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MAP HISTORY . WOMEN AUTHORS
WRITING ABOUT WINTER AND LIFE IN THE NORTH

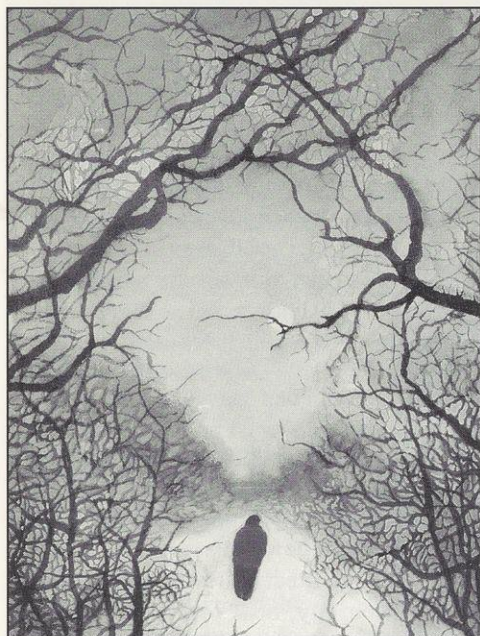
Wisconsin Academy Review

A JOURNAL OF WISCONSIN CULTURE



Wisconsin Academy Review

Winter 1995-96



Cover art from *Twelve Below Zero* by Anthony Bukoski. Painting by Gaylord Schanilec.

Front cover: *The Nest* by Aaron Bohrod. Oil on gesso, 20 x 16 inches. 1966. Courtesy Ariela Bohrod, a gift from her grandmother Ruth Bohrod.

Back cover: *The Musicians* by Neil Bohrod. Watercolor, pen, and ink. 14 x 11 inches, 1992. Courtesy Ruthanne Bessman.

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The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters was chartered by the State Legislature on March 16, 1870, as a membership organization serving the people of Wisconsin. Its mission is to encourage investigation in the sciences, arts, and letters and to disseminate information and share knowledge.



When John Steuart Curry came to Madison in 1936 as artist-in-residence at the university, the position was unique in the country. What made it even more unusual was the fact that the program was conceived by the dean of the school of agriculture in order to enrich the lives of the state's farmers, believing that "income is but a means to an end, and that end is the *good life*"; the good life, Dean Chris Christensen felt, included "literature, arts, music and history as well as practical training for the vocations" (Madison Art Center catalog).

In 1948, two years after Curry's death, Aaron Bohrod was named artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin. While the program was still under the aegis of the agriculture school, Bohrod's appointment met with the approval of the Art Education Department faculty as well. He continued Curry's work with rural artists and also was active with Madison artists and arts organizations. During the early fifties he turned to the *trompe l'oeil* style, and in 1954 one of the earliest paintings in his new form of expression, *A Lincoln Portrait*, appeared on the spring cover of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. We are pleased once again to feature Aaron Bohrod's art, this time along with the art of his son Neil and Neil's wife, Ruthanne Bessman.

We feel it is important from time to time to publish accounts of major projects being carried out in the state—projects which cover the gamut of science, art, and literature. We feature two such projects in this issue of the *Review*.

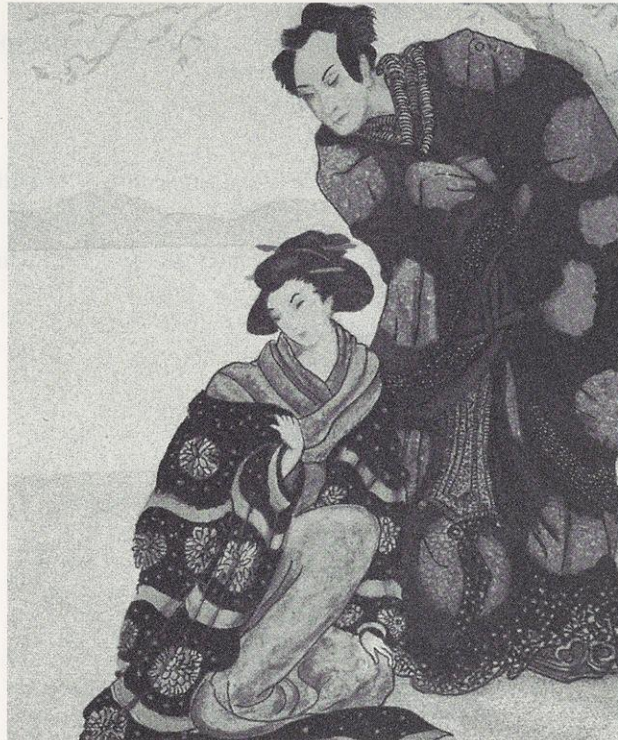
David Woodward, co-founder and director of the History of Cartography project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, provides us with a description of that monumental project. Those of us who naively see a map as simply a helpful tool whose main challenge lies in proper refolding will be enlightened by David's article and will henceforth consider maps in a more interesting way.

Emily Auerbach's article on nineteenth-century women authors reminds us that today's women know a freedom their earlier sisters-in-writing did not share, that indeed it took courage to write in a time when women were expected not to. There is some irony here, in that a Japanese woman, Lady Murasaki (978–1031?) probably invented the novel!

The Tale of Genji: A Novel in Four Parts was begun around 1001 and finished between 1015 and 1020. Interestingly, the novel's protagonist is a young man, and Murasaki speaks through his character to comment within the novel itself on the novel form:

To begin with, the novel does not simply consist in the author's telling a story about the adventures of some other person. On the contrary it happens because the storyteller's own experience of men and things . . . has moved him to an emotion so passionate that he can no longer keep it shut up in his heart.

*Translated from the Japanese
by Arthur Waley*



Frontispiece from 1935 Literary Guild edition of *The Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki, believed to be the world's first novel.

When Murasaki as a young girl showed an aptitude for learning Chinese from overhearing her brother's lessons, her father reportedly said, "If only you were a boy, how proud and happy I would be." Different continent, different century, but for some, an old familiar message.

In future issues of the *Review* we will explore other projects, such as the Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution and the university's role in the development of the Hubble Space Telescope.

The winter solstice sends some of us south—others of us just longingly gaze southward—in search of warmth and comfort during these cold, often dark

days. But it can be rewarding to meet the challenge of the North head on. In this spirit, we offer an interview with Superior author Anthony Bukoski (which exudes great warmth in spite of its setting), a short story, an essay, poems, and book reviews. Be brave and hardy and venture into these pages of literature inspired by winter in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Academy Gallery

December: E. Christian Egger, photography

January: Kathleen Raash, paintings

February: Tom Uttech, paintings

Correction: On page 8 of the fall issue, the dates in the Thornton Wilder caption should have been 1897–1975.

Faith B. Miracle

CONTRIBUTORS

- Emily Auerbach, professor of English, has received teaching excellence awards from the Division of University Outreach, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the University of Wisconsin System. She serves as co-host of “University of the Air” every Sunday afternoon on Wisconsin Public Radio and directs the award-winning “Courage to Write” project on women writers. She lives with her family in a converted barn in Middleton.
- Ruthanne Bessman has studied the traditional art of origami with leading paperfolders in the United States, Japan, England, and France and has taught the discipline throughout Wisconsin, in New York, and in Israel. Her work has been exhibited widely, most recently in the Origami World Exhibition in Japan and the Madison Public Library, and will be shown at the Memorial Union, Madison, in January 1996.
- Neil Bohrod attended the Art Students League in New York, where he won a John Sloan Memorial Scholarship. He lives in Madison with his wife, Ruthanne Bessman, and their infant daughter, Ariela.
- Linda Cosner grew up on a dairy farm near Chetek in the northwestern part of the state and graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Superior. Even though she now lives in Santa Clara, California, much of her writing reflects her Wisconsin roots.
- Yvette Viets Flaten holds degrees in Spanish and history from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. As an Air Force child she traveled extensively in this country and Europe. She now lives in Eau Claire and writes fiction and poetry.
- Karin Gordon lives in Lake Bluff, Illinois, but for the past ten years has spent a third of the year in Eagle River, where she does most of her writing.
- Elizabeth Ivers grew up in west Texas and received a B.A. degree from St. John’s College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and an M.S. degree in land resources from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She works as a community services specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and lives in Madison.
- Michael Longrie was born in Superior and received a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, an M.A. in English from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and was awarded the Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He teaches English at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.
- Diane Snyder-Haug was born and raised in La Crosse. She has published previously in *Wisconsin Trails* magazine, and her short story, “Shiftings,” was selected as a finalist in the 1993 Dorothy Daniels Honorary Writing Award Contest sponsored by the National League of American Pen Women, Inc. She recently moved to Savannah, Georgia.
- Christopher Tozier holds a degree in creative writing from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His poems have appeared in *Cream City Review*, *Mankato Poetry Review*, *The Maryland Poetry Review*, and *Xandadu*. He lives in Madison.
- David Woodward, the Arthur H. Robinson Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, was recently named a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. He was the 1995 Panizzi Lecturer at the British Library, where he discussed the producers, distributors, and consumers of maps in the Italian Renaissance. He publishes a series of literary broadsheets about map history through the Juniper Press in his Madison home. He has directed the History of Cartography project at the University of Wisconsin–Madison since 1981.

Members of the Wisconsin Academy receive four issues of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, the annual issue of *Transactions*, six issues of the newsletter *Inside the Academy*, discounts on publications, and invitations to Academy activities. For additional membership information, write the Academy office, 1922 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705.

Mapping Map History: The History of Cartography Project at the University of Wisconsin–Madison

by David Woodward

The History of Cartography project is a research and publishing endeavor that has attracted international attention to the history of maps and mapping. The results of our research are appearing in a multi-volume illustrative and narrative series of books titled The History of Cartography.

The conception of the History of Cartography project can be pinpointed to a specific time and place. In May 1977, I was walking on a country footpath with J. Brian Harley, the late co-editor of the series, near his home in Devon, England. Our conversation turned to the possibility of writing a four-volume general history of cartography. The project officially began in 1981 when the federal government provided funding. The initial four volumes have now become six, and Volume 2, which explores the cartographies of non-Western societies, has now grown to three books. The project requires the cooperation of over one hundred authors in more than twenty countries and brings together cartographic materials that have never before appeared together in a single book.

Organized broadly by historical period, the series spans 40,000 years of history and has worldwide scope. Challenges in writing map history have arisen for each historical period, such as reconstructing the maps of Classical Greece and Rome where few artifacts have remained; or meeting new problems (at least for our Western minds) of language and interpretation in the maps of the Islamic and South Asian cultures; or exploring the traditional maps of China, Japan, Korea, and other East and Southeast Asian societies, where nothing, even in languages other than English, had ever been attempted.

The three published books resulting from these many challenges have been received enthusiastically. Five more books are in the planning stages. The next book, the third of Volume 2, completes our study of traditional non-Western cartographies. Eventually we will return to Europe in Volume 3 to document the Renaissance, a rich period of cartographic history when European expansion brought cultures face to face. The last three volumes will address the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. When the twentieth-century volume appears in 2007, the year I am eligible for retirement, the twentieth century itself will have become history!



.....
*Maps are graphic
 representations that
 facilitate a spatial
 understanding of things,
 concepts, conditions,
 processes, or events in the
 human world.*

*The History of Cartography,
 Volume 1, page xvi.*

In describing the route taken in overseeing this project and editing the books over the past fifteen years, I want to highlight some of the intellectual tensions that have arisen during the course of our journey. A good point of departure on this journey in mapping map history is the tension between defining a “map” in terms of its function as facilitating spatial understanding (or, in the case of some propaganda maps, misunderstanding), and as a type of representation with rather fixed parameters of scale and viewpoint. In the preface to Volume 1, we suggested that “maps are graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world.” Our definition thus

embraced maps which by virtue of intent or explicit representation have functioned as maps, irrespective of the object mapped, the intended function, or the level of technical competence achieved in the mapmaking processes or final representation. This definition of “map” proved to be liberating and overwhelming at the same time.

Since discussions relating to the meaning of map often excite interest, particularly in the age of geographical information systems, we were surprised that no discussion of this defi-

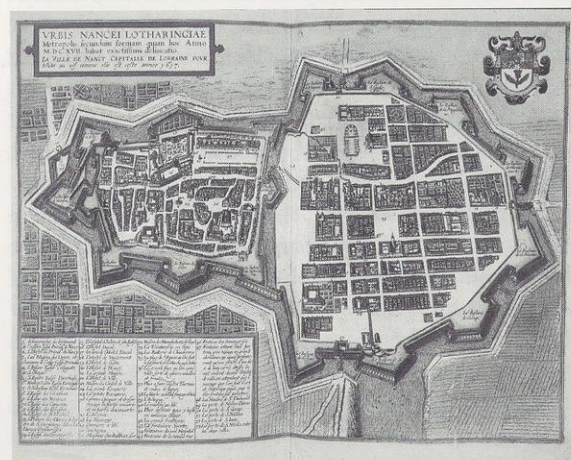
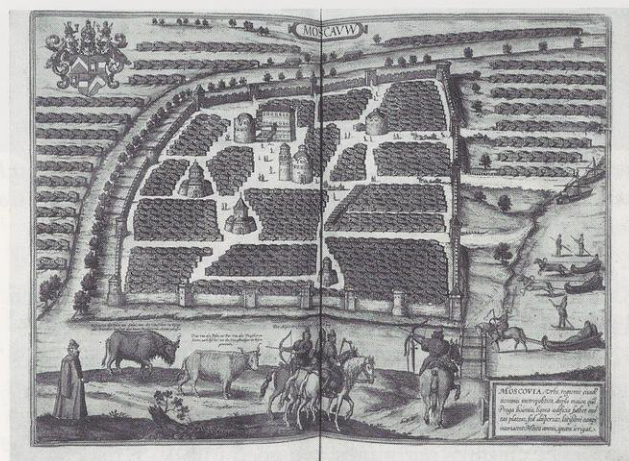
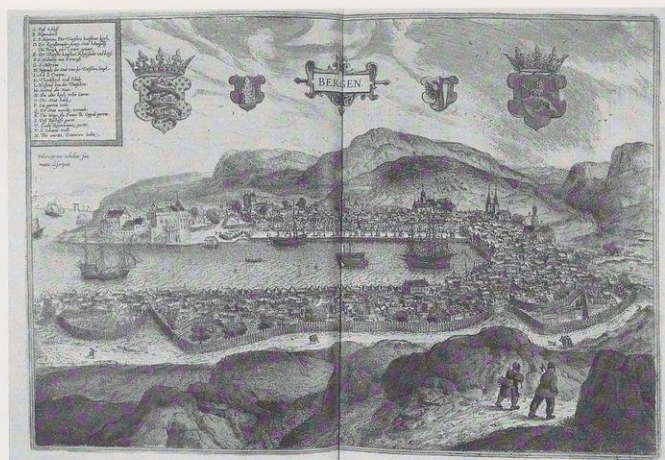
nition appeared in print until this year, when Denis Wood, a professor of design, suggested it includes exploded views of toaster ovens! This reflects our desire to have a definition of map based on their functional context rather than on their external form.

Earlier the debate had been more straightforward about whether maps are views of the earth, either from an angle or from directly above. For example, P.D.A. Harvey suggests in his preface to *The History of Topographical Maps* that views such as those in the engravings of Braun and Hogenberg “aren’t maps at all. They’re pictures, bird’s eye views. Why are they called maps?” This largely misses the point. I find it more helpful to ask whether the drawing facilitates a spatial understanding of the subject. In *The History of Cartography*, we call the Braun and Hogenberg “views” maps because that is the way people in the sixteenth century understood how their world (their town) was laid out. It makes more sense to be inclusive rather than exclude a whole range of artifacts (views) that make it possible for us to improve our spatial knowledge. This is particularly true now that computer technology and digital mapping are enabling us to escape more easily from the “flatland” of two-dimensional printed maps.

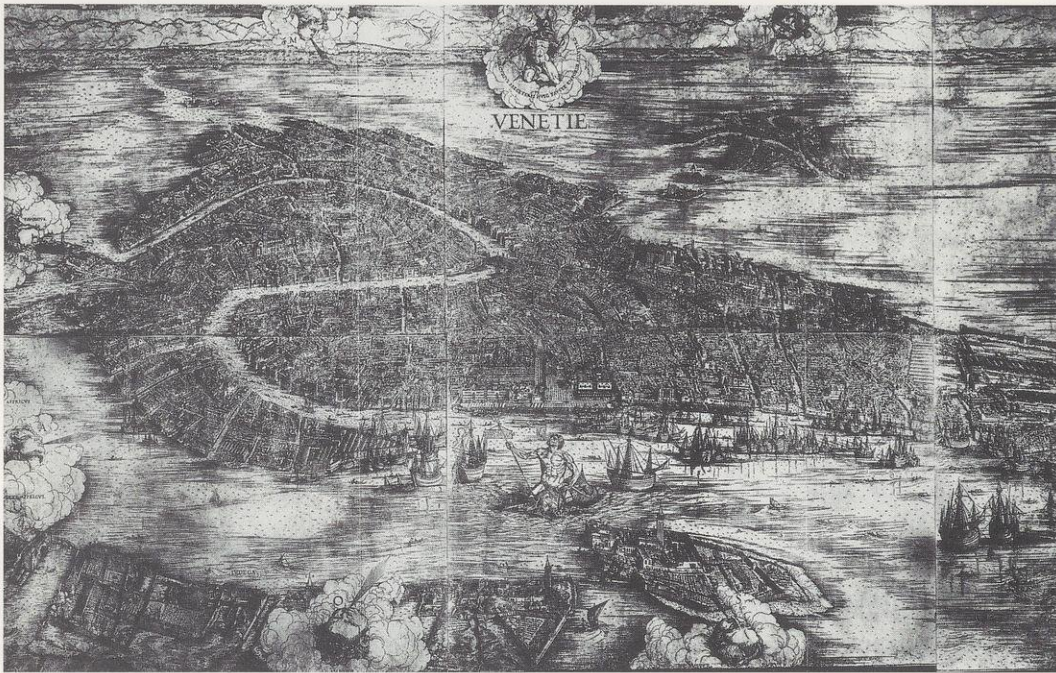
Our definition was liberating in the sense that our notion of map went beyond Western terms, as a measured Euclidean representation of the physical environment, to embrace non-Western representations of the cosmographical, metaphysical, or historical worlds that have tended to characterize the mapping tradition in many non-Western cultures, worlds just as real to those societies as the physical worlds of the West.

