

Jeffery Beam's work hailed for its "transcendent, lush beauty, its minimal sacrament, simplicity and physicality" fuses through Gnostic intention the physical and spiritual worlds, creating a conversation between the natural world, the body, and the spirit.

He is the author of

Spectral Pegasus / Dark Movements, a collaboration with Welsh painter [Clive Hicks-Jenkins](#) which includes an audio CD and downloadable MP3 files ([Kin Press](#), 2019);

the online chapbook [Don't Forget Love](#) (2018, Dispatches from the Poetry Wars);

Beam co-edited [The Lord of Orchards: Jonathan Williams at 80](#) — a Jonathan Williams online feature (with Richard Owens) in 2009 for *Jacket* magazine which led in 2018 to an expanded book [Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards](#) (Prospecta Press);

[The Broken Flower](#) (Skysill Press, 2012);

[The NEW Beautiful Tendons: Collected Queer Poems 1969-2012](#) (Spuyten Duyvil Press, 2012) — an expanded version of the acclaimed *The Beautiful Tendons: Uncollected Queer Poems 1969-1997* (White Crane Books, volume seven of the White Crane Wisdom Series, 2008);

[Midwinter Fires](#) (French Broad 1990, Seven Kitchens Press 2012);

[Gospel Earth](#) (Skysill Press, 2010);

A Hornet's Nest-Quotes from Jonathan Williams (Editor) ([The Jargon Society](#) and Green Finch Press, 2008);

the award-winning spoken word audio collection *What We Have Lost: New and Selected Poems 1977-2001* (Green Finch Press, 2002);

the award-winning [An Elizabethan Bestiary: Retold](#) (Horse and Buggy Press, 1999);

[Light and Shadow](#) (Aperture with photographer [Claire Yaffa](#), 1998);

little (Green Finch Press, 1997),

[Submergences](#) (Off the Cuff Books, 1997 reprinted in 2008 in Rebel Satori Press's [Madder Love: Queer Men and the Precincts of Surrealism](#));

Visions of Dame Kind (The Jargon Society, 1995);

The Fountain (North Carolina Wesleyan College Press, 1992);

The Golden Legend (Floating Island Publications, 1981);

and *Two Preludes for the Beautiful* (Universal, 1981).



Limited edition works from fine presses include

ENO Crow (Horse & Buggy Press, 2016),

[MountSeaEden](#) (Chester Creek Press, 2012),

[An Invocation](#) (Country Valley Press, 2008),

On Hounded Ground--an autobiographical essay with poems (Bookgirl Press, 2008),

and *Lullaby of the Farm* (UNC Friends of the Library, 2002).

Various small publications include

the chaplet [Me Moving](#) (Longhouse, 2010);

an online chaplet [Gospel Earth](#) (Longhouse, 2006) and accompanying print booklets with poem selections *Gospel Earth One* (2006) and [Gospel Earth Two](#) (2007),

an online "anthology" *Poems Small and Not So Small* (The Jargon Society, 2006),

[Old Sunflower, You Bowed to No One](#) — a critical essay on the work of Lorine Niedecker (special supplement to *Oyster Boy Review*, 2003),

Honey and Cooked Grapes (Backwoods Broadsides, 2003),

and Jeffery Beam's *Allnatural Heatsensitive Ganeshaapproved Zuppapoetica AlphabeatSpiritbodySoup* (Alpha Beat Press, 2003).

Beam's poems and criticism have appeared in many anthologies and magazines. A book of his poems were translated into Italian by poet and translator [Ann McGarrell](#) but has yet to be published. His poems have also been translated into Turkish, Polish, Japanese, and Russian.

Beam is also known for his “sung poems”, children’s lullabies, and the occasional “new” antique ballad.

Jonathan Williams

Beam co-edited [The Lord of Orchards: Jonathan Williams at 80](#) — a Jonathan Williams online feature (with Richard Owens) in 2009 for *Jacket* magazine which led in 2018 to an expanded book [Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards](#) (Prospecta Press).

Beam facilitated the Slovakian literary magazine [Enter](#)’s issue feature on Jonathan Williams in (4, 2011).

