



# friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD

A Newsletter For Poets & Poetry  
Volume 18, Issue 2 - Fall 2013

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR: DENNIS SCHMIDLING

TIM BARNES

PATRICIA CARVER

DON COLBURN

JOHN DESCAMP

BARBARA DRAKE

MARTHA GATCHELL

BILL HOWE

PAULANN PETERSEN

SUSAN MCKEE REESE

JIM SCHEPPKE

HELEN SCHMIDLING

LEAH STENSON

RICH WANDSCHNEIDER

NANCY WINKLESKY

## NATIONAL ADVISORS

Marvin Bell

Robert Bly

Donald Hall

Maxine Kumin

Li-Young Lee

Ursula K. Le Guin

Chris Merrill

W. S. Merwin

Naomi Shihab Nye

Gary Snyder

## Will the Real William Stafford Please Stand Up?

By Michael McGriff

The publication of *Winterward* (Tavern Books, 2013) marks many things. First and foremost, it marks the emergence of a totally new, as well as a completely unique, single-volume collection by one of postwar America's most beloved and critically acclaimed poets. For this reason alone, poetry lovers of all stripes have cause for celebration. But first, a bit of backstory and a few musings.

Paul Merchant, former William Stafford Archivist at Lewis & Clark College, has been at the forefront of researching, unearthing, contextualizing, preserving, and disseminating the wonders of William Stafford's legacy. The term "archivist" falls short in describing Paul's vocation at the Stafford Archive. I would like to suggest an overhaul for the definition of the term archivist—for Paul's sake, let's say archivist is now a combination of two words, "archive" and "activist." That's a far better way of framing what Paul's been up to over the years.

It should be of little surprise, then, that it was Paul who brought *Winterward* to the attention of Tavern Books nearly three years ago. I was visiting the William Stafford Archive while Carl Adamshick (it's together with Carl Adamshick and Natalie Garyet that I edit Tavern Books) was one of its Writers-in-Residence. Paul had offered to give me a tour and show me some of the Archive's gems and oddities, its rarities and B-sides. Being both a bibliophile and fan of Stafford's work, I was thrilled. At this point, Carl and I had already started Tavern Books (in 2009) with the simple and explicit vision to reintroduce lost works of poetry to the reading public: books that had fallen out of print, books by neglected masters, and books so obscure that "obscure" was somehow a generous moniker.

Paul's tour was insightful and exhilarating, but that's not where this detective story begins.

Poetry is a curious genre. Writing poetry, spreading the word about a great collection, publishing poetry, discovering a new author—these are all acts and byproducts of community and the grassiest of grassroots efforts. As genres, nonfiction and fiction have a boundless community generated

by the marketplace (for good or ill), whereas poetry depends on free public readings, get-togethers in living rooms, telephone calls between friends, newsletters like this one, and writing groups to keep the sparks floating through the air. Which brings me back to Paul Merchant. We were sitting in the Archive when Paul showed us a facsimile copy of *Winterward*, the creative portion of Stafford's 1954 Ph.D. dissertation as submitted to the University of Iowa. For a lover of rare and obscure manuscripts, this was a marvelous *objet d'art!* Even in its facsimile edition it was glorious.

It's easy to forget that our literary heroes and ancestors are—what's the right word?—human? Real? We have a burning and unhealthy desire to ignore this very fact. We *want* Ted Hughes to play the role of the mustachioed villain in his dark cape of lust. We *want* Carl Sandburg cradling a sheep with a bit of fog drifting through the background on its little cat feet. Of course, both of these poets rise far and away from such simplistic and tragically misguided characterizations. Unfortunately, Stafford, too, can often be spotted as an oversized balloon floating above

(cont. on p. 2)

William Stafford  
*Winterward*



The Cover of *Winterward* with a preface by Stafford and a bibliographic note by Paul Merchant

(cont. from p. 1)

the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in our collective and worshipful poetry minds. It's essential (for us, for poetry, and for the legacy of the poet himself) to keep William Stafford framed within the human, earthly, fragile, temporary, and fallible. And that's exactly what happened when Carl and I saw that bound stack of photocopied dissertation pages. Here was the first evidence of, and movement toward, a major poet's first collection of poetry. Stafford the graduate student! William-with-no-published-poetry-books-Stafford. You and me. Anyone who's ever sat down to seriously write a poem. The myth stripped away. Another person bent over a formidable blank page suddenly whisked into the sublime by lyrical poetry and its traditions. *Winterward*, as a stack of 8½ x 11 photocopied pages, shone with a kind of refreshing anonymity.

And so the detective story begins. What is *Winterward*, exactly? Is it a book? Is it *merely* a dissertation? Is it both? Neither? Is it something altogether different?

First off, it's a reminder of just how many essential American literary voices have passed through the halls of the University of Iowa and the Writers' Workshop. The University of Iowa began accepting creative dissertations in partial fulfillment of advanced degrees in the early 1920s, a move that gave birth to the M.F.A. program as well as to the fostering and funding of creative writing within English departments across the country. By the time Stafford submitted *Winterward* as part of his advanced degree, the Writers' Workshop had been in official existence for nearly twenty years—a staggering fact.

*Winterward* is a reminder, and it's also a snapshot of an emerging writer purposefully sculpting a collection of poems, a point that Paul highlights in his six-page Bibliographic Note in the Tavern Books edition of *Winterward*:

Of the thirty-five poems in *Winterward*, eighteen were composed during the two years spent in the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop between Fall 1950 and Summer 1952. Seven were written in Oregon between leaving the Workshop and submission of the dissertation in February 1954. The remaining ten were already in Stafford's files when he arrived at Iowa.

.....  
This willingness to exclude successful poems from before and after the Workshop suggests that Stafford was deliberately fashioning a coordinated collection, rather than simply assembling a gathering of his best poems to date. The result is a tough, somber book, created during years of uncertainty and privation.

We're not often given access to a poet's creative laboratory. What's of interest here is what's *not* included in *Winterward*. By the time Stafford showed up at the gates of Iowa, he'd already written hundreds of poems, and he'd already gained notoriety through high-profile publications in venues such as *The New Yorker* (none of the poems from *The New Yorker*, it turns out, end up in *Winterward*). Importantly, *Winterward* shows us a poet in pursuit of crafting a slim, carefully condensed, cohesive volume of poetry. And what's more striking is that, though crafted as a book, *Winterward* ultimately dissatisfied Stafford as a publishable volume. Again, more patience. No lowering of standards. Only seven poems from *Winterward* would find their way into Stafford's first full-length collection, *West*

*of Your City*, in 1960.

A reminder. A snapshot. But also a blueprint. In addition to *West of Your City*, *Winterward* contains poems that later appeared in several notable collections, including *The Rescued Year* and *Traveling through the Dark*. It's disarming—even shocking—to open *Winterward* and find such famous poems as “Bi-Focal” and “The Fish-Counter at Bonneville” in the Table of Contents. Perhaps a blueprint is what *Winterward* most resembles. The plans drawn up by a great and instinctive draftsman. Plans that were eventually scrapped so a new plan could take shape, so a new instinct could be followed like a golden thread. Looking at *Winterward* through this lens reminds us of the acute patience and care that go into the crafting of both a single poem and a book of poems, all the dead-ends and missteps and happy accidents it takes just to get one line to take shape on the page.

Tavern Books is especially proud of this publication. Importantly, and significantly, the publication of *Winterward* was a community project. We worked closely with Paul Merchant, Jeremy Skinner (who selected the two amazing author photos we used, one of which is Stafford's student ID at Iowa), and Doug Erickson at Lewis & Clark College Special Collections. The book started in the William Stafford Archive as a pile of manuscript pages and an idea, and will soon return there as a trade edition. Paul Merchant and Kim Stafford helped us formulate the architecture of the book itself—cover art, fonts, layout, front and back matter. *Winterward* took many iterations, with Paul and Kim serving as sounding boards, spin doctors, and veto holders. Paul Merchant, Kim Stafford, and Vince Wixon pored over this book, lending us their editorial time and expertise. We received generous grants from both The Friends of William Stafford and the Oregon Cultural Trust, which, along with donations from numerous individual donors, allowed us to double our print run and issue this book in both paperback and hardcover editions. It's humbling to be surrounded by so many individuals and institutions that came together to help support such a unique publication.

Tavern Books is a national press with its ear to the regional rail. And it's a regional press with a national scope. No matter how one prefers to frame William Stafford and his work, *Winterward* fits perfectly into Tavern Books' unconventional and forward-thinking catalog and ethos. One of the most striking parts of this collection is how it opens, with William Stafford speaking to us from his 1954 Preface. The preface, which Stafford wrote and then ultimately removed from his dissertation, heretofore only existed in Lewis & Clark College Special Collections. Simply put, Stafford's prose is astounding. The poet references Wordsworth, Milton, Cocteau, and Pound in an effort to frame the strengths and shortcomings of his own work, as well as the strengths and shortcomings of “workshop” culture in general. Stafford articulates the precarious position of the writer—he sees himself giving in to contemporary trends and artistic institutionalization while at the same time reaching toward the “repose of mind and religiousness of purpose” one only finds when following one's own artistic, aesthetic, and ethical impulses. As a poet, Stafford clearly sees himself wearing the Janus mask. Before us on the page is a writer, thinker, and citizen fully embroiled in a tangle of contradictions. From the get-go, we see a great mind at work.



We're delighted with this collection...even if it isn't exactly a *book*. Poor William Stafford, have we lowered his standards against his will by publishing this collection? I'm confident that we haven't. In fact, I believe the opposite is true. I'm delighted that those new to Stafford's work, longtime admirers, and scholars alike will find something to cherish in these pages. This dissertation was completed nearly sixty years ago, yet it's only through its publication in 2013 that we're offered this fresh view into a thrilling body of work from a major writer. Kim Stafford wrote to us: "Once you open *Winterward*, it's like a literary detective story." This sentiment speaks to the mystery and impulse of any poet, of any collection of poems. With the publication of *Winterward*, we are now given the opportunity to take part in another chapter of such a mystery.

## Letter from Los Prietos

July 27, 2013

Dear Friends of William Stafford,

Enclosed is my check to become a friend.

I was not aware of William Stafford and his connection to the Los Prietos (Boys) Camp, where I currently work, until recently when Westmont College and the US Forest Service erected a sign commemorating his days spent here as a conscientious objector during WWII when it was a Civilian Public Service camp.

When I started working in Special Education in 2009 at the camp, which is currently for incarcerated teenage boys, I had a student who gave me poem after poem after poem. When he was supposed to be doing his studies, I would catch him writing poetry instead. Sometimes I would scold him, but other times I would sit down with him and read his latest creation and offer him a tip or two. Having just self-published a book, I approached our English teacher about creating a poetry book for the camp since I was familiar with the self-publishing process. That seed, planted by that one boy, has grown into an annual tradition.

This year's poetry book, which we are currently working on, is entitled "Bridges" and will have poems written by the boys expressing their thoughts about finding that bridge to manhood. We are hoping to be included in the centennial celebration of Stafford at the event this year next to our camp and have a boy or two read his poem.

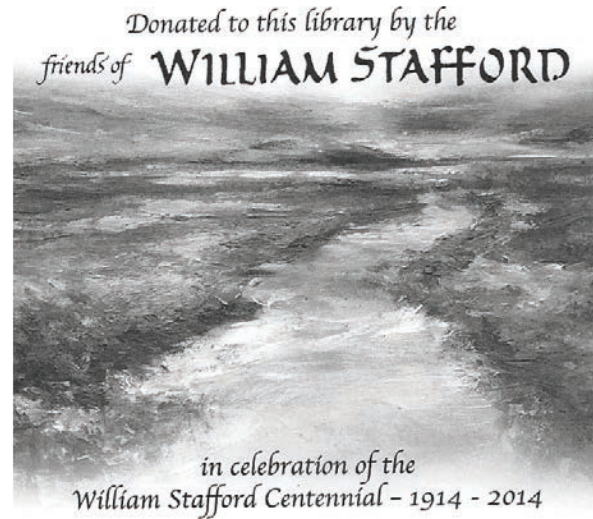
When I spoke to the boys about William Stafford and his connection to the camp, the boys were in awe and many shouted that they had seen the sign below our camp.