The scope of *The History of Cartography* has grown in response to our experience. It has not followed a neatly thought-out plan and would have suffered if it had. Our original intent was to treat the cartography of all non-Western societies in Volume 1. This was not only to include discussions of the maps of the prehistoric, ancient, and medieval West and the traditional cartographies of Asia, but also those of the indigenous societies of Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. The utter impracticality and, one might add, the Eurocentricity of this view was soon apparent as the richness and diversity of the non-Western mapping traditions emerged.

It soon became obvious that we should devote a separate volume to the traditional cartographies of the Islamic and Asian societies. We continued to assume that a single “Asian” volume would suffice. Once again, however, as the amount of material coming within our definition of cartography continued to expand, and as the notion of “Asia” was in any case Eurocentric, it became necessary to divide this second volume into two books. Later we realized a third book devoted to the rest of the non-European indigenous traditions was required to do the subject justice. From these three books of which Volume 2 is composed, we may be able to draw conclusions about when the creation of material artifacts representing spatial behavior was regarded as necessary; it is already clear that not every culture felt this need.



Views of Bergen, Moscow, and Nancy (top to bottom) from *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* by Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, 1572–1617. This atlas was the first systematic atlas of cities. The variable angle of view is characteristic of the atlas. Courtesy The Newberry Library, Edward E. Ayer Collection.



Jacopo de' Barbari's view of Venice from 1500 was one of the earliest large town views intended to commemorate the mercantile and political power of major Renaissance cities. Courtesy The Newberry Library, Franco Novacco Collection.

One of the things we have learned from this project, and that is especially pertinent in the work we are doing on indigenous cartographies, is that different cultures and different times produce very different kinds of maps for very different functions. Since each culture tends to impose its own culture and time on other cultures and times, we need to ask: What can we learn from the ways in which other cultures view their world and themselves? For example, a sea chart made in the Marshall Islands is a mnemonic device intended to teach the geography of wave patterns among the island shoals of the Pacific. It is not what we would normally think of as a map. Our culture thinks it knows what a map is supposed to look like. We need to broaden our thinking. We need to learn that measured geometry is not the only framework that can help us get around in the world.

The Aztec, Toltec, and Mixtec maps of pre-colonial Mesoamerica are inextricably tied up with the history of the people. For example, the Codex Xolotl shows the migration of the Aztecs from their original home to Tenochtitlán, now Mexico City. Another type of map, the *lienzo*, is a record of a group's history and geographical boundaries. Its content can be traced back to the sixteenth century. The *lienzos* are used today to legitimize these claims, carrying out the pre-Hispanic tradition of cartographic histories to the present day.

In addition to being stimulating, our expanded definition has been demanding. We might well have followed Charles Singer's *History of Technology* lead in tracing only the history of technology in the West, but we chose not to do that, thinking that the juxtaposition of different cartographic cultures would be of interest. The response from scholars in other fields,

including anthropologists, art historians, historians, and students of literature, has encouraged us that this was the right decision.

A second tension exists between seeing maps as a progressive index of civilization or as reflections of cultures that are different but equal. There are two clearly defined sides to this issue. One side—the cultural particularists—would say that we can learn something from the cultures of the world, that we need to immerse ourselves in their cultures and their languages in order to improve our understanding of human beings. This side would argue that one culture's cartography is not innately

more important or better than another's—they are just different. Comparison is therefore not appropriate.

The other side—the cultural universalists—might argue that this approach results in a lack of detachment about these cultures, that the particular view of cultures does not recognize universals of quality and, therefore, negates the idea that there could be cultural levels and progress in cultures, and that cultures can and should be compared. Applied to the History of Cartography project, this group would say that cartography is only important to study if it can be shown that there is progress and improvement in absolute accuracy and precision. In general, of course, this can be easily demonstrated as the needs of society for more precise information about the land have changed from medieval wayfinding, guiding a pilgrim across Europe over a period of weeks and months, to guiding a cruise missile at the speed of sound two hundred feet above the ground.

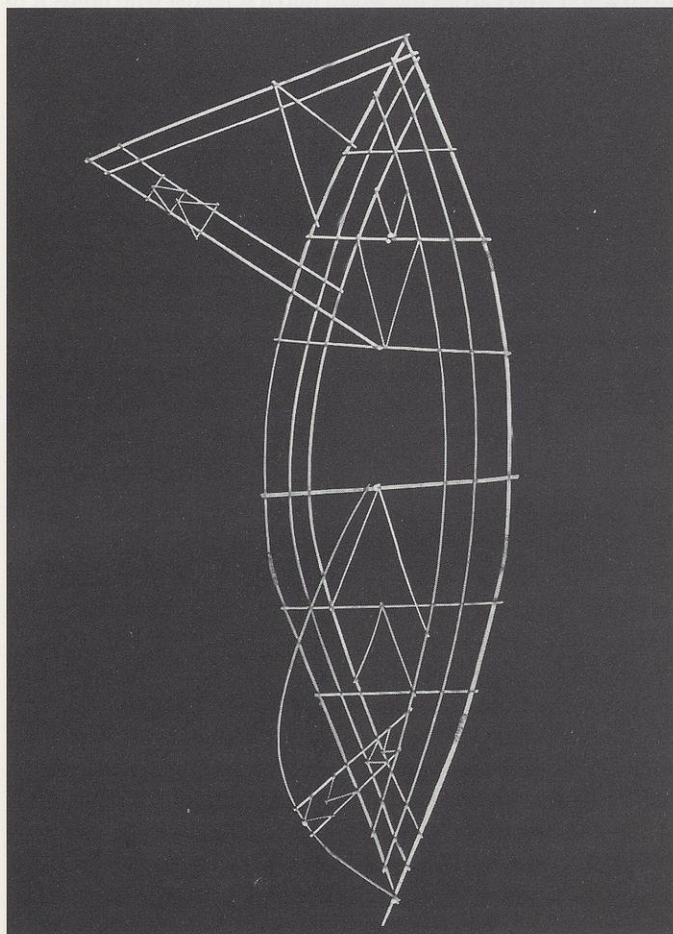
Like the philosopher Merleau-Ponty, however, we need to draw a distinction between geometrical or mathematical space and anthropological or cultural space. If, as I suspect, the universalists are defining maps or mapping only in terms of the measured accuracy of longitude and latitude, then of course the Western paradigm has become universal, like Coca Cola. This, however, reduces mapping to a mathematical activity (a conformal mapping in a geometrical or an engineering sense) and ignores mapping as a cultural activity. We cannot generalize the longitude and latitude lines in a projection, so of course it is an independent and objective scheme. But we can, and have, chosen projections for political and social ends, and it is this extension of the definition of mapping that complicates the idea of

the history of cartography purely as a mirror of improvements in mathematical precision.

The Western yardstick also previously had the effect of inhibiting understanding of “Eastern” cartographies on their own terms. What the history of Asian cartography may reveal, however, is that the very success of this universal cartographic paradigm may in fact have impoverished and dehumanized modern cartography. Assistant editor Cordell Yee, now a professor at St. John’s College, Annapolis, persuasively argues:

On traditional Chinese maps pictorial representations had a more central role. The mapmaker saw art—poetry, calligraphy, and painting—as essential to the task. To such a practitioner, a map is a fusion of image and text, of the useful and the beautiful. In the twentieth century, modern mathematical cartography displaced traditional techniques and put an end to this idea of maps. Whether this was progress remains an open question.

The History of Cartography
Volume 2, Book 2



A stick chart from the Marshall Islands. The central framework of long curving sticks represents the refracting eastern and western swells of the sea. The chevrons indicate the inner section of swells refracting around islands, and the horizontal sticks represent the distances at which different indications of an island can be detected. Courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.



A map of the Valley of Mexico, circa 1540. This appears as page one of the *Codex Xolotl*, one of the earliest Aztec cartographic histories known. The map shows topographic and hydrographic features, as well as hieroglyphic names of places in the valley and beyond. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

To say that Marshall Islands stick charts are inferior to hydrographic charts, then, makes as much sense as saying that a Lascaux cave painting, Duccio’s *Maestà*, Botticelli’s *Primavera*, and Picasso’s *Guernica* can be fitted into a grand progressive model. I find this very hard to accept, and I strongly feel that if cultures can be ranked, with the West at the top, the resulting arrogance may blind us to what we can learn from others.



A third tension rests on the question of whether a map is a passive mirror of reality or a humanly and socially constructed artifact. One does not have to be politically correct to see that a map or picture is not a representation of reality but a representation of ideas, usually highly conventionalized, about how we view reality. Nevertheless, they seem to work consistently as wayfinding devices and, because they have built up a tradition of expectation in this regard, they are fun when they are wrong, and their apparent exactitude has long been the target of literary satire from Aristophanes to Lewis Carroll.

The notion that maps are humanly created objects and do not mirror facts in reality is now central to copyright law. When lawyers start getting interested in how maps are made, the debate breaks out of circular discussions in cartographic journals, and I find this fascinating. Ideas, of course, cannot be copyrighted, but a landmark case, *Feist Publications vs. Rural Telephone Service* (1991), could be read to suggest that maps are compilations of facts and have no creative input. But in a later case, *Mason vs. Montgomery Data* (1992), the idea of maps as facts was rejected. The appeals court decision in that case ruled that maps are not facts but artifacts that bear the unique stamp of their makers, and thus are copyrightable.

Mapmaking is not a one-way process, but one that experiences constant feedback. Having been created within specific contexts, maps are used for manipulative social and often political purposes. Many times, the purposes for which maps were made are totally different from the ways in which they are used. Maps sometimes take on lives of their own, and suggest to their viewers relationships and meanings that the maker never dreamed of. This is part of their magic. They have acted to teach, verify, defend, claim, excuse, mask, negotiate, misdirect, mislead, and achieve any number of purposes in complex societies and cultures. Whether or not these purposes sometimes or always aggrandize one race or class or gender above another depends on one's view. But one thing is certain: Maps are in no way neutral.



Our focus on the near horizon is Volume 3, the Renaissance, a volume that many map enthusiasts have been waiting for. I can assure you that it will be a large reference tool which will answer the questions that researchers have in this field about how maps were made and published. But it will also be sensitive to the reasons why maps were made in the first place, and how they were used. The emphasis will thus be as much on the

consumer as the producer, less on metric accuracy, and more on the cultural aspects of mapping.

When Mercator is discussed in Volume 3, therefore, the treatment will go beyond the projection of accurately positioned points. We will agree with Lewis Carroll that:

'What's the good of Mercator's North Poles and Equators
Tropics, Zones, and Meridian Lines?'
So the Bellman would cry: and the crew would reply
'They are merely conventional signs!'

Hunting of the Snark, 1876

Mercator's atlas was far more than a book of maps. It was none other than a revelation of how the world was created. It enabled the person on the street to have a God's-eye view. Indeed, this was the downfall of cosmographers in the sixteenth century. They became too big for their boots. Science historian Bruno Latour points out that the "great man is a little man looking at a good map. In Mercator's frontispiece, Atlas is transformed from a god who carries the world into a scientist who holds it in his hand!" This verged on the blasphemous.

Maps are sometimes thought to be oversimplifications and even stumbling blocks to our accurate cultural understanding of

NOTHING SUBLUNARY IS ETERNAL

At times the sheer monumentality of orchestrating such a research task has been daunting. Part of this stems from the desire to produce a history in chronological fashion. Anthony Grafton captures this sentiment well when he says:

I could have stayed with Poliziano [his earlier subject of study on the Italian Renaissance] forever, rather like the character in David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down* whose study of sanitation in the Victorian novel never emerges from its first background chapter on the sewer in prehistory.

Defenders of the Text
Harvard University Press, 1991

I am also reminded of Edward Molineux, who wrote to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge as a subscriber to their world atlas, which was being issued in parts:

As I have been taught that nothing sublunary is eternal, I presume that even the Series of Maps published by your Society will one day have an end; but [as] present appearances induce one to think that such an event must be witnessed by one of my remote posterity . . . If it takes so long a period to prepare each number, this was known, or at least ought to have been known when the scheme was projected, & had I dreamed that an atlas which I fondly hoped would be so use-

ful to me during the best period of my life would have remained useless so very many years I certainly would never have subscribed.

Letter, 1841.

One might also assume that the editor of the atlas, on reading this letter, might have commented that had he known it would be so much trouble during the best period of his life, he might never have started it.

Despite the strong motivation to finish the series quickly, I can say that we are nonetheless thorough. Every reference in the books is checked against the original source for accuracy of spelling, transliteration, and citation. Other factors impinge on the publishing schedule we strive to meet. The books are published by The University of Chicago Press, which retains independent readers who judge our manuscripts and sometimes demand extensive changes, as was the case with the book on East and Southeast Asian cartographies.

Finally, with the cutbacks and possible demise of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is one of our primary funding agencies, and the realignment of private foundations and corporations to more socially visible concerns, the project's work is slowed by financial burdens and will take even longer to complete.

David Woodward

the world. Their power has often been interpreted purely in the wayfinding and mathematical sense, but now they are often said to lie. Yet maps have acted as varied and essential tools for visual thinking about the world on global, continental, national, and local scales. They have shaped scientific hypotheses, formed political and military strategy, formulated social policy, and reflected cultural ideas about the landscape. They have been subject to changing aesthetics in cartography in an age of geographic information systems where content is everything, form is nothing.

By the time our volume on twentieth-century mapping is written, the technological constraints of traditional cartography that severely hampered the development of fluid and versatile tools of representation will have been removed. As Robert Kaplan has written,

Maps, with their neat boundaries and colors, have less and less to do with reality in the Third World. Borders and the very states they supposedly contain are disintegrating under the pressures of poverty, population growth, lawlessness, and resulting chaos.

Kaplan sees “The Last Map” in the twenty-first century as

a three-dimensional hologram . . . with layers of group identities, some in motion. Replacing the fixed and abrupt lines on a flat space would be a shifting pattern of buffer entities. Instead of borders, there would be moving centers of power as in the Middle Ages. Henceforward, the map of the world will never be static. This future map—in a sense, The Last Map—will be an ever mutating representation of chaos.

Atlantic Monthly, February 1994

Cartographers, or their equivalents in the digital world, will have to address these needs of inventing a more fluid form of representation. They will also need to offer a cultural interpretation of the world, and be as rich as the Fra Mauro map of the world of 1459, with its carefully described legends in tiny blocks of text sprinkled across the mapped landscape. In a sense, then, some of the representations of the past have already offered this flexibility, and we should surely be aware of the richness of this tradition.

In this spirit, and in cooperation with the Wisconsin Academy’s Center for the Book, we are developing a cultural map of Wisconsin that will function as a cartographic portrait of the state. Compared to the official state highway map, the purpose of which is to show how to drive from A to B where the destination is presumably already known, the cultural map will be for browsing, to draw the visitor into the state, pique the curiosity, and provide an incentive to visit areas not already known and off the beaten track. The map also will provide a baseline of cultural literacy for the inhabitants of Wisconsin.

Aesthetics change, and the age of information is already claiming its own aesthetic. But are we condemned to accept crude generic maps if they are made by computer? Or can we rightly ask why this incredibly flexible medium cannot produce

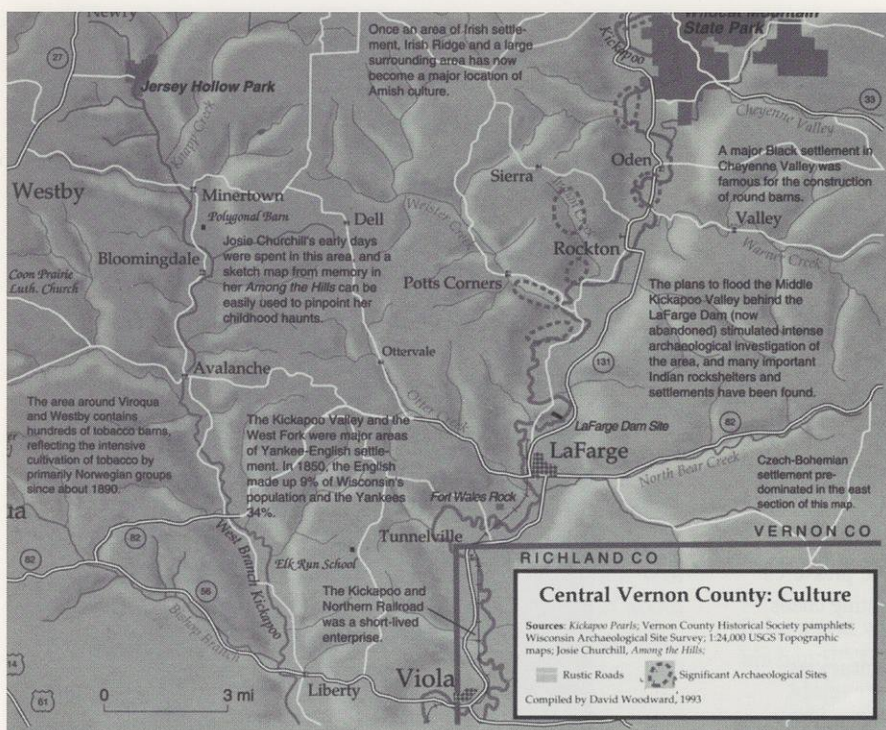


Title page for Mercator's seventeenth-century *Atlas Sive Cosmographicae*. Courtesy William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

maps of far more richness than we have ever seen, maps that would not only help us form hypotheses about the world at different scales of representation but also instill a love of the cultural landscape, as many historical maps have done and still do for us? It is to recapture this cultural tradition of cartography that the History of Cartography project at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is all about. ■

Acknowledgments

The History of Cartography project is funded by both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation, a rare imprimatur of support from both the arts and the sciences. Other funding has been received from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, and many other generous



Detail from a prototype of the Cultural Map of Wisconsin, a cartographic portrait of the state scheduled for completion in August 1996.

and prestigious granting agencies. Support is also welcomed and encouraged from individual donors, an increasingly important and necessary source of funds now that government support is on the wane.