Airing of part of a recording of the [Rain Taxi interview with Jonathan Williams](#) by Jeffery Beam, along with a 1981 poetry reading by Jonathan. *WordPlay* with Jeff Davis, WPVM 103.5 FM Asheville, NC. Sunday, April 12, 2009. 60 minutes.

Musical Collaborations



Song cycles and orchestral pieces inspired by Beam's work by various composers have been performed all over the world from Carnegie Hall to Glimmerglass, from the Austin Symphony to the North Carolina Opera, in Baden, Chicago, the District of Columbia, Baltimore, Boston, Spartanburg, Chapel Hill, Toronto, New Zealand, and Nova Scotia.

Beam's and Lee Hoiby's [Life of the Bee](#) with the songs [Millennium Approaches](#), [The Spirit of the Hive](#), [The Sting](#), [Ars Poetica: The Queen](#), [The Swarm](#) (Rock Valley Music, 2001) commissioned and performed by mezzo-soprano [Shauna Holiman](#), pianist Brent McMunn, and cellist

Barbara Stein Mallow (NY) [cellist Wendy Law in NC] is included in the [DRAM](#) archive of recorded music and on the [Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive](#). In addition to the Holiman premieres at the NC Literary Festival and at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in 2002, it continues to be performed internationally. Beam appeared in the two premiere performances, and has appeared in a few other subsequent ones. The CD [New Growth: Shauna Holiman and Friends — New Songs and Spoken Poems](#) (Albany Records) is a New York's Town Hall studio recitation and performance of the poems and song cycle as performed at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall.

Composer [Steven Serpa](#) continues to create works using Beam's texts, or inspired by them including

[Heaven's Birds: Lament and Song, a cantata for World AIDS Day for mezzo solo, SATB chorus, and piano quartet](#);

[An Invocation for Oboe \(or Soprano Saxophone\), Violin, Viola, and Cello](#) (2012);

[An Invocation for Oboe and String Orchestra](#) (2016);

and the song cycle [The Creatures: A Bestiary Retold](#) (2017).

[Holt McCarley](#) composed a cadenza-like, virtuosic piece for solo clarinet in response to the Bestiary, [The Hyena](#) (2015).

Also in 2015 soprano [Andrea Edith Moore](#) and composer [Daniel Thomas Davis](#) premiered in recital a hybrid chamber opera / song cycle [Family Secrets: Kith and Kin](#), with texts by North Carolina writers Beam, Allan Gurganus, Randall Kenan, Frances Mayes, Michael Malone, Lee Smith, and Daniel Wallace, photographs by [Elizabeth Matheson](#), and the [American Folk Art Building Collection](#) of Steven Burke and Randy Campbell. The work premiered with North Carolina Opera in 2018. Beam's song is entitled [Porch Song No. 2](#), which appears as the second (untitled) poem in the online chapbook [Don't Forget Love](#).

In 2019 Moore will offer an evening's tribute to the many musical works inspired by Beam's poems in association with the The Mallarmé Chamber Players.

Composer and oboist Bo Newsome created three preludes, *Evocation*, *Questions*, and *Nocturne* for Beam's *What We Have Lost* CD collection, as well as the gathering music *Imploring Sweet* for Beam's wedding in 2015.

Most recently composer [Tony Solitro](#) has taken up Beam's poems. His first composition is *Love's Astronomy*.

Over the years a number of student composers have set his poems to music, or written works inspired by them.

Choreographer Natasa Trifan premiered a ballet, *Somewhere Towards the Center*, using texts by Beam and Ted Hughes for her Natasa Trifan Performance Group (2010, Figment Festival, NYC).

In Progress

Beam is currently at work on a number of projects including his first children's book, [The Droods](#), to be illustrated by British artist [Phil Cooper](#); an expanded *Life of the Bee* sequence; *They Say: A Commonplace Book on Poetry and the Spirit*; an anthology of bee poems throughout the ages entitled [Bee, I'm Expecting You](#); *Blue Darter-Jonathan Williams: A Bibliography of the Publications and Ephemera, 1950-2008*; and an opera libretto based on the Demeter / Persephone myth. An illustrated children's book of winter lullabies with audio CDs and sheet music seeks a publisher.

