

friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD

A Newsletter For Poets & Poetry
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Principle and Poetry

by Tim Barnes

Refusing War, Affirming Peace: A History of Civilian Public Service Camp No. 21 at Cascade Locks. Jeffrey Kovac. Oregon State University, 2009.

Can Poetry Save the Earth? A Field Guide to Nature Poems. John Felstiner. Yale University Press, 2009.

These two books speak to things vital to understanding Bill Stafford's life and work. *Refusing War, Affirming Peace* tells us about the kind of community in which Bill honed the principles that influenced the life that made the poems we love. *Can Poetry Save the Earth?* looks at a kind of poetry of which Bill was a master—the nature poem—and claims in a way I think Bill would have approved that the ethos of the serious nature poem is salvific, that the attention to the earth that fine nature poems offer could save it from environmental devastation. These books explore two keystones of Bill's life and work—his pacifism and his poetics.

The cover of *Refusing War, Affirming Peace* shows what appears to be a man in World War II army fatigues manning a machine gun. A closer look reveals a man cutting pipe, probably Henry Dasenbrock, one of the several hundred conscientious objectors who served at CPS #21, where Charlie Davis, Kovac's father-in-law, also served.

Kovac is a Reed graduate, a professor of chemistry at the U. of Tennessee, and an expert in scientific ethics. His commitment to nonviolence and his access to his father-in-law's papers and correspondence prompted him to write the story of one of the most successful of the 152 Civilian Public Service Camps created during WWII.

Kovac's strategy is to look at CPS #21, which became known as the "Athens of CPS," as an organic community. Among the factors that made the community

of CPS #21 flourish was a camp director of integrity, leadership, and moral courage, Mark Schrock; a large number of writers, artists, and musicians; and perhaps most crucial, according to Kovac, a certain kind of CO. He calls them "transformers," those COs who mostly cooperated with the CPS system because they hoped to accomplish certain goals so they could "create a more peaceful world after the war." Other types were "resisters," those who rejected conscription and the CPS; "servants," those who accepted conscription and cooperated fully, and "separatists," often Jehovah's Witnesses, hostile to state interference with their evangelism. These transformers, people like Stafford, tried to create a community of individuals who could realize a vivid alternative to the way of the world that led to their isolation and estrangement from the general citizenry.

Easy

Our men walk lightly and scatter over the mountains.
They go away casually and you can't find them.
You can't ever find them. They don't care.
They don't even tie their shoes or look back.
They climb over the rocks and stand easily in the sun.
They can build roads and lift stones all day
and laugh on the way home.

You ask them a question, but you can't ever find them.
"God don't like war," says one.
"I'll go back. I'm willing. I'll walk the rows of corn,"
says another.
"But why should I kill people? It's silly."
They stroll through those tall mountains.
They don't care.

BILL STAFFORD
Printed in *The Illiterati* 3, summer 1944

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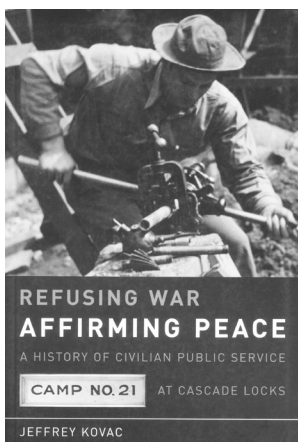
Gary Snyder

This was manifested in the way CPS #21 governed itself, the cultural life it created, and the political positions it took. As a coda to some key examples from the book, I quote from Kim Stafford's introduction to the OSU reprint of *Down in My Heart*, Bill's book about his CO experience:

Years later, my father would tell me that when a CO came to our house, he felt a certain kind of light came into the room. . . . I think for the rest of his life he missed that intensity of purpose he had felt in camp.

CPS #21 was a "democratic, cooperative community" and developed a particular form for electing the nine-member camp council. No nominations were allowed. Each man voted by secret ballot for the person he thought most qualified. If no one received a majority, the same process was applied to the leading candidates. Electoral campaigns were waged in the individual minds of the constituents—a democracy based on the individual's unencumbered intuitions.

CPS #21, Kovac tells us, had a "vibrant cultural and recreational life." There were musical concerts, a men's chorus, and a basketball team. Several COs remodeled a building into a library that housed the newspaper, *The Columbian*, and a music room. The library



became a center of intellectual activity, and one CO called it "the most used and most valuable building of the entire Cascade Locks camp." The camp produced a number of plays, including a very popular parody called *The Mikado in CPS*, written by one of the key "transformers," Kermit Sheets. CPS #21 also published a literary magazine, *The Illiterati*, that had as one of its goals "to explore the relationship between art and pacifism." Bill's poems appeared in several issues. One of those poems, "Easy," accompanies this review.

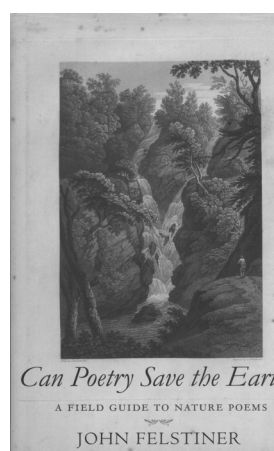
The camp also formed a School for Pacifist Living which listed twelve study areas. Several of these seem subjects Bill studied on his own: six, "Pacifist Living and Education"; nine, "Disciplines Necessary for Pacifist Living"; ten, "Pacifist Lessons from History." COs studying number six articulated these goals: Educate students for "world citizenship," "teach a cooperative spirit instead of a competitive one," and "teach that military force in national hands is a grave danger to world peace." These feel like Bill's principles and, of course, his poem, "At the Un-National Monument Along the Canadian Border," (the latest FWS broadside) is a clear example of number ten. I think Bill would have enrolled in that school and its existence speaks to the intellectual and ethical atmosphere of CPS #21 and, more than likely, other camps, especially among Bill's type, the transformers.

The case of George Yamada tested the political will of CPS #21. A Japanese-American CO, Yamada was ordered discharged from the CPS so he could be sent to a relocation camp under the regulations of FDR's 1942 executive order requiring removal of all people of Japanese descent from the West Coast. CPS #21 was divided

about Yamada's discharge order but the transformers, lead by camp president Charlie Davis, resisted it, some proposing nonviolent direct resistance. The board wrote a letter of protest to General Hershey, head of the Selective Service. This and some good fortune convinced the Selective Service to shift its position, and Yamada was sent to a CPS camp farther inland. Dorothy Stafford was once asked if Bill was afraid of anything and she said, "Well, he took on the Defense Department all by himself, didn't he?" Those COs at CPS #21 had that spirit and gained a small victory in the face of a formidable foe.

Kovac's book begins with the formation of the Civilian Public Service Program in 1940 that created CPS #21 and in eight chapters follows that community to its close in July, 1946. Though the endnotes are flawed (those for chapter five are listed as those for six and those for six are absent), *Refusing War, Affirming Peace* is a compelling story for the reader interested in pacifism, progressive politics, and Bill Stafford. The reader gets a close and thoughtful look into the type of community that fine-tuned the sensibility that allowed him to write the kind of poem John Felstiner finds just might save the earth.