I would like to thank Charles W. Dean, outreach and development specialist for the History of Cartography project, for his assistance in preparing this article.

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The History of Cartography

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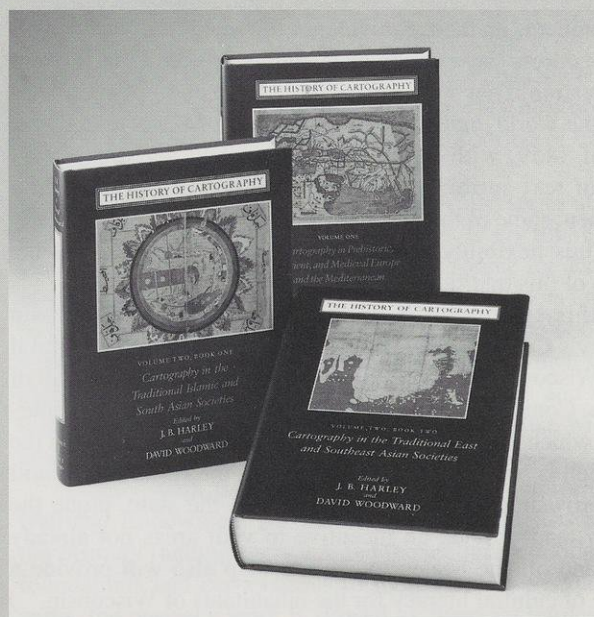


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The Courage to Write: A University of Wisconsin Project on Women Authors

by Emily Auerbach

The inspiring principle which alone gives me the courage to write is that of so presenting our human life as to help my readers.

George Eliot

The “inspiring principle” behind the Courage to Write project is my belief in the power of women’s literature to help readers gain a fuller sense of “our human life.” Since 1989 we have worked to promote statewide, national, and international awareness of women authors through audio/radio programs, written guides, and independent study courses. Our goal is a series of at least fifty-two programs on women writers to be broadcast once a week for a year to combat the notion that women’s history is something one does only in March for Women’s History Month and then forgets about for eleven months. So far, the series has reached over 200,000 Wisconsin listeners as well as schools, libraries, book discussion groups, and individual readers in thirty-eight states and several other countries. As an Independent Study course for college credit or for enrichment, the Courage to Write project has brought women’s literature to students from age eighteen to ninety, from Oshkosh to Denver to Tokyo.



Harper’s Bazaar featured this illustration of a walking dress in 1872. As Edith Wharton writes in *The House of Mirth*, “A woman is asked out as much for her clothes as for herself.”

Women of earlier eras had to overcome tremendous obstacles in order to write. Aristotle had made it clear that “silence is a woman’s glory.” Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s doctor claimed her illness was “brain fungus” afflicting women who wrote poetry, while Massachusetts Bay Colony governor John Winthrop warned that a woman who forgot her place, “giving herself wholly to reading and writing . . . many books,” might go insane. Looking back at the women writers before her, Virginia Woolf marveled at their perseverance:

What genius, what integrity it must have required in face of all that criticism, in the midst of that purely patriarchal society, to hold fast to the thing as they saw it without shrinking. . . . They alone were deaf to that persistent voice, now grumbling, now patronising, now domineering, now grieved, now shocked, now angry, now avuncular, that voice that cannot let women alone, but must be at them.

A Room of One's Own, 1929

We must, Woolf insists, not only ignore criticism but have money, a room of our own, "and the freedom and the courage to write exactly what we think."

A woman of genius could expect a life of ostracism and frustration. The heroine of George Eliot's final novel (*Daniel Deronda*, 1876) laments, "You may try, but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl." Edith Wharton satirically notes, "Genius is of small use to a woman who does not know how to do her hair" (*The Touchstone*, 1900).

Like bandits masking their faces while committing crimes, many women writers hid their identities while writing. Jane Austen not only published her novels anonymously but concealed the very act of writing. Preferring not to fix a creaky door hinge, she hid manuscript pages under the blotter on her desk at the sound of approaching visitors. Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë became Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell because they "had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked upon with prejudice." Mary Ann Evans and Aurora Dupin became George Eliot and George Sand. As Sand learned from a French publisher, women were expected to make babies, not books. After all, Napoleon had pronounced female equality a "mad idea" and labeled women "nothing but machines for producing children."

"God keep me from what they call *households*," Emily Dickinson observed in a letter of 1850, choosing instead a secluded life devoted to reading, thinking, and writing. Far from being the crazy, broken-hearted pitiful old maid depicted by her earlier biographers, Dickinson emerges in her nearly 1,800 poems as a fiery, witty, and profound woman determined to remain true to her vision. "Much madness is divinest sense," she begins one poem; elsewhere she describes the "divine insanity" and endless possibilities open to her as a woman poet. Her life may seem narrow and restricted, as imprisoning as when in girlhood "They put

me in the Closet—/ Because they liked me 'still.'" But those who look within the closet will see her "Brain—go round" and will discern a life of sheer mental freedom.

Dickinson acknowledges that writing can shock. People may go blind if dazzled with the truth directly, so Dickinson advises, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant—/ Success in Circuit lies."



Examples of "Success in Circuit," or the strategy of indirection, appear throughout women's literature as writers mask not only their identities but their messages. Although all her heroines marry and live happily ever after, Jane Austen challenges marital property laws (why else is Mrs. Bennet so desperate in *Pride and Prejudice* to find husbands for her five daughters?), disparity in educational opportunities for men and women, and conventional notions of female "accomplishments." The heroine of Austen's *Northanger Abbey* denounces history as a tiresome list of kings and battles with "hardly any women at all," and the heroine of Austen's final novel discounts the entire literary canon:

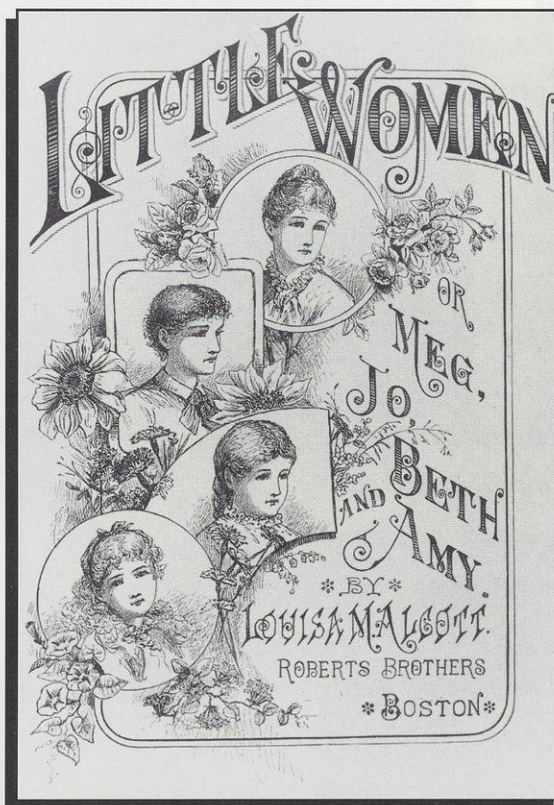
Captain Harville: All histories are against you, all stories, prose and verse. . . . I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs all talk of woman's fickleness. But, perhaps, you will say, these were all written by men.

Anne Elliot: Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree: the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.

Persuasion, 1818

Such bold passages appear like hidden pictures or secret codes in a children's activity book. Some readers discern nothing but the surface descriptions of wedding gowns, carriage rides, and ballroom dances. Thomas Carlyle, for instance, blindly labeled Austen's dazzling works "mere dishwashings."

Yet women writers also received censure if they ventured outside the domestic sphere. Some reviewers charged Mary Shelley with "unfeminine coarseness" for creating *Frankenstein* (1818), while others avowed that her husband, the famous Percy Shelley, must be the novel's true author. "I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely



one train of feeling, to my husband," Mary Shelley argued in the Preface to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*.

Two centuries before Mary Shelley, America's first poet, Anne Bradstreet, complained that women writers could never win:

Such despite they cast on female wits;
If what I do prove well, it won't advance,
They'll say it's stolen, or else it was
by chance.

Prologue to *The Tenth Muse*, 1650

Bradstreet complains that "carping tongues" insist she use a needle rather than "the poet's pen."

To write was to risk suffering, rejection, and ridicule, many women learned the hard way. Harriet Beecher Stowe's controversial *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), the novel Abraham Lincoln claimed had started the Civil War, generated scores of nasty reviews ("a foul-mouthed hag" who published "the loathsome rakings of a foul fancy") and piles of hate mail, including an envelope containing the chopped-off ear of a slave. Because Kate Chopin had candidly portrayed a woman's sexuality in *The Awakening* (1899), the book was removed from St. Louis libraries and its author ejected from the city's Fine Arts Club.

Both Kate Chopin and Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote amid the chaos of raising six children. Chopin was a widow; Harriet Beecher Stowe was nicknamed "The Widow Stowe" because of her scholarly, hypochondriacal husband's frequent (and, one suspects, deliberate) absences from home. In 1845 Stowe writes her husband in desperation that she needs "some place where I could go and be quiet and satisfied":

I am sick of the smell of sour milk, and sour meat, and sour everything, and then the clothes *will* not dry, and no wet thing does, and everything smells mouldy. . . . and you know that, except this poor head, my unfortunate household has no main-spring, for nobody feels any kind of responsibility to do a thing in time, place, or manner, except as I oversee it.

.....

*Literature cannot be the
business of a woman's life,
and it ought not to be.*

Robert Southey, Poet Laureate of
England, to Charlotte Brontë in a
March 1837 letter

.....

In a sentence written long before Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Stowe entreats her husband, "If I am to write I must have a room to myself that will be my room."

What of the women who not only had no room of their own but no *house* of their own? Contemporary black novelist and poet Alice Walker writes in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1974), "What then are we to make of Phillis Wheatley, a slave, who owned not even herself?" Kidnapped from her native Africa at age seven, Wheatley was bought by slaveholders who taught her to read English and Latin and encouraged her to write verses. She became a curiosity, capturing the attention of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, but the novelty waned.

Wheatley died at age thirty-one of malnutrition, her second volume of poetry unpublished and apparently destroyed.

Like that lost volume of poetry, the words of most black women have vanished. How could they write in a society denying them education, time, resources, and respect, asks contemporary poet June Jordan in "The Difficult Miracle of Black Poetry in America, or Something like a Sonnet for Phillis Wheatley":

A poet is African in
Africa, or Irish in
Ireland, or French on the
Left Bank of Paris, or
white in Wisconsin. A Poet
writes in her own language. .
. . . A poet is somebody free. . . .

How should there be Black poets
in America? It was not natural. And
she was the first.

Massachusetts Review, Summer 1986

Jordan labels her "Phillis Miracle Wheatley."

Even those minority writers who were technically free faced enormous burdens. Harriet Wilson, the first African-American woman novelist, described the horror of an indentured servant in the north in her autobiographical *Our Nig* (1859). Unlike Stowe's earlier *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which had become a best-



Kate Chopin with some of her children. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society. "My mother . . . did not have a study or any place where she ever really shut herself off from the household." Lelia Chopin.

seller among self-righteous northerners, *Our Nig* brought Wilson no money. Who would buy it? Not Wilson's fellow African-Americans, who lacked money, literacy, and leisure, and not white abolitionists anxious to avoid a black finger pointing in their own direction. *Our Nig* disappeared from print for over a century, until extraordinary detective work by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., led to its discovery and reissue by Random House in 1981.

No wonder most of us have never heard of Harriet Wilson, or for that matter, Mourning Dove, the first Native American woman to write both a novel and an autobiography. As her heroine informs a skeptical white man, "even if I am a 'squaw' as you call me, I may use the pen!" Mourning Dove's *Cogewea* appeared fifteen years after she wrote it, her prose altered by a white editor determined to "help" her with English, her second language. "I felt like it was some one else's book and not mine at all," she wrote (June 4, 1928). Mourning Dove's autobiography has been available only since 1990.

We simply cannot assume in the case of minority and women writers that an unfamiliar, therefore seemingly minor, work deserves to remain in the minor league. (Sometimes this is indeed the case, however. I remember as a music major discovering unknown composers, only to conclude that they deserved to stay unknown!) We must ask *what were the reasons* behind the disappearance of a woman writer's works. Have we based our own judgments of women writers on an incomplete record and on the biased reviews of earlier eras?

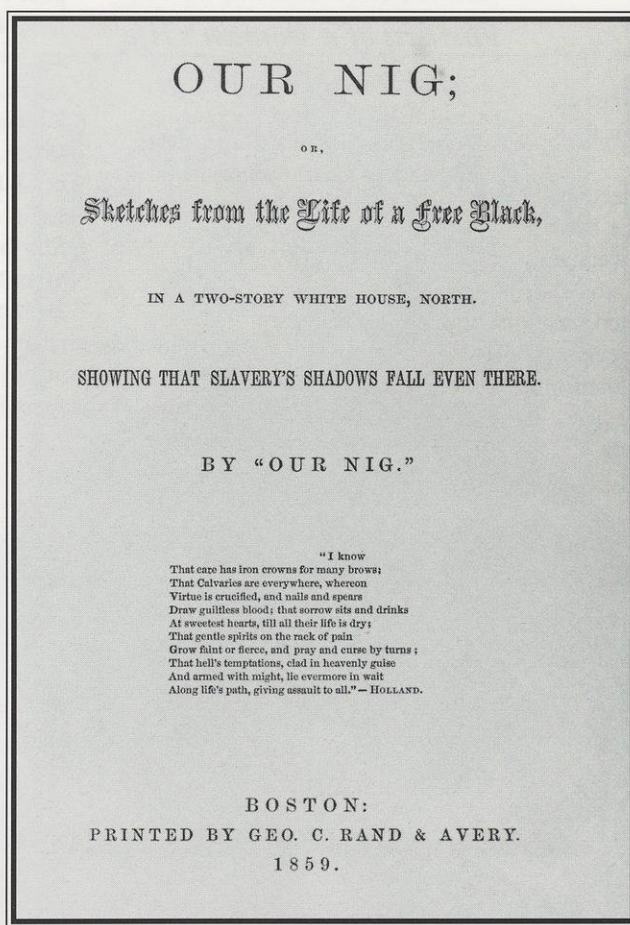
Why, for example, did Kate Chopin's short stories from the 1890s not appear in full until 1969? Not surprisingly, early editors and readers took issue with Chopin's fictional portrayal of adultery, incest, miscegenation, divorce, and sexuality. If a writer's works are out of print, how can they be included in college curricula and mainstream academic studies? Why can we still not find a complete edition of Emma Lazarus's works, even though over a century has passed since her untimely death in her thirties? In addition to the famous "New Colossus"—the "Give me your tired, your poor" poem affixed to the Statue of Liberty

pedestal—Lazarus wrote volumes of poetry, a play foreshadowing the Holocaust, and brilliant essays attacking anti-Semitism at home and abroad. One reason we do not know Lazarus is that her sister Anna chose to delete the so-called "Jewish" poems from the posthumous edition of Emma Lazarus's work. Having converted to Christianity, Anna Lazarus wanted to hide Emma Lazarus's "deplorable Hebraic strain" from the public.

Readers continue to misinterpret and distort the works and lives of even those women writers with established reputations. Why did (and do) poetry anthologies routinely reprint Emily Dickinson poems expressing delight in nature rather than also including those with uncomfortable images ("Amputate my freckled bosom!/ Make me bearded like a man!")? Why do we still regard Dickinson with patronizing pity? After selling my biography of Dickinson to *Highlights* in 1990 (circulation three million young readers), I was shocked to discover alterations in the proofs: The editor had added the sentence, "Emily wrote poetry because she had a broken heart." This sentence and others like it reduced *my* Dickinson (yes, I feel passionately toward her and yes, I insisted that my original be restored) to a mere child, an "Emily" whose art was just a consolation prize for not finding a man. The *Highlights* editor apparently agreed with Heinrich Heine that "When women write they always have one eye on the paper and the other on a man" (Lutezia, 1854).

Beliefs persist that a writing woman is an anomaly, a mistake, a freak. When I surveyed the 400 undergraduates in my introductory literature course on campus last fall, I discovered attitudes harking back to Aristotle and Napoleon. Here are some of their comments:

When I think of Emily Dickinson I picture a weird demented lady—sitting in a dark lonely house writing twisted and strange poetry.



Title page of Our Nig. Courtesy Cairns Collection, University of Wisconsin–Madison Memorial Library. "I sat up most of the night reading and pondering the enormous significance of Harriet Wilson's novel Our Nig." Alice Walker, 1983.

I get a sarcastic feeling. I picture a frail middle-aged woman with a tattered wedding dress.

It's hard to respect a woman who spent most of her life alone. She must have been crazy.

Most telling is the student who noted,

In all my high school English classes I did not read *one* work by a woman, even when we were studying women's rights.

What do such students miss? Without unprejudiced exposure to women's literature, they lack the voices of half the human race—those who, as the Chinese proverb says, hold up half the sky. Through novels, short stories, autobiographies, essays, plays, and poems, women question the assumptions of the world around them. Instead of fainting damsels-in-distress with golden ringlets and blue eyes, they present a new breed of female heroes with true grit. George Eliot's character Dorothea Brooke (*Middlemarch*, 1872) longs to read Latin and Greek and reform the world; her uncle, however, insists "classics, mathematics, that kind of thing, are too taxing for a woman" because "women are flighty, not meant to be thinkers."

Emily Brontë's Catherine (*Wuthering Heights*, 1847), perhaps the greatest tomboy in all literature, longs to roam the moors, "half savage and hardy, and free." Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) presents a "poor, plain, and little" heroine who lacks Cinderella's beauty, fairy godmother, and tiny feet. Although one character notes of Jane that "one really cannot care for a little toad like that," we do come to care for the fiery and determined orphan, and so does Mr. Rochester. The publisher who received the manuscript copy of *Jane Eyre* stayed up to finish the novel by Currer Bell, noting "I married Rochester about four in the morning." Only in literature can one switch sex—and with it, mind set. Charlotte Brontë makes readers agree with *Jane Eyre* when she exclaims in the middle of the novel, "Women feel, just as men do."

