

Masterclass in craftsmanship with Daniel Gumbiner

By Jack Larson

Culminating the WWW Festival, we were fortunate to host a couple of top-notch authors. Daniel Gumbiner is a rising star in the literary world. His first published book, “The Boat Builder” was added to the National Book Awards long list for fiction in 2018. Daniel is an inspiration to all of us interns. It is great to see a young person find success in writing.

The Winter with the Writers Festival cherishes our relationship with the National Book Foundation. We strive to be a model for other undergraduate writing festivals and programs across the country. The foundation has done a tremendous job spreading the opportunities and possibilities of writing, on campuses in 35 states. We were thrilled to have Whitney Hu, the National Book Foundations director of public programs, join us for the final week of this years’ festival. Winter with the Writers looks forward to a meaningful relationship with the foundation for years to come.

Gumbiners masterclass was immersive and engaging, digging into the details that separate a good story from a great one. Line by line and piece by piece we were able to dissect and recognize traits of a great story. All of the interns that submitted were able to take with them a rich array of critiques and approaches. For an author who is relatively new in the writing world, I thought he had a lot of interesting and useful tools to incorporate into my writing.

After a break for dinner, we reconvened for the final event of the festival. Bitter sweet, but we knew, surely, we were in for a treat. Contrary to what Daniel says, he did just read about talking dogs. All jokes aside, his reading was meaningful and spoke to me as well as the crowded Bush auditorium. Followed by a brief Q/A, where many of the Festival guests had the opportunity to have their questions asked to the author. After some laughs, deep thought and even maybe a tear or two we culminated in a book signing.

All in all, it was a great season. We had a diverse group: writers, comedians, and even an improv coach. As we look back on this wonderful festival season, we can’t help but look forward to what the future holds. In the words of Puck, from William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummers night’s dream” .

“If we Shadows have offended
Think but this, and all is mended,
... So, goodnight unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.”

