



The Sixth Annual Meeting of the

# GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION

**SOUTHWEST POPULAR/AMERICAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION**  
47TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE • MARRIOTT ALBUQUERQUE • ALBUQUERQUE, NM • FEBRUARY 25-28, 2026

# THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING

*of the*

## GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION

*at the*

### FORTY-SEVENTH SOUTHWEST POPULAR/AMERICAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

February 25~28, 2026

Albuquerque Marriott

*Albuquerque, New Mexico*

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#### *Program Committee*

Susan Balter-Reitz

Granville Ganter

Nicholas G. Meriwether

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#### GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Susan Balter-Reitz

*President*

Deepak Sarma

*President-Elect*

Natalie Dollar

*Vice President*

Ariella Werden-Greenfield

*Vice President*

Granville Ganter

*Past President*

Nicholas G. Meriwether

*Executive Director*



Dear Members, Presenters, and Guests,

Welcome to the sixth annual meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association! This year's conference features 21 sessions with 61 presenters from across the US and the UK. With 37 papers and 7 roundtable discussions, this is our largest largest meeting ever, reflecting the robust nature of the interdisciplinary scholarly conversation about the Grateful Dead phenomenon and the steadily growing footprint of the GDSA.

We are grateful to the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association for hosting us. This meeting represents something of a homecoming: in 2019, the participants of the Grateful Dead area of the SWPACA voted unanimously to form the GDSA, and six years later, we are pleased to be able to return to Albuquerque, which also coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the first conference sessions on the Dead held at the SWPACA.

This would not have been possible without the support of our donors: High Moon Records, Duke University Press, The Dead Zone, Relix, Sky Yellow/Sun Blue LLC, and the Jerry Garcia Family. Tamy Burnett, Kathleen Lacey, Lynnea Chapman King, and Stephanie Lim of the SWPACA were gracious and resourceful in accommodating our very large group. Association Charter Member Jan Wright was instrumental in managing local logistics, and Dennis Gromelski of Fusion arranged for us to be able to celebrate our meeting with live music.

This program provides the schedule for the Grateful Dead sessions at the time this went to print; the final record of the conference will be published in our *Proceedings*, which will incorporate any last-minute changes that may occur. All members receive a print copy of the *Proceedings* and we will make the contents available on our website, [www.deadstudies.org](http://www.deadstudies.org).

We extend a warm welcome to our members and guests, and we especially thank our presenters and session chairs for their work to make this meeting a success. We look forward to seeing you in 2027!

Susan Balter-Reitz  
Granville Ganter  
Nicholas Meriwether  
*Program Committee*

# schedule

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

**Session 1 (11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)**

**Salon A & B**

### *The Hidden Robert Hunter*

Welcome: Nicholas G. Meriwether

Chair: Deepak Sarma

Rhoney Stanley, “‘The Alien and the Weird: Revealing the Hidden Robert Hunter.’”

Brian Dyke, “‘Dark Star’ as a Clinical Intervention for Treating Addiction Withdrawal.”

David Emerson, “‘Storyteller Makes No Choice’: Stories, Tellers, and Listeners in Hunter, Coleridge, and Kenneth Grahame.”

**Session 2 (1:15–2:45 p.m.)**

**Salon A & B**

### *Understanding the Grateful Dead: Media, Medium, and Metadata*

Chair: Jeremy Berg

Kathy Watkins and Scott Wiseman, “*Dead Head TV: Television by Deadheads for Deadheads.*”

Scott Deetz, “900,000 Tons of Data Out of Control: Metadata, Extensibility, and Access Issues in the Grateful Dead Listening Experience.”

Jeremy Berg, “275 (And Counting) From The Vault: An Examination of Grateful Dead Live Releases.”

**Session 3 (3:00–4:30 p.m.)**

**Salon A & B**

### *Special Session: “Your Ears Shall Find No Easy Chair”: Charles Ives, Phil Lesh, and the Grateful Dead*

Moderator: Hawk Semins.

Discussant: Graeme Boone.

