

W^{THE} 2012 ILLIAM STAFFORD ❁ BIRTHDAY EVENTS ❁

Readings and Celebrations Around the World

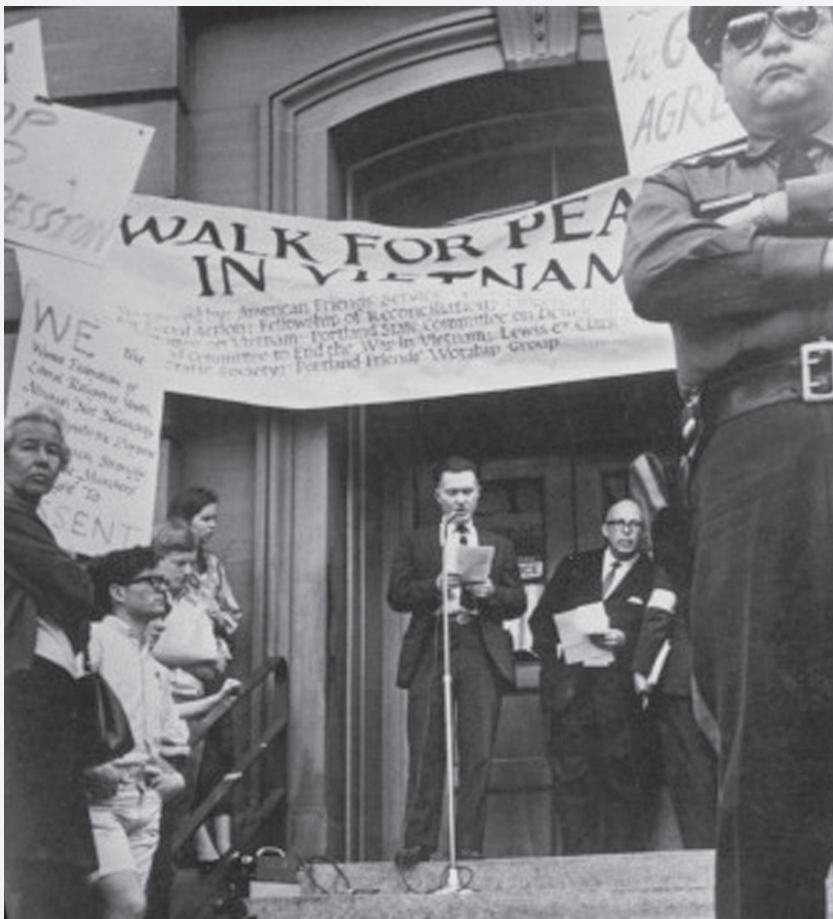


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM STAFFORD ARCHIVES

William Stafford at a peace rally during the Vietnam War. Benjamin Spock is to his right.

Serving with Gideon

Now I remember: in our town the druggist prescribed Coca-Cola mostly, in tapered glasses to us, and to the elevator man in a paper cup, so he could drink it elsewhere because he was black.

And now I remember The Legion—gambling in the back room, and no women, but girls, old boys who ran the town. They were generous, to their sons or the sons of friends. And of course I was almost one.

I remember winter light closing its great blue fist slowly eastward along the street, and the dark then, deep as war, arched over a radio show called the thirties in the great old U.S.A.

Look down, stars—I was almost one of the boys. My mother was folding her handkerchief; the library seethed and sparked; right and wrong arced; and carefully I walked with my cup toward the elevator man.

— Bill Stafford

King, the Elevator Man, and Me

by Joel Nightingale Berning

How could “the elevator man” get his “Coca-Cola” in a “tapered glass”?—that was the central question of the early Martin Luther King, Jr., the King we know best, the King we are fed, the King of MLK Day. The later King, the King after Watts, the radical King who was assassinated—he asked questions like: What does the elevator man’s “paper cup” have to do with the “old boys” “in the back room”? What do the drugstore and “The Legion” have to do with a “dark[ness]” “deep as war”? What do “the stars” above care about this mess of “right and wrong arced”? And can the elevator man really depend on the White narrator?

This essay expositis the later King by answering these questions, informed by his later speeches and writings, focused by James Cone’s interpretation of them, and illustrated in Stafford’s imagery. It culminates in Stafford’s last line, which I interpret in light of King’s turn toward separatism. There I construct the political and theological meaning of the later King for me and my own commitment to the elevator man.

The story in Stafford’s poem and the story of King’s radical turn are both stories of increasing awareness, awareness of 1) White supremacy deeper than segregation, 2) the relationship between war and injustice, 3) cosmic and biblical hope against hope, and 4) the ambiguity of White (would-be) allies.

First, Stafford’s narrator mirrors the later King in coming to see White supremacy as deeper than just segregation. The poem opens with his memory of the elevator man’s separate but (therefore un) equal soda, his exclusion from the drugstore, simple Southern-style segregation. But by the second stanza, his memory turns to the local power structure (“old boys / who ran the town . . .”), to patriarchy (“no women, but girls . . .”), to institutionalized patriotism (“The [American] Legion”), to the self-sustaining status quo (“generous / to their sons or the sons of friends”) and this privileged ruling class of which the narrator “was almost one.” The transition from stanza one to stanza two is the transition that the later King made (though the role of women might not have bothered King so much). His radical turn began after Selma, the peak of the civil-rights movement and precursor to the Voting Rights Act. Only five days after the VRA was signed—the formal guarantee of equal rights—Watts erupted in flames. King’s “How long? Not long!” had been a premature victory speech. Suddenly, King was more measured about what the movement had gained: “a foothold, no more.” Dismantling *de jure* segregation did not create *de facto* equality; the back room at The Legion would have to be deconstructed too. Not mere tokenism, “integration merely in esthetic or romantic terms,” drinking Coke together, would do; Black people needed “shared power” and “genuine equality.” The Malcolm-inflected King after Selma was not only interested in the civil right to a tapered glass but the human rights to a “quality education,” an “adequate livable income,” and a “decent sanitary house.” He asked not only why the elevator man has to drink outside but why the elevator man is an elevator man, and in a (carefully crypto-)socialist spirit, he advocated “re-distribution” of wealth and a guaranteed income. What was needed was a response to the despair of Black people in the Northern ghettos. That would take more of

a “revolution” than “reform,” a “revolution of values” for the soul of America to be “born again.” Chicago, the Poor People’s Campaign, and the Memphis labor struggle became efforts to see if nonviolence could win revolutionary gains and not just formal ones.

