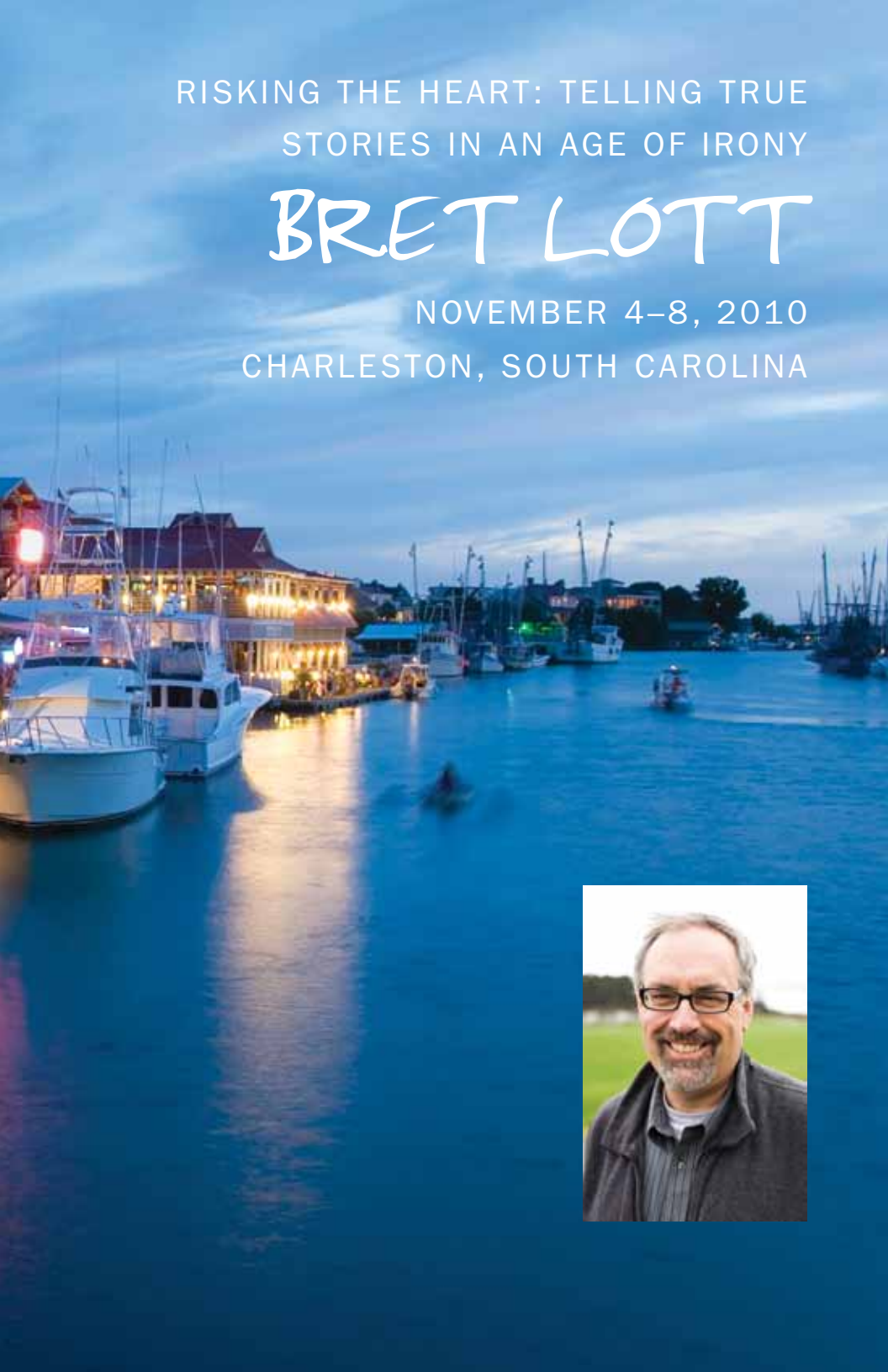


RISKING THE HEART: TELLING TRUE
STORIES IN AN AGE OF IRONY

BRET LOTT

NOVEMBER 4–8, 2010

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



RISKING THE HEART

TELLING TRUE STORIES IN AN AGE OF IRONY



ONE THING all human beings share is the need for Story—it is as essential as the need for air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat. Whether we believe in a creator God or a random universe, we do not know ourselves without knowing our own story: where we are from, to whom we are related, what our trials and our triumphs have been.

But what happens when our sense of Story contracts? What happens to a culture when it believes it can become its own story, disconnected from history and the perennial questions—only to find that its self-absorption has led to a dead end?

How can a media-saturated society that has become “distracted from distraction by distraction,” as T.S. Eliot put it, develop the patience and attention that good storytelling calls forth in its hearers? How can we move beyond the superficial connectedness of internet “social media” to regain the true sense of community and solidarity that the great narratives once generated? What happens when, as much of contemporary literature holds, we have no other story than the one we create for ourselves?