I, too, am excited about the connection and becoming a member of your organization.

Thank you for all you do.

Regards,

Coleen Hefley  
Instructional Assistant Special Education  
Los Robles High School Los Prietos Boys Camp  
Santa Barbara, CA



This bookplate will go inside each of the books given to libraries as a part of the William Stafford Library Project. The image is by Barbara Stafford and the bookplate design by Dennis Schmidling.

## The William Stafford Library Project

- Early Morning: Remembering My Father, William Stafford*, by Kim Stafford. Graywolf Press, 2002.
- Down in My Heart: Peace Witness in War Time*, introduction by Kim Stafford. Oregon State University Press, 2006.
- Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War*, edited and with an introduction by Kim Stafford. Milkweed Editions, 2003.
- On William Stafford: The Worth of Local Things*, edited by Tom Andrews. The University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems*. Graywolf Press, 1998.
- Writing the Australian Crawl: Views on the Writer's Vocation*. The University of Michigan Press, 1978.
- Writing the World: Understanding William Stafford*, by Judith Kitchen. Oregon State University Press, 1999.
- Every War Has Two Losers: A Poet's Meditation on Peace* (video), produced and directed by Haydn Reiss. Zinc Films, 2009.
- William Stafford: Life and Poems, A Collection of Three Video Works*, produced and directed by Mike Markee and Vince Wixon. TTTD Productions, 2004.

This project, organized by the Friends of William Stafford, will place the seven books and two videos listed above—a "William Stafford Library"—in seventy small and rural libraries in Oregon.

Friends of William Stafford board member Jim Scheppeke, former state librarian for Oregon, was instrumental in shaping this project and in securing a \$10,000 grant from the Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation—Betsy Priddy Donor Advised Fund. The Friends of William Stafford (that means you, readers) also gave \$2,000 to the project. This means there will be a collection of nine works by and about Stafford in libraries in Bandon, Dora, Nyssa, Pilot Rock, Harrisburg, Joseph, Sweet Home, and sixty-three other underserved and far-flung libraries in Oregon. It sounds like a poem, a good deed, and a fairy tale, all bound up together and ready to check out—a story that came true.

## At Home in the Poetry World

By Emily Wall

“She got out of the car here one day, / and it was snowing a little.” William Stafford opens his poem “Emily, This Place, and You” with a moment we shared and that I remember vividly. I met Bill when I was a 20-year-old undergrad at Colby College in Maine, home for Christmas break, and that meeting is one of those life moments that became a touchstone for me. And now, twenty years later, that moment has once again given something beautiful to me, connecting me to two new friends, two poets whose work I admire.

Recently my poem “This Forest, This Beach, You” was chosen to be placed in Totem Bight State Park in Ketchikan, Alaska. This is part of the *Poems in Place* project where poems by Alaskans will be placed in parks all across the state. The organizer of the project is Wendy Erd, who knows and loves Bill’s poems. She dreamed this project up with Kim Stafford, and they modeled it after Bill’s River Methow poems. I didn’t know Wendy before the project had begun, but spent a beautiful weekend with her in Ketchikan this past September, attending events and giving workshops that celebrated *Poems in Place*.

One morning Wendy and I were sitting in our funky hotel room on the docks in Ketchikan, and we were talking poetry while we drank this rich, dark coffee she had brought. In the way of poets, we were reading each other snippets of our poems and reciting lines from poems we loved. At one point we both started reciting lines from a William Stafford poem and that got us laughing and talking about the River Methow project. Wendy mentioned that she knew Kim, and I was eager to hear more about him, and his writing life, as I only knew him from his beautiful poems. As we talked, I told her I thought I might be the Emily in Bill’s poem, and she jumped off the couch and exclaimed that she and Kim had always wondered about this “Emily.” I had never told anyone that story, as of course I’m not sure that poem is about me, but the events of that poem match perfectly with my recollection of that day.

Some time after Bill’s death, I was home again in Portland (this time from graduate school in Arizona) and browsing in Powell’s Bookstore and found the book *The Way It Is*. In the front matter is a hand-written poem, his last poem, written on August 28, 1993. The poem opens: “Are you Mr. William Stafford?” I felt a chill as I read that line—that’s exactly what I had said when I walked up to Bill on that January day that we met. As soon as the words were out of my mouth I blushed, realizing how formal and weird they sounded, but of course Bill just smiled and invited me to sit down. So I did, wondering how it was that I was actually meeting William Stafford, actually sitting down with a National Book Award winner.

A few months before this meeting, I was at Colby taking a writing workshop with the wonderful poet Ira Sadoff. When I mentioned how much I loved Bill’s poetry, Ira told me I should write to him. I was from Portland and of course Bill was there. It took me a few months to work up the courage, but I did write him a letter to tell him how much I loved his poetry. That fall I was reading Bill’s poems daily and learning so much. Along with my letter, I included a poem of mine. And then a few weeks later, I opened my campus mailbox to find a letter from Bill, who had taken the time out of his busy writing and teaching schedule to write back this undergrad on the

other side of the country. He wrote that he liked my poem (oh joy!) and invited me to come meet with him when I was home on winter break.

Standing in Powell’s that day, holding *The Way It Is*, I had to catch my breath before I kept reading. Could it be that Bill had borrowed that line from me? Perhaps. But what was really amazing was that he had taken this awkward, stilted, line and turned it into this poem of grace. For me, that so encapsulates him as a person and as a writer. I continued to flip through the poems, reading a few here and there, and then my eyes fell on “Emily, This Place, and You.” I read the poem with shaking hands, and then read it again. It was like Bill’s voice talking to me, assuring me, returning somehow to check in with me, to see if I was “getting used to being a person.”

I had gotten out of the car there that January, and it was snowing a little as I walked up to the library on the Lewis and Clark Campus. It was right after Christmas, and I was getting ready to fly to England where I would study at Oxford. As I recall, that’s mostly what Bill and I talked about that day. We sat by a window and watched the snow falling through the trees, and we talked about the Romantics and Oxford and poems. I remember him talking to me as if I was a writer, as if we were just two poets talking craft. And what a gift that was to me then, as I was just beginning to decide if this would be my life’s work. As a professor now, I’m even more amazed that he devoted this time to me—a student not even his, on an afternoon he could have been working on his own poems. I remind myself often of this generosity, especially at times when I’m not generous enough with my own students.

In August of that year, after I returned from England, I read in the paper that he had died. There was a memorial service on the Lewis and Clark campus so I went, and sat on the lawn along with so many other people, and listened to poems and stories from his life. At the service his poem “Assurance” was passed out. It felt again like a little friendly wave from Bill, another way he was offering himself to us, even after his death. I have that poem now in my office. Sometimes when a student is sitting in my green chair and crying or frustrated or just feeling down, I copy the poem and give it to them. I can tell by their faces that they get the same little jolt of recognition and joy that this poem gives to me.

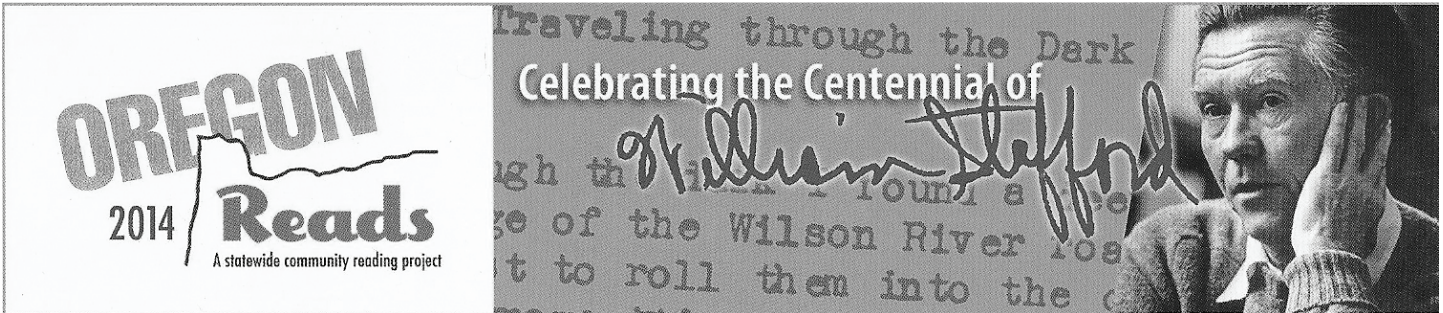
The day my poem was unveiled in Totem Bight State Park, I spent an hour down on the beach. It was a beautiful fall day—amazingly not raining—and I had this miraculous quiet time to myself. With three children, a husband, and a teaching job, I rarely have this. But on this day, on this beach, I had quiet, and the memory of reading his River Methow poems for the first time, and the memory of meeting him that January day. I picked up a few stones to take home with me, and looking out over the water, thought of his lines: “But now, looking out there, / she felt easy, at home in the world.”

### from “A Poetry Ambassador”

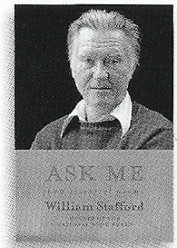
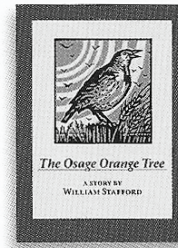
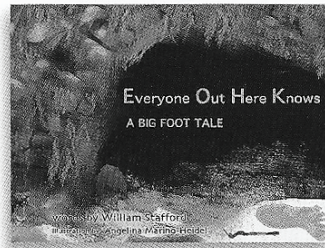
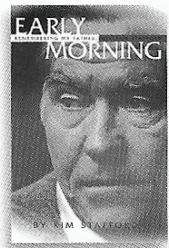
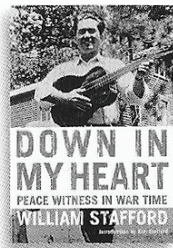
by Paulann Petersen, in *The Lewis & Clark Chronicle*, Fall 2013

Poetry speaks the language of us at our best. A poem comes from that place in us where we are the most creative, attentive, responsive. A poem speaks to that place in us where we are the most authentic. Poetry is the language of *our best selves*.





Recommended reading for the William Stafford Centennial in 2014. [oregonreads2014.com](http://oregonreads2014.com) Sponsored by the Oregon Library Association



## Oregon Reads 2014 Recommendations

*Early Morning: Remembering My Father, William Stafford*  
by Kim Stafford. Graywolf Press, 2002.

*Down in My Heart: Peace Witness in War Time* by William Stafford,  
introduction by Kim Stafford. Oregon State University Press,  
2006.

*Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War*  
by William Stafford, edited and with an introduction by Kim  
Stafford. Milkweed Editions, 2003.

*Ask Me: 100 Essential Poems* by William Stafford, edited and with  
an introduction by Kim Stafford. Graywolf Press, (available late  
2013).

*The Osage Orange Tree, A Story* by William Stafford  
by William Stafford, illustrations by Dennis Cunningham.  
Trinity University Press, (available late 2013).

*Everyone Out Here Knows: A Big Foot Tale* by William Stafford,  
created and compiled by Tim Barnes, illustrations by  
Angelina Marino-Heidel. Arnica Creative Services, 2014  
(available now).

The six books above are the ones recommended by the Oregon Reads 2014 committee, a group of librarians affiliated with the Oregon Library Association. They were selected to help promote the centenary of William Stafford's birth. Over 100 public, academic, and school libraries are participating in the William Stafford Project. Besides recommending books, Oregon Reads has a speaker's bureau which includes Kim Stafford, Brian Doyle, John Daniel, Lawson Inada, Paulann Petersen, Jarold Ramsey, and Tim Barnes. These seven writers will be available for library programs in 2014.

The Oregon Reads website <[oregonreads2014.com](http://oregonreads2014.com)> has a Stafford bibliography, a resource page for teachers and presenters, a biography of Stafford from the Oregon Encyclopedia, and a Facebook page.

In 2009 Oregon Reads selected three books to celebrate Oregon's sesquicentennial: *Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family* by Laura Kessler; *Bat 6* by Virginia Euwer Wolff, a book for upper elementary students; and *Apples to Oregon*, a book for younger children. Of the six Oregon Reads recommendations, *The Osage Orange Tree* is geared toward an adolescent audience and *Everyone Out Here Knows* is aimed toward younger children. However, since this editor was the creator and compiler of the latter, he can say that it is such a beautiful book that it would appeal to readers of any age.