Second, Stafford’s narrator echoes the later King by relating racial and economic injustice to war. The poem moves from segregation to White Supremacy, oligarchy, and patriarchy, and then to “winter,” “the dark then,” “deep / as war.” “War” stands out here because the same verse says that this is “the thirties,” and America fought no war in the thirties. It is as if the narrator looking back can sense the seeds of war buried beneath the town’s status quo, germinating under *Pax Americana*, budding in what Emilie Townes calls our “fantastic hegemonic imagination,” America like “a radio show” as Stafford puts it. In the later King’s vision, militarism is a cause, a result, and an instance itself of injustice. “The road from Montgomery led to” denouncing the war in Vietnam, as King put it. The road from the drugstore and the back-room dealings of the old boys “in the great old U.S.A.” leads to Vietnamese (but first Korean, and before that Japanese) children peddling their mothers’ and sisters’ bodies to American soldiers (King’s image). What King saw in *Ramparts* was “but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit.” And this symptom reinforced the malady by squandering resources that could have reduced poverty at home. Vietnam was hurting the civil-rights movement so badly that speaking out against it might have helped more than it hurt King’s political goals. Even if not, King’s “conscience leaves me no other choice” because “silence is betrayal.” King saw our involvement in Vietnam as plain hypocrisy (a Malcolm theme): proponents of domestic nonviolence “damning me when I tell people that they ought to be non-violent toward little brown children in Vietnam,” a conservative nation trying to protect itself without helping others protect themselves, a freedom-loving nation restricting the freedoms of other nations, even ones who quote the Declaration of Independence. Notice how the American Legion functions in Stafford’s town and so many others: an organization by and for people who served in wars to protect our liberties and now use domestic political power to prevent liberation, being generous just to “their sons or the sons of friends.”

Third, both the later King and Stafford’s narrator reach for cosmic and biblical bases for hope that allows them to engage—not escape—an apparently hopeless situation. Most of Stafford’s poem is hopeless—all but the last stanza. “Look down, stars,” it says, invoking a transcendent frame. “I was almost one of the boys.” That he is not one of the boys is a reason to give thanks for his humanity over and against the inhumanity of the Legion, and it is a reason to have hope that his humanity and the humanity of the elevator man will be preserved/restored despite the world, the town, the “down” to which Stafford calls the stars’ attention. This is not a hope in the hereafter/beyond, but a hope that empowers the narrator to take the hopeful steps of the final line amidst the chaos and confusion of it all. The poem’s title, “Serving with Gideon,” identifies the elevator man with a biblical revolutionary movement that drinks apart, is too small to win by their own brute force alone, and yet ultimately wins freedom with the help of a divine friend. This was precisely King’s vision of the African-American hope. As the later King faced greater and greater chaos, the potential for deeper and deeper despair, he found cosmic-

cont. on p. 9

Readings and Celebrations Around the World Honoring the Spirit of William Stafford

IN THE PORTLAND METRO AREA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4TH, 7 PM—WEST LINN

West Linn Library, 1595 Burns, West Linn. Hosted by David Hedges. Featuring Linda Appel, Jean Bennett, Ailish Duff, Madison Fiedler, Emma Kennard, Rachel Pass, Scottie Sterrett, Andy West, and FWS Board Member Nancy Winklesky. Contact: Rebecca Mayer rmayer@westlinnoregon.gov, Librarian Cheryl Hill chill@westlinnoregon.gov or David Hedges david@hedges.name

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7TH, 2-4 PM—TIGARD

Tigard Public Library, 13500 SW Hall Blvd., Tigard. Hosted by FWS Emerita Board Member Sue Einowski. The theme will be William Stafford's poetry and philosophy in the classroom today. Featuring Leanne Grabel, John Morrison, Steve Sander, and FWS Board Members Tim Barnes and Leah Stenson. Contact: Sue Einowski sueeinowski@gmail.com or Sarah Jesudason Sarah@tigard-or.gov

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7TH, 4-5:30 PM—MILWAUKIE

Kairos-Milwaukie UCC, 4790 SE Logus Road, Milwaukie. Hosted by Oregon Fellowship of Reconciliation. Featuring a showing of the film, "Every War Has Two Losers." Kairos Community Forums encourage the exploration of topics related to the pursuit of justice and peace, as well as a wide array of issues that promote greater understanding of diversity and difference of opinion as stated in the congregation's core values. Contact: Joanie McClellan, 818-599-0257, or FOR_POOR@aol.com Directions: <http://www.kairosucc.org/html/map.html>

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8TH, 7-9 PM—PORTLAND

Stonehenge Studios, 3508 SW Corbett Ave., Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. "Stafford in Translation." Featuring Paul Merchant who will talk about the translation of Stafford's poetry into various languages as well as Stafford's work as a translator of Spanish, Cindy Gutierrez who will read Spanish Stafford translations, and Lars Nordstrom who will read his translations of Stafford into Norwegian. Attendees are invited to share a Stafford poem or anecdote at the open mic. Contact: Leah Stenson leahstenson@com-cast.net

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 7:30 PM—PORTLAND

Annie Bloom's Books, 7834 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Emerita Sulima Malzin. Featuring Maura Doherty, Joan Maiers, Carolyn Martin, and FWS Board Member Tim Barnes. Contact: Sulima Malzin sulimama@gmail.com or books@annieblooms.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 2 PM—HILLSBORO

Hillsboro Main Library, 2850 NE Brookwood Parkway, Hillsboro.

