Katrina & Beyond in words

August 25, 2015 8:45 AM Fran Simon
fsimon@tulane.edu

Peter Cooley, a professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Tulane University, was named Louisiana State Poet Laureate last week. He and other Louisiana writers will present readings of poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction in response to Hurricane Katrina on Saturday (Aug. 29). (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

When Peter Cooley returned to his house after floodwaters inundated his neighborhood in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, one of the first things he picked up

was a pen.

That action is natural for Cooley, a professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Tulane University, who starts every day by writing. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal named Cooley the Louisiana State Poet Laureate last week. Cooley will serve a two-year term.

Cooley is the author of nine full-length collections of poetry. His most recent book, Night Bus to the Afterlife (2014) addresses the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In the podcast below, hear Cooley read one of his poems.

The New Orleans community will have an opportunity to hear Cooley and other New Orleans writers read their work on the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

In commemoration of the anniversary of Katrina"s landfall, on Saturday (Aug. 29) at 3 p.m., the Tulane University English Department will present readings of poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction in response to the storm. Joining Cooley will be Tom Beller and Jesmyn Ward of the Tulane English Department; Kay Murphy and Niyi Osundare from the University of New Orleans; and performance poet Gian Smith.

This event in the Freeman Auditorium of Woldenberg Art Center is free and open to the public. A reception will follow in Woodward Way. The Ian Gallagher Zelazny Writers Fund is sponsoring the event in memory of Ian Gallagher Zelazny.