

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

Funeral director and poet Thomas Lynch to visit OU for poetry, essay reading

It may seem odd to some, but nationally-renowned poet and essayist Thomas Lynch is also director of a local funeral home.

Lynch deals with death every day, but also writes about it – among other topics – and on Tuesday, Oct. 27, will visit Oakland University to read from his collection of essays including, “**The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade.**”

The free event will run from 5-7 p.m. in Banquet Room B of the Oakland Center. Light refreshments will be served.

“The Undertaking” won the Heartland Prize for non-fiction, The American Book Award, and was a finalist for the National Book Award. A second collection of essays, *Bodies in Motion and at Rest*, won the Great Lakes Book Award.

Creative Writing Director **Annette Gilson, Ph.D.**, said Lynch has been a friend of Oakland’s English Department for many years. He has twice been the featured poet at OU’s annual Maurice Brown Poetry Reading, which pays tribute to Professor Maurice F. Brown, who taught at Oakland from 1961 until he passed away in 1985.

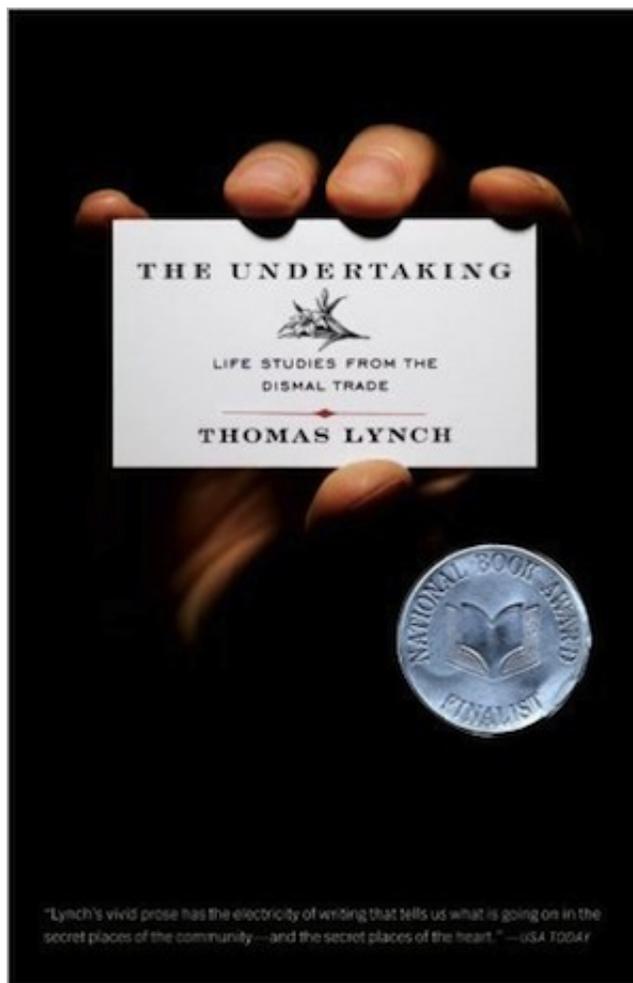
“He is both a local writer – and a poet, memoirist, fiction writer – and an international one, and so we feel a lot of pride in having him return to us,” said Gilson.

“He’s also someone who looks carefully at the world. We need to pay attention to the things he notices: how we die, what that says about us as a culture, how that affects our communities.”

Lynch, who was a student in Oakland’s English Department in the late 1960s, lives and works as director of the **Lynch & Sons Funeral Home** location in Milford, Michigan. He also keeps an ancestral cottage in West Clare, Ireland.

Lynch said reading poems aloud is a form of public-making and publication. “(Writer) Don Marquis said that publishing poems is like throwing rose petals into the Grand Canyon and hoping for an echo. I agree with him. I think hearing poetry out loud in the voice of the poem’s maker is good for the language and good for the listener.”

Oakland’s campus community and surrounding community members are invited to this free event. For more information about the poetry reading, call 248-370-2250 or email gilson@oakland.edu.



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Thomas Lynch is a funeral director, poet and essayist. (photo: Brenda Fitzsimons, The Irish Times)