

## **Four Masters Discuss The Personal Essay at Tulane University Symposium**

September 23, 2009 11:15 AM Mike Strecker  
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*Los Angeles Times* columnist Meghan Daum, novelist and HBO series creator Jonathan Ames, film critic and essayist Phillip Lopate and *Times-Picayune* columnist and NPR commentator Chris Rose will take part in a symposium on the personal essay 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Oct. 3 in Tulane University's Freeman Auditorium. The event, *Less-Than-Secret Lives: Symposium on the Personal Essay*, is free and open to the public.

"It's a diverse group of writers who share a propensity for being perceptive, provocative, and comic, often at the same time," says assistant professor of English Thomas Beller, who helped organize the program and who has published several of the speakers in his literary magazine, *Open City*, and on his website *Mr. Beller's Neighborhood*. "All of their work deals with the divulging of the self and making public that which is usually private, but they handle it each in their own unique way."

Tulane English Department faculty taking part in the symposium include Peter Cooley, T.R. Johnson, Paula Morris and Thomas Beller.

The symposium, which is supported by Tulane's Department of English Creative Writing Fund, is one of several literary events Tulane will host this year. Future events include campus visits by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author Rita Dove, renowned Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes, short story writer Deborah Eisenberg and essayist Edmund White.

Below is additional information on the symposium participants.

Meghan Daum's *Los Angeles Times* column was a 2006 finalist for a National Journalism Award and the winner of the Southern California Journalism Award in

column writing. Daum is also the author of the essay collection *My Misspent Youth* and the novel *The Quality of Life Report*. Her articles and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *GQ*, *Vogue* and *The New York Times*, among other publications. Her third book, a work of nonfiction about real estate and identity entitled *Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived In That House*, is due out from Knopf in June 2010.

Jonathan Ames is the author of the books *I Pass Like Night*, *The Extra Man*, *What's Not to Love?*, *My Less Than Secret Life*, *Wake Up, Sir!*, *I Love You More Than You Know* and *The Alcoholic* (a graphic novel illustrated by Dean Haspiel). He is the editor of *Sexual Metamorphosis: An Anthology of Transsexual Memoirs*. His most recent book, a collection of fiction and non-fiction, *The Double Life is Twice As Good*, was published by Scribner in July 2009. He created and wrote the new HBO series "Bored to Death."

Chris Rose is a columnist for *The Times-Picayune*, an essayist for *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, and a frequent commentator for NPR's *Morning Edition*. In 2006, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Commentary in recognition of his Katrina columns and was awarded a share in the *Times-Picayune* staff's Pulitzer for Public Service. His columns were collected in the book *1 Dead in Attic*.

Phillip Lopate has written three personal essay collections — "*Bachelorhood*, *Against Joie de Vivre* and *Portrait of My Body*"; three novels, *Confessions of Summer*, *The Rug Merchant* and *Two Marriages*; two poetry collections, *The Eyes Don't Always Want to Stay Open* and *The Daily Round*, a memoir of his teaching experiences, *Being With Children*, a collection of his movie criticism, *Totally Tenderly Tragically*; an urbanist meditation, *Waterfront: A Journey Around Manhattan*; and a biographical monograph, *Rudy Burckhardt: Photographer and Filmmaker*. His most recent book is a collection of essays, *Notes on Sontag*.