**Session 4 (4:45–6:15 p.m.)**

**Salon A & B**

### *Poetry and the Dead: A Roundtable Discussion and Reading*

Chair: Christopher Coffman

Panelists: P. W. Covington, Don McIver, Dean Smith, Tracey Zielonka.

**Opening Reception (7:00 p.m.–)**

**Green Jeans Food Hall**

*3600 Cutler Ave. NE, at the northeast corner of I-40 and Carlisle Blvd.*

Members, presenters, and guests are invited to gather for no-host libations and dinner to mark the opening of our sixth meeting. Green Jeans is an Albuquerque original, offering a range of options with eight restaurants and watering holes and a commons area. It is located across the street from the Hampton Inn (2300 Carlisle NE), a little over 2 miles from the Marriott. We will arrange carpools and rideshares at the end of Session 4.

# schedule

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Session 5 (8:00–9:30 a.m.)

Salon A & B

### *The World in the Lyrics of the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Jeff Zittrain

Maximilian Bowden, “Mapping the Deadverse: A Novel Cartography of a Psychedelic Reality.”

Jeff Zittrain, “‘Let My Inspiration Flow’: Grateful Dead Dreams in the Face of Despair.”

*Note: This panel had a cancellation.*

Session 6 (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Salon A & B

### *Burkean Analysis in the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Susan Balter-Reitz

Nicole Brown, “‘You Better Head Back to Tennessee Jed’: Psychedelics, Incongruity, and the Grateful Dead’s Equipment for Living.”

Susan Balter-Reitz, “‘Even the Purest of Romantics Compromise’: Guilt, Purification, and Redemption in GD60.”

Jayne Stone, “‘There is No ‘No’ In Music’: How the Grateful Dead’s Sound Encourages Sonic Identification.”

Session 7 (11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)

Salon A & B

### *Influences and Antecedents in the Lyrics of Robert Hunter*

Chair: Daniel Pinti

Christopher Coffman, “‘Robert Hunter and Pindaric Odes: Abraham Cowley at Terrapin Station.’”

Nicholas Meriwether, “Mourning the Dead: Robert Hunter’s Uncollected Elegies.”

Granville Ganter, “Robert Hunter and the Future Past.”

Session 8 (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Salon A & B

### *The Legacy of the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Matthew Armstrong

Jason Jarvis, “Digital Dead: Digital Media, Tape Trading, and the Birth of the Jam Band Scene.”

Annemarie Teagle, “‘If You Get Confused ...’: Deadhead Cultural Adaptation in a Changing Musical Landscape.”

Matthew Armstrong, “The Kennedy Center and the Legacy of the Grateful Dead.”

# schedule

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Session 9 (3:00–4:30 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Material Culture and the Grateful Dead Phenomenon*

Chair: Annabelle Walsh

Cecilia Vidal, “Franciscans and Deadheads: Ritual, Imagery, and Lifestyle in Two Intergenerational Communities.”

Annabelle Walsh, “‘Tell Me the Cost’: Resale Value of Vintage Grateful Dead T-Shirts and Inversions of Authenticity.”

*Note: This panel had a cancellation.*

Session 10 (4:45–6:15 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Philosophical Approaches to the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Granville Ganter

Keith Bickley, Aaron Lawler, and Steve Zusman, “‘Experimenting with the Dead: Toward an Ontology of ‘Dark Star’”

Quentin Kinnell and Russell Pryba, “Weirding Experience: The Grateful Dead in the American Intellectual Tradition.”

*Note: This panel had a cancellation.*

SWPACA Reception (6:30–8:00 p.m.)

Grand Ballroom

*Celebrating the 47th Annual Meeting of the SWPACA*

All conference participants are invited to celebrate the forty-seventh Southwest Popular/American Culture Association conference and honor this year’s award winners. Light refreshments and heavy appetizers will be served.

GDSA Evening Social (8:00–10:00 p.m. )

Cimarron

*Remembering Bob Weir*

Please join the GDSA to celebrate the life and music of Bob Weir, with a curated soundtrack of his career by Jesse Jarnow, John Hilgart, and Tyler Roy-Hart. Food and beverages can be purchased from the hotel bar; in accordance with hotel policy and SWPACA rules, please no outside food or drinks.