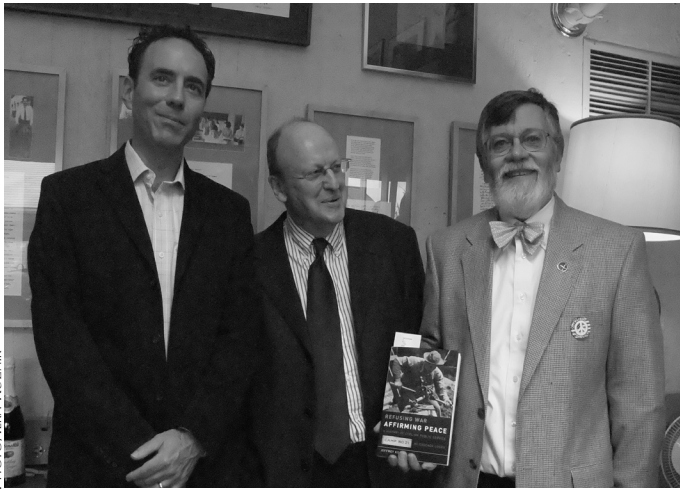
Felstiner's premise and his reason for gathering together thirty-eight nature poets (not including the psalmist and anon.) is that



these poets remind us "how connected we are to the natural world." A field guide is a book for identifying things in their natural environment. This book feels more like a field guide to poets than poems, though many wonderful poems are discussed. Among the poets included are Whitman, Dickinson, Frost, W.C. Williams, Roethke, Levertov, Kinnell, Ted Hughes; it stops at the birth year 1930 with Derek Walcott and Gary Snyder. His goal is to include those poets whose special gaze focuses in particular on the natural world. Eliot, Pound, Auden, Koch, Plath, Sexton, James Wright, Phil Levine, Ashbery, to name a few, are not included.

The cover of *Can Poetry Save the Earth?* shows an 1816 engraving of a small figure gazing at a huge cataract cascading down a gorge. It is the poets one can imagine in this situation that Felstiner includes. And though he devotes only a chapter to Stafford, he finds Bill essential in establishing and affirming his thesis that the attention to the natural world found in certain poets is salvific.

His chapter on Bill's poetry, "Earth Home to William Stafford," is subtitled, "care in such a world." Felstiner, an English professor at Stanford University and the author of two exceptional books, *Translating Neruda: The Way to Macchu Picchu*, and *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, and Jew*, subtitles his introduction with the above phrase from "The Well Rising." He threads Stafford's poetry into his statement of purpose, quoting from that poem and claiming that its "attentiveness to such live detail is a crying need of our times." Felstiner fashions a powerful argument for environmental peril and then returns to the "question of human consciousness, poetry's target audience" by quoting "Watching Jet Planes Dive," "We must go back and find a trail on the ground." That trail, that attentiveness,



PHOTO/ILKA KUZNIK

Tom Booth of OSU Press, Paul Merchant of the archives, and author Jeffrey Kovac

is the human being staring a waterfall into a poem. That's the gaze Felstiner finds in Bill's poetry.

The name of Bill's chapter reminds us that the root of the word *ecology*, *oikos*, means house. Felstiner calls Stafford a "voice for the down-to-earth places he dwelt in," noting his frequent use of place names. He also focuses on Bill's interest in Native Americans, "this land's true natives." The number of Stafford's poems with Native American themes may be a neglected aspect of his work. He didn't have Indian ancestry but was, as Kim says in *Early Morning*, an Indian "by conversion, the intense persuasion of the prairie on his impressionable soul."

Felstiner does a line-by-line reading (something he does for no other poem in the book except anon's "Western Wind") of "The Well Rising." It is enlightening, showing how the participles converge with the final declarative sentence to echo structurally and syntactically the motion and stasis of Felstiner's key image, the waterfall. This poem is so vital to his thesis that he read it on NPR when he was publicizing the book. It structurally enacts the key interpretive image of the book.

Another of Felstiner's points about Stafford serves to bind together the two books under discussion: "A good Stafford sentence speaks alike for dwelling and for writing in touch with this earth. So in his political moments, poetry and the land go hand and hand." The political stance that Stafford brought into and carried out of the CPS camps is the source of his holistic, ecological vision in poetry. Pacifism and poetics are about right relationships.

Can Poetry Save the Earth? is a lovely book, not just for what it tell us about Stafford's poetry. The relatively short chapters provide primers, or refreshers, on some marvelous poets. Anon, we discover, is an environmentalist. The chapter on John Clare is revelatory. The photo of Emily Dickinson at age nineteen with a flower in one hand and a book near the other seems both prophetic and iconic. The chapters on Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Edward Thomas, Kenneth Rexroth, Galway Kinnell, and Gary Snyder are particularly good. There is a striking photo (this book has sixty color and black and white photos) of Kinnell reading in 1966 at the gorgeous age of thirty nine. Felstiner's book is filled with surprises, pleasures, and wisdom. It might even be called essential.

Can Poetry Save the Earth? closes by returning to Stafford. Summoning the lines from "Watching Jet Planes Dive" quoted earlier, he tries to answer the question in the book's title. His answer is much the same as how Bill answered the question in *Every War Has Two Losers*: "How to count the people who are ready to do right: 'One.' 'One.' 'One.' . . ." This returns us to those transformative individuals who made CPS #21 the Athens of the CPS camps, a place where the poetry of principle thrived. They gave the camp its character and that character is found in Bill Stafford's voice when he writes of the earth that would always hold him up. Both of these books bring us closer to that and to a way of seeing community in the quiet of the land.



PHOTO/MICHAEL S. GLASER

Lucille Clifton, 1936-2010

"Poetry began when somebody walked off the savannah or out of a cave and looked up at the sky with wonder and said, 'Ah-h-h!' That was the first poem. The urge toward 'Ah-h-h' is very human, it's in everybody."

Lucille Clifton, one of our national advisors, died on Feb 13 at the age of 73. She won the National Book Award for *Blessing the Boats, New and Collected Poems, 1988-2000* in 2000 and the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize in 2007. Clifton served as the poet laureate of the state of Maryland from 1979-86. She visited Portland two years ago as part of the Literary Arts series, *Poetry Downtown*, a visit partially underwritten by the Friends of William Stafford.

Spring Song

the green of Jesus
is breaking the ground
and the sweet
smell of delicious Jesus
is opening the house and
the dance of Jesus music
has hold of the air and
the world is turning
in the body of Jesus
and the future is possible

LUCILLE CLIFTON

Definitions from *Unmuzzled Ox Special Issue, The Poet's Encyclopedia*

"Everything" is a circle, an egg. You look and feel and listen. Tap on the shell: it's hollow inside. "God, where are you?" There is always an answer, but whose? You curl up in the echo.

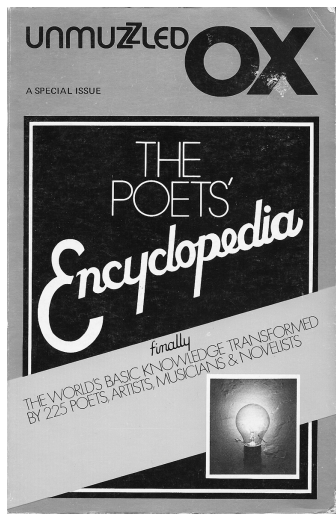
"History" has a resident spider waiting, weaving tomorrow. You think the little spotlight of your life, but round you and pulling you forward reach the great grey cables of the past.

"Space" is where time goes on a vacation. It disappears like a snake that doesn't have any shoulders. After the miles are left they forget away, just going and going and going.