Hosted by Mark Thalman. Featuring Tim Applegate, Margaret Chula, Liz Nakazawa, Lars Nordstrom, Bill Siverly, Penelope Scambly Schott, and FWS Board Member Barbara Drake. Contact: Hillary Garrett hillaryg@ci.hillsboro.or.us 503-615-6500 or Mark Thalman mark@markthalman.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 6:30 PM—LAKE OSWEGO

Moonstruck Chocolate Café, 45 S. State Street, Lake Oswego. Hosted by Joan Maiers. Featuring Geranna Fleming, James Fleming, Jon Seaman, and FWS Board Member Patricia Carver. Contact: Joan Maiers, jmaiers@yahoo.com or Moonstruck Chocolate Café 503-697-7097.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 2 PM—PORTLAND

Sanctuary, West Hills Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, 8470 SW Oleson Road, Portland. Hosted by FWS Emerita Board Member Sulima Malzin. Featuring Susan Bucharist, David Hedges, Bill Siverly, VOX Spoken Word Chorus, and FWS Board Members Paulann Petersen and Susan Reese. WHUUF Sunday morning worship services at 9 and 11am will feature Sulima Malzin speaking on "Another World Instead: The Life and Vision of William Stafford." All are welcome to attend. Contact: Sulima Malzin sulimama@gmail.com

MONDAY, JANUARY 16TH, 10 PM—PORTLAND

KBOO Radio, 90.7 FM. "Talking Earth" hosted by Barbara LaMorticella. Contact: Barbara LaMorticella barbala@teleport.com

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 6-8 PM—OREGON CITY

Literary Arts Room, Roger Rook Hall, Clackamas Community College, 19600 S. Molalla Ave., Oregon City. Hosted by Elisabeth Miles, Third Monday Authors' Evening Group, and CCC. Featuring FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen. Stafford Theme Open Mic: People will share one or two poems by William Stafford, and, if they want, a poem of their own in the tradition of William Stafford, or an anecdote or remembrance about him. Contact: Elisabeth Miles, bethiem@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 7-9 PM—PORTLAND

In Other Words Feminist Community Center, 14 N Killingsworth, Portland. Part of the Figures of Speech Reading Series. Hosted by Constance Hall and Steve Williams. Featuring Mary Szybist and FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. Bring poems inspired/in tribute/or in the style of Wm. Stafford for our open mic. (1 poem or 2 pages max please.). This event will include poetry prompts, & cookies. Contact: Steve Williams slw1057@hotmail.com or go to www.figuresofspeechpdx.wordpress.com/about

IN THE PORTLAND METRO AREA (CONTINUED)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 7 PM—PORTLAND

Smith, (333 SMC), Portland State University, 1825 SW Broadway, Portland. Featuring John Beer, FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen, and FWS Board Member Emeritus Shelley Reece. Contact: Shelley Reece reeces@pdx.edu

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 7 PM—PORTLAND

Miracle Theater/El Centro Milagro, 525 SE Stark St., Portland. The second William Stafford Birthday Reading sponsored by Los Portefños, Portland's Latino writers' group. Hosted by Cindy Williams Gutiérrez. Featuring Ana Consuelo, Mary Drew, Catherine Evleshin, Joann Farías, Joaquín López, Octaviano Merecías-Cuevas, Ivonne Saed, Olga Sanchez, and FWS Board Member Don Colburn. Bring your favorite Stafford poem to read! Contact: Cindy Williams Gutiérrez cindy@grito-poetry.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 7 PM—PORTLAND

Broadway Books, 1714 NE Broadway, Portland. Hosted by Joanna Rose. Featuring Stevan Allred, Harold Johnson, Christie Krug, Barbara LaMorticella, and FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. Contact: Roberta Dyer 503-284-1726 bookbroads@aol.com or Joanna Rose joannarose@earthlink.net

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 7 PM—OREGON CITY

Oregon City Library, 606 John Adams Street, Oregon City. Hosted by Christine Delea. Featuring Lyssa Tall Anolik, Cindy Williams Gutiérrez, Carolyn Moore, David Rutiezer, Laura Weeks, and FWS Board Member Nancy Winklesky. Contact: Library Director Maureen Cole mcole@orc.org or Christine Delea christinedeala@cs.com

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 7 PM—LAKE OSWEGO

Lake Oswego Library, 706 4th St., Lake Oswego. Hosted by Kirsten Rian. Featuring Skye Leslie, Amy MacLennan, Melissa Madenski, BT Shaw, and FWS Board Member Susan Reese. Contact: Alicia Yokoyama, ayokoyama@ci.oswego.or.us or Kirsten Rian k@kirsten-rian.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21ST, 2-4 PM—MILWAUKIE

Milwaukie Ledding Library, Pond House, 2215 SE Harrison, Milwaukie. Hosted by Greg Chaimov and Tom Hogan. Featuring Gail Barker, Susanna Lundgren, Helen McNaughton, Ron Rasch, Bill Siverly, and FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen. Contact: Greg Chaimov gchaimov@comcast.net or Tom Hogan tomhogan2@comcast.net or 503-819-8367.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21ST, 3 PM—LAKE OSWEGO

Holy Names Heritage Center, 17425 Holy Names Drive, Lake Oswego. (Take the Mary's Woods exit off Hwy 43 and head one block east.) Hosted by Joan Maiers. Featuring FWS Board Member Patricia Carver. Contact: Joan Maiers, jmaiers@yahoo.com or Holy Names Heritage Center 503-607-0595

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21ST, 4 PM—VANCOUVER

Cover to Cover Books, 6300 NE St. James Road, Suite 104B, Vancouver, WA. Hosted by Christopher Luna. Contact: Christopher Luna christopherjluna@gmail.com or Cover to Cover 360-993-7777