Novelist Walker Percy, after winning the National Book Award for *The Moviegoer*, was asked why there were so many good Southern writers. He answered, “Because we lost the war.” In Charleston, South Carolina—a Southern city wreathed in beauty and drenched in a history both noble and tragic—writer Bret Lott will lead us in discussions about how we might regain our connection to Story. In particular, we’ll focus on how literature can enable us to integrate the fragments of our selves by revealing the true Story of who we are.

THE PLACES WE'LL GO

WHILE THE FOCUS OF OUR TIME in Charleston will be conversation, we'll also get out each day to see some of the artistic and historic sites in the city that will deepen our appreciation of its story. Founded in 1670, Charleston became known as "The Holy City" because of the many church steeples that adorn its skyline. It is also a city of many "firsts," including the first theater building designed solely for theatrical performances in America (Dock Street Theatre, 1736), the first museum (1773), and the first municipal college (the College of Charleston, where Bret Lott teaches, 1836). Among the things we'll see and do:

CARRIAGE TOUR OF CHARLESTON: There's no better way to get acquainted with historic Charleston than a carriage tour.

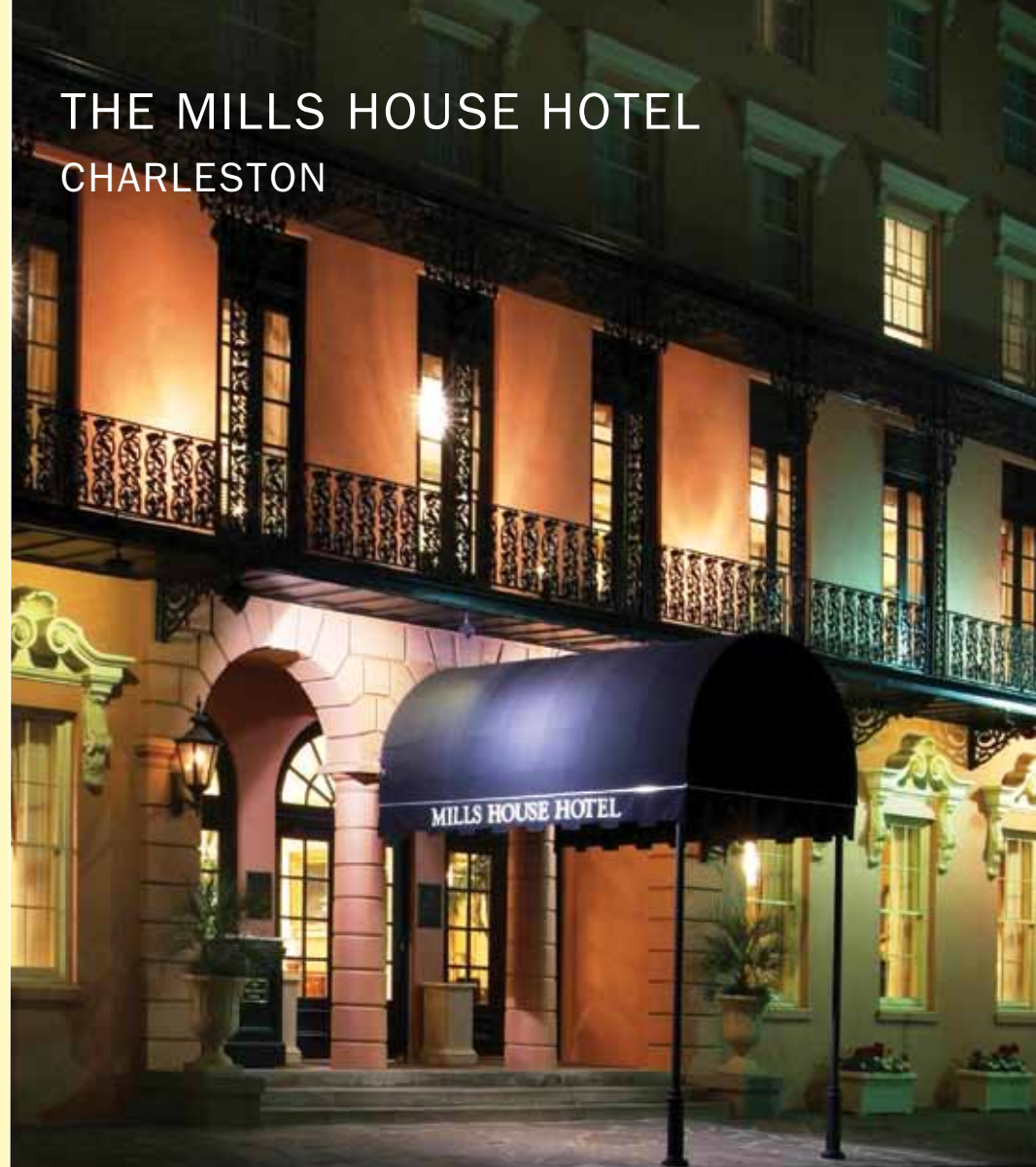
EDMONSTON/ALSTON HOUSE, one of the first houses built on Charleston's High Battery (1825), has witnessed many of the city's historic events. It was from this house, for instance, that General Beauregard watched the bombardment of Fort Sumter at the outset of the Civil War. A quintessential example of Greek Revival architecture, the house contains a wealth of period furniture and artifacts.

