

## National Book Award Nominee Daniel Gumbiner Joins Us For The Last Week of Winter With the Writers

By Victoria Alvarez

As our amazing experience with Barbara Hamby comes to a close, we look forward to wrapping up our last week of Winter With the Writer's 2019 season with National Book Award nominee Daniel Gumbiner. Our visiting author graduated from UC Berkeley in 2011 and is now currently a Managing Editor for *The Believer* in Southern Nevada. His debut novel, *The Boatbuilder*, made the longlist for the prestigious 2018 National Book Award for Fiction.

*The Boatbuilder* is essentially a coming of age story; however, his novel does not follow the "usual" coming of age narrative. The novel focuses on the protagonist, Berg, who is a 28-year-old man struggling with an opiate addiction after a traumatic brain injury. In efforts to take control of his addiction, Berg moves to a small town in rural Northern California to get away from fast-paced city life. During his time there, he meets a range of interesting characters—specifically, a magnificent storyteller and boatbuilder named Alejandro. Berg becomes interested in boatbuilding and begins an apprenticeship with Alejandro and eventually develops a better understanding of life, as well as himself.

Gumbiner's inspiration for his book stemmed from his own life. Curious about boatbuilding, he took classes for over a year with a master boatbuilder, Bob Darr, and like Alejandro, he was an engaging mentor and a great storyteller. Between breaks, Darr would share stories about where Gumbiner grew up — also Northern California — and it eventually sparked *The Boatbuilder*. Gumbiner wanted to focus on the mentor aspect that came along with his boatbuilding experience, as well as capturing his town's essence in an accurate light seen throughout his novel.

Gumbiner will be conducting a master class on February 28th at 4 p.m. in SunTrust Auditorium. He will also participate in a joint reading the same day at 7:30 p.m. in the Bush Auditorium with fellow National Book Award nominee Jennifer Clement.