Photography

Beam has had two photographic exhibitions at [Through This Lens Gallery](#) in Durham, North Carolina — *Daedalus Slept Here: Poetic Views: Earthly Travels* and [Not What It Seems](#) — combining photographs, texts, and poems. He continues to “take pictures” although he has not focused on printing and exhibition works for the last few years.

Other

Beam's work was surveyed in [Literary Trails of North Carolina: Piedmont](#), Greenwood Press's [Contemporary Gay American Poets and Playwrights: An A-Z Guide](#), [Encyclopedia of Contemporary LGBTQ Literature of the United States](#), [An Encyclopedia of Male Homosexual Poetry](#), and [Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered Queer America Today Encyclopedia](#).

He has received numerous awards and grants including three American Library Association Notable Book and Gay / Lesbian Non-fiction Award nominations, three Pushcart nominations, a 2010 [SIBA](#) (Southern Independent Booksellers Award) nomination, an [IPPY Ten Best Books Award](#), an [Audie Award](#), an [AIGA 50 Best Books Award](#), a North Carolina Writers Network Blumenthal Writer and Reader Award, a Durham Arts Council Emerging Artist Grant, a [Duke University Chronicle Award](#), a Nazim Hikmet Festival poetry award, a *Writer's Digest* Editor Award for best E-Zine poetry outlet (2000), a 1998 Associated Press Holiday Gift Giving Ideas, and a grant from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation.



The poem [The Man Who Ate Butterflies](#), from *The Broken Flower*, was an honorable mention in the first Bards on the Bus of the Chapel Hill Transit System co-sponsored with *The Carolina Quarterly* and appeared as a poster on the buses. The poem *I am Thankful* was included in the *Poetry in Plain Sight* series of storefront posters in Winston-Salem, NC.

His work as an educator was highlighted in [The Compassionate Classroom: Lessons that Nurture Wisdom and Empathy](#) by Jane Dalton and Lyn Fairchild. Beam is also the recipient of a [Preservation Award](#) from the 2004 Preservation Society of Chapel Hill, and the first annual [Provost Award for Public Service](#) from the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for Public Service in 2000. Associate Vice Chancellor of Campus Services called Beam the campus's Lorax for his service toward protecting [Carolina's historic landscape and trees](#). Jeffery's poem "[Song of the University Worker](#)" was [adopted in 2009](#) as the official University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill staff poem.

He served for ten years as a judge for the Lambda Book Awards. In 2014 he served as the judge for the annual [Indy Week poetry contest](#). He serves as poetry editor emeritus for [Oyster Boy Review](#). His papers are on deposit in the [University of North Carolina's North Carolina's Writers Manuscript Collection](#). There is also an archive at the One Archives at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Beam [retired](#) as a botanical librarian after 35 years at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in November 2011.

Born and raised in Kannapolis, North Carolina, Beam moved to Orange County in 1975. Since 1984 he has lived in Hillsborough, NC with his husband Stanley Finch. In 2014 [73rd College Photographer of the Year Ray Whitehouse](#) produced a [photo documentary](#) (first version), [After 34 Years](#) (expanded version), on Beam and Finch's wedding in North Carolina, as well as a photo documentary, [You Lose Them Twice](#), on Alzheimer's and Stanley's mother's passing at the age of 91.

The Man Who Ate Butterflies

HONORABLE MENTION

You wouldn't think he would do such a thing in public in front of children or even dogs who have been known to eat wasps (are always embarrassed) But he cannot stop himself To imagine the sweet nectar stolen by the proboscis the cool air between the wings the colored dust He thinks "Turkish Delight! Yum! Yum!"

Before you know it he has grabbed the poor thing and swallowed He likes flowers and so spends many afternoons visiting gardens

—Jeffery Beam

Jeffery Beam's works include *Visions of Dante's Kind, An Elizabethan Bestiary: Retold, and What We Have Lost*. You can learn more at his website: www.unc.edu/~jeffbeam/index.html



Bus Poster by Jeffery Beam

In magazines, anthologies, books, and other critical works:



