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BMCC student's poems selected for national literature conference

PENDLETON, Ore. – A Blue Mountain Community College sophomore with aspirations of becoming a novelist or short story writer has been selected to read two of his poems at the National Undergraduate Literature Conference at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, today through Saturday. Tanner Livesay, 21, will read two of his original poems that he wrote for his BMCC writing classes and that were selected for the conference. Only one other BMCC student has ever had a piece selected for the conference.

"It is really quite an honor to have a piece selected for this national conference," said Shaindel Beers, Livesay's English instructor at BMCC who submitted the poems for consideration at the conference. "Tanner has always been a really good writer, and this is an exciting opportunity for him to be around other fantastic writers from around the country."

The conference will feature Michael Ondaatji, who wrote the novel, *The English Patient*, which was adapted into the Academy Award-winning film of the same name. Livesay will have an opportunity to attend workshops on poetry, American and British literature, creative writing and more. Livesay will read "Stay," which was inspired by an attempt to come to grips with the ending of a past relationship, as well as his poem "Old Pete: Or Longstreet's Reply Had He Had Thinner Skin," which was inspired by the book *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara, which renewed his interest in the Civil War.

"General Longstreet stood out to me as a fascinating and misunderstood figure in history," Livesay said. "My goal with this poem was to show his true thoughts and feelings based on several accounts and historical events, although he himself was reluctant to combat the many negative sentiments that were floated about him."

Livesay credits his instructor, Shaindel Beers, for helping him become the writer he is today.

"Shaindel is the best professor I have ever had in all of my schooling," he said. "She has given me the freedom to write about the things that are true to me and evaluates them on their merit rather than what she necessarily agrees or disagrees with – she really pushes you to fulfill the promise of your ideas."

Livesay's trip to Utah for the conference was made possible by a scholarship from the BMCC Foundation.

"I can't even put into words how appreciative I am of BMCC's (Foundation's) decision to provide me with the means to make the trip," Livesay said. "I just really want to represent myself and BMCC well and make the most of the incredible opportunity that I've been given."

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