The American Brontë, as Louisa May Alcott was sometimes called, also overturns readers' assumptions about womanhood. We cannot help liking the spirited Jo March of *Little Women* (1868) who writes plays, loves running free, and hates the thought of growing up and becoming Miss March. One look at the "walking dress" from *Harper's Bazaar* of 1872 substantiates Jo's plea for liberty. As Edith Wharton's heroine Lily Bart

complains in *The House of Mirth* (1905), "What a miserable thing it is to be a woman!"

Women writers were determined to change their world. As Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote on March 9, 1850, to the editor of *National Era*, "I feel now that the time is come when even a woman . . . who can speak a word for freedom and humanity is bound to speak. I hope that every woman who can write will not be silent." These women were not silent, and their words deserve to be heard.



The ultimate goal of the Courage to Write project is to draw readers into works by women writers—works which changed their world and ours forever. But have we changed enough?

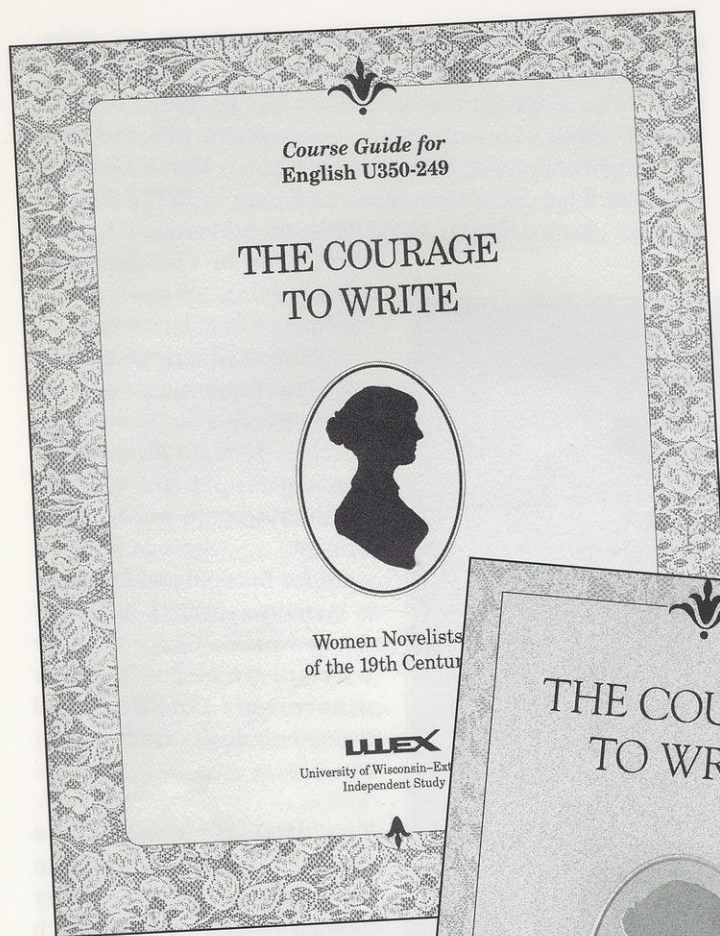
In 1992 I flew to Washington, D.C., to receive a broadcasting award for The Courage to Write, one of several national awards it would receive. I felt I had truly *arrived* as I approached the National Press Club for a ceremony at which CBS's 60 Minutes, ABC's Prime Time Live, PBS's McNeil-Lehrer Report and Civil War documentary, and several

other television and radio programs would also receive awards. Bursting with pride and self-importance, I eagerly approached the reception desk, my husband with me as my invited guest. The man behind the desk reached up his hand to my husband, remarking, "Congratulations! You must be one of our winners!" As Mark Twain put it, the problem is not that people change but that they *don't* change.

Henry David Thoreau observed in *Walden*, "How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book!" How many men *and women*, I would add, might profit from the



"Whites can hardly get at the truth. By and by, some of us are going to be able to make our feelings appreciated, and then will the true Indian character be revealed." Mourning Dove, interview of 1916. Photo from the private collection of Jay Miller.



works of women writers and from a series devoted to their courage. Listeners may come away changed after hearing Mourning Dove's native Salishan language, Gertrude Stein's opera *The Mother of Us All*, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrayal of the brutal Simon Legree. They may be moved, as I was, by the comments of Morris Schappes, age eighty-eight and still the editor of *Jewish Currents Magazine*, as he explains his decision in 1944 to issue the first edition of Lazarus's selected poetry and prose. "Emma Lazarus," he says on the radio program, "thanks for being, thanks for writing, thanks for continuing to inspire me in innumerable ways."

All of us can take inspiration from the lives and works of these women who possessed what Kate Chopin would call in *The Awakening* "the courageous soul. The brave soul. The soul that dares and defies." They were fighters. Emily Dickinson wrote, "I took my Power in my Hand—/ And went against the World—."

Like Dickinson, Gertrude Stein refused to conform or to change her vision, noting, "I do want to get rich but I never want to do what there is to do to get rich." When asked to write more traditional literature, Jane Austen calmly and elegantly replied, "No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way."

Going on in their own way involved hard work. Louisa May Alcott wrote with her left hand when her right became too tired. Mourning Dove squeezed in time to write in English, her second language, after a day of backbreaking work as a migrant laborer:

I have had too much to do outside of my writing. We got work apple thinning at Brewster, Washington . . . and after working for ten hours in the blazing sun, and cooking my meals, I know I shall not have the time to look over very much manuscripts. . . . Between sand, grease, campfire, and real apple dirt I hope I can do the work.

As contemporary author Tillie Olsen observes in *Silences* (1978), "Every woman who writes is a survivor."

Ignoring the Napoleons and Southneys who insisted they should stick to their proper feminine duties, women found the courage to write, making literature the business of their lives—and, in consequence, bringing immeasurable enrichment to ours. 🍎

The Courage to Write series has received the Ohio State Award for Excellence in Broadcasting, the Distinguished Program Award from the American Council of Higher Education, and awards from the National University Continuing Education Association.



Sketch of a portrait of Austen included in her nephew Edward's memoir. "She was careful that her occupation should not be suspected by . . . any persons beyond her own family party." From *Memoir of Jane Austen* by James Edward Austen-Leigh, 1870.

Acknowledgments

Many organizations have helped to bring these women writers and their works to life. So far, the Courage to Write project has received major support from the University of Wisconsin's Division of Continuing Studies, Wisconsin Public Radio, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of Wisconsin System Multicultural Affairs Office, and the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission. I am using revenues from sales of *The Courage to Write* materials around the country (from Vienna, West Virginia, to West Covina, California) to finance more programs on women writers. The project has also received a new, unsolicited award from the Jane Austen Society of North America for development of an eight-part national series to encourage wider reading of the books of Jane Austen.

Literally hundreds of individuals have been involved in this project. In addition to Ralph Johnson, tireless producer; Tom Blain, painstaking engineer; and Laurel Yourke, invaluable consultant and writer, I must thank Sybil Robinson and Carol Cowan for providing the voices of Mary Shelley, Gertrude Stein, and others in a medium perfect for capturing the pure eloquence of an author's words. This project depends on the talents of other actors, linguists, musicians, librarians,



Sketch of Emily Dickinson from an 1847 photo, taken when she was seventeen. She wrote, "I dwell in Possibility—."

artists, editors, and script consultants (Wanda Auerbach, Jocelyn Riley, Judith Strasser, James Tucker), as well as the behind-the-scenes patience of administrators and clerical workers sorting through labyrinthine grant regulations and copyright restrictions. At the heart of the project are scholars with knowledge and enthusiasm: University of Wisconsin professors Dale Bauer, Sargent Bush, Betsy Draine, Lynn Keller, Gerda Lerner, Nellie McKay, Robert Najem, Cyrena Pondrom, Annis Pratt, Ronald Wallace, Jeffrey Steele, and Joseph Wiesenfarth, as well as many scholars from outside Wisconsin.

Selections of Emily Dickinson's poetry are from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Boston: Little Brown and Company.

Sketches by Barry Carlsen.

Additional information:

For a brochure on *The Courage to Write* or a selected listing of books by and about women writers, write to Emily Auerbach at 627 Lowell Hall, 610 Langdon Street, Madison, WI 53703 or call 608-262-3733. *The Courage to Write* materials are available through the Audio Store at 1-800-972-8346 or 263-2294 in Madison.

There is Still Life: The Art of Aaron Bohrod, Neil Bohrod, and Ruthanne Bessman

by Faith B. Miracle

Aaron Bohrod's place in the history of twentieth century American Art has thrice been established: as a social realist, as a war artist, and as a still life painter.

John Lloyd Taylor, associate director,
Milwaukee Art Museum, 1966

Aaron Bohrod was born on November 21, 1907, on the west side of Chicago. He attended classes at the Chicago Art Institute and the Art Students League in New York, where he studied with such teachers as Charles Locke and John Sloan. He achieved national recognition during the 1930s for his honest, often stark studies of life in America. Attracted more by scenes that were ragged and scruffy than by pleasing landscapes, he established an early reputation as a new kind of artist-chronicler of the post-Depression way of life, particularly in and near his native Chicago. His early style became known as social realism.

During World War II he painted scenes from the war in the Pacific and also documented images of war-ravaged Europe. More than one hundred of these original paintings are now at the Pentagon.

In 1948 Bohrod came to Madison from Chicago to become artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin, the campus which had established the first artist-in-residence program in the nation with the appointment of John Steuart Curry in 1936. Curry, who died suddenly during the summer of 1946, had not taught classes but rather used his campus studio as "a kind of laboratory." In addition, he had developed a rural art program involving artists in farming communities around the state.



Aaron Bohrod (1907–1992)

For Bohrod, a young artist with a growing family, the open, encouraging atmosphere at the university offered a welcome opportunity. In addition to finding time to paint and lecture, Bohrod continued Curry's tradition of traveling throughout Wisconsin, interacting with aspiring artists in rural areas. "It has given me the pleasure of developing a wide acquaintance around the state with people who are untutored but soul-searching artists," he said.

In 1954 Aaron Bohrod's style changed. He moved into a new mode of painting, magic realism, and began creating the distinctive still-life compositions known as *trompe l'oeil*. He maintained the status of nationally-renowned artist while

remaining highly visible and accessible in his role with the university, bringing "lustre to its academic image," in the words of one dean. Bohrod enjoyed this position for twenty-five years, until his retirement from the university in 1973.

During the height of his remarkable career, his paintings appeared in such magazines as *Life*, *Look*, *Time*, *Esquire*, *Holiday*, and *Fortune* as well as in major arts journals. His many awards include two Guggenheim fellowships. He was known for his generosity, and it was apparent that he enjoyed sharing his talent. A university colleague once reported seeing him "like an eager student painting the fence which barricaded the construction site for the Humanities Building."

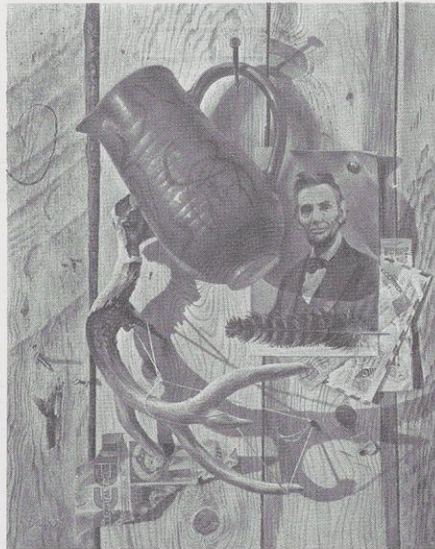
During the early years of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, Aaron Bohrod was a frequent contributor of his art for covers of this small, fledgling publication.

In 1984 the Wisconsin Academy named him a fellow.

Today the arts tradition continues in the family through the work of Aaron's son Neil Bohrod and Neil's wife, Ruthanne Bessman.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

SPRING, 1954



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE
WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE
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SUMMER, 1956



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SPRING, 1956



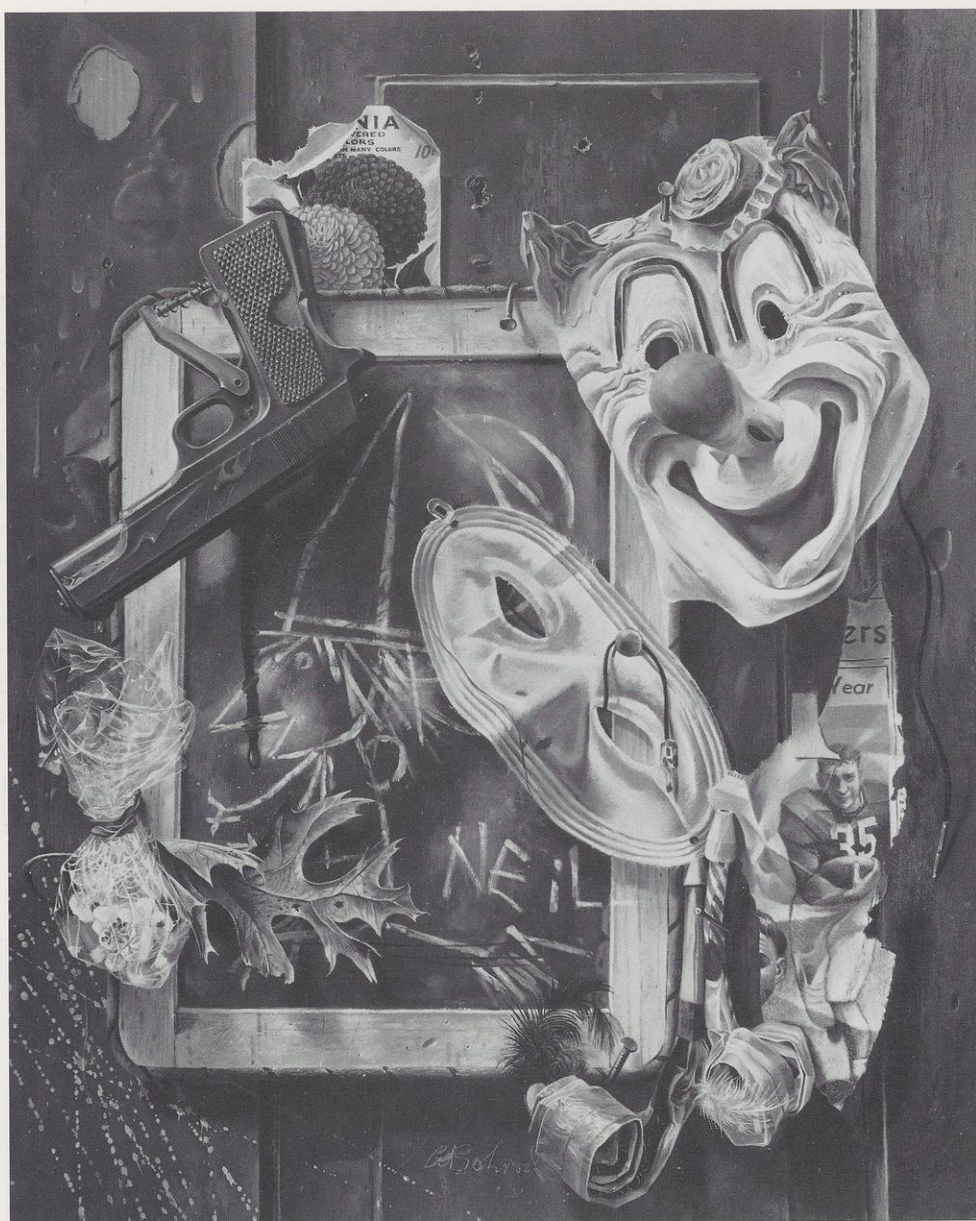
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ABOVE: *Autobiography* by Aaron Bohrod. Oil on gesso, 12 x 16 inches, 1991. Bohrod's symbolic paintings are open to many interpretations. For example, one might say that here he uses the car as a metaphor for various stages of life, and the "oil" (life-blood of the vehicles) spilling from beneath the cars appears as paint, the life-blood of the artist. Courtesy Neil Bohrod.



RIGHT: *Animalphabet* by Aaron Bohrod. Oil on gesso, 14 x 11 inches, 1989. A is for ape, B is for bull, and so on, with a jump from L to Z. The model for the E-elephant was folded by Ruthanne Bessman. Bohrod, who usually appears somewhere in his paintings, shows up behind the parade of animals, carrying a shovel! Courtesy Ruthanne Bessman.



October by Aaron Bohrod. Oil on gesso, 20 x 16 inches, 1954. A blackboard drawing of a witch by seven-year-old artist Neil Bohrod appears in the painting. Courtesy Abbott Laboratories.