Beam has published widely in small magazines, anthologies, and books among them being *Lovejets: Queer Male Poets on 200 Years of Walt Whitman*, [Visiting Dr. Williams: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of William Carlos Williams](#), [The Asheville Poetry Review 10th and 20th Anniversary anthologies](#), [Black Men / White Men](#), Carolina Spring, [The Carolina Table](#), [Collective Brightness](#), [27 Views of Hillsborough](#), *Earth and Soul: A Russian / English Anthology of North Carolina Poetry*, [EOAGH Queering Language Anthology](#), [Fourth International](#)

[Anthology on Paradoxism](#), [Gay City](#), [Gay Roots: 20 Years of Gay Sunshine](#), *Kakalak: An Anthology of Carolina Poets*, *The Light in Ordinary Things*, [Longhouse: A Bibliography from 1971-2006](#), [Madder Love: Queer Men and the Precincts of Surrealism](#), [Mirrors and Prisms: Writers of Marginalized Orientations and Gender Identities](#) (*Nimrod International Journal*), two Nazim Hikmet Festival anthologies, the CD collection *9 Poets Alive the Radio Show: An Archive of Poets from Alpha Beat Featured Arts BroadSides*, the North Carolina Arts Council Poet Laureate [My Laureate's Lasso Poet of the Week feature](#), *North Carolina Poets on 9/11*, *Pen and Brush: A Collection of the Best Illustrations and Their Poems from Hummingbird's First Fifteen Years* by David Kopitzke, the Polish anthology [Parada równosci :antologia współczesnej amerykańskiej poezji gejowskiej i lesbijskiej](#) (*Rainbow Parade: Anthology of Contemporary American Gay and Lesbian Poetry*), [SUCCINCT: The Broadstone Anthology of Short Poems](#), [The Son of the Male Muse](#), [Sparks of Fire: Blake In A New Age](#), [Word and Witness: 100 Years Of North Carolina Poetry](#), [Yellow Silk](#) (first ten year anthology), *Arabesques Review*, [The Asheville Poetry Review](#), [Assaracus](#), [Big Bridge](#), *Blink*, *Brightleaf - A Southern Review of Books*, *Cairn*, *Cardinal*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, [Conjunctions Web Forum Robert Creeley Memorial](#), [The Dead Mule](#), *The Double Dealer Redux*, *Dreamworks*, *Evergreen Chronicles*, *Frame*, [gard](#), *Gargoyle*, *The Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review*, *Inch*, *The James White Review*, *Knockout*, *Lilliput Review*, [Lodestar Quarterly](#), *modern words*, *Mouth of the Dragon*, *9/11 Twin Tower of Words*, *North Carolina Literary*

Review, Origin, [Oyster Boy Review](#), *Pembroke Magazine*, *Poetry Now*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *The Prose Poem*, [qarrtsiluni](#), *The Raleigh News and Observer*, *Shrike*, [The Sigh Press](#), *South by Southeast: Haiku and Haiku Arts*, [The Sun](#), [Success](#), *Tight*, *Versal*, *The Worcester Review*, *Yellow Silk*, *Kiss of the Whip* by Jim Prezwalski, *With Hidden Noise: Photographs by John Menapace* [exhibition catalog and book editions], *Touching Earth: Reflections On The Restorative Power Of Gardening*, *The Quality Of Life*, and *From Grass to Gardens: How to Reap Bounty from a Small Yard* (all three by Janet Lembke).

Interviews and such:

In 1989 *The Arts Journal* featured the first full-length interview with Beam. In 1998, his short poems were subject of a special issue of *Hummingbird: The Magazine of the Short Poem*. 1999 saw his career featured as the subject of a *Durham Herald-Sun* article, and in [Duke University's Rainbow Triangle Oral History Project](#) which included an article in their newsletter *Tobacco Road*. In late 2001 his work was featured, along with an interview, in Charlotte, North Carolina's *Main Street Rag*. Another feature, including an interview and video clip, appeared in [Nantahala Review](#) in April 2003, and in 2004 [Virginia Libraries](#) published an interview. Writer Marly Youmans featured Beam's work three times in 2006 - 2007 on her blog [The Palace at 2 AM](#), poet Joe Massey featured an audio reading in 2007 on his blog *Mr. Tong Bliss's Journal*, and in 2007 artist Laura Frankstone drew him on her blog [Laurelines](#) as he taught students at a local high school. He has also been interviewed on WUNC-Radio FM (with innumerable appearances on [The State of Things with Frank Stasio](#)), WCHL-Radio AM, WDNC-Radio AM, WNCU-FM, WOIC-Radio AM, WPVM-FM's *WordPlay* [2008](#), [2009](#)), WNCN-TV 17, WLFL-TV, thrice on *The Wacqueline Stern Show* – WCOM-FM ([2012](#), [2017](#), [2017](#)), and Chapel Hill and Greensboro Cable stations. Other interviews have appeared in North Carolina newspapers including the *Raleigh News and Observer*; [The News of Orange](#), [Southern Neighbor](#), [The Daily Tar Heel](#), *The Chapel Hill News*; [The Independent Weekly](#), and [North Carolina Libraries](#); and internet classroom chats. His work is noted on a number of gay resource web sites.

