

October 9, 2015

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As part of its growing commitment to the creative arts, Sacred Heart University is delighted to announce the appointment of [Jonas Zdanys](#) to the position of poet-in-residence. To date, Zdanys has published 44 books of both his own poetry as well as translations of Lithuanian literature into English; another two books of original verse are scheduled for release in 2016.

The post serves as the obvious culmination of the poet's many roles and positions over the years. Prior to his tenure at Sacred Heart, Zdanys taught at Yale University in addition to serving as a dean and assistant to the university president. Comfortable with the challenges of administration, he served for 11 years as the Connecticut chief academic officer, responsible for the academic integrity of the state's 47 institutions of higher learning. Then, in 2009, he returned to the classroom, teaching creative writing on Sacred Heart's campus in Fairfield. "The only thing that's been constant through it all has been my work as a poet and translator," Zdanys says.

"We are excited to announce Jonas as poet-in-residence. He is a gifted poet and a gifted teacher," says Laura Niesen de Abruna, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs at Sacred Heart. "This new position is another example of our commitment to providing our students with a well-rounded liberal arts education."

Though the classically soft-spoken and humble professor speaks of the title as a "kind and welcome gesture" recognizing his life's work, he has no intention of treating the post as purely honorific. Zdanys is keen to use his visibility within the literary world to help illuminate the University's standing commitment to the arts as they secure the talents of numerous practitioners across an array of artistic disciplines. Likewise, he looks to connect SHU to its local and regional community, making on-campus artistic events

more widely accessible to the public as well as developing outreach programs such as, for example, visiting high schools to bring the talent and experience of the University to the next generation of creative artists.

“My students are wonderful,” Zdanys says. “But they are so used to certainty. And it’s an uncertain world. Creative writing, poetry—the arts in general—allows them to break out of that.”