### William Stafford

I remember that he came into our class quietly  
That he spoke slowly with great dignity  
That he praised two of my poems  
But clearly he was grander than any poems

I should not seek glory  
For those college moments with him  
I walked in a jungle where a few gentle wisemen stood  
and spoke  
Sometimes I listened but I could only guess at meanings

RAY BURLEIGH

## Interview with Paul Merchant, Former Head of the William Stafford Archives

Tim Barnes, Interviewer

*What were you doing before you came to the Stafford Archives and Lewis & Clark?*

I had been fifteen years at Warwick University in the center of England, when Grace, Luke and I came to Portland in 1987. Here began a potpourri of jobs: a year and a half as Managing Editor under James Anderson at Breitenbush Books, publishers of Mary Barnard, Naomi Shihab Nye, Peter Sears, Barbara Drake, Ingrid Wendt, Clyde Rice, and other mostly Western luminaries; then six years in Dayton, Ohio, editing a book of essays on Wendell Berry, and three plays by Shakespeare's contemporary Thomas Heywood, while volunteering at the local Museum of Natural History and assisting a family of graphics designers with a range of publications, including a coffee-table survey of Ohio's seventy courthouses; back in Portland I taught at the Refugee Center (IRCO) and copy-edited seventeen volumes for OSU Press, before joining the William Stafford Archives, then housed above Fat City Cafe in Multnomah Village, in 1997.

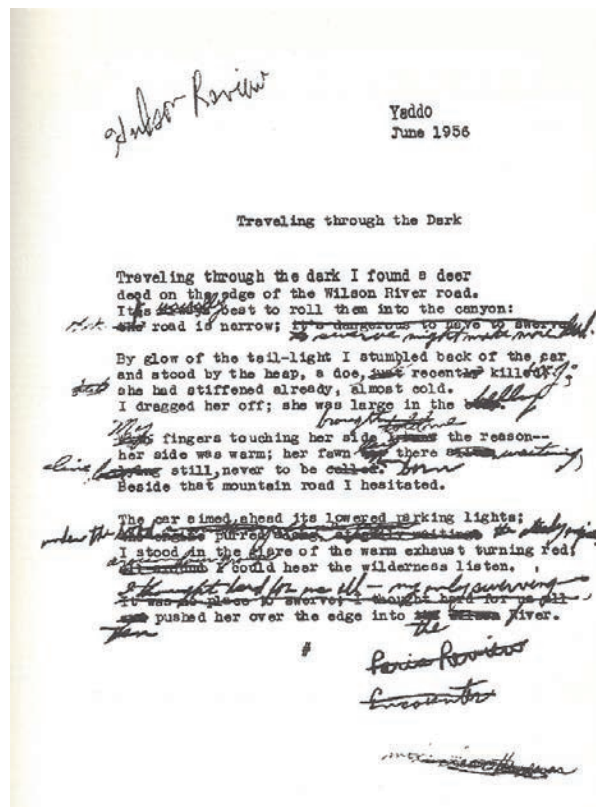
*What was the sequence of events that brought you to the Archives?*

One afternoon in 1996, when Peter Sears was trimming a rancy camellia shrub and I was sanding the porch of the future Mountain Writers' House on Milwaukie Ave. that we were helping Sandra Williams to renovate, Peter commented that Kim Stafford might welcome help with his father's papers. I had known Kim from the late 1980s, when we had discussed bringing Breitenbush to the Oregon College of Art and Craft as the press in residence, and I had also met his father briefly when I drove Naomi Nye to a poetry reading at Catlin Gabel School. After the reading, Dorothy came up to me and started a friendly conversation while Bill stood a little distance away. I don't remember exchanging any words with him. If I had, mine would have been shy and banal. Dorothy invited us to a meal, but Grace's work took us to Ohio very suddenly about a week later. Now Peter's suggestion led me to contact Kim again, and he invited me to the Archives as a volunteer. About six months later, in mid 1997, the University of Michigan Press requested a further selection from William Stafford in their Poets on Poetry series, and I was taken on half-time to work with Vince Wixon on what became *Crossing Unmarked Snow* the following year.

*What were the Archives like when you arrived at Lewis & Clark? What were the organizational problems you had to solve? I understand that you were working at Lewis & Clark some time before all the Archives arrived there; could you talk about that?*

Soon after his father's death in 1993, I understand that Kim had enlisted the help of his assistant at the college, Diane McDevitt, and of Vince and Patty Wixon, to move the two hundred or so banker's boxes of books and papers from the Sunningdale house in Lake Oswego to the office space in Multnomah Village. Bill had been methodical in his preservation of the materials: a separate folder (containing about a ream of paper) for every year of daily writings, approximately

twenty thousand sheets, from 1950/51 to 1993; all his incoming (and copies of a choice of outgoing) correspondence in annual boxes, twelve monthly files in each box; separate files (organized under book titles) for his dealings with publishers—correspondence, contracts, copyrights, etc.—for each of his books; separate prose files in ream boxes for essays, interviews, reviews, and reviews of other authors' books; a delightful box of more than a thousand index cards dating from Iowa 1950 into the 1970s that he had used in his teaching; files of photo negatives arranged chronologically, and his own prints from those negatives, many with identifications on the reverse side; and perhaps the most important single sequence, thousands of typescripts in separate categories, including the documentary copies (see documentary copy of "Traveling through the Dark" below) of



every poem in every collection, separately filed, copies of poems used in readings from the 1950s to the 1990s, and annual files of the poems accepted in journals. The organization was careful, as it had to be, given the quantity of material involved, though it all required catalogue entries and finding aids. Kim, Diane, Vince, and Patty had wisely maintained the original arrangement. In subsequent years, right to the present, the author's original cataloguing has always been used as a guide to future cataloguers. There have been no major organizational problems to solve, for which Bill has been blessed almost daily, and when I arrived in 1996, I was additionally fortunate in having Vince present as Scholar in Residence at the Archives, researching Stafford's relationship with his brilliant editor at Harper & Row, Elizabeth Lawrence, for *Traveling through the Dark*. At around the same time, I had begun teaching a series of classes in the spirit of William Stafford for Kim at the Graduate School of Education at Lewis & Clark, and one of my earliest meetings at the Archives was with Doug Erickson, Head of Special Collections at the college, for a discussion of the Archives' relation



with the newly formed Friends of William Stafford. Soon I was volunteering at the college's Special Collections, assisting Doug and then Jeremy Skinner on exhibits and their catalogues, and as co-author on two Lewis and Clark Expedition volumes. I also served as the lead cataloguer on the papers of C.E.S. Wood and of Waldport CPS internee Kermit Sheets, two extensive collections catalogued with precious help from student interns at the Watzek Library. By the time the William Stafford Archives arrived in the spring of 2008, followed by the remainder of the materials from Stafford's study in the summer of 2012, we had all had useful experience in using student help (important educationally for the students, and invaluable for the timely processing of materials) in the handling of huge collections.

*What were your responsibilities in general and in particular? Were all of them focused on Stafford?*

My duties as a volunteer were to assist with all the collections that had a literary component. Later as an employee, those tasks expanded to more general library duties, and included outreach to faculty members to bring the materials in Special Collections to their classes. Doug, Jeremy and I collaborated on various projects with faculty, involving student visits to Special Collections, student research leading to small exhibits, or involvement in the creation of larger ones, and assistance to faculty in the departments mainly of history, art, Classics, French, and English, where I also taught a number of classes during the sabbatical absences of Mary Szybist, and at other times. In addition to the C.E.S. Wood and Kermit Sheets collections, other literary acquisitions included the complete poetry drafts of Vern Rutsala, Stafford's colleague at Lewis & Clark, and gifts of drafts by Oregon poet laureate Paulann Petersen for her three latest collections. In recent years the William Stafford collection began to take center stage.

*How would you describe a typical day?*

Very varied, no two days alike. Contacts might be with visitors to Special Collections needing access to any of our literary holdings; or with students under our supervision preparing class projects, or researching an exhibit, or assisting with cataloguing; or it might be with faculty in relation to an existing class or devising a future collaboration. In the absence of visitors, there was always uncatalogued material to put in order and summarize in a finding aid. No shortage of tasks. My last major occupation, begun two years before retirement and continuing a few months after retirement, was to meet weekly with Jim Carmin, Director of the John Wilson Room in the Multnomah County Library, to select from William Stafford's correspondence for that Library's exhibit in the Collins Gallery, November/December 2012. These sessions, frequently continued at an Indian meal shared by Carl Adamshick and Michael McGriff, were an engaging mix of friendship with hard work and scholarship, typical of most encounters at the Archives over the years.

*What were the major accomplishments of your time as the Stafford archivist? Of which ones are you most proud and which ones were the most difficult?*

I was very pleased that I had the time, four years, almost entirely

alone with the materials after they moved to Diane McDevitt's house, enabling me to read all twenty thousand pages of the daily writings and to catalogue every poem begun in those pages, tying all their typed versions to their various handwritten drafts. That very large catalogue of poem first lines and titles, alongside the smaller finding aids of titles and first lines for poems published in books (created in the early days by Diane McDevitt and Sam Jordan respectively) has been invaluable in many different ways.

Another early collaboration at the Archives was with Nancy Winklesky and Patty Wixon in assembling a collection of framed broadsides by Stafford and his contemporaries from the Archives, "How the Ink Feels." This Friends of William Stafford traveling exhibit visited venues across the country over many years. It is now resting from its travels at the Archives.

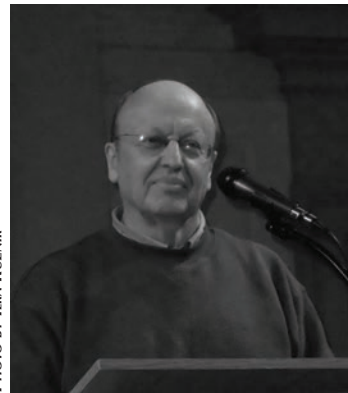


PHOTO BY IKA KUZNIK

Paul Merchant

Two huge leaps forward in knowledge of William Stafford were Patty Wixon's transfer of all his recorded readings to almost one hundred disks, work done in Ashland, and the digitization of all the photographic negatives under the supervision of Jeremy Skinner. Other jointly produced aids to research were the transcription of William Stafford's prose mainly created by Loretta Johnson, the transcript of the teaching cards, much of it the work of Karen Bonoff, and Natalie Garyet's ordering and cataloguing of Stafford's correspondence with his publishers.

When I arrived at the college, the William Stafford Room was a student study room adorned with reproductions of Stafford poems and other memorabilia. I was one of those urging the creation of a dedicated safe space for books from the Archives, along with other poetry from the Rare Book Collection. The room has been provided, in two stages, with a pair of matching glass-fronted bookcases, a distinguished home for the publications of Stafford and his contemporaries, with two wall cases and a floor case outside its door for student exhibits based on the literature collections.

The web page presenting all the drafts of the poems in Stafford's first two collections has proved popular and attractive. Finally, the two largest catalogues, both completed last year with the help of an army of students under the supervision of Jeremy Skinner, were the catalogue of Stafford's correspondence, and our completion of emeritus Watzek Librarian James Pirie's admirable bibliography of William Stafford's published work, which had been complete and extremely useful for publications to 1979. The revision of this unpublished finding aid, brought up to date to 2013, was published late last year by Oak Knoll Press in a volume of well over five hundred pages, over eighty of them a double-column index. In its weight alone, the volume is a tribute to one of America's most prolific poets. Its extensive acknowledgments pages give the names of the dozens of students whose good-natured work made the book possible. Of these, two students, Casey Newbegin and Alice Whitaker, gave many months to the project, and Alice is still a highly valued intern at the Archives.

(cont. on p. 8)

(cont. from p. 7)

*What books came out of the Archives during the time you were there, books dealing with Stafford and others?*

*Even in Quiet Places* (Confluence Press, 1996): assistance as proof-reader.

*There's a Thread You Follow . . .* (Archives, 1998), a pamphlet celebrating three new titles, to accompany events in Portland between April 19 and April 25, 1998.

*Crossing Unmarked Snow: Further Views on the Writer's Vocation* (University of Michigan Press, 1998): co-editor with Vince Wixon.

