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Gunnar Johansen on the Music of Liszt  
Remembering Wallace Stegner

40<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Issue

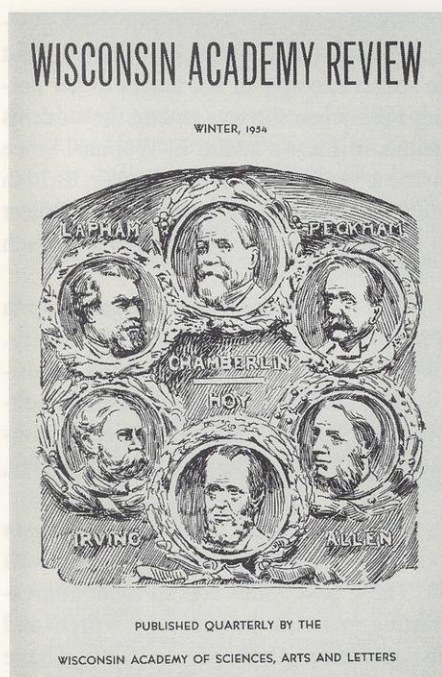
# *Wisconsin Academy Review*

A JOURNAL OF WISCONSIN CULTURE









Volume I, Number 1  
January 1954

COVER: Gunnar and Lorraine Johansen at their home near Blue Mounds.

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Is journalism dead? Is classical music dead? These questions have been asked in public forums recently, and I'm pleased to say that at least in this issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, both mediums are alive and well.

Throughout the history of our state, remarkable men and women have called Wisconsin their home. Some were born here but left to seek fame and fortune elsewhere; others came from distant parts of the world, adopted the state as their own, and spent the most productive years of their lives here. Among the latter was Academy fellow Gunnar Johansen—pianist, composer, humanitarian, and man with a vision. Johansen died in 1991, and we take this opportunity to acknowledge his significant contribution by focusing on one aspect of his varied life: his commitment to the work of Franz Liszt. We are grateful to Canadian pianist and scholar Gordon Rumson for providing us with our lead article, a critical analysis of an essay on Liszt written by Johansen, whose work Rumson so much admires. We also are grateful to Lorraine Johansen for her help and interest.

Johansen was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1906 and began studying piano when he was ten, with his father as teacher. He gave his first public concert at age twelve and made his orchestral debut at age fourteen, when he performed Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1. He came to California in 1935, performed there for a while, and in 1939 he was named artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin, the first musician in America to hold that title anywhere. In 1946 he and his wife, Lorraine, moved to a small stone house near Blue Mounds State Park, where he established his own recording studio, continued to teach, compose, and perform, and where he developed ideas for his other great passion, the Leonardo Academy.

His recordings of the complete piano works of Liszt were accomplished over a period of seventeen years. These and the other recordings described by Gordon Rumson in his article are available on cassette tape, and recently the sounds of Gunnar Johansen at the piano have been filling my house, my car, my head.

There is one Johansen story which Rumson does not include in his fine piece which continues to baffle the imagination: In 1969, on one day's notice, Johansen played the Beethoven Piano Concerto no. 6 with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Philharmonic Hall, New York. He performed in place of the ailing pianist who was scheduled to play, though not only had Johansen never played the Beethoven, *he had never even heard it*. He found the score in the university's music library, studied it on the plane enroute to New York, faced an additional nine pages of credenzas after he got there, and gave a performance the critics called "a complete tour de force," all within twenty-four hours.

As a companion to the critical work by Rumson, Max Gaebler has provided us with a delightful story about his Great Aunt Sophie Gaebler, and he shares excerpts of her letters to her parents in Wisconsin during 1885 when she was among the students invited for Sunday sessions in Liszt's studio in Weimar. Since Max has left Madison for a year's stay in Vancouver, British Columbia, our thanks to Peter Press (who is working on a project for the Gaebler family) for helping us out with the photos which accompany the Sophie-in-Weimar story.

As always, busy people have stepped forward, generous in their willingness to share their scholarship and creativity. Included in this issue you will find the adventures of an American poet in Europe, new methods of teaching and learning mathematics, an essay on the late Wallace Stegner, recently published aphorisms by poet Felix Pollak, fiction, art, photography, and reviews.

Finally, let's salute the work done by former *Wisconsin Academy Review* editors and contributors since the journal was first introduced in 1954. These past issues add up to an impressive collection of interesting materials provided by writers and artists with a Wisconsin connection. As the present editor, I have a rich foundation on which to build, and I send sincere good wishes and warm thoughts to all of those who were involved over the years. It is a privilege and a challenge to attempt to live up to their legacy.

## • WISCONSIN ACADEMY PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Wisconsin Academy has just published *John T. Curtis: Fifty Years of Wisconsin Plant Ecology*, edited by James S. Fralish, Robert P. McIntosh, and Orie L. Loucks. (Curtis, who joined the Academy in 1933 while still an undergraduate and was an active member until his death in 1961, was among the early scientists to develop the philosophy that plant communities should be preserved for the benefit of future generations.) Many current members of the Academy contributed to the text, which includes details of Curtis's life and research. Copies are available from Plant Ecology Projects, Box 123, Carbondale, IL 62903-0123 for \$35, including postage.

## • WISCONSIN ACADEMY GALLERY SCHEDULE:

December: Tom Lindfors, photography  
January: Dierdre Luzwick, charcoal drawings  
February: Mike Brylski, oil paintings

*Faith B. Miracle*

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters was chartered by the state legislature on March 16, 1870, as an incorporated society serving the people of Wisconsin by encouraging investigation and dissemination of knowledge in the sciences, arts, and humanities.



## CONTRIBUTORS

- ▶ Shirley Anders is writer-in-residence and lecturer in English at the University of Wisconsin Center-Fox Valley, Menasha. Her collection of poems, *The Bus Home*, won the 1986 Devins Award, and her work has appeared in such publications as the *Southern Review*. She grew up in North Carolina and has been in Wisconsin for five years.
- ▶ Sue Burke lives in Milwaukee and writes science fiction stories and contributes articles to such publications as *Milwaukee Magazine*, *Business Journal of Milwaukee*, and *Art Muscle*. She occasionally digs for artifacts as a volunteer with Archeological Rescue, Inc., which is affiliated with the Milwaukee Public Museum. Her poem which appears in this issue was inspired by an artifact she encountered in the basement lab of the museum.
- ▶ Max Gaebler was born in Watertown, attended Harvard College and Harvard Divinity School, and was ordained into the Unitarian ministry in March 1944. He served congregations in Massachusetts and Iowa before coming to Wisconsin in 1952. He was minister of the First Unitarian Society in Madison for thirty-five years and is currently interim minister of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, British Columbia. At one point in his career he was an exchange minister with the Free Religious Congregations in Germany.
- ▶ Peg Carlson Lauber won a first-place Hopwood Award for poetry from the University of Michigan and an American Academy of Poets first prize from the Iowa Writers Workshop. She has been a poet-in-the-school in Florida and Wisconsin and is an assistant professor of creative writing and women's literature at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Her work has been published widely in such small magazines as *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *North American Review*. Her poems also appeared in *Wisconsin Poetry*, published by the Wisconsin Academy.
- ▶ Rusty McKenzie is an art therapist and poet who lives and writes on the north shore of Lake Winnebago and sometimes on a tiny Bahamian out-island. Her work has previously appeared in the *Wisconsin Academy Review* as well as in such other publications as *Wisconsin Review* and *Columbia Review*.
- ▶ Michael Miller was born and raised in Milwaukee. He earned his B.F.A. and M.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and currently teaches drawing at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. He also has a background in woodworking, ornamental plaster, and cabinet-making, and his oil paintings reflect the inspiration he receives from the old Flemish masters. His work is shown through Gallery A in Chicago.
- ▶ JoAnna Poehlman, Milwaukee, observes her fortieth year as a professional artist in 1994 as we celebrate the fortieth year of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. She studied art at the Layton School of Art, the Kansas City Art Institute, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and also attended Marquette University. Among the institutions which collect her art are the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the New York Public Library, and the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt, Germany. A retrospective of her work can be seen at the Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine, March 27 through May 1, 1994.
- ▶ Felix Pollak (1909–1987), internationally acclaimed poet, was director of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Wisconsin–Madison until his retirement. The last collections of poems published during his lifetime were *Pros and Cons* (1983) and *Tunnel Visions* (1984). Pollak's close friend Reinhold Grimm of the University of California-Riverside has edited and translated much of his work.
- ▶ Thomas A. Romberg, Sears Roebuck Foundation-Bascom Professor in Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, is director of the National Center for Research in Mathematical Sciences Education for the U.S. Department of Education. He long has been involved in mathematics curriculum reform, and he served as chair of the national commission that produced the *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics* in 1989. He has edited several other works, and his recent reform efforts have extended to mathematics assessment. He is currently directing the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics assessment standards project, which is drafting new assessment standards for school mathematics.
- ▶ Gordon Rumson was born in Montreal and studied piano and composition at the University of Calgary in Alberta. In 1983 he moved to the United States where he received a master's degree in piano performance from the University of Michigan. He has also attended the University of Bowling Green in Ohio and Wayne State University in Detroit. In 1992 he attended the University of Wisconsin–Madison where he conducted research into the music of Gunnar Johansen. He is a composer and has written articles on musicology as well as fiction and poetry. On December 6, 1991, he performed a concert "In Memoriam to Ignace Paderewski and Gunnar Johansen." This marked the 50th anniversary of the completion of Gunnar Johansen's *Pearl Harbor Sonata* as well as the death of Paderewski.
- ▶ Gretchen Holstein Schoff, recipient of a Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, serves on the Madison faculties of the Institute for Environmental Studies, the Integrated Liberal Studies program, and the College of Engineering. During a one-year sabbatical at the University of Chicago Divinity School she studied the relationship between modern systemic theology and modern worldviews.
- ▶ Maureen Trainor's poetry has appeared in small press magazines and has been anthologized in *World of Poetry*. She grew up in Green Bay and is currently completing an M.F.A.

*Continued on page 47*



# Gunnar Johansen on the Music of Franz Liszt: The Search for the Spontaneous Moment

by Gordon Rumson

**D**uring the almost fifty years that he was artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, the pianist and composer Gunnar Johansen undertook a series of performances and recordings of monumental proportions. In the 1940s and 1950s he performed complete series of the music of Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, Chopin, and Bach. He also committed to record—in his own studio, for his own company—the complete keyboard works of Bach (the first and perhaps only so far to do so), the music of Ferruccio Busoni and that of Ignaz Friedman, a series of twelve Historical Recitals, and a lengthy series of his own compositions.<sup>1</sup>

But of all the recording projects which he undertook, it was the Liszt series that garnered Johansen greatest fame and recognition. Johansen had clear reasons for undertaking this project.

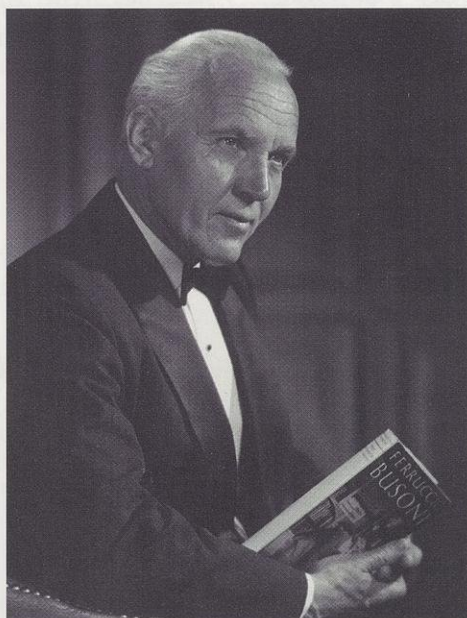
Franz Liszt, the greatest pianist of his generation and the inspiration for many later musical developments, left a vast collection of compositions, over four hundred of which are for solo piano. Yet for all of his fame as a pianist, recognition as a composer eluded Liszt.

Johansen was well aware of the status of Liszt in the eyes and ears of the music world. A few of Liszt's compositions, such as the ubiquitous *Liebestraume* or the stirring second *Hungarian Rhapsody*, were well—perhaps too well—known. The vast proportion of Liszt's works were unperformed and disregarded.

In a 1973 sketch toward an essay on the interpretation of Liszt,<sup>2</sup> subtitled “A Philosophic Approach,” Johansen commented on this state of affairs:

*... Liszt has remained for the most part unrecognized and [ . . . ] in depth, breadth and elevation, he generally has not been understood and respected. Only five to ten percent of his works, until very recently, were performed and even up to this time, the so-called complete edition [of his compositions] contains only about half of his production. This fact alone explains why he [ . . . ] could not be properly evaluated and appreciated.*

In order to correct this lamentable state of affairs, Johansen began to collect the complete piano compositions and



Gunnar Johansen (1906–1991).

then to record them. The project, begun in 1961, took seventeen years and resulted in fifty records and cassettes.

Johansen was singularly equipped to undertake this vast project. Possessing a brilliant technique at the piano, Johansen also inherited from his teachers a clear vision of Liszt as a composer. Among Johansen's teachers were Frederic Lamond (himself a student of Liszt) and the great Egon Petri, whose interpretations of Liszt were of an imposing and transcendental variety. In the background was also the influence of the incomparable Ferruccio Busoni, perhaps the first great musician to fully grasp the importance of Liszt's music. The results of this combination of background, personality, and intellectual endowments were performances that were described by David Dubal as “some of the greatest Liszt playing ever captured on records.”<sup>3</sup>

Dubal considered Johansen,

*... a titanic virtuoso with lightning reflexes . . . [whose] approach to the piano is one of fearlessness. Once you become familiar with Johansen's playing, you will not mistake it for another's.*<sup>4</sup>

With this project well under way and its importance established, it is enormously significant that Johansen attempted to explain his conception of Liszt's music in the essay sketch of 1973. Not content to merely suggest a few technical tricks for performers, Johansen tackled the problems the music poses for the interpreter by attempting to grasp the rela-



tion between performance, inspiration, and improvisation. His approach was that of a widely-read philosophic contemplative who viewed artistic creation as a response to social, historical, and spiritual conditions. Johansen reached for the music of Liszt through philosophic investigations into the nature of music and life itself.

He began his reflections with the broadest brush strokes: “The nineteenth century was an epoch of spontaneity.” He then considered two related ideas:

... all great [manifestations of art] have their origin in the impulse of the moment when considered in the light of inspiration.

And the second idea:

When one contemplates the music of the nineteenth century and ponders the pervading spirit of spontaneity, it is then an astounding fact that coincidental with all this cultivation of the moment and impulse, the art of improvisation virtually perished. What a paradox!

Until the middle of the nineteenth century it was standard practice for a composer, who was also a performer, to exhibit his skill through improvisation—the creation of a musical composition immediately and unprepared at the piano. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt were all renowned as improvisers. But with time the tastes of the public and the artists changed—by the turn of the century the art of improvisation was virtually dead. Johansen quoted a letter in which Busoni (who was arguably the greatest pianist in the two generations after Liszt) wrote:

How could something of value come forth in improvisation, when only a small part of that [which] one with care and deliberation puts down on paper survives as worthy art?<sup>5</sup>

For Johansen this is the crux of the matter—this “separating of impulse from deliberation.” Does one create art from the inspiration of the moment or must art always be passed through the intellect’s discerning reflection?

In order to illuminate this antithesis, Johansen turned to Leonardo da Vinci. This renaissance figure is remembered as a great painter, but his gifts as a consummate musician and improviser are less well known. Johansen quoted a potent phrase from Leonardo:

Music has two ills, the one mortal the other wasting: the mortal is ever allied with the instant which follows that of the music’s utterance, the wasting lies in its repetition, making it seem contemptible and mean.<sup>6</sup>

The first ill is improvised music, which because it is unrecorded, disappears. The second ill is printed music, which having been written down, can be repeated in performance. It is significant that during Leonardo’s lifetime a method of printing music was invented, and so began the production of vast libraries of “master works.” Compositions could be performed centuries after a composer’s death, but whether this was a benefit or a danger was the question to

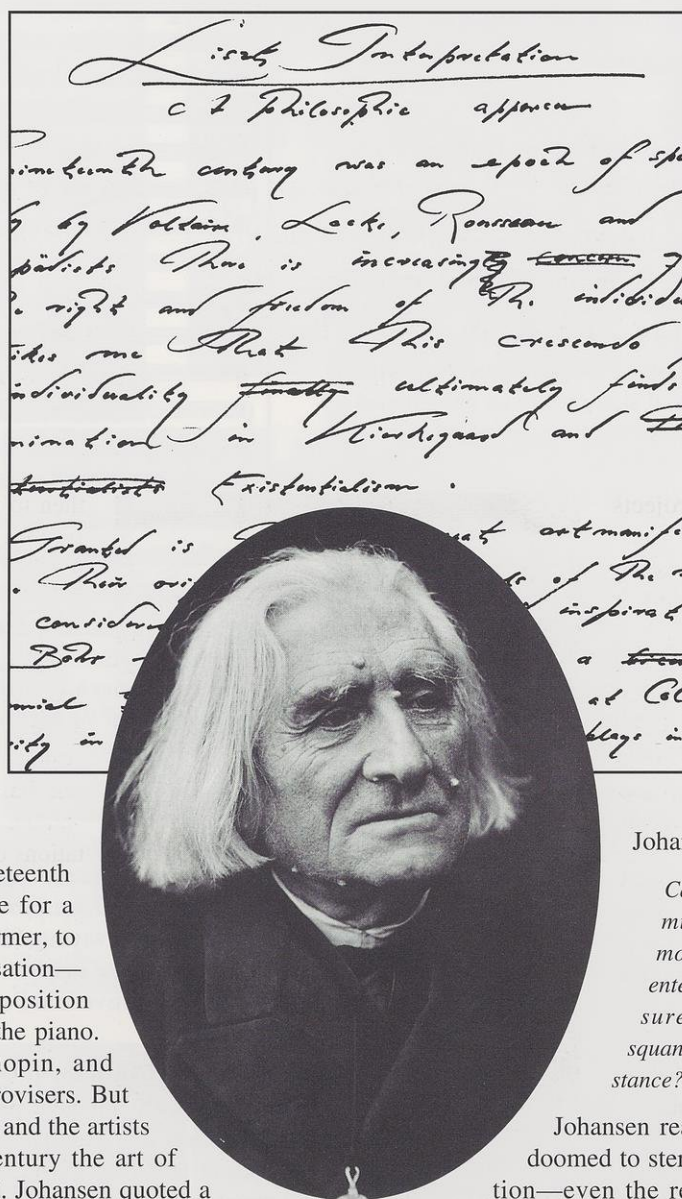
Johansen. He asked:

Can it be denied that [through] the music press . . . we are all much more backward than forward oriented and prejudiced? With such treasures and riches of the past, why squander time with improvised happenstance?

Johansen realized that the creative process is doomed to sterility if it engages solely in repetition—even the repetition of the greatest masterpieces. The issue is not merely musical though; it has to do with life itself:

How fares [ . . . ] the existential where-with-all of life? Is it possible to eat too much of the tree of knowledge? Self-consciousness can be driven too far to the detriment of art, while the juices of life dry up as the essence evaporates. Truly, breathing comes before thinking—and life comes before art.

It may be said that improvisation represents the immediacy of life and that the repetition of music in per-



ABOVE: Page one of the 1973 essay on the interpretation of Liszt by Gunnar Johansen.  
BELOW: Franz Liszt (1811-1886).



*The last big challenge Gunnar Johansen was working on was an attempt at comprehending the future through consultation with the world's outstanding minds...*

Whatever spectacular achievements the past two hundred years of the American experience have to trumpet about, democracy as intended by Thomas Jefferson never was realized, because two fundamental requirements Jefferson so explicitly had placed as imperatives of his agenda for a democratic republic were resolutely ignored, to wit: Instead of the inherited right to occupy a throne, there were to be men from the "natural aristoi," as he called it, meaning the best among the gifted minds to lead the nation, to steer the ship of state, while an enlightened citizenry would form the balance of common interest insuring a rational and deliberate course of events.

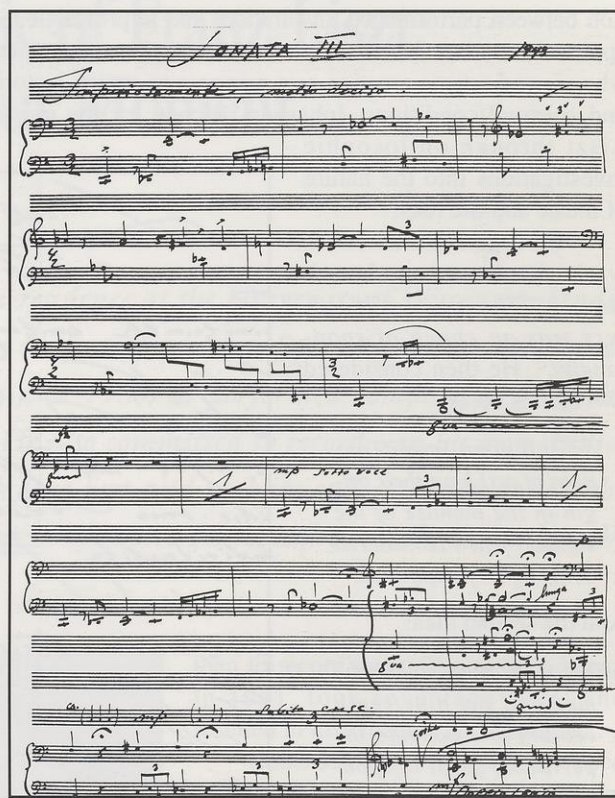
It is fairly well known that by the time Jefferson returned from his four-year mission to France as our envoy, succeeding Benjamin Franklin in 1785, he did not recognize that what he more than anyone had helped to establish in 1776 had been severely compromised. The causes were the rising industrial activity and the Federalist regime, paired with Hamilton's banking dictates and capitalist dynamics. To ward off the political leverage of capital, Jefferson had abolished the law of primogeniture, partially to prevent capital from pooling, thereby creating political pressure.

