

“A Little Salvation” kicks off this year’s poetry readings

Rebecca Reed

Each year, Mercer University host several poets from across the country to read their original pieces. This year’s poetry tour opened with a reading from one of Mercer’s own professors, Judson Mitcham, who teaches writing with the creative writing tract of the English Department.

Mitcham said his book, “A Little Salvation,” is a collection of “25 years of work.” The opening to the poetry tour included 12 poems from Mitcham’s collection, one of which is to be published in the *Hutchinson Review*.

Mitcham’s poems speak the thoughts of a Southern man finding strange comedies in life. He stated before reading “Preface to an Omnibus Review” that he taught himself how to write poetry by reading reviews until he felt overwhelmed by the details and wrote the poem with a large sense of irony.

The opening night’s readings were held in the choir rehearsal room of the McCorkle Music Building.

The evening ended with the last poem in “A Little Salvation” entitled “An Introduction”. This poem was written to remind people that the elderly have a past and a history where they were different and “beautiful.”

During an in-class interview Mitcham talked about his love for poetry and the struggles that he goes through in creating poems. He also spoke of how he began writing poetry.

He encouraged students to write about personal issues and to not worry about how people close to them will react.

Mitcham keeps a journal filled with the words of others, but he only writes his ideas down to poems.

He said that all his poems start longer and they get shorter through the editing process. He recommended writing long.

Mitcham said, “Even if you think you have something, write a little bit more.” He also encouraged writing several endings, sometimes three to four.

Gary Gildner is the next poet scheduled to read on campus. The reading will be on Oct. 18 at 6 p.m. in the choir rehearsal room.

Another Mercer English professor, Dr. Anya Silver, will be reading on Nov. 4th in Newton Chapel from her new collection of poetry which was recently released.

The last reading of the semester will be on Nov. 9. Brian Turner, a soldier who has served two tours in the Middle East, will read at 6 p.m. in Newton.