# schedule

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

**Session 11** (8:00–9:30 a.m.)

Salon A & B

*Landscape, Environment, and Place in the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Nathaniel Racine

Paul Collins and Steve Midway, “Bird Song: Nature and Environmental Themes in the Lyrics of the Grateful Dead.”

Rob Wallace, “The Grateful Dead and/in the Southwest.”

Nathaniel Racine, “Four Trips to Vermont: A Case Study in the Cultural Landscapes of Grateful Dead Tours.”

**Session 12** (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Salon A & B

*Art and Visual Culture in the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Kenneth Hartvigsen

Noah Franken, “The Sphere as Ken Kesey’s Dome Fantasy.”

Kenneth Hartvigsen, “Playing Dead: Grateful Dead Pictures, Performing Culture, and Personal Transformation.”

*Note: This panel had a cancellation.*

**Session 13** (11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Roundtable: The Dead, the Counterculture, and the Electronic Frontier  
on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Apple*

Chair: Susan Balter-Reitz

Panelists: Matthew Armstrong, Jesse Jarnow, Peter Richardson.

**Session 14** (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*The Musicology of the Grateful Dead*

Chair: Chadwick Jenkins

Kristina Marinova, “Symphonic Improvisations: The Grateful Dead, Classical Form, and the Global Folk Imagination, 1966–1972.”

Chadwick Jenkins, “Collecting His Due: ‘Dire Wolf’ and Musical Space.”

Graeme Boone, “‘Bird Song’, an Analytical Journey.”

**Session 15** (3:00–4:30 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Roundtable: The Blues For Allah Workshop Sessions*

Chair: Jesse Jarnow

Panelists: Jeremy Berg, Chadwick Jenkins, Jesse Jarnow, John Hilgart, Tyler Roy-Hart.

# schedule

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Session 16 (4:45–6:15 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Special Session: Celebrating the Grateful Dead at the SWPACA*

Chair: Susan Balter-Reitz

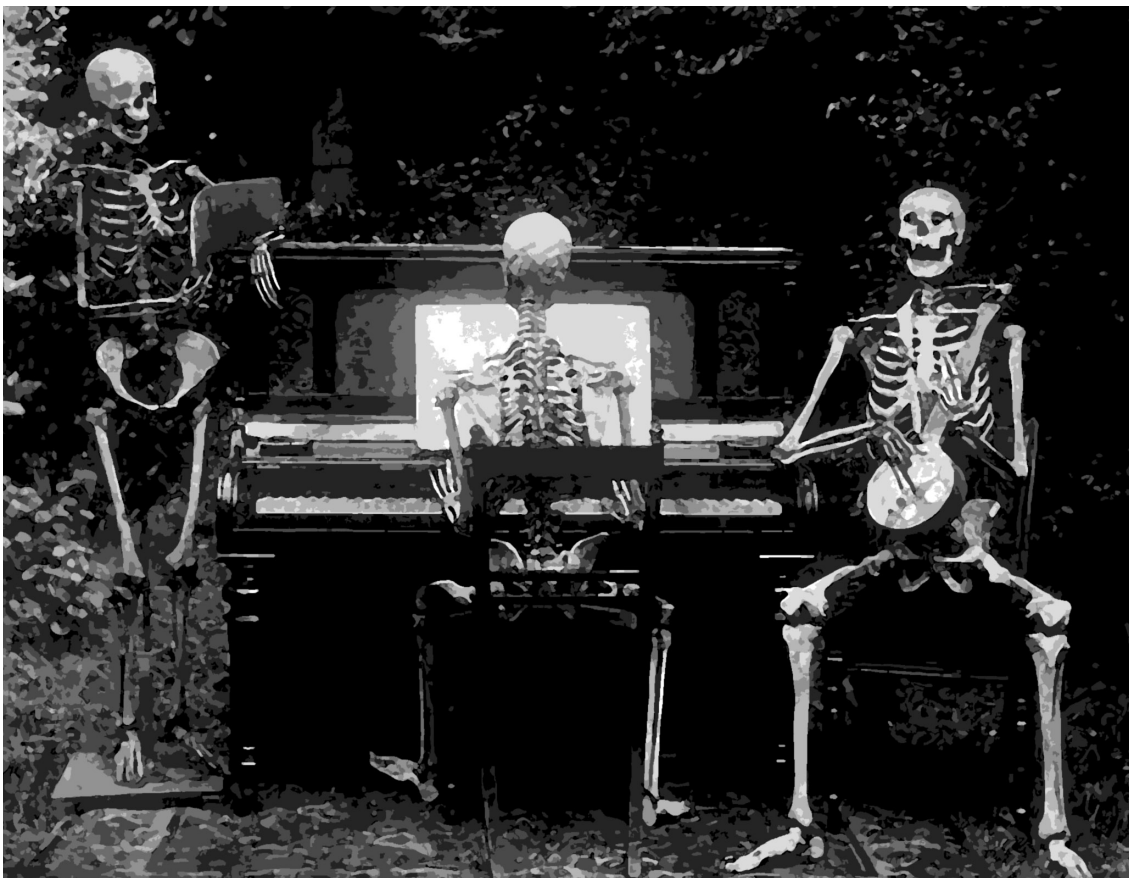
Panelists: Barry Barnes, Lynnea Chapman King, Nicholas Meriwether, Robert G. Weiner.

