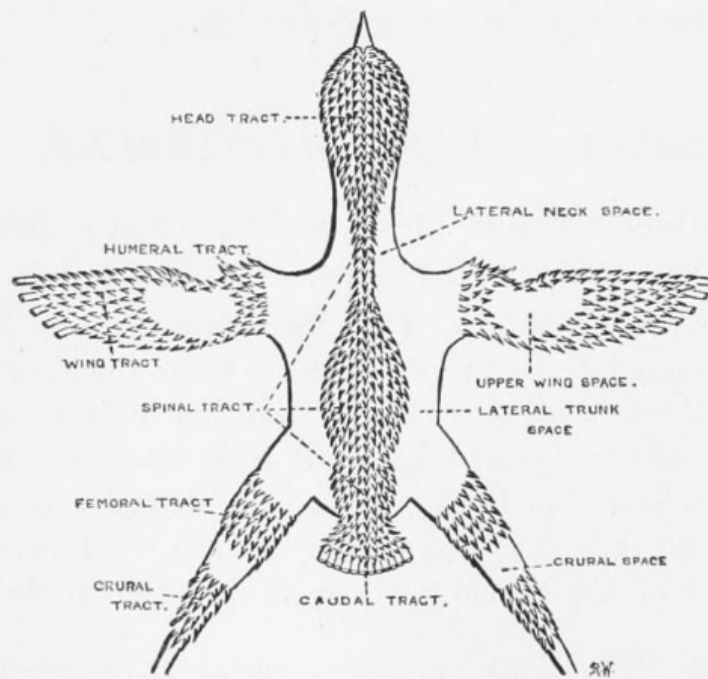
I write in my head all the time, like a walking meditation, without the walking. I always have a poem I am working on, and I finish almost every poem I begin. Sometimes there is a lot of living that gets in the way of focused writing time, but I hold the poem I'm working on in my head. If I lose track of what I'm working on—or just let working slip, then I feel like my skin is crawling.

***"If I lose track of what I'm working on—or just let working slip, then I feel like my skin is crawling."***

Sometimes the work is slow, sometimes fast, but the point for me is never to let go of it. If I'm off in my life it's often because I'm off in my writing life.

When I sit to write, it's at a computer, preferably in front of a fire or a window. I work and work at revision, and though poems sometimes come all at once and of a piece, I mistrust them for a long time. I tend to trust work I've sat with for a good long time—kind of like how we come to trust friendships, over time and after much rearranging and poking and prodding.

---



Dorsal view of *Turdus musicus*, to show the pterylosis of a typical Passerine Bird. (From a specimen in the Index Series in the Natural History Museum, by permission of Professor Flower, C.B., F.R.S.)

## "Passerines" by Kerrin McCadden

I want to tell you about the thud against the back door,  
that my man says, "bird." That later we see its tail  
sticking out from underneath the siding. That its  
tail feathers shine like oil, shifting purple to blue,  
and we are kneeling on the wet decking. The yellow  
of its stomach making it something more  
than the brown birds everywhere, a tiny prize  
for kneeling there, for prying back the vinyl siding  
to find a yellow-bellied flycatcher, its cheek bloodied.  
I want to tell you how he held it, said "Passerine"  
before it took flight. Little Passerine. Songbird.  
Before she left, I brought my daughter to Saint-Jeannet.  
There were swallows like boomerangs near dark,  
like here, like everywhere I go. I want to tell you  
about the neighbor, the scientist, who said they were  
swifts, not swallows. Swallows are Passerines,  
but swifts are not. *Passerine*, I thought, *Passerine*—  
a more future verb tense for *to pass*, a tense I can't  
know yet—a passing I can't understand. The order  
*Passerine* is a mess, the scientist said. It's impossible  
to track its evolution. I want to tell you I don't understand  
evolution, any of it, even mine, becoming the mother  
I will be next, the one who lets go. Once, I stood  
on a bridge and a man taught me to call sparrows to eat  
from my hands, told me he was a sinner, that what he did for me  
was atonement, which is a thing I might understand.  
I want to tell you there is nothing like their tiny grip,  
the way they quiver while they peck at your palm,  
wanting to fly out of reach. I want to tell you what happened  
when I let her go, but I don't understand it yet. I want  
to talk about this morning, the little yellow bird in sudden,  
dizzy flight. The trees full of yellow. How I lost sight.