The accomplishment of business, capital, and profit in our time is not questioned—but on this side of the Atlantic all financial deals are dwarfed by the transaction of the Dutch, who bought Manhattan for \$24 from the Indians, and Jefferson, who, as president, arranged the Louisiana Purchase, which for at least a century gave the United States a seemingly endless frontier.

In the intervening two hundred and some years, the world has become so interdependent that nothing short of a unification of the many parts [is logical]; and nations now claiming sovereignty pose what is tantamount to an organized bulwark against the only possible solution for future global integration by a world order wherein all parts act in unison for the benefit of all—environment as well as people. Yes, environment must come first as we step into the third millennium, calling for restoration and control of atmosphere, hydrosphere, and population, all on a global scale.

No greater wisdom than Jefferson's plan for democracy, led by the most gifted minds, will suffice.

Gunnar Johansen  
The Leonardo Academy  
1990



Page one of the Sonata III by Gunnar Johansen. Composed in 1943, shortly after his marriage to Lorraine Johnson Johansen, this work marked the beginning of Johansen's period of immense productivity.

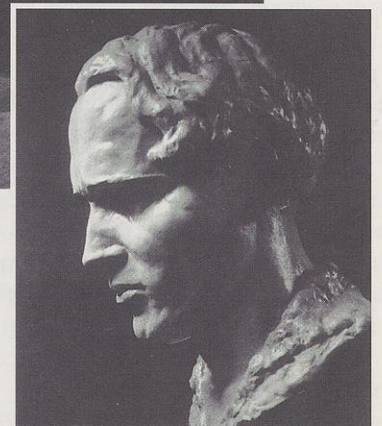
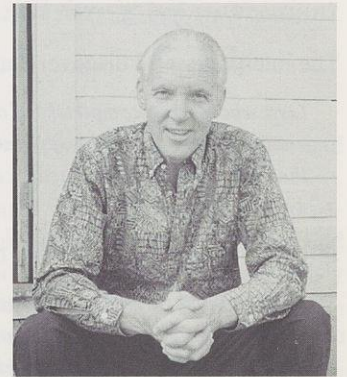
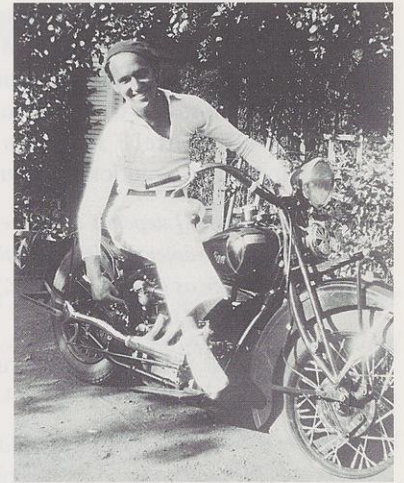
formance represents the intellectual reconsideration and essential creative dryness of the mind. It is for this reason that Johansen rejected the famous phrase by Descartes, "I think, therefore I am," and placed the ideas in a more creative sequence, saying, "I am, therefore I think." Johansen believed that the inspiration, the improvisation, must precede the reflective mind's deliberation.

•••

It is in the music of Liszt that this issue of inspirational immediacy and recreative interpretation finds deepest conflict. Liszt was a unique individual whose impact as a performer and improviser was enormous. Almost all who came in contact with him fell under his spell. However, subsequent performers of Liszt's music have been unable to achieve similar results, and, worse still, Liszt's music is often considered bombastic, banal, trivial, or worse. Johansen sought to place Liszt's music and its history after the composer's death in proper perspective:

*As an artist as well as a human being Liszt personified a hot flame brightly illuminating his life and work. This flame and light was something uniquely and peculiarly his own, and though he had hundreds of students and disciples, it seems this wondrous flame and light that emanated from his being [was] extinguished with his death.*





*The many faces of  
Gunnar Johansen.*



How does the modern performer rekindle the flame of Liszt's music? Lift the music above the level of mere showmanship? Recreate the improvisational freedom of Liszt's own performances and invest the performance with the "existential where-with-all of life"? Johansen provided very specific insights into his own solutions. He wrote:

*... [interpretation] depends upon the ability of the interpreter to evoke a temperament's identity to that which once was—and bring back to life as close as possible, that which radiated from the personality of Liszt.*

To attain this goal, it is necessary to understand Liszt as a man, even if,

*Such psychoanalytical contemplation or extrapolating may seem to many an interpreter as superfluous, even abhorred, yet it remains necessary if the attempt is to fully evoke the plenipotential [sic] of Liszt.*

The interpreter will discover that,

*Liszt who was so completely of one cast, always true to himself, none the less harbored two polar souls: the demonic opposed to the lyric; the spiritual, transcendental, interacting with the worldly sensual.*

Johansen was firm in his belief that,

*For every interpreter who studies Liszt, or any other composer, it is of imperative importance to comprehend the dimensions of the composer's nature and to identify with his temperament in some fundamental sense.*

This identification with the composer will allow the performer to re-enter the spirit of the work and, finding the living essence, recall that essence into existence in the manner of an improvisation. A performance of any composer's music—and perhaps especially of Liszt's—should not remain a merely intellectual process.<sup>7</sup> For to Johansen, art and music were

*... the crowning florescence [sic] of the phenomenon of life—[...] the highest rung [...] where human aspirations flame upwards through flesh and blood.*

The music which began as spontaneous must become spontaneous again.

*Photos courtesy Lorraine Johansen.*

## Notes

1. These projects were all carried out while Johansen taught and performed at the university. It is reported that he gave over 1,000 performances in Madison alone. On a weekly basis he presented a lecture recital entitled "Music in Performance." This very popular class often numbered over 700 students. Johansen was always grateful for his position at the university. His essay on Liszt ends with the following paragraph:

*If in some limited way I, as an interpreter, have come near to identifying Liszt the composer for the piano [...] the tenacity was not wanting, but it must be said affirmatively that the conditions granted to me by the administration throughout my Artist in Residenceship at the University of Wisconsin permitted me to devote the major part of my time to study, research and recording; without which latter endeavor my performances would have vanished into the gases known as the atmosphere.*

2. The essay sketch's complete title is "Liszt Interpretation: A Philosophic Approach." It seems to have been written while Johansen was on leave from the university and in residence at the Villa Serbelloni in Italy in 1973. (A page on a slightly different subject in the note pad is dated November 23, 1973.) The sketch is seventeen pages long and is found in a note pad which also contains an unfinished essay entitled "The Five Mephisto Waltzes of Liszt." Both essays show signs of great speed of composition, and were subject to some revisions. However, a digest version is offered here to place the material in a suitable context. All quotations from the essay have been placed in italics to differentiate clearly Johansen's own words. The quotations have been edited for punctuation and some usage. Editorial changes are signified by brackets. But Johansen's elaborate, almost baroque, writing style has been retained.

I would like to thank Lorraine Johansen for permission to quote from the essay and also for her unfailing support and encouragement in my researches into her husband's music.

3. David Dubal. "Johansen: The Recordings," *High Fidelity Magazine*, November 1976, p.90.

4. Ibid., p.91.

5. This quotation is rendered as found in the essay sketch. Johansen translated Busoni's letter, but he was likely quoting from memory. I have not been able to consult either the original letter or Johansen's translation for this article. Slight discrepancies may exist.

6. Edward MacCurdy, ed. *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1956, p.401. Johansen does not quote the original exactly. The original is given here.

7. Johansen remained ever true to these beliefs about interpretation and the significance of improvisation. As a creator he left behind approximately 520 tapes containing his improvised sonatas. He referred to them as his "Tonal Tapestries." They represent a vast treasury of imaginative musicianship and await discovery by the public. Some of these improvisations, as well as all of the other recording series (including the Liszt series) are available from Artist Direct, Blue Mounds, WI 53517.





# The Young Lisztianerin From Watertown: Sophie Charlotte Gaebler in Weimar

by Max D. Gaebler

One of our family's most treasured mementos is a picture of Franz Liszt seated at his desk in the Hofgärtnerei, his home in Weimar during the last seventeen years of his life. The photo is inscribed in his handwriting: "Frl. Sophie, In freudlichsten Erinnerung. F. Liszt. September '85, Weimar."

The Fräulein Sophie to whom Liszt inscribed that picture was Sophie Charlotte Gaebler, my great aunt—my paternal grandfather's younger sister. In 1885 she became a student of Liszt and wrote letters from Weimar to her family then living in La Crosse. She described her experiences and shared her impressions. The letters survive in the Gaebler family archives.

The life of Franz Liszt spans the nineteenth century, linking the classical world of Mozart and Haydn with the early decades of our own century. He was born in western Hungary in 1811, the year of Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia, and he died in 1886, just short of his seventy-fifth birthday. It is difficult now for us to appreciate adequately the stature of Liszt in his own time.

His piano teacher was Carl Czerny; for theory he was the pupil of Salieri. As a child, so the story has it, Beethoven consecrated his brow with a kiss; and he did indeed know Franz Schubert. In mid-nineteenth century, Chopin and Berlioz were among his friends; his daughter Cosima became Wagner's wife. At the far end of his life his pupils included the Spanish composer and pianist Isaac Albeniz, who lived well into this century. There are a number of recordings made early in this century by several Liszt pupils, most notably Moritz Rosenthal. And though they were not his pupils, such composers as Cesar Franck, Smetana, Dvořák, Grieg, and MacDowell were recipients of his advice and his practical assistance.

Liszt's life thus constitutes a compendium of nineteenth-century European music. This was true in an even more profound sense than the simply historical; in his person he embodied the spirit of nineteenth-century Romanticism in music as surely as Lord Byron did in poetry. Liszt the man contributed as much as Liszt the musician to his unprecedented stature as

a celebrity—perhaps the first real celebrity as we understand that term today.

He virtually created the piano recital. As someone put it, he "took the piano out of the salon and placed it in the concert hall." And he utterly transformed the public stature of musicians—indeed of all artists. Thanks to Liszt, artists soon became "the new aristocracy."

Alan Walker, a Liszt biographer, summarizes the composer's place in history: "Liszt was the first modern pianist. The technical 'breakthrough' he achieved during the 1830s and 1840s was without precedent in the history of the piano. . . Liszt is to piano playing what Euclid is to geometry." It actually began with benefit concerts for the Hungarian victims of the Danube flood of 1838. Liszt was always generous in behalf of causes that captured his imagination and sympathy. He raised money for the Beethoven monument in Bonn and for the completion of the cathedral in Cologne. He gave concerts for the striking silk workers in Lyons.

At the very height of his powers and his fame, when he was but thirty-five years old, Liszt retired from the concert stage—abruptly, firmly, finally. He never again played in public for his own benefit, though he occasionally performed in order to aid some charity or to further some special cause.

Henceforth he made Weimar his home.

Sacheverell Sitwell observes, "In his old age [Liszt's] chief pleasure was



Sophie Charlotte Gaebler (1862–1954).



in his pupils. . . . Young men and women of talent, and of the most impressionable age, were gathered together here round this person of legend. . . . His counsel and advice, and the wonderful stimulus of his personality, were at the service of the young. . . . His pupils would bring him their pieces to play every afternoon," and he would criticize and comment. Sitwell tells us that on Sunday mornings, between eleven and one o'clock, there were regular concerts. Sometimes Liszt himself would play a whole recital, if he were in the mood.

It was under these circumstances that my Aunt Sophie from Watertown came under Liszt's spell. She was twenty-one when she set sail from New York on the steamship Fulda on May 21, 1884, to visit her relatives in Germany.

Music was the primary focus of Sophie's venture. And she couldn't have gone to a better place than Weimar. "Here," she wrote, "I'm right in the midst of music. On Monday I heard d'Albert. He plays gloriously." (Eugène d'Albert was her own contemporary, but he already had a considerable reputation. He lived until 1934, and his recordings are still available.)

It was at the d'Albert concert that Sophie first laid eyes on Liszt. She sat right behind him at the concert, which was in October 1884. Liszt had given Weimar its place on the musical map of Europe, but Weimar was noted also for its excellent conservatory. Sophie writes of a man who had said to her uncle, "Weimar has quite a reputation because of Liszt. But there's no one like Mrs. von Milde at any other conservatory." It was in November 1884 that Sophie met Mrs. von Milde and arranged for voice lessons with her. But the real guardian of her musical education was Professor

Carl Müller-Hartung, who in 1872 had founded the Weimar Conservatory (officially the Ducal Orchestral School, later renamed the Franz Liszt Hochschule für Musik).

Sophie wrote,

"I want to go to Liszt next summer, I can't be traveling around. There is a whole crowd of Liszt's pupils who all go to his house at a certain time. Then he has them play while he gives directions, but he never accepts a single penny for his instruction. But one has to be introduced to him by the right person."

For Sophie, Professor Müller-Hartung proved to be the right person.

Big news came in Sophie's letter dated April 25, 1885:

"Before I go to bed I simply must let you know how happy I am. I'm terribly excited. Just imagine! Liszt shook my hand. But it happened completely naturally. I gathered up all my courage . . . Since he is really very old, I was always afraid I'd never reach my goal. But I did want to have some contact with him. Miss Schnobel [who, at eighteen, was Liszt's youngest pupil] had classes with me with the Professor until Easter, when she left. She's been studying with Liszt a whole year. . . . She has taken a liking to me and would be delighted if I were to go with her to Liszt for instruction. . . . She went to see the master and invited him to come to the concert (at which she was to perform), and he promised he'd come. Of course we thought he'd never show up, but all of a sudden there was Liszt next to us. Someone had ushered him down front. Schnobel had taken me to the front row, so I stood up with her. . . . He sat next to Schnobel, who was the



*Franz Liszt seated at his desk in Weimar. The drapes are red, green, and gold, the color of Liszt's native Hungary, reflecting his strong patriotic sentiments for the nation of his birth. The original photo is inscribed to Fraulein Sophie...*



*Liszt and the famous violinist Anna Zenkrah, who was staying in Weimar at the time Sophie Gaebler was there.*



singer, then came Mrs. Schnobel and then I. I kept looking at him with his beautiful thick white hair.

"Since you had written that I couldn't imagine how important it would be to have some connection with the master, I went right away yesterday to Prof. Müller-Hartung at his house to ask his advice. He said, 'Yes indeed, you should go there and introduce yourself. . . . But I would recommend that you leave the conservatory, because he [Liszt] doesn't like it.' He did not try to hang onto me but gave me complete permission to go to

Liszt. He said I was far far more advanced than Schnobel and played much better than she. So I have his report, which is worth a lot to me even if I don't get to study with Liszt."

But it was another three months before Professor Müller-Hartung actually accomplished the introduction. On July 31 Sophie wrote:

"Yesterday at eleven we went together to Liszt, and it came off splendidly. There were still several men there, and he was in the

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## Remembering Aunt Sophie

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Sophie Charlotte Gaebler died in 1954 at the age of ninety-one. She was an important figure in my childhood—it would have been difficult not to be impressed by her. A large woman with a rich mezzo-soprano voice, she bore all the marks of what we used to call "an artistic temperament."

Many were the Sundays and holidays that Aunt Sophie came from Milwaukee to visit us at our home in Watertown. She would come down the steps from the train, stray wisps of her gray hair flying from under the edges of the auburn wig which matched what had once been the natural color of her hair. She was utterly unselfconscious about the transformation: "Is my hair on straight?" she would ask. She always carried a large bag, out of which an astonishing assortment of small gifts, personal needs, and sheet music would tumble at appropriate (or inappropriate) moments.

Each meeting seemed a fresh reunion of long-lost relatives. At the start of a visit, Aunt Sophie's conversation would literally bubble. Filled with accounts of teas and recitals and dinner parties, it was liberally sprinkled with references to a huge cast of characters in Milwaukee, virtually all of whom spoke German and loved music. She herself had grown up speaking German, but whatever language she chose to speak at any given time, her speech was always animated, full of enthusiasm, and gilded with what strikes our more tempered ears as the exaggerated dynamics of the Saxon tongue.

There was always music, of course. After Sunday dinner, when everyone was settled comfortably in the living room, Aunt Sophie would be persuaded to go to the piano. There

she would play a Chopin etude, one of Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies, and perhaps accompany herself as she sang a song or two of Schubert's. Many years later, near the end of her life, we took our two-year-old son to visit her. He stood entranced as his almost-ninety-year-old-great-great aunt played the Brahms *Lullaby* for him.

Like her great mentor, Aunt Sophie never married. She taught at the Wisconsin College of Music in Milwaukee for many decades, and she was long in demand as a recitalist as well—she lived at the very heart of Milwaukee's musical life. Her apartment was located on North Milwaukee Street, just off Wisconsin Avenue. There were, as I recall, half a dozen or so studio apartments, all inhabited by members of Milwaukee's artistic community, including the painter Karl Priebe.

In 1938 she celebrated her seventy-fifth birthday with a recital at the Wisconsin College of Music. *The Milwaukee Journal* ran a feature story on the occasion and observed:

"For more than half a century Miss Gaebler has been teaching music and giving recitals here, but those years cannot dim the one tremendous experience which has been hers. Sophie Gaebler, you must understand, was a pupil of the legendary Franz Liszt. To have studied with the 'greatest pianist of all time' is the *summum bonum* of the piano playing profession; it is to have played Ophelia to Edwin Booth's Hamlet, to have sung the 'Miserere' with Caruso . . ."

Max D. Gaebler



mellowest of moods. The Professor told him that he was bringing him a young lady from America who would like very much to attend his classes and to profit from his teaching. Then Liszt took me by both hands and said: 'Of course, of course, etc.' I must sit down on the sofa (it's delightfully comfortable in his chambers), the men stood and talked. He kept turning around and smiling at me. Then he said to me that I could come the next day at four o'clock. He put his hands down so that I couldn't kiss them (both times, when we came and when we left). I thought this very considerate of him. He was still remarkably sprightly—wonderfully so.

"Professor left with me and talked very kindly with me. He said I must just take courage; there were many who couldn't do as much as I—for example, Schnobel, who was a favorite of Liszt, but who couldn't do half so much as I. He found it quite natural that my father should want me to study with Liszt. I told him that I hoped he didn't think I was evaluating myself too highly. He replied: 'On the contrary, you underrate yourself.' So there you have the guarantee that I'm not conceited."

The next day she went for the first time as pupil. She writes:

"Today I went with Schnobel to Liszt and was introduced to several people by her. Then Prof. Müller-Hartung arrived, too. Silote (sic) and Friedheim were there, and the famous violinist Anna Zenkrah, who is staying here just now. Altogether there must have been some twenty people. He got up and shook my hand twice. One person played something of Beethoven's, and then Variations by Brahms were played by a young woman who had already been playing for Bülow for four weeks. It was splendid—like the finest concert. A lady from Chicago played a piece by Chopin elegantly. . . . What one learns there just by listening is worth infinitely much."

Following another session, not long afterward, she writes:

"As the group was leaving, it eventually came my turn to say good-bye. I asked him whether on Monday I might play the

Fantasy and Fugue by Bach. 'The Fugue,' he said, 'absolutely.' I repeated my name. Then he made a gesture with his hand and said, 'Bach is indeed at home here.' In my joy I said, 'That will be the happiest day of my life when I am allowed to play before

the master of all times,' and I kissed his hand. He complimented me most courteously and kissed me on the forehead. This was no small matter; I had surely laid it on thick enough! And he deserves to be so honored. . . . You'll be thinking, 'Well! The lessons are starting out well.' "

The lessons did indeed go well. On August 3 Sophie wrote her parents:

"Today I played for Liszt for the first time, and I can be very pleased with the result when I consider what a fantastic place he has in music. He's heard the Fantasy and Fugue of Bach so unbelievably often that he always asks jokingly whether the Moonlight Sonata is going to be played too. He called on me first today. I began, eager to do it just right, and ended the first run diminuendo. Then he stopped me: 'The old masters are tired of tender caresses' (he was refer-

ring to Bach), and then he played the beginning for me. He placed his hand on his heart and added: 'Ah! But old men were amorous once!' Then he made an appropriate face and everybody laughed."

Then, as if she were afraid her parents would miss the point, she adds:

"That was a bit of irony on my playing the beginning too delicately. I didn't have to play all of the Fantasy; he turned to the Fugue and said I should spend two marks to buy the Bülow edition. I played the Fugue pretty well, except that sometimes when I should have been playing more slowly he beat the time on my shoulder. As we left he said something to everyone. To me he said: 'That

wasn't bad at all—I mistreated you a little, but that won't do any harm—it was well meant.' I felt I could be very satisfied with that. To someone who played the Appassionata (a woman already in her 30s) he said: 'You don't need to trouble me with that; you should learn it at home if you can't manage it. Why do you come to me with something you could really have spared me?' . . . Then Liszt played a bit from the Appassionata glori-



*Liszt playing to Berlioz and Czerny in Vienna, 1846.*

.....  
*Liszt was the first  
 modern pianist.  
 The technical  
 'breakthrough' he  
 achieved during the  
 1830s and 1840s was  
 without precedent in  
 the history of  
 the piano.*  
 .....



ously; it's astonishing what technique the old man still has. I wouldn't have dared to dream what has fallen to my lot. I'm still Fortune's favorite."