Aaron Bohrod in the Wisconsin Academy Review

Covers:

A Lincoln Portrait, Spring 1954

October, Fall 1954

Pillar, Summer 1955

The Lizzard, Spring 1956

Of War and Peace, Summer 1956

Summertime Wisconsin, Summer 1967

Articles:

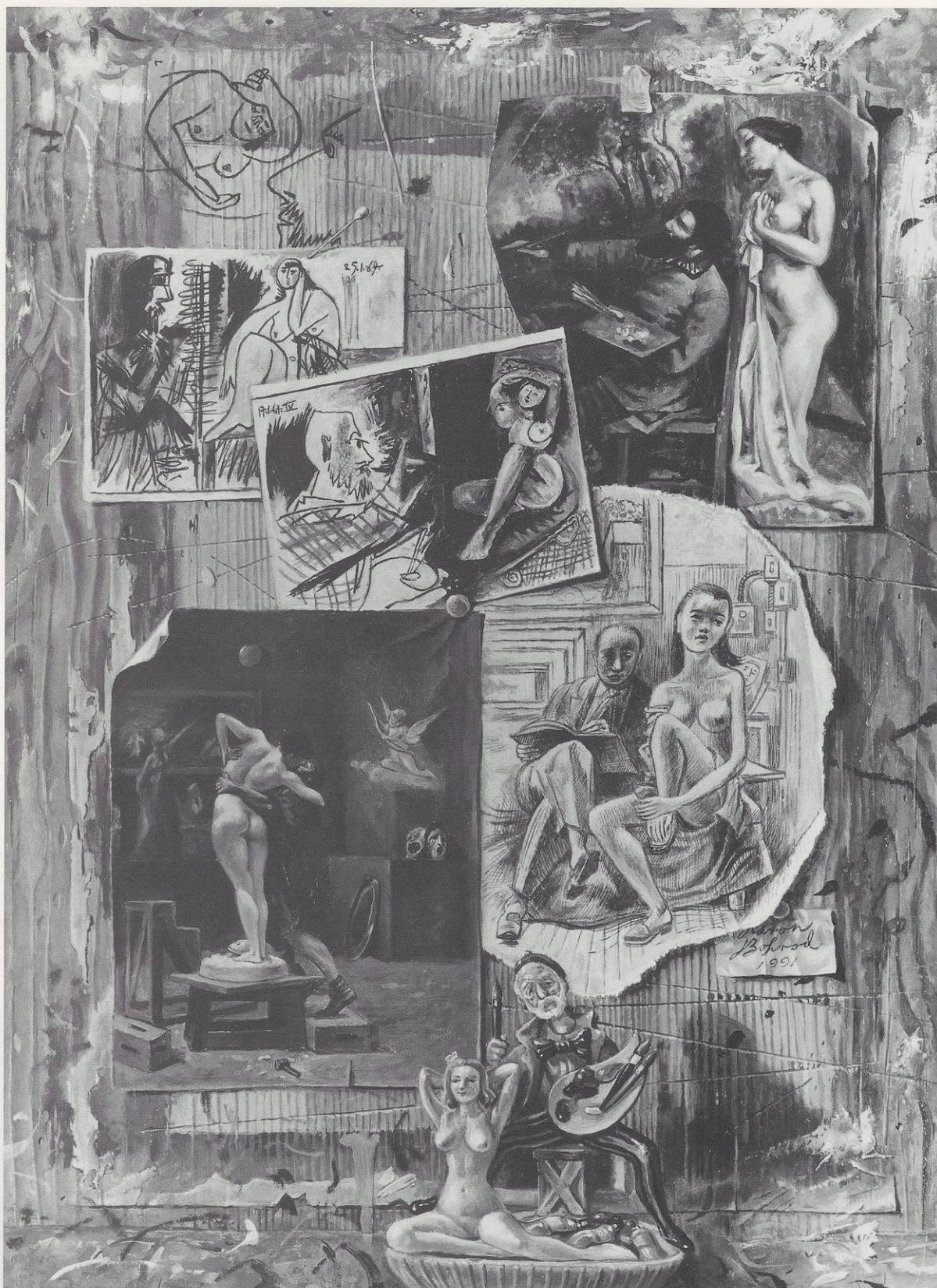
"Wisconsin Pioneers: The Artist-in-Residence" by Fannie Taylor. Fall 1972.

"Some UW-Madison Painters and Printmakers" by Warren Moon. Spring 1983.

"Aaron Bohrod: Artist-in-Residence" by Donna Scott Thomas. Summer 1985.

Neil Bohrod

Line Drive to the Gap (ink and wash) appeared in a story titled "The Summer I Learned Baseball" by Ron Rindo. Summer 1993.



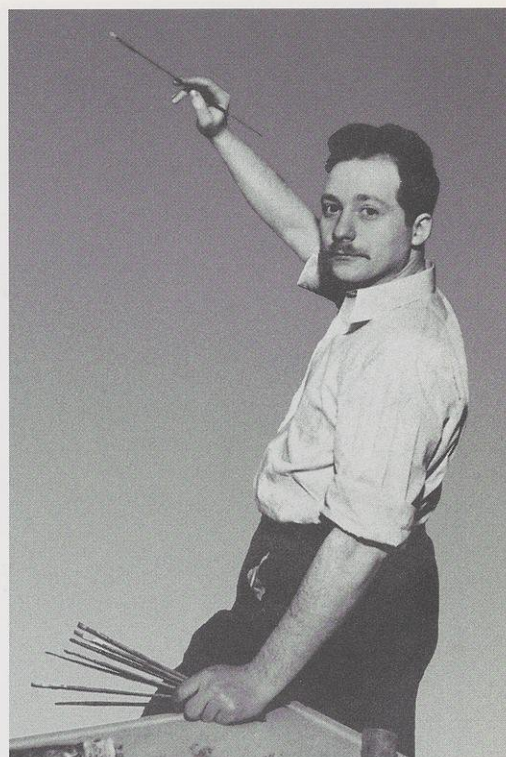
Artists and Models by Aaron Bohrod. Oil on gesso, 24 x 18 inches, 1991. Among the artists (and styles) represented here are Picasso, Courbet, and Aaron Bohrod himself. Courtesy Neil Bohrod.

Aaron Bohrod: The Early Years

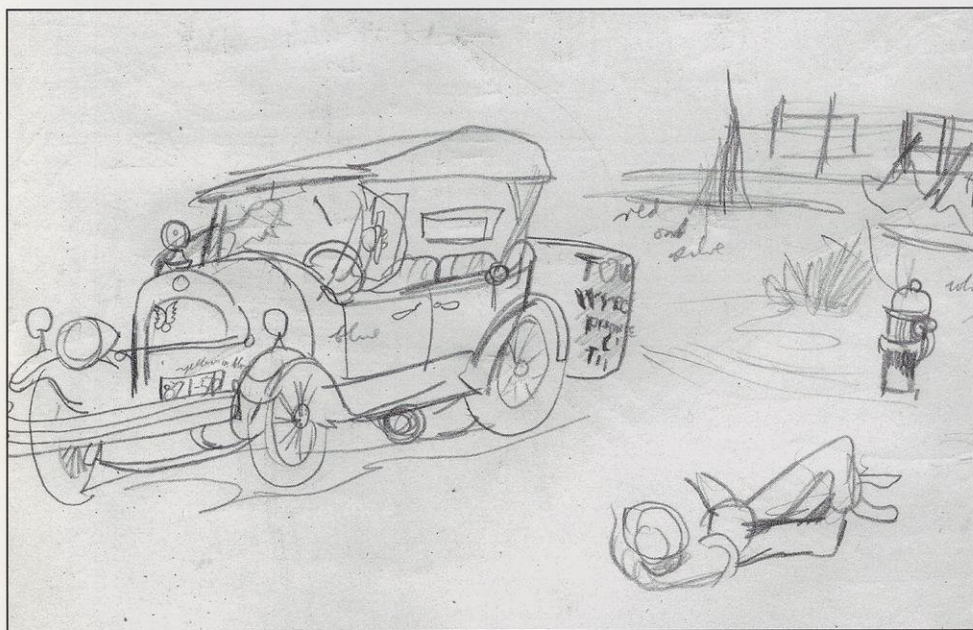
The 1930s and a Penchant for Unlovely Subjects

One of Aaron Bohrod's earliest paintings, done in 1934 and titled *Landscape near Chicago*, remains among his most interesting and most revealing works as far as process, technique, and principle are concerned. It tells us much about the young Chicago artist, who portrayed life as he saw it, and about the meticulous painter he was to become. Fortunately, many of Bohrod's sketchbooks have been preserved, along with his journals and notations. This makes it possible for us to reconstruct a scenario, at least in part, of this one particular piece of work from the artist's early years.

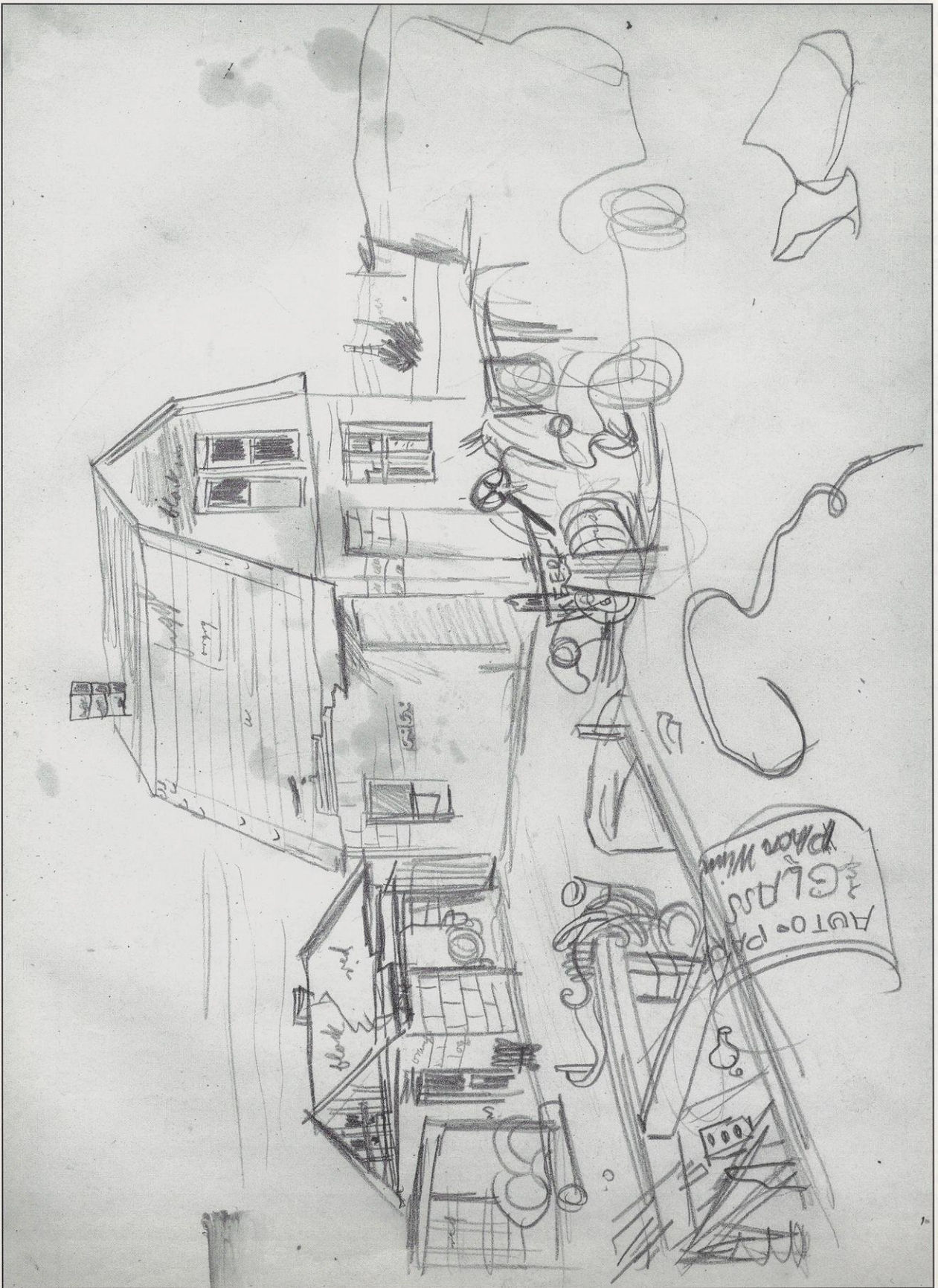
We can start with the initial ideas which Bohrod penciled randomly on a page in his notebook, individual drawings which would eventually come together as part of the completed composition. In the full sketch, he has put together some of the elements that appear in the finished painting, leaving space for details from his initial drawings. In the photo of the finished oil painting, which is now in the permanent collection at the Whitney Museum of American Art, we see the completion of his composition. Finally, a similar version of the scene was executed in gouache on paper and was recently acquired by the Elvehjem Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a gift of university alumnus Richard A. Klevickis. An awareness of the importance which the young Aaron Bohrod placed on this particular scene reveals his early artistic nature and the ideals and forces that were part of his personality.



Aaron Bohrod, the young painter.



Sketchbook drawings for *Landscape near Chicago*, probably done in 1933.
Courtesy Neil Bohrod.



Sketchbook drawings for Landscape near Chicago, probably done in 1933. Courtesy Neil Bohrod.



Landscape near Chicago by Aaron Bohrod. Oil on gesso, 24 x 32 inches, 1934. Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art. Photo Copyright © 1995, Whitney Museum of American Art.

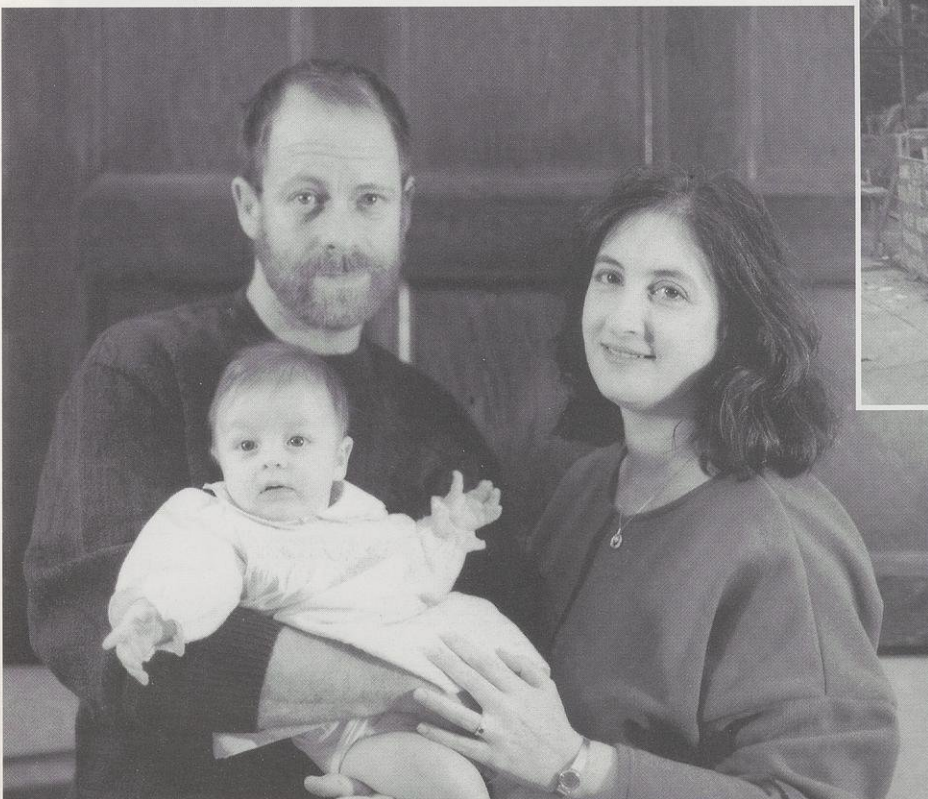
Wherever I went, I was never without some kind of sketchbook. Apart from the posed figure and the passing scene gleaned from the streets, countless pictorial ideas, intriguing details, informal figure arrangements, useful and useless doodles found repository in these books. Drawing, I have always thought, is the best way for the artist to build his visual vocabulary. Until the advent of the completely abstract painting which decreed the abolition of drawing as an element of art, powerful draughtsmanship was the attribute which set the true artist apart from the dilettante. . . . I have never been at a loss for some kind of subject matter (page 9).

One cannot have at once spontaneity and precise order. Conscious order was what I was after and in its favor I set aside the alluring splash and flow of runny pigment. One of the works in the hard-boiled vein was *Landscape near Chicago*, a Skokie Valley setting which was shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. A Chicago newspaper with mild indignation reproduced the painting under the heading "New York's view of Chicago." The few bristling protests the notice evoked neither deterred nor specifically encouraged additional investigation of the city's auto graveyards and other unprepossessing places. These were simply some of the unlovely subjects that interested me.

I have always felt that intrinsic beauty in a subject is a handicap when the artist selects a motif for his work. What can an artist really say about a beautiful sunset that would improve on nature; about a brand new, shining automobile; about a newly completed chunk of modern architecture? It is probably incorrect to say that no artist under any set of circumstances can use these motifs well, but it is fair to say that, unlike those things affectionately or mercilessly touched by time, the brisk, the new, and the beautiful are not very *likely* subjects for the artist (page 11).

Aaron Bohrod: *A Decade of Still Life*
University of Wisconsin Press, 1966

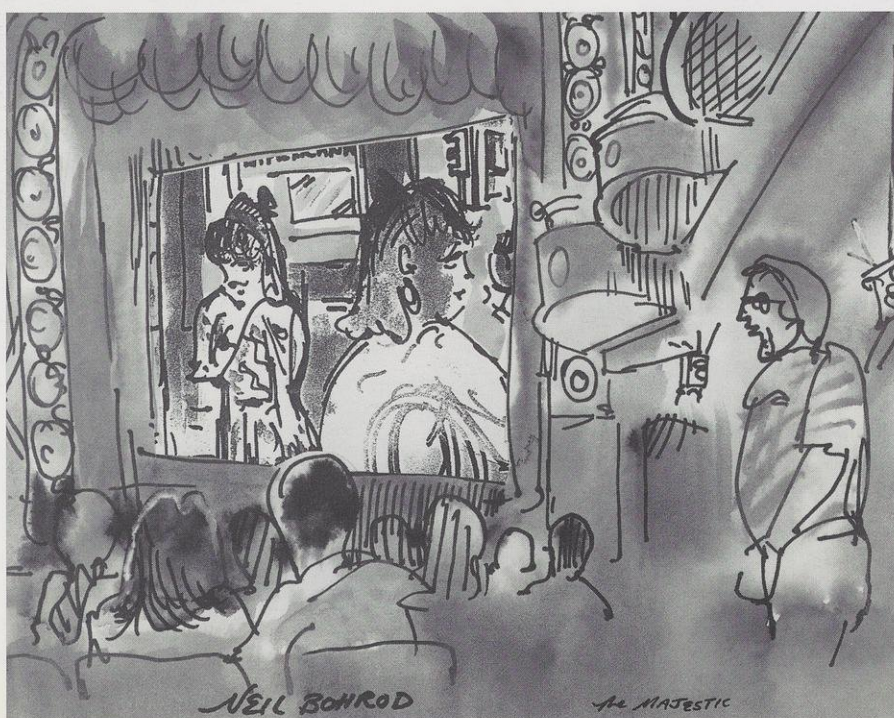
Tim Walsh



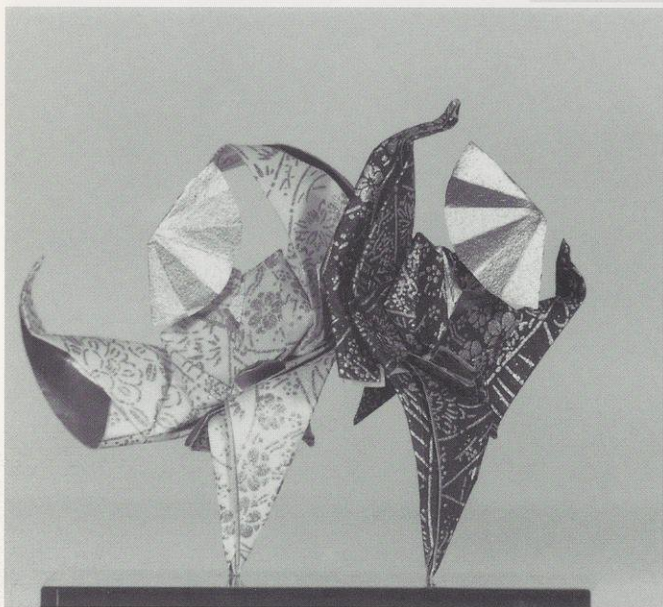
LEFT: Neil Bohrod, Ruthanne Bessman, and their daughter, Ariela. ABOVE: Aaron Bohrod painting the construction fence at the Humanities Building site.