"Truth" climbs anything put in front of it—castles, prisons, bombs: it will surface in a desert and own that instant. After you close your eyes at night it begins to arrange the next day.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Editor's note: I found these definitions under their alphabetical headings in a 1979 *Unmuzzled Ox* that had been on my bookshelf for a number of years. They have never been reprinted.



William Stafford's Aphorisms

By Paul Merchant

From the first year (1950) when William Stafford began to save his daily writings, the habit of early morning composition often included one of his trenchant aphorisms as part of the little flurry of prose that he would sometimes use in preparation for the day's writing. Even the materials for 1950, which consist only of a single typed page of selected notes, culled mostly from the month of March, contains at least nine aphoristic passages, including "Mankind may be a disease," "I don't want to do anything to be an example to anyone," and "Too bad that by the time we get over the follies of youth we begin to show our age."

These three examples neatly illustrate the characteristic voice of William Stafford in his philosophical manner. As often as not, his aphorisms carry pessimistic, ironic, or dissident messages, but invariably with an elegance of phrasing, or a vein of outright comedy, that sweetens the pill. As every reader will remember, many William Stafford poems contain (and very often hinge upon) aphorisms: "The bitter habit of the forlorn cause / is my addiction" ("On Quitting a Little College") is one of hundreds of examples. Some of the poems, especially list poems like "Keepsakes" or "Things I Learned Last Week," are entirely composed of sententiae.

I have been asked by Tim Barnes, the new editor of this FWS journal, to choose a small handful of William Stafford's aphorisms for each issue, and I begin the process here, with Kim Stafford's encouragement. It seemed appropriate to lead off with six sentences all written in a single sequence on the morning of 2 May 1990. They were followed by a workmanlike poem about poetry and truth that the poet felt was not worthy of being typed and sent out. The cream of that day's work was in this cache of witty and deceptively simple thoughts, which he later did type up, almost unchanged.

Alert readers will hear echoes of Stafford's philosophical mentors Pascal, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard, all of them connoisseurs of language and of life's surprising turns. As for subject-matter, the little sequence begins and ends in meditations on poetry, and the fifth example echoes one of the 1950 aphorisms, because this poet was nothing if not consistent over forty years.

A well-oiled gate won't give you a song.
 Hold your glass right side up if you want a drink.
 Any trouble, an oyster builds a pearl around it.
 Hiring a media voice: bring your sound of honesty; we'll
 tell you what to say.
 Wisdom is too heavy for the young.
 Any sound that we give our lives to turns into music.



Dorothy's 94th Birthday



PHOTO/DENNIS SCHMIDING

How We Came to Be

The story goes that our father, a pacifist in the Good War, was held at a camp in the California mountains where a minister brought his pretty daughter to help attract the boys to the Lord, but our father asked her to walk into the hills instead: evening, the lingering decrescendo of the sun, and the moon hung low. They saw dust along a distant road. One began, "I have come upon a stretch of dusty white road..." and the other said, "drinking up the moonlight beside a blind wall..." and both knew the Willa Cather story where this sentence lived, and knowing that, they recognized one another to be kin to the story "Two Friends" in the book *Obscure Destinies*.

After a few days, back home in L.A., she sent him a telegram, signing it "Radiance," and the war censor sent it back to her, thinking it code: "After long thirst, a draught of perfect good."

Imagine you are a man in a war, far from home, very poor, maligned, long at a loss. Someone you have just met offers a few consoling words from home. Would you not say, as he did, "Isn't this the way it should be?" Would you not say, as she did, "But you don't know if I can cook"? And in such coded words, together they began to knit the world together once again.

KIM STAFFORD

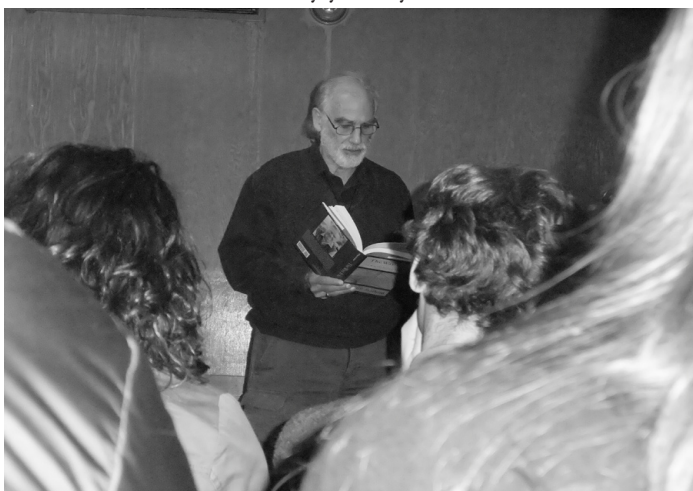
How We Celebrated: January Notes

A participant in the William Stafford Birthday Celebration at the **Northern Nevada Correctional Center**, Ismael García Santillanes, wrote the following as a report to the Friends. His words will serve well as an introduction to the following accounts of the world-wide celebrations.

Dear Friends of William Stafford,

To answer the call of poetry is to expose the body to acts of humanity as well as to atrocities. The mandate is then to pen with a sure and level heart the experience of life--that is, to voice the sublime and shrill the indignations. But to answer the call with all of these ingredients, and to perform for the world with such Stafford dignity, is to assume the human conversation with faith and faithfulness. His is a dignity every poet must naturalize--so that when we must, we too may think "hard for us all."

Santillanes is a member of the Razor Wire Poetry Workshop which has been led for the last twenty years by Shaun Griffin.



PHOTO/ILKA KUZNIK

PSU English professor and novelist Tony Wolk reading at U. of P.

At the **University of Portland** celebration, hosted by Herman Asarnow, bt Shaw delighted the audience with her multiple-choice bio. Lars Larson read "Traveling Through the Dark" backward, line-by-line up the page, and it sounded fine in a new dimension. Tony Wolk told this story: He gave a workshop for an OCTE conference a number of years ago, perhaps in Salem, called "Anarchy in the Composition Classroom." The workshop, given that anarchy in the classroom does not appeal to most teachers, was sparsely attended. A few minutes into his presentation, though, Bill appeared, attracted to that shadowy and often maligned word *anarchy*.

Southern Oregon had its tenth successful January Stafford Birthday reading, again held at Southern Oregon University with 124 attending. The six featured poets, anchored by Lawson Inada, brought various backgrounds to the work they read: a librarian, teacher, journalist, mill worker, watercolor artist, and army veteran. The Stafford poems they selected plus those read by a dozen audience members provided a rich program, ending with watching *Every War Has Two Losers*. The following day they scheduled next year's William Stafford Birthday Celebration, same time, same place.



PHOTO/DENNIS SCHMIDING

Future chaplain Joel Berning talking at the Downtown Library

At the **Multnomah Central Library** celebration, graciously hosted by Joe Soldati, Carlos Reyes read his translation of "Ask Me" into Spanish, "Pregúntame," and those with a smattering of Spanish understood everything. Joel Berning, a theology student studying to be a chaplain in a hospital, gave a talk, "William Stafford as Minister." Berning uses Bill's poems in the essays he writes at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. He spoke of the ways Bill's work and ideas connect to chaplaincy. In Bill's ritual of waking early to write and be aware in a place, Berning sees a model for the chaplain's need to be in a space with a patient, responsive, open, reflective, caring. He recalled Bill's thought to "avoid the stance that the writer is a guide," seeing the chaplain's role to be one that does not critique or criticize or judge the patient. In closing, Berning spoke of his vocational call as resembling Stafford's in its social engagement and the following of a thread that leads to certain stances that are "deep" and seek to understand "the way it is." Paulann Peterson, capped the event by reading a beautiful poem, dedicated to Dorothy Stafford (who was in the audience), about how those tiny hummingbirds manage to winter over here in Portland.