*Down in My Heart: Peace Witness in War Time* (Oregon State University Press, 1998), a reprint of the 1947 text, edited with an introduction by Kim Stafford: bibliographic and photographic assistance.

*The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1998): first selection, made with Vince Wixon.

*A Scripture of Leaves* (Brethren Press, 1999), a revised edition of the 1989 printing: numerous corrections made by reference to the best published texts of the poems.

*William Stafford: An Exhibit Catalog and Bibliography* (Archives, 2000), exhibit catalog and bibliography to accompany the exhibit curated by Doug Erickson at Lewis & Clark College.

*The Answers Are Inside the Mountains: Meditations on the Writing Life* (Michigan, 2003): co-edited with Vince Wixon.

*Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War* (Milkweed Editions, 2003): draft selection for editor Kim Stafford, made with Vince Wixon.

*Rapport från en avlägsen plats (Report from a Far Place)*, Swedish translations by Lars Nordström, (Edda Editions, 2003): the texts partially reflected discussion with Kim and myself on choices and arrangement, some years earlier.

*Down in My Heart: Peace Witness in War Time* (Oregon State University Press, 2006), a second OSU Press edition, edited with a new introduction by Kim Stafford and an expansion of the photographs: bibliographic and photographic assistance.

*Whispered in Winter*, Japanese translations by Ritz Kyoko Mori, a product of the second William Stafford Chapbook Workshop, 2006, led with Wendy Swanson.

*Another World Instead: The Early Poems of William Stafford 1937-47* (Graywolf Press, 2008), early poems chosen and introduced by Fred Marchant: with my bibliographic and textual assistance.

*William Stafford and His First Publishers: The Making of West of Your City and Traveling through the Dark* (Berberis Press, 2009), the expansion of Vince Wixon's research in the Archives from 1996, with my collaboration, published as Stafford Studies #1.

*William Stafford, An Annotated Bibliography* (Oak Knoll Press, 2013), the product of multiple authors, student interns, and volunteers at the Archives since 1997, under the leadership of Jeremy Skinner, working with finding aids, catalogues, and materials created by myself and many others at the Archives and at Lewis & Clark College over fifteen years.

The Archives also published pamphlets of Stafford materials that I compiled to accompany annual symposiums at Lewis & Clark's Graduate School and elsewhere, as follows:

"Friends to This Ground" (First Symposium, October 2001)

"How These Words Happened" (At Willamette Writers, Portland, January 2002)

"Mercy and the Upright Life" (Second Symposium, October 2002)

"Justice Will Take Us Millions of Intricate Moves" (At Orono, Maine, June 2004)

"The Dream of Now" (Fifth Symposium, November 2005)

*Could you talk about Berberis Press and, as well, how it connected with Stafford studies?*

Berberis Press was founded by Doug Erickson at the college's Special Collections to publish (for free distribution) illustrated broadsides of poems by visiting poets in the English Department's annual reading series, and each year by members of Mary Szybist's senior poetry class; the illustrated catalogues of all the many exhibits over the years in Special Collections; occasional volumes of poetry; the volumes of Stafford Studies; and the current products of the third William Stafford chapbook series, volumes of poetry printed and in progress from writers associated with the college: Garrett Chavis, Natalie Garyet, Kirsten Rian, and Pauls Toutonghi. In all these ventures, now totaling many dozens of items, often in substantial editions, Doug has been ably assisted by Jeremy Skinner as designer and printer. Many of the publications and exhibit catalogues may be viewed on the Special Collections website.

*What books might come out in the future?*

The next few months will see the publication of five William Stafford books: his Iowa dissertation, the poetry collection *Winterward* (Tavern Books); Kim Stafford's selection, *Ask Me: 100 Essential Poems by William Stafford* (Graywolf Press); a children's book based on a Stafford poem, *Everyone Out Here Knows: A Big Foot Tale*, created and compiled by Tim Barnes, with illustrations by Angelina Marino-Heidel (Arnica Creative Services); Stafford's story *The Osage Orange Tree* (Trinity University Press); and *Sound of the Ax*, aphorisms and poems (University of Pittsburgh Press), edited by Vince Wixon and myself.

*What do you see as the most promising areas for research and development in the Stafford Archives in the future?*

I would have liked to see a concordance of every word in the poems in Stafford's published collections. It is extremely easy these days to find poems by first line or title, but very challenging (relying on memory alone) to find poems from quotations within poems. Creating such a concordance would not be difficult, but would be time-consuming. It would certainly be an essential aid to scholarship in William Stafford's poems.

A collected poems (perhaps as an online publication) is probably to be anticipated. Its future editor would have available all six thousand poems typed by Stafford, in chronological order; or the two to three thousand poems published in book collections would be another possible selection.

I expect a greater interest in William Stafford as a photographer to follow from the exhibits of his photographs at the college in February 2014 as part of the symposium there.

Little attention has been given to William Stafford's almost one hundred book reviews.



The recordings of his numerous readings, with their illuminating introductions to his poems, have not been studied for their role in the growth of the public reading, in which Stafford was a pioneer. His parallel role in the development of poetry workshops has been available through the four volumes in the Michigan Poets on Poetry series, but his influence as a teacher of writing could still repay study.

But the most exciting future researcher in the Archives will be the person we could never have anticipated. In preparing for that unknown and unpredictable researcher, we have all been aware from the beginning that our role was to make the materials available with as little interference as possible. I hope all future researchers will find the Archives welcoming and easy of access.

*What people did you work with at the Stafford Archives and what were their responsibilities?*

Kim Stafford, Literary Executor; Diane McDevitt, Archives Assistant; Vince and Patty Wixon, scholars and researchers; Doug Erickson, Head of Special Collections; Jeremy Skinner, Assistant Archivist; Zachary Selley, Archival Assistant; Matthew Dickman and Carl Adamshick, William Stafford Fellows; and a host of faculty, students and volunteers far too numerous to name. Their names can be seen in the acknowledgments pages of the Oak Knoll Pirie bibliography.

*Could you talk about the student research projects you mentored, discussing some of the significant ones.*

Alphabetically, these are the student internship projects to date, created under supervision at Special Collections, most resulting in exhibits outside the William Stafford Room:

- Jessica Alberg: William Stafford and Walt Morey. (Jess also provided an excellent blog on the Stafford Archives web page detailing an encounter between Stafford and Bukowski.)
- Mayme Berman: William Stafford's Journal at Camp Miminagish, June 1993.
- Robin Cedar: The Drafts of Paulann Petersen's "Doxology."
- Michael Chasar: William Stafford and Paul Engle at Iowa.
- Garrett Chavis: The Correspondence between Richard Hugo and William Stafford.
- Emily Cousins: Tonal Tensions in Petersen's *Kindle*.
- Natalie Garyet: Submissions for Paulann Petersen's *Kindle*.
- Rosalie Gordon: Letters from Conscientious Objectors in World War II.
- Alexandra Hebler: Drafts of Two Poems from Petersen's *Kindle*.
- Riley Johnson: William Stafford's Longest Short Story.
- Chris Keady: The drafts of "In the Night Desert."
- Charlie Macquarie: The drafts of "In Dear Detail, by Ideal Light."
- Sarah Osborne: The drafts of Paulann Petersen's *The Voluptuary*.
- Preetham Sridharan: The Portrayal of Walt Whitman in Petersen's *The Voluptuary*.
- Hannah Thompson: William Stafford and Four Fine-Press Printers (Hamady, Coberly, Moser, Hui-Ming).
- Kelsi Villareal: William Stafford on Life and Death.

*What have you learned about poetry and the writing of it from working with the Stafford Archives?*

My own writing is so diametrically different from William Stafford's that I could be objective in my work on him, and received no

distracting influence from his powerful voice. I did of course learn much about the career of a poet in twentieth century America, which helped in clarifying my work with Vince Wixon on the two Michigan Poets on Poetry volumes.

*What do you think will be William Stafford's legacy?*

William Stafford's personal witness as a pacifist in World War II, and as a pacifist writer throughout his career, but especially in the early years and the luminous last couple of years, cannot be overstated. In coming years, especially in the current political climate, the pacifist voice is essential, and Stafford's will surely be remembered.

In the field of modern poetics, he continued the tradition of well-made conversational poems established by Robert Frost in the first half of the twentieth century, while resisting the powerful voices of Eliot and Pound, the Confessional poets (though he admired Lowell), and the Beats. He was a pioneer in two influential movements, the poetry workshop and the public reading, which have formed American poetry, resulting generally in short, personal, largely accessible poems. He has been unfairly neglected by those critics who admire the obscurity of John Ashbery and Jorie Graham, and his legacy a hundred years from now would be hard to predict.

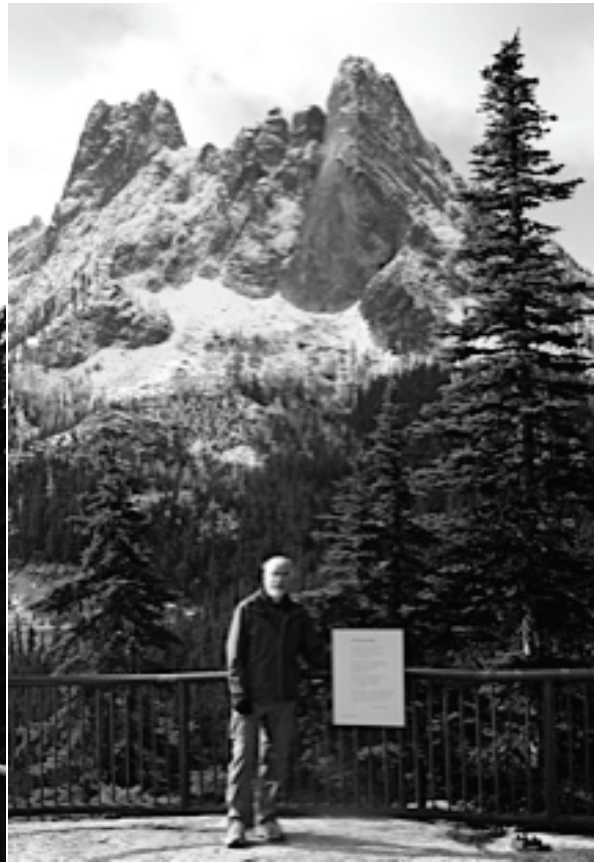
## Instructions for Childhood

- 1  
Slither solitary as a grass snake  
under the fence into water meadows
- Share the summer dreams of cattle  
grazing on yellow marigolds
- Crouch by the track to feel the train's thunder  
taste of coal smoke on your tongue
- 2  
A name floats up across half a century  
freckle-faced Rosemary with her mysteries
- Best at hiding and the most fun to find  
she disappeared suddenly, we never knew why
- 3  
That steep hillside forest of fern  
will keep you invisible all afternoon
- It is all much older than you: the armor-plated  
woodlouse, the mushroom, the pebble
- And you find every creature makes its own way—  
even the paired sparrows settle on separate  
branches

PAUL MERCHANT

## Methow River Poems

These are two photos taken by Don Colburn and his wife Nell at the site of the recently restored installations of two of Stafford's Methow River Poems at Washington Pass toward the east end of the North Cascades Highway. The one pictured here is "A Valley Like This." The other, located nearby, is "Silver Star." There are five more down in the valley that is seen in the picture below.



## Wordstock 2013



PHOTO BY TONY FARRENKOPF

Ilka Kuznik, Tim Barnes, Leah Stenson, and Joan Maiers. Behind is the new FWS banner.





## Returning What We Owed

The first tracks we came upon were those of old digressions. Not only did our scent cover them, but other animals had littered the clearings with their various sleeps. After that, migrations south drew us, or branches starting suddenly from fog, or stems straightening like spinal columns to push up to light. Deers' browsing tracks crisscrossed in the burdock; only our hearts stood like stone markers old scouts laid. Finally, the green of semper vivens receding toward snow line persuaded us beyond what we already knew. What we loved we left in hand-hewn shelters by the trail. Whole lives--all we trusted--would have to pick up where we left them, returning what they owed us in that taking. Meanwhile, we, like travelers in Sesshu scrolls, had waded through the rapids, gone around the last bend anyone could guess at from the road.