Readings, Lectures, Workshops:

Beam is known for his vibrant and engaging poetry readings.

St. Matthews Episcopal Church in Hillsborough, North Carolina invited Beam in 2015 to present a lecture and retrospective of his poems, sung-poems, lullabies, and ballads *Beyond the Green Door*, as part of their *Faith in the Arts* series. You can hear the whole reading *Beyond the Green Door* on YouTube, [Part one, here](#), [Part two, here](#), and [Part three, here](#).

He has read in Rome and Umbria, in Wales and England, in Toronto and up and down the East Coast of America. His highly regarded readings were chosen ten times as Best Bets, Our Picks, and Indy Picks by *The Independent Weekly*, twice as a *Chapel Hill News* Best Bet, once as a *Chapel Hill Magazine* Best Bet, and as a Smart Bet by Asheville's *Mountain Xpress* newspaper. Since 1974 Beam has given over 900 poetry readings, lectures, and panel discussions in art museums and galleries, schools, churches, bookstores, botanical gardens, restaurants, parks, and even living rooms and funerals, and at two North Carolina Literary Festivals, the UNC-CH North Carolina Collection's Second Sunday Reading series, two Carrboro and West End Poetry Festivals ([2004 audio](#)), the Carrboro Cybrary and Carrboro Recreation & Parks National Poetry Month Poetry on Your Plate reading, with three North Carolina Writers Conferences, the Atlanta Queer Literary Festival, Virginia Arts Festival, Fort Lauderdale Stonewall Gay Archives Gay and Lesbian Literary Arts Festival, as an award winner and a keynote reader at the Nâzım Hikmet Poetry Festival, as a keynote speaker at Ferrum College's Conference in Humanities on "Gender Roles



in a Shrinking World", as a keynote speaker for Earth Day at Virginia Intermont College, as a NC Writers Network Blumenthal Reader, at the International School of Art in Montecastello di Vibio-Italy, at the University of Toronto, and even for the Athletics Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was inducted into the North Carolina Writers Conference, was an invited guest to the Durham Public Library's Centennial NC Writers Gala, and a Parade Marshal for the NC Gay Pride Festival. In 2017 Beam was the first poet invited to read before the Orange County Board of County Commissioners in a program which introduces county artists to the Commission.

For twelve years he directed, produced, and starred in a highly popular program for the Friends of the Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill entitled Winter Stories for Children of All Ages. In addition to numerous middle school, high school, and college classrooms visits, Beam has conducted two Hot Ink workshops for young writers for the [NC Writers Network](#) - *Fossil Poetry*, *Seeing the Word*, *Hearing the World* and *The Dog of Art in the Garden of Toads*; a Bestiary workshop *Boo at the Zoo* at the NC Zoological Park, a Family Day Bestiary workshop at the Duke Museum of Art, thrice been a visiting author to the Duke University Young Writers Camp, and as an UNC-Charlotte undergraduate art student was a staff member for the summer Brickle Bush workshops for children at the Mint Museum, Charlotte. Beam was a founding member of the now defunct Southern Literature Council of Charleston.

During the UNC-Chapel Hill academic year 2017-2018 Beam organized and curated a Speaker's Series on spirituality and vocation discernment for the Episcopal Campus Ministry of the Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill through a Lilly Foundation Grant, "My Spiritual Awakening: Relationships and Resources for the Discovery and Renewal of Vocation."