But it wasn't all just luck. She was practicing ten hours a day. On August 18 she writes that she's gone through thoroughly with Prof. Müller-Hartung the piece she's to play for Liszt the next day. She writes:

"I seem to be holding my own with Liszt. Before I could offer my hand as we were leaving, he kissed me on the forehead. You'll think the lessons consist only of kissing. One hears wonderful music there. . . . Tomorrow I'm going at 3:30, when only a few are there. Then I'm not so anxious and get to play sooner."

She speaks of a young woman who is "a first-rate pianist but unbearably conceited" who also came early and asked Liszt whether she "might play for him today." He looked at her music and agreed. But as she was making herself ready to begin, he noticed Sophie's music for Schumann's Fantasy:

"'Let's start with this; it's a superb piece.' The other woman had already played this Fantasy there, so it was uncomfortable for me to have her listening to it. But I really wasn't very nervous—I had achieved my purpose; I wanted to play first. It always makes a big difference if one selects a piece he likes—I really learned a lot from him today. I had to repeat a lot, he played little passages for me, now and then saying 'very good, very good'—and once 'superb' (perhaps he meant the piece itself)."

The following week she reports that Arthur Friedheim, "whom many consider better than d'Albert," had "played magnificently." Noted musicians were always coming through, and hearing such people informally was one of the great privileges of studying with Liszt. The end of August Sophie writes that

"Davidov (a great cellist, Director of the Conservatory at St. Petersburg) played the cello at Liszt's and he himself accompa-

nied him. We listened from down in the garden. It was the D-major sonata of Rubinstein's they were playing. At the final chord the master played E instead of D down in the bass but didn't repeat it. That can happen, and if one doesn't see the player one hears it all much more clearly. The cellist played magnificently. We had a special class yesterday to hear him and today we meet as usual."

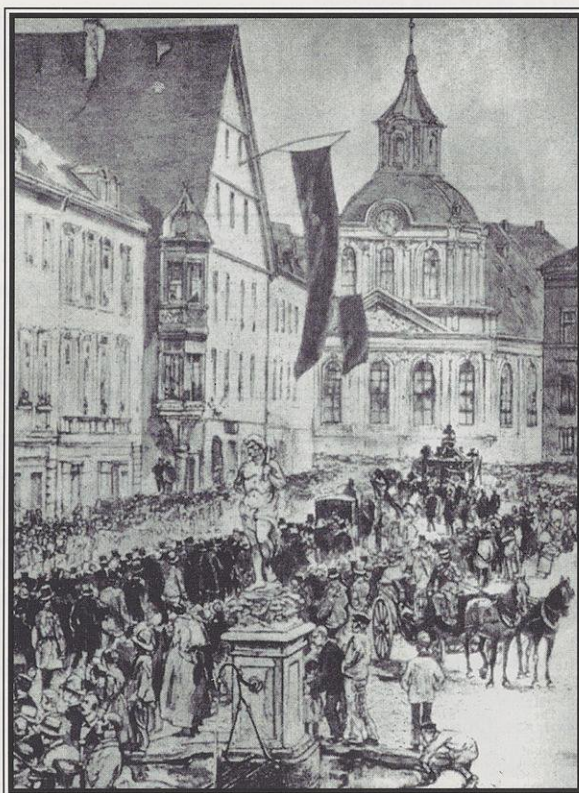
By this time Sophie had already settled on September 6 for her return trip to America. She had been in Germany for more than fifteen months, and there were abundant reasons for her to return home. In any case, she adds in her letter of August 28,

"Whether I get to go to Liszt a few more times really doesn't make much difference, for we go every other day and he is always so kind as to invite us for Sunday, too. . . . I'm much more self-confident now; I don't know whether or not that makes me a true Lisztianerin."

She harbored no such doubts when she arrived home—or, for that matter, the rest of her life. Having had access to the charmed circle around Franz Liszt for those few weeks in the summer of 1885 transformed her career. She may

have learned more, and her musicianship may have profited more from her year with Professor Müller-Hartung and Mrs. von Milde, but for the remaining years of her long life she was indelibly marked as one of those favored young musicians whose understanding of themselves and of their art had been shaped by their experience with this remarkable genius.

*Photos courtesy the Gaebler family.*



*Liszt's funeral procession in Bayreuth, Germany, August 3, 1886.*

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# A Flag for Mathematics Teachers to Rally Around

by Thomas A. Romberg

*In 1989, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics published Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics. Since then, this 258-page document has become the focal point for the national reform movement in mathematics and has been hailed as the exemplar of what is needed in all curricular areas if we are to reform American education during the coming decade.*

Although there have been calls for reform in the way mathematics is taught and learned in the schools of the United States since the turn of the century, the current reform movement should be seen as a direct, but reasoned, response to the criticisms of contemporary schooling practices voiced in *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and in *Educating Americans for the Twenty-First Century* (National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology, 1983).

The strategy used was initiated as a consequence of two sets of recommendations that were developed at conferences held in 1983 in response to the perceived crisis. One conference was sponsored by the Conference Board of the Mathematical Sciences and funded by the National Science Foundation, and the other was jointly sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the University of Wisconsin and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Their reports were: *New Goals for Mathematical Sciences Education* (Conference Board of the Mathematical Sciences, 1983); and *School Mathematics: Options for the 1990s* (Romberg, 1984). The dozen or so recommendations in each document were strikingly similar. Included in each set was the recommendation that a "new content framework" for the K-14 mathematics curriculum be developed.

In 1986, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics organized the Commission on Standards for School Mathematics to prepare such a document. Writing teams met in 1987 to prepare a draft of the *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards*. The writing team included classroom teachers, supervisors, mathematics educators, and mathematicians. During the summer of 1987, a draft document was prepared and 10,000 copies were distributed. Reviews were held with many groups (parents, business leaders, teachers, mathematicians, and so forth) and over 2,000 suggestions were received for revisions, improvements, or other modifications. In addition, a number of professional organizations in mathematics were asked both to critically review and to endorse the document.

In 1988, the writing teams met again to revise the document, which, after further review and editing, was published in 1989. Also in 1988, upon completion of the draft of the final document, NCTM created another series of working groups to develop the Professional Teaching Standards in a similar manner; these were published in 1991.

Three facts are important in this sequence of events: 1) The subsequent *Standards* documents were created as a consequence of scholarly review and analysis; 2) review and consensus involving many groups were paramount in the process, and 3) the document was produced by a professional organization using its own resources.

No authority to develop standards was demanded by a governmental agency or corporate group. The professional community decided it was needed and took the initiative.

## The Reform Vision

The vision of school mathematics expressed in the *Standards* is captured in this statement: "All students need to learn more, and often different, mathematics. . . . instruction in mathematics must be significantly revised" (NCTM, 1989, p. 1). There are five key implications in this statement:

- (1) Teaching mathematics to "all students" emphasizes the fact that anyone who is to be a productive citizen in the twenty-first century must be mathematically literate. In particular, this includes all under-represented groups, not only "talented, white males."
- (2) "More mathematics" implies that all students need to learn more than how to manipulate arithmetic routines. At present, nearly half of American students do not study mathematics beyond arithmetic.
- (3) "Often different mathematics" refers to the fact that the mathematics all students need to learn includes concepts from algebra, geometry, trigonometry, statistics, probability, discrete mathematics, and even calculus.



(4) "To learn" means more than to be shown or to memorize and repeat. Learning involves investigating, formulating, representing, reasoning, and using strategies to solve problems, then reflecting on how mathematics is being used.

(5) "Revised" instruction implies that classrooms need to become discourse communities where conjectures are made, arguments presented, strategies discussed, and so forth.

To capture the importance of both technical knowledge and reflective knowledge, the term *mathematical power* was chosen to indicate the quality of mathematical literacy sought. This perception envisions a citizenry empowered by mathematics, which means each person has the experience and understanding to participate constructively in society. Over the ages, people have invented and used mathematics to count, measure, locate, design, play, conjecture, and explain. They also have examined its generalized abstractions and developed out of them further mathematics—explanations, designs, proofs, or new theorems—that may or may not have had practical application (Bishop, 1988). People are continuing to do all of these, but in a rapidly increasing variety of contexts, in increasingly complex situations, and with shorter time-spans for development.

Students need to value mathematics, to reason and communicate mathematically, and to become confident in their power to use mathematics coherently to make sense of problematic situations in the world around them. Hence, the *Standards* document advocates that four basic standards be applied to all of the other content standards: 1) mathematics as problem solving, 2) mathematics as reasoning, 3) mathematics as communication, and 4) mathematical connections (making linkages within mathematics and between mathematics and the real world).

## The Reform Strategy

Historically, there have been three reasons for groups to formally adopt specific standards: (1) to assure quality, (2) to indicate goals, and (3) to promote change. For NCTM, these were of equal importance. The creation of the NCTM Commission on Standards was based on the perceived need for school mathematics to meet each of the three. Schools, teachers, students, and the public at large currently have insufficient protection from shoddy products. In the United States, any group or individual can produce and sell a mathematics textbook, test, or curriculum guide. Although most such efforts are well-inten-

tioned, the recent proliferation of manipulatives, software, modules, and so on have made minimal curricular standards a necessity. It seems reasonable that anyone developing products for use in mathematics classrooms should 1) document how the materials are related to current conceptions of that content deemed important to teach, 2) how it should be taught, and 3) present evidence regarding its effectiveness.

The commission focused on the development of standards as statements of expectations or as "criteria for excellence" in order to produce change. However, as a part of a broader change strategy, the document was written to be "a distinctive flag" for mathematics teachers to use so they could justify their demands for change. The need for such a document was made explicit by publishers at a conference, *School Mathematics: Options for the 1990s*, held in 1983 at the University of Wisconsin. They argued that since we live in a supply and demand economy, if the mathematics community wanted different texts and tests, a demand would have to be created.



Thomas A. Romberg

To respond to this challenge, the mathematical sciences education community has been following a seven-step iterative strategy in its attempt to bring about reform in school mathematics.

### The steps and the relationships between them are:

(1) *Need*. Before any change plan can proceed, one must establish a need for change. To do this, three things must be considered. First, evidence must be presented that the current system is not effective. Second, one must decide whether the problem is the result of a lapse in quality control, a design flaw, or a combination of both (Cuban, 1988). Third, if a new design is needed, planners must be aware of the traditions that have to be challenged. The need for a new blueprint for mathematics education has been well documented. (In particular, see *Everybody Counts*, published by the Mathematical Sciences Education Board, 1989.)

(2) *Vision*. This is a key factor if a new design is needed. Design change involves not only eliminating inadequate materials or practices, or replacing them, but creating a new system. One must consider the features of the new design and be able to argue that they satisfy the need. Good intentions are not enough. Realizing the specifics of a vision necessarily will include consideration of values, goals, and standards. The *Standards* documents were designed to capture this vision.



(3) *Plan*. This step calls for the participation of everybody in a system, or a school, in arriving at consensus about the details of both a long-range and short-range plan, with timetables for carrying out the needed changes. It is here that demand is created.

(4) *Elements*. Two things are involved in this step: the identification of specific elements of the system to be targeted for change (e.g., curriculum materials, instructional methods, examinations, teachers, technology) and their levels of priority.

(5) *Suppliers*. Systems depend on suppliers. In a "supply and demand" society, schools must demand that suppliers (e.g., textbook publishers, testing companies, staff developers, university teacher education programs) contribute the ingredients necessary for the desired changes in elements.

(6) *Putting the plan into operation*. At this step, one tries out the new materials, procedures, programs. Feedback from this trial is matched with the vision and the plan for judgment, and possible iterative revisions are made.

(7) *Products*. At this final step, one produces a product (e.g., a new curriculum, instructional procedure, assessment materials). In economics, a product is judged of good quality if it satisfies customer needs and at the same time makes the company a profit. In education, quality should be judged in terms of what students are able to do and whether or not the anticipated result meets society's needs. The educated student is the product of schooling. Again, via feedback, we now return to the vision and to our goals and objectives to update or revise the vision, plans, specific elements, and so forth.

Our intent was that this change strategy be used by school staffs at all levels to develop a reform curriculum for school mathematics, kindergarten through twelfth grade. In particular, teachers need to see that they have a critical role in the reform efforts. Each mathematics teacher must understand the need for change, must own the vision, must be an active participant in the planning process, must become a spokesperson for the demands for new products and processes, must be the one who tries out new materials and judges student progress toward the reform vision.

## Status of the Implementation of the Standards

Given the change strategy being followed, "implementation" means to use documents to plan changes, make demands of suppliers, enhance the professional status of mathematics teachers and educators, empower teachers to voice their views.

Planning for change in education takes place on at least three organizational levels: national, state, and local district. Reform initiatives at the national level are being influenced by

the *Standards*. They became a focal point in the Bush administration's strategy for school reform and were adopted by the National Education Goals Panel. At the state level, reform plans should go beyond statements of goals and general expectations to curricular frameworks for schools.

The evidence that the demands for change are being heard is clear. The National Science Foundation is funding a variety of curriculum projects, teacher enhancement projects, and research programs, all focusing on the reform agenda. The Department of Education is encouraging the use of Eisenhower funds for helping teachers with new materials. States such as California and Texas established an expectation for publishers

to develop new texts aligned with their mathematics frameworks. In fact, at current professional meetings, most publishers are claiming either that their current materials meet the *Standards*, or that they are in the process of developing new materials to meet them. And publishers of tests are busy developing new instruments to be aligned with them.

The professional status of mathematics teachers and educators and their empowerment has been enhanced. The creation of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board (another of the recommendations) has provided the community with a

national voice. Membership in national and local mathematics teacher organizations is at an all-time high, and attendance at meetings of these groups has set records every year.

Finally, an increasing number of mathematics teachers are being asked to testify at hearings and serve on national and state committees dealing with mathematics education.

## Issues

The implementation of the vision of a reformed school mathematics curriculum is a non-routine set of activities for policy makers and school staffs. To carry out the proposed curriculum change strategy, the participants will be faced with a number of issues and problems. Some of these are:

1. *Standards?* Although not a serious issue, the word "standards" implies, to many persons, measuring student performance. If they have not read the document, they may misunderstand what the reform movement is about. The use of the word to indicate a vision that mathematics teachers can rally around is unusual and requires explanation.

2. *Nominal change*. It has become common for producers, in order to satisfy demands for change, to change labels, but not change substance. Several current claims by publishers that their products "meet the *Standards*" fit in this category. For example, since 1990, the authors of the National Assessment for Educational Progress have claimed to have substantially

.....  
*Good intentions are  
not enough. Realizing  
the specifics of a vision  
necessarily will include  
consideration of values,  
goals, and standards.*  
.....



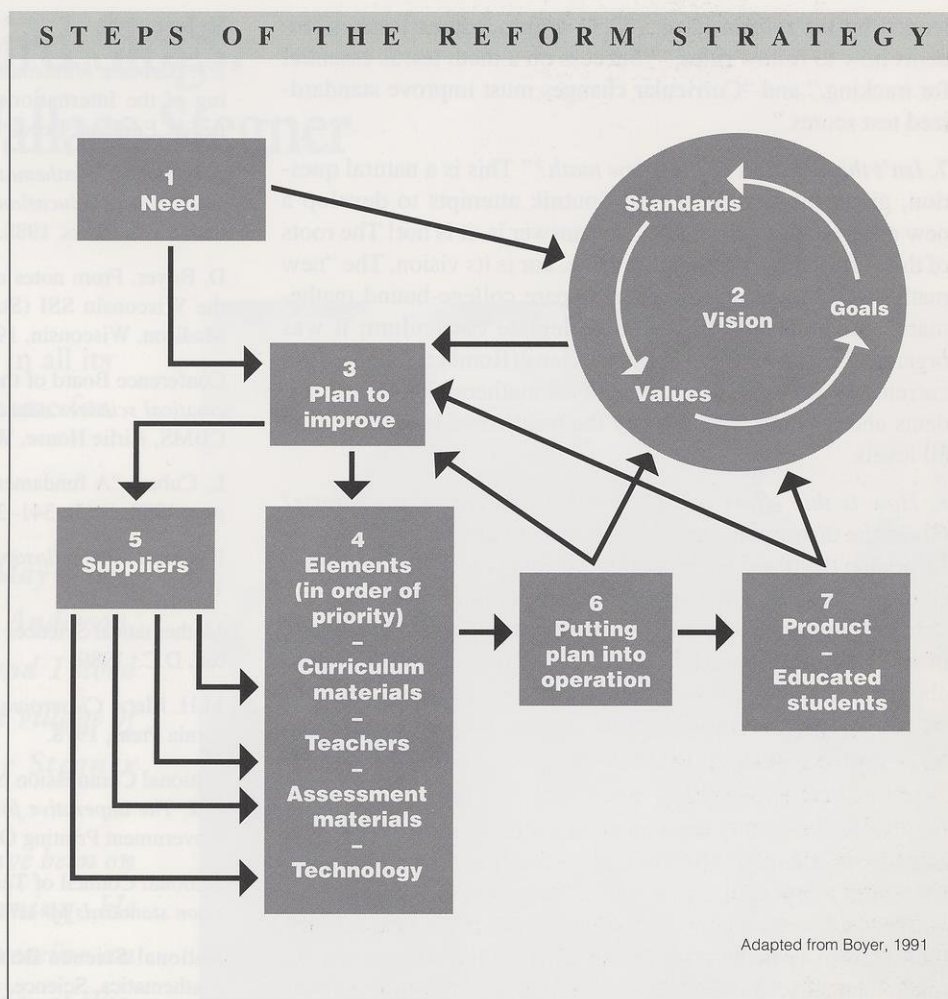
changed items in the tests in light of the reform expectations. In fact, both the 1990 and 1992 tests show little alignment with the *Standards* (Romberg, Smith, Smith, & Wilson, 1992).

3. *What is mathematics?* “Most of the population perceive mathematics as a fixed body of knowledge long set into final form. Its subject matter is the manipulation of numbers and the proving of geometrical deductions. It is a cold and austere discipline which provides no scope for judgment or creativity” (Barbeau, 1989, p. 2). This view of the discipline is undoubtedly a reflection of the mathematics studied in school. The current view is that mathematics is “fallible, changing, and, like any other body of knowledge, the product of human inventiveness” (Ernest, 1991, p. xi).

The aims of teaching mathematics need to include: 1) the empowerment of learners to create their own mathematical knowledge, 2) the reshaping of mathematics, at least in school, to give all groups more access to its concepts and to the wealth and power its knowledge brings, and 3) bringing the social contexts of the uses and practices of mathematics into the classroom. The implicit values of mathematics need to be squarely faced. When mathematics is seen in this way, it needs to be studied in living contexts that are meaningful and relevant to the learners, including their languages, cultures, and everyday lives, as well as their school-based experiences.

4. *The “saber-tooth tiger” content problem.* Attempts at reform must begin with a careful re-analysis of current curricular content. Topics should be included because of their inherent worth, not because they have “always been part of the curriculum.” Peddiwell’s (1939) satirical tale of continuing to teach students techniques to scare saber-tooth tigers with fire long after they have become extinct is analogous to the continued expectation that students should master interpolation of logarithms, square roots, long division, and myriad other routine procedures long after computers have automated such procedures. Furthermore, we must make room in the curriculum for new, or newly important, topics such as statistics or discrete mathematics.

5. *Teacher independence and isolation.* One tradition of schooling is that teaching happens behind closed doors (Metz, 1978). Such independence allows teachers to take risks, to be creative, and so forth. Taken to an extreme, independence can, and often



does, lead to isolation. However, independence should not be seen as license to be incompetent. Porter (1988) refers to one consequence of independence as a curriculum “out of balance.” Elementary school mathematics instruction can be seen as a form of instruction in which large numbers of mathematics topics are taught for exposure with no expectation of student mastery; where much of what is taught in one grade is taught again in the next; where skills typically receive ten times the emphasis given to either conceptual understanding or application; and where, depending upon the accidents of school and teacher assignment, the amount of mathematics instruction a student receives may be either doubled or halved by comparison with the amount of instruction a student in another context receives. The reform vision sees as the norm a balanced curriculum arrived at via collaboration, joint planning of lessons, and shared judgments about student performance.

6. *The “hidden” curriculum in schools.* Probably the biggest challenge of the reform curriculum for many parents, administrators, and even teachers is its challenge to the routines of school that are based upon existing architecture, organization, and management. Such notions as the following are being chal-



lenged by the reform ideas: "Drill on procedures teaches students how to follow rules," "Success on a math test is essential for tracking," and "Curricular changes must improve standardized test scores."

7. *Isn't this a repeat of the "new math?"* This is a natural question, given the failure of post-Sputnik attempts to develop a new mathematics curriculum. The answer is, it is not! The roots of this reform effort are not the same, nor is its vision. The "new math" was an attempt to better prepare college-bound mathematics students for a changed collegiate curriculum; it was organized by university mathematicians (Romberg, 1990). The current reform movement focuses on mathematics for *all* students and is being organized by the teachers of mathematics at all levels.

