“Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. . . . When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.”

Karl Menninger, *Love against Hate*

“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”

Frederick Buechner, *Now and Then: A Memoir of Vocation*

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The Art of Writing and the Imperative of Listening

October 20–21, 2011
Guest Speakers

**Matthew Roth**'s first book of poems, *Bird Silence*, was published by The Woodley Press in 2009 and described by poet Bruce Bond as “Roth’s dazzling debut volume.” His poems have appeared in many journals, including *Verse, Fence, Minnesota Review, Quarter After Eight* and *32 Poems*. He received his BA in English from Houghton College, his MFA in Poetry from Wichita State University, and his PhD in English from the University of North Texas. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of English at Messiah College, in Grantham, PA.

**Valerie Sayers** is chair of the English Department at the University of Notre Dame and is the author of six novels, including *The Powers*, which will be published by Northwestern University Press in 2012, and *Brain Fever* and *Who Do You Love*, both named “Notable Books of the Year” by the *New York Times Book Review*. Her literary honors include a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Pushcart Prize, and “Notable” and “Distinguished” citations from *Best American Short Stories* and *Best American Essays*. Her stories, essays, and reviews have appeared in the *New York Times, Washington Post, Commonweal, Zoetrope, Ploughshares, Prairie Schooner, Image*, and many other journals.

**James A. Zoller** spent last year abroad, first teaching in the Houghton in London fall program and then teaching at Pusan National University as a Fulbright Scholar. This fall he resumes teaching at Houghton College, where he has been on the English Department faculty since 1984. He and his wife, Donna, raised four children and are now awaiting the arrival of grandchild number six. He is the author of two books of poems, *Simple Clutter* and *Living on the Flood Plain*, the second being published by WordFarm in 2008. He has also published short stories, a newspaper column, and most recently a blog that chronicles his experiences overseas.

Schedule

**Thursday, October 20:**

11:00-11:50 a.m. “Listening and Vocation”—readings and discussion by Valerie Sayers and Matthew Roth (Library 323)

12:00-12:50 p.m. Lunch for invited students and faculty (South End Dining Hall)

1:00-2:30 p.m. “Listening to the Lives of Others”—readings and discussion by Valerie Sayers and Matthew Roth (Chamberlain Center 125)

4:00-4:50 p.m. Interview of Valerie Sayers by Lori Huth (Library 323)

6:30-8:00 p.m. Readings by Valerie Sayers and Matthew Roth, with reception and book signing to follow (Library 323)

**Friday, October 21:**

8:00-8:50 a.m. Breakfast with students and faculty (Dining Hall)

9:00-10:00 a.m. “Listening for the Future” (2nd floor library, study room overlooking quad)

10:15-11:15 a.m. “Listening to Each Other”—a conversation between Valerie Sayers and Matthew Roth with questions and answers to follow (2nd floor library, study room overlooking quad)

3:00-3:50 p.m. Interview of Matthew Roth by James Zoller (Chamberlain Center 123)

4:15-5:00 p.m. “Listening for the Moment When the Moon Goes Round”—Tea and Texts: Reading by James Zoller (Library 323)

* Events marked thus count for chapel credit.