Since his [retirement](#) he has also been performing as narrator for a number of classical song-cycle productions.

Please contact him at jeffbeam at email dot unc dot edu to schedule appearances.

Exhibitions:

Ceramicist Judith Ernst has created two large vessels using Beam's poems: [Holding the Center](#) (the poem Dame Kind), and [Pause ... Now, Go](#). Holding the Center received an honorable mention and was exhibited in New Bern, NC at the Craven Arts Council and Gallery's 2016 Bank of the Arts juried exhibition Ekphrastic Poetry.

In 2016 he exhibited two limited edition self-published broadsides in the Questioning Ourselves: Queer Identity in Art at the LGBTQ Center of Durham, NC.

2015 saw his poem *ENO Crow* as part of an exhibition, [FLOW](#), at the Hillsborough Gallery of Arts in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Eno River Association. His poem was the only one in which one of the visual artists responding directly which led to the limited edition broadside of the painting in poem published by Horse & Buggy Press.

The Traveler, Eno Crow Broadside

From the FLOW exhibition last winter at the Hillsborough Gallery of Arts, dedicated to the Eno River and the Eno River Association's 50th Anniversary, poet Jeffery Beam and artist Michele Yellin have collaborated with Horse & Buggy Press to create this beautiful broadside featuring Michele's lovely painting and Jeffery's exceptional poem, with digitally printed images and letterpress text. Signed and numbered copies, donated to the Association by Jeffery Beam, are available at the Association office for \$25. A special holiday gift!



These two words were born of an exhibition, FLOW, dedicated to the Eno River and the Eno River Association's 50th Anniversary, at the Hillsborough Gallery of Arts in 2016. The Eno River starts in Orange County, North Carolina, and flows through downtown Hillsborough. Named for the Eno tribe (also known as the Eno or Wicomico) that lived among its banks during the 17th and 18th centuries, its watershed occupies most of Orange and Durham counties. Notable for its beauty and water quality, and for the detrimental effects which have generated it, the river, an initial tributary of the Neuse, carries barely more than forty miles from its source to its confluence at the Neuse. After Michele Yellin's delightful response, The Traveler, to the poem Eno Crow, we signed this broadside.

ENO CROW JEFFERY BEAM

Eventually you end up ambling past
bushwhack and pine cathedral to Eno warble
Light spangling through oak hickory
standing in leaning over
Water moss singing silent song to salamander
fish terrapin

Up over
never heard such cackle
Treetop black-robed Caw-Caw sparring
oak-muscle and water-sinew
Boulders and call loosening body's thrumming tether
Needing only to be Not do
River coursing another river inside

This broadside was designed by Dave Wilford of Horse & Buggy Press. The image was printed at Lark Image in Monticello and the text was printed on a hand-fed, hand-colored Vandercook letterpress by Lane in Durham. 50 broadsides were donated to the Eno River Association by the artist. GREEN FINCH PRESS Hillsborough, North Carolina Green Finch Printing #101 CR 2016 broadside 5th & number

8 CURRENTS

In 2015, The Center for the Study of the American South at UNC-Chapel Hill featured an exhibition [Sacred Spaces: A Look Inside the Home of Harlem Renaissance Poet Anne Spencer](#) photographs by John M. Hall with an essay by Beam, which in 2018 was published with new photographs in their magazine [Southern Cultures](#). The original photographs and essay are also available in the book [Sacred Spaces The Home of Anne Spencer](#).

From March - June 2008 a photograph was included in an exhibition, "[If You Can Kill a Snake With It, It Ain't Art](#)", of the poet Jonathan Williams' personal collections at the [Turchin Center, Appalachian State University](#) and the [Green Hill Center for North Carolina Art](#).

[Through This Lens Gallery](#) represents Beam's photographic work. He held his first one person show there in October 2006.

In 2006 Beam's photographs and publications were included in the Time Arts BCA / BFA Alumni and Faculty exhibition at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. 2007 saw his first photographic publication in [Origin](#) magazine. The online magazine, [qarrtsiluni](#), recently featured a photograph.