8. *How is this effort related to other current reform efforts?* Given the distressing state of education in this country, it is not surprising that there are numerous current programs designed to change schooling. Although the objectives of the mathematical sciences education community were developed independently of many other programs, if they embrace the same assumptions about content and pedagogy as other plans for change, then they should be compatible. Systemic change should be based on ideas common to all the disciplines.

In conclusion, American students must have an opportunity to become mathematically literate in a culture that is rapidly becoming mathematized. If our students are to be productive workers and reasonably responsible citizens in the next century, then reform is necessary. In the *Curriculum Standards*, the mathematical sciences education community has proposed both a vision of a school mathematics curriculum designed to meet the need and a strategy to be followed so that school districts and schools can construct a curriculum consistent with its vision. It has provided teachers who are essential to the success of the reform movement with a "flag" to rally around as they fulfill their essential role in mathematics reform. However, creating reform curricula will not be easy. It will take time, hard work by many persons, commitment, patience, and persistence.

*This is an edited version of an article which was published in the February 1993 issue of Educational Leadership. It appears here with permission.*

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# Where the Bluebird Sings: Remembering Wallace Stegner

by Gretchen Holstein Schoff

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Now we are finally here. This, in all its painful ambiguity, is what we came for.

*Crossing to Safety*

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*I*t happened, on a brilliant May morning in 1986, that Patricia Anderson, Professor Walter Rideout, and I stood at the front door of a home in the village of Shorewood Hills, and Wallace Stegner answered the bell.

More than nostalgia must have been on Stegner's mind that spring morning. He had come back to Madison to receive an honorary degree from the University of Wisconsin. The university was the place where Stegner had spent some of his first lean years as an academic—teaching, correcting student papers, and working “around the edges” and far into the night on launching his own writing career. Madison had been the seed bed for friendships and emotional relationships that lasted all his life, and by the time Stegner returned, he had honed “returning” to an art. Writing *Wolf Willow* and *The Sound of Mountain Waters* had taught him how much could be learned by going back, checking memory against reality.



Wallace Stegner

And in 1986 he had another project in the works. His novel *Crossing to Safety* was published in 1987. Much of the story has Madison as its setting, though, clearly, emotional landscapes, more than lakes and hills, count most in this book. As Stegner was to put it later: “Of all the books I ever wrote, *Crossing to Safety* is in some ways the most personal. It is, in fact, deliberately close to my own experiences, opinions, and feelings, which are refracted through a narrator not too different from myself.”

*Crossing to Safety* tells the story of an important relationship between two academic couples, one wealthy, the other struggling to get





Wallace Stegner was born in Lake Mills, Iowa, on February 18, 1909, and spent much of his youth on the prairies of Canada and in western United States. He died on April 13, 1993, from injuries sustained in an accident. The following excerpt is from *Wolf Willow*.

I may not know who I am, but I know where I am from. I can say to myself that a good part of my private and social character, the kinds of scenery and weather and people and humor I respond to, the prejudices I wear like dishonorable scars, the affections that sometimes waken me from middle-aged sleep with a rush of undiminished love, the virtues I respect and the weaknesses I condemn, the code I try to live by, the special ways I fail at it and the kinds of shame I feel when I do, the models and heroes I follow, the colors and shapes that evoke my deepest pleasure, the way I adjudicate between personal desire and personal responsibility, have been in good part scored into me by that little womb-village and the lovely, lonely, exposed prairie of the homestead. However anachronistic I may be, I am a product of the American earth, and in nothing quite so much as in the contrast between what I knew through the pores and what I was officially taught.

a start (as Stegner and his wife were in the 1930s). Stegner called the themes of the novel “love, friendship, and survival” and the villains of the novel “willfulness, polio, cancer, and blind chance.”

So to say that *Crossing to Safety* was on his mind in 1986 is too mild a statement. Stegner, somewhat later, put it this way: “I wrote my guts out trying to make it as moving on the page as it was to me while I was living and reliving it.”

*You don't go out and “commit experience” for the sake of writing about it later, and if you have to make notes about how a thing has struck you, it probably hasn't struck you. ( On the Teaching of Creative Writing)*

Inevitably, Stegner admirers in Madison looked for ways to make good use of his time during that commencement weekend, one of the ways being to request an interview for broadcast over the state radio network. Stegner agreed, but asked that the interview be conducted, not at the station, but at the home of friends with whom he was staying. Patricia Anderson, then executive director of the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, arranged for the interview. (At her encouragement, the committee had commissioned Stegner to write a special essay, “Sense of Place,” which had been published in a limited edition under committee auspices by Silver Buckle Press at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Stegner regarded this essay as important enough to be included in his last published collection, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs*).

I was afraid of that first encounter. I have had more disappointments than I care to mention meeting “famous writers,” watching them diminish, shrivel, indulge in displays of ego or eccentricity. I was not over-awed at the prospect of meeting Stegner. I was afraid he would have feet of clay, that I would be disappointed to meet in the flesh the image and voice I had come to love on the page.

The door opened and the “sizing up” came first—so much is conveyed in the first minute. If he felt reluctant or thought of the morning ahead as a nettling obligation, he gave no sign. He smiled and welcomed us. Casually dressed in a figured knit sweater, tan trousers, comfortable shoes, he moved across the room and sat down with the grace of a man much younger than his years. He had a sense of style, a presence—snow white hair, a quiet dignified bearing. Most arresting of all were his easy laugh and his eyes. He was a born listener and told you, with his gaze, that what you were saying had his attention. What-



ever fear of disappointment I brought along dropped away at the doorsill.

Other details struck me. Stegner was missing a finger on one hand (below the second knuckle) and I wondered how it had happened; it made me think of farm boys I'd known who lost fingers in corn choppers or on power take-offs. The longer I watched Stegner the more familiar he seemed, like the Scandinavian men I had known all my life—my father, grandfather, uncles, cousins, my husband. There was that fundamental strength and muscle of the body, the strength acquired through hard work in youth, strength that never completely fades. There was the wry humor. Most of all, there was Nordic understatement. (Is it the Scandinavian "iceberg syndrome"—nine-tenths of the significance concealed below the surface?) Stegner was, by 1986, winner of a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award, dozens of other awards and prizes—a giant of a writer who had shown that he could do it all: novels, short stories, essays, history, biography, reportage. But he talked about his writing craft that morning with the modesty of the Wimbledon champ who says he plays a little tennis.

... a novel is a long, long agony. . . . When Bill Styron described it as like setting out to walk from Vladivostok to Spain on your knees, he wasn't just making a phrase. (On the Teaching of Creative Writing)

We talked of many things that morning, about writers like Beryl Markham and Isak Dinesen, about the triangulations and plotting in *Angle of Repose*, about teaching writing and about doing your historical homework.

At one point I asked, "How long did it take you to write *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*?"

"Eleven years," he answered. *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*, the story of the voyage of John Wesley Powell on the Colorado River, sets one of the great benchmarks for writing about the West. It is a masterwork of dazzling virtuosity, weaving together history, geography, biography, geology—a tale of rivers and mountains and short grass prairie, of whites and Indians.

"How did you know what questions to ask yourself, or where to look for answers?" I asked

Stegner stopped, smiling slightly at the memory of what the book must have taken out of him.

"Sometimes I didn't know. Whenever I needed to know what to do next, I'd ask Benny. Benny knew everything about the West. Benny was loaded." (One of Stegner's most loving pieces is his memoir of Bernard DeVoto, *The Uneasy Chair*.)

I took no notes that day, but the morning with Wallace Stegner struck me. It has stayed with me ever since. What can

you see in two or three hours? Certainly not the warts, the sins of omission and commission. (Who among us is without them, but they were territory reserved for the people who knew him well, lived with him, worked with him.) I wasn't canonizing him for sainthood, but I walked down the drive of that house in Shorewood Hills thinking, "What you see on the page is what you get in the flesh." The work and the man seemed as close to seamless as one could hope for, expressions of one another, a rarity in any life.

.....  
*All over America,  
ink will flow, now that  
Stegner has died.  
So many different kinds  
of people staked out  
claims on him.*  
.....

*Largeness is a lifelong matter. . . . You grow because you are not content not to. You are like a beaver that chews constantly because if it doesn't, its teeth grow long and lock. You grow because you are a grower. You're large because you can't stand to be small. (On the Teaching of Creative Writing)*

The phone rang half a dozen times before 10:00 a.m. Three of the callers eased into it with, "Have you seen the morning paper?" Two simply blurted it out, "Stegner died yesterday." The sixth was already thinking ahead. "We should do something, some kind of memorial meeting, talking about his work, something. I'm not quite sure what."

All over America, ink will flow, now that Stegner has died. So many different kinds of people staked out claims on him—friends and family, environmentalists, historians, Westerners, his writing students, colleagues. He had covered a lot of ground.

The environmentalists owe him. He didn't whine or sermonize; he just turned a formidable talent to things he believed in. People like Stegner and DeVoto had a parade started on wilderness long before there was a bandwagon, before Earth Day had become a catch word. Stegner's essay on Dinosaur National Monument, though written in the 1950s, could have been written yesterday. He was already worried about the day when human beings might have only one square foot of ground to themselves, and no place to run to. He also understood the West, how inextricably its history, its myths and delusions, its angst are tied to the presence or absence of water. Aridity has always driven the destiny of the West, and few writers knew the particulars better than Stegner. What he learned writing *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*, he came back to again and again—in *The West as Living Space*, *The Sound of Mountain Waters*, and *Wolf Willow*.

So a host of Westerners, writers like Ivan Doig, Larry McMurtry, Edward Hoagland, will remember what Stegner taught them about themselves. If there really is such a thing as an ethos of a region, Stegner went very far in shaking out the ingredients—individualism, loneliness, ego, rapacity. Missing



from the crew who remember, and it's a pity, will be Edward Abbey, whose outrageousness was full of surprises; Abbey always could be counted on to skip being too reverent or solemn. He was amused at the way regionalism was turning into a writing industry, and he once remarked that regional writers were crawling all over the landscape, staking out territories "like vacuum cleaner salesmen." Stegner managed to be larger than that—interpreting the West, but slipping past the regional label.

Historians owe Stegner too. He showed that he could do his homework on the facts, corroborating where he was able and admitting he couldn't when he was unable. Further, he demonstrated in *Wolf Willow* how he thought history was a pontoon bridge and its building materials a mixture of verifiable fact, memory, and autobiography. The histories we get, Stegner believed, depend on which stories historians choose to tell, what questions they ask, and ultimately on the artistry they summon to set the stories down. Whether historians agree or not with the Stegner idea of historiography, they can't have failed to notice how powerful story-telling history can be or what a writer can do with a prose style that has no fat. Readers can learn as much about how America was transformed, grabbed, explored, and exploited from Stegner's short essay "Inheritance" as they can from a shelf full of ponderous historical treatises.

Then there are Stegner's students, the writers he helped all those years. Hundreds of writers got their start at the Stanford School of Creative Writing when Stegner led the program there. Festschrifts are probably bubbling all over the place, because long after writers left the school, they kept sending Stegner galleys. By all accounts, the Stegner touch was a blend of expectation and respect. His expectations were rigorous—he was a bear about grammar, impatient with phoniness or missed deadlines. No excuses. You put your seat on the seat of the chair, and you write. And it had better be seven days a week, "not six, not five—certainly not two or three."

As for the respect, he seemed to have little taste for personality cults or for creating clones of himself. Take a look at his alumni list if you need proof. A writing school that has nurtured the likes of Wendell Berry, Tillie Olson, Ken Kesey, must have been a place that knew how to spot "promise" on the application form and, once writers got there, didn't encourage cliques or clones.

Every writer knows how lonely a business it is, how dull facing the wall can be. Brotherhoods develop among those who face the wall. Stegner sometimes wrote to the brotherhood, pieces like his wonderful "Letter to Wendell Berry," and his moving response, probably the best yet written, to Maclean's *A River Runs Through It*. It's a pity, too, that Maclean, like Abbey, is not around to say goodbye. He would have known what Stegner was trying to do. Both men had grown beyond their Westernness, without ever losing a sense of how it shaped them. Both lived long lives, years that spanned an incredible century. Both lived long enough to fish the river of time. Both

knew what it meant to lay the line down in a perfect cast with their words, and then to enjoy the quiet pleasure, as Maclean put it, of "watching yourself softly becoming the author of something beautiful."

In a lot of ways, it's the people who won't write tributes, don't know how to say goodbye, that will miss Stegner the most. With all the public acclaim that gathered momentum in the last years of his life, it is doubtful that he realized how many garden-variety readers he had, people who love books and regard them much as they do favorite friends. Stegner never caved in to fads, never reached for the bizarre, the decadent, the arty. That was his great art, the control of a sentence that lesser writers would kill for and the genius to take dailiness and turn it into transcendence.

Readers recognized the sound of an American voice. They waited for it and took comfort that it was there, as children do who hear the murmur of grown-up voices in distant rooms. When they read, "I may not know who I am, but I know where I am from," they got the message. Stegner wasn't so much telling them who he was; he was telling them how to find out who they were.

*There is no decent literature on how to die. There ought to be, but there isn't. . . . Medical literature is all statistics. So I'm having to find my own way. (Crossing to Safety)*



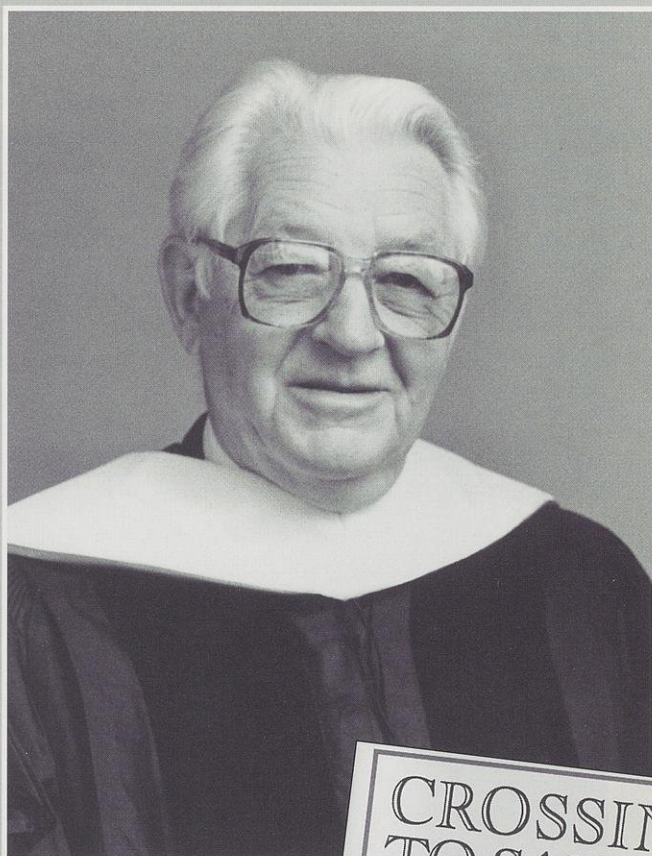
This remembrance, much too late, recalls a brief encounter with Wallace Stegner. The blink of an eye, for him, but I wanted him to know the encounter "stuck." I caught him, that day, shuttling back and forth between inner and outer landscapes. In 1986 he was seventy-seven years old, and still growing. Three years later, at eighty, he sat down and wrote a long overdue letter to his mother.

*Mom, listen. That's the way he starts. Except when I have to tie my shoelaces, I don't feel eighty years old. . . . But if I don't feel decrepit, neither do I feel wise or confident. Age and experience have not made me a Nestor qualified to tell others how to live their lives. . . . Instead of being embittered, or stoical or calm, or resigned, or any of the standard things that a long life might have made me, I confess that I am often simply lost, as much in need of comfort, understanding, forgiveness, uncritical love—the things you used to give me—as I ever was at five, or ten, or fifteen. (Where the Blue Bird Sings to the Lemonade Springs)*

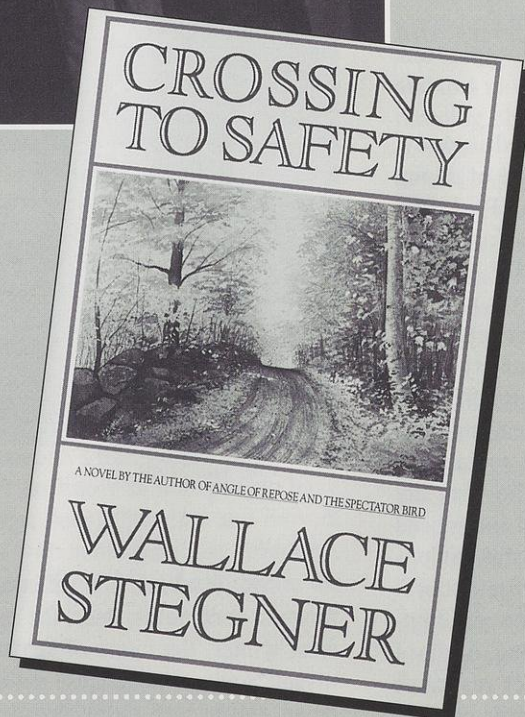
What an admission! So there is no decent literature on how to die? Well, then, you do the next best thing. What Wallace Stegner left behind was the road map from the Big Rock Candy Mountain to the land where the bluebird sings. This is what he came for, to tell the long, broken story of crossing to safety, with all its painful ambiguity.

*Photos courtesy the Office of News and Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison.*





Wallace Stegner in Madison in 1986 to receive an honorary degree from the University of Wisconsin.



The rain fell steadily on the narrow, right-angled road, on white farmhouses and red barns . . . on browning September cornfields, and pigs knee-deep in muddy pens. It fell steadily as we passed through Platteville, Mineral Point, Dodgeville, and was still falling when somewhere beyond Dodgeville the wiper blade disintegrated and bare metal began to scrape in a crazy arc across the windshield. Rather than delay us by stopping to get it fixed, I drove from Mount Horeb to Madison with my head out the window, my hair soaked, and water running down inside my shirt collar.

The traffic led us directly into State Street. However Sally felt, I was interested. This that we were entering was our first chance at a life.

I knew that the university was at one end of State Street and the State Capitol at the other, and I couldn't resist driving the length of it once, and part-way back, just to get the feel.

*Crossing to Safety*



# The Obvious Question: An American Poet's Answer

by Sharon M. Van Sluys

*I*n the summer of 1991 I left Madison for London and points beyond under the auspices of the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship. I was the 1991–92 recipient of this national award. It essentially provided me with a big bag of money and the requirement that I leave the United States for a year to travel and write. Until that time, I had always had an answer to that trick identity question: “What do you do?” I was a poet, yes, but my functional answer to that inquiry was *Visiting Lecturer, Marketing Associate, or Technical Writer*—something readily understandable, something economically sanctioned: employment. I never answered, “Poet.” Poetry didn’t buy groceries and didn’t seem a reasonable response.

After I left on my Lowell travels, my identity changed abruptly. With no job and no affiliation other than to the estate of a long dead New England imagist, I was simply American Poet. In a very short time I was forced to consider and answer for myself the obvious question and its corollary: “What am I?” And if I am a poet, “What and why do I write?”

Of course I had considered these questions before. They are the writer’s version of the various existence-anxiety questions many ask themselves between eighteen and forty-five; the halting, inchoate answers revealed to diaries, spouses, and therapists. They became for me, however, the stuff of social conversation with strangers. At dinner parties and the like, my hosts in Paris, London, Amsterdam, and Cornwall introduced me as “our American Poet.” This invariably led to the obvious questions: “A poet! How lovely! What do you write about?” This situation required that I either zigzag about conversationally, uttering something obscure and poetic sounding, or that I have a reasonably true and reasonably succinct response formed and ready: the proverbial twenty-five words or less. Forming the answer helped me to better understand my own identity as a poet, and particularly as an American poet.



Sharon M. Van Sluys

Photo by Glenn Trudel

Many of my poems contain natural imagery: storms, flowers, corn fields, deer, the moon, the deep cold of the Midwest winter, the cycle of seasons. However, I would not call myself a nature poet. I use natural imagery as a framework for or an entrée into more abstract philosophical questions. For example, a poem about catching a barracuda touches on the controversial link between pleasure and violence. A poem titled



"Storm Warning" uses an approaching tornado as a metaphor for falling in love. A sestina about a vegetable garden reveals the plants as anything but domesticated: carrots are "witch's fingers"; cucumbers are "wide-roving nomads," taking up all available space. Dill has a "Medusa" head, and sage leaves are "lizard-skinned." The garden is raucous with personality. Thus, while natural imagery is present in many poems, the works contain always a deeper philosophical concern. This may be an attempt to answer a question I consider necessary to ask, or an endeavor to clarify the question. Because of this layering of meaning, it is possible to read many poems very simply—to take pleasure in the sensual, lyric description, as well as to delve beyond the weather, plants, and animals and engage in deeper discussions addressed there.



Beyond compelling me to succinctly describe my work, my travels also forced me to more fully consider what it means to be an American poet. Throughout Europe, I was aware of history everywhere. Nowhere was there a square foot of land that had not been touched a hundred times by humans. I realized my own poetry finds its inspiration in the expansiveness and possibility of America: There is still a feeling of wildness here. There is still the impression (true or not) that with work and a good idea, anyone can make it here, regardless of class and circumstance.