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND, 2-4 PM—PORTLAND

Blackfish Gallery, 420 NW 9th, Portland. Hosted by Willa Schenberg and Robin Bagai. Featuring Ron Bloodworth, A. Molotkov, Susan Russell, Suzanne Sigafos, Joe Soldati, and FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. Contact: Willa Schenberg, snowmntn@comcast.net, 503-248-4136

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND, 2 PM—BEAVERTON

Auditorium, Beaverton City Library, 12375 SW 5th St., Beaverton. www.beavertonlibrary.org. Hosted by FWS Board Member Don Colburn. Featuring three-time Oregon Book Award winner John Daniel who will read from William Stafford's poems and his own and talk about Stafford's life and work in relation to his own writing, both poetry and prose. Then there will be time for audience members to come forward and read a Stafford poem of their choice. Bring one! Contact: Linda Fallon lfallon@beavertonoregon.gov 503-526-2676 or Don Colburn doncolburn@msn.com 503-737-7819

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND, 2 PM—ESTACADA

Flora Room, Estacada Public Library, 825 NW Wade Street, Estacada, Oregon. Featured presenters will include Felix Gurley-Rimberg, M, and Steve Williams. They will read from Stafford's work as well as pieces inspired by this prolific writer. Audience members are invited to share their favorite Stafford poems, stories, and Bill-inspired art work. Hosted by Carolyn Martin. Contact: Carolyn Martin Carolyn-Martin62@comcast.net or the Estacada Library 503-630-8273.

MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 7-8:30 PM—PORTLAND

University of Portland, Buckley Center 163, University of Portland, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd., Portland. Hosted by Herman Asarnow. Featuring Chris Cottrell, Kate Gray, Jerry Harp, Sara Jaffe, Lay-Ping (Candy) Tan, and FWS Board Member Susan Reese. Contact: Herman Asarnow, asarnow@up.edu

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 7 PM—PORTLAND

Eliot Chapel, First Unitarian Church, 1011 SW 12th Avenue (corner of 12th and Salmon), Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen. Featuring Paul Merchant and Greg Simon. Merchant, the Stafford Archivist at Lewis & Clark College, will present "Images from the California Back Country: The Persistence of an Idea," a talk about particular images that appeared in Bill's poetry in 1942, 1943, then reappeared in 1970, 1989, and finally in 1991. Simon will present "Some Time When the River is Ice . . ." a brief discussion of 20th century poets Gaston Baquero, Fernando Pessoa, and William Stafford, and their literary relationships with rivers. Contact Katie Radditz kradditz@firstunitarianportland.org 503-228-6389 ex.17

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH, 2 PM—PORTLAND

Multnomah Central Library, US Bank Room, 801 SW 10th Ave., Portland. Hosted by FWS Emeritus Board Member Joseph Soldati. Keynote presentation by Bob Balmer, high school teacher and widely published humorist. Also featuring Jane Glazer, Diane Holland, Kirsten Rian, David Rutiezer, Mark Thalman, and FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. Contact: Joseph Soldati jasole@comcast.net

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 7-8:30 PM—VANCOUVER

Barnes & Noble, 7700 NE Fourth Plain Boulevard, Vancouver, WA.

Hosted by Shawn Sorensen. Award winners Leanne Grabel and Steve Sander read their work at our Last Tuesdays Poetry Group! Come celebrate William Stafford with a round table discussion, author readings, open mic and the largest selection of poetry titles in town. We will also have a drawing for the [2012 Poet's Market](#) book! Come on up or by for a poetry event in the thriving and growing Vancouver art/literary scene. Featuring FWS Board Member Tim Barnes. Contact: Shawn Sorensen crm2679@bn.com

A 2012 January Stafford Celebration is also being planned for the Vancouver Public Library.

IN THE GREATER NORTHWEST

SUNDAY JANUARY 8TH, 2 PM—KLAMATH FALLS, OR

Klamath County Library, 126 S. 3rd St., Klamath Falls, Oregon. Bring a poem of your own to read, or read one of William Stafford's. Refreshments will be available Contact: Mary Hope 541-850-2091 fishtrappe@hughes.net or Andy Swanson [541-882-8894](tel:541-882-8894) ext. #10

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 7 PM—BEND, OR

COCC Library, Second Floor Reading Room, Central Oregon Community College, Bend, Oregon. Hosted by Neil Browne and John Martin. Contact: Neil Browne neil.browne@osucascades.edu or John Martin terrafirmjm@hotmail.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 7:30 PM—MCMINNVILLE, OR

Austin Reading Room, Nicholson Library, Linfield College, 900 SE Baker Ave, McMinnville, Oregon. Hosted by FWS Board Member Barbara Drake. Featuring Barbara LaMorticella, Michael McDowell, Joanna Rose, Bill Siverly, Mary Slocum, and Mark Thalman. Public participation warmly invited. Bring a Stafford poem, prose passage, or anecdote, and a poem of your own to share if you wish. Contact: Barbara Drake bdrake1@verizon.net or swhyte@linfield.edu

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 2-3:30 PM (M T)—ONTARIO, OR

Ontario Community Library, 388 SW 2nd Avenue, Ontario, Oregon. Host: Phillip Mahaffey, English Department, Treasure Valley Community College. Contacts: Darlene Johnston and Doreen Jones (Ontario Community Library) 541-889-6371; Phillip Mahaffey pmahaffe@tvcc.cc 541-881-5912

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 1:30-3:30 PM—MOLALLA, OR

Molalla Public Library, 201 E. 5th St., Molalla, Oregon, 97038. Hosted by Larry Anderson. Sponsored by the Molalla Writers Group. Featuring Kate Gray and FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen. The first hour will be a discussion of Stafford poems, stories and experiences. Guests are invited to share related poems, original or not. The second hour will be a visual/verbal exchange, showing Stafford-inspired art and poetry by community members. Artists are invited to use their craft to create an impression of any Stafford Poem of their choosing. Audience participation in any part of the program is strictly voluntary. We expect many guests will prefer to listen. Contact: Larry Anderson, 503-829-8269 anderslr@whitman.edu

