

THE SOUTH WHIDBEY RECORD

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'Gotbreast?' and body image readings at Hedgebrook

Help kick-off **Hedgebrook's** Literary Landscapes reading series this year with authors celebrating the theme "Writing from Our Bodies." The series starts at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23 in the longhouse at **Hedgebrook**.

Hedgebrook alumna Jennifer Munro explores the hills and valleys of the body with readings from "Navel Attire," which was originally published in Calyx and most recently published in the Seal Press anthology "The Bigger, the Better, the Tighter the Sweater: 21 Funny Women on Beauty, Body Image and Other Hazards of Being Female."

The essay, said Munro, is about her coming to terms with body image and pregnancy loss by the simple, or not-so-simple, act of getting her belly button pierced.

Munro was accepted for a **Hedgebrook** residency in 2001.

"At the time, I had no publication credits, and I worried that I could not call myself a 'writer,'" Munro recalled.

"**Hedgebrook's** belief in me helped me to have confidence in myself as an author."

Since her residency, Munro has published more than 40 essays and stories, won a Grants for Artists Projects grant and was accepted for the 2008 Jack Straw Writers Program.

"I don't believe any of this would have happened without the foundation that **Hedgebrook** helped me to build, fostering my own belief in the importance of my work which continues to help me forge ahead through the constant rejection that's part of the publishing process," said Munro.

Munro's stories and essays have appeared in numerous literary journals and anthologies, including the North American Review, Boulevard, Massachusetts Review, Zyzzyva, "Best American Erotica," "Best Women's Erotica," "Mammoth Book of Best New Erotica" and Literary Mama. Her new short-story collection, "The Erotica Writer's Husband," is available on www.lulu.com or by visiting www.munrojd.com.

Anastacia Tolbert's documentary film "GOTBREAST?" will get a screening at the **Hedgebrook** reading as well.

Tolbert wrote, co-directed and co-produced the film with Ann Walsh in 2007.

She explained a little about how the motivation for the film came about.

"The 'GOTBREAST?' documentary seeks to respond to the acute 'body-image-itus' epidemic by destroying myths, perpetuating truth and examining the ways breasts and negative and positive body images affect women," Tolbert said.

The hour-length film features interviews with women who vary in age, race, marital status, sexual orientation, cultural background, body size and class.

Tolbert said she sees the film as a platform for discourse and examination and may be particularly beneficial to teen girls, women's organizations, documentary buffs, universities, film festivals, libraries, not-for-profits, public radio stations, public television, activists and, generally everyone.

Tolbert is a writer, a Cave Canem Fellow, journalist, workshop facilitator and playwright living in Seattle.

She is author of the poetry book, "Baring My Soul," and the recipient of the 2004 San Diego Journalism Press Club Award for the article "War Torn." Tolbert is currently a Seattle Arts and Lectures writer-in-residence.

Her poetry, fiction and nonfiction have been published in a variety of magazines and in "An Anthology of Female Poets & Emcees," "I Woke Up and Put My Crown On: 76 Voices of African American Women," and the "Hair Piecez Anthology."

The Literary Landscapes reading series features **Hedgebrook** alumnae reading from their work followed by a discussion over tea and homemade **Hedgebrook** cookies.

The readings are free and open to the public and held on the last Saturday of every month (except December). **Hedgebrook** is located at 2197 Millman Road in Langley.

Go to www.hedgebrook.org for a complete schedule of upcoming readers and to find out more about the writers-in-residence program.