ABOVE: Paris Scene by
Neil Bohrod. Watercolor,
8¹/₄ x 9³/₄, 1990. Courtesy
Ruthanne Bessman.

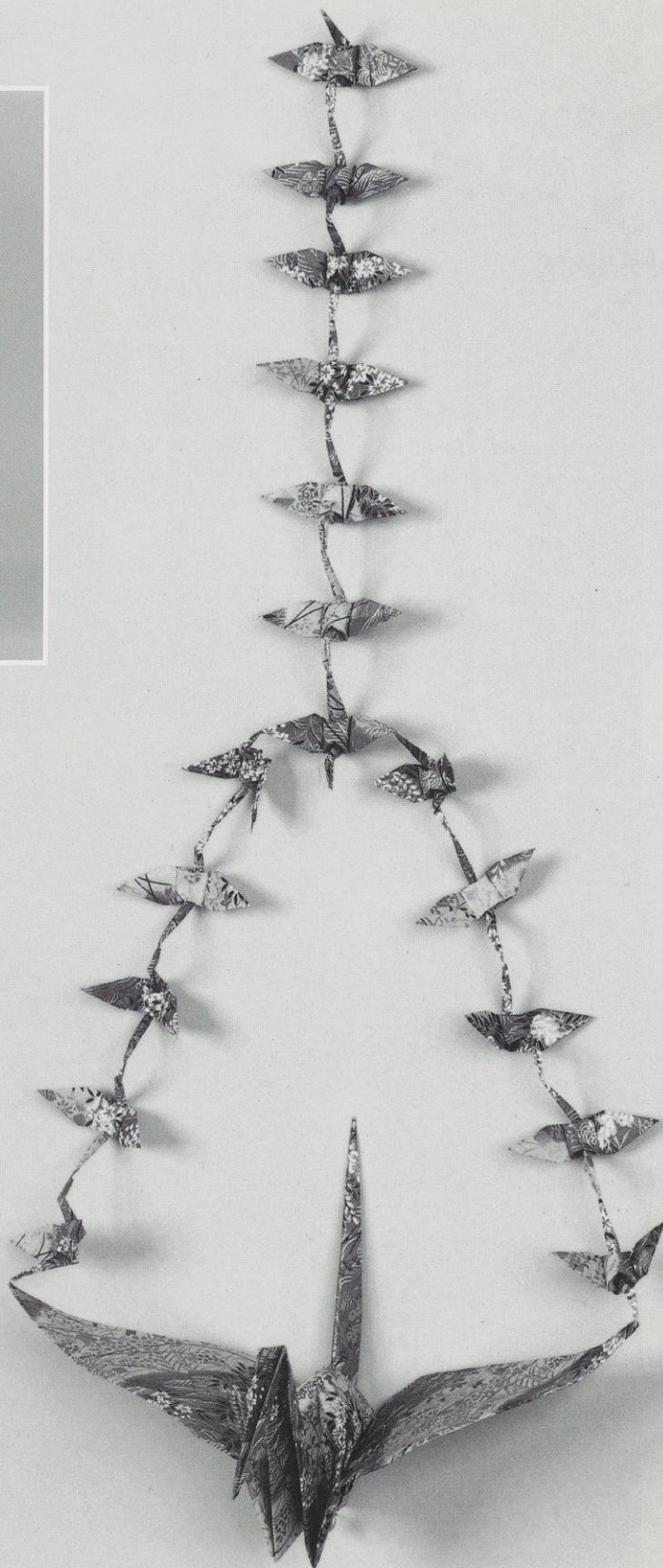


LEFT: Majestic Theater by
Neil Bohrod. Mixed media,
11 x 14, 1989. Courtesy
Ruthanne Bessman.



ABOVE: Awa-odorie by Ruthanne Bessman. Washi paper, 1995. These dancing dolls, created for a traditional Japanese festival, were designed by Toshie Takahama, Ruthanne Bessman's teacher.

RIGHT: Mother Crane and Young by Ruthanne Bessman. Folded from a single piece of paper, 1993.



Replaying the Past: An Interview with Anthony Bukoski

by Michael Longrie

I grew up in the same neighborhood as Anthony Bukoski and remember him as one of the “big kids” at the Nelson Dewey playground. However, he stood out for a number of reasons, notably his hitting prowess and strong arm on the baseball diamond.

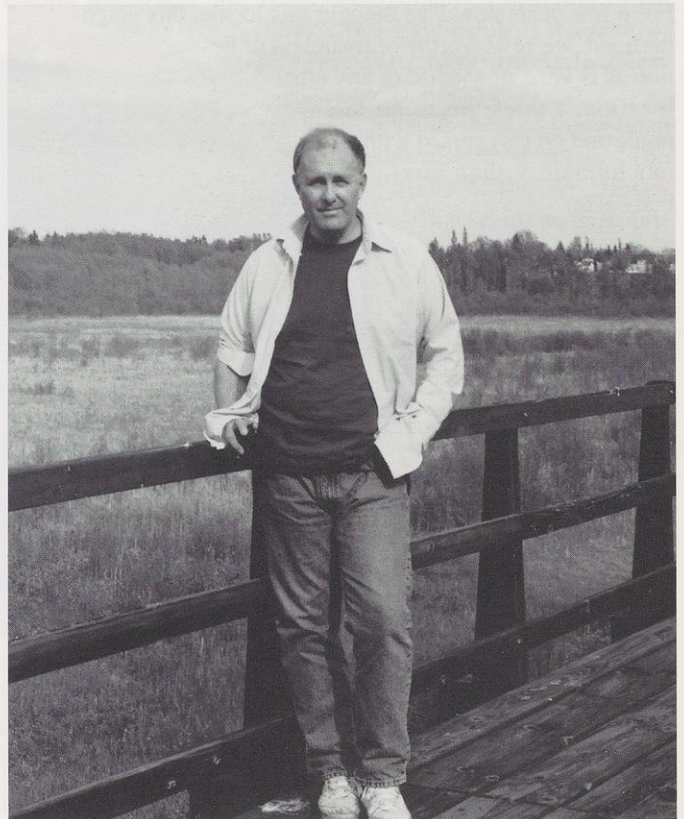
Also, I remember clearly one time going with a friend to his house to trade baseball cards (this would have been in the late fifties when I was eight or nine and he twelve or thirteen). My friend and I were masters at cheating card owners out of valuable players (especially Stan Musial, the hardest to get back then), working out a complex system of diversion, whereby we “borrowed” many cards from unsuspecting traders. The day we visited Tony we were expecting great things, because he was known to have the entire major league roster (with duplicates). When we arrived, he appeared, not with boxes of cards, but with clipboard and a written, alphabetized list of all the cards he owned. Even then he was wise to the ways of the world.

Longrie: In your story collections there is serious attention to three great themes: the value of place, especially Superior; the Catholic tradition that raised you; and your Polish heritage. I'd like you to talk about these three themes and about how they're connected, if at all.

Bukoski: I've always thought of Superior as a kind of outpost, a geographical outpost because we are so far north, backed up against Lake Superior, the largest fresh-water lake in the world. We're surrounded by a range of hills in Duluth. The hills grow quite high. The range is thousands of years old and called the Duluth-Gabbro complex. We are stuck, as it were, here in the lowlands, or were at least in my childhood (I was born in 1945) until, say, the late 1950s. Even now we have only a two-lane highway coming up from Spooner almost to Superior, which isolates us. Add to this the oftentimes severe weather, and I'd like to think of us as kind of an outpost.

Isolated this way, I think we're psychologically and emotionally circumscribed. I lived in a largely Polish-American neighborhood. Our church was founded by Polish immigrants—our church being St. Adalbert's. These were the people I had most commerce with.

Yes, and it is these Polish people who populate your stories. I listen to you talk about those days, and I wonder if perhaps your stories aren't, in some ways, attempts to capture what you think has been lost?



Anthony Bukoski, near the Nemadji River in northern Wisconsin.

I do mark the passing of the immigrant population that I know best, that being Polish-American. St. Adalbert's Church was razed over twenty years ago by order of the bishop. So too were two other ethnic parishes in Superior—St. Stanislaus and Sts. Cyril and Methodius, one Polish and the other a Slovak parish. Those three churches were razed, ostensibly, because we didn't have the priests to staff them. That wasn't true about St. Adalbert's, because our parish was self-sustaining. We paid the priest ourselves. But we have so many of the older Polonians, that is, people outside of Poland in this neighborhood, the Superior Polonia, who have passed away along with our ethnic parishes.

A community that was bound, in large part, by its spiritual belief in Catholicism was in some ways destroyed. And this has happened all over the United States—in Detroit, Buffalo, and

elsewhere where the Polish churches are being razed. So I'm trying to recall those sometimes noble, if largely unschooled, inelegant people. I'm trying to recall them in these fictions so that their voices and the memory of them, at least in this area about which I write, are not lost.

On perhaps a tangential matter, in what ways would you say that your repeated attention to working-class lives fits into this notion of elevating the status of the forgotten?

For a few years now I've thought this locale, this neighborhood, we're as worthy of treatment of fiction as is Paris or Madrid or any other location. I think we're no less noble and no less cursed with our humanity than any-body else.

That's a very interesting phase you use there, "cursed by our humanity." What do you mean by that?

I try hard not to make the Polish-Americans I write about sanctified, to elevate them to such a level that they are without fault. The people I write about are gamblers and adulterers and sometimes they are unscrupulous in their business dealings and have all the failings of the rest of humankind. On the other hand, sometimes I see the great charity and generosity of spirit and nobility that these old people I remember and write about showed. It so happens that most of those I knew in this community were blue-collar workers, and so thus my writing about them.

But these, you have to agree, are trans-national traits. Can you think of anything that is specifically identifiable in the Polish community that you think worthy of study and reading about?

I think of the great spirituality, the doggedness of Polish Roman Catholicism—the refusal for years to give up on Catholic doctrine and the continued care and worship, and abiding very carefully to church law and the days when one is to worship and meatless Fridays and the like. I find great value in that. Many would say that that is just hidebound tradition, but I think of the old men and women who would not miss mass—my great aunts were good examples—even to this day if mass on Saturdays begins at 4:00, they're there at 3:00 to worship beforehand.

I think of the great necessity for worship that would bring people out under the worst weather conditions to Forty Hours Devotion, or to the Stations of the Cross on Friday, or to mass on Sunday mornings in the old days before Vatican II, and then

return in the afternoon for benediction. It must have been a physical enterprise as well as spiritual—I mean it was a physical, physical undertaking to come to the church and to worship and to kneel.

Your answer anticipates another question I have in my mind and that is, beginning with the very title of your first collection, Twelve Below Zero, the weather is a dominating force in many of these stories. Whether winter and its harshness or the ephemeral nature of summer, what is the weather's role in your stories and how does it reveal the kinds of things you're talking about?

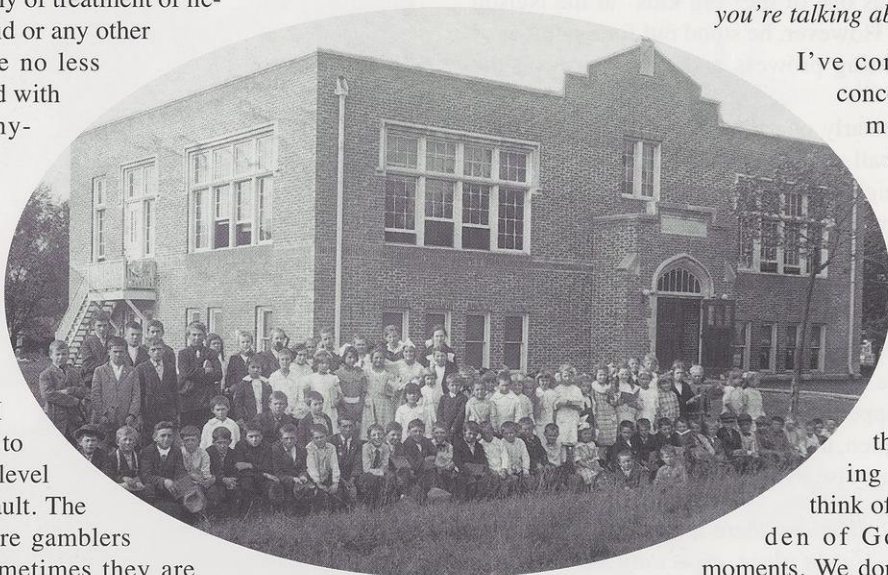
I've come upon this unusual conceit: I like to think of a metaphor for us as the Canadian thistle. The thistle with its burrs and its prickles has a beautiful purple flower in July and August. And I like to think of that Canadian thistle, humble and prickly though it is, still as having some beauty. I like to think of us as kind of the children of God, in my romantic moments. We don't have much sunshine

in Superior, because of the influence of the lake. We don't have an abundance of flora, as one would even in southern Wisconsin. Our growing season is short. And we struggle against this. And we struggle against the early autumn. The spring is non-existent.

We struggle against this, and I think part of the struggle, the people going to mass, the people with religious icons at home, following Catholic tradition, is our great struggle to find heaven. This idea informs some of the stories, in that we fight against some of these terrible weather conditions and a bleak landscape to live the holy life and then to be raised up.

Your answer reminds me of one story—perhaps one of your finest—"River of the Flowering Banks" from Children of Strangers, the story about the Indian boy Gerald Bluebird and Father Nowak, the Polish priest. To my mind, some of your most beautiful writing is contained in that story, and I'm wondering, have any Native Americans here ever commented to you on the beauty of that story and the homage it pays to the Indian burial grounds on Wisconsin Point?

Well, no. I'm sorry, Mike, but no, none have. But coincidentally, two Native American students at the college are trying to gather support to remove from the Catholic cemetery the remains of those



St. Adalbert's Catholic School in 1916, the year it opened. The author's father, Joe Bukowski (the spelling was later changed to Bukoski) was in third grade.

Indians who had first been removed from their burying ground on Wisconsin Point in the 1920s. The cemetery overlooks the Nemadji River, which I call the left-handed river in the stories, “left-handed river” being an English translation of the Anishinabe word *nemadji*. A steel mill was going to be built on Wisconsin Point and the Indian remains were taken from there, brought up river, and now have reposed for these seventy years or so in that Catholic cemetery. My story is an impression of the days those graves, those remains were brought up the river—in the twenties. My father had told me the story of seeing the boat that had brought them up there, and that idea always troubled me and I wanted to write a story. But mine is a Slavic or Slavic-American’s recollection or imaging in fiction of that event.

The culminating moment in that story, when Father Nowak dressed in gold chasuble performs the ceremony over the graves with the sorrowful Gerald Bluebird on the bank, seems to be an ethnic communal gesture. Now, I’ve talked to you many times when you have blanchd at certain kinds of ethnic consciousness-raising within the academy. Are your stories in some way an attempt to perhaps carve out a space for forgotten ethnicities that you think have been passed by affirmative action and the attention of the academy?

Largely, I think, that is one of the motivating factors. I write stories about the Superior Polonia and other ethnic groups—Greek-Americans and Finnish-Americans and Swedish-Americans who have been ignored in the last twenty or thirty years amid the push for ethnic studies sweeping through the academies. We’ve been passed over. And one of the reasons I’m writing these stories, aside from the great emotional and maybe even spiritual pull that I feel in that direction, is to rectify the situation.

But this story about Gerald Bluebird, who is a Native American child, is also my attempt to join together the Polish-American community and the Native-American community. There are also Vietnamese in the stories—late-comers to Superior—and also the Jewish-American population. I’m trying in these stories to elevate us all and to bring us all together, at least within the world of these stories. So the stories are not only about Polish-Americans but also about many people seen through the eyes of a Polish-American writer.

Critics have called attention to bizarre elements in your stories.

St. Adalbert’s Catholic Church, circa 1968, before its razing.

At the University of Iowa you studied American literature of the South, where there is a strong tradition of the gothic, even the grotesque. Is there any connection between your studies and your fiction?

There is a connection, at least in the first book of stories, *Twelve Below Zero*. A lot of those stories are about grotesque characters and likely I’d been influenced by southern writers. My favorites for a long time were Faulkner and O’Connor and Carson McCullers and Tennessee Williams. I’m trying to get away from that in the new book, *Children of Strangers*. But there are still a few grotesque characters.

One of them is the woman who rusts to death in “The Tomb of the Wrestlers.”

That seems an appropriate metaphor for Superior. A woman has rusted to death because the railroad tracks have often been allowed to rust and the buildings have fallen because of the weather and what metal we do see around here has oxidized because of the weather. It seemed a perfect extension that a human being should rust to death as she does in one of the stories. However, I’m trying to get away from them, I think, because I’m free of the influence of southern writers. I see it as test of my own abilities to try to break away from that way of thinking and writing.

Would you say, then, that the grotesque is a kind of seductive lure for young writers, a lure which you think all serious writers have to grow beyond?

I don’t think so. I’m sure that there are writers whose names escape me now who’ve made entire careers on grotesqueries.

