

# Philadelphia's 53rd Annual Great Books Fall Institute

## Rutgers University Inn & Conference Center

178 Ryders Lane. New Brunswick, NJ 08901

**November 10 - 12, 2023**



### *Writers as Characters*

*Meneseteung*, Alice Munro

*The Friend: A Novel*, Sigrid Nunez

*Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann

*The Wonder Boys*, Michael Chabron

By popular request, we will return to the *Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center*. Their website [ <https://inn.rutgers.edu/> ] clarifies holding our weekend on *Writers as Characters* at this strategically located site. The twenty-one acre wooded campus estate is near, but separate, from the Rutgers campus. Parking and WiFi are complimentary. The Inn is BYOB. Although we provide libations for our Saturday evening social, you may wish to be self-sufficient at other times. Check-In on Friday is at 4:00 pm; Check-Out on Sunday is at 10:00 am. In both instances, the front desk can hold your bags. Currently, there are no Covid restrictions. Yet, we will adhere to up-to-date protocol recommendations from the CDC, State of New Jersey, and Rutgers University. As a new addition, a guided tour of Rutgers' Zimmerli Art Museum is planned for Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. at a cost of \$11 per person.

On Friday night, we will discuss Alice Munro's short story *Meneseteung*. Its portrayal of Almeda Joynt Roth, an independent woman and poet, captures the difficulties she encountered within a historical context with restrictive provincial norms. Simultaneously, it illuminates the erasure and epistemological uncertainty that accompanies historical retrieval.

Saturday morning presents *The Friend: A Novel* by Sigrid Nunez, which won the National Book Award in 2018. The novel portrays an unnamed novelist who lifts the veil on the private lives of writers giving a sobering glimpse into their competitive world. With the tragic loss of her beloved mentor, she is rescued by his literature-loving Great Dane who fills the void in her life. Saturday afternoon brings Thomas Mann's exquisite novella, *Death in Venice*. Gustav von Aschenbach is portrayed as a renowned writer of serious and sensitive prose whose desire for an idealized love, slowly, but inevitably, contaminates his intense and narrowing focus on beauty and aesthetics. As he struggles to keep afloat his transcendent consciousness, he finds himself hopelessly sinking in dangerous libidinal waters.

Sunday morning, we discuss Michael Chabron's *Wonder Boys*. This contemporary comic classic is at once a deft parody of the American fame factory and a piercing portrait of young and old desire. The novel introduces two unforgettable characters: Grady Tripp, a former publishing prodigy now lost in a fog of pot and divided passion and loyalties, who has resisted adulthood in favor of adolescent rebellion, and Grady's student, James Leer, who is a budding writer obsessed with Hollywood self-destruction and struggling with his own searching heart. The two find themselves at a writing retreat where Leer self-destructs and Tripp finally gets tripped up by his dual love life.

## Registration

If you attended in 2022, you know our venue was terrific in many ways. Unfortunately, expenses were greater than expected. We should have charged more, and before the Institute, Rutgers imposed an increase in dining costs. This January, 2023, Rutgers anticipates having yet another increase in dining costs. Nevertheless, they required a deposit which locks in the costs of accommodation. We accordingly have had to increase our registration costs. We believe fees are still very reasonable for a two-night stay with good accommodations, six meals, pleasant conference rooms, and delivery of books.

**COST:** \$500 per person for double-occupancy, \$650 per person for single-occupancy. When requested, we can try to arrange roommates. Commuter rates are available.

**CANCELLATION:** Cancellations after September 10, 2023, two months prior to the event, will lose the deposit. Cancellations before September 10, 2023 incur a \$60 charge for books and mailing.

**REGISTRATION LIMIT:** Only the first forty-five applicants are guaranteed. Therefore, please register as soon as possible.

**INFORMATION:** John Dalton (610) 608-7711, jd5258875@aol.com &  
John Taylor (215) 283-7351, John.Taylor219@verizon.net

### Registration Form:

Complete and mail with deposit to: John Dalton, P.O. Box 424, Newtown Square, PA 19073

#### Deposit Enclosed:

\_\_\_\_\_ : \$250.00 per person for double-occupancy for \_\_\_\_ persons.  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \$325.00 per person for single-occupancy for \_\_\_\_ persons.  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \$11.00 per person for OPTIONAL Guided Tour of Rutgers' Zimmerli Art Museum, Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 3:00 pm for \_\_\_\_ persons.  
Admission without the tour is free. NOTE: Paid parking is available at the Museum (i.e., meters out front plus a nearby garage). Suggestion: Park first at the museum for the tour and then drive afterward to the Rutgers Inn & Conference Center for registration, where parking is free.

Make checks payable to: FALL INSTITUTE. On arrival, your remaining balance is due with CHECK OR CASH ONLY: \$250.00 per person for a double and \$325 per person for a single occupancy.

PRINT NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ CELL: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate Preference \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests (if possible):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact:  
\_\_\_\_\_