

Poet's Corner With Peter Cooley

July 16, 2009 11:45 AM Mary Ann Travis and Nick Marinello
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English professor Peter Cooley read from his latest book *Divine Margins* during a poetry reading at the Paris American Academy on Thursday (July 16). Before he left for France, Cooley sat down with *New Wave* to discuss the life experiences behind his poems. On the video, see and hear him read the poem, "Correspondences," as well as talk about the death of his parents and all the inherited "stuff" that inspired the poem.

While in Paris, Cooley also is researching the life and work of sculptor Auguste Rodin for another series of poems. Cooley is visiting the Rodin museum in Paris and Rodin's country estate in Meudon on the outskirts of the city. Funding for Cooley's trip came from a [Georges Lurcy Charitable and Educational Trust](#) grant for Tulane faculty research and travel.

"Correspondences"

*Mornings before light in this beach house on the Gulf
my parents willed me, my grief not even one year old,
I wake to the waves' music: without asking they come back,
the ancient give-and-take I walked beside last night
too full of myself to find my rhythms in its own.
But this morning from my bed the waters forgive everything.
Unseen, they promise a new day to walk to
and duties thereof: beg the Salvation Army to return
for another truckload of the past I'm giving up.
First light exposes all these rooms as a sad tomb
such as the pharaohs left: I would if I could, display everything*

*for some museum I would meander, my parents resurrected
in stuff. I can't do that. I'll keep this silver napkin ring.
Dumb as it is, a gold bowl we gave them for fifty years together.*

*Undertow, swell and calm: I'll take my directions from your
music as I go.*

□by Peter Cooley, from *Divine Margins* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2009)