

## Skirrid Fawr\*

Just like the farmers who once came to scoop  
handfuls of soil from her holy scar,

so I am still drawn to her back for the answers  
to every question I have ever known.

To the sentence of her slopes,  
the blunt wind glancing from her withers,

to the split view she reveals  
with every step along her broken spine.

This edge of her cleft palate,  
part hill, part field,

rising from a low mist, a lonely hulk  
adrift through Wales.

Her east-west flanks, one dark, one sunlit,  
her vernacular of borders.

Her weight, the unspoken words  
of an unlearned tongue.

*Owen Sheers, from Skirrid Hill (Seren Books, 2005)*

\*Skirrid Fawr is the most easterly of the Black Mountains in Wales. The mountain is also known as Holy Mountain or Sacred Hill. Skirrid comes from the Welsh *Ysgyrid*, a derivation of *Ysgariad* meaning divorce or separation.

Washington Meets Wales – a festival of Welsh writing, 18-24 March 2009

Organised by Academi with support from the Welsh Assembly Government

[www.academi.org](http://www.academi.org) / [www.wales.com/smithsonian](http://www.wales.com/smithsonian)

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## Washington Meets Wales

### 18-24 March 2009

#### Wednesday 18 March

7.00-8.00pm – Hotel Tabard Inn, 1739 N Street, NW  
Welcome reception and readings. Entry by invitation only.  
Contact: Tabard Inn (202) 463 7909 or [Academi.post@academi.org](mailto:Academi.post@academi.org)

#### Thursday 19 March

7.00-8.30pm - Marymount University Campus Café, Arlington, Virginia  
**Fflur Dafydd** sings and writes in both Welsh and English. **Owen Sheers** is a poet and prose writer who writes in English. Together they will perform their work in a unique bilingual evening of poetry and song. Event is open to the public. For reservations contact the Honors Program: (2703) 284 1629

#### Friday 20 March

British School of Washington, 2001 Wisconsin Ave., NW  
**Eurig Salisbury** and **Tom Anderson** lead creative writing workshops for young people. Eurig will introduce the ancient form of *cynganedd* (Welsh verse form) and draw parallels with the more modern art of texting. Tom will lead a workshop on travel writing and introduce the concept of the surfing novel. This event is for students of the British School only.

7.30pm – The Writers' Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda  
**Catrin Dafydd**, **Owen Sheers**, **Eurig Salisbury**, **Tom Anderson** and **Fflur Dafydd** will join DC writers **Rose Solari** (author of *Orpheus in the Park* and *Difficult Weather*) and **Adele Steiner** (author of *The Moon Lighting* and *Freshwater Pearls*) for a lively evening of readings and discussion. For reservations go to [www.writer.org](http://www.writer.org) and click on the "Events" link.

#### Monday 23 March

2.30-3.30pm – Battelle-Tompkins Building, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W  
**Catrin Dafydd**, **Owen Sheers** and **Eurig Salisbury** present their work at the Department of Literature at American University. They will also discuss some of the issues in contemporary Welsh literature and culture. For information contact: Kyle Dargan (202) 885 2933 or [kyle.dargan@american.edu](mailto:kyle.dargan@american.edu)

6.00-8.00pm – Busboys and Poets, 14th & V., 2021 14th St (At the heart of the U St. Corridor)  
Poetry Slam in DC's best venue with poets from DC and Wales: with Welsh writers **Catrin Dafydd**, **Owen Sheers**, **Fflur Dafydd**, **Tom Anderson** and **Eurig Salisbury**, joined by some of the best of DC poets, **Ethelbert Miller**, **Kyle Dargan** and **Fred Joiner**. Book early to avoid disappointment.  
Contact: Busboys and Poets (202) 387 7638 or [post@academi.org](mailto:post@academi.org)

#### Tuesday 24 March

9.30am-1.00pm – English Department, George Washington University, Rome Hall, 801 22nd St., NW  
**Catrin Dafydd** and **Tom Anderson** are visiting writers at some of the creative writing workshops at George Washington University. This event is for GWU students only. Contact: (202) 994 6180

Note: this timetable is subject to alterations. For further information contact [post@academi.org](mailto:post@academi.org)



# WASHINGTON MEETS WALES

# 2009



[www.academi.org](http://www.academi.org)

## Introduction

Some of the best young Welsh writers will be performing their work in Washington DC in March 2009 as part of a week-long celebration of contemporary Welsh literature in the US capital.

