

2009-2010 Junior Faculty Leave Application

Name Joanne Diaz Your Email: jdiaz@iwu.edu

Department or School English

First Year Appointed to a Tenure Line 2008

Year of Tenure Consideration 2014

Have you applied for a junior faculty leave before? If yes, when? No

Leave Requested for (please check one and fill in the year)

Fall Spring of Academic Year 2010

- Will you use human beings as experimental subjects? Yes No
If yes, please submit the appropriate approval notice.
- Will you use animals as experimental subjects? Yes No
If yes, please submit the appropriate approval notice.
- If your proposal is funded, would you be willing for the Mellon Center to use it as an exemplary submission in the online *Handbook*? Yes No

Please complete the following checklist by placing a check mark against each item to insure that your application is complete. Incomplete and/or late applications will not be considered.

1. Project Summary (email to jhand@iwu.edu)
2. Have you requested IRB approval? Yes No NA
3. Proposal
4. A brief Vita
5. Supervisor Letter
6. External Letter
7. Report of previous ASD grants (file separately with the Associate Dean of the Faculty) Yes NA

Please give name and email address of immediate supervisor

Name: James Plath Email: jplath@iwu.edu

Please give name and email address of person writing your external letter

1. Name: Reginald Gibbons Email: rgibbons@northwestern.edu

Summary of Project

During my Junior Faculty Leave, I will divide my time between two projects: I will continue work on my scholarly book project on English Renaissance complaint poetry, which is titled *Grief as Medicine for Grief: Complaint Poetry in Early Modern England, 1559-1609*; and I will complete my poetry manuscript-in-progress, which is titled *Larry David on Corregidor*. During my leave, I will complete the research necessary to draft the two chapters of my scholarly book, research that will necessarily bring me to Cambridge, Massachusetts for work at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. I will also need to spend one month at a writer's residency in Spain so that I can complete the poems in my poetry manuscript. By the time I return to Illinois Wesleyan, I will be able to submit book proposals to scholarly publishers and submit my completed poetry manuscript to poetry publishers.

1. Summary of previous ASD grants

“Bills of Complaint in the Elizabethan Court of Star Chamber, 1558-1603.” ASD grant proposal submitted and approved, Fall 2009.

2. Narrative

A. The end product of the project

When I tell colleagues from other departments that I am both a scholar and a poet, they often ask if those two pursuits are completely separate, and whether I find myself pulled in divergent directions intellectually. However, as a scholar of English Renaissance literature and a practicing poet, I find that it is impossible for me to separate my curiosities about the sixteenth century from my curiosities about the creative process. When I have gone on short-term fellowships to archives such as the Folger Shakespeare Library or the Huntington Library, I have given all of my attention to English Renaissance texts and their material properties. As I do this, however, I also find myself stimulated by the use of language in prayer books, poems, religious treatises, and play texts. Conversely, my creative writing informs my scholarship. All poets have to read broadly and deeply in order to understand how other poets are using language to explore complex emotional terrain. My poetry writing fuels my scholarly work because I am able to see how our modern concerns speak back to the early modern concerns of poets like Shakespeare, John Donne, and George Herbert. For example, when I read the work of contemporary American poet Kay Ryan, I see that she draws her formal and rhetorical preoccupations from George Herbert, an important seventeenth century devotional poet. I can see the historical specificity of poetry across time periods, but I can also see what's transhistorical, too, and this transhistoricism is what allows me to engage with both scholarly and creative writing at the same time.

During my junior faculty leave, I have two specific goals: I intend to research rare complaint texts at the Houghton Library at Harvard University for one month with the assistance of a short-term fellowship; and I intend to complete the travel necessary to write the poems that will complete my poetry manuscript-in-progress. By the end of my semester, I will have

completed enough work on my scholarly book project to send it to publishers; and I will be finished with my poetry manuscript and ready to send it to first book contests. As a result of these activities, I am convinced that I will be better positioned to create a persuasive tenure case by the beginning of my sixth year.

My scholarly project traces the meaning and scope of English Renaissance complaint poetry. I argue that a secular poetics of dissatisfaction arose to fill the void left when religious auricular confession was no longer an institutionalized practice, and that this mode of literary expression was itself shaped by the evolving legal discourse of complaining. This project begins in 1559 with the publication of *The Mirror for Magistrates*, and ends in 1609 with the publication of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. The book contains four chapters. In Chapter 1, I provide a reading of select poems from *The Mirror for Magistrates*, a multi-authored compilation of complaint poems spoken by various figures from English history. In these long narrative poems, kings and queens return from the dead in order to confess their sins while bringing others to task. In doing so, they blur the line between personal and political tragedy, and provide the groundwork for some of Shakespeare's most compelling tragic figures. In Chapter 2, I will share my research on the formal and rhetorical properties of bills of complaint, which bear a striking resemblance to the complaint poems by William Shakespeare, Samuel Daniel, and Thomas Lodge. In Chapter 3, I examine epistolary complaints by Ovid, Michael Drayton, and Isabella Whitney, and I argue that these poems engage with and extend the juridical rhetoric that suffused the discourse of letter-writing in the period. Chapter 4 focuses on the pervasive use of complaint as a mode of expression in pastoral poetry by Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, and Mary Wroth.

