Mark Jarman has published eleven books of poetry and two collections of essays on poetry. A new collection of his poetry, *The Heronry*, was published in January 2017. Honors for his work include a Guggenheim Fellowship, three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Joseph Henry Jackson Literary Award from the San Francisco Foundation, and the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize from the Academy of American Poets and *The Nation* magazine. Jarman is Centennial Professor of English at Vanderbilt University.

Jarman will lead a workshop on *Blank Verse and the Iambic Line*. Description: In American poetry the two modern masters of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) were and remain Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens. We will begin our class by comparing some of the ways these two, employing the same metrical measure and following the same metrical rules, wrote verse that sounded remarkably different and distinctly their own. We will also read and discuss at least two of your own efforts at writing blank verse and/or other poems in which you have written an iambic line. Blank verse will be our focus, but I will be happy to talk about any other iambic poems you have written.

Below is one of Jarman’s poems:

**Tiel Burn**

A minor river rises in the west,  
a creek, a brook, it ambles to a sea  
no greater in its way than it, a burn,  
and finds its mouth where pebbles, sea coal, sticks  
roll out and in and dwell as lumps in mud.  
A spill of run off from suburban farms  
and neighborhoods that see it as a ditch
behind their alleyways, it passes through, 
a dim phenomenon that catches light, 
unseen within its cutting, a dun ravelling, 
where water birds trill canticles but only 
to each other, if at all, and sing 
of thirst and appetite and breeding there, 
a minor river running through their lives — 
and, I’m surprised to learn, through part of mine, 
the south end of a life I left far north, 
far north and east, through all these years, a quirk 
of landscape which now I have seen from space 
on Google Earth, yes, there, a pencil line 
of pallid shadow drawing east through country 
that pokes its pastoral nose into a sea 
I can neither feel nor picture any more. 
Where the burn empties, mudflats fly their gulls, 
and, I have read, a rare duck was once seen 
and noted by a birder, years ago. 
Years and years ago. To get used to that 
I have to keep from saying it. To feel 
the time pass through as if it were my blood 
I have to act as if I cannot feel it. 
To understand the distance — only ten miles 
in length the burn’s a very minor river 
descending from a spring in little hills— 
I have to act as if I never knew it 
was always present, always passing through, 
on its way to the shifting place of change 
that turns from fresh to salt, and worlds divide, 
giving to the sea its gift — itself.

Mark Jarman, *The Heronry*