

Winter with the Writers Presents: Katie Farris

By Mario Ferrucci

So far, the 2015 season of Winter with the Writers has been a wonderful success. Four outstanding authors have flown in from all over the states to share their insights on craft during the master classes, and wisdom readings in the evenings.

Most recently, on Thursday, February 19, Winter with the Writers welcomed Katie Farris, author of *boysgirls* and acclaimed fiction writer, poet, translator, and editor. Farris has held teaching positions at both Brown University and UC Berkely, but currently is a member of the faculty in the MFA Program at San Diego State University.

In *boysgirls*, Katie Farris makes an art of taking myths we all love and using them to tell a new story. Throughout the book, there are hints and allusions to Daedalus and Icarus, Narcissus, and even Cyclopes. The real beauty of *boysgirls* is that it shows us how to read the stories we all know and love anew and, once again, experience that glowing passion of an excellent first read.

At 4:00, Farris taught a master class and workshopped pieces of six different Rollins Winter with the Writers Interns. Many of her points stressed the need to emphasize the setup and payoff of a story. “In many cases, you need to consider what you are setting the reader up for, and, later, how that setup will pay them off. That said, how much do we think this story lives up to the expectations it sets during the introduction?” Some other themes discussed included the perversion of known themes, the rules of cause and effect, and the importance of clarity through connections built with the reader’s emotions.

Later in the evening starting at 7:30, Farris read from her newest book, *boysgirls*, and entertained a short question and answer session. To say the reading was both passionate and gripping would be an understatement. She read a few stories from each section, including *Misa en Abyme*, *The Devil’s Face*, and *The Boy with One Wing*. While the stories were short in length, it was easy to tell that *this* was how they were meant to be read and heard. They were powerful works of fine craft.

Ms. Farris,

We look forward to having you.