CAROLYNE WRIGHT

Originally published in *Poetry Now*

## from "The Spirit of William Stafford: A Countertradition to Modernism?"

by Lewis Caccia, Jr., in *Atenea* 23.1, June 2003, accessed in the *William Stafford Online Reader*

[T]he spirit that blended Stafford's enthusiasm for life itself with his acute social awareness is the same spirit that enabled Stafford to write some of the most inspired and insightful poetry of the twentieth century.

### Yes

It could happen any time, tornado,  
earthquake, Armageddon. It could happen.  
Or sunshine, love, salvation.

It could you know. That's why we wake  
and look out--no guarantees  
in this life.

But some bonuses, like morning,  
like right now, like noon,  
like evening.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Read at Dorothy's memorial

## Full Moon 1160 Times & Counting

That first full moon, in 1916,  
January, shone through cracks  
in the barn boards where Prince  
and Mandie munched their oats,  
then peered into the upstairs  
room to touch your face.

*I will watch over you.  
Wherever you go, I will find you.*

Silhouette of the miracle worker—  
you held your hand to that light,  
that great forgiveness, bounty  
of welcome as you grew up  
in orange groves, then your  
cabin in the mountains.

*I will pry open darkness.  
I will raise your spirit.*

Loyal still, you leave your  
room, your things, your worries  
to tread the hall in search  
of our rendezvous, I over  
Oregon, and you here  
where you have always been.

*In my light I hold you.  
I see you through all weather.*

Remember a dusty road.  
Remember a little school.  
Remember a garden, a porch.  
We have bound these treasures  
in lasting light, in a kind of  
holiness that is simple and right.

*Years do not matter. Only  
fullness, and in darkness, light.*

KIM STAFFORD

Read at Dorothy's memorial

## The Light in the Room— Dorothy Stafford, 1916-2013

By Tim Barnes

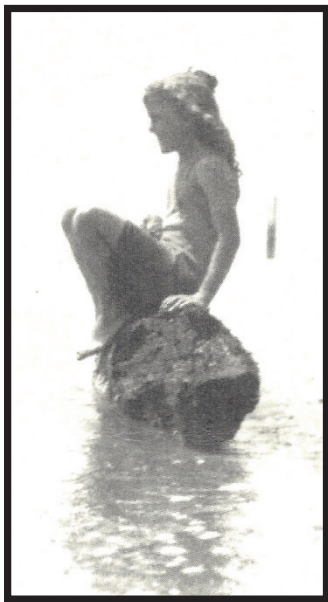
I'll be seeing you  
In all the old familiar places  
That this heart of mine embraces  
All day through ...

I'll find you in the morning sun  
And when the night is new  
I'll be looking at the moon  
But I'll be seeing you.

-a song Dorothy sang

The Agnes Flanagan Chapel at Lewis & Clark is a beautiful place, round and wood and tall, with a blue-toned stained glass window that rings its upper reaches. It was packed with people who, as Kim Stafford said, brought Dorothy with them.

A quartet of musicians played the lovely and haunting Bach Double Violin Concerto in D Minor, a piece that has calmed and extended the sensibilities of so many people. Barry Glassner, the president of Lewis and Clark, gave a short welcome. And then members of the



Stafford family witnessed their love and memory of Dorothy.

Barbara Stafford remembered that Dodo, Dorothy's family name, was often expanded to Dodo do-it. "Happy was our directive," she laughed, embodying her mother with her smile. "She had summer inside her," Barb remembered, using the prevailing metaphor for her life—"light." "She turned off her own light," Barb said, telling how her mother had gotten up to turn off a light in her apartment that someone had left on—and fell. This lived metaphor speaks of the sparkling independence so many people loved in her. Her favorite

two words, Barb said, were "summer day"; her favorite word, "home." Barb recalled a dream Dorothy told her not long ago of running down a hill with streamers of all colors flying out from her fleet form. Barb then read one of her mother's favorite poems, Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Afternoon on a Hill."

Sam, Barb's son, remembered the story of Dorothy's first day of teaching, a story she told him a bit reluctantly. Called in to replace a teacher who resigned because of a class of extremely unruly boys, Dorothy entered the class and found it so. A very rude boy said something to her and she slapped him. He turned out to be the

ringleader and things went much better after that.

Ian, Barb's other son, remembered the kick of her leg she would give, standing by the mailbox, as friends and family drove away on Sunningdale. He moved from behind the podium and demonstrated, much to the delight of the assembled. Paulann Petersen tells me that in younger times it was sometimes a leap and click of the heels.

Her niece Julie Frantz spoke of Dorothy's love of "beauty bound in small things" and how Dorothy and a relative, in order to save wrapping, sent the same wrapping back and forth until it was finally a small square taped to the actual wrapping. Julie's phrase, "she was always the light in the room," captures how so many felt and feel about Dorothy.

It was beyond moving to hear Katie, her grandchild through Bret, move from her grandmother's passing to her father's, and to forgiveness and reconciliation. Perhaps she had read her uncle's amazing book, *100 Tricks Every Boy Can Do: How My Brother Disappeared*.

Kim, with his usual grace and pith, said that he realized the morning of the memorial that "Everyone is bringing mother." And it was true and is true. We have our memories of Dorothy alive within us and they feel, to use one of her favorite words, "good." She cast, as Kim said, "a shadow made of light." Then Kim read his poem, "Full Moon 1160 Times & Counting."



Kim's son Guthrie

played a guitar instrumental for his grandmother. His daughter Rosemarie, whose bouquets were on every table at the reception that followed, remembered Dorothy's love for flowers and the tiny flowers in little vases she would have around the house and wondered whether that this might be why she now operates a floral company, Rosemary Stafford Floral Design.

Kit Stafford read a letter from Naomi Shihab Nye, an excerpt of which appears here. In another part of the letter she calls Dorothy, "a poet of living." Kit asked the audience to stand up if they shared with Dorothy things she loved, like eating pies, a gift of flowers, talking

*Wondrous pleasure in family, flowers, friends, events, good food, adventure, birds, quotations, travel, journal-writing, jokes, memories, Bill and Bret and Helen, everyone you loved. It was strange to get old, you said, still feeling such sparks of fresh appetite for - everything. Nothing was dim or dull in your presence. If so, you shooed it away. Brought that light back into the room ....*

-A note for Dorothy by Naomi Shihab Nye





about books, watching the full moon, and dozens of other pleasures. Readers, you were on that list and stood up or could have; I was on that list, and we are so grateful.

And somewhere in the memorial one of the family remembered that at the hospital, "She gave a little kick at the end." Did I hear that or imagine that? I don't know, but I think I'll call it true.

After the celebration at the chapel was over, many people walked up to the Stamm Dining Room for the reception. Along one wall there were tables on

which scarves and keepsakes that Dorothy collected over the years were offered to guests. I took a refrigerator magnet of two sea gulls perched on pilings; my wife took a yellow bird with a gold string for a Christmas ornament, and then we wandered around talking with Dorothy's friends, glowing with memories, too many to count.

Postscript: I sent a note to Barbara, asking her if there was a photo of Dorothy's farewell high jinks by the mailbox on Sunningdale. She said that there wasn't but included something she had forgotten to say at the memorial: "Not long ago I said, 'Mama, if you die before I do, I am going to miss you.' Her response: 'I'm going to miss me, too.'"

## Afternoon on a Hill

I will be the gladdest thing  
Under the sun!  
I will touch a hundred flowers  
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds  
With quiet eyes,  
Watch the wind bow down the grass,  
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show  
Up from the town,  
I will mark which must be mine,  
And then start down!

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

## "Hope" is the thing with feathers

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.

EMILY DICKINSON



Dorothy and the editor at the Hiroshima Memorial at the Japanese American Historical Plaza on August 6th.

**Editor's note:** The pictures of Dorothy are from the program for her memorial. The poems were read during the ceremony.

## Stafford-Curtis Correspondence (Cordial Encounters)

By Walt Curtis

In 1971 I was a young pup of a street poet—odious epithet!—yet true. There was tension between outsider poets and academic ones. They had paid privileges, salaries. We had nothing. The Vietnam War brought us together. Suddenly we were on the same stage. American poetry was out of the lecture halls into Russian-size auditoriums and rock-n-roll stadiums.

It was mind-blowing to use a cliché of the era. We poets, students and professionals alike, had a national voice in the late sixties and early seventies. Protest poetry had become a cottage industry. To stop the war, we marched in the Portland streets, chanting: “All we are saying, is—just give peace a chance.” Those were heady and passionate times.

College students were under enormous pressure to maintain their grades. Otherwise, they could be inducted and sent to Vietnam. An insane capitalist and militarist venture. What for? So Dow chemical could make billions of dollars by selling napalm and dropping herbicide on Vietnamese peasants. Oddly enough, the Pentagon, and the politicians stopped the draft, so they could continue to pursue foreign imperial wars.

This is not a rant. I am setting up context for the first letter from Bill Stafford, dated 23 July 1971. I will go to it in a moment. In 1970, protesting the war, there was a student strike at Portland State. Mayor Ivancie sent the TAC squad to tear down the encampment in the park blocks—and bust heads. This political ferment was happening on campuses all over the USA.

Through his pacifist Quaker consciousness, Stafford understood: All wars are bad. Everyone loses. When will President Obama wake up? O-bomba! Drones blow up innocent civilians. To restore our so-called Democracy, I believe—we need a mandatory national service like the Peace Corps or Vista, or even a short-term military one. Everyone in society should share the suffering and the sacrifice, not just one percent.

I am certain our CO poet would be proud of Bradley (Chelsea) Manning and Edward Snowden, for exposing the deceit and excesses of the national security state.

I still can't comprehend why this established poet (winner of the National Book Award in 1962) was so congenial, nice, teacherly, even friendly to me. Maybe opposites attract. Our personalities were so different; however, we both strongly opposed the War. Our



Walt at the Allen Ginsburg reading, 1967; Joe Uris in background

reading styles were antithetical. He was soft-spoken, measured, slightly self-deprecatory, and welcoming.

Bar bard—at Reuben's 5, The Long Goodbye, The Mediterranean Tavern, and The Satyricon—I performed energetically and scatalogically, flailing my arms in the air for the Muse. For some reason I sent him a copy of my second book, *The Erotic Flying Machine*. He is referring to it in the letter below. Bill encouraged me to find my voice and self—for which I will thank him—when we meet in that Poet Land in the sky.

*Dear Walt Curtis,*

*Thanks for the book and the message. Oregon has a special advantage I find, after a year in the East:—we have few enough people to be aware of them. There aren't many of us pursuing the edge of things with words out here.*

*It seems to me that you already know how to find outlets and how to put together a book. I am still randomly sending out bunches of poems, to magazines I happen upon and find congenial. . .*

*You probably have a hunch about what poems I prefer in your book. I believe my preferences derive more from a sense of the total effect of the communication than from any measure so simple as “bad” words. It is true, though (and maybe an indication that my judgment of myself is faulty) that I like best such poems as “Wildeflecken” and “Lost Glasses.”*

*I write this quickly, poised to go to a couple of writers' conferences. Hope to be seeing you. Meanwhile—good luck on the writing.*

*So long—*

*William Stafford*

On April 13, 1966 I was ordered to report for a physical in Portland. After graduating from college, my deferment was up. It was quite a psychological struggle for me. I wrote to the draft board, stating I was incapable of killing a young man whom under other circumstances I might love. I was publicly outing myself, and it brought me to the edge of a nervous breakdown.

In retrospect, I am glad I was tested. I didn't break. I discovered myself. I recall on the Greyhound bus, on the way to the induction center—out the side window in central California. There was a ragged band of United Farm Workers, with black eagle flag, priest, probably Cesar Chavez on Easter day. They—poisoned grape-pickers, women and children—were straggling toward the capitol in Sacramento. They, had guts! I am a coward, cobarde, in comparison.

Ironically at the physical, I didn't have to worry. The doctor took one look at me. Kindly he said, “You don't need to talk to anyone. You have a physical out, I-Y. Go home.” Why? In 1961 I lost two digits on the middle finger of my left hand in a sawmill accident. Curtis can't manipulate or clean his rifle.

Several more asides to introduce the second letter from Bill, dated 2 Dec. 83. Twelve years later. As Barbara LaMorticella told me—she interviewed him several times on KBOO FM. He told her, “Poetry is not a monarchy; it is a democracy.” After almost 12 years, Stafford was going to resign from being poet laureate. He alludes to that in the letter and expresses how much fun he had with my class in forgotten and neglected Oregon poets. He liked to be challenged. We all get bored with establishment roles.