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 2 PM—NEWBERG, OR

George Fox University, Hoover Hall, 105, 414 N. Meridian Street, Newberg, Oregon 97132. Hosted by George Fox University, Department of Peace & Justice with support from the Friends of William Stafford. Featuring Eleanor Berry, Ursula Le Guin, and FWS Board Members Dennis and Helen Schmidling. Contact: Ty Olson (tyguy2@gmail.com) or George Fox University at 503.554.2685 or Dennis Schmidling (dslopdx@gmail.com)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 4 PM—ENTERPRISE, OR

Fishtrap House, (Coffin House), Enterprise, Oregon. Hosted by FWS Board Member Rich Wandschneider. Contact: Rich Wandschneider rich@fishtrap.org

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 2 TO 4 PM—HOOD RIVER, OR

Columbia Center for the Arts, Hood River, Oregon. Co-hosted by Barbara Young and Althea Hukari. Featuring FWS Board Member Leah Stenson and local poets. Both Stafford and personal poems will be read with time for audience members to read. Contact: Barbara Young, 541-490-1996, barby@gorge.net

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 2 PM—WELCHES, OR

Wy'east Book Shoppe & Art Gallery at the Rendezvous Center, 67149 E. Highway 26, Welches, Oregon. Hosted by Josh Baker. Featuring FWS Emeritus Board Member Sharon Wood Wortman. Contact: Sandra Palmer 503-622-1623 or Lindy Delf lindydelf@gmail.com

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 7-8:30 PM—NEWPORT, OR

Newport Public Library, 35 NW Nye Street, Newport, Oregon. Co-sponsored by Willamette Writers Coast Chapter. Hosted by Marianne Klekacz. Featuring FWS Board Member Linda Gelbrich. Attendees are encouraged to bring their favorite Stafford poems to share. Contact: Marianne Klekacz mklekacz@peak.org or Dorothy Mack dmack@centurytel.net

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 7 PM—BELLINGHAM, WA

Village Books, 1200 Eleventh Street, Bellingham, Washington. Hosted by James Bertolino. William Stafford Tribute Event: An Evening of Poetry. Village Books will host a poetry reading celebrating Oregon's late poet laureate, William Stafford. One of the best-known and

IN THE GREATER NORTHWEST (CONTINUED)

loved American poets, Stafford served as Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress, received the National Book Award for *Traveling Through the Dark*, and taught for many years at Lewis & Clark College in Portland. He grew up in Kansas, was a conscientious objector during World War II, and was widely admired for his generosity. Contact: Nan Macy, Village Books nan@villagebooks.com or James Bertolino jim@jamesbertolino.com 360-398-7870

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 7 PM—ASHLAND, OR

Hannon Library, Meese Meeting Room 309, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon. Hosted by Friends of Hannon Library and Friends of William Stafford. Poets from eighteen to eighty will be featured including Eugene poets Ingrid Wendt and Ralph Salisbury and Rogue Valley poets Kasey Mohammad, Marisa Petersen, Michael Holstein, and Lucia Hadella. Audience members who bring a favorite William Stafford poem will also be invited to read. The program will conclude with a showing of the short film "Every War Has Two Losers" based on Stafford's journals. Contact: Patty Wixon vpwixon@opendoor.com or Ila Haas, [541-552-6835](tel:541-552-6835).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 7 PM—BURLINGTON, VT

Morgan Room of Aiken Hall, Champlain College, Burlington, Vermont. Hosted by Jim Ellefson. Contact: Jim Ellefson ellefson@champlain.edu

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 6:30 PM—BURNS, OR

Harney County Library, 80 West D Street (corner of D and Alvord), Burns, Oregon. Hosted by Kate Marsh. Featured readers include several members of the Harney Basin Writers who will read William Stafford's poems followed by some of their own written in his spirit. Other community members will also be sharing favorite Stafford poems, and young students will read poems they've written influenced by their study of Stafford's work. Contact: Kate Marsh, copeland-marsh@centurytel.net, [541-573-7204](tel:541-573-7204)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 5:30 PM—SALEM, OR

Location TBA, Salem, Oregon. Third Thursday Poets begins its ninth year with a Celebration of All Things Stafford. Please bring 2 or 3 poems or stories or anecdotes or memories or remembrances to share. The work can be by William Stafford or about William Stafford or inspired by William Stafford – you get the idea! Contact: Maureen Clifford, maureen@thirdthursdaypoets.org

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 6:00 P.M.—SISTERS, OR

Paulina Springs Books, 252 W. Hood Ave., Sisters, Oregon. Hosted by Paulina Springs Books and Friends of William Stafford. Featuring Jim Anderson, Jane Kirkpatrick, Kit Stafford, Ellen Waterston, and Friends of William Stafford board members Dennis & Helen Schmidling. Dennis Schmidling will give a short presentation on the Stafford signs along the Methow River. Host and Contact Helen Schmidling helen@dsagroup.net, [541-549-5992](tel:541-549-5992) or [541-549-0866](tel:541-549-0866)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21ST, 1 – 4:30 PM—CORVALLIS, OR

Corvallis-Benton County Library, Corvallis, Oregon. Hosted by FWS Board Member Linda Gelbrich. Featured poem: "Climbing Along the River." The day will begin with a writing workshop with Ann Staley, followed by featured readers including Clem Starck, Roger Weaver, and 3rd grade students from Adams School in Corvallis, followed by audience members reading Bill's poems or a poem they've written in response to the featured poem. Contact: Linda Gelbrich lindaw@exchangenet.net [541-754-7198](tel:541-754-7198)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21ST, 2 – 4 PM—WALDPORT, OR

Waldport Community Center, 265 Hemlock St., Waldport, Oregon. *Starting Here: A Stafford Celebration*. Hosted by Drew Myron. Featuring Shirley Plummer, Fred Strauss, Herman Welch, and students from Seashore Family Literacy. Featured writers will read a Stafford poem, as well as one of their own. Audience members are invited to read a favorite Stafford poem. Contact: Drew Myron, [541-547-3757](tel:541-547-3757), dcm@drewmyron.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND, 2 PM—ESTACADA, OR

