1-15-2009

UNH Professor Honored For Book About Anne Sexton

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DURHAM, N.H. - Paula M. Salvio, professor of education at the University of New Hampshire, has been honored by the American Educational Studies Association with the 2008 AESA Critics' Choice Book Award for her book, "Anne Sexton: Teacher of Weird Abundance."

Published in 2007 by State University of New York Press, Salvio's book portrays the teaching life of Anne Sexton, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet who confessed to the unrelenting anguish of addiction and depression. Salvio's book looks at how Sexton framed and used her personal life in her teaching and learning, and considers how personal lives influence teaching. The work concerns itself with images of women who teach writing in ways that defy normative notions of what it means to be a "good" teacher.

"Our best teachers are dissonant and enigmatic figures; they haunt and inspire us with their strangeness and provoke in us anxious excitement and wild thoughts. Paula Salvio's engrossing meditation on the melancholic life and work of Anne Sexton stays close to this discomforting insistence. With sensitivity, insight, courage and a writer's flair, Salvio presents a compelling study of Sexton's life that will provoke readers to be grateful for the power of creative, honest, and searching scholarship," says Deborah Britzman, professor of education at York University.

A professor at UNH since 1992, Salvio studies the ways in which the rhetoric of performance are used by professional and student writers to express what is half-spoken in culture and society. She is interested in the rhetorical practices writers use when their emotional lives call out for full expression, but they feel at a loss for words. Currently she is studying the professional melancholia among teachers due to the No Child Left Behind legislation. Salvio is working on a book-length project on surrealist World War II photographer Lee Miller and is coeditor with Gail Boldt of "Love's Return: Psychoanalytic Essays on Childhood, Teaching, and Learning" (Routledge, 2006).

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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