Thus far, I have completed drafts of Chapters 1 and 3 and have submitted an article on the subject of epistolary complaint (currently under review at *English Literary Renaissance*

[*ELR*]) and an article on *The Mirror for Magistrates* (under review at *English Literary History* [*ELH*]), two of the most prominent journals in my field. With the help of an ASD grant that I just received, I will work at the National Archives in London immediately following the Spring 2010 semester. After I have completed my work on bills of complaint at the National Archives, I hope to spend one month working on the unique complaint poems at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. I have already spent significant amounts of time at the Houghton. In Summer 2009, I went there to research a unique copy of George Turberville's translation of Ovid's *Heroides*, an ancient Roman text that features the complaints of men and women who have been dishonored or abandoned. The *Heroides* was a central work for sixteenth-century English poets who wanted to borrow from and extend the complaint tradition. I will apply for a short-term fellowship at the Houghton for Summer 2010. Many of the poems, broadsides, and ballads in the Houghton collection are not available in reprints or online, and my work in the archives will allow me to further refine my case studies in my chapter on the use of complaint in pastoral literature. Short-term fellowships at the Houghton library are extremely competitive; however, I intend to work at the Houghton even if I do not receive a fellowship. My family still lives in the Boston area, and I would be able to stay with them while commuting into Cambridge for my daily work.

My poetry writing requires that I have quiet time necessary to continue my work on *Larry David on Corregidor*, my manuscript-in-progress. In 2010, it will be essential for me to have this time for my poetry. In 2009, I received an NEA grant based on my poetic achievement, but also for poetic promise. To fulfill the conditions of that grant, I must have my project completed by December 2010. To achieve this goal, I plan on traveling to Montserrat, Spain, to stay at the Can Serrat artist colony (just outside of Barcelona). I know based on experience how valuable such a residency can be. A few years ago, I spent a month at the Vermont Studio

Center. During that time, learned that I was capable of working many hours a day on poetry (instead of the hour per day that I was used to at that time); that I was capable of generating several drafts a week (instead of one, if that); and that I enjoyed the communal atmosphere of the colony, where I got to meet photographers, painters, fiction writers, and fellow poets. I am eager to be a part of such a community again. Spain is compelling to me for a variety of reasons—my father's family is from Spain, the history, culture, and politics of the country intrigue me, and Federico García Lorca, Spain's greatest twentieth-century poet, is an enormous influence on my work. When I traveled to Spain several years ago, I was able to write a poetic sequence that is central to my first book manuscript. When I return from the Can Serrat residency, I will focus on creating new poems, and when I return from the residency I will continue to read, write, and revise my best work so that it is ready for publication when I return from my leave.

B. Significance of the project

For years, I wrote poems that functioned on a principle of exclusion—that is, I wanted each poem to look and feel like a tight corset that conveyed only the most essential information and insights. Recently, though, I have been working on a style that is based on a principle of inclusion, one that allows me to write long, discursive lines which connect popular culture with political concerns, cross many geographies and time periods, and use a variety of rhetorical strategies to explore charged emotional material.

This shift is more than just a new consideration of content. It is a shift in the way I think about what poetry is and what it can do in the world. In a recent issue of *The American Poetry Review*, Natasha Sajé explains that metaphors occur when a poet compares a literal object, feeling, or person, with some other seemingly unlike object, and in that comparison transforms both things. This process of meaning-making dominates most contemporary American poetry,

according to Sajé, in part because it feels more timeless and universal. However, there have always been poets who are more interested in metonymy. Metonymic poems are usually sprawling, discursive works—poems that allude to high culture and low culture, to the personal and the political, the proper names of things. This sprawling attention to our particular cultural moment appeals to me, and during my junior leave, I look forward to experimenting with it further.

I have become increasingly interested in metonymic poetry over metaphoric poetry, in large part because of my scholarly book project on complaint poetry. In the English Renaissance, poets wrote numerous complaint poems that provide critiques of literary shortcomings, political corruption, and personal failures. Critics have long seen emergent interiority as a defining characteristic of English Renaissance poetry; however, I argue that complaint poems are argumentative, highly emotional, and committed to revealing a shattered self in publicly staged distress. Complaint poems provide a generative, historically specific critique of cultural institutions that failed to provide consolation, supplanting those institutions with the possibilities of confessional expression and consolation in print and performance. My scholarly project, then, intervenes in and enhances current discussions surrounding lyric poetry of the English Renaissance.

C. Proposed timetable for completion of the end product

My timetable for this project is as follows. During the summer, I will make two significant trips: one to Spain, where I will spend a month at Can Serrat; and one trip to the Houghton Library at Harvard University, where I will also spend one month. After these two significant trips, I will write full-time until my chapters and poems are completed in December 2010.