Flora Room, Estacada Public Library, 825 NW Wade Street, Estacada, Oregon. Hosted by Carolyn Martin. Contact: Carolyn Martin CarolynMartin62@comcast.net or the Estacada Library 503-630-8273

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND, 4 PM—SALEM, OR

Salem Friends Meeting House, 490 19th St., SE, Salem, Oregon. Hosted by Janet Markee. Featuring Virginia Corrie-Cozart, Carolyn Miller, and FWS Board Member Linda Gelbrich. Guests are invited to bring a Stafford poem. The program will feature a showing of the Markee & Wixon film "What the River Says." A potluck dinner will follow the celebration. Contact: Janet Markee janetmarkee@mac.com

MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 7-9 PM—BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA

Bainbridge Island Library, 1270 Madison Ave. N - Bainbridge Island, WA 98110, 206-842-4162. Tenth Annual William Stafford Birthday Celebration. Hosted by Neil Baker. Featuring Gary Anderson, Jennifer Hager, Marit Saltrones, and David Stallings. Contact: Neil Baker neil@njbaker.net 206-855-1140

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24TH, 6 PM—ALBANY, OR

Albany Public Library, 1390 Waverly Drive S.E., Albany, Oregon. Featuring FWS Board Member Linda Gelbrich. After the featured poets read, members of the audience will be invited to read one of their favorite Stafford poems. Those who would like to participate should bring a copy or one or two favorite Stafford poem. Contact: LaRee Bates LaRee.Bates@cityofalbany.net 541-791-0112

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 7:00 PM—HERMISTON, OR

Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center, Blue Mountain Community College, 980 SE Columbia Drive, Hermiston, Oregon. Hosted by Pam Steele. Contact: Pam Steele 541-571-8722 Pamela.Steele@hermiston.k12.or.us

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 7 PM—LONGVIEW, WA

Longview Public Library, 1600 Maple, Longview, Washington, 98632. Hosted by Northwest Voices (Lower Columbia College & Longview Public Library). Featuring a reading by Kim Stafford, William Stafford's son who teaches at Lewis and Clark in Portland. Joe Green will show his and Marquita Green's prize-winning 2010 broadside of "Meditation" by William Stafford, and will discuss broadsides in general. Some community members will read William Stafford poems, and there will be a short open mike period for the audience to read their own poems or poems by other authors. At the end of the celebration there will be birthday cake. At 3:30-5 pm, a Writers' Workshop at Lower Columbia College (MAN 119) led by Kim Stafford. Contact: Chris Skaugset chris.skaugset@ci.longview.wa.us or 360.442.5309 or Charlotte Persons cpersons@lcc.ctc.edu.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27TH, 7 PM—SUNRIVER, OR

Trude' S. Pozzi Education Center, Sunriver Nature Center, 57245 River Road, Sunriver, Oregon. Hosted by Jay Bowerman. Featuring Kit Stafford and Alexander Weiss. Contact: Jay Bowerman frogs1@sunrivernaturecenter.org Directions: <http://www.sunrivernaturecenter.org>

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH, 4-6 PM—EUGENE, OR

Tsunami Books, 2585 Willamette St., Eugene, Oregon. Hosted by Ingrid Wendt, Jerry Gatchell, and FWS Board Member Martha Gatchell. "Speaking Truth to Power: The Poetry of William Stafford and the Occupy Movement." Contact: Ingrid Wendt idwendt@com-cast.net or Tsunami Books [541-345-8986](tel:541-345-8986).

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH, 2 PM—SANTA BARBARA, CA

First Crossing Day Use Area, Los Padres National Forest, Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, California. This site has no address, but is just across the road from: Los Prietos Boys Camp, 3900 Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. In case of rain, the reading will be moved a mile down the road to: Los Prietos Ranger Station, 3505 Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. Hosted by Paul Willis. Featured readers: Christine Kravetz and Gregory Orfalea. (The Forest Service has waived the requirement of an Adventure Pass for those attending this event.) Program note: This reading will take place on the exact site of the Los Prietos Civilian Public Service Camp where William Stafford was stationed during WWII. Contact: Paul Willis 805-565-7174 willis@westmont.edu

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH, 4 PM—SILVERTON, OR

202 E.. Main St. (the Wolf Building), Silverton, Oregon. Hosted by Kelley Morehouse. Ron Stewart will give a small presentation on Stafford's Life and Poetry. Participants are encouraged to bring favorite Stafford poems or art influenced by Stafford poems to share. Contact: Kelley Morehouse [503.873.6582](tel:503.873.6582) kbrassaw@chemeketa.edu

2012 January Stafford Celebrations are also being planned for Glasgow, Scotland, and Lakeview, Oregon.



"Darius and Stafford." Bill at Persepolis, Iran, October 1972

Remembering William Stafford

Where are the better people we hoped
to be, in his memory?

Maybe for a moment
something glimmered,
small pieces fell together,
a ripple of current
pushed a certain boat
farther down a stream—

but was it enough?
You know the way he had,
embracing both sides
but claiming neither—
where was it now?
We were desperate for it.
What he said about the hard ways of peace?
How he lifted one eyebrow, never proclaimed?

Take the word humanity,
wrapped in delicate paper,
in contrast to good and evil,
those tricky packages.

Take the cool and friendly bombs
opposed to suicide bombs—
what bomb is not a suicide bomb?
The one they hide behind
or drop from a high place?
Good people never show their faces
when they drop their bombs.