---

**More Information About Summer Programs**

---



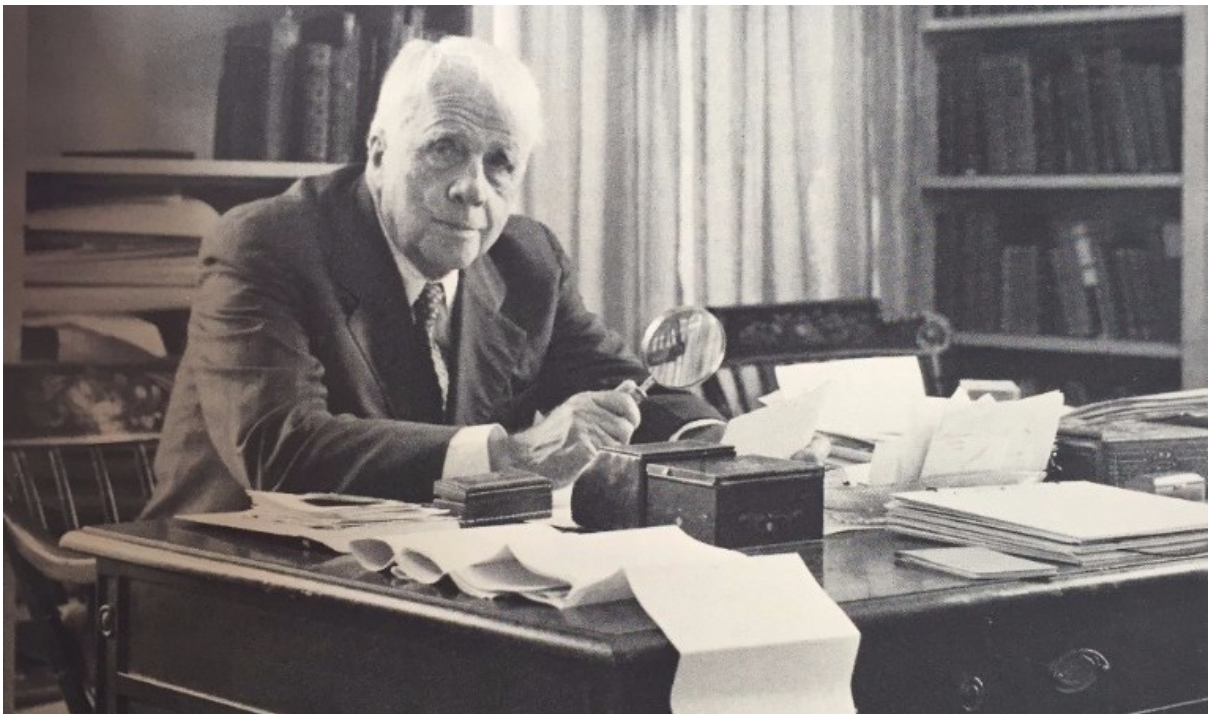
## Conference on Poetry and Teaching | June 25 - 29, 2016

**Director:** [Dawn Potter](#) **Associate Director:** [Teresa Carson](#)

**Faculty:** [Kerrin McCadden](#), [Rich Villar](#)

Held each year in June, the Conference on Poetry and Teaching is a unique opportunity for teachers to work closely with both their peers and a team of illustrious poets who have particular expertise in working with teachers at all levels.

[READ MORE](#)





## Writing Intensive | June 29 - 30, 2016

**Director:** [Afaa Michael Weaver](#)

The Frost Place Writing Intensive is a day-and-a-half reading and writing workshop that directly follows the Conference on Poetry and Teaching. Led by renowned poet-teacher Afaa Micheal Weaver, it gives teachers the opportunity to focus entirely on their own creative growth.

[READ MORE](#)



## Conference on Poetry | July 10 - 16, 2016

**Director:** [Martha Rhodes](#)

**Faculty:** [Gabrielle Calvocoressi](#), [Maudelle Driskell](#), [Rachel Eliza Griffiths](#),  
[Michael Klein](#), [Matthew Olzmann](#)

**Fellow:** [Collier Nogue](#)

Spend a week at “intensive poetry camp” with writers who are deeply committed to learning more about the craft of writing poetry.

[READ MORE](#)



**Poetry Seminar** | July 31 - August 5, 2016

**Director:** Patrick Donnelly

**Faculty:** Ilya Kaminsky, Cleopatra Mathis, Lyrae Van-Clief Stefanon

You're invited to join a select community of poets for 5-1/2 days this August to refresh your artistic inspiration in a setting of great natural beauty.

[READ MORE](#)



*Copyright © 2016 The Frost Place, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

[Donate to The Frost Place](#)