Concert (7:30–11:00 p.m.)

Fusion

*708 First Street NW, downtown Albuquerque ♦ Tel. (505) 766-9412*

Please join us at Fusion, Albuquerque's premier arts venue, for a special concert featuring Easy Jim, one of the country's up and coming Grateful Dead cover bands. The venue is about 6 miles from the Marriott. There are good restaurants nearby, and the venue has onsite food and beverage options. Tickets are \$20.00; Fusion is a small venue, so see the flyer or call to purchase ahead of time. Doors open at 6:30; the concert begins at 7:30.



# schedule

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**Session 17** (8:00–9:30 a.m.)

Salon A & B

*Roundtable: Workingwoman's Dead, the Influence and Legacy of Donna Jean Godchaux*

Chair: Beth Carroll

Panelists: Beth Carroll, Rhoney Stanley.

*Note: This session had a panelist cancellation.*

**Session 18** (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Salon A & B

*Assessing the Grateful Dead's History: Currents and Constructs*

Chair: Natalie Dollar

Jason Gallagher, "The Cold War and the Life and Afterlife of 'Morning Dew'."

Michael Parrish, "Becoming the Grateful Dead, 1964–1969."

*Note: This session had a cancellation.*

**Session 19** (11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Lyric Themes in the Grateful Dead Songbook*

Chair: Steven Garabedian

Julie DeLong, "'Too Much of Everything Is Just Enough': Camp and the Carnavalesque in the Grateful Dead."

Jay Williams, "'Where Flipism Meets the Acid Test': The *I Ching* and the Grateful Dead."

Steven Garabedian, "The Blues and the Abstract Truth: Pigpen, Race, and the Paradox of Sound."

**Session 20** (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*The Unsung Donna Jean Godchaux, A Guided Listening Session*

Chair: Jesse Jarnow

**Session 21** (3:00–4:30 p.m.)

Salon A & B

*Grateful Dead Studies Association Business Meeting*

Welcome *Susan Balter-Reitz*

Executive Council Reports *Natalie Dollar, Granville Ganter, Nicholas G. Meriwether, Deepak Sarma*

Discussion

Elections

Keynote Address *Barry Barnes*

"The Grateful Dead and Personal Transformation: Reflections on a Fifty-Year Journey."