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE

AROUND THE COUNTRY AND THE WORLD

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 5:30 PM—PRINCETON, NJ

Princeton Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. Hosted by Meredith Martin. Contact: Meredith Martin mm4@princeton.edu

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 12:15 PM—NEW YORK, NY

Leland Eggleston Cofer Memorial Chapel of the New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center, 525 East 68th Street, New York, NY 10065. Hosted by Joel Nightingale Berning, Chaplain. Midday within a large Manhattan hospital, this celebration is restricted to NYP staff, patients, and their families (for security reasons). Nurses, doctors, housekeepers, social workers, chaplains, security guards, etc. will be welcome to share their favorite poems, relate poetry to their healing work, and maybe discover a poetry community among each other. Contact: Joel Nightingale Berning, job9122@nyp.org, 212-746-6971

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 7 PM—BURLINGTON, VT

Morgan Room of Aiken Hall, Champlain College, Burlington, Vermont. Hosted by Jim Ellefson. Contact: Jim Ellefson ellefson@champlain.edu

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 5:30 - 7:00 PM—TIFFIN, OH

Herbster Chapel, Heidelberg University, 310 East Market, Tiffin, Ohio 44883. Co-hosted by President Rob Huntington and Professor Bill Reyer. Open to the broader Tiffin and Seneca County community, the event will have a featured student group, a solo interpretive reading, then readings of Stafford pieces by anyone who cares to share. The evening will end with an open microphone for student and area poets to share their own work or work by other poets. Contact: Bill Reyer wreyer@heidelberg.edu 419-448-2048

MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 9:45-11:15 AM—CARSON CITY, NV

Northern Nevada Correctional Center, Carson City, Nevada. Facilitated by Shaun Griffin. For twenty-two years, Shaun Griffin has been leading a writing workshop for the inmates in this correctional center. He says, "There will be a handful of us gathered to read and remember Bill on that day. We will read Bill's poems, some of his essays, and remember, through his many words, the depth of his gift to all of us. I always tell my guys at the prison to 'lower your standards and keep writing...' after Bill's example." Contact: Shaun Griffin shaungrif@aol.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH, 3 PM—SAPPORO, JAPAN

Alumni Room, Hokusei Gakuen University (a sister college of Lewis & Clark), Sapporo, Japan. The group will translate some of Bill's poems into Japanese, so they can read them in both Japanese and English. Contact: Yorifumi Yaguchi ym1517@jcom.home.ne.jp

2012 January Stafford Celebrations are also being planned for Glasgow, Scotland.



A house in the Hawthorne area with a poetry post in which Bill's poem "When I Met My Muse" was being offered. See last page for a close-up.

Passing a Creche

Sometimes past a Christmas light in the evening,
a little, downcast light—an open door
or a window somewhere—reaches and catches
here on my coat. I stop to disentangle
my life, and the threads won't part.

Such times, I know again a certain house
we passed, and wanted in, but couldn't
stop, and anyway no one would welcome
us. I see that place: it isn't as if
we own our thoughts, but more that we're caught somehow—

Years reach for us, like lights when we are going
somewhere else alone through the evening.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

companionship with his God. Professor Cone argues that because times tended toward despair, King's theology shifted toward hope (distinct from justice and love), hope not based on gains but on his kitchen experience, Sister Pollard's words, and the cross. That hope gave him the courage to take an unpopular stand that marked a one-year countdown to his death.

Fourth, both the later King and Stafford's narrator come to see ambiguity in the White "ally." This is not to say that even the later King would not appreciate and identify with Stafford's narrator in some ways: his moral decisiveness, his concern for "the least of these," his effort to restore broken community, because "the black man needs the white man and the white man needs the black man." But after Chicago, King began to question the depth of commitment in people like the narrator. As a Southern civil rights leader, he had appealed to Northern whites, and they obliged insofar as they did not want to see Black people obviously brutalized by Whites. But when it came to the more subtle forms of brutalization, of Black-on-Black violence in the ghetto, of the costly changes that would substantively improve the position of Black people, of actually living near them, White people in fact valued their own self-protection more than their "democratic traditions." The vast majority of White people "are racist, either consciously or unconsciously." "White folks are not right.... It's time for America to have an intensified study on what's wrong with white folks...." "There has never been a single, solid, determined commitment on that part of white America where genuine equality is of concern for the black people of this nation." This shift in King's perspective helped him hear the Black Power perspective more fully than ever before. In it he recognized an understandable, errant, but redeemable and important "cry of daily hurt and persistent pain," call to political and economic strength as a people, and affirmation of self-love. A reporter said "he sounded like a nonviolent Malcolm X," and in fact their first intentional meeting would have taken place two days after Malcolm was killed. Whereas the early King swelled on heroic White solidarity, the later King was more separatist and more skeptical of Whites. He may not have read much hope, triumph, resolution, or progress in Stafford's final line. Will this narrator stay for the long haul or is he an oppression tourist? Would he be ready "for us to live next door" or is he just trying to have a Coke with a Black man? Does he really care enough about the elevator man to risk his own self/life/wealth? What if "the druggist" objects? What if the old boys see him? Worse yet, will he "integrate" the elevator man "out of power," imposing himself on wherever the elevator man goes? What makes him think the elevator man even wants his company? Is his walk just pity? What does he want from the elevator man? Or is he just trying to feel more innocent than the other Whites (cf. Reinhold Niebuhr)? Would "temporary segregation" be better for the elevator man? (Not to mention the one-sidedly White gaze of the poem, e.g., the use of "dark" as "bad" that King started to contest.)

Yet Cone's understanding is not that King converted to separatism so much as that he newly incorporated the best of the separatist tradition ("affirmation of black self-esteem and self-determination in politics, economics, and social and religious institutions"), fusing it with his integrationism, resulting in a pure version of neither, because they "cannot be ... neatly divided." This is what is most meaningful for me about the later King. Even the all-time integrationist was not colorblind, post-racial, or willing to "stop living in the past and blaming race and just accept that we're all Americans now and

you've gotta be better parents," as the man next to me on the airplane yesterday said, referring to the Black neighborhood around Chicago Midway airport as we landed. Before David Garrow's biography and this week's readings, I never knew King was so radical.