Host Drew Myron writes this of the first-ever **Yachats** celebrations: "Just wanted to give you a brief recap of Saturday night's Stafford Celebration. It was a great success, with over 60 people in attendance! All ages, all backgrounds, and great audience participation. Several readers had been students of Stafford's. Others had never met him but had a great appreciation, and many had no idea who the heck William Stafford was but were happy to be introduced. As you know, Ingrid Wendt and Ralph Salisbury were our visiting Stafford reader/writers, along with Martha from FWS, who offered information about the organization. We also had great coastal representation, from Khlo Brateng, Ron Brean, Flip Garrison, two of my young students (from the after-school writing group). In addition, local musician Richard Sharpless composed and performed a song from Stafford's 'Level Light.' All in all, it was a great night."

Of the **Mollala** celebration, Larry Anderson reports: "The Molalla Writers group sponsored the first ever Stafford Celebration in Molalla. Pat Love and Paulann Petersen were moderators and principals in the

program. We had a nice size crowd (about 16 not counting Paulann and Pat). Pat and Paulann were brilliant in their presentations/discussions, and discussion was lively. One local writer described the session as 'Amazing.' I look forward to next year!"

Celebrating William Stafford in **Scotland**: Larry Butler reports that the Glasgow Center for Contemporary Art held its first celebration. It happens that Bill and Bobbie Burns have birthdays in late January. For many in the audience, it was "their first introduction to Stafford's poetry and his influence and place in the American canon." Butler met Kim when Kim was in Glasgow a couple of years ago and then visited Portland, going to Bend to stay in the cabin Bill and Kim built. Butler writes, "I find it hard to separate William Stafford the writer from William Stafford the man and his family and friends. Even listening to a tape of WS reading, I sometimes can't tell the difference between the writing and the story about the writing. His voice slides naturally from talk to poetry and back again."

Butler read from *Lost Words*, the compilation of things the Stafford children said that Bill and Dorothy kept. Other readers were Donna Blackney, Steve Tilley, Gerry Stewart, and Brian Larkin. Tilley read "Objector" and got a tense response from a listener who claimed Bill's stance would not have stopped the death camps. Butler closes his report to the Friends (which I condense quite dramatically here) by praising the "open discussion" of the poems after the reading and quoting a participant who observed, "It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening which introduced me to some new people and poems and gave me confidence in my own voice." I think Bill would have liked the brogue of that.



Heidelberg Celebration

Heidelberg University celebrated William Stafford for the first time on January 21, 2010, in Herbster Chapel of Heidelberg University where between sixty and seventy members of the Heidelberg University/Tiffin, Ohio, community gathered to celebrate the poetry and life of William Stafford. Hosted by President Rob Huntington and English Department chair Bill Reyer, this was the first time Heidelberg joined with other communities for such a commemoration.

The program was rich and varied: Dr. Huntington shared greetings and biographical insights; those assembled viewed a brief clip of Mr. Stafford reading "Ask Me"; and Heidelberg University students, staff, and faculty read favorite Stafford poems. Two student-focused segments of the evening gave the event a distinctly "Heidelberg" flavor. Senior German major Holly Yanacek offered an interpretive reading of five poems based on the thread metaphor of Mr. Stafford's poem "The Way It Is." In addition, the three winners of the "Stafford First-Line Student Poem Competition" read their prize-winning pieces. After a brief break for refreshments and conversation, the evening concluded with an open-microphone session.

Those assembled were moved and delighted by William Stafford's warmth, humanity and humor. The joy and energy of Heidelberg's initial Stafford Celebration left the community eager for more in the coming years.



PHOTO/TIM BARNES

Barb Murray talking about her House of Words project at the Beaverton Library

The celebration at the **Beaverton City Library**, hosted by Sue Einowski, featured Barb Murray and Stacy Erickson, two participants in the House of Words, a five-day continuing education class taught by Kim Stafford, Paul Merchant, and Doug Erickson at the Lewis & Clark archives. The idea of House of Words was to develop curriculum using the Stafford material at the archives, particularly the electronic resources relating to Bill's first two books, *West of Your City* and *Traveling Through the Dark*.

Barb Murray's project, "Truant No More," uses a number of Bill's poems to follow the cycle of the seasons, actual and emotional, from darkness to light, from despair to redemption. She designed the curriculum to cover a semester, but she selected from that some wonderful writing prompts based on lines from Bill's poems and so the assembled found themselves writing. This participant was particularly moved by Bill's poem "Circle of Breath," which is about his father's death. It came alive under Barb Murray's care and our group felt as we wrote that warm spark of discovery that must have attended Bill's early mornings.

Stacy Erickson brought some of Bill's poems alive through the internet. She swooped into, using Google maps, the river where Bill's blood flowed downstream in "Ceremony." We hovered above the fish counter at Bonneville Dam. The speed of the internet seemed

kin to the swiftness of Bill's perceptions, his sudden enlargements of focus, his shifts in which one suddenly sees the essential.

In their introduction, in which they spoke glowingly of the House of Words project, Barb and Stacy talked about Bill's gift for teaching questioning and for cultivating the quiet that is the prelude to thoughtful colloquy. That sense was in the room for the golden few who were there.



PHOTO/MIRIAN HADDAD

Naomi Shihab Nye at San Antonio Celebration

Naomi Shihab Nye's account of the William Stafford reading at **Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas**: "Well -- it was one of the most perfect readings ever, inside a beautiful art gallery with an amazing exhibition -- perfect number of readers, students and poets mixed, profound selections and introductions, people saying things like 'I NEED William Stafford this week -- and every week' -- a 5 year old read 'First Grade' and also made birthday cupcakes which she passed to the crowd. I made a Stafford

table centerpiece with white table cloth, beautiful writing-on-couch photo and many books and films. . . ."

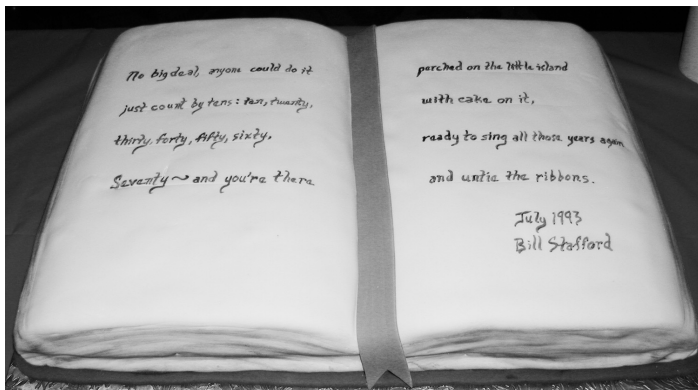
The **Writers' Dojo** celebration took place on January 17th. Kim hosted and asked the assembled to write based on a prompt from an excerpt Garrison Keillor read on The Writer's Almanac that day, the day of Bill's birth in 1914, "How These Words Happened": "In the winter, in the dark hours, when others / were asleep, I found these words and put them / together by their appetites and respect for / each other. In stillness, they jostled. They traded / meanings while pretending to have only one." Kim also brought the poem "Fifteen" along and talked about how his father, according to friends in Hutchison, had really just found a rusty bicycle by the Seventeenth Street Bridge. His father, it seems, made up the motorcycle and the rest, dramatizing a feeling. Kim encouraged the audience to write based on promoting the energy of some ordinary happening from childhood.

