



Pembroke College
University of Oxford

Pembroke College, Oxford
OX1 1DW
3rd January 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William Badger
Cultural Officer, Pembroke MCR
tel. 07445 096730
william.badger@pmb.ox.ac.uk

**PEMBROKE LAUNCH FANTASY LITERATURE LECTURE SERIES
IN HONOUR OF JRR TOLKIEN**

(Oxford, January 3, 2012) **Pembroke College have invited award-winning author Kij Johnson to deliver the inaugural Pembroke Lecture on Fantasy Literature in Honour of JRR Tolkien.** The first annual lecture in the series designed to explore the history and current state of fantasy literature will take place on January 18th at 6 pm, it was jointly announced today by Meghan Campbell, President of the Pembroke College Middle Common Room (MCR), Catherine Beckett, Deputy Development Director, Pembroke College, and Kendall Murphy, Representative of the Pembroke College Annual Fund. Professor Johnson will also offer a fiction masterclass at Pembroke on January 19th from 10 am until noon.

The series is intended to memorialize Tolkien, who was Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke for twenty years; he wrote *The Hobbit* and much of *The Lord of the Rings* during his time at the college. The lectures are sponsored through a grant from the Pembroke Annual Fund.

‘Fantasy literature informs contemporary society’, said Campbell. ‘Any glance at current cinema offerings – or at a list of the most popular films of all time – demonstrates that fantasy is still the mode in which we tell one another stories. This and our members’ desire to celebrate Professor Tolkien’s connection to Pembroke made the lecture series an obvious choice’.

‘The Development Office is pleased to partner with Pembroke’s MCR and broader student communities in honouring the contribution made by Professor Tolkien to the life of the college and to world literature’, said Beckett. ‘Having Professor Johnson offer the inaugural lecture is a dream come true. Her humane and searing fiction, and her

expansive vision of the role and possibilities of genre, will place the series on a proper foundation’.

‘The Pembroke Annual Fund connects our alumni to current students and allows them to work together to make an immediate impact on college life’, said Murphy. ‘The Pembroke Lecture on Fantasy Literature in Honour of JRR Tolkien is precisely the sort of project the Annual Fund was designed to support, thanks to its resonance within and beyond the Pembroke community’.

Kij Johnson’s ‘fiction in the fantasy mode’ has won the Hugo, the Nebula (three times running), the World Fantasy Award, and the Sturgeon Award. She has written two novels set in Heian-era Japan, *The Fox Woman* and *Fudoki*, available from Tor Books, and a story collection, *At the Mouth of the River of Bees*, available from Small Beer Press. Among other subjects, her writing explores the human-animal interface, ancient and medieval Japanese culture, and narrative form.

She has taught at the Clarion Writers’ Workshop and is Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas, where she is also Associate Professor of Creative Writing.

Both the lecture and the fiction masterclass are free and open to the public, but online registration is required to reserve a place on the fiction course. Please go to pembrokemcr.com/Tolkien for more information.

###