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IWU Hosts Author/Poet/Musician Charles O. Hartman

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IWU Hosts Author/Poet/Musician Charles O. Hartman

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- Multi-talented Charles O. Hartman, a pioneer in the application of computers to poetry, will give two presentations at Illinois Wesleyan University on Wednesday, May 18.

Hartman, professor of English and co-director of the creative writing program at Connecticut College, will speak on "Computers and Poetry", at 4 p.m. in the Henning Room of the Memorial Student Center. He will be reading from his poetry at 7 p.m. in the Merwin Gallery of the Ames School of Art.

He is the author of five books of poetry, most recently "The Long View" (1998), and has written three prose books, including the formative study "Free Verse : An Essay on Prosody." His other poetry books are "The Pigfoot Rebellion" (1982), "True North" (1990), "Sentences" (1994), and "Glass Enclosures" (1995).

Hartman, who is also an accomplished jazz guitar player, has devised a computer program, MacProse, which generates random, but syntactically correct, sentences for the composition of poems.

Hartman's book, "Virtual Muse: Experiments in Computer Poetry," explains the use of computers in creating poetry. Patricia Monaghan in Booklist Magazine called it an "absorbing, authoritative, and astonishingly accessible book...Hartman explores what he has learned of human poetry by attempting to create computer poetry programs and, further, by attempting to write a single poem--a dialogue of mind and body--with a computer as compositional partner. As he describes his own process, he also engages us with the intricate questions he raises about what makes poetry work or not work."

Hartman, an Iowa City native, earned a bachelor's degree from Harvard and received his master's and doctorate from Washington University. He was a lecturer at Northwestern from 1976-79 and taught at the University of Washington from 1979-84. He has taught at Connecticut College since 1984.