Winter With the Writers Presents: Amy Bloom

By Natalie Smith

This year’s Winter With the Writers Festival has now come to an end, with guest author Amy Bloom’s master class and reading last night wrapping up a wonderful month of visiting writers, which included Sapphire, Natasha Trethewey, Katie Farris, and Malena Mörling.

Amy Bloom is a New York Times bestselling author, with multiple novels and collections of short stories being published since 1993. She is currently the Irving Bacheller Chair at Rollins, and taught a 1-credit course entitled “The Writing Life” to Rollins students throughout this last week. Her most recent novel Lucky Us follows a young girl through her formative years in 1940s America. It explores human relationships and personalities in all their forms with wit and great heart.

Bloom’s visit was both inspiring and motivating for the interns. In her master class, she started the workshop of each intern’s piece of writing with a question to the author about what it is that the author is struggling with in writing the story. The interns were able to have their work critiqued and analyzed in a constructive way, with ideas and tips given by Bloom throughout for how to improve the piece.

In the evening, her reading was met with a large and eager audience. Bloom read wonderfully from her newest book Lucky Us. She read through the first part of the story, where the heart and main voice of the story, Ava, is introduced, and then read through a few chapters later in the book to give the audience a feel for the novel as a whole without spoiling the plot for anyone who hadn’t read it yet.

The question-and-answer session that followed was filled with fantastic insight into the writing craft, as well as Amy Bloom as a writer. Her wit charmed the audience and had them laughing throughout the session. Her insights into the craft of writing and life itself were a great note to end on for this Winter With the Writers season.

Thank you all for your support and attendance throughout this year’s festival. It has been a truly wonderful season of Winter With the Writers. Now we look forward to next year!