Let me set the stage for the next letter and the last two referring to Hazel Hall, the feminist poet who died on Mothers Day—May 11, 1924. Her Collected Poems are available from OSU Press. The Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, with the design of John Laursen, and the support of others, created a beautiful memorial and pocket poetry park at 104 NW 22nd Place. Visit it.

Thanks to John Henley of Powell's Books, at the time. He encouraged me to become a "book scout," to find, buy and sell books. From that experience, I put together a curriculum of Oregon literature. This is the "class" Bill refers to at PCC Sylvania campus in 1983.

Dear Walt,

*Meeting with you and your class was a great time—we had a lot of bounce that night!*

*And your letter gives me a chance to rebound and say so: I enjoyed your analysis of the literary scene in Oregon and around, and your Neruda poems help me to confirm a feeling that Neruda deserves respect everywhere—maybe we can include Chile in our Oregon feelings?*

*I'll be looking forward to seeing you again, and maybe even daring to do the KBOO deal if your time and mine harmonize soon. Meanwhile, blessings from the majestic height of that heavy laureateship. . . .*

Adios—

Bill Stafford

Who was in the class? Tim Barnes and Ilka Kuznik. David Hedges who revived the OSPA. Rabble-rouser Michael Paul Marino, the last hipster and member of the 4 Bastards band. A fine poet, my friend, now deceased. Others. Marino baited Bill, asking, "Should Walt be the next poet laureate?" Stafford so cool, without batting an eye, replied-- "No, I don't think Walt wants to do it. It's not his kind of thing." I agreed. Then and now, I am happy to be "the Unofficial Poet Laureate of Portland."

One last aside. Astrologically speaking, 1971 was a big year in my chart and life. First of all, "The Girl with the Green Eyes" was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Then I stupidly sent the entire collection of erotic drawings, porn, anti-war, and surrealism. I always screw up. Nevermore conservative editors decided. However, I met Norman Solomon, media critic, and peace activist. We became fast friends and founded Out of the Ashes Press. KBOO invited me to host, "The Talking Earth," an uninhibited poetry program for the last 42 years.

In the third letter, mercifully short—Bill admits his lack of knowledge of Hazel Hall. He calls it a flaw. I call it honesty. Not many intellectual or professional persons are willing to admit their ignorance. This letter is dated 21 Oct. 1992.

Dear Walt,

*My response about Hazel Hall has been slowed, first, by some travel, and now by my realization that I don't know her work well enough to witness helpfully.*

*I am casting about in libraries etc. and will get in touch again when I have got myself informed.*

*Strange that I have drifted this far, just believing what others said,*

*without informing myself. Another flaw in my character. . . .  
Adios—*

Brian Booth, David Millholland, myself, several others, founded the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission in 1987. (I need to mention some of the board members: David Horowitz, Tim Barnes, David Hedges, Janet Kreft, Marian Kolisch, etc. OCHC has completed many successful projects. If curious, please visit ochcom.org.) 1987 was the centennial of John Reed's birth in Portland. He is the radical journalist who wrote *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

We were excited then, and are ongoing in our mission. Perhaps our finest memorial is the Hazel Hall poetry park, unveiled in 1995. Hazel and her sister Ruth had lived and died in the house. What was going to happen to it? Who would help put it on the national historic registry? I contacted Oregon's most famous poet to write a letter of support, please.

With absolute candor and credibility, Bill admitted he didn't know her poetry. He couldn't give support until he read her. Without batting an eye, I replied, "I'll bring you my copy of *The Cry of Time* and other materials. You decide." I drove up to the home at Sunningdale and hand-delivered Hall. I probably included my definitive article on the feminist poet, "No Frail Servant of Utility," published in *Clinton St. Quarterly*. The fourth letter is dated 26 Oct. 1992.

Dear Walt:

*Your packet of Hazel Hall has enlightened me, and I hasten to respond to your invitation for reactions. I sense that you want a short witness, and I'll try to phrase that (for I am convinced about her) later in this missive. But let me ramble for a few minutes:*

*I thought Beth Bentley in her Asakta Press book hit it off just right: Beth zeroed in on Hall's "irony and detachment." And I think those qualities are indeed distinguishing characteristics; a certain grittiness comes through and redeems even many poems that for our taste use too much of the hearts and flowers material. A strange idea came into my head while reading the material you loaned me:—the prose writers who comment on Hazel Hall wax more poetic than she did in her poems. . . .*

*Thanks very much for giving me access to your Hall materials and for urging me to inform myself. I'm a believer now, and richer for your urging.*

Sincerely,

All four letters are real ones, written on a selectric typewriter. They are not emails. When he transitioned in 1993, the Internet and virtual reality was coming to the fore. What timing! We don't know where the world is headed! I feel something metaphysical is going on which is irreversibly changing planetary history. Humanity is in the throes of that right now. The Digital Age.

What does that portend? Can global warming be stopped? What are the consequences of the Fukushima meltdown? Are computers, cell phones, etc., electronically neuro-programming the human brain?

The flesh-and-blood, old school, CO poet hinted at such concerns. The lizard clenching at the nuclear blast in "At the Bomb Testing Site" calls up dinosaurs, millions of years. Asteroid extinction of

(cont. on p. 16)

(cont. from p. 15)

that species. My other favorite—the meteorite is ready to hit planet Earth—and Bill goes into the bathroom, comes out and he is all alone. Did the human race rapture upward? If you believe. “We Interrupt to Bring You” is a humorous poem. Isn’t it a warning? Poets are prophets.

Thank my lucky stars that I got to know a great person and poet like Bill Stafford. His cordiality and friendship gave me self-esteem. I felt I was on the right track. To paraphrase Bill’s astonishing poem “The Way It Is,” the title of the Graywolf Press collection—You just follow the thread of your life, wherever it leads, and you never let go. That’s what I did. The Spanish poet Lorca wrote, “Only the mystery allows us to live.”

At age 72, I have no idea how or why I got to be who I am. A few kind words helped me along the way. It’s absurd in the sense of Camus’ word. A gay adolescent, I almost committed suicide at 17, by jumping off the cliff in Oregon City—at the end of the Oregon Trail. Today I am an Oregon poet and scholar. Big surprise! To me.

Reading Alan Watts and *The Myth of Sisyphus* saved my life. Just as reading Stafford’s poetry or listening to his reassuring voice can save your life. We all who are Stafford fans know that truth. “Nothing you can do can stop time’s unfolding. / You don’t ever let go of the thread.” (quote from Bill’s CD *Last Reading August 13, 1993*, available from poetryvideos.com in Ashland.)

I hear his voice now, as I finish these personal remarks. Still listening to the CD, my eyes are tearing up. I am outright crying. Stafford and Curtis were such different persons and poets, yet we met. Why? How come? Real men cry real tears at the finality of the human condition.

Strangely enough, I wrote a poem called “The Way It Is,” after having a conversation with Ken Kesey just before his death in 2001. I consider him a friend. We’d bonded at the 1973 Portland Poetry Festival. It was published in the memorial edition of *Spit in the Ocean #7*, edited by Ed McClanahan—Ken’s buddy and my writing teacher at PSU in 1962. The gist of it goes: “The spirit finds you. If you need love, and you give love—you will be given love in return. It’s that simple.” I think Kesey and I were talking about agape, more than eros.

We poets are witnesses for peace and the salvation of the planet. For the next generation. As Bill knew, there is no assurance today that everything will turn out okay. We will live our daily lives and do our best so that it might. As a halfway Buddhist, I am not sure that my self exists. The last poem that Bill Stafford wrote in his diary, before he died, asked the same question—“Are you Mr. William Stafford?” 28 August 1993.

How touching and hilarious! What an exhilarating sense of cosmic self-awareness and transience! Bill, you exist in your poetry, for all of us. Forever.

## from “Traveling With Stafford”

by John Callahan, in *The Lewis & Clark Chronicle*, Fall 2013

He was a teacher whose karma remained in the room when he went on the road. I know because a few times when he asked me to take his classes, students would joke affectionately that he was sometimes present in his absence and absent in his presence.

1050 Sunningdale  
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034  
26 October 1992

Walt Curtis  
15270 S. Holcomb Blvd  
Oregon City, Oregon 97405

Dear Walt:

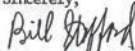
Your packet of Hazel Hall has enlightened me, and I hasten to respond to your invitation for reactions. I sense that you want a short witness, and I’ll try to phrase that (for I am convinced about her) later in this missive. But let me ramble for a few minutes: if anything in my rambling might serve it too (or instead of) might be useful....

I thought Beth Bentley in her Asahta Press book hit it off just right: Beth zeroed in on Hall’s “irony and detachment.” And I think those qualities are indeed distinguishing characteristics; a certain grittiness comes through and redeems even many poems that for our taste use too much of the hearts and flowers material. A strange idea came into my head while reading the material you loaned me:—the prose writers who comment on Hazel Hall wax more poetic than she did in her poems....

I guess I’ll try to phrase my witness on a page enclosed with this note. My intention will be to ramble on at more length (and with more repetition) than you will want to use, in hope that some bit or bits may be extracted for helpful use.

Thanks very much for giving me access to your Hall materials, and for urging me to inform myself. I’m a believer now, and richer for your urging.

Sincerely,

  
William Stafford

## Wildeflecken

for Alex

“Entrance For Madmen Only”

There is a wild place in the heart;  
no, there are two hearts,  
one high and one low.  
Your heart beats, your blood pumps,  
and your body glows warmly  
like the underside of a flying saucer

OR AN ANGEL.

There is a wild place in the woods.  
You go there and build a lean-to.  
Your friends follow you and intend to take  
you back.  
You have a knife; you try to kill the dog Blue  
but can’t quite do it;  
and they tackle you and bruise and subdue you.  
When you get back home, everything is the same.

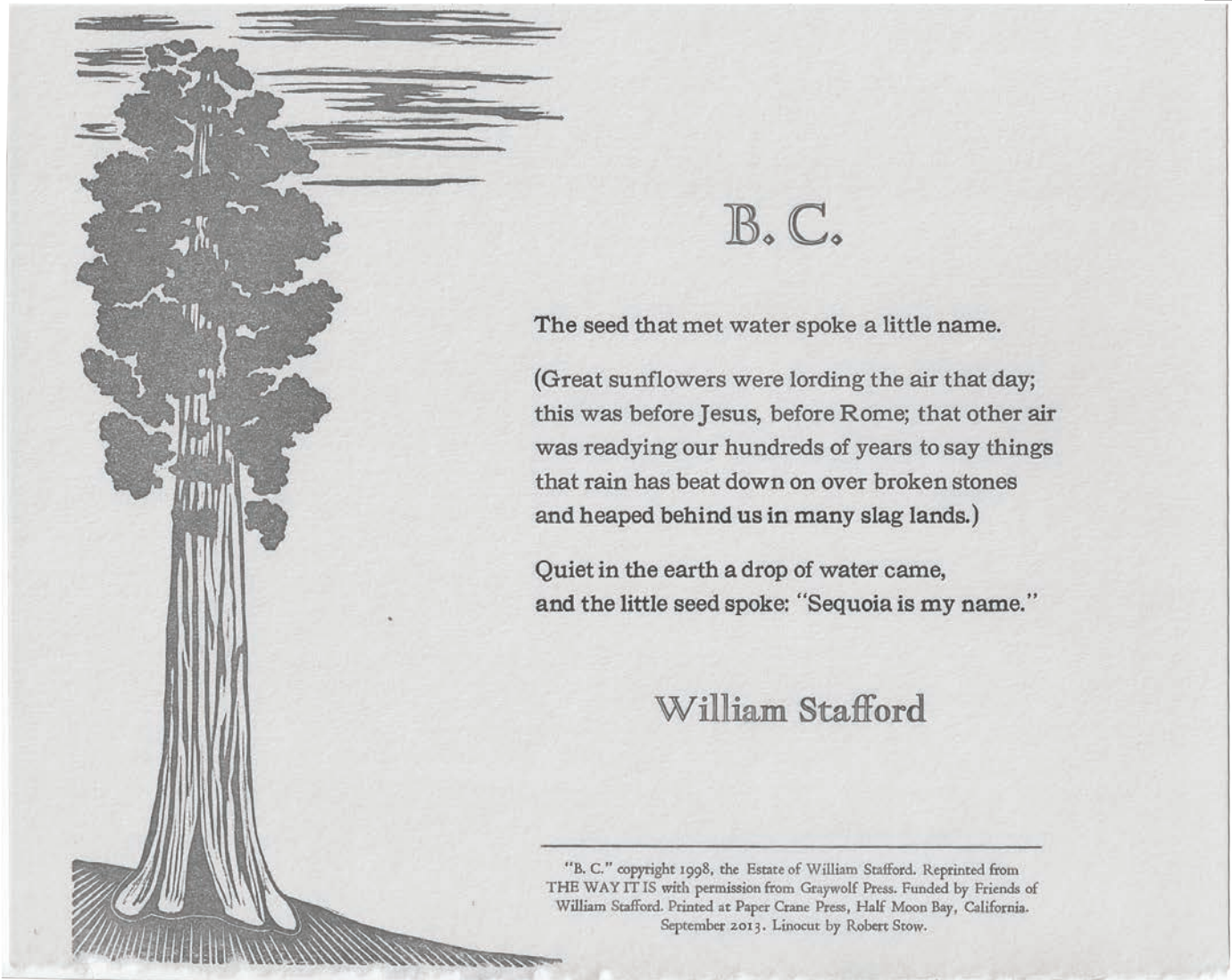
There is a wild place in the largest city.  
There is a wild place somewhere.  
There is a wild place in the Twentieth Century.  
And it is going to become wilder.