An Elizabethan Bestiary: Retold was a feature exhibition at the Duke University Museum of Art (now [Nasher Museum](#)), and at Wofford College. The book, or parts of the book, has also been exhibited at the Leipzig International Book Fair, the Frankfurt Book Fair, the AIGA National Design Center, the National Humanities Center, the Durham Arts Council, and the University of North Carolina Davis Library. It has also been exhibited at many small book fairs and at Poet's House in New York, along with many of Beam's other works.

He exhibited work in the First International Think Dinky Invitational at the Meta-Museum in Durham, NC in 1977. As an undergraduate student at UNC-Charlotte, Beam exhibited visual work during student exhibitions for the Bachelor of Creative Arts program. Beam received his Bachelor of Creative Arts from UNCC in 1975.

Book reviews, criticism, and commentary:



Beam's book reviews, criticism, and commentary have appeared in *The Advocate*, *The American Book Review*, [Big Bridge](#), *The Chapel Hill News*, [The Christian Science Monitor](#), *Contemporary Gay American Poets and Playwrights*, *The Durham Herald-Sun*, [Encyclopedia of Contemporary LGBTQ Literature of the United States](#), *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, *The Front Page*, [Galatea Resurrects](#), *Garden Design*, *The Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review*, [The Independent Weekly](#), *Lambda Book Report*, *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered Queer America Today Encyclopedia*, *loblolly*, *North Carolina Libraries*, [The North Carolina](#)

[Literary Review](#), The North Carolina Arts Council Poet Laureate Poet of the Week feature, *The Raleigh News and Observer*, [Rain Taxi](#) (interview with [Jonathan Williams](#)), *Small Press Review*, *Smithsonian*, *The Solitary Plover: The Lorine Niedecker Newsletter*, *The Sun*, *Yellow Silk*, [The Secret Language of Birds: A Treasury of Myths, Folklore, and Inspirational True Stories](#), WUNC-Radio FM, WCHL-Radio AM, and *Oyster Boy Review*. In 2009 Duke University's Nasher Museum posted a podcast of artist Ippy Patterson and Jeffery walking through and talking about its exhibition [Picasso and the Allure of Language](#).

Beam is currently Poetry Editor Emeritus of the print and online literary journal *Oyster Boy Review*, and was for a time a contributing editor to *Arabesques Review*. As an undergraduate student at UNC-Charlotte he served as Business Manager, then Poetry Editor, then Editor of the campus literary magazine *Sanskrit*, and during that time was a contributing columnist to *The Road* and *Irregardless* magazines in Charlotte.

And, Jeffery's The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature Southern Legitimacy Statement:



"No good Southern fiction is complete without a Dead Mule."
— Valerie MacEwan

Teaching Daylilies How to Read

A few years ago I submitted work to a Southern lit magazine, The Dead Mule, which requires in fun, as part of the submission process, that the writer include a statement of Southern legitimacy. I've expanded it a bit, and also, in fun, include it as a postscript to The Broken Flower.

I was born and raised in the feudal mill village of Kannapolis, North Carolina, in the 1950's, have never lived outside the state, and don't want to. When I was a child my neighbor Preacher Pethel ran a country store, plowed everyone's Victory Garden with a mule during the week, and preached Hell-fire on the weekends. I sang hymns with his grand-daughter many a Saturday and Sunday night and learned how to hold a note until the

bees swarmed. One day when a black snake slithered down the hill toward my grandma and me hoeing in her garden up the street from my house, the Preacher and every other grown man in the neighborhood appeared with their Personal Hoe to take on that critter. After seeing it hang on a fence post for a week I knew I'd love snakes the rest of my life.

I was born knowing the difference between Eastern and Western North Carolinians, and Eastern and Western North Carolina barbecue [both noun and verb]. Of Appalachian Scots-Irish and Cherokee stock (with some Pennsylvania-Dutch thrown in to sweeten the ball, not flat, dumplings), one would think I would prefer Lexington-style cue, but I don't, even though it's just fine, especially with that red slaw; rather give me some Wilson, North Carolina barbecue, yellow slaw, and corn sticks anytime [although, in truth, the best cue anywhere, *except* in Umbria, Italy, is at Allen & Sons in Chapel Hill with the white slaw I most prefer]. I'm born redneck and White Trash, and bred-in-the-bone Yallah Dawg Democrat, which I reckon has something to do with being descended from a refugee Calvinist preacher and his exiled Hapsburg princess wife.

