

Verse and Versatility

*Now, what type of animal asks after facts?
—so I'm a lawyer. Maybe charming,*

*direct yet as circumspect as any other lawyer
going on about concrete forces of civil*

*society substantially beyond anyone's grasp
and about money. . . .*

—Lawrence Joseph, "Admissions Against Interest"



For Lawrence Joseph, '75, the seemingly disparate worlds of poetry and the law fit well together, just as they once did for the American modernist poet Wallace Stevens. Joseph is the author of six widely acclaimed books—five books of poetry, and *Lawyerland*, a book of prose. As a lawyer, he currently is the Tinnelly Professor of Law at St. John's University School of Law in New York City.

Now, the University of Michigan's Special Collections Library has acquired his literary, professional, and personal papers, which will be housed at the Hatcher Graduate Library.

For Joseph, it is the latest honor in a long and successful career. His journey began in Detroit, where he was born; his grandparents—Lebanese and Syrian Catholics—were among the first Arab American emigrants to Detroit in the early years of the last century. The city, with its hard edges and burned wreckage, would inform his poetry for decades to come.

"I write of Detroit, which I use metaphorically as being emblematic of a number of things: labor and capital, race, violence," he said in a recent speech. He has written of tool and die factories, Hamtramck, Highland Park, of the 1967 riots, of a junkie shooting and wounding his father at his store in 1970.

Joseph earned a B.A. in English literature at U-M in 1970, and won first prize in poetry in the Hopwood Awards. A Power Foundation Fellow at the University of Cambridge, he received a B.A. and M.A. in English language and literature, then attended Michigan Law.

Here, he met some of his major influences, such as then-Dean Theodore St. Antoine, '54, who taught Joseph's labor law class in the spring of 1974. He says St. Antoine, as well as Professors Joseph Sax, Joseph Vining, and Yale Kamisar, "are as professionally important to me as anyone in my life."

Detroit beckoned Joseph home again after he earned his degree from Michigan Law, first as a clerk for Justice G. Mennen Williams, '36, of the Michigan Supreme Court, later as a professor at the University of Detroit Law School.

In 1981, Joseph moved to New York City, where he practiced law at the firm of Shearman & Sterling before becoming a professor at St. John's University School of Law. He teaches courses on labor and employment law, jurisprudence, tort and compensation law, and law and interpretation, and has written and lectured in these areas.

New York City also has become an integral part of Joseph's work, particularly after the World Trade Center attacks of 2001, which occurred just a block from his apartment. "There are few writers toiling on the edges of ground zero better equipped to express what happened," noted a *New York Times* writer.

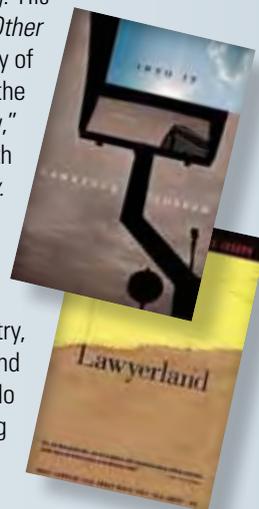
Joseph's writing has been honored by two major symposia, "The Lawyerland Essays" (Vol. 101, *Columbia Law Review*, November 2001), and, more recently, "Some Sort of Chronicler I Am: Narration and the Poetry of Lawrence Joseph" (Vol. 77, *Cincinnati Law Review*, Spring 2009). His

latest book, *The Game Changed: Essays and Other Prose*, will be published this year by the University of Michigan Press. In one of the essays, "Being in the Language of Poetry, Being in the Language of Law," he weaves together his two professions with references to court cases such as *Sierra Club v. Morton* and *Laird v. Tatum*, along with excerpts from several of his poems.

