



W friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD NEWSLETTER

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LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON

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SHELLEY REECE AND ROBERT HAMM JOIN FWS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Robert Hamm grew up in Oregon, attended Lewis & Clark College, and taught high school English in Lake Oswego, Beaverton, and West Linn. He was founding editor of the journal of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English for seven years and is currently co-chair and newsletter editor of the NCTE Assembly on American Literature. He also serves on the board of the End of the Oregon Trail interpretive center in Oregon City. Hamm is Director of Personnel for the West Linn-Wilsonville School District.

Shelley Reece has been in the English Department at Portland State University since 1969, six years as English Department Chair. He describes himself as a survivor who co-chaired the committee working to salvage public education after the ravages of Ballot Measure #5. Reece writes poetry and essays and is also a trained lyric baritone. For the past five years, he has been a member of Concord Choir, a group whose mission is "peace through music." This summer the group will tour and sing in Italy for two weeks.

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH BRINGS NOTICE TO WILLIAM STAFFORD AND MANY OTHER POETS

People across the United States made note of National Poetry Month in various ways, from events reported on TV, radio, in print, in bookstores, and in schools. One FWS member, Mike Markee, reports an enthusiastic response at McNary High School, Salem, OR, where

he teaches. Markee's students, who produce a daily in-school filmed news program, began each April school day with a "Poem of the Day" -- first using poems by William Stafford, then moving to other poets. They also received eager assistance from McNary's Spanish, German, and Latin teachers who provided poems in their languages along with translations.

Many newspapers and magazines ran articles during April to honor National Poetry Month. Especially notable is an article by Jim Lenfestey, a Minneapolis writer, which appeared in the editorial section of MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE, April 9. Lenfestey touches on several national poetry events and names a number of poets who have influenced our culture -- including Maya Angelou, Emily Dickinson, Rumi, Han-shan, Mary Oliver, Rainer Maria Rilke, David Whyte, Robert Bly, Patricia Hampl, William Butler Yeats. He highlights one poet, beginning the paragraph with, "These days I carry around my worn copy of the poetic prescriptions of William Stafford." The only poem quoted in the article is Stafford's "Turn Over Your Hand," and Lenfestey refers to the importance of the last line

"and only this fine record you
examine sometimes like this
can remember where you were
going before that long-
silent evasion your life became."

Lenfestey states, "Stafford echoes in those few quiet lines the \$100 million truth that helped make the movie 'Titanic' so titanic at the box office -- the epic struggle to spare one soul from that 'long silent evasion' so many lives become."

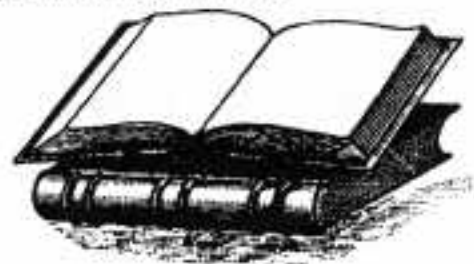


EXHIBIT OF POETRY BROADSIDES ON TWO-YEAR TOUR

An inspiring exhibit of work by 38 American writers began touring the United States last fall and will continue for two years. The exhibit title, "Like Frost On a Window --The Beauty of the Written Word," is taken from a line in William Stafford's poem, "The Trouble with Reading." (THE WAY IT IS: NEW & SELECTED POEMS, Graywolf Press, 1998). Eight broadsides are of poems by William Stafford.

