

Jay Hople

By Iman Gareeboo

Jay Hople was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1970. He is an acclaimed poet who is currently an associate professor of English at the University of South Florida. His first poetry collection, entitled *The Green Squall* (2006) received notable awards, including the Great Lakes College Association New Writer's Award and the Yale Younger Poets Prize, as well as the Florida Book Award, the National "Best Books" Award from *USA Book News* and a "Book of the Year" award from *Foreword Reviews*.

The Abridged History of Rainfall is his second book of poetry and has made him one of the finalists for the National Book Award. Heavily influenced by the passing of his father, Hople's newest poetry book contains writings that marry the tropical qualities of our beautiful state of Florida with images and metaphors of grief. His poems evoke hymns, underlining Hople's dedication to the sound and music of his poetry and he shows he is unafraid of playing with words. His poem, " Excerpts from the Unabridged History of Rainfall" (p23) begins with:

" In dark rain and sharp rain.

In this rain-sharpened dark.

In this dark sharpened by the sound of rain falling on the

Roof of the hospital."

Hople's poetry has both visual, sensory and literal images of sorrow and *The Abridged History of Rainfall* pulls together as an interconnected piece that questions how people work through huge loss.

Rollins College is proud to have this exceptionally accomplished poet come for our last, and best, week of the Winter With the Writers series.