In preparation for this interview, I reread The New York Times review for your second book, Children of Strangers. The reviewer says you are a “sensitive, lyrical writer” and that it was a good thing this book had been written to capture the people whose lives you document. I’m sure that kind of comment is most gratifying to a writer. What do you think the reviewer meant by it?

I don’t know what she meant about sensitive, lyrical writer, though I was pleased that she said that. But I do know that I was moved when I read the last line of the review, where she mentions that the book insures that these voices of Polish-Americans, and others that I’ve written about, will not pass away unheard. This really moved me. I’ve said for a long



time that any attention these books and, I hope, future books receive is good for my students, because they can see someone from a lower, middle-class background publishing stories, and because it's good for the university; but I think it's good even to a greater extent for the Polish-American community which has not, as I said, had many voices.

As I listen to your answer, I must state at this point, though, that anyone reading this interview who thinks these are simply Polish stories would be mistaken. Much autobiographical material is contained in the stories, including some of the time you spent in Louisiana. I think those stories have a sensitivity, if you will, about ethnic matters that are not exclusively Polish but that are cultural or specific to a region. What was your year in Louisiana like, and how did it enrich your writing?

It was a dream come true for me to go and take my first teaching job in Louisiana, because I was still very involved in reading southern writers. It was an absolutely enriching experience to go to a small town in Louisiana which is off—really off—the beaten track down there (seventy miles south of Shreveport), a lovely small community, many of whose buildings on the main street are in the National Register of Historic Places, and where there are antebellum plantations and mansions.

Your experience in 1965 as a marine in Vietnam is also included in some stories. How does that experience inform these ethnic themes?

I was fortunate in Vietnam to escape with my life and without permanent physical ailments that I know of. Still, I have had the experience of living in that country. I have written a number of stories about Vietnam, one of them is the last story in the book *Children of Strangers*, where an English teacher has the good fortune to be teaching English as a second language and in that class has a Vietnamese student. He tries to change some of her essays and one day realizes that in changing these essays about a Vietnamese woman and her mother, whom she's left in South Vietnam and will never see again, he is again a kind of imperialist even twenty years after the war, because he's still trying to reconstruct a country and a politics, and he's doing it from his western perspective and tampering with her essay. Twenty-five years later he learns something about the great loss that this person and hundreds of thousands of others have experienced due to the displacement and dislocation caused by the war.

In Hemingway's memoir, A Moveable Feast, he talks about being in a café and sitting down to write a story in the morning as the rain beat against the window pane and a beautiful woman walked in and he said he had no worries about being distracted because the story was writing itself. Has this phenomenon ever happened to you?

You know, that's happened about four times in my life, where I was so captivated by some idea. The story of the Vietnamese student is one where I couldn't let go. That weekend I remember telling you and a couple of others what had happened. Some

say you shouldn't talk stories out firsthand because you might lose something in the telling of them. But I couldn't help but tell people.

Most recently, I had an experience in Chicago visiting the Polish consulate to interview them for a novel I'm working on. At about 6:15 a.m. on a Sunday morning I was heading into the terminal at O'Hare to get a flight north when I heard what I thought was piped-in music. It was an accordion playing, and I thought, What kind of muzak would include an accordion? So I stepped out of the sliding doors and tried to find the source of the music.

Then I saw that it wasn't at all coming from a loud speaker, but from a man playing an accordion. Moreover, what he was playing was a beautiful polonaise by Michael Oginski. Now, what are the chances that I would be in O'Hare airport early on a Sunday morning and hear an accordion playing Oginski's polonaise? I walked over and listened to him, spellbound. The title in English means "Farewell to my Country," and I suppose that this emigre standing there was playing as his heart was breaking. I suspect he couldn't go back to Poland even though there's been obviously great change in the political system in Poland. There are Poles here that cannot go back despite the change in Poland.

Perhaps he was playing this piece at the door to the international flights, I don't know. However, it was such a transcendent experience for me that I put aside everything else when I got back and wrote a story. I saw the man playing the accordion and thought of my father who played the accordion. My father's now dead. I don't hear him playing the accordion any more. At that moment I missed him. I missed the old country. Perhaps when I heard that accordion, I missed my grandparents and the whole community that seemingly has passed away.

But I think your stories are about a lot more than mere loss, though many stories are about loss. I know that you're the president of the local Polish club, and I know you have stories with such titles as "The Pulaski Guards"; and I'm wondering if your meeting this man at the most unpredictable place, O'Hare airport at 6:00 on a Sunday morning, if you don't feel a kinship of sorts with that kind of outsider status. Did you feel different because of your Polish traditions even growing up with what would seem to be a normal, healthy American boyhood?

No, I didn't feel different. No, I didn't. I felt as though I were one of the kids in the neighborhood. But then there was this different life at home that I saw no reason to talk about with others. We carried on with Polish traditions, and my grandparents spoke very little English. It seemed natural to me. But now the old ones are gone, and thus the emergence of my own ethnic consciousness over the last ten years.

Another reason I ask this question is because (our readers won't know this) Superior thirty years ago had what I consider to be an anomaly. That is, I also went to a small, Catholic school, St. Francis. And yet, there was a Polish church and school, St. Adalbert's, two blocks away where Polish or Slavic kids went. I

would guess there were fewer than one hundred students there in the eight grades. Why was there a need for another Catholic school only two blocks down the road when there were six other Catholic schools in other parts of the city?

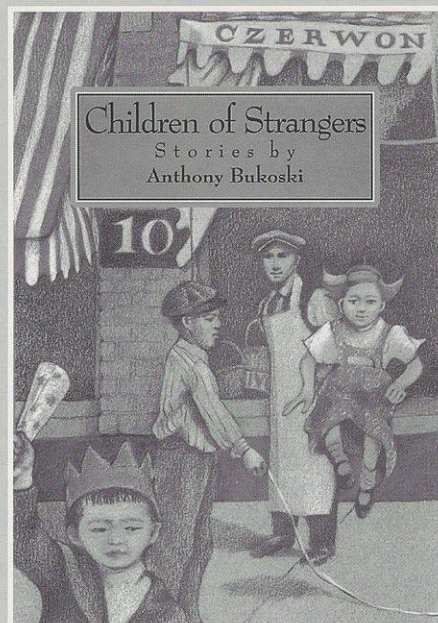
We went to St. Adalbert's because our parents went there. I guess it was just assumed that the Polish kids would go to St. Adalbert's because of the Polish priest, because it was a Polish school. *Szkola Wojciecka*—St. Adalbert's School—was written in Polish over the door and the nuns were largely Polish-Americans come to teach us there. There was never any thought that Anthony Coda or that Bernard Gunski or Arthur Libby, whose mother's name was Bahnek, or that Anthony Bukoski or Norm Lear, whose mother's name was Zowin, or Bob Novak, my cousin, would go anywhere else. It was inconceivable to me that any of us whose parents had gone to St. Adalbert's would go to St. Francis. Ours was the Polish church.

What has been most satisfying in the critical reception of your work?

When I was reviewed in *Narod Polski*, a newspaper printed in Chicago (the title means "The Polish Nation"). That was such a magnificent experience for me because—and maybe again this is overblown and romantic thinking—it seems to me that a second-generation Polonians who's getting reviewed in a Polish newspaper in Chicago was kind of justification for my grandparents coming here at the turn of the century. It was a kind of justification because of how far we had come from both sets of my grandparents who did manual labor and my father who worked as a Great Lakes seaman and in a flour mill, a pretty lousy job. But here, the product of these people had written a small book of stories that had gotten reviewed in a Polish newspaper. In a way it's a small paying back—what else can I do to pay back the people who came here?

One final question. Before I ask that, I want to thank you for taking time out for this interview for the Wisconsin Academy Review. Since you have returned from the University of Iowa (except, of course, for one year teaching in Louisiana), you have chosen to reside in the house of your birth. Your father and mother passed away years ago, but only recently have you decided to sell your childhood home and move into the country. What is the significance of that leave-taking?

I'd written about the house and the people who'd dwelled there. Finally, with my parents having been gone for all these years, I concluded that I'd used up the emotions of that house. I'd written about every room of the house and some of the occurrences that had happened therein, and I'd described the house in a lot of the stories, with the holy water bottles up stairs and the scapulars hanging from my sister's vanity and the many, many rosaries and Polish prayer books. Finally, I'd used up the house. And I didn't feel any loss in leaving. I didn't feel a longing for it, and I still don't. There came a time when I didn't know whether there'd be any point in remaining there because it was a neutral ground for me having, as I said, spent all the passion



Anthony Bukoski was born in Superior in 1945 and was raised there. He was educated at St. Adalbert's Catholic School and Superior Cathedral High School (both no longer in existence). He received a B.A. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, an M.A. in English from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and an M.F.A. in creative writing and a Ph.D. in American literature from the University of Iowa. He also attended the renowned Iowa Writer's Workshop. He has published two collections of stories, *Twelve Below Zero* (New Rivers, 1986) and *Children of Strangers* (Southern Methodist, 1993), and is currently finishing a third collection, titled *A Concert of Minor Pieces*. He teaches English and creative writing at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

that one accumulates over the years living in a place. And so the move was not as tragic or as difficult as I thought it would be.

But you know, there was a kind of hearkening back to the old days, because the last thing I did before I left the house that morning, having cleaned it and moved everything out, was to go to all the rooms and bless them, saying my goodbyes in that way. So that was a fitting closure to the place too.

Who knows, maybe it was just kind of a superstition that I was playing out. But I'll tell you, in the new house I have hanging from the walls a wonderful picture of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, whom Poles revere. So while I said my goodbyes to the old house, now I have brought this Madonna to the new one. And, of course, I have all the Polish prayer books and rosaries and things in the new house. So the past will later replay itself in another way. ♣

Northland Cycle

by Linda Cosner

Winter Solstice, 1902

The milk pails seemed light this morning, the calves calm, and now as my melton skirt brushes along the banks of the crystal-packed path from the barn to the house, I smell the wood smoke, imagine the coffee, and let the sun bounce up at me from snow wrapping round over summer's sharp edges, smothering the summer days of constant cooking sandwiched between milkings, of watching my boys sweat like little men in the fields, of teaching my girls how to butcher and can.

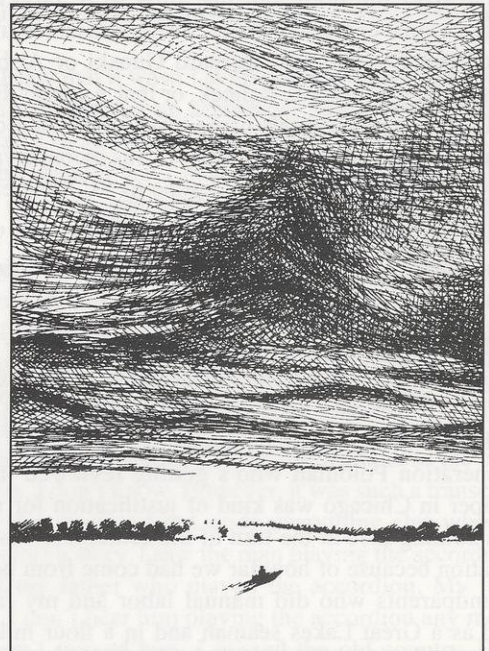
Thor left this morning for his winter in the woods, an annual trek north to the lumber camps for extra cash. He and Syver set out on horseback before chores, while the stars poked holes in the dark Wisconsin sky like silver pins in my black velvet cushion, and I silently prayed for the clear weather to hold to give them ample distance before nightfall.

In the blinding snow-glow I catch a mystic moment, the thought of four blessed, barren months before me. I would never have allowed such an ungrateful thought, except for those moccasins he brought home last spring, the soft, handsewn ones he said he won in a card game, not like the ones they sell but like the ones they wear, moccasins that marched right into my mind and kicked aside the cold lumbercamp curtain and showed me the red-white children created in the heat of a reservation fire.

Dortea's Baby

An early winter storm poured out the forever-white plains and stretched the raw distance between homesteads, letting Dortea grow to term with only Papa, Mama, the boys, and little Anna to see her swell. If a neighbor broke the chill and hiked over for coffee, Mama pointed to the pantry where Dortea would retreat to sit on the flour bin and blow temporary holes in the frosted pane, drawing the scentless cold into her nostrils, drowning the warm nausea of premost and fresh bread being passed in the kitchen.

She wanted another glimpse of the Indian spirit that she'd first seen in the alder glitter by the creek. The silver-bronze man wearing a fingerwoven headband and a beaded buckskin framed with fringe and weasel-tail tassels. The after-death peace warrior who



Winter scene from Twelve Below Zero by Anthony Bukoski. Drawing by Gaylord Schanilec.

forewarned how the blood-sopped black soil of the upper Midwest would suck the Norwegian juices from her bones and give her the game and grain to grow a native American soul.

Martin came in late February with only Mama there in the loft to hum and stroke her through the strain. Mama had sent papa and the boys hunting, and Little Anna slept while Dorteia dug for the strength that only the soul can store, and shoved the boy into his grandmother's arms.

In a rose-glow dream the Medicine Man danced with a butter-brown baby strapped and wrapped in embroidered wool on a wooden palette. Dorteia stood with the circle of dark women while he tranced within bowing, springing, chanting, swooning, eye-droning, head-rolling until the baby cried and the shaman tossed the tender bundle to a dry old woman with no teeth.

Outside of her, Martin seemed a demanding stranger, draining her juices, pirating her power, a fragile little guard with all the dominion to hold her in place. One dawn she awoke to a blank panic and certainty that her unmotherly thoughts had killed him. Rushing to the cradle she stared but couldn't discern his breathing so touched the blanket near a tiny nostril and feeling the regular, gentle bursts finally released her fear-rigid guilt cage.

On the slow ride to Easter Sunday services, Dorteia saw the months of winter isolation melting, leaving pools of brown grass scattered in the snowfields. Martin gazed out of a Shetland hood and lap robe at the winter-barren boughs now tinted with green and chattering in motion to spring's wild breath. His miniature fist tugged on Dorteia's forefinger, dragging out the courage to face the elders and the silent young man who might have lightened her shame. When they arrived, Mama swung down off the wagon and reached up to Dorteia, with firm intentions saying, "You'll sit with the choir. Give Martin to me now."

Dust floated in a sunbeam above the congregation and rained the Indian Spirit into a spotlight by the organ. A carmine sash, wound turban-style around his head and lined with sculpted eagle feathers, shimmered as he sang in low, monotonous tones and waved a white martin pouch that rattled lightly as he disappeared. Dorteia felt a surge within, fainted, and awoke outside in the arms of Elder Hanson who was carrying her toward the gate. "Are you all right now child? You must be working too hard helping your mother with your new baby brother."

Rural Wisconsin Winter, 1962

The manure pile grew all winter
while Oscar read *Mein Kampf*.
Nestled quiet in the overstuffed chair,
sometimes he'd startle himself
with a "son-of-a-bitch, Jeeh-suss Christ,"
then stare at the television, not watching,
'til he dozed off or took up the book again.

One March morning he threw off the comforter
lifted the lid to the wood stove, dropped it in
and watched the pages curl into black confetti.
He got the pick, the shovel, the six-tined fork
from the shed, hitched up the spreader,
and wheeled on jangling chains to the barnyard.

The first up-swing of the pick lifted,
stretched, liberated his chest, his back
knitted tight from weeks of sitting slumped.
The down-swing broke quick through frozen,
clotted straw sinking softer, faster than expected,
releasing the putrid gas rising to his nose
nearly dropping him to his knees.

He turned quick, sucked in clear cold
then swung around for another blow
another blast from the mound of stench,
of straw bones, life heat, rotted remains.
To load and spread on snow-covered fields
took four days of hoisting, swinging
slinging, sitting high in the open cold.
The second day he began to sing
above the sputter of the tractor
"How great thou art, how great thou art."

Snow After Death

by Diane Snyder-Haug

Outside my kitchen window, the translucent morning moon hangs like the residue of last night's dream. Below, the new snow is dazzling and late for the first snow in a Wisconsin winter. The ground has not yet froze, and this is good. Good because the shovel dug deep and easy when my father and I buried him in my backyard just the other night. That night had been warm and oddly quiet except for the shoo, shoo of the shovel in the dirt. The mist that rose from the fields behind the house shrouded us in our grim task.

"Good black dirt all the way down," my father said as he dug. Afterwards he held me as I cried.

"He'll be cold out there," I said when we returned to the warmth of the house.

"It's warm out tonight," said my mother from somewhere past the kitchen door.

I had called my father to come with his shovel and help as soon as I found my cat's lifeless body on the bedroom floor. He was stretched out so stiff I couldn't bend him to fit into a shoe box. He was wet with his own urine, which soaked through the muddy brown carpet. The whole room smelled of death. Sweaty, tangy, tart.

At first I could only move through the motions and not quite grasp the finality of it. It was the whole game again, the same one I played when the husband left. Divorce and death. Death and divorce. Why must all these ills pile up like some refuse heap behind the tenement which is myself. I couldn't believe it could happen now, when everything else about me was shattered. My cat—who shared my bed and kept me company all night through—was dead. He had dutifully slept where the husband had once, right on his pillow. When the night grew chill, he would nuzzle into the space between my chest and arm and sleep contentedly. The warmth of his little body pressed against me. The sound of his breathing filling the air.

The husband had left as soon as the leaves turned color and followed the geese and the robins to the warmth of the south. Since then the land has gone from golden to drab brown to white, yet he still calls. "Say the word and I'll come home," he says, and his voice sounds so clear, like he was talking from just next door. Then he tells me where he is and what the weather is like there. "It's 85 degrees in Dallas," he said one week. "It's 78 in

Phoenix," he says the next. I keep a little map next to the telephone and chart his progress with a red marker.

There are still days when it doesn't seem likely that I will ever get over this. I try to arrange these emotions into a more palatable form. The loneliness is the hardest to bear. I go to the battered woman's shelter every week and we have a support group there. We are school teachers and office managers and factory workers and housewives. We sit and talk and laugh and cry and try to comprehend why our men are the way they are.

"Don't go down there," my mother says. "You're not that kind of people."

I want to scream at her: "I am, I am."

The day after my cat died, one of the women from group telephones me. "How are you?" I say. "How are the kids?"