# presenters

Matthew C. Armstrong *North Carolina A&T State University*  
Susan Balter-Reitz *Montana State University–Billings*  
Barry Barnes *Nova Southeastern University, emer.*  
Jeremy Berg *Arizona State University Library*  
Keith Bickley *Waubonsee Community College*  
Graeme M. Boone *Ohio State University*  
Maximilian Bowden *University of Essex*  
Nicole Brown *Western Washington University*  
Beth Carroll *Appalachian State University*  
Christopher K. Coffman *Boston University*  
Paul M. Collins, Jr. *University of Massachusetts–Amherst*  
Patrick W. Covington *Independent Scholar*  
Scott Deetz *Independent Scholar*  
Julie DeLong *So Many Reads Book Club*  
Natalie Dollar *Oregon State University*  
Brian Dyke *Independent Scholar*  
David Emerson *Independent Scholar*  
Noah Franken *West Texas A&M University*  
Jason Gallagher *St. Louis University*  
Granville Ganter *St. John's University*  
Steven Garabedian *Marist College*  
Alfredo Guerrieri *Cuyahoga Community College*  
Kenneth Hartvigsen *Brigham Young University*  
John Hilgart *Independent Scholar*  
Jesse Jarnow *Good Ol' Grateful Deadcast*  
Jason Jarvis *Loyola Marymount University*  
Chadwick Jenkins *City College, City University of New York*  
Lynnea Chapman King *Adams State University*  
Quentin Kinnell *Northern Arizona University*  
Aaron J. Lawler *Waubonsee Community College*  
Kristina Marinova *World Piano Teachers Association*  
Don McIver *Independent Scholar*  
Nicholas G. Meriwether *Grateful Dead Studies Association*  
Steve Midway *Louisiana State University*  
Michael Parrish *San José State University, emer.*  
Daniel Pinti *Niagara University*  
Russell Pryba *Northern Arizona University*  
Nathaniel R. Racine *Texas A&M International University*  
Peter Richardson *San Francisco State University, emer.*

# presenters

Tyler Roy-Hart *Independent Scholar*  
Deepak Sarma *Case Western Reserve University*  
William “Hawk” Semins *Owsley Stanley Foundation*  
Dean Smith *Duke University Press*  
Rhoney Stanley *Independent Scholar*  
Jayne E. O. Stone *University of Cincinnati*  
Annemarie Teagle *Texas State University*  
Cecilia Vidal *Pratt Institute*  
Rob Wallace *Northern Arizona University*  
Annabelle J. Walsh *Parsons School of Design*  
Kathy Watkins *Nitecat Media*  
Robert G. Weiner *Texas Tech University*  
Jay Williams *University of Chicago Press, ret.*  
Scott Wiseman *Nitecat Media*  
Tracey Zielonka *Independent Scholar*  
Jeffrey Zittrain *Chabot College*  
Steve Zusman *Waubonsee Community College*

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DENNIS GROMELSKI

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KEVIN MONTY

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DEAN SMITH

GEORGE B. WALLACE

PATRICK WORKMAN

## THE GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION

proudly recognizes our members who have presented at five annual meetings.

Inaugurated in 2025 at our fifth conference, the Five Timers Club honors the work and achievement of these scholars. The award recognizes their commitment to the Association and thanks them for their contributions to our conference and the discourse of Grateful Dead studies.

The Class of 2026 inductees into the Five Timers Club are:

*2026*

Christopher K. Coffman

Chadwick Jenkins

*2025*

Susan Balter-Reitz

Granville Ganter

Nicholas G. Meriwether

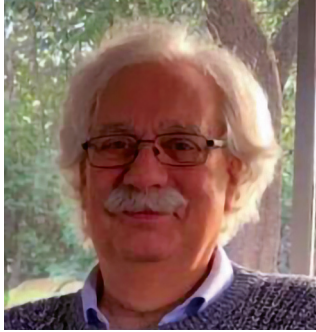
Shaugh O'Donnell

Nathaniel R. Racine

Jay Williams

# IN MEMORIAM

## Dennis Wayne Rothermel, 1949–2025



The Grateful Dead Studies Association is saddened to note the loss of one of our Charter Members and leading lights, Dennis Rothermel, on October 5, 2025. Born in South Bend, IN, Dennis earned his BA in Philosophy from Yale University and his MA and PhD in Philosophy from Northwestern University. He spent his career at California State University–Chico, retiring as Professor of Philosophy with Emeritus status.