Washington Meets Wales is part of the wider Wales Smithsonian Cymru 2009 programme of activities and events, which includes Wales as a guest nation at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in June 2009. As a taster to the festival, Academi, the Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society for Authors, with support from the Welsh Assembly Government, has organised a series of literary activities around the city.

The links between Wales and the US have a long history. Academi is delighted to have a role in creating new connections today. Following in the footsteps of Dylan Thomas, five young Welsh writers will cross the Atlantic for a week of workshops, readings, exchange and debate. What better time to glance at the state of these two nations and their literatures.

The inheritors of Dylan Thomas have a lot to live up to but, being Welsh, they'll do it with ease.

We hope you will join us.

Academi is the Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society for Authors. Academi is funded by the Arts Council of Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government.

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### Tom Anderson

Tom Anderson was led into a writing career through journeys taken as a surfer. He studied at the University of Glamorgan, south Wales and was the recipient of an Academi writer's bursary for 2007 for his next book, a travelogue set in the USA. Tom's main area of interest is travel, and he has had articles published in several publications. His book *Riding the Magic Carpet: A Surfer's Odyssey to Find the Perfect Wave* (Summersdale Publishers Ltd) was published in 2006.



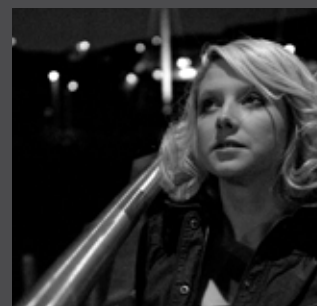
### Catrin Dafydd

Author, dramatist, poet, political campaigner and performer. Catrin graduated in Welsh from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. She won the Literature Medal at the Urdd Eisteddfod, Cardiff. Catrin won an Academi bursary in 2004 to work on her first novel, entitled *Pili Pala* (Gomer, 2006), which reached the long list for the Welsh Book of the Year, 2006. Her first novel in English, entitled *Random Deaths and Custard* (Gomer, 2007), has been nominated for the 'Books to be talked about 2009' award by the World Book Day team.



### Fflur Dafydd

Novelist and singer-songwriter Fflur Dafydd is a graduate of the University of East Anglia's Creative Writing MA course. She was selected in 2005 for the high-profile Scrittura Giovani project for emerging European writers, and has undertaken residencies in Helsinki, Finland and on Bardsey Island, Wales. Fflur has a PhD on the poetry of R.S. Thomas and currently lectures in Creative Writing at Swansea University, south Wales. Fflur was awarded the Prose Medal at the National Eisteddfod in 2006. She is the author of two Welsh language novels and one English novel, *Twenty Thousand Saints* (Alcemi, 2008).



### Eurig Salisbury

Poet and academic Eurig Salisbury was born in Cardiff, Wales and later moved to Carmarthenshire. He is currently a Research Fellow on the Poets of the Nobility Project at the Centre for Advanced Welsh & Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth. At the age of 13 he taught himself the craft of *cynganedd* – the ancient, but still very popular, verse form in Welsh. He won the Chair at the National Urdd Eisteddfod in 2006, and has come second in the Chair competition at the National Eisteddfod of Wales on three occasions, in 2006, 2007 and 2008. *Llyfr Glas Eurig*, his first collection of poems, was published by Barddas in 2008.



### Owen Sheers

Owen Sheers was born in Fiji in 1974 and brought up in Abergavenny, south Wales. He was educated at King Henry VIII comprehensive, Abergavenny and New College, Oxford. The winner of an Eric Gregory Award and the 1999 Vogue Young Writer's Award, his first collection of poetry, *The Blue Book* (Seren, 2000) was short-listed for the Wales Book of the Year and the Forward Prize Best 1st Collection 2001. His debut prose work *The Dust Diaries* (Faber 2004) won the Wales Book of the Year 2005. In 2004 he was selected as one of the Poetry Book Society's 20 Next Generation Poets. Owen's second collection of poetry, *Skirrid Hill* (Seren, 2005) won a 2006 Somerset Maugham Award. His first novel, *Resistance* (Faber, 2008) has been translated into nine languages. Owen was a 2007 Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Fellow at the New York Public Library. He currently divides his time between New York and Wales.



## Washington meets Wales Meet the writers