Joseph also includes in the essay this quote from his predecessor in the fields of law and poetry, Wallace Stevens: "...I don't have a separate mind for legal work and another for writing poetry. I do each with my whole mind, just as you do everything that you do with your whole mind."—KV

*"One is not a lawyer
one minute and a
poet the next."*

—Wallace Stevens,
in a letter dated July 29, 1942



2001

The Class of 2001 reunion will be September 23-25, 2011.

Joseph E. Giles recently joined Barclays Capital in Chicago to help grow its Education and Business Services investment banking franchise. In his new role, he will work closely with companies in those two sectors, primarily advising on merger and acquisition transactions and a variety of equity and debt financings.

Samir Parikh recently joined the faculty of Northwestern Law School of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, as an assistant professor of law.

2002

Héctor Arangua has been named partner of Jáuregui, Navarrete y Nader, S.C. in Mexico City. His practice focuses on project finance,

structured finance, mergers and acquisitions, and securities law for both Mexican and foreign clients.

Scott Hairston has been named partner at Latham & Watkins in the Chicago office. He is a corporate attorney with a focus on mergers and acquisitions, corporate restructurings, and general company representation, with particular expertise with companies and transactions in the hospitality industry.



Matthew D. Johnson has been named partner with Warner Norcross & Judd LLP. He specializes in mergers and acquisitions, private security offerings, joint

ventures, and related corporate matters in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, office.

Jordan L. Lipp has been named partner at Davis, Graham & Stubbs, LLP in Denver. He also was chosen as the Colorado Lawyer of the Year by the Colorado Civil Justice League, Colorado's tort reform coalition.

Caroline Reckler has been named partner at Latham & Watkins in the Chicago office. She is an insolvency attorney and has experience in a wide range of restructuring matters, both in- and outside of bankruptcy, including representations of private and public companies in all aspects of chapter 11 proceedings.

Michael Riela has been named partner at Latham & Watkins in the New York office. He is a finance attorney specializing in corporate restructuring.



Darkness, Light, and Hummingbirds

By Clarissa Sansone



JEFFREY CUNNINGHAM

Greg Rappleye, '76, wrote poetry in high school. "But," he observes, "I think everybody does that." Unlike everybody, however, he returned to it decades later and has won prizes for his work.

Rappleye, who is corporation counsel for Ottawa County, Michigan, and teaches in Hope College's English department, has published three books of poetry, completed a fourth manuscript, and drafted a novel. It's no wonder his blog is called "Sonnets at 4 a.m.;" he needs those pre-dawn hours to devote to his craft.

An undergraduate history major, Rappleye turned to reading poetry for "eye relief" while at Michigan Law. "Staring at casebooks every day drove me crazy," he

says. He read the work of Lawrence Joseph, '75, a renowned poet who maintains a law career (see story, p. 50), and looked to the Modernist era. "It was T.S. Eliot and Auden," he says, who rekindled his love of verse.

"About 1990," Rappleye recalls, "I got the chance to ask myself what I wanted to do with my life." His urge to write would not be ignored. In 1995, he published *Holding Down the Earth* (SkyBooks).

He received an M.F.A. from Warren Wilson College in 2000 and published two more books: *A Path Between Houses* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2000) and *Figured Dark* (University of Arkansas Press, 2007). His latest manuscript, *Tropical Landscape with Ten Hummingbirds*, draws on the life and work of 19th-century painter Martin Johnson Heade.

Rappleye's legal writing and creative writing, seemingly at odds, have influenced each other. "What I learned from being a lawyer is don't take criticism too personally, and don't get so attached to what you've written," he says. Writing poetry helps Rappleye to craft "really, really good resolutions" which, he observes, tend to "have a sonnet-like form."

Rappleye's poetry, lyrical yet unflinching, is permeated with images and metaphors of darkness and light. The poet's fascination with these themes stems from his own struggles with macular degeneration and glaucoma. Yet, as he notes, "What a great metaphor." In "Orpheus the Prophet," a poem from his latest manuscript, he writes:

name one songbird, nestled at last among the darkening trees, who will not prophesy the night.