Having been Eastern Indian in my last life, I embrace Vedanta and Jesus [the real one not the current day self-righteous one], and given a choice between my fantasy desert island meal of country style steak, lima beans, sweet potato biscuits, and grandma Gill's pound cake or Goa Fish Curry, onion chutney, paratha, and raita, I'd have it all and ask for more. Luckily okra comes compliments of both cultures. In addition, I'll have a glass each, just to display my New South cosmic-cosmopolitan taste, of some black wine of Cahor,

Sicilian Nero d'Avola, Provençal amber-colored Rosé, Prosecco, Veuve Clicquot, and French Suze. Then a thimble-full each of Nocello, Limoncello (homemade please), Siennese Amaro, and Lot Valley Pruneau (also, homemade please). Maybe I'm not Southern enough, but I just can't drink bourbon. One strike against me, I know, but you'll like me after I've downed all that fancy southern European stuff. Wait...please throw in some English bitters—a pint will do.

If that's not enough to get your Mule ears listening, then let me tell you that I eat banana sandwiches (sometimes with peanut butter in addition to the Duke's mayonnaise), fried chicken, chicken livers (Dip's please), devilled eggs, okra, and collards—and drink sweet tea with abandon. Being Southern, I am full of lovely loving contradictions and thus hate white grits which to my taste should only be eaten as a condiment for pools of butter; but I adore yellow grits, and stone or water ground grits with runny eggs glazing through. Those yellow grits? We didn't eat grits for breakfast; we had corn meal mush with red-eye gravy. Thus when I first crossed the Ponte Vecchio I realized, Southern as I am, that I was also Italian. Another former life? Or the next one; I don't know.

I wish I had the gumption to be vegetarian, but oh I do so love hawg, and I think plants have just as much soul as we animals, so what's up with that? Oh, and Neese's sausage is just great, especially the extra sage. But beware of Neese's Liver Pudding in Blowing Rock which I grew up devouring, and Tom Thumb (also known as Thingamajig) from the Wilson County area. As my father would say, "Pretty good eat'n for the poor!"

I think kudzu in flower is one of the earth's greatest pleasures, and goldenrod and sumac the most beautiful doorways into the corridors of coming winter. Trees. Oh, how I love trees. I could eat 'em with a spoon. That's not allowed, but persimmons are. Now that's a puddin' to write home about, and Jane knows how to make it. Two spiritual guides, one Southern, one Japanese, speak to trees better than anyone: Ms. Welty declared, "How can you go out on a limb if you don't know your own?" While that Eastern dude Musō Soseki advised, "Don't ask why the pine trees/in the front garden/are gnarled and crooked//The straightness/they were born with/is right there inside them." I trust my poems smell of pine and chrysanthemums, cut grass and cedar posts, and that the crookedness in them shows I know the limb I'm hanging on. I wrote my first poems high up in the fork of a *Mimosa*; a fragrance never forgotten.

Some folks might not consider most of my work Southern enough, but I do. It don't matter to me. My vale of humility has room enough for another's mountain of conceit. Without the slightest hesitation I'd sleep on a bed

of moss with ticks and beetles to hear the earth sing. A blue mountain all smoked up is the most erotic sight I ever did see. Now I'm not saying those roiling waves on the Banks don't do it to me too—they do. If you gonna have one contradiction you might as well have a thousand. "*Magnolia, Camellia, Gardenia thrall.*" That's the refrain.

But listen to this. My Scots-Irish and Cherokee bloods allows me visions and to believe'm, no matter how the practical Calvinist and Pennsylvania-Dutch fire in the veins might fight against it. I see all kinds of beings in the blessed outdoors and next to the hearth without a whimper or a scare. I've parleyed with fairies and leprechauns many a time and no one will ever convince me otherwise. I even woke up once to a goblin creeping into my bed. One swift kick and he was gone. I'm legitimately Southern and proud of it which makes me ordinary and strange at the same time.

Jonathan Williams once told me that we needed to teach daylilies how to read and so, ever since then, that's what I've been trying to do.

Golgonooza at Frog Level
Summer 2007, revised and expanded June 2012

[The Poems in The Dead Mule.](#)