In addition to the Grateful Dead, his research interests focused on the intersection of Continental philosophy and cinema studies. His many publications include two coedited books and numerous journal articles, book chapters, and book reviews, as well as almost two dozen conference papers on the Grateful Dead. Indefatigable and unfailingly positive despite the health challenges that slowed him in his last years, he was working on a book on the Dead and film for Duke University Press at the time of his passing.

Dennis's many friends will miss his expansive conversations, his thoughtful and rigorous critical insights, and his warmth and humor, which he used to inspire and encourage colleagues as well as cushion his incisive critiques. Grateful Dead studies will miss a luminous intellect and a great friend, and the Association joins his family in mourning his loss.

## Richard Scott Wallach, 1950–2026



The Grateful Dead Studies Association lost one of our earliest and most loyal supporters, Charter Member Rick Wallach, who passed away after a series of health challenges on January 29, 2026. Born and raised on Long Island, Rick spent summers in Florida, where he graduated high school. After college he joined the family insurance business, where he had a successful career but felt the tug of the professoriate. After earning his PhD in literature from the University of Miami, he became a prolific scholar known for his pioneering work on Cormac McCarthy. A devoted Floridian, he also taught literature and American studies at Nova Southeastern University and the University of Miami.

Rick had many interests, including travel, cooking, and gardening, but especially the Grateful Dead. He presented his first conference paper on the Dead at the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association in 2012. A frequent presenter and attendee after that, he was an outspoken proponent of the creation of the Grateful Dead Studies Association and became the first major donor.

Rick's contributions to Dead studies tapped a host of other interests, from Victorian literature to film, Godzilla to the Mafia; his restless curiosity and wide-ranging intellect informed his gift for storytelling, which delighted colleagues and made his conference presentations especially memorable. After his retirement in 2017, Rick continued to write and lecture, supporting his colleagues and mentoring younger scholars. At his passing, he was mourned as “truly the representative of the great American spirit.” The Grateful Dead Studies Association joins his family in mourning his loss.

# relix.auction

Where Archives Find Their Audience

Since 1974, Relix has lived at the intersection of music, community, and cultural preservation.

Now, relix.auction brings that same curatorial care to collectors and institutions seeking rare Grateful Dead ephemera — tickets, posters, programs, and literary works that document the story.

**February 25 – March 6, 2026**

## Dead Letters: The Literary Legacy of the Grateful Dead

An Auction featuring the literary legacy of the Grateful Dead.

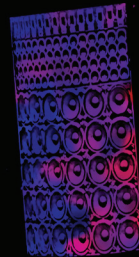
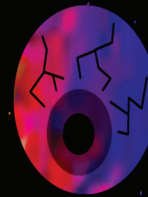


Relix is a proud supporter of the Grateful Dead Studies Association and its contributions to the community.

Consignment Inquiries Welcome



**Congratulations GDSA  
On Your Sixth Annual Meeting!**



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An epic, sprawling work unlike anything ever seen before. Bravo.

—Joel Selvin and Pamela Turley, Authors of *Fare Thee Well*

Like the Wall, this book is a work of obsession and titanic achievement. It flawlessly integrates words, chroma, and somehow, “sound,” while unveiling a pulsing, uplifting palette of imagination that joyously reimagines and honors the promise of a Great American Dream.

—Brian Anderson, author *Loud and Clear:*

*The Grateful Dead's Wall of Sound and the Quest for Audio Perfection*

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The influence of the Dead on fine, pop, and folk art takes on new depth and meaning through the original work of over three dozen visual artists and thirty writers/narrators, all commissioned by Steven R. Hurlburt to interpret the exultant, colorful coda from "Scarlet Begonias." It's inspiring!

—David Gans, co-host of Sirius XM's *Tales from the Golden Road*

Two nouns, two verbs, two adjectives, two definite articles, and one conjunction become an entrancing gateway to a brave new world; a springboard leap into a visionary landscape where things you've never seen become familiar. What a trip!