As I traveled through Europe, Britain, and Ireland, I found myself deeply impressed, awed, surprised, and charmed; but after a time I also felt claustrophobic. I never entertained the idea of becoming an expatriate, never felt my decidedly Dutch ancestry tugging me toward a life in Amsterdam. I became more an American through my experience than I was before I left. I came to understand the *American-ness* of my own work.

Still, poetry is a marginal art in America. I know of no American poets alive today who live by their work alone (most well-known poets teach for a living). Yet I continue to write poetry despite its apparent exclusion from the realm of economic value. Why write poetry? A well-written poem is a work of literary art that is aesthetically pleasing, emotionally resonant, and intellectually engaging in a very concentrated form. It compels the reader to *feel* as well as to *think*. It can do this with astounding economy. Every word, every space, every bit of punctuation, *every association* is significant. It is possible for a poem of four lines to change someone's life. I don't know if my poems have done that. What I do know is that people have approached me after my readings, deeply touched and moved. My work has reconnected them with something lost, forgotten, or never fully realized. This is gratifying; it tells me I'm on the right track. So I continue.



## POEMS

### Small Something and Almost

Begin with this birdfeeder  
I fill without thinking:  
a little house, glass and rough cedar,  
a pattern of black and white millet  
abstract inside.  
Tell me why I hang it out in the empty trees.  
A cheap circus to glance at? An offering,  
a nod to the old god and his  
kitschy surveillance  
of each sparrow's quick tragedy?

Check the woods back here—its cache of evidence.  
Under the moon's useless eye, nuthatches,  
juncos, sparrows, buntings  
litter the still woods floor,  
smudgy down bodies chilled  
to blank loss, and fallen—tossed—  
like small purses from the boughs  
into unbroken white.

Each sub-zero morning, more small deaths assembled,  
tiny subtractions multiplied, I see  
yes, how three sparrows could equal  
a squirrel, five juncos  
a good cat loved by someone. And ten,  
and more,  
and this morning, this  
morning, this terrible  
counting!  
What is natural in nature  
turns perverse  
charged, pervasive—  
little dead birds, each not a handful,  
but again and again and yes, soon  
the woods could be littered with children.

Deep in these seamless, slow-ticking nights,  
I think how the world is willful,  
how it seeks out and reaches  
a stark, exclusive beauty  
of extreme. How cruel it is  
to be pure. How cold. How the birds  
drop lightly and vanish. How I need  
more blankets and  
simpler sleep.



See, it's fifteen below and falling.  
 Clouds thin fast and  
 here is night  
 with no dimension but UP and ALL.  
 Here is the numberless icelight of stars.  
 I can show you Andromeda, Orion, the others,  
 but I tell you, I know  
 there's not a soul up there.  
 I'm pouring out seeds,  
 I'm leaving a light on, but  
 I'm no saint—  
 this isn't charity.  
 It's a real small something, almost  
 nothing, almost.

## Buy Me a Melon

Hurry. Go.  
 Buy me a melon.  
 Go to the aisle of  
 musk and casaba,  
 honeydew, sweet water-  
 melon.  
 Let fragrance guide you. Find  
 the moon-skinned melons  
 by touch.  
 Slowly, you must  
 take two in your hands  
 as you would  
 your own breasts. Carefully  
 weigh them and choose  
 the more perfect.  
 The navel will give,  
 yield  
 slightly beneath  
 the pressure of your thumb.  
 Breathe  
 deeply.  
 The perfume will be  
 furred, sweet, and free  
 of all greenness.  
 Pay for it gratefully.  
 Then please,  
 hurry,  
 hurry home.



## Under the Influence of Blackbirds

In the Cash-Only  
 Ten-Items-Or-Less  
 check out line, 5:30 on some hot  
 day when there is  
 no tolerance for fumbling,  
 no tolerance for  
 anything, any small  
 insanity, there

they startle me, make me catch  
 my breath fast, the blackbirds  
 swarm out  
 as though a knife tip had slit  
 that taut scrim that is always  
 between us and the invisible world  
 behind this one, the maker of this one,  
 and let them burst out. There

grief least expected, believed  
 calmed at last,  
 but there  
 it erupts and encircles my head, black feathers  
 scratch my throat. And my heart,  
 my heart:  
 a dry fist of straw.  
 If I open my mouth to speak,  
 who will know this shrill call?



## Coffee Break

For Cornelia Walvoord 1914–1991

This is a good day: you remember  
my name. You point out  
the flitting birds feasting  
on thistle seeds, name them:  
*Parus atricapillus*,  
Black-capped chickadees.  
Yesterday you couldn't place me  
as your grandchild.  
Yesterday the birds went hungry.

We sit in your neat kitchen,  
sipping strong coffee. So good,  
you say, so good you have to be  
quiet about it—close your eyes  
and drink.

It's a gift after long abstinence.  
Your doctor surprised you,  
now he allows it:  
"Eat what you like."

It's tainted advice, I know.  
The three-year disease, the slow  
eroding cancer has slipped you  
past all remedy  
or rescue.

I imagine him talking, false  
and jaunty as the unlucky  
guard who must fetch  
the condemned man's last meal,  
nervous, urging decadence:  
"Anything on the menu.  
You name it, you got it."  
It's an odd generosity  
to the body beyond reprieve.  
As though it were a creature, innocent  
and dumb, done in by  
bad judgment, worse company,  
some massive blunder.  
At least let it eat.

Poems are from *Under the Influence of Blackbirds*.  
Minneapolis: New Rivers Press, 1993.

The January sky is clear  
and aseptic. You stare out past the birds,  
the dark cedars, past fields  
trapped beneath still sheets of snow.  
We talk weather. A cold snap. So long  
until spring.  
I pour us another,  
bracing and black, and we drink  
what can only damage you in time.  
But you are  
without time and  
the pure, moment's pleasure  
of flavor, of body,  
outweighs  
this cup's small poison.

## While Reconsidering It

After the rain  
the air is glass.  
Somewhere  
a small dog  
yips yips  
like a toy wound too tight.  
Across the street  
the neighbor's blonde kids,  
one in a droopy diaper,  
crouch like cubs,  
scrub their pale plastic babies  
in the curbside lake.  
Childless, I press this  
into memory.







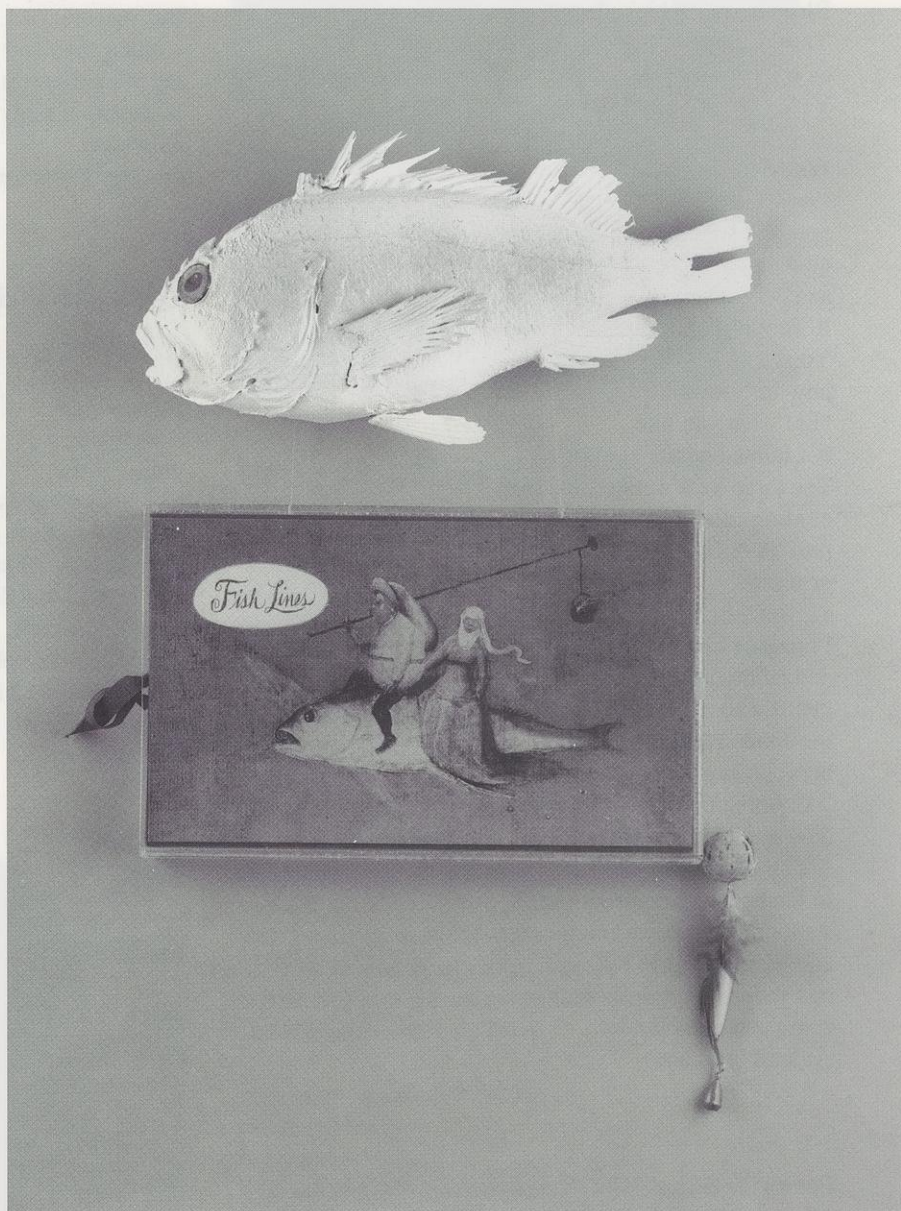
# Tiny Books and Nature: The Art of JoAnna Poehlmann

**M**y work has progressed in media from trompe l'oeil silverpoint and graphite/water/collage drawings to handcolored lithographs and etchings. Many of the prints are expressed in series and collected in folios and boxes.

From these three-dimensional pieces has evolved my present focus on artist's books as art objects. Most are limited editions—some are unique, incorporating various combinations of the aforementioned media with handmade papers, found objects, pen and ink, Xerox, stamps, preserved animals and insects, and collage. If I can't find an object I need, I make it out of clay, wood, papier-mâché, or other malleable materials. I place my work in no particular category, although its literary aspect—which has always been concerned with pun-entitled parodies of nature, art history, and the old masters—generally reflects my interest in the Dada movement.

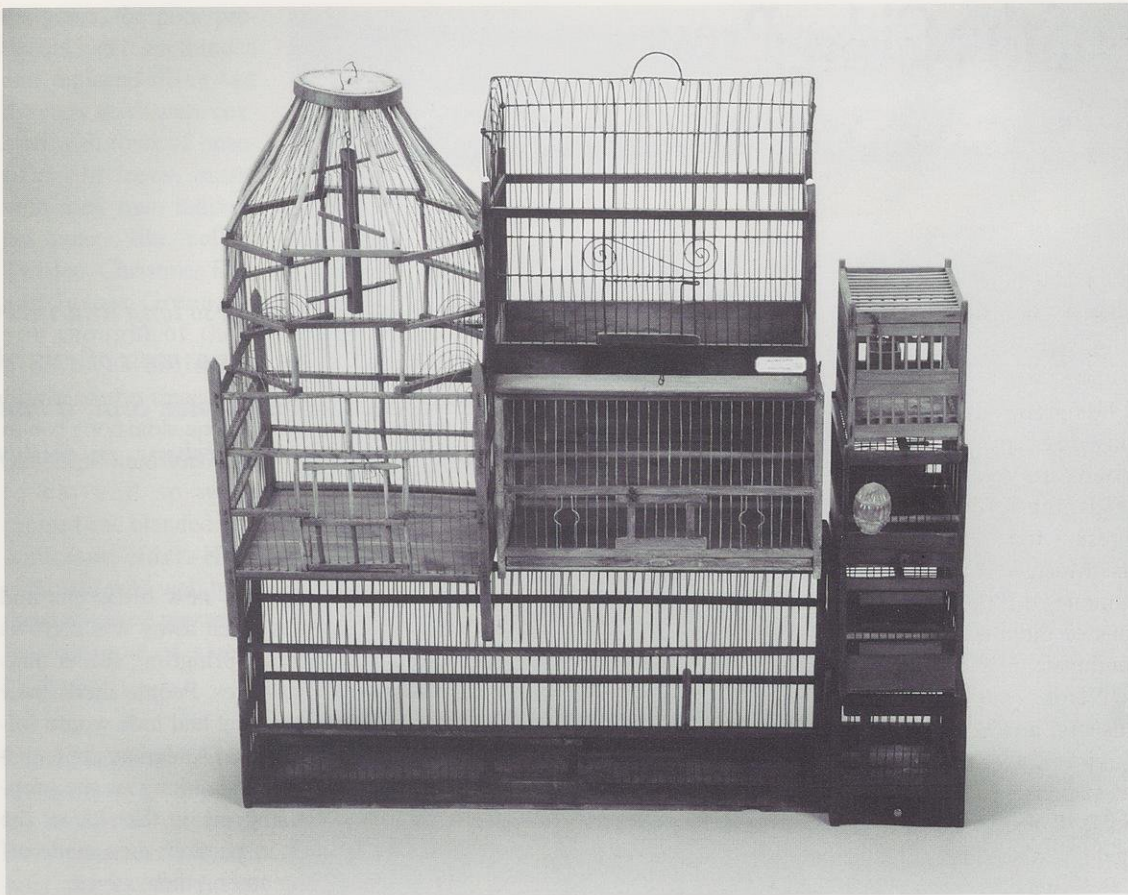
The medium of the tiny book allows me to pull past work together in a more refined expression with definite statements and explore new ways with which to voice them.

JoAnna Poehlmann



*Fishlines. Color xerography, pen and ink, found object. 12 x 9 1/2 x 3 inches, 1991.*





*ABOVE: Vanished Species. Sculptural book. 47 x 43 x 15 1/2 inches. 1991.*

*LEFT: Shell Game II. Hand colored lithograph folded into walnut shell attached to found object. 20 x 8 inches; book is 1 inch x 15 inches. 1991.*





# The Screw of the Cider Press

by Timothy Walsh

*There's something special about old cider presses. It comes, I guess, from their being so long and intimately involved in setting free living essences. The one in Anderson's barn was a mass of rusted hardware and split wood and didn't look fit for anything more than a lawn planter. Still, it had that air of metamorphosis, the latent power to transform that you sense in mills and kitchens, in freshly ploughed loam, and even in a kettle of water working toward a boil.*

As I stood in the half-light of the barn appraising the battered relic, I couldn't help but wonder why Emma Anderson had suddenly decided to repair it after so many years. From long experience, I knew that Emma always had her way, so I didn't even try to explain that a brand-new press would be cheaper than I'd have to charge to rebuild her heirloom.

The smell of rotting hay brought back memories of the Anderson farm in better days, back when buyers would come all the way from Jackson City to bid on the first cider pressings, back when every tavern within miles couldn't keep enough jugs of Anderson applejack behind the bar to satisfy the local thirst. But those days were long gone. Now the orchard was overgrown with grapevine and chest-high goldenrod. It hadn't been tended in decades, and the unpruned trees had grown into a wild and impenetrable tangle. Year after year the unpicked apples had been left to rot on the ground, and thousands of apple saplings had sprouted among the older trees. If you didn't know it had once been an orchard, you'd likely mistake it for a scrap of original wilderness.

I walked around the press to the other side where it was charred and blackened from when the old cider house burned down. That was over twenty years ago, the year when the apple trees on the Anderson place blossomed twice, the year when Buck Anderson was gunned down by his own son. I remember clearly the Sunday in early September all those years ago when folks from miles around came to see the Anderson orchard where the apple trees, already heavy with fruit, had strangely begun to blossom again. The delicate white flowers made the countryside come alive with spring color, but the maples had

already begun turning, and the mix of new blossoms and autumn color was unsettling. Horses shied away while crows flocked to the trees in great numbers. Springtime scents mingled with the sweet smell of rotting leaves. People shook their heads and said it was not a good sign, that bad luck would fol-

low anyone who ate an Anderson apple that year. No one would stay long on the property. Most just stopped on the side of the road for a quick inspection, then made off again whispering among themselves.

Knowing the Andersons were in for a hard season, a man from Brikelhoff's Nursery came—for about the tenth time in as many years—to ask if Buck would sell the grafting rights to his Flame Apple tree. Anderson's Flame Apples were famous throughout the valley. They were about as tart as a Northern Spy, but both sweeter and more sour at the same time. In color they were a deep crimson mottled with yellow, and when they were hanging ripe from the mammoth tree it looked like a conflagration.

There was only one Flame Apple tree because Buck, like his father before him and his father's father, thought grafting was

evil, that it was a crime against nature, the first step on the path to damnation. Buck wouldn't even eat any of the usual varieties, like MacIntoshes and Jonathans, because they come from grafted stock, each one going back to a single scion tree discovered by chance long ago. It's all because apple trees aren't true to seed. They're like people that way. If you start with a seed, no matter what kind of apple it came from, you can never tell what sort of tree you'll get.

That's the way the Andersons grew their orchard, each tree from seed, each tree a variety unto itself, no two alike. Over

.....  
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to blossom again.*  
.....



the years, the poor producers had been thinned and replaced till at last the sixty acres were covered with rows of beautiful old trees, many with their own individual names, like Yellow Twisted, Christmas Eve, and Jasper Green, so you thought of them kind of as children. Some of the trees produced good table apples, but most were too wild to eat and so were pressed and blended into Anderson cider. Hard cider still sold well back then, but they pressed a fair amount of sweet cider too.

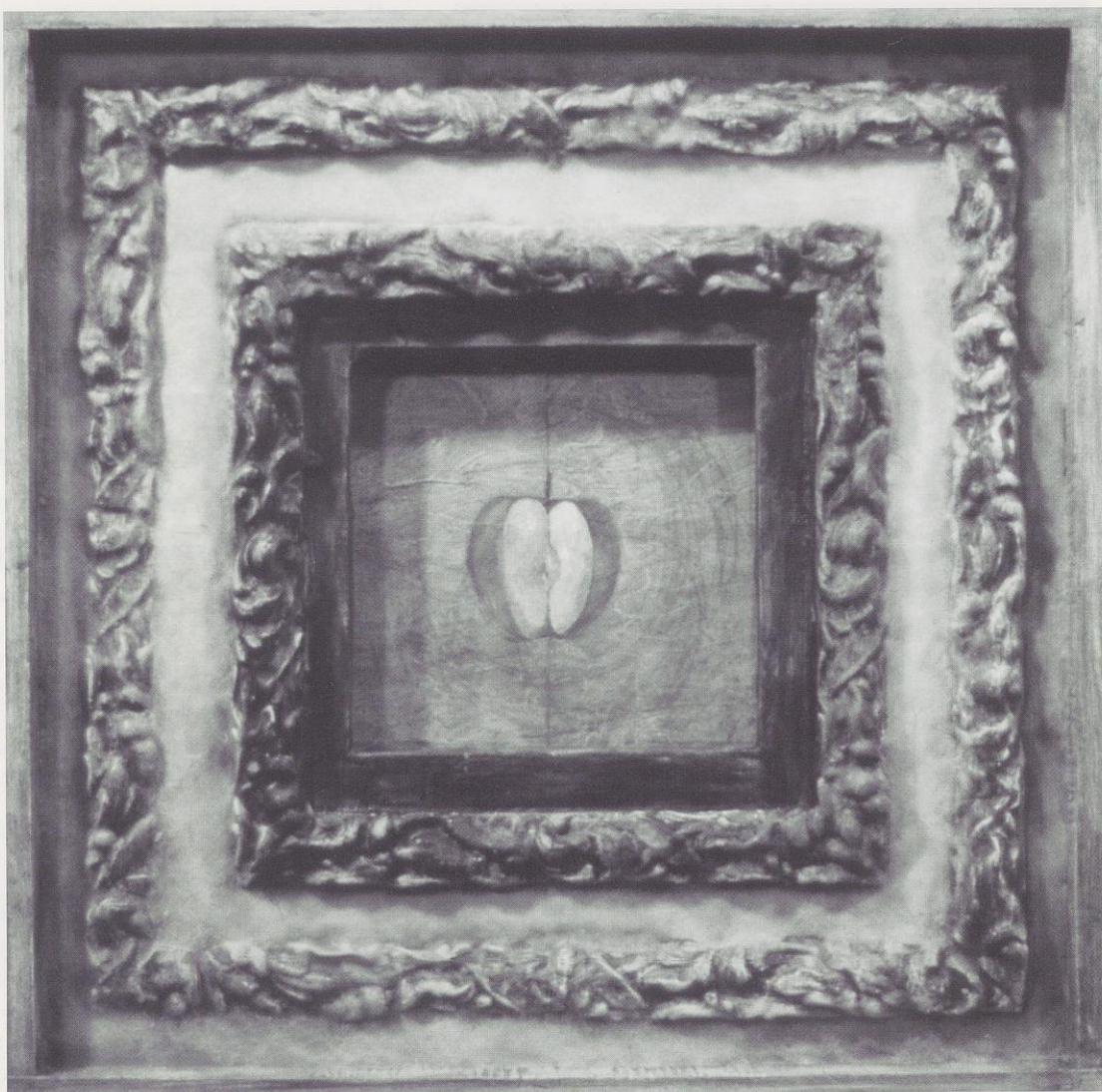


Buck Anderson was always kind of strange, but everyone tolerated him, more or less. He was dazzled by the commonest things, like bird nests and dandelions, and was notorious for smashing to pieces the gun of any unlucky hunter who strayed onto his property. Sometimes when there was a full moon, he used to sit out

all night talking to the apple trees and the oaks. He kept a sack of rocks in the barn that he said were shooting stars. I remember once how he burst into Peabody's store all moony-eyed about a certain quality of light in the willows by the mill pond. We followed him back, but no one else saw anything special.