After this, Doug Erickson, head of the Lewis & Clark library's Special Collections, showed the audience how to access the Stafford digital archives, playing a tutorial that is available on the archive website. He also showed a short video of the earliest tape of Bill reading, a 1966 clip in which he reads and comments on "The Woman at Banff" and "Passing Remark," which can be viewed electronically. Doug made a gracious plea for people to visit the archive website at <http://www.williamstaffordarchives.org>.

Four participants in the House of Words project gave presentations of the curriculum they have developed: Sara Guest, Robin Judd, Andy Koolack, and Erin Ocon. You can go to the archive website and see reports of their work.

The assembled then took a break for wine and cheese, a break that they never came back from, and so the celebration ended with cabernet, camembert, conversation and good spirits.

Reporting on the **Bainbridge Island, Washington**, event in the *Bainbridge Island Review*, Connie Mears noted, "a philosophical shift in the gathering." The assembled watched the video, *A Literary Friendship*, a conversation between Bill and Robert Bly. Pioneering a new format, the participants had a 20-minute discussion after each reading of a Stafford poem. "Any reaction," said host Neil Baker, "helps deepen our understanding."



PHOTO/HILARY GARRET

Bill's birthday cake at the Hillsboro Celebration

The Greatest Story Ever Told

It would help if no one ever mentioned* that story ever again. You tell it to everyone we meet as a kind of initiation into our group of debauchers and misfits. I've grown tired of hearing that tale.

It's not because I am the unfortunate star of the story – that no longer bothers me, not since the stitches came out – it's the fact that I've heard it all before. Around bars, backyards, you even managed to work it into a wedding toast. You're telling it again tonight.

I stand here on this tile floor and nod along when my name is mentioned, repeatedly, listening to your enthusiastic recitation, with animated limbs – no, I never found those socks. We all laugh, and our new friend seems both shocked and amused – Yes, I really did that.

DAVID YOUNG

*Line taken from William Stafford's "Merci Beaucoup." One of the winners of the Heidelberg poetry contest

Tribute to William Stafford

By Robert E. Gerber

January 13th, 2010

I first met William Stafford in the spring of 1956. I had recently come to Oregon from Kansas and was teaching English at Grant High School in Portland. We had invited Professor Stafford—as we knew him then, not yet the famous poet he was to become—to share his vision and insights in teaching poetry and other literature.

As expected, we were delighted to learn of his uniquely creative teaching methods.

During his discussion Professor Stafford also shared some of his own poems. He urged each of us to write and publish, and explained his way of getting his work known. “Send it in,” he said. “Someone might think it a poem.”

And send it in he did, poem after poem, to editors he thought might like them. He kept careful records of where each poem was sent and, if rejected, he promptly sent it to another editor.

I admired his discipline and his insistent belief that he had a voice worth noting. This resonated well with me. I had grown up at the same time and in the same geographical area as William Stafford. Living on the edge of the Kansas / Oklahoma dust bowl, we knew the same extremes of climate, from hot and dusty summer winds to cold winter blasts and snow, with barely benign spring and autumn winds and rain.

I marveled that such an austere and demanding land, and the kind of people who could learn patiently to endure living there, could have produced a gentle, lyrical spirit such as William Stafford.

And I was happy to learn from him as I, too, tried to make my Kansas-nurtured character find its voice in a broader world. Not surprisingly, I wrote a poem explaining what I regarded as the Stafford phenomenon.

I am not organized as was William Stafford. My files are in disarray, and that poem is resting somewhere in one of many boxes of “go through sometime” papers, not easily to be found. I do, however, remember the last two lines, which speak to my question. I wrote:

. . . yet clouds need dust to glow,
and violent winds can sire the gentle rain.

In preparing for this year’s series of William Stafford tributes, I have read and re-read dozens of William Stafford poems, including “Traveling Through the Dark,” which is my favorite of all others. In many of the poems I cannot find the “golden thread” of which he spoke in an interview with Robert Bly.

This used to bother me. It bothered me a lot! I once had a reputation as being really good at understanding poetry, and William Stafford, while carefully observing rules of grammatical syntax, broke all the rules of use with similes, metaphor, and analogy. Then I discovered I was not alone in this regard. A friend of mine attended a seminar in which William Stafford was featured speaker. After reading one of his poems, Professor Stafford remarked that he “didn’t really understand the poem, but kinda liked it.”

Happy to be in such good company, even when unable to understand nuances of imagery, metaphor, or syntax, I always have a feeling that I’ve been invited to share a reality of knowing that, however inscrutable, is deeply embedded in truth patiently waiting

to be realized—some mystery that, together, we might unravel.

Trying to express this feeling, I’ve written in, as I fancy, the William Stafford style, this little “might be a poem.”

Let Us Now Think

Let us now think!
Peel back the covers.
Raise lids to arcane meanings
Plain to see
--if seen.
Hear the voice of one
Who “thought hard for us all.”
Think William Stafford.

To William Stafford

Forgive me. . .
I knew you were there,
but have taken my time
making your acquaintance. (So many
others commanded my attention.)

Then I heard you say
Ask Me and stopped to listen, felt
the steel glint of your knife
cut to the truth.

This week in January rain
I journeyed westward with you
from your winter roots in Kansas
to our shared adopted home.
I’ll return and return again.

So thank you, Bill.
(May I you call you that now?)
Thank you for the way you say
what shudders in the wind
and speak to that which stirs
under everything.

GAIL BARKER

Some Thoughts on William Stafford

By Ger Killeen

(Given at the 2010 William Stafford Memorial Reading, January 20th, Annie Bloom's Books, Portland, Oregon.)

In 1915, the year after William Stafford was born, and the First World War was ratcheting up its mad energies, Sigmund Freud published a paper called "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" where he commented on the spectacle of mass killing, on how "a multitude of simultaneous deaths appears to us exceedingly terrible," how it profoundly disillusions us, and produces in us inconsistent and even contradictory attitudes towards death that, he suggested, would last well beyond the end of combat. Little did he guess at the time how this was merely a prelude to the most violent century in human history, a century which, though it may have moved forward calendrically, has certainly not ended. We live in the era of permanent war and permanent war-consciousness.

The disillusionment, the disablement, the disgust, the depression alternating with the brittle euphorias of artificial paradises could almost be the psychological poles that define the world of modernity. And hope would often seem the most fleeting, fragile and illusory of things. But in 1914, in Kansas, in the heartland of America, in what Fitzgerald calls in *The Great Gatsby* "the warm center of the world," William Stafford was born, and in time came to write the poems that set and continue to set a different fire against the wailing, hectic flames of war, war, war with its deaths, its lies, its coarsening of our shared lives, its diabolical ambiguities.

Ambiguities. That's not a word you would readily associate with William Stafford. Like all good poets, of course, his poems cherish the necessary ambiguities of language that make a reader stop and consider and reconsider. But in his work and life, when the job of thinking hard is getting done, we arrive at stances in the world which don't allow for moral ambiguity.

In *Down in My Heart: Peace Witness in War Time*, reprinted in 1985, he ended his foreword with these words about the book: "here it is unchanged, offered as it was published in 1947, and reprinted in an ambiguous time." The times, I think, are always ambiguous, and Stafford taches us again and again that we don't have the luxury of being morally ambiguous about the times.