—Blair Jackson, author of *Garcia: An American Life*

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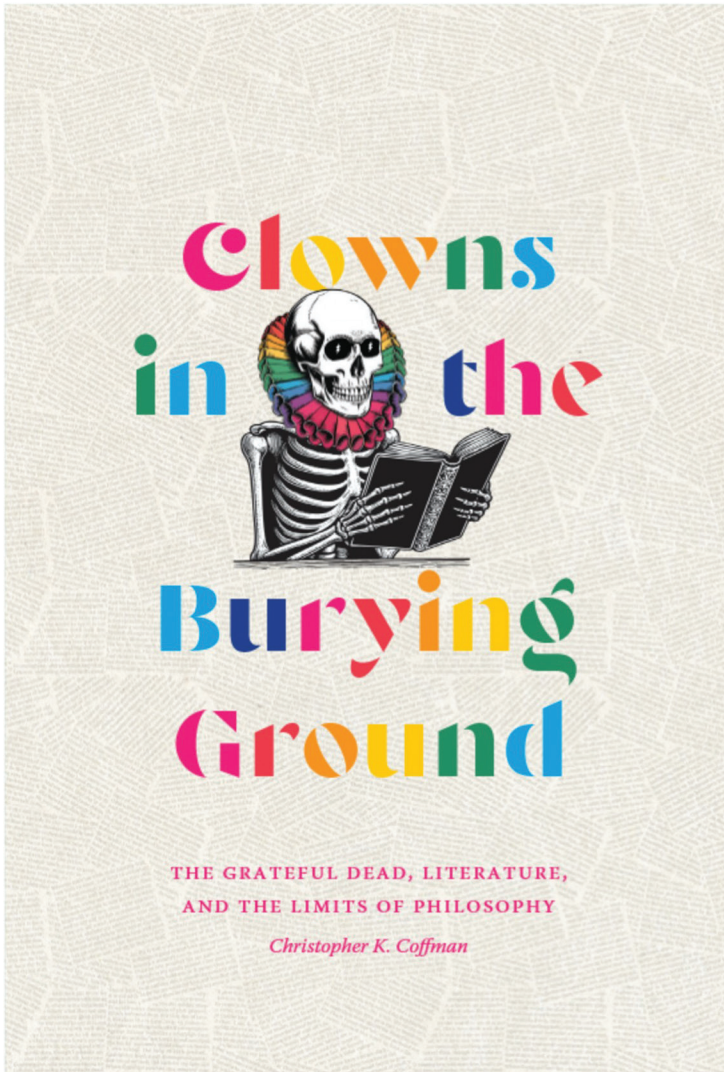
*and Legacy of*

ROBERT M. PETERSEN



*"The guy who did turn me on  
was Bobby Petersen. He taught  
me everything I know, practically  
..."*

*Phil Lesh*



## Clowns in the Burying Ground

The Grateful Dead, Literature, and the Limits of Philosophy

**CHRISTOPHER K. COFFMAN**

*"Coffman's timely analysis provides a groundbreaking study that will appeal to both aficionados and to those curious about why the Dead have attracted so many generations of thoughtful listeners."*

— **Nicholas G. Meriwether**



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CONGRATULATIONS  
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GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
*On Your Sixth Annual Meeting*



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## GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES VOLUME 8

Scholars are encouraged to contribute articles about the Grateful Dead and reviews of Grateful Dead and related performances and media for consideration for publication in our field's refereed journal, *Grateful Dead Studies*.

Accepted pieces from the current submission cycle will be published in volume 8 (2027 / 2028) of the journal.

Article submission deadline: 1 August 2026

Review submission deadline: 1 September 2026

*Grateful Dead Studies* is also seeking qualified reviewers interested in supporting the peer review process. Please reach out if you would like to help scholarly discourse about the Grateful Dead thrive.

See <https://gratefuldeadstudies.org/> for more information and submission guidelines.

Direct any queries to Chris Coffman at [ccoffman@bu.edu](mailto:ccoffman@bu.edu).