The year the apple trees blossomed twice, the year that ended with his own son Carl shooting him through the heart, Buck really began going off the deep end. One morning at dawn, Buck was walking through the orchard, marveling at the new blossoms, when he saw a crow on a low limb fall to the ground, stone dead. He took it as a sign, a sign that death had come to the valley. He knew the crow was meant for him, so he roasted it on an apple wood fire and ate it.

That afternoon Buck went deep in the woods. Whether from eating the crow flesh or some other flight of madness I'm not sure, but he believed he could understand the language of animals. He listened to the chattering of squirrels, the twittering



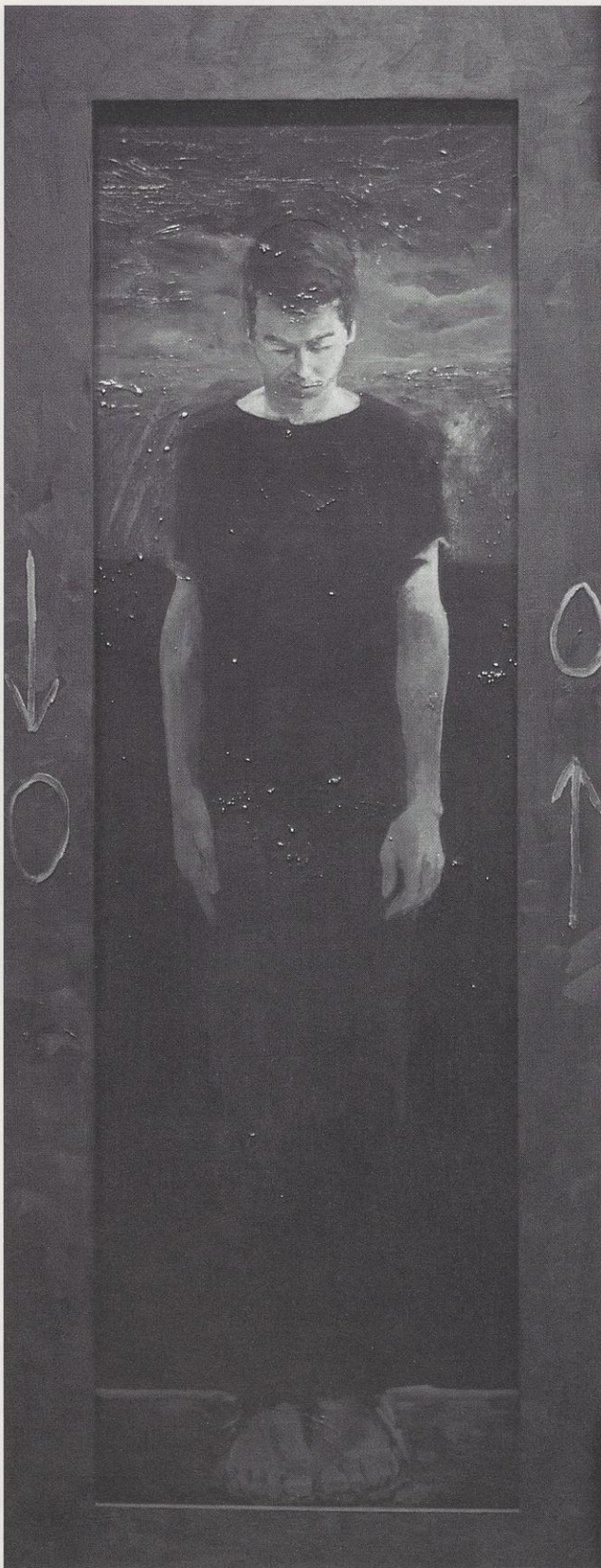
*Michael Miller, Untitled. Oil and encaustic on plaster and wood, 17 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches, 1993.*

of birds, the throaty growl of unseen bears, and he found himself suddenly able to understand it all. Words were cumbersome baggage in comparison. The wind shared secrets with him, too, and he wondered how he could ever have been so deaf to the soft music of clouds rubbing against the sapphire sky above.

In plain language, Buck simply woke up one day and lost his mind. He'd passed over into another world, and his eyes were aglow with that fierce inner light that brands the transfigured. Now he understood the meaning of the second blossoming. The voices of the forest had revealed it to him and to him alone: The apples were not to be picked that year. The coming winter would be cruelly harsh, and the bounty of the Lord was to be left as sustenance for God's wild creatures. Not one apple more could be eaten or sold, not another single bushel pressed into cider, without bringing down the implacable wrath of the One, who is everywhere and unseen.







Michael Miller, *Untitled*. Oil on wood, 54 x 22 x 2 inches, 1992.

Buck emerged from the woods just after the man from Brikelhoff's Nursery arrived. He was standing with Carl under the Flame Apple tree, and it was common knowledge that Carl had been wanting to turn to grafting for years. Picking up a shovel as he passed the tool shed, Buck walked straight for them like a man possessed. When Brikelhoff's man saw him coming, he held out a hand and launched into his spiel. Without even breaking stride, Buck hit him across the side of the head with the flat of the shovel, then went straight for Carl.

.....  
*I could almost taste that sweet, brown  
 Anderson cider, absent from the valley  
 for twenty years. It would be like  
 revisiting a childhood summer.*  
 .....

Carl was big and no coward, but he saw the strange light in his father's eye and knew if they fought, one would leave the other dead. So he ran. Through the orchard and across acres of corn, he ran for all he was worth without knowing where to go. . . .

Again I found myself wondering why after all these years Emma had decided to repair the old press. Considering the memories tangled up with it, I was surprised she'd kept it at all. I grabbed the handle and pushed with all my might. The wheel turned, grudgingly at first, then a little easier. It was badly rusted and made an awful noise, but at least it was still in working order. Aside from the heavy oak frame and a dozen staves, the screw was really the only thing still salvageable. But that was the essential part. After some scraping and a bit of grease, it would work like new—better in fact, since a century of breaking-in had long ago worked out any kinks.

The thought of actually using the old Anderson press again made me begin to think it was worth fixing up after all. I could almost taste that sweet, brown Anderson cider, absent from the valley for twenty years. It would be like revisiting a childhood summer. Once word got out that Emma was repairing her press, there'd be quite a stir among the older set, and words would fly again about the murder of Buck Anderson, the second blossoming of the trees, and the burning of the old cider house.

The day after I started work on the press, Emma came out to the barn to see how things were progressing. She was past seventy and walked with a cane, and I chided her for venturing so far without Connie, the niece who'd come to live with her.

"Never mind about that," she snapped back as she took a turn around the disassembled press. "Will it be finished by Monday week?"



"I don't know," I said, trying to gauge how long I'd need. "Why?"

Emma didn't answer. She took another turn around the press, then said, "Have it done by Monday week. Work nights if you have to. I'll pay extra."

With that she made for the door, but I caught her gently by the arm. "Emma, why do you need it so soon?" As far as I could see, she didn't even have an apple crop.

After a short silence, she met my eye. "Carl's getting out on Monday. He'll want to put up some hard cider against the winter. It'd please him to see the old press working again."

So that was it! After twenty years in the state prison, Carl was finally getting out. No wonder Emma was being so secretive.

As she made her way up the hill, she called back, "If you can get to it, pick a few bushels for the first pressing. The orchard's a nightmare of weeds, but you'll find plenty of good apples."

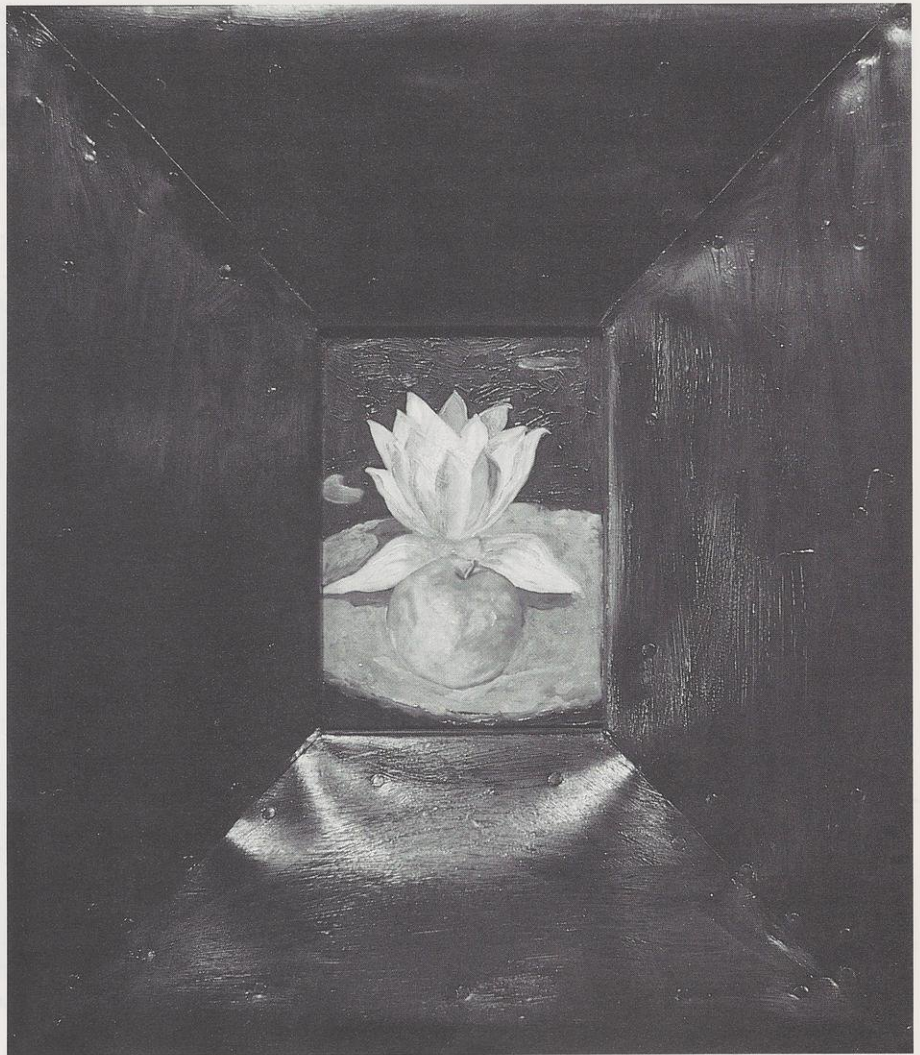


What is it about a son killing a father that cuts you to the quick? This killing was unlike any other. Many felt it was self-defense, that Carl shouldn't have had to do time. But it was Carl himself who pleaded guilty and asked for the maximum sentence: death by hanging. The judge gave him life, eligible for parole in twenty, and expressed his deepest sympathy for Carl and the widow.

The fact is Carl didn't want to get off. It would have tortured him more horribly than any noose to be pronounced innocent when he had to relive over and over the moment he pulled the trigger and emptied both barrels of a shotgun into his father.

It all happened that same afternoon, the day Buck heard the voices in the forest and almost killed the man from Brikelhoff's. When Buck was coming at him under the Flame Apple tree, Carl turned and ran all the way into town. He began to worry about leaving Emma alone on the farm with Buck, so he went straight to the sheriff's station. Nobody was there except Edgar Bynam, the dispatcher. Edgar put out a call, and Carl walked back outside to wait. The first thing he saw was smoke, heavy black smoke coming from the direction of the farm.

Carl flagged Curtis Michaels, who was passing in his pickup, and they tore back to the Anderson place. As they drew near, they could see that the cider house was in flames. Carl grabbed Curtis's shotgun and ran up the hill to where his mother lay sobbing on the ground.



*Michael Miller, Untitled. Oil on wood and tin, 21 x 18 1/2 inches, 1992.*

"He'll burn the whole place down," Emma cried. "You've got to stop him. He's gone to chop down the Flame Apple tree."

Curtis backed his truck up the hill and managed with chains to pull the badly scorched cider press from the building just before the roof collapsed. Carl ran off in the direction of the Flame Apple tree, and no one knows for sure exactly what happened there. I guess that's why people never stop talking about it. If there had been witnesses maybe it would have been forgotten by now. But there weren't any, and Carl never spoke of the matter in detail except to admit his guilt.

Some say that Buck came at Carl swinging an axe and that Carl had no choice. Once, a stranger who claimed to have known an old cellmate of Carl's was passing through. He swore that Carl told his friend it was really the father who squeezed the trigger, that Buck had walked calmly down to meet his son, pressed the leveled shotgun to his own chest, then worked his thumb in over Carl's trigger finger and, asking forgiveness,



fired. The drifter was only an old drunk, so not many believed him, but it made people even more uncertain than they had been.

In any case, it's a fact that Buck had taken an axe to the Flame Apple tree and had cut deep into its heart before a blast from Curtis Michael's shotgun cut him down. It's a fact that Carl, seeing his father lying in a pool of blood, took up the axe himself and, with tears streaming down his face, finished chopping down the tree. And it's a fact that the two of them were pinned under the Flame Apple tree when it fell—Buck already dead and Carl with a broken collarbone and crushed ribs.



It goes without saying that I had the press finished on time, working past midnight more than once. Bright and early on Monday an unmarked car dropped Carl at the end of the lane with only a large duffel bag to show for twenty years. He'd gone entirely gray, wore an untrimmed beard, and seemed only half his former bulk. But still I knew him for the Carl Anderson I picked apples alongside many a late summer as a teenager.

On his way up to the house, he looked in at the barn and nodded approval when he saw the cider press and the floor littered with fresh oak shavings. "Looks good," he said as simply as if he'd never been away from the place at all. Then he walked slowly on up the hill.

A few hours later, Emma and Carl stopped in to ask if I'd walk with them up by the orchard. There were still a few finishing touches needed on the press, but the invitation came more as a privilege granted than a favor asked, so I put everything aside and walked up the rise with them. Neither Carl nor Emma spoke much. They looked around seeming a little lost, taking in the countryside in a saddened yet satisfied way.

We passed along the edge of the orchard, a weedy tangle of brambles and grapevine, until we came upon a path I hadn't noticed before. It took us deep into the heart of the grove, deep into the latticework of wild, unpruned branches. The thicket was alive with birds and rabbits. Scarlet tanagers and orioles darted and swooped through the foliage, leaving dazzling traces of red and orange in their wake.

At last we came into a large clearing where a few trees had obviously been tended and the weeds held in check on a regular basis. In the center, a single tree rising from three main trunks arched overhead, gnarled and twisted and heavy with fruit. The apples were a peculiar color, deep crimson streaked with yellow.

"Flame Apples!" I gasped.

Carl plucked one and bit into it with such gusto you'd have thought it the fruit of the gods.

"But I thought . . ." I stammered.

"No one knows but us," Emma said. "Let's keep it that way for now."

"But how . . ."

"The spring after it all happened, the stump sent up suckers from the base. It seemed the tree was spiting me, with Buck dead and Carl in jail, so I hacked them down. Later that summer it sent up three more shoots, and I let them live. When Connie came to help out, I had her tend only the Flame Apple, keeping the path clear and pruning the limbs back each year. I dare say it's a better tree now than it ever was. Try one."

I gently pulled one from overhead, and the sensation as my mouth closed on that exquisite, sweetly tart flesh, after years of tasting them only in my imagination, is something I can't describe. Essence runs to essence, I suppose, and any good apple leaves you wondering what there is in you akin to such unearthly sap, what sweetness might be diffused through your own bloodstream, what distillation of desire makes up the soul.

That very day, Carl began clearing and thinning the orchard, keeping a few of the most promising saplings and pruning back the older trees. He didn't make much headway, but I knew by this time next year the orchard would be on its way to being as it had been.

In the end, I suppose Buck had his way after all. With Carl locked up and Emma in mourning, not an apple was touched in the orchard that fateful year, the year the trees blossomed twice. It was a harsh and terrible winter, thirty below for long stretches with snow drifting to five or six feet. No doubt countless creatures would have perished except for the unlimited store of apples on the Anderson place. So maybe Buck wasn't so crazy after all.



At day's end, Carl began pressing the few bushels of apples I'd picked from the fringes of the orchard. The screw worked like a charm—smoothly bringing down the force of muscle, the force of will, the force of desire onto the pliant apple flesh, pushing the glowing essence through the staves in trickling, vital rivulets.

.....  
*No doubt countless creatures  
would have perished except  
for the unlimited store of  
apples on the Anderson place.*  
.....



# Aphorisms and Marginalia

by Felix Pollak

**F**elix Pollak's aphorisms, the most momentous work he ever composed in German, are comparable only, in their profundity of thought and masterful style, to the best of Pollak's English poetry. They call for an in-depth study entirely of their own, all the more so since a substantially revised version of them, now titled *Lebenszeichen*, has just recently been discovered in his estate. The original, inscribed copy, which he dedicated to his wife, Sara, is dated "16. Mai 1953," thereby providing a reliable terminus ante quem at least for the completion of the original collection. The various dates, jotted down by Pollak along with his revisions, clearly indicate that the earliest of his aphorisms must have been written around, perhaps even before, 1930. Approximately twenty of them appeared in Austria during the 1930s, mainly in the *Neue Freie Presse*.

May 1953 seems also to herald Pollak's final transition from German to English as well as from prose to poetry (if we exclude, in the latter case, a few essays or vignettes, on the one hand, and, on the other, the scholarly articles he penned and published in his capacity as a librarian at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and also as a specialist in little magazines and underground presses).

It was, apart from the revisions of the aphorisms, not before the very last years of his life that Felix Pollak resumed writing in German, chiefly by retranslating a good deal of his English verse.

Reinhold Grimm  
University of California-Riverside

**Aphorisms from *Lebenszeichen: Aphorismen und Marginalien*, edited by Reinhold Grimm and Sara Pollak. Vienna, Austria: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1992.**

- To write an aphorism means to miss the target with meticulous precision.
- The life of the mind begins when one ceases to understand what has been self-understood, when one finds answers questionable and solutions problematic, when one suspects the obvious to obviate one's view and the overt to avert one's vision, when one hesitates to accommodate oneself to the commonplace, wonders about the simple and puzzles about the plausible.
- "I'd love to become an introvert," said the extrovert, "if I could only be sure that people will learn of my conversion!"
- No idea is as violently rejected as an idea we've once believed in, no person as violently hated as a person we've once loved. The reason goes beyond mere disappointment. Love and acceptance are efforts to "take in," to make a part of ourselves; if these efforts fail, if what we have absorbed cannot be organically assimilated into ourselves, then we have to throw it up,

violently, in order to "get it out of our systems"; for it has already gotten under our skin and permeated our flesh and pervaded our blood. Only those who have never swallowed what does not agree with them can be calm and detached and indifferent about it; only those that have not loved need not hate, only those that have not accepted can afford not to reject.

- Some people resemble stars: sometimes their light reaches us only after they themselves are already extinguished.
- The conclusion at which one arrives slowly may be sound, but it is always covered with the dust of the road. There is nothing as fresh and shiny as a jumped-to conclusion.
- "Getting even" usually means descending.
- "Cutting down to size": whose size? Why, the cutter's of course!
- There are people who prevent you from doing them a favor by requesting it from you.
- How revealing about our civilization that "immaterial" and "unimportant" are used as synonyms!



# FELIX POLLAK

## LEBENSZEICHEN

### Aphorismen und Marginalien

Herausgegeben von Reinhold Grimm und Sara Pollak



• I write the way I shave, going over and over the same territory, cutting, scraping, smoothing—and forever finding rough spots right under my nose.

• The poets have always celebrated the wrong feats of passion, e.g., the surmounting of obstacles, the overcoming of distances in time and space—things that are the very food of passion, complications on which passion thrives, while the real enemy of passion is the absence of these complications—tranquillity, serenity, security. If it can survive *those*, then passion has won a victory, then there is cause to stand in awe and shout “hurrah for love!”

• It is not an artist’s function to re-chant the poesy of the poetic (truly a rearguard action) but to conquer for poetry the territory of the nonpoetic. In that sense, every true artist is a member of

the *avant-garde*. That a rose is “poetic” has been established by now; the task is to discover and convey the poetry of the rose-thorn; to see and make visible the beauty of the mud-bed wherein, whereout the rose grows; and to convey the nostalgic beauty of even the barren lot that can acquire the quality of poetry by the felt lack of roses.

• Two factors determine the quality of an artist: the extent of chaos he has within him, and his ability of giving it form. For an artist is he who can transform the micro-chaos in his soul into the micro-cosmos of his work.

• The only freedom I never want to have is the freedom from doubt.

• To study history has a point only if one doesn’t do it in order to know what happened but in order to know what is happening.

• No reader needs to go to the trouble of contradicting me; I’m carrying on that activity quite efficiently myself.