THE GIBBES MUSEUM OF ART: Thanks to a bequest from local businessman James Gibbes, the museum that bears his name opened its doors in 1905. During our visit to the Gibbes we'll not only take in some of the permanent collection but also see an exhibit by African-American artist Stacy Lynn Waddell.



Photo courtesy of Mills House Hotel.

THE MILLS HOUSE HOTEL CHARLESTON



DESCRIBED IN 1853 as the "finest hotel south of New York," The Mills House Hotel has hosted some of history's most notable personalities, including General Robert E. Lee and President Theodore Roosevelt. Within walking distance of the hotel, you can explore cobblestoned side streets, gardens dripping in Spanish moss, and landmarks such as the pastel-colored mansions of the High Battery.

Sporting antique marble-floored lobbies, crystal chandeliers and period furnishings, Mills House also offers a relaxing Hemingway-style restaurant and lounge and a rooftop terrace overlooking the hotel's fountain courtyard. Mills House remains as elegant today as the day it first opened its doors.

Photo courtesy of Mills House Hotel.

BRET LOTT

PARABLES FOR OUR TIME

BRET LOTT is the bestselling author of twelve books, most recently the novel *Ancient Highway* (Random House 2008); other books include the story collection *The Difference Between Women and Men*, the nonfiction book *Before We Get Started: A Practical Memoir of the Writer's Life*, and the novels *Jewel*, an Oprah Book Club pick, and *A Song I Knew by Heart*. His work has appeared in, among other places, *The Yale Review*, *The New York Times*, *The Georgia Review*, and in dozens of anthologies.



Born in Los Angeles, he received his BA in English from Cal State Long Beach in 1981, and his MFA in fiction from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1984, where he studied under James Baldwin. From 1986 to 2004 he was writer-in-residence and professor of English at The College of Charleston, leaving to take the position of editor and director of the journal *The Southern Review* at Louisiana State University. Three years later, in the fall of 2007, he returned to The College of Charleston and the job he most loves: teaching.

His honors include having been named Fulbright Senior American Scholar and writer-in-residence to Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv, Israel; having spoken on Flannery O'Connor at The White House; and being appointed a member of the National Council on the Arts. He and his wife, Melanie, live in Hanahan, South Carolina.



Photo courtesy of Mills House Hotel.

THE PROGRAM

THE *IMAGE* SEMINARS gather together small groups of people who care passionately about the ways that art and faith can renew our culture. As the name “seminars” signifies, we place a strong emphasis on dialogue and communion and make time in the schedule for meaningful conversations. The meals we share together also allow for more intimate exchanges that often become the basis of lasting friendships.

Bret Lott will be our host and discussion leader. He will not only read from his work—in both fiction and nonfiction—but will offer us exercises for meditation and reflection.

And since this is a seminar about storytelling, participants will be given a modest list of suggested reading to serve as the basis of our conversation, including *The Hunt Club*, a novel by Bret Lott, and a select number of short stories. Participants are also encouraged to come to the event prepared to share some of their own favorite stories.

REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION for the *Image* Seminar in Charleston includes four nights' accommodation, all meals, and entrance fees to all sites. Airfare is not included.

FEES (PER PERSON)	Standard Room	Suite
Shared room	\$1,900	\$2,100
Single room	\$2,300	\$2,500

DEADLINE: July 15, or until space is filled. Space is limited, and registrations are accepted on a first come, first served basis. A receipt will be mailed to confirm your registration, followed by an informational packet.

ACCOMMODATIONS: The suite features all the amenities of the standard room, plus a small sitting area and wet bar in an elegant setting.

PAYMENT: A non-refundable deposit of \$300 per person must accompany your registration in order to reserve your space. \$1,000 is due by July 15 and the balance by September 15 (nonpayment will forfeit your space). Please make checks payable to *Image*, or phone us at 206.281.2988 to pay by credit card.

REFUNDS: Between July 15 and September 15, a 50% refund will be paid upon cancellation. No refunds are available after September 15.

GETTING AROUND: Because Charleston is an old-world city and wonderfully compact, all of our sightseeing will be within easy walking distance from the hotel.

WAITING LIST: If the seminar is full, we will contact you and place you on a waiting list. We will let you know as soon as space becomes available.

