

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Kristen Steenbeeke

kristens@hugohouse.org

Twitter: @HugoHouse | @ksteenbeeke

Word Works returns with a second season

SEATTLE, WA—Word Works 2014-15, a series of writing-centric craft talks at Hugo House, will feature writers **Charles Baxter, Randall Kenan, Dorianne Laux, Kay Ryan, David Shields,** and **Luis Alberto Urrea.**

"We had an overwhelming response during our first season--with the majority of the events selling out--and we're thrilled about the six incredible writers joining us this second season. Word Works is a unique series in the city: nationally celebrated writers offering up their writing wisdom in a fun and affordable context. One of my favorite things about the series is how closely it fits with Hugo House's mission to support writers."

Each event features an established writer talking about a topic of personal obsession and mastery. This year, the topics are plot, rhyme, place, understory, collage, and music. Although the speakers have more experience writing either prose or poetry, the talks are designed to apply to all writers.

In the past, Word Works events have included creative PowerPoints, videos, examples from the writers' own work as well as the work of others, and more. In addition to giving a talk, the writers will teach classes—open to the general public—related to their craft talks.

The events will take place in the theater. The bar will be open, and books will be for sale.

More info, along with links for ticket purchase, can be found on [Hugo House's website](#).

Event Dates

Charles Baxter on plot: Sept. 10, 7 p.m.

Kay Ryan on rhyme: Oct. 8, 7 p.m.

Randall Kenan on place: Jan. 22, 7 p.m.

Luis Alberto Urrea on understory: March 26, 7 p.m.

David Shields on collage: April 18, 7 p.m.

Dorianne Laux on music: May 8, 7 p.m.

About the Authors

Charles Baxter was born in Minneapolis and graduated from Macalester College, in Saint Paul. After completing graduate work in English at the State University of New York at Buffalo, he

taught for several years at Wayne State University in Detroit. In 1989, he moved to the Department of English at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor and its MFA program. He now teaches at the University of Minnesota. Baxter is the author of five novels, five collections of short stories, three collections of poems, two collections of essays on fiction, as well as being the editor of other works. His 2000 novel, *The Feast of Love*, was a National Book Award finalist and was made into a movie starring Morgan Freeman. He is a recipient of the Michigan Author Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Kay Ryan, who is acknowledged as one of the most original voices in the contemporary landscape, is the author of several books of poetry, including *Flamingo Watching*, *The Niagara River*, and *Say Uncle*. Her book *The Best of It: New and Selected Poems* won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. She was appointed as U.S. Poet Laureate in 2008 and held the position for two terms. Ryan is the recipient of several major awards, including fellowships from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

David Shields is the *New York Times* bestselling author of fifteen books, including *The Thing About Life Is That One Day You'll Be Dead*; *Salinger* (co-written by Shane Salerno); *Reality Hunger*, named one of the best books of 2010 by more than thirty publications; *Black Planet*, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; *Remote*, winner of the PEN/Revson Award; and *Dead Languages*, winner of the PEN Syndicated Fiction Award. He lives with his wife and daughter in Seattle, where he is the Milliman Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at the University of Washington. His work has been translated into twenty languages.

Luis Alberto Urrea is a prolific and acclaimed author of fourteen books, including poetry, essays, and novels. Born in Tijuana, Mexico, to a Mexican father and an Anglo mother, Urrea's work is inspired by his cross-cultural upbringing and unique perspective of life on both sides of the border. His first book, *Across the Wire*, which draws from his experiences working with Tijuana garbage pickers as a missionary in his early twenties, was named a *New York Times* Notable Book. Among his most celebrated works is *The Devil's Highway*, a revealing nonfiction account of twenty-six Mexican immigrants lost in the torrid, desolate Arizona desert. The book was a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist for nonfiction and a Kiriya Prize winner. He has taught writing workshops at Harvard University, the Massachusetts Bay Community College, and the University of Colorado.

Dorianne Laux's fifth collection, *The Book of Men*, is currently available from W.W. Norton. Her fourth book of poems, *Facts about the Moon*, is the recipient of the Oregon Book Award. Laux is also author of *Awake, What We Carry* (finalist for the National Book Critic's Circle Award), and *Smoke*. Co-author of *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry*, she's the recipient of two Best American Poetry Prizes, a Pushcart Prize, two fellowships

from The National Endowment for the Arts and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Widely anthologized, her work has appeared in *The Best of the American Poetry Review*, *The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Poetry* and *The Best of the Net*.

Randall Kenan's first novel, *A Visitation of Spirits*, was published by Grove Press in 1989; and a collection of stories, *Let the Dead Bury Their Dead*, was published in 1992 by Harcourt, Brace. That collection was nominated for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for Fiction, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and was among the *New York Times* Notable Books of 1992. He is also the author of a young-adult biography of James Baldwin. *Walking on Water: Black American Lives at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1999, and was nominated for the Southern Book Award. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Writers Award, the Sherwood Anderson Award, the John Dos Passos Award, and was the 1997 Rome Prize winner from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was awarded the North Carolina Award for Literature in 2005.