"I need cash," she says. "Can you lend me a few bucks for gas?"

I pause. "My cat just died," I say.

"I'm sorry," she says, but I don't feel it from her. It is just two words coming out of her mouth.

Those people who don't have pets don't understand the love affair of sorts that develops—sensual, erotic, an entire form of communication based on touch and telepathy. These are the most intimate relationships. So much better, I think, than human ones. A cat will not be disloyal to you. A cat will not harm you. A cat will not cheat you.

I eat popcorn for supper: popcorn sprinkled with grated cheese. This is a benefit of living alone—one does not have to cook a decent meal. One can go to the grocery store and return with only a can of waterpacked tuna and a package of Cheetos. No one chastises you for this. There are other benefits too. Like no

one's messes but your own to clean up. No one to have to explain the cartoon in *The New Yorker* to.

Before the husband flew south, we sat in a local café at a rickety wooden table, each of us on opposing ends as though we were about to commence a game of chess. In our haste, we both forgot to bring paper, but the husband has a pen and writes down all our assets on a napkin. Then he begins drawing circles and lines. The lined things are his, the circles are mine. He turns the list around for me to see. Ten years of marriage reduced to one side of a cocktail napkin. He smiles. He knows I will give him what he wants. He knows he is still in control.

I must've loved him once. I must've loved him so much I was willing to accept anything he did as right. It is only now that I know how wrong he was. This is all a bit late, for I have to deal with all these emotional things and try to come to terms with myself and try to see life as it really is and not as he would have me see it. Previously it had been he who painted every picture—he said the world was against us, everyone was out to get us, no one could be trusted, we alone had to rise up above all this, we alone could do it without any outside interference. When we went to marriage counseling he said the counselors were putting ideas into my head. No one wanted us to make this work.

In his eyes, love and anger have the same wild look. When he tied my wrists together, he did it because he loved. He bloodied my mouth out of love, bruised my arms and legs out of love. When he tied me down, beat, and raped me, he did it out of some odd love and if I loved him I would let him. My love for him was so great I did not question him. I suffered for his love. I wanted to please him. I didn't want to lose him. Somewhere I lost it, though—my love for him, my sanity, perhaps, my soul. I know I loved him once. This isn't the question. The question is how could he have loved me and done these things? This is my sense of wonderment. How love can obscure pain.

I hang a prism in my kitchen window and in the morning on sunny days the whole room is alight with a rainbow of green, yellow, and rose. It lasts for only an hour until the sun moves onward. I love that little prism shaped like a crystal heart.



At group we sit in a circle of the most uncomfortable chairs imaginable. We talk for ninety minutes or until we run out of steam—which is rare. Once you get someone to utter a sentence, the rest just starts to tumble out after it. We talk about beatings. We talk about rape. We talk about verbal abuse and power plays and emotional control. But mostly we talk about ourselves and what we must do to pull all these little pieces of our lives back together. I pass the tissue box. At the end of the session, the counselor asks if everyone is satisfied. No one really leaves sat-

isfied. We all leave with our brains churning a hundred miles a minute. Once I went to group and no one else showed up. When I left, I thought, this is what it is like to be really alone.

I read somewhere that single people are more sensual than coupled people. Single people are more tuned into their environment. I try to fill my new role. I try to absorb everything: sounds, sights, smells. I touch things and experience them. In the cool of the night I lay naked caressing my own soft skin, loving myself better than any man ever has. I delight in exploring this dark mysterious thing which is me. I laugh because, I think, I don't need a man after all. Little things begin to catch my attention: the sound of the coins tumbling down one of

those little change ramps on a cafe cash register, the hot detergent smell whiffed on passing a beauty shop, the sleekness of a pen in my fingers while I write, the roundness of the moon. Nothing alludes me. My whole body resounds of it.



The bedroom smells of urine where my cat died. I pour a bunch of odor eliminator on the spot but it doesn't seem to help. I think it makes it even worse. At night I wake up gagging from the stench of it. The husband calls and cries when I

tell him about the cat. I remember the time he threw my cat full force against the wall because he had done something catlike and mischievous. "I wish I were there for you," he says now, "I wish I could hold you."

I want to say to him that I didn't force him to go south. I want to say that I never asked to be raped. I want to tell him I hate him, but then there is part of me that wants to say "come home." Part of me still thinks that no one will ever love me again, that I should cling to whatever love is offered. Instead, I ask him where he is calling from and what the temperature is there.

I remember the last time vividly: being awakened at 3:00 a.m., the smell of liquor on his breath, the pressure of his hand on my ankles where he grabbed me to yank me from the bed. "What are you doing?" I asked, still half asleep.

"Raping you," he said.

It wasn't the act itself, which lasted only three minutes, though those were the longest three minutes ever lived. In those three minutes it was absolute—there was no god. It wasn't the physical pain of it—which was instantaneous but not lasting. It was the whole force of it, the brutal force of it. This was not one act but the culmination of every act ever forced on a woman by a man. It was the final putting in one's place, condemning one to less than human: a veritable rape machine sans feelings. A universe that had existed, like a safe bubble enclosing me, shattered.

Afterwards, he fell to his knees and cried. I had to comfort him when it was I who had just died.

I cannot return to my rapist. I must tell myself this over and over.

People are curious creatures. Everyone wants to know how I put up with it. I tell them it is like having a poisonous snake in your living room, coiled thickly in the corner. It is always there. You dust around it, tiptoe past it, ignore it, sometimes even caress it. A stranger might come in and be aghast: "You have a deadly snake in your living room!" they would say. But you, who have lived with it so long, know its movements and its moods, you know that deep down it is a gentle beast. You are sure you know this, until one day it springs from its coil and sinks its venomous fangs into your neck. If you are lucky, you survive. If you are exceptionally lucky, you get away for good.

"It's 78 degrees in Albuquerque," I announce at group. Some of the women there have restraining orders against their men. One woman had an order but took it off. Her man is supposedly cured. She doesn't come to group anymore. One of the women asks how many of us were also abused as children. Everyone raises their hands, except one. Funny, the things love makes people do.



The day after my cat died I stay in bed all day long. I lay in bed and stare up at the ceiling. Then I turn over and stare into the pillow. I am numb to everything. I try to sleep, and when I finally do I dream I am falling into a black endless hole. I wake up, turn on the radio, spread books and magazines all over the bed, and try to read them.

I cannot concentrate. When I close my eyes I see little white dots. They are like the shafts of light peeking through the sides of a wicker clothes hamper. I am seven years old again—crouching in that hamper under the stench of dirty socks and underwear. Through the house my heavy-footed mother stomps, throwing open closet doors, falling in a thud to her knees to peer under the bed. "When I find you . . ." I hear her saying, and she needn't finish the sentence. That voice is the background of all my nightmares. I curl myself into a tight ball. I am afraid to move, afraid to breath, afraid to let my heart beat lest it be heard. The fear wells up in me until I can no longer bear it. I wet my pants.

I lay in my adult bed and try to push that little girl away. She haunts me. Everything I do, everything I am, goes back to

her. What was not understood was that a little girl of thirteen could be so lonely as to cleave to the only love offered, that of a hot-headed, sixteen-year-old boy. And even after he raped her on the cold floor of a hotel room, she would walk down the aisle sure she had found the key to the golden door. That little girl was so anxious to grow up she missed out on growing up. In her mind, love and death and sex were all woven intrinsically as the strands of the rope forming the noose that would become her first suicide attempt.

I am glad when night comes. In the dark, all things become safe and secret. When it's dark, daddy's home.

In the gray of dawn, I run. I like to feel all the components of my body working. I like to hear nothing but the rush of the wind in my ears. When it's cold outside, my eyes water, my nose runs, and all the perspiration freezes into icicles under my cap. With each movement I try to expel that which was me, and with each breath I draw in a new me. It is a run of anger, hate, and frustration. It is a run of lust, love, and joy.



Three days after my cat dies, the snow begins to fall. It starts in the morning—big white flakes, and continues slow and steady throughout the day. The white

fluff clings to the trees, the street lamps, and makes a soft mounded blanket over the fresh little grave in my backyard. I brush sloppy piles of the stuff off the car onto the street while my hands grow cold.

At night, the husband calls. "It's 83 degrees in San Bernadino," he says.

"It snowed today," I say. "It's very pretty."

"Not as pretty as you," he says.

In the morning I go out to the little snow-covered grave in my backyard. The snow is pure and clean and brilliant in the sunshine, crisp and crunchy under my boots. I breathe in the cold air. I smell it. I touch the snow. I taste it. It makes everything fresh and new. I stand there and stare down at the little snowy grave for an eternity, then I cry: great, gasping, sobbing cries like my whole guts are shaking inside me, wanting to come out through my mouth. This is silly, I think, this is just a cat.

I go into the house. The kitchen is alight with a rainbow of colors from the little prism heart. I make myself tea and sit down at the table. It's 22 degrees in Wisconsin. ❧



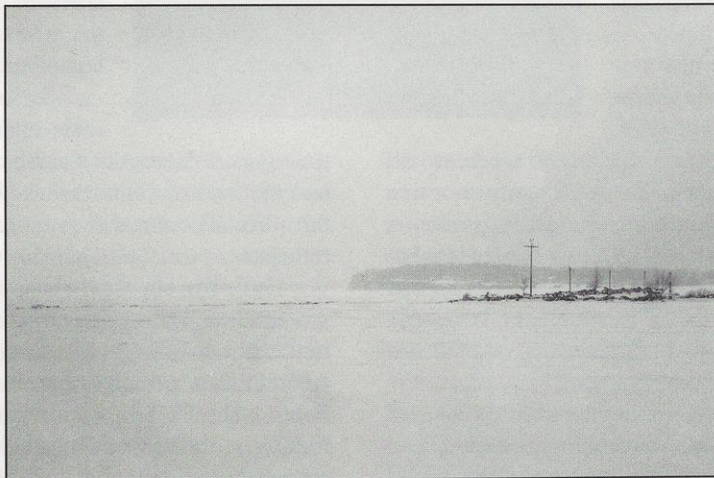
Weathered Lives

by Elizabeth Ivers

*S*ometimes a change of events causes an abrupt shift in our expectations and turns our attention outward. Such a change occurred one winter day not long ago. I met my husband after work and we walked together to the bus stop; the temperature had warmed up a little from the bitter sub-zero weather we had lately been enduring, and it had begun to snow. Large, soft flakes lit up the air around our faces. Surprised and gladdened by the new snow, we felt a little giddy, as if we were a young couple out on our first date.

I was still restless when we arrived home. The weather's movements could be felt inside the walls, and I was pulled outside with the same urgency as a leaf is swept down a rushing creek. The light was fading as I turned in the direction of the Lake Mendota shoreline. The air had grown colder, and the snow had turned to ice; it blew against my cheeks like grains of sand.

The frozen lake was silent and still beyond the veil of falling snow. In the deep cold of Wisconsin's winter the lake mimics the earth's solid, unyielding character—water becomes terra firma; what is essentially fluid, ephemeral, suggests something more abiding and ancient. It is at this time of the year that I can at least fool myself into imagining the slow-moving glacier that some 12,000 years ago pushed through the Yahara Valley and then receded, leaving behind the rock and debris it had displaced at the front edge of its advance. I feel the thunder-like tremor of the glacier's movement as it shears the rock cliffs of the valley. I see the waters of the Yahara River, cut off from their normal drainage by the glacier's end moraine, seep into the broad depressions cut by glacial movement and form a vast lake. I hear falling water as the lake begins to spill over the walls of the moraine. I watch as it slowly drains until water remains only in the deepest depressions, and the sea-like lake is reduced to a chain of smaller lakes linked together by the Yahara River, like pearls on a strand.



Elizabeth Ivers

Returning to the present on that late February afternoon, I leaned into the wind and gazed out across the frozen, snow-covered expanse. The horizon was lost in the snowfall. Some distance out, a solitary figure approached the shore, providing accent and scale to the trembling blur of white and gray. A sense of anticipation filled the air, as if the snow that fell on the surface of the lake would at any moment rise again, like a flock of birds that, after gently fingering the earth, ascends once more to the sky.

The weather's motions and moods come in and out of our lives, sometimes no more than an unnoticed backdrop to our day-to-day concerns. But from time to time, the forces of wind, heat, cold, and moisture collide loudly enough to push to the forefront of our attention.

On a March day, I spoke by phone with my husband's mother who lives in Lexington, Kentucky. We exchanged news of work and family. Then her voice became noticeably more excited, agitated, as she described a recent ice storm unlike anything northern Kentucky had seen in years. An inch-thick layer of ice had covered the trees, making them dangerous to stand under; tree branches, frozen and burdened with extra weight, snapped off without warning. Falling limbs and ice caused power outages helter-skelter throughout the region. The interstate was closed. The National Guard was called out. My in-laws were out of electric-

ity for over twenty-four hours, and the lack of power to the sump pump was their greatest concern. Every couple of hours, all through the night, my father-in-law went down two flights of stairs to the basement to bail water by hand.

The Kentucky storm was not an isolated event. The weather—its extremes, its unpredictability—has been a conspicuous part of our lives in recent years. In September of 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated south Florida; the following March a giant blizzard released four feet of snow on the East Coast, from Florida to Maine. Here in the Midwest the summer of 1993 brought flood levels greater than any recorded since records began in 1895. The following winter, the temperature—in some strange inverse proportion to the summer's high water marks—fell to record lows. In February of 1994, southern California was overwhelmed by a series of rainstorms that caused flooding reminiscent of the Mississippi deluge. And this year brought a record hot summer to the Midwest, and the most active hurricane season in sixty years.

Seen at close range, the weather's exaggerated gestures have been devastating. Homes have been destroyed, farm crops ruined, traffic brought to a standstill, towns evacuated, lives lost. The difficult process of rebuilding, of recovery, will go on for years to come.

Curiously, though, we have also relished the weather's extremes. One morning, during the record winter cold of 1993, I was riding in a crowded elevator on my way to work; we all stood silently hunched over, stunned from our early morning encounter with the bone-numbing cold. Suddenly, someone exclaimed, "I've never seen anything like this winter—unbelievable!" The rest of us, stomping our still frozen feet, laughed in agreement. The winter's record cold was a drama. An event. A story to be folded in among other stories we would tell and retell.

Our encounters with the weather lie at the heart of some of our greatest stories, and they reveal much about ourselves and our relationship to the natural world. At the darkest moment in his long journey, when he is alone and lost at sea, Odysseus is threatened by torrential rains and pounding waves. It is not death that he is afraid of but anonymity: the storm threatens to wipe out his name and the memory of his life. But he remains steadfast and endures, as he has endured so many previous trials. King Lear, "minded like the weather most unquietly," casts about on the heath during a raging tempest, striving "in his little world of man to outscorn the to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain." His complete despair drives Lear out into the storm in hopes that nature's tempest will distract him from his soul's

tempest. He receives the patience he requests; the storm not only draws him out of his private pain, but leads him towards a truer self-forgetfulness, and he learns sympathy for the pain of others. For the first time, Lear is able to ask:

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?



Elizabeth Ivers

The struggles of Odysseus and Lear are echoed in the stories of European settlers new to the Great Plains. Through the eyes of Rusty, a young Englishman who travels to western Canada to try the life of a cowboy, Wallace Stegner portrays the hardship of the winter of 1906–07 when blizzards, one right after another, destroyed men and their livestock. As Rusty and his companions struggle to survive, the bitter wind, "heartless and inhuman, older than earth and totally alien," seems to taunt them with the "voices of all the lost, all the Indians, *métis*, hunters, Mounted Police, wolfers, cowboys, all the bundled bodies that the spring uncovered and the warming sun released into the stink of final decay; all the freezing, gaunt, and haunted men who had challenged this country and failed . . ."

By contrast, Willa Cather's memorable character Antonia joyfully accepts the rigors of Nebraska's harsh climate—both the cold of winter and the heat of summer—as she accepts all the difficulties of farm life. The weather is but another expression of the land's richness.

Endurance. Self-discovery. Compassion. Defeat. Acceptance. The stories of fiction are reflected, more modestly, in the stories of life: most families have stories that feature the weather as a principal character. I remember one winter in Texas when the temperatures dipped into the single digits. By local standards conditions were treacherous; roads were extremely icy, and snow—a rarity—seemed to cover everything in sight. Most people elected to stay home from school or work, so I was surprised to see my father up early and anxious to get out the door. My surprise was even greater given his increased reluctance, as he drew nearer to retirement, to haul himself out of bed each morning to go to a job he disliked. The reason for his alacrity that morning? "On days like these, someone has to be willing to get out, to look after things," he said. "I think someone should be at work in case an emergency comes up." The unusual energy in his movements also indicated another reason: the demanding weather presented him with an opportu-

nity he rarely enjoyed in the routine of his day-to-day life, to be moved to heroic action—to give an out-of-the-ordinary reply to the weather's out-of-the-ordinary invocation.

Sometimes the weather moves us to simple joy and laughter. At such times, the sky's patterns are our own, as if the expansion and contraction of our lungs are perfectly in rhythm with the expansion and contraction of the clouds floating across the infinite blue of an August day. During a summer camping trip to northern New Mexico when I was a girl, my family was visited not by the usual brief afternoon rain but by a sudden hailstorm. My mother—in that once characteristically resourceful American way of seeing riches in hardship—put a pan out to collect some of the hail stones. She saved them for later that evening when she and my father sat over a campfire and savored bourbon on the rocks.



We commonly observe that when we cannot find anything else to talk about, we can always talk about the weather. The implication is that only participants in a desperately waning conversation would resort to such a dull topic. But the other side of this truism is that we readily turn to the weather because it is a subject we all share. It is one of the last of nature's phenomena that we each interact with on a daily basis; and many of us, at one time or another, have experienced the weather as a force greater than ourselves, a force that includes and encompasses us all. The weather is nature's most public gesture. Snowstorms. Hurricanes. Floods. Spells of unusually good weather. These natural events are regularly featured on the front page of newspapers. They receive ample air time on the radio and television. And they are regularly discussed among friends and co-workers. Together we speak of the lengthening or shortening of days; the strange beauty of hoarfrost; the welcome of the first few clear, crisp days in spring; the colorless sky of a scorching August day; or