King's separatist tendencies teach me to read Stafford's last line more precisely. The narrator does not just pull the Black man toward him, throw his arms around him, and declare himself innocent of all the town's evil. "[C]arefully! I walked with *my cup toward* the elevator man." He moves toward the elevator man, meets him where he is. He does not run; he walks. He does so carefully. And he brings with him his own "cup," not "glass" now—an act of solidarity, not charity. The meaning of the later King for me is that identifying with the victim is the decisive but not conclusive step and that the Black separatist tradition can inform how I act and not just paralyze me as a White person. I can—somehow—serve with Gideon.

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Editor's Note: Joel Nightingale Berning works as a chaplain in the Department of Pastoral Care and Education at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, the largest hospital in New York. He wrote this essay in 2009 for his Systematic Theology class at Union Theological Seminary. His professor was James H. Cone, an articulate advocate of Black Liberation theology whose ideas influenced Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Barack Obama's pastor at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago.

The reference to Sister Pollard stopped me, sending me to Google. I learned that she was a dedicated supporter of the Montgomery bus boycott. Going about her commitments, the seventy-year-old woman was asked by someone driving if she was tired and needed a ride. "My feet are tired but my soul is rested," she responded. King apparently told this story many times.

Ramparts was a leftist magazine that was quite popular in the late sixties. An early critic of the Vietnam War, it used glitz and eclectic design and featured an incendiary array of radical/progressive American thinkers, Noam Chomsky, Cesar Chavez, Seymour Hersh, and Angela Davis, among them.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) was an American theologian who moved from radicalism to pragmatism. Noted for trying to reconcile faith with the actualities of *realpolitik*, he was closely connected with a movement called Christian Realism.

The words in Joel's essay have not been changed but the numerous footnotes have been removed. All of them refer to the works in the bibliography. If someone is interested in those details, write me, and I will send you the PDF Joel sent me.

A Poem for Dorothy Stafford

Tending the soup while she talks—
 a little garlic, bacon, zucchini,
 chicken broth, as many of her garden herbs
 as the pot will hold—she adds
 enough milk to make it turn
 creamy, pale. *Have you been to visit
 Mt. St. Helens since it blew?
 Neither have I. You and I should do that
 some day.* Bread into a foil packet
 she crimps shut, slips into her oven's
 pocketed heat. *A woman I knew
 had eighty acres there. She built
 the cabin herself and set it
 back in the forest so she and her husband
 would have to walk a good ways
 to see mountains. She claimed
 they'd never take them for granted
 that way.* Ripe bell pepper
 into a salad. Its hollow globe
 red as molten glass. *I never dreamed
 that I would be the one
 left alone. Me with my funny heart,
 I always thought I'd be the first
 to go.* Cherry tomatoes from her deck's
 container plants, the ones outdoing themselves
 again this year. *Did I ever show you
 the note he left that day he died?
 His handwriting so big, unsteady—
 he must have known.
 It said "And all my love."*
 Store-bought cookies on the counter
 in their white paper package.
 Easier since she cooks alone.
*You know that you were very much
 a part of that day. Bill and I were making
 a lemon pie to bring to your house for dinner.
 I'm so glad I found that note.* In a vase
 at her bare table's shining center,
 a many-sectioned, leafless branch
 no bigger than her hand,
 a lone ceramic wren she's tucked
 near its base. On each of her placemats,
 a rice paper napkin
 printed with blood-bright leaves.
*Bill and I kept a souvenir
 from when we camped at Mt. St. Helens
 years ago. I wonder if there's another
 place in the world where mountains
 are so separate, so much
 their own selves?*

PAULANN PETERSEN

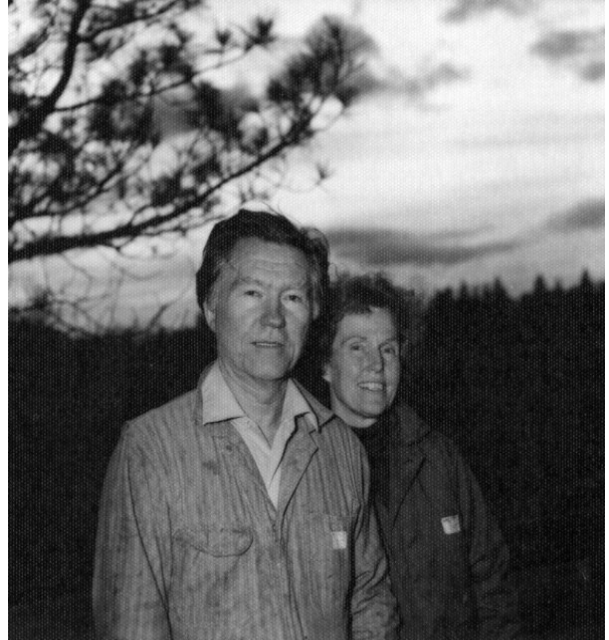


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Bill and Dorothy sometime in the 80s.

Happy 96th Birthday, Dear Dorothy!

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IN THE SPIRIT OF WILLIAM STAFFORD, we are committed to the free expression of literature and conscience. We seek to share Stafford's work and advance the spirit of his teaching and literary witness. We strive to provide ongoing education in poetry and literature in local schools and communities in ways that will encourage and enrich a broad spectrum of readers and writers. In doing so, we hope to contribute to William Stafford's legacy for generations to come.

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Special Birthday Celebration Issue



King, the Elevator Man, and Me
by Joel Nightingale Berning



Please notify sender of change of address



When I Met My Muse

I glanced at her and took my glasses off—they were still singing. They buzzed like a locust on the coffee table and then ceased. Her voice belled forth, and the sunlight bent. I felt the ceiling arch, and knew that nails up there took a new grip on whatever they touched. “I am your own way of looking at things,” she said. “When you allow me to live with you, every glance at the world around you will be a sort of salvation.” And I took her hand.

William Stafford

PHOTOS BY ILYA KUZNIK

A poetry post in the Hawthorne area in Portland, Oregon, sharing Bill's poem "When I Met My Muse." This photo was taken in December 2011.