If you were born there, you need never fear.

WALT CURTIS

Wildeflecken was Hitler’s hunting lodge. Alex was a displaced person in WWII, who now owns a winery near White Salmon, Washington—W.C.





This is the latest Stafford broadside done by Doug Stow and his son Robert of Paper Crane Press. It costs \$10.00 and can be purchased at our website. You could also contact Leah Stenson, our board member in charge of broadside sales, at [leahstenson@comcast.net](mailto:leahstenson@comcast.net).

## Kurt Brown, 1944-2013

Kurt Brown, a National Advisor for the Friends of William Stafford died in June of this year. Poet and editor Kurt Brown was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1944 and grew up on Long Island and in Connecticut. His collections of poetry include *Return of the Prodigals* (1999), *More Things in Heaven and Earth* (2002), *Fables from the Ark* (2004), *Future Ship* (2007), *No Other Paradise* (2010), *Time-Bound* (2012), *A Thousand Kim* (2013), as well as six chapbooks. With his wife, the poet Laure-Anne Bosselaar,

Brown translated *The Plural of Happiness: Selected Poems of Herman de Coninck* (2006). His memoir, *Lost Sheep: Aspen's Counterculture in the 1970s*, was published in 2012.

Former editor of the highly regarded journal, *Aspen Anthology*, Brown also edited numerous poetry anthologies, including *Drive, They Said: Poems About Americans and Their Cars* (1994); *Night Out: Poems about Hotels, Motels, Restaurants and Bars* (1997), with Laure-Anne Bosselaar; *Verse & Universe: Poems about Science and Mathematics* (1998); *The Measured Word: On Poetry and Science* (2001); *Blues for Bill* (2005), an anthology of poems for William Matthews; *Conversation Pieces: Poems That Talk to Other Poems* (2007), co-edited with Harold Schechter; and *Killer Verse: Poems about Murder and Mayhem* (2010), also with Harold Schechter.

Brown founded the Aspen Writers' Conference and Writers' Conferences and Centers (WC&C), and taught poetry workshops at Sarah Lawrence College and Georgia Tech.

**Editor's note:** Most of this obituary was taken from the Poetry Foundation website. I am not sure how well Bill knew Kurt. Their correspondence involved one short exchange in the mid seventies. There is every reason to believe his place as a National Advisor came from simple admiration of Bill's work.

## FWS Poetry and Potluck – 2013 Rain Reigns Supreme

By Helen Schmidling  
Membership Chair

Steady rain and the first really cold day of fall did not deter 40-some sturdy Friends of William Stafford from the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry and Potluck, Sept. 22, in Lake Oswego's Foothills Park.

Oregon Poet Laureate and FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen emceed the event, held under the park's portico and in front of a warming fire. Board members and Friends contributed to the spread, renewing old and making new ties, and discussing poetry, life, and of course, the rain.

After officially welcoming the hearty crowd, Paulann turned the program over to Board Chair Dennis Schmidling, who mentioned some of the events planned for the William Stafford Centennial in 2014, including the new website [Stafford100.org](http://Stafford100.org), the completion of the Methow River Poetry sign restoration, and the upcoming publication of Stafford's doctoral thesis, *Winterward*.

Board Member Jim Scheppeke then further explained other Centennial projects, including 2014 Oregon Reads, ([oregonreads2014.com](http://oregonreads2014.com)) sponsored by the Oregon Library Association. During 2014, this statewide community-reading project will encourage all Oregonians to read one or more of the following six titles: (see p. 5).

Jim also highlighted the Oregon Libraries Project, in which the Friends of William Stafford is donating seven books and two videos to the 70 smallest public libraries in Oregon (see p. 3).

Paulann then introduced Los Porteños, the group of Latino writers dedicated to raising their voices in the Portland community and to raising awareness of their diverse languages, canons, stories, and cultures. Three members of Los Porteños—Seattle's Latino writing circle—who had migrated south to Portland, founded the group in January of 2006. Since its inception, Los Porteños has presented annual readings at the Miracle Theatre for Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), and in 2011, they began hosting a William Stafford Birthday Reading featuring multi-lingual poetry and prose written in response to Stafford poems. This fall, Los Porteños was featured at Wordstock for the second time.

In October of 2014, they will present their debut production *Words That Burn: A Dramatization of World War II Experiences of William Stafford, Lawson Inada, and Guy Gabaldón in Their Own Words*. This world premiere—honoring two of Oregon's former poet laureates—will commemorate the Stafford Centennial, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rescindment of Executive Order 9066, and Hispanic Heritage Month. The director of *Words That Burn*, Gemma Whelan, and three of its actors, Damon Kupper, Joaquin López, and Paul Susi, gave us a taste of the production that will premiere next year. And as the rain continued to pour down, the Friends listened to their account of those who, during the war, had it much worse. Joaquin then sang an original song, "Cuando Sale El Sol" (When the Sun Comes Out), he wrote in response to Stafford's poem, "Looking For Gold." And as he sang, the sun came out for the first time that day.

Another highlight of each Poetry and Potluck is the introduction

of the year's letterpress broadside featuring a poem by Stafford. The 2014 selected broadside is "B.C." – printed by FWS member Doug Stow at Paper Crane Press in Half Moon Bay, California. This year's poem features a linocut of a giant sequoia tree by Robert Stow, Doug's son, who as it happened, was getting married on the very same day. Paulann read Doug's heartfelt letter of well wishes to the group in his absence.

After a short break for refreshments and raffle tickets, fifteen participants read a combination of their own Stafford-inspired work, along with their favorite Stafford poems or prose selections. The concluding reader was Charu Nair, who read Stafford's "The Way It Is" – first in English, and then in her native Hindi.

Paulann then closed the event with a Stafford poem, which she described as speaking to the individual "you" in each person – "Little Rooms." It concludes, "You who come years from now ... to give it to you."

Thank you, Stafford Stalwarts who attended this year's Poetry and Potluck. We promise better weather for the Centennial Potluck in September 2014. Save the date, to be announced soon.



Dennis Schmidling and Paulann Petersen with the latest Paper Crane broadside, "B.C."



Dos Porteños laughing at the cold





Los Porteños: Paul Susi, Damon Kupper, and Joaquin López



Martha Gatchell arranging flowers



Charu Nair

All photos from the potluck were taken by Mike Markee.



Gemma Whelan



The open reading in the portico





## Listening

By Eleanor DesPrez

In the spring of 1986, during my freshman year at Vanderbilt University, I pored over “Traveling through the Dark” in a class textbook, *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*. The book is in front of me now, open to page 115, which is annotated in neat handwriting that isn’t even mine anymore: “What is the relationship between car & wilderness?” I see, too, that I tried to scan the rhyme; I hadn’t read much free verse, yet. I got through the first stanza (A, B, C, 1/2 B), then gave up. But the ending, that ambivalent push, never left me. I doubt I read the poem aloud as I studied it that spring. It would be years before I’d commit to the joy of hearing poetry. Still, the whole poem stayed with me more than anything else in that fine little anthology. For several decades after that, “William Stafford” meant “Traveling through the Dark” to me.

In about 2009, the librarian at John Burroughs School in St. Louis, where I teach English, purged audiocassettes from the collection. I scooped up scores of little green tapes from The American Academy of Poets Audio Archive. I thought someone in the English department would want to share them with me, but no one had a cassette player anymore, so the tapes were all mine.

At that time, my husband and I still owned a car with a tape deck, an old, white Hyundai Elantra. We rode around with three or four of those Academy tapes for half a year. Once my husband and I heard the William Stafford tape, we never took it out of the player again. That tape made the old Hyundai the favored car. My husband and I started to vie for it. We fell in love with a kind, spacious voice. We fell in love with a teacher. We fell in love with these things apart from each other. As parents with two kids and two jobs, we’re usually driving separate cars at the same time. But it was still a new love for us to share. We went on to buy many Stafford books and fall in even more particular love with some particular poems, including “Listening.”

On a December Saturday about two years ago, the Hyundai died in front of the shoe store where I’d taken our younger daughter to buy new sneakers. Before the tow truck hauled the car away, I tried to clean it out, but I must have left the Stafford tape in the deck. Now we have a Prius with a CD player and even an MP3 jack. We’re lucky—but we both miss hearing that voice.

The textbook was a good introduction to poetry. I tried so hard to read well when I was nineteen. But now I’m forty-six, and I’m grateful for that little tape, one of many things that keep coming around to teach me that poetry is really a matter of voice, and of listening.

### from “The Mutual Parade of Our Life”

by Jarold Ramsey, in *The Lewis & Clark Chronicle*, Fall 2013

In “A Ritual to Read to Each Other,” Bill imagines the dire difficulties of maintaining “the parade of our mutual life” through the surrounding darkness. Not “lives,” notice, but ideally one life “on parade,” kept shared and humanly mutual through the honest attentions of each one of us to the others. Bill has left the parade, alas, but this rare vision of mutuality is central, I think, to what we celebrate in the man and his poems.

## Listening

My father could hear a little animal step,  
or a moth in the dark against the screen,  
and every far sound called the listening out  
into places where the rest of us had never been.

More spoke to him from the soft wild night  
than came to our porch for us on the wind;  
we would watch him look up and his face go keen  
till the walls of the world flared, widened.

My father heard so much that we still stand  
inviting the quiet by turning the face,  
waiting for a time when something in the night  
will touch us too from that other place.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

## Stories That Could Be True

published 1977  
for DRM, WS

The book is thirty-five.  
Mother gave it to me when  
she was seventy-three.

There might be a number  
divided by time  
yielding gold and eternal life.

Gold is in the pages  
I have been picking among  
with a geologist’s hammer.

Which way did you want to be rich?  
On your knees, you say, with  
a stone split to its bright core.

An uninterrupted Eastern Oregon sky  
won’t say if you’re right,  
but you feel its wide arc over you—

Blue that can only be called heavenly,  
then star-strewn, your quilt at night.

ERIK MULLER

## Centennial Celebration Events—Stafford100 website

The coming year will be an exciting one for all things Staffordian. There will be celebration activities all year round. In order to keep up with the happenings, the Friends of William Stafford has created a website where people can find out what is happening and post announcements. I reprint below a letter that Paulann Petersen sent to event organizers last month.

1) Events will take place throughout 2014. All 365 days of the year are possible. If you and your group want to hold your event during January as a “traditional” January Stafford Birthday Celebration, that’s great. But if you want to pick a month with better weather, or National Poetry Month, or International Day of Peace, or Earth Day, or Oregon’s birthday, that’s good too. Or perhaps you’d like to combine your organization’s anniversary with a Stafford Celebration, or throw a birthday party for your favorite bookstore with a Stafford Celebration. This is a chance to be creative and innovative. We’ll be celebrating Bill’s birthday all year long!