We celebrate William Stafford's life and work in a different way, perhaps, than we celebrate the life and work of, say, Emerson, and more like the way we celebrate Thoreau. "The intellect of man is forced to choose/ Perfection of the life or of the work..." says Yeats, but there are a few writers in which the life and work seem so interfused with each other that to separate them is to carelessly strip the flesh from the bones. Stafford is one of these, and tonight we celebrate the tough pacifist whose poems set the authenticities of dailiness, of stories that could be true, of open eyes and ears, open mind and brimming soul against the steely narratives of separation and anonymous death.

Has he ever been more relevant?

Tribute To William Stafford

We read your poems out loud on your birthday.

There were maybe fifteen people there.

Do you know that in Japanese, your poems sound soft and clipped like bonsai trees?

Some poems we read twice — once by a man and once by a woman.

One woman had to choose her poem carefully so she could get through it without choking up.

The weather was miserable but no one cared.

For a couple of hours the room was lifted up and luminous, no longer in the grid of this world.

We were lifted too, tracking your thoughts together like a flock of birds.

At the end someone remembered what you said to your draft board in 1942: "Show me a good war and I'll go."

Of all your poems, maybe I like that one the best.

CRAIG BRANDIS

Paulann Petersen: Oregon's New Poet Laureate

Friends of William Stafford board member Paulann Petersen has been selected as Oregon's latest poet laureate. She replaces Lawson Inada and follows in the footsteps of William Stafford who served as Oregon's poet laureate for a number of years. The board of FWS couldn't be more pleased that such a fine poet, teacher, organizer, and torch bearer for the muse has received this honor. We offer her our shared elation at this profoundly exciting opportunity and know from experience that she will do a magnificent job of weaving poetry in the fabric of our community. For a history of Oregon's poet laureates, see FWS board member Don Colburn's May 10 article in *OregonLive.com*, "Oregon's poet laureates: A sample of their work, a bit about their lives." You will find there a bit about Paulann, Oregon's eighth poet laureate.

Watching the Jet Planes Dive

We must go back and find a trail on the ground
back of the forest and mountain on the slow land;
we must begin to circle on the intricate sod.
By such wild beginnings without help we may find
the small trail on through the buffalo-bean vines.

We must go back with noses and the palms of our hands,
and climb over the map in far places, everywhere,
and lie down whenever there is doubt and sleep there.
If roads are unconnected we must make a path,
no matter how far it is, or how lowly we arrive.

We must find something forgotten by everyone alive,
and make some fabulous gesture when the sun goes down
as they do by custom in little Mexico towns
where they crawl for some ritual up a rocky steep.
The jet planes dive; we must travel on our knees.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

A Note to the Friends from Haydn Reiss

Every War Has Two Losers was started three years ago when Kim Stafford sent me the book the film is based on. And, at the same time, I looked at my two young children and wondered why I didn't see war in their faces.

I've come around to Bill's assertion that *War isn't inevitable*, it's not a law like gravity we're stuck with. It is a human choice and thus only a choice among many. Striving to be a peacemaker, as I understand it, isn't a simple step like switching to energy efficient light bulbs to save energy. It is a lifelong path.

If you appreciated the film, I (peacefully) deputize you to be ambassadors for it. Let others know. Email your friends the link to the film's website – www.everywar.com. Purchase a copy – the dvd also includes a second film, my film on the friendship between Stafford and Robert Bly.

The honest truth is the only way a small film like this will get seen is if there's word of mouth.

As Bill says at the end of the film, "Here's how to count the people ready to do right. One One One."

I hope you will be ... one.
Haydn Reiss (pronounced HI-DEN Reese)

Stafford Studies Inaugural Issue

The first in what looks to be a significant series of publications, *William Stafford and His First Publishers: The Making of West of Your City and Traveling Through the Dark*, has been published by the Lewis & Clark College Special Collection's Berberis Press. The slender, attractive, chapbook-sized volume is the first in the Collection's *William Stafford Studies*. The writers, Vince Wixon and Paul Merchant, are co-editors of two other books on Stafford, *Crossing Unmarked Snow: Further Views on the Writer's Vocation* and *The Answers are Inside the Mountains, Meditations on the Writing Life*. As many of you know, Wixon also joined with Mike Markee to make some fine videos of Bill, and Merchant is in charge of the Stafford archives at the Lewis & Clark Library. It is clear this is a labor of love.

One finds here a thoughtful and careful account of the origins and assemblage of the two manuscripts. We see how they were constructed out of others. We learn how obliging and alertly ambitious Bill was, how responsive to criticism and respectful to his editors. His relationships with Robert Greenwood and Newton Baird of Talisman Press, publisher of *West of Your City* (1960), and Elizabeth Lawrence of Harper & Row, publisher of *Traveling Through the Dark* (1962), were more than cordial and lasted years beyond the books produced.

Manuscripts are molded and this process, particularly with *Traveling Through the Dark*, becomes richly evident. Bill sent Harper & Row a manuscript called simply *A Collection of Poems* that intrigued Harpers. He had another manuscript that Indiana Press was interested in, *Representing Far Places*. In order to enhance the manuscript at Harpers, he withdrew that manuscript from Indiana, and Lawrence helped him combine the two to make *Traveling Through the Dark*. The give and take about the content of Bill's breakthrough book is a pleasure to discover. We also see how Lawrence helped him revise and improve some of his poems, particularly the ending of one of Bill's most well-known poems, "Thinking for Berky," clearly an enhancement. We also see what she culled, "A Bridge to Eden," for example, a poem from *A Collection of Poems* that remains uncollected to this day. This reader's curiosity is aroused.

William Stafford and His First Publishers also includes Bill's remarks at the National Book Awards Ceremony, a bibliography, and an appendices listing the poems in the manuscripts that went into the making of both books. Also found here are color reproductions of their covers. *West of Your City* being so rare, this is a special treat.

Berberis Press printed 75 hard copies of the book, and I don't know how many they still have but the interested reader can download a copy, in color, for free at <http://williamstaffordarchives.org/book/1/>. For those fascinated by the making of books and the editing process, this book is a treasure.



Sightings

Writers from a variety of fields have found a use for Bill's vision when they explore their subjects and try to suggest some resolution. Bill's thoughts on the world and on the poetic endeavor have a staying power, a tone, that enhances the conversation around a surprising number of concerns. He seems, judging from these sightings, to be particularly useful for closure.

Two books, both brought to my attention by board members, use Bill for effective closure. Both of them deal with dark, difficult subjects. John K. Roth is the Edward Sexton Professor of Philosophy and the Director of the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights at Claremont McKenna College. As you might guess by his titles, he is the author of numerous volumes of philosophy, religion, ethics, and holocaust studies. He also happens to have a granddaughter who lives in Winthrop, Washington, along the Methow River. In December 2004, while he was at work on his recent book, *Ethics During and After the Holocaust: In the Shadow of Birkenau*, he visited her, and she took him to see Bill's poems along the river.

An exploration of the effects on the field of philosophy of the Holocaust, this intense and penetrating book confronts with wrenching specificity the scholarship of the Holocaust, both the historical record and the philosophical response. Roth's thesis is that the Holocaust calls into question our assumptions about the ability of moral systems to promote good and prevent evil. After all, the perpetrators of the final solution were, in his words, "civilized people from a society that was scientifically advanced, technologically competent, culturally sophisticated, efficiently organized, and even religiously devout." The issues Roth raises are not comforting, but they are incisive.