• Unbelievers and agnostics seldom tolerate disbelievers in their unbelief and agnostics toward their agnosticism. Doubters have no use for doubters of their doubt, skeptics require unskeptical acceptance of their skepticism, the unorthodox demand the most orthodox unorthodoxy from their flock, anarchists want their followers to toe the anarchic line, revolutionaries approve only of comrades dedicated to the conservation of past revolutionary achievements, and who is more religiously irreligious than an atheist?

• He is a limited thinker indeed who can see only “both” sides of an issue!

• The less people distinguish between, the more they discriminate against.

• Reading *per se* is no more a virtue than walking *per se*. It all depends on where one is walking or reading to. The good reader is motivated by the wish to let the author’s thoughts arouse his own, and has reached his aim when he stops reading to start thinking. The bad reader wishes to let the author’s thoughts take over and blot out his own thoughtlessness. Reading, for the first, provides food for thought; for the second, dope for a void.

• A bad book devoured with gusto is more nourishing than a good book consumed without appetite.

• The artist seldom expresses all he feels; the dilettante always more than he feels.

• My sense of humor prevents me from laughing more often, just as my aesthetic sense keeps me from enjoying more sights. Only the tasteless live in the land of plenty.

• Happiness: The thought of the cinder that failed to fly into your eye.



## Museum Pots and Pumpkin Pies

Look. I can see her hands  
on the rippled edge of a pot  
over here. This one:  
"Oneota Indians, 1000–1500 A.D."  
They lived here,  
on this thumb of land  
at a great lake,  
it says.  
I make that rippled edge  
on pie crusts. I pinch  
with my thumb and the first two fingers  
like this, all the way around,  
My hands dusty with flour,  
hers smeared with red clay.  
Inside I put  
sweetened squash or  
stewed meat or  
juicy summer berries.  
See, there you can see a thumb print.  
If I could  
reach inside the glass  
my thumb would fit in that print  
and I could hold her hand and  
we could swap recipes and laugh like  
living neighbors.

*Sue Burke*

## A Half Step From Flying

The great blue heron sleeps  
like a bag of laundry  
on a limb of old elm  
high above the damp ravine  
still covered with night chill.  
Slivers of ice  
hem the Winnebago shore.

Far away on the edge  
of Dickie's Cay, hot sun  
and jelly-green water  
wrap around me like wings  
and inside  
a slumbering bird stirs  
opens one blue eye.

*Rusty McKenzie*

## Potlicker

the white-haired man of some descent  
(Chippewa, Irish, or Norwegian, I don't know)  
tells me that every spring he takes  
a long walk up the fire trail  
until he gets to a particular stump  
His stump

he sits there, meditates, leaves  
his troubles on it, then he goes home  
every autumn he returns to find that  
they have rotted away a little more  
of his stump

and he sits some more with any problems  
that remain and leaves them again for  
the snow to wash away

like a fox, he marks his path

*Matt Welter*



## Learning Bach

When I was eight I'd take the bus  
downtown, three miles, one nickel,  
climb two wooden flights of stairs  
to Berger's Music School where Miss Kowalkowski

waited for me in her single maidenhood—  
homely, tall  
and slim, with dark hair, dark eyes—  
and no personality. I, who had practiced

as little as possible, only the length  
of time it took Grandmother to do  
the dishes, fumbled through scales,  
arpeggios, through Hanon and "The Juggler,"

the only piece I loved simply  
because it made our black cocker howl  
(and forty odd years later I can play  
it still as can my daughter who finds

the story funny). We labored on together,  
I reluctant, she steadfast. I never loved  
the piano until I was sixteen and found  
a teacher from the Julliard

who taught me to love Bach.  
His music fit my two small hands,  
fit my mind, and flew me into pain  
and finally past to joy.

*Peg Lauber*

## Rameau, Poulenc

Rippling down the staff, the harpsichord  
dances its cataract of thirds  
and quavers, tosses the flute's melody  
like a child's toy, bubble riding like a torrent.  
Later, flute leads the laggardly piano  
through a sleek channel of sound, minor  
conduit to a flood of resolution.

Their stories! Loosening the gut,  
calling one in like a loan  
come due! To be first to imagine  
this cascade, that broadening stream,  
clamber this height, see out, topple!

Outside, afterward, the town  
settles for silence. Pale snow  
falters down the arc-lit night.

*Shirley Anders*

## The Last Frontier

Winter's benzine fog and the cold indexical glare of headlights  
corral the crumpled roan mass of a moose gone wide from rut—  
legs in a broken fold of prayer beneath her.

A part of the mad sideshow, I watched  
this agate-eyed pile of fevered road kill hyper-vent  
fear in alto *woofs* from her flared nostrils—  
a confusion of smokey signals for her calves  
shadowed in the safety of a silent treeline.

With ears bent back in the heat of her moment,  
she battled gravity—the heavy of her sinewed life  
cop-shot still, arresting her natural order,  
trapping her in a synapsuous rock-a-lurching,  
and me turning chameleon, black-green  
against the night's shade of spruce, as I walked away,  
acid snow crunch under foot,  
and the steam enveloped us both.

*Maureen Trainor*



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## Old Apple Tree in Appleton

*for Margaret and Elmer Otte*

When it was set out, the Columbian Exposition  
was going strong, a young nation with little past  
clamored to build a present, and this brawny state  
was shaping itself, half generous heart,  
half gall. It's been a rough century  
for the tree, its bole canted a good forty-five degrees  
from the true. The only limb left  
has become a lesser trunk,  
elbows out at seven feet  
and again this year has pulled off its miracle—  
from a dozen twiggy shoots, blossoms,  
petals half blown down in last week's high wind.  
This fall there'll be the usual few hard pippins  
for squirrels, rabbits.  
It's the hole that gets you, elliptical, ringed  
by a great scar like a lip gone wrong, keloid tissue  
tough as iron rising from the ground, gaping  
deep enough to shelter a curious ten-year-old,  
baroque access only to itself, a shell of trunk  
curved round its old circumference, channeling juices  
up to the branch, the blossoms, leaves to come,  
fruit. There's something in that tree cave  
we want to name but can't,  
not mystical but simply wooden, the nude grain  
running up, earth floor speckled with wood rot  
and a few dying flowers that neighbor children bring.  
They do what we can't remember, but it's enough  
to know they do, that children come  
to holes in things, with offerings. There's something  
we can't say, bent forward, thrusting the head  
in, murmuring "hello," something  
in the way the trunk returns the word  
with the damp resonance of Earth  
and soft wood, a friendly coffin sound;  
how, once in, one shifts  
shoulders, swivels neck, peers up  
through what remains of the canted trunk,  
jagged hole where the old crown  
broke off years ago: a round of sky, light  
at the end of the tree, blue, with sun, with a moon.

*Shirley Anders*

## Cows and Red Barns

*for Hattie*

Morning's heat complained as it fizzled from the kitchen radiator,  
and Hattie, layered in woolens and the promise she made her father,  
stood warming the puff of her 6 a.m. hands  
over the kettle's slow chirp and gurgle. From behind the cook stove  
and crystalline pane, she could see the shadows of holsteins  
and guernseys rallying outside the clapboard barn—  
long and skinny against the violet pitch of daybreak.

Barely thirteen and branded a dairymaid,  
Hattie railroaded her schooling for him,  
this antique farm, and the quiet of Forest Junction's winters.  
She could hardly tug teats, but Hattie stayed—  
kept his creams and cheeses fatty, his butter sweet,  
and milked his patience cold. Her love for her father  
grew like the calluses on her hands  
and toughened for cows and red barns,  
straight back rockers, the sour musk of moth balls,  
and the Jack Bite of wintry Wisconsin sunups  
each time she plodded barnward.

*Maureen Trainor*





## Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles

by Margaret George. St. Martin's Press, 1992. 873 pp. \$24.95

by Hayward Allen

Readers of Margaret George's vast and ingenious novel, *The Autobiography of Henry VIII, With Notes by his Fool, Will Somers*, will recall how wonderful it was to admire and appreciate the intense and creative scope of both the writer's and reader's minds that engineered and collaborated within one of our era's finest historical novels.

Is that a hard act to follow, or what? Before *Henry* and its national success—a 900-page novel now in its ninth printing—Margaret George was, quite simply, an aspiring novelist without a track record. Not an advantageous position for any writer, yet her sudden fame approached avalanche dimensions and, of course, her publisher wanted another novel. ASAP.

*Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles* was more or less in the historical ballpark of *Henry* for those readers who find their centennial calendars blurring. Plus, Margaret George was very interested in the dual queenships of England's Elizabeth and her cousin, Mary, in Scotland. The dynamics were both natural and historical: one new to her throne and fearful of losing it, full of ideas and ideals, staunchly independent and blatantly imperialistic while the cousin was born to rule, really did not want the responsibility, struggled with her affections and loyalties, and was rarely in control of her small region of control.

*Mary*, as the title implies, is about the life of the latter queen, the one who would have been most comfortable residing in France, where she had been exiled as an infant. Yet, she recognized and reluctantly accepted her eventual return to Edinburgh. From there, as they say, it was all down hill for a most admirable, intelligent, and appealing monarch.

Her cousin to the south may have controlled her enemies, her destiny—going as far as creating the Elizabethan equivalent to James Bond, Control, and M15—but the vibrant and vital Mary had no one, actually, whom she could trust for advice and counsel, love and affection. Her rival half-siblings were her enemies. Her Catholicism, albeit private and not by decree, found formidable enemies in the likes of John Knox and his followers.

Margaret George's novel reveals the historical depth in its massiveness, and the author creates a character of revealing significance along with a cast of true characters who appear upon the dark and gloomy stage that was Scotland and its small empire of islands. While it does not revel in the originality of *The Autobiography of Henry VIII*, it is not a work that disappoints anyone interested in history, especially those periods which are relatively obscure.

George's greatest challenge was dealing with Mary's final two decades of forced exile and virtual imprisonment in England. How does an author take a vivacious, adventurous, real person and then cope with the incredible ennui Mary faced until her beheading? In fact, by the time the reader reaches that

fate, there is the possibility of a great sigh of relief to have reached the end of a life that proved tragic.

Of course, all kinds of questions arise as a result. What if Mary had had a loyal following of subjects who respected her religious freedom? What if Mary had opted for the first selection of a husband, Elizabeth's own and closest "advisor"? What if those two projections had proved true and Bothwell were allowed to command Scotland's power against England? Needless to say, Elizabeth saw all as being possible and chose to defend her own reign in her own way.

Margaret George, however, will not be posing such questions again. She has already leapt backward in time, back to the days of glory and demise of Egypt's Cleopatra. Readers may look forward to that next historical novel sometime in 1996. It's just enough time to re-read *Henry* and to finish *Mary*.

Hayward Allen is a free-lance writer now living in Arizona.

## North Country Notebook Volume II

by George Vukelich. Madison: North Country Press, 1992. 130 pp. \$17.95.

by John Bates

George Vukelich opens his book with a story about the three people in his life who gave him worthwhile advice on writing. Outdoor author Mel Ellis was one: "If you haven't got something to say, what the hell are you writing for? . . . I think you should try to teach as you go along, but in an offhand way . . . I think you show some of life, good or bad, and let the reader do his own moralizing and draw his own conclusion."

*North Country Notebook* follows Ellis's prescription to the letter, offering good stories that are comfortable to read and rounded out with humor to let the morals go down easy. The characters we venture with and the places we travel to are true to the spirit of the Northwoods. And the spirit of the North is what most of the stories come back to, casually, with a soft touch unlike the beating that readers often sustain from the heavy hand of writer/preachers.

Vukelich is part crazed trout fisherman, river philosopher, and everyday Joe at the American Legion Bar. He is sure to laugh at himself a bit whenever advancing a chancy reflection on experiences like the watchfulness of a boulder or the mourning of a sow bear at the loss of her mate, a technique that soothes the reader's slide along the path of serious thought with him. His experiences combine to form a vision of the North Country as a church in its best sense, and he writes with reverence of the magic it offers. He's also willing to tackle controversy, discussing the anti-Indian spring spearing protests as possibly a deflected economic issue, the Bible as an ecological handbook, and illustrating the debilitating effects of aging and a lack of purpose.

But what surprised and pleased me most were his six essays in his section entitled "Hunting." As a newcomer to



Vukelich's writing, I feared for the usual banalities around the "hunter gets the monster buck" story. Instead Vukelich offers balanced reflection on the value of life, human and otherwise. A letter of thanks from a hunter to a landowner who has allowed him on his land typifies this perceptive writing: "I thank you on behalf of all the hunters and fishermen who have learned that an outdoor experience goes beyond setting a hook or pulling a trigger—that it reaches further than open season or legal limits—that it increases our awareness of ourselves and the world around us."

Vukelich's writing bridges the abyss that usually separates the stereotypical consumers (hunters/fishermen) and the non-consumers (hikers, birders). He's anthropomorphic without falling into handkerchief sentimentality, and without giving up his license to catch ("prune back" says Vukelich) innumerable fish. There's wisdom and perspective here, characters we can relate to, all given with a strong dose of laughter. He says, "When you live up in the North Country in winter, you just naturally keep track of things because you could wind up freezing your buns if you don't." Vukelich is doing a good job of keeping track of things.

*John Bates lives in the Northwoods and is a naturalist, poet, and free lance writer.*

## An August Derleth Reader

edited by Jim Stephens. Madison: The Prairie Oak Press, 1992. 352 pp. \$16.95.

## Walden West

by August Derleth. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. 262 pp. \$12.95.

by Ken Grant

Throughout the 1980s, finding anything written by August Derleth was proving progressively more difficult. Virtually nothing he published was still in print, bookstore supplies had disappeared, and even some libraries were pulling his works from their shelves and discarding their copies. The author of over 150 volumes of novels, poetry, short stories, historical fiction, biography, essays, horror tales, and mysteries was well on his way to literary oblivion. Thankfully, that trend is being reversed by the recent efforts of two Wisconsin publishers, Prairie Oak Press and the University of Wisconsin Press. Wisconsin's most prolific writer is becoming accessible once again to a larger audience.

Jim Stephens does a remarkable job of selecting readings for *An August Derleth Reader* which reflect recurring themes in Derleth's fiction and reveal his technical skills working in a variety of genres. The anthology is divided into six sections: Sac Prairie Saga, Wisconsin Saga, Poetry, Juveniles, Tale of the Weird, and Of Kindred Spirits. These categories contain selec-

tions published over a thirty-five-year span by Derleth and help us see the range of his work and the ambitious plan that he envisioned.

Derleth intended to chronicle the settlement and development of the Sauk City/Prairie du Sac area—what he called Sac Prairie—from the early 1800s through the 1950s. This Sac Prairie Saga plan itself developed from a projected twenty-five volumes, as he initially proposed it in his successful Guggenheim Fellowship application, to fifty or more.

Among the eight anthologized pieces in the Sac Prairie Saga section, Stephens's choice of excerpts from *Place of Hawks*, *Country Growth*, *Evening in Spring*, *Wisconsin in Their Bones* and *Walden West* are thoughtfully representative of Derleth. They are, in fact, repeatedly cited by the author himself as being among his best work. The Poetry section contains pieces from the Saga which present a Sac Prairie that would, so Derleth says in the Prologue to *Walden West*, serve as "a base of operations into a life more full in the knowledge of what went on in the woods as well as in the houses along the streets of Sac Prairie and in the human heart."

Derleth did not confine his interests only to the Sac Prairie area, but also engaged in writing a smaller Wisconsin Saga, which Stephens acknowledges with selections from *The House on the Mound*, *The Hills Stand Watch*, and *The Wind Leans West*, works that focus on the fur trade in Prairie du Chien, the Cornish miners of Mineral Point, and the development of banking in Milwaukee, respectively. The remainder of the anthology contains excerpts from Derleth's novels for young readers, his horror and mystery fiction, biographical works, and histories. Even the juveniles are can be recommended for general reading, especially *The Moon Tenders*.

Stephens's achievement in this anthology, to my mind, is the consistent and honest way he captures Derleth's most important themes. His selections reflect Derleth's interest in what goes on in nature, in houses, and in hearts captured by the sweep of time.

The Prairie Oak edition is physically attractive, mirroring Derleth's own concern for quality in bookmaking as well as writing. Technology fails only once, in proofreading; a number of errors appear to have crept into the text, all of them the kind that would not be recognized by a computer spell checker, like replay for reply. Still, Stephens is to be commended for his real skill in editing longer passages into understandable abridgments as he does in *Wind Over Wisconsin*. *An August Derleth Reader* is the perfect way to introduce a new reader to the range of Derleth's work and the best of his regional writing.

The University of Wisconsin Press is also to be commended for deciding to reprint the 1961 edition of *Walden West*. Derleth calls *Walden West* "an exposition on three related themes: 1) on the persistence of memory, 2) on the sounds and odors of the country, and 3) of Thoreau: 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.'" The writing, perhaps Derleth's finest, investigates these three related themes in Sac Prairie, but the observations are of universal significance. Brooding gothic



mystery hovers over the book, adding to the atmosphere Derleth creates in this series of connected reflections, vignettes, observations, and meditations.

Readers of this new edition will certainly be hoping for a reissue of *Return to Walden West*, Derleth's companion volume, as well as a systematic reissue of the works of this important Wisconsin writer.

*Kenneth B. Grant is an associate professor of English at the University of Wisconsin Center-Baraboo/Sauk County.*

## Coming Up Sequined

by Art Madson. Madison: Fireweed Press, 1991. 46 pp. \$7.50.

by David Graham

Art Madson of Whitewater, his book cover informs us, "came late (in his mid-fifties) to the writing of poetry." His first book shows no signs of being a novice production, but bears the unmistakable marks of maturity and experience. His abiding themes are love and aging, and his treatment of each mixes wit with heartfelt sentiment.

He is considerably more adept at comedy; his sentiment too often lurches into sentimentality, as in "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," which is every bit as sentimental as the old popular song it takes as title. "Linda Beth and I / picked wild flowers," we learn, and, when the narrator pricks his finger she says "Let me kiss it / and make it well." Then, as the poem concludes on the same emotional note:

The green corn stretched and grew,  
the violins played,  
Linda's hand lifted  
my stricken finger,  
her lips jounced my heart.  
We dawdled in the swings  
and the chains sang.

Many kisses have come and gone  
roses bloomed, and violins played.  
. . . but a pricked finger  
transports me to  
that wild-rose summer  
when a kiss made things  
better than well.

I suppose some will enjoy this, even down to its echo of Dylan Thomas's "Fern Hill" (compare Madson's "and the chains sang" to Thomas's "though I sang in my chains like the sea"). But to me it is in need of the Welsh poet's baroque linguistic gift or his subtle perspective split between childhood extravagance and adult melancholy.

I turn, then, gratefully to Madson's more quirky, often carnal love poems, in which his colloquial wit and keen eye for

physical detail shine. He can render a boy's first bewildered awareness of sexual urges with homely directness, for instance:

"Be careful of Helen," Dad said,  
assigning me the Saturday chore  
of cleaning out the calves' pen.  
"She's in heat."  
What did careful mean?  
The heifer bucked, butted, and shied,  
frisking as I worked the fork.

The book is replete with memorable descriptions, especially of those uneasy bedfellows, love and romance. "Ingenue," for instance, memorably attends to a woman's first tattoo; after rejecting an impulse to choose one "emblazoned— / with two bloodied, dripping / jeweled daggers," or "two cobras" with "flared heads," she finally decides on

a tulip growing from her pubic garden,  
slanting northeast,  
blooming red,  
and luring two honeybees  
flying abreast.

Everything about that description works, nor does its overt comedy conceal a serious undertone. The war of the sexes is never far removed from these poems, even at their most celebratory, and this cool realism gives Madson's work a refreshing quality, as well as good dramatic force.

In the delightful "Clemmie With Hoe," another woman does battle with all the forces of fecundity in her household, dispatching bees and even the serpent in her garden. See how she turns her battle with weeds into a sexual victory:

Landscaper, she sees others  
with spiny leaves and spicules  
breaching her barberry hedge,  
defiling her garden rows,  
defying her weeding hands.  
Sometimes she lets one reach  
his fence-row purple climax,  
lets him think he's winning  
before she chops him down,  
his seed still green.

*Coming Up Sequined* comes up with such refreshing moments more than often enough to redeem its occasional sentimentality. In fact, Madson's best poems are probably his longest ones, too extensive to discuss here. I recommend a good long look, though, at gems like "Ruth and I Go Way Back; We Get Along," "Script and Graphics," "The Yellow Dress," and "Jake Speaks His Mind."