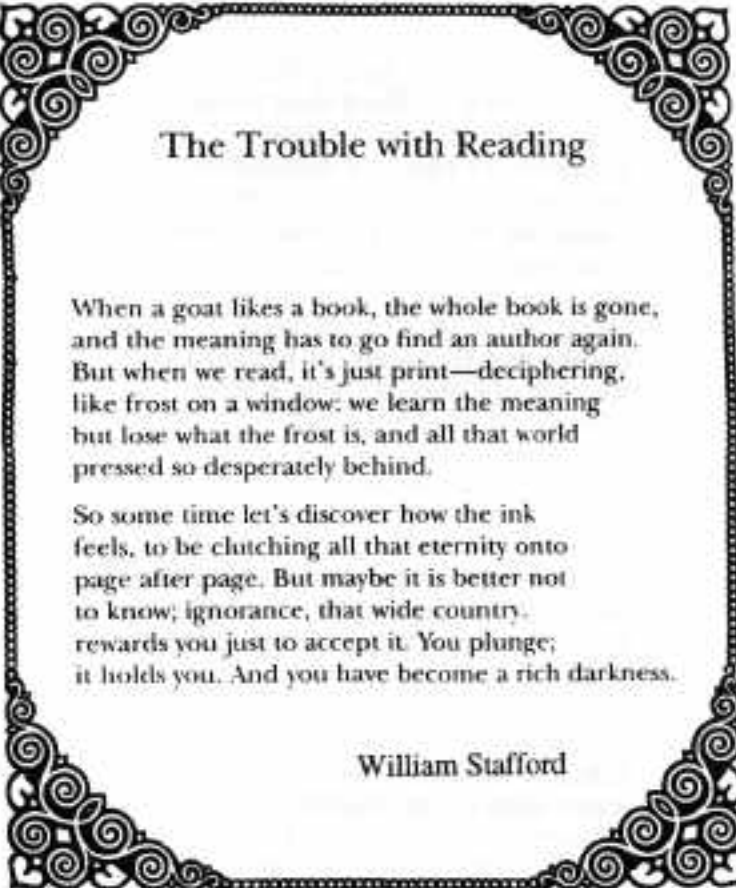
As the exhibit brochure says, the broadsides "beautifully illuminate poetry and prose selections by well known writers. The show presents 67 letterpress broadsides and unbound book pages, as well as selections from commemorative folios and limited edition portfolios. Many are the result of collaborations between the printer, and other artists: illustrators, printmakers, calligraphers, and paper makers."

Writers included in the exhibit are James Agee, Agha Shahid Ali, Marvin Bell, Wendell Berry, Robert Bly, Madeline DeFrees, Ivan Doig, Rita Dove, Martin Espada, Vi Gale, Tess Gallagher, Donald Hall, Mark Halperin, Joy Harjo, Robert Hass, Jane Hirshfield, Richard Hugo, Stanley Kunitz, David Lee, Li-Young Lee, Ursula K. Le Guin, Denise Levertov, Barry Lopez, Sandra Lopez, W. S. Merwin, E. Ethelbert Miller, Howard Nemerov, Naomi Shihab Nye, Carlos Reyes, Alberto Rios, Ralph Salisbury, Richard Shelton, Peggy Shumake, Gary Snyder, Kim Stafford, William Stafford, James Welch, and Ingrid Wendt.

If you are interested in having "Like Frost On A Window - The Beauty of the Written Word" exhibited near you, contact Visual Arts Resources, 232 West 5th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401, Phone 541-485-1230 FAX 541-345-6956 E-mail Visarts@efn.org

The following lists where the touring show has been shown and can be seen in future months:

- College of Southern Idaho, Herrett Center for Art & Science, **Twin Falls, ID**, Oct. 1- 31, 1997
- College of Eastern Utah, **Price, UT**, Nov. 15 - Dec.15, 1997
- IUPUI Cultural Arts Gallery, **Indianapolis, IN**, Aug. 1 - Sept. 1, 1998
- Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, **Great Falls, MT**, Sept. 15 - Nov. 1, 1998
- Liberty Village Arts Center & Gallery, **Chester, MT**, Dec. 1, 1998 - Jan. 1, 1999
- Holter Museum of Art, **Helena, MT**, Jan. 15 - March 1, 1999
- Tacoma Public Library, **Tacoma, WA**, April 8 - May 21, 1999



The Trouble with Reading

When a goat likes a book, the whole book is gone,
and the meaning has to go find an author again.
But when we read, it's just print—deciphering,
like frost on a window: we learn the meaning
but lose what the frost is, and all that world
pressed so desperately behind.

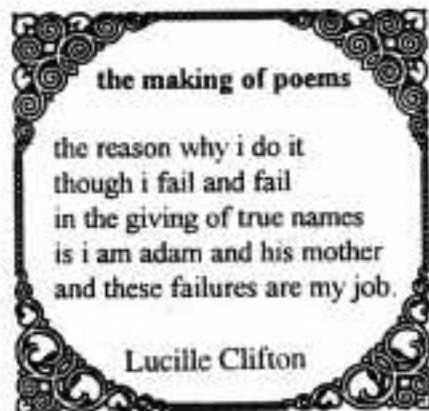
So some time let's discover how the ink
feels, to be clutching all that eternity onto
page after page. But maybe it is better not
to know; ignorance, that wide country,
rewards you just to accept it. You plunge;
it holds you. And you have become a rich darkness.

William Stafford

from CROSSING UNMARKED SNOW:
FURTHER VIEWS ON THE
WRITER'S VOCATION (University of
Michigan Press, 1997)

FWS NATIONAL ADVISOR, LUCILLE CLIFTON, ONE OF APRIL'S FEATURED POETS

Lucille Clifton, *FWS* National Advisor, was in Portland, OR, in April for a reading (hosted by Mountain Writers Series) and a brunch reception (hosted by Mountain Writers Center). Clifton is distinguished professor of Humanities at St. Mary's College in Maryland. She is the only poet to have two books nominated for the Pulitzer Prize within the same year: *GOOD WOMAN: POEMS AND A MEMOIR 1969-1980* and *NEXT: NEW POEMS* were finalists in 1988. Clifton has published ten collections of poetry and is one of American's most distinguished poets writing today.



THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR AND HUNGRY MIND REVIEW FEATURE STAFFORD POEMS

Two major magazines have published work by William Stafford in their Spring 1998 issues. *THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR* includes several outstanding poets -- Hayden Carruth, Rita Dove, Paul Muldoon, Heather McHugh, Rachel Hadas, and William Stafford. The two Stafford poems selected are "Living on the Plains" and "Our Way Those Days Before These Days." This magazine has been highly respected for 65 years with Stafford publishing a number of poems in it throughout his career. The Spring issue of *HUNGRY MIND REVIEW* highlights Stafford with five poems: "Home State," "Big Bang," "November," "Are You Mr. William Stafford?" and "The Way It Is."

AUGUST MARKS FIVE YEARS SINCE WILLIAM STAFFORD'S DEATH

Friends of William Stafford in several cities in U.S. and Canada are organizing gatherings in August to commemorate William Stafford five years after his death, August 28, 1993. *FWS* Member Raymond Patterson will oversee an event in West Hills, Long Island, NY, at the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association Center. (Stafford was the Birthplace Poet in Residence in 1990.) Naomi Shihab Nye, *FWS* National Advisor, plans an event in San Antonio, TX. Other *FWS* members are also organizing gatherings. If you are interested in planning a gathering in your town and would like assistance, please contact a *FWS* Board Member. Also if you are interested in volunteering your help, let *FWS* know so we can put you in touch with a gathering organizer in your area. Please let *FWS* know of your event so it can be listed in a flyer to be published in late July giving details of each William Stafford gathering in August.

"POETRY IN MOTION" IN EUGENE, SELECTS POEM BY WILLIAM STAFFORD

"Poetry in Motion," an international project of Poetry Society of America, announces the program has been extended to Eugene, Oregon, where it is co-sponsored by Lane Transit District. Poets featured in Eugene this year include Rita Dove, Theodore Roethke, William Stafford and others. "Starting with Little Things" is the Stafford poem that will ride the buses in Eugene.

HAVE YOU USED *FWS* WEBSITE OR E-MAIL YET?

Dean Seabrook, Brooklyn, NY, continues to be a generous contributor to *Friends of William Stafford* by maintaining the *Friends of William Stafford* website and e-mail he designed. *FWS* Website at www.wmstafford.org
FWS e-mail at friends@wmstafford.org

**(NATIONAL POETRY MONTH
CONT. FROM PAGE 1)**

Libraries across the country also focused on poetry in April. FWS member Sara Jameson organized an event at Josephine County Library, Grants Pass, OR, to "remember Oregon's beloved former Poet Laureate." She invited the public to bring a favorite William Stafford poem to read or an original poem inspired by Stafford. Eighteen people brought their work.

**HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT
POETRY DAILY?**

While checking *Friends of William Stafford* website note a related site to click on: Poetry Daily. This site posts a new poem every day with a brief bio of the poet and where to find more of the poet's work. Postings are kept available for one year.

**HELP KEEP POETRY ALIVE:
DONATE A BOOK OF POEMS TO
A SCHOOL NEAR YOU**

Consider ending this school year by making an important contribution to students attending a school near you. Select a book of poems and donate it to the library. If you visit and give the book to the librarian, he or she may read it over the summer and make it a part of next school year's focus on new books.

**LISTEN TO A POEM EACH DAY
ON NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO**

Garrison Keillor, honorary FWS member, discusses writers on his program "Writers Almanac" each day on many NPR stations across the country. Keillor concludes his daily 5-minute program with a poem he admires. Every few months he reads a poem by William Stafford.

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Friends of William Stafford Board of Directors: Patty Wixon, Ashland, OR, Chair; Nan Atzen, Forest Grove, OR; Brian Booth, Portland, OR; Bob Dusenbery, Portland, OR; Martha Gatchell, Drain, OR; Robert Hamm, West Linn, OR; Ceil Huntington, Lake Oswego, OR; Beverly Partridge, Portland, OR; Shelley Reece, Portland, OR. FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD NEWSLETTER is published quarterly. NEWSLETTER articles also appear on FWS website: www.wmstafford.org. Send inquires and correspondence to Friends of William Stafford, P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034 or e-mail: friends@wmstafford.org.
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