One must read the whole book before one arrives at the postscript where Roth tells of his discovery of Bill's poetry and uses two poems, "Meditation," and "Being a Person." The first is available as a broadside from FWS and the second is part of the Methow River poems collected in *Even in Quiet Places*. The poems are part of his attempt to offer guidance as to how to approach a post-Holocaust world, these lines in particular: "How you stand here is important. How you / listen for the next things to happen. How you breathe." Bill breathed reconciliation, a way of being that revered life but also penetrated the sham of official postures. Roth, in his search for an ethical stance to take in the wake of Birkenau, finds ripples of an answer in Bill's poems. If you don't have time to read the whole book, you can find a version of it, a lecture Roth gave at the Holocaust Memorial Museum, at www.ushmm.org/research/center/publications/.../2005.../paper.pdf.

The second book that uses Bill for closure, *Why Good People Do Bad Things: Understanding our Darker Selves* (2007), investigates the role of the shadow in the life of the individual and the community. Its author, James Hollis, the executive director of the Jungian Educational Center, proposes that evil actions, like the Holocaust, can be attributed to the failure of people, societies, and institutions to accept aspects of themselves that they "cannot bear to see." He defines the shadow as "what discomforts the sense of self we wish to have." What we do with the shadow, individually and collectively, is to project it outward onto others. One of the major sources of

this disassociation is the desire for rightness, certainty, simplicity, yes/no solutions. "Life," Hollis tells us, "is inherently contradictory and conflictual, and any view that seeks to finesse these contraries is operating in bad faith." I am reminded of something Bill said to Kim, recounted in *Early Morning*, when he was coiling some cord, "This string has all kinds of protuberances I didn't see. I realize light hides a lot." Light conceals shadows that are revelatory. "I live," Bill writes in "Existences," "by the grace of shadows." This is, in a way, what Hollis' book is about. He urges us to accept the grace of the shadow as part of the whole. Hollis, like Roth, summons Bill in his last chapter. Here he warns the reader to be alert to the shadow because "the sum of our separate darknesses makes for a very dark world." Hollis calls, therefore, on lines from one of Bill's most political poems: "it is important that awake people be awake. / Or a breaking line may discourage us back to sleep." Hollis uses "A Ritual to Read to Each Other" here to encourage alertness to the place of the shadow in our lives, but his larger point seems to reinforce Bill's sense of the healing grace of the embrace of the other as we negotiate the deep darknesses of the self.

A third book, with a more comfortable, though not necessarily simpler subject, is *Citadel of the Spirit: Oregon's Sesquicentennial Anthology, A Merging of Past and Present Voices and Stories*, a collection published last year to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Oregon. A substantial book, it has 122 contributions but only one poem, Bill's "For the Oregon House Session, 13 April, 1987," which is the last entry in the anthology—closure again. This nearly 500 page collection of prose about Oregon by Oregonians late and living, from Ben Hur Lampman to Monica Drake, features Ken Kesey, Barry Lopez, Jeff Baker, Tom McCall, Abigail Scott Duniway, Walt Curtis, Joanna Rose, Rick Rubin, Bob Packwood, and scads more. Subjects include the KKK, the Trailblazers, tree sitting, the Rajneeshies, the state fair, our state-owned beaches, and the Shakespeare Festival. This anthology is a cornucopia of Oregonia. Close to the interest of Friends is Kim Stafford's remembrance of his father's friend and fellow CO, Glen Coffield, "Our Man of the Mountain: Oregon's Glen Coffield and the Grundtvig Folk School." Coffield, like Bill, was a true original.

It is consonant with the range of voices and subjects in this incredible efflorescence of writing, edited and published by Matt Love, that it closes with Bill's poem in which these lines of inclusion are found: "Only the people voted, but the animals too are here, / and the salmon testing silt in their home rivers. / Even trees deserve a place, and the hills / maintaining their part, while the rocks are quietly / mentioning dignity." It seems only fitting that Bill brings into this generous anthology the quiet constituency of the landscape that holds us all.

The way these writers and editors have found Bill's words and used them to affirm and reconcile their messages seems consonant with what brings friends to Bill. It is also suggestive of the way in which Bill Stafford will make friends in the future. And he seems to be doing it quite well.

Editor's note: My purpose in doing these "sightings" is to discuss books, journals, websites, and any place where Bill Stafford's writings are used or discussed in a meaningful way. If readers discover news of Bill, I would appreciate word. Some Friends have already enlightened me to interesting mentions of Bill. I appreciate it.

News, Notes, and Opportunities

Paul Willis' thoughtful review of *Another World Instead* begins at the January celebration held beside "the old stone foundation of the Los Prietos Civilian Public Service Camp" where Bill spent several years during his time as a conscientious objector in War War II. The camp, located in the Los Padres National Forest just north of Santa Barbara, California, was once, according to Willis, a professor of English at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, a Chumash Indian village. You can read a part of his review, "We Few Dreamers," at ChristianityToday.com (<http://www.ChristianityToday.com/bc/2009/novdec/wefewdreamers>) and all of it if you subscribe to the magazine.

You can hear a podcast of Bill reading five poems at the Poetry Foundation's website. Donald Hall put together these "Essential American Poets" readings in 2006 while he was U.S. poet laureate. Bill's contribution was recorded at the Library of Congress in 1970 and 78. He reads "Message from the Wanderer," "A Report to Crazy Horse," "At the Un-National Monument Along the Canadian Border," "One Home," and "The Farm on the Great Plains." Other poets include the current U.S. poet laureate Kay Ryan, Robert Hass, Li-Young Lee, Anne Sexton, William Carlos Williams, Philip Levine, Elizabeth Bishop, Theodore Roethke, and Galway Kinnell, thirty-eight poets in all.

Friends of the Lake Oswego Library William Stafford Fellowship. Fictioneer Margaret Malone of Portland won the \$2500 prize for 2009 awarded by Literary Arts. Malone has a B.A. in philosophy from Humboldt State University, is a volunteer facilitator for Write Around Portland, and cohost of Share. For more information go to <http://portland.readinglocal.com/> and put Margaret Malone in Search the Archives. That would take you to a literary arts website featuring Karen Munro's recent interview with Malone.

The William Stafford Award for Poetry. This contest, offered by *Rosebud Magazine*, has a \$1000 first prize and four runner-up awards of \$100 each. See <http://www.rsbd.net/NEW/index.php?> for guidelines. The deadline is June 15th, 2010.

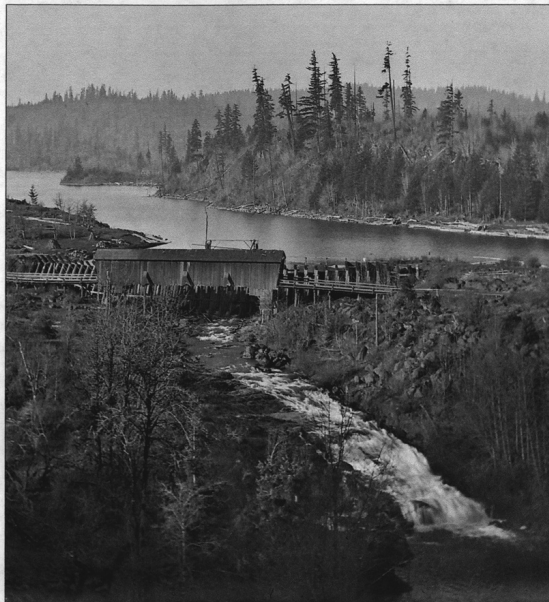
The Poet's House is a literary center and poetry library located at 10 River Terrace in the Battery Park area of Manhattan. It was founded by poet Stanley Kunitz and arts administrator Elisabeth Kray in 1985 and opened to the public at its current location on Sept 25th, 2009. Its mission is to be a "home for all who read and write poetry" and sponsors panels, lectures, seminars, readings, writing workshops, and exhibitions. The house holds 50,000 volumes of poetry including twelve of

Bill's books. *Traveling Through the Dark* is not included but *The Way It Is* is.