2) Events taking place everywhere will be listed on the master calendar. When you’ve decided what you want to do to celebrate the Stafford Centennial, go to <http://stafford100.org/signon/>. On this page (after entering your name and password), enter the details about your event.

3) Your password to enter your event information on <http://stafford100.org/signon/> is: ws100birthday (all lower case). If you have problems or questions about the master calendar, please contact our FWS Board Chair and Web Master, Dennis Schmidling at [dennis@williamstafford.org](mailto:dennis@williamstafford.org).

Web site: <http://stafford100.org/signon/>  
Your Password: ws100birthday (all lower case)  
Technical assistance: [dennis@williamstafford.org](mailto:dennis@williamstafford.org)

Dennis Schmidling has been working with people as they post events on this master calendar. Please realize that entering complete information makes Dennis’ task a thousand times easier.

Here are some tips from Dennis:

1. People are using personal phones and email addresses for the “Event Site Contact Info.” Phone numbers and email addresses entered into the “Event Site Contact Info” section are intended to be visible on the website. Personal phone numbers and email addresses can be used, if the submitters are OK with that, but they should know it does expose them to internet mischief.

2. If submissions do not include “Featured Guests” Dennis will need to enter TBA or None, because that category will be visible on the event page. Similarly, if there is no “Host” specified, he will need to enter None, or the Name of the Sponsoring Organization. An example is Kenton Public Library on January 14.

3. It does help to have a description of the event, so please put some effort into that task. Otherwise, Dennis is left to enter *something*. Examples of text he’s added can be viewed at Linfield College and Waverly Heights.

4. Dennis can edit most of the essential fields after the fact, but it does help him to get it complete and accurate the first time.

To those of you organizing events outside of Oregon: If you’re interested in exploring the possibility of Kim Stafford making an appearance at your event, please contact Mary Bisbee-Beek at [mbisbee.beek@gmail.com](mailto:mbisbee.beek@gmail.com). Mary is handling Kim’s 2014 Centennial calendar, which includes a fair amount of travel throughout the U.S.

**Additional note:** Lewis & Clark also has a website ([http://www.lclark.edu/william\\_stafford/](http://www.lclark.edu/william_stafford/)) listing events at the college, among them are an exhibit in January of Stafford’s photography; a three-evening class in January and February called Learning How to Live: Exploring the Imperatives in William Stafford’s Work; a symposium in the first weekend in February called “You Must Revise Your Life”—Stafford at 100, A Celebration and Reassessment. Participants include Paul Merchant, Vince Wixon, Kirsten Rian, Primus St. John, Mary Szybist, Jack Hart, Fred Marchant, and John Felstiner. Connected to the symposium will be an evening with Li-Young Lee and Ted Kooser, hosted by Matthew Dickman, with special guest Paulann Petersen, on Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> at the Newmark Theatre.



Stafford’s photo of Carolyn Kizer chatting with W.S. Merwin at an NCTE conference in 1966, cropped by the editor.

## News, Notes, and Opportunities

**Tavern Books Reception for *Winterward*:** Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM, First Unitarian Church/Eliot Center, 1011 SW 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. Portland. Tavern Books, Kim Stafford, and special guests will introduce and read from *Winterward*, William Stafford's 1954 doctoral dissertation of thirty-five poems published for the first time as a book. It was submitted, its title page says, "in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Creative Writing in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa." The department referred to, as most readers know, is more commonly known as the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

**Daily Writing in the Spirit of William Stafford**, a weekend workshop with Kim Stafford, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, on the Graduate Campus of Lewis & Clark College. The description of the class says, "we will feed on examples from the daily writing of William Stafford and practice in the spirit of his work." The course is part of the Northwest Writing Institute's Documentary Studies Certificate. For more information go to the William Stafford Archives/Centennial events; URL: <[www.williamstaffordarchives.org/events/](http://www.williamstaffordarchives.org/events/)>.

**William Stafford at 100**, honoring the legacy of a beloved professor and an esteemed poet. The Lewis & Clark magazine, *The Chronicle*, Fall 2013, has several interesting pieces on Stafford in a section called "Reflections on William Stafford": "A Poetry Ambassador" by Paulann Petersen, poet laureate of Oregon; "Traveling with Stafford" by John Callahan, Morgan O'Dell Professor of Humanities at Lewis & Clark; "The Mutual Parade of Our Life" by Jarold Ramsey, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Rochester; "Your Own Way. . . Some Timely Advice from the Old Man" by Kim Stafford. Here, as well, are some memories by former students, a page of his photos, and a calendar of upcoming centennial events.

**The William Stafford Reading Program.** The poet Pattiann Rogers gave a talk on October 12<sup>th</sup> at Malone University in Canton, Ohio, as a part of this program. The talk, called "Poetry Under the Open Sky," explored "the intersection of poetry and language with public and wild spaces." One of the five poetry trails she discussed was "the William Stafford Path" in Lake Oswego. Google Poetry Trials: 28 Photos to see it.

**Call for submissions: *North Dakota Quarterly***, in association with the William Stafford Centennial 2014: One Hundred Years of Poetry and Peace, respectfully solicits your submissions to the upcoming William Stafford Celebration issue of NDQ. We seek diverse responses to William Stafford and his work: personal essays, direct engagement through poetry or prose, flash-fiction and non-fiction, reflections on his significance and influence, and more. We value diversity of approach and subject matter, so long as it clearly relates to Mr. Stafford. We only ask that you avoid the bone-dry, the stuffy, or the exclusively theoretical. We believe this celebratory issue should be characterized by generosity, exploration, inclusivity, and diversity. Political, personal and aesthetic responses are all welcome. Submit via email to: [Stafford.Celebration@gmail.com](mailto:Stafford.Celebration@gmail.com). Submissions will be immediately considered, with a final deadline of January 15, 2014.

**Not a famous poet yet? The Bard Deluxe Awards.** *Bear Deluxe Magazine* is calling for poetry submissions to a contest for emerging Oregon poets whose work is focused on a "sense of place." Submit three unpublished, place-based poems and be declared a Bard Deluxe. To enter you must be a current or former Oregonian. Contest judge: Paulann Petersen. *Bear Deluxe Magazine* ([bear@orlo.org](mailto:bear@orlo.org)) 810 SE Belmont, Studio 5, Portland, OR 97214.

### Road Report

Driving west through sandstone's  
red arenas, a rodeo of slow erosion  
cleaves these plains, these ravaged cliffs.  
This is cowboy country. Desolate. Dull. Except  
on weekends, when cafés bloom like cactus  
after drought. My rented Mustang bucks  
the wind—I'm strapped up, wide-eyed,  
busting speed with both heels, a sure grip  
on the wheel. Black clouds maneuver  
in the distance, but I don't care. Mileage  
is my obsession. I'm always racing off,  
passing through, as though the present  
were a dying town I'd rather flee.  
What matters is the future, its glittering  
Hotel. Clouds loom closer, big as Brahmas  
in the heavy air. The radio crackles  
like a shattered rib. I'm in the chute.  
I check the gas and set my jaw. I'm almost there.

KURT BROWN, 1944-2013

### PERMISSIONS

"Yes," "Listening," and "We Interrupt to Bring You" are reprinted from *The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems* and used with permission of Graywolf Press.

The poems "William Stafford," "Returning What We Owed," "Full Moon 1160 Times & Counting," "Wildeflecken," "Instructions for Childhood," "Stories That Could Be True," and "Road Report" are used by permission of the authors or their estates.

The drawing of William Stafford on the first page is from the cover of *You and Some Other Characters*, Honey Brook Press, 1987; the Vignette of William Stafford on pp. 10 and 19 is from the title page. Both are used by permission of the artist, Barbara Stafford.

The bookplate on p. 3 is used with permission of Barbara Stafford and Dennis Schmidling.

The essays by Michael McGriff, Emily Wall, Walt Curtis, and Eleanor DesPrez are used by permission of the authors.

### Errata for 18.1:

Pattiann Rogers, not Pattian, p. 3, "23 Sandy Gallery—The Stafford Collection"

Oregon Symphony, not Portland Symphony, p. 6, James DePreist, 1936-2013, FWS National Advisor"

Bret, not Brett, pp. 16-17, "Winter Words: A Review."

And, finally, it was seagulls, not pigeons, circling Walt Curtis' head when he ran into Ian along the Willamette, p. 15, "Portland, OR—Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>"





## BECOME A *Friend of William Stafford*

### MISSION OF FWS

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.*

### WHY JOIN?

BY JOINING THE FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD, *you become part of an international community of poetry lovers and writers with broad access to other poetry organizations and events. As a Friend, you'll receive a subscription to our triannual newsletter, filled with poetry and poetry news. In addition, your contribution supports the annual William Stafford Birthday Celebration Readings, maintains our web site, [www.williamstafford.org](http://www.williamstafford.org), and helps initiate new projects. We always welcome your volunteer services.*

To join the Friends of William Stafford, renew your friendship, or make a donation, please fill out this form and mail to: FWS, P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034. Checks payable to "Friends of William Stafford."

### JOIN OR RENEW:

*(Please check ALL appropriate boxes)*

- New     Renewal     Gift  
 Patron \$100/yr     Individual \$35/yr  
 Family \$50/yr     Retired/Student \$20/yr  
 Lifetime \$500

Please add \$5.00/year outside the U.S.

Name\* \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

May we list this information (or any part of it) in a "friends-only" directory of which you will receive a copy? \_\_\_\_\_

\*If this *friendship* is a gift, please add your name and address on the line below so that we may send an acknowledgement to the recipient and to you. \*\*If you reside outside the United States, please add any additional postal codes we may need to ensure that you receive your mail.

Giver's Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear of FWS? \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer opportunities  Organize poetry readings in your community;  Event help;  Distribute posters/flyers;  Publicize events;  Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome New Friends  
June 2013-October 2013

Coleen Heffley  
Nina Sarroub Boyd  
Julie Robinett  
Maggie Kelly  
Cathy DeForest  
Dr. Robert Huntington

We are in the midst of renewing delinquent members. If your mailing label has a date before Nov. 1, 2013, it is now time to renew. Please use the form in this newsletter, or the form sent in a recent membership mailing.

If you have any questions about your membership status, please contact Helen Schmidling, [helen@dsagroup.net](mailto:helen@dsagroup.net)

FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD  
NEWSLETTER©  
is published three times  
a year.

EDITOR: Tim Barnes  
[tim.barnes63@gmail.com](mailto:tim.barnes63@gmail.com)

**Note:** Anything in this newsletter that does not have a byline was written by the editor.

WEBMASTER: Dennis Schmidling

Special thanks to Ilka Kuznik

Please email comments, letters, news, and information on poetry events, awards, etc. to [news@WilliamStafford.org](mailto:news@WilliamStafford.org) or mail to  
Friends of William Stafford  
P.O. Box 592  
Lake Oswego, OR 97034

Interview with Paul Merchant,  
Stafford Archivist



Stafford100.org, the Centennial Website



Will the *Real* William Stafford Please Stand Up?  
Essay by Michael McGriff



Stafford / Curtis Correspondence

---

Please notify sender of change of address



## We Interrupt to Bring You

It will be coming toward Earth, and a cameraman who happens to be on Mt. Palomar or somewhere will catch it, live, for the news, and I'll be going to the bathroom or something and miss it; or maybe I'm out raking leaves in the yard, or it's one of those days I'm home with flu, and being feverish I doze, but it's all right to skip work because I'm really sick, a little bit; anyway, it's the greatest scene ever, and I don't see it—they call an alert, and everybody panics; it's coming like mad, and everybody hightails out—they clear New York, and all the people rush into shelters or those new domes on the ocean floor, and everybody's gone, and the domes collapse, and I'm the only one left.

And it's still coming on toward Earth, but at the last minute it misses, and I come back from the bathroom or from raking, or just wake up, and the channels are funny; I switch around and find one still going—it's on automatic pilot or something—and it just keeps going back and back through old commercials and Saturday morning horrors, and people are all dead, or gone anyway, but the world is saved and I'm watching this one dim channel, thinking: it's still a good day even though I can't get Perry Mason—the leaves are all raked, and I'm not very sick, really.

WILLIAM STAFFORD