*David Graham, who chairs the Department of English at Ripon College, is the author of four books of poetry, most recently Doggedness.*





## The Wisconsin Academy Review Turns Forty

by Faith B. Miracle

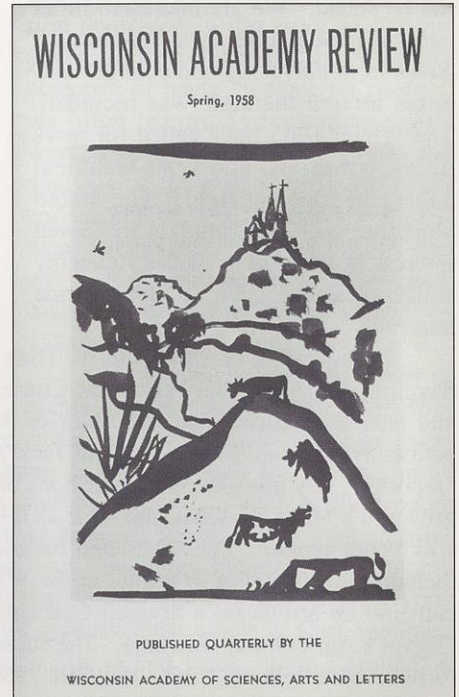
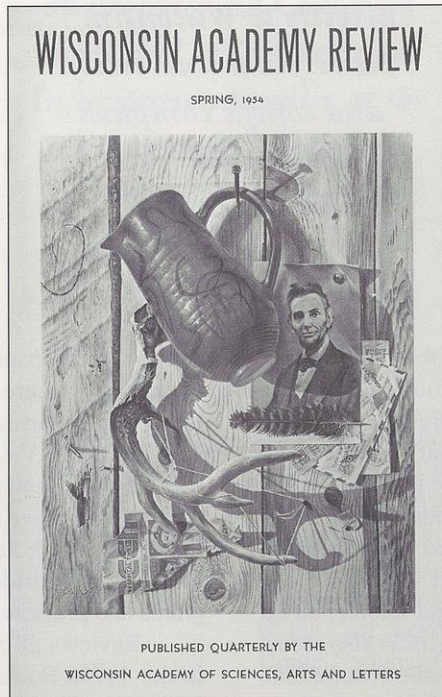
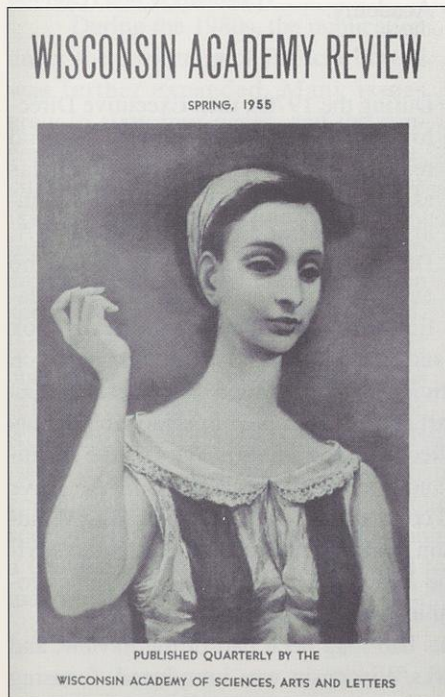
**I**n the early 1950s members of the Wisconsin Academy began to feel the need for a publication to focus on Academy members and activities. The scholarly journal *Transactions* had been published continuously since 1872, and it played an important role in fulfilling the Academy's mission as established by the founders. But *Transactions* was meant for research papers and criticism, not news and member information.

Enter the new *Wisconsin Academy Review* in January 1954, designed as a quarterly "house organ" to be written by members about members. In the beginning, the *Review* operated without staff, budget, or office. Long-time Academy loyalists Walter and Gertrude (Trudi) Scott were the first editors, and, with the help of Litho Productions of Madison, they produced the publication in their home, in a room they called their den. There were 600 copies of the first issue printed at a cost of \$220, exclusive of postage for distribution.

Both Walter and Trudi worked for the Wisconsin Conservation Department (now the Department of Natural Resources). One of Trudi's prime responsibilities there was to produce

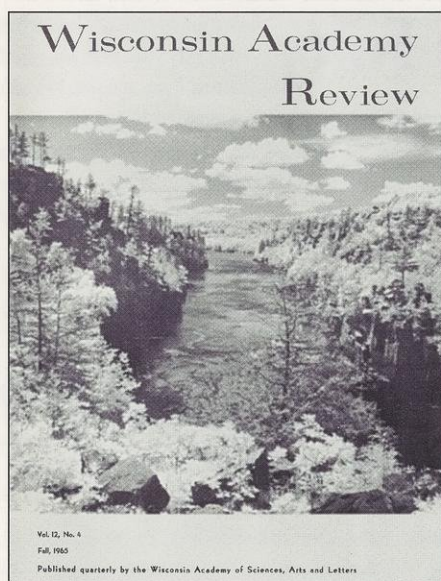
monthly progress reports which, she said, at that time consisted mostly of hunting violations and arrests! Walter worked on a number of publications for the department. He had been interested in publishing since childhood—when he was eleven years old he produced a small publication called *Scout Life* for his fellow boy scouts in Milwaukee. He enjoyed working with small magazines.

The Scotts edited the *Review* for the first ten years. In the beginning much of the content was dedicated to directory information on members, minutes of council and committee meetings, obituaries, reports and papers of general interest, regional and topical maps, and photos. The text was typewritten, and the

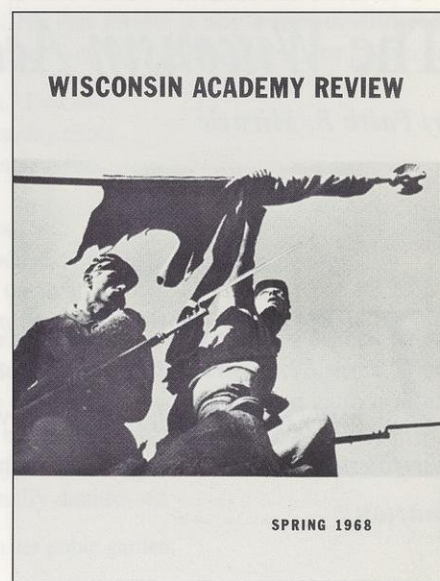
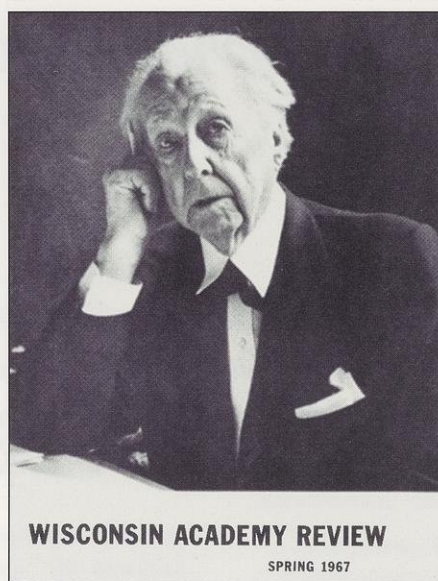


The 1950s.





The 1960s.



size of the publication was small, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. In the Fall 1963 issue, the last produced by the Scotts, Trudi provided a ten-year index of the *Review* contents. The compilation was funded by Academy members who contributed \$10 each toward the project.

Jack Arndt of the University of Wisconsin-Madison pharmacy department became editor beginning with the Winter-Spring 1964 issue. In his editorial he stated, "We are interested in all material relating directly to Wisconsin." News from university and college campuses around the state was included. The Winter 1965 issue called for news items, editorials, and semi-technical papers in specific fields. The stated objective was "to stimulate increased interest in the affairs of the Academy and to present popular articles of wide interest."

In the spring of 1967 Ruth L. Hine of the research and planning division of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, and later their editor, became editor of the *Review*. Previous editors Walter and Trudi Scott and Jack Arndt were listed as "reporters." By this time the dimensions of the publication had grown to 8 1/2 x 11 inches, the same as it is today, and the text was being typeset. The focus had broadened, apparently to include the world. For example, in the Winter 1969 issue one can find an article on a divided Germany and another titled "Egypt's Agricultural Dilemma." The cultural focus also seems to have been relaxed a bit—the Fall 1969 issue features the Green Bay Packers on both front and back covers.

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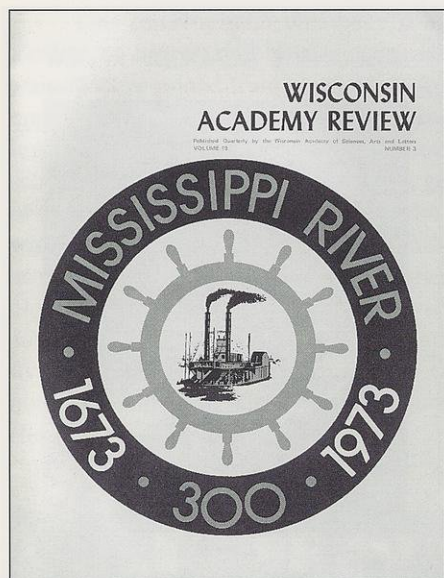
In 1970, in observance of the centennial of the Wisconsin Academy, two special issues of the *Review* were produced under the editorship of L. G. Monthey. One was titled "Man and the Environment" and the other, "Wisconsin Academy History: A Century of Service." Both were appropriately packaged in glossy gold cover stock, and both issues continue to be valuable as resources for sleuthing out tidbits of past information about the Academy.

During the 1970s, then Executive Director James Batt assumed the editorial responsibility for the *Review* and was assisted by Monica A. Jaehnig as managing editor and, later, by Patricia A. Dorman, then Elizabeth Durbin, who eventually became editor. The publication took on a somewhat slicker look

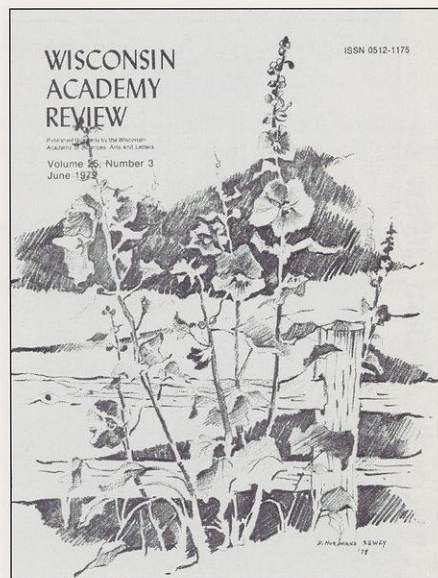
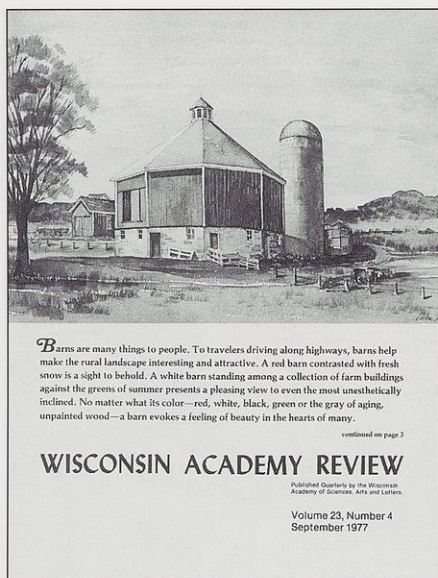
with upgraded paper, and from time to time color appeared on the cover. Feature articles were expanded, and there was an increase in the use of art and photography. Special departments included Vis-a-Vis, reflections on various matters by the executive director; Sending and Receiving, observations by Art Hove on language usage and communication (later changed to Windfalls); Point of Inflection, a guest column of views on the environment; and Inside the Academy, information on various programs and projects within the organization.

Reviews of books had long been part of the *Review*, and in the 1970s Bookmarks/Wisconsin was introduced, focusing specifically on books with a Wisconsin connection. In 1979 a





The 1970s



bookshelf title illustration which had been designed for the *Review* by Aaron Bohrod in 1956 was again used to announce the book review department. Bohrod's illustration continued to appear for the next decade. The design captured much of the Academy spirit and interest. In addition to a shelf of books representing the literary aspect, other figures represented the arts and sciences, especially chemistry, ornithology, botany, entomology, zoology, and archeology.

During the 1980s, the publication under the editorship of Patricia Powell was further expanded. Many issues grew to sixty-four pages, and the concept of special issues dedicated to specific themes was instituted. Exclusive issues featuring fiction and poetry included the work of many writers from around the state. Special arts issues on such themes as Wisconsin material culture, three-dimension art, and painters and printmakers continue to be used as reference tools by many of us. The Academy still receives requests for Powell-produced special issues covering such science-related themes as mining in Wisconsin, archeology, vegetation, and ground water. A number of specially-funded issues displayed stunning color graphics, and a Galleria department was introduced to feature the works of individual artists.



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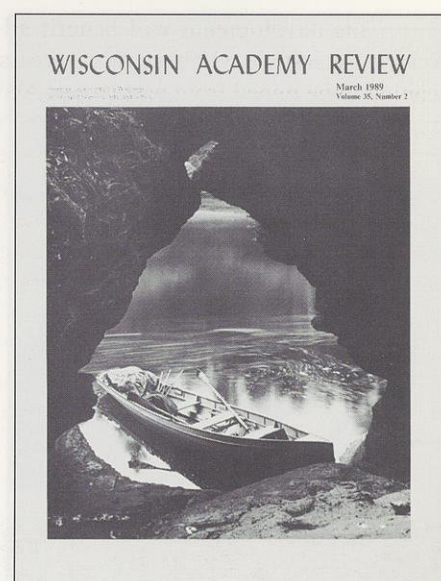
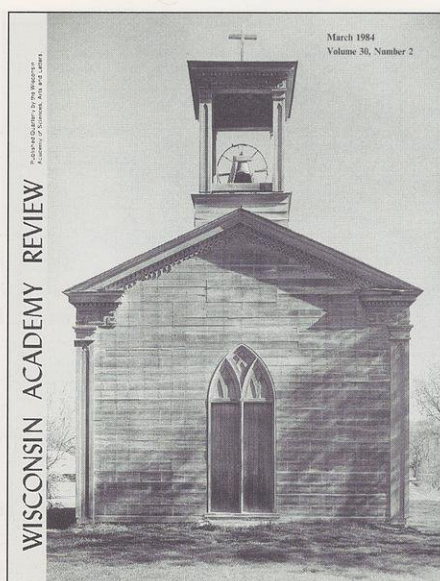
*Graduate students in  
the indexing class taught  
by Professor Ed Cortez at  
the School of Library and  
Information Studies at the  
University of Wisconsin-  
Madison are currently at  
work creating a  
retrospective index.*

.....

In the 1990s, the *Review* has once again changed its look and has adopted the sub-title, *A Journal of Wisconsin Culture*. We attempt to live up to our sub-title by featuring articles with a Wisconsin connection on various aspects of science, art, literature, technology, and education. Wisconsin Photographers' Showcase, Galleria, and Inside the Academy continue to be departments of the journal. We have added Chronicle, excerpts from letters and journals, and Poetry, a special section dedicated to the work of various poets. In keeping with the Academy objective of being "a place for poetry," we often feature an individual poet's work, accompanied by photographs and analysis of the poet's writing process and inspiration. The book review department has become simply Reviews, and we include commentary on compact discs and other recordings as well as video cassettes.

The *Review* has found its way to archives in such places as the Winterthur Museum in Delaware, which has in its files the issue on material culture and the more recent issue with articles on Gustav Stickley and Brooks Stevens. There is a copy of the George Catlin issue at Pipestone National Monument in western Minnesota, a copy of the issue containing the article on Antonin Dvořák in the historical archives at Spillville, Iowa, and a copy of the Carl Sandburg/Lilian Steichen article at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in Flat Rock, North Carolina. A





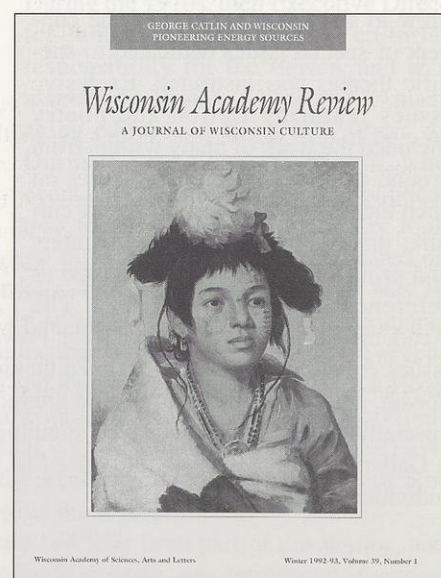
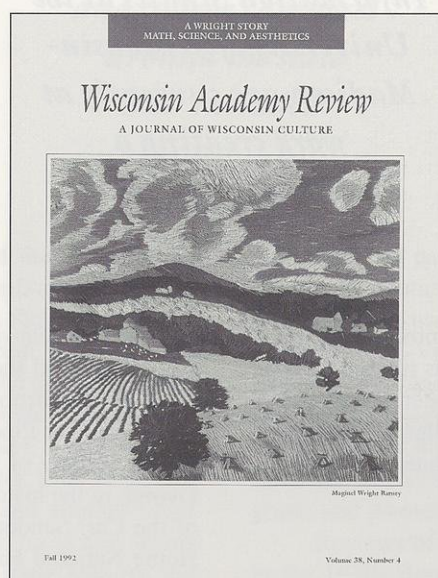
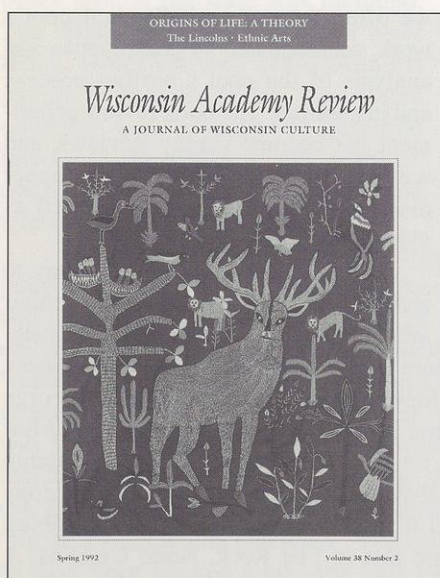
The 1980s.

few years ago I visited John Muir's home in Martinez, California, and saw copies of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* on the shelves in their visitors' center.

The members of the *Review* editorial committee continue to play an important part in the production of the journal by volunteering their time and expertise to evaluate manuscripts, offer advice on whether or not to publish, and make helpful suggestions.

Now there is a particularly exciting development in the history of the *Review*. Graduate students in the indexing class taught by Professor Ed Cortez at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are currently at work creating a retrospective index covering the

contents of the publication. Indexing initially was begun some years ago by two librarians at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eugene Engeldinger and Carol Kane. (Engeldinger is now library director at Carthage College, Kenosha, and Kane is head technical services and reference librarian at the Northern Waters Library System in Ashland.) The current indexing project began in June 1993 and is one of several practicum options offered to students in Cortez's class. Graduate students Carolina Menendez and Phil Kaveny were the first to choose the project as a practicum, and the work continues with Tana Elias. Her plan is to complete the subject index for three volumes (twelve issues) this semester.



The 1990s.



This development will benefit all of us who read the *Review*. At last we will have ready access to the rich materials waiting to be mined from past issues. According to Cortez, the opportunity for graduate students to choose the *Review* indexing project as a practicum is also beneficial to the library school. This is a complex undertaking, given the eclectic nature of the publication. In order to make the articles available to a wide audience, the students are assigning as many descriptors as necessary to each article so that users can be directed to articles of interest in a variety of ways. We plan to add the author/title index to the subject index and publish the retrospective compilation when the project is completed. After that, we hope to publish an annual index in each winter issue of the *Review*.



Book shelf art created by Aaron Bohrod for the Wisconsin Academy Review.

Another exciting component of the *Review* of the 1990s is our new relationship with Faxon Research Services of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Faxon Company has served libraries and publishers for more than 110 years, and *Review* articles will be indexed in their Faxon Finder database, which contains more than 10,000 titles. This means that *Review* articles will be widely accessible for research and general reference use to libraries and to individual users in academic, government, business, and public communities.

So, new life begins at forty for the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. We no longer cut and paste galleys. With the help of professionals at University Publications and American Printing in Madison, the *Review* is now produced using state-of-the art technology. Challenges relating to content, concerns over cost, and the intricacies of the technology keep us from being complacent. We are grateful for the generosity and talents of our scholarly and creative contributors, and we appreciate the support and interest of our readers. We are committed to the best we can achieve within the limits of our resources and abilities.

Happy birthday to you, *Wisconsin Academy Review*.

Faith B. Miracle is editorial director for the *Wisconsin Academy* and, since January 1990, editor of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*.

## Contributors

*Continued from page 3*

degree in poetry at the University of Alaska in Anchorage. She holds a B.A. degree in English from Western Washington University, Bellingham.

- ▶ Sharon Van Sluys was born in eastern rural Wisconsin, attended Beloit College and the University of Wisconsin–Madison and holds an M.F.A. degree from the Iowa Writers Workshop. In 1991 she won the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship of \$28,000, with the requirement that she travel for a year. Her collection of poems, *Under the Influence of Blackbirds*, was published by New Rivers Press and she is currently working on another book and some stories and essays. She lives in Madison.
- ▶ Timothy Walsh is an assistant dean in the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he received his Ph.D. His poetry and fiction have previously appeared in the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, and he is contemplating a novel “that’s been knocking around in my head for some time.”
- ▶ Matt Welter has worked in the national parks and is now working seasonally at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. He has been published in *Wildflower*, *The Waiting Room* and *Changing Men* and won the 1990 Poetry Society of Oklahoma Discovery Award. He is a member of the board for Open Mouth Poetry, a writing guild in northern Wisconsin.



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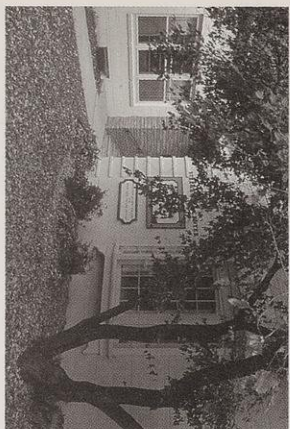
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