"Poet's Writing Roots Buried Deep in Kansas." Michael Stubbs sent the Friends a note about this article in the Nov. 9th, 2009 issue of the *Wichita Eagle*. It was part of a series called "To the Stars: The Story of Kansas." If you email him at prairiescout@gmail.com, he might send you a pdf.

Doug Stow of Paper Crane Press, which prints the FWS broadsides every year, sent this interview from a recent issue of *Poetry Flash*, a Bay Area poetry magazine. Nigerian poet and novelist Chris Abani and Dominique McCafferty, a children's librarian, are talking about the poets they like and McCafferty bursts out, "I love the poem by William Stafford—it's very well-known—where he moves the deer off the road. There's such compassion in the poem. Yes, I would have to say I'm in love with Bill Stafford's poetry." There's a sweet spontaneity in McCafferty's outburst in the middle of an interview she is conducting that captures something about how Bill's poetry affects people and stays with them, gushing out at open moments. I thank Doug for sending this along.

Lake Oswego Centennial Poetry Reading. A reading will be held at the Lake Oswego Library in which readers featured in a chapbook of poems by Lake Oswego residents or those connected in some way with the town will read their poems. The chapbook will be on sale as well as a broadside, designed by John Laursen of Press 22, of Bill's poem "Climbing Along the River." Two FWS board members on the Centennial Project Committee, Scot Siegel and Leah Stenson,



CLIMBING ALONG THE RIVER

Willows never forget how it feels
to be young.

Do you remember where you came from?
Gravel remembers.

Even the upper end of the river
believes in the ocean.

Exactly at midnight
yesterday sighs away.

What I believe is,
all animals have one soul.

Over the land they love
they crisscross forever.

William Stafford

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supervised the contest that selected the poems that constitute the chapbook.

Pilgrim at Home: Vagabond Songs is a CD of songs written and sung by Kim Stafford. He accompanies himself on guitar, with Jan DeWeese on mandolin and Harriet Wingard on violin. For more information go to www.kimstafford.com. If you roam around a bit on his website, you'll find his moving film, "Journey to My Father," in which he goes to McNeil, the CO camp where his father was almost lynched. You will also find a link to the William Stafford Pages, which has photos, a chronology, songs of his poems, and pieces Kim has written over the years about his father.

The Way It Is was an NPR pick for best poetry book in April. Nancy Pearl, a librarian and NPR commentator, picked it as one of eight books she recommended for the annual poetry month. She also recommended *Blue Dusk: New and Selected Poems, 1951-2001* by Madeline DeFrees and Bill's old friend Richard Hugo's collection *Making Certain It Goes On*. You can go to her article with this URL: <http://npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125997807>. What you see at the website doesn't indicate that Pearl read "What's in My Journal" in the live broadcast on April 15th.

Poetry and Potluck

The fifth annual Friends of William Stafford Poetry and Potluck will take place on September 12th at Foothills Park in Lake Oswego from noon to five. The poems below were read at last year's event.

Eastern Oregon

Out here is miles from anywhere.
Coyotes, cattle, and sun become your companions.

Hills roll and fold, a sea of giant swells,
then flatten out, lay calm, in bleaching summer heat.

When evening unveils its stars,
life shrinks under the universe.

For centuries, Nez Perce came to trade for Columbia salmon,
then Pioneers snaked wagons down the Blue Mountains.

Even today, dust devils coil up,
and rivers cut deep gorges.

Sage grows low so wind can go where it wants—
whistling through wire fences.

MARK THALMAN

Biker Chick

When I am old, I shall ride a purple Harley
with a red helmet that doesn't go
and terrify my dog and adult children.
'Till now I have only driven a sky blue moped,
College Dean reports in my jacket against the wind,
helmet in place, knees primly together, scarf flying
while boys raced by shouting "Mary Poppins!"

But there is something to that primal throb
and shiny plumbing that turns a switch in me.
Makes me want black leather pants, beer and
biker bars. Makes me want to ride in parades
and biker funerals and collect toys at Christmas.
Makes me want to ride down the highway in a
flock, lean on the curves, park in formation
on the streets of small towns while I eat steak, rare.

When I am old I'll ride a purple Harley.
There is a biker chick in every woman.

SSSAKURAI

PERMISSIONS

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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 provides vital funding for our traveling broadside exhibit, *How The Ink Feels*, supports the annual William Stafford Birthday Celebration Readings, maintains our web site, 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)

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

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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
November 2009 – May 2010

Jeri Golsan
Chris Jansen
Celia Leber
Jim Votaw
Rachel Votaw
Linda Wright



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Special thanks to Ilka
Kuznik

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letters, news, and
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events, awards, etc. to
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Stafford Birthday Celebrations
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Staffordisms



Sightings and Review:
“Principle and Poetry”

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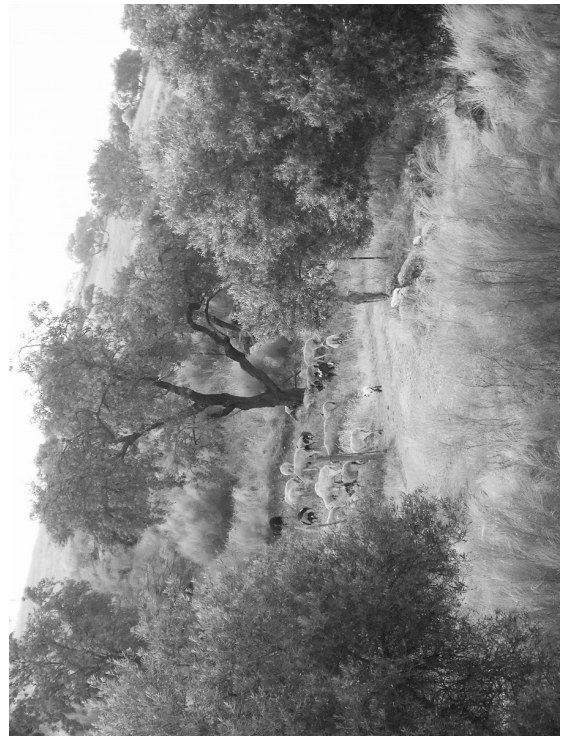
Jeremiah at Miminagish

Somewhere up there God has poised
the big answer to the new doctrine
written all over this country in concrete
by the corporation everyone has bought into
that leads to where the minotaur waits,

Waits just over there by the new mall,
or at the end of your carefully planned
university course, your Moloch Award,
your honors, your degree fastened like
a dogtag around your neck for life,

As the freeways are knotting around cities
getting ready to reach out.
But scattered in little pieces the old times
trail off into the mountains and hide,
forming their avalanche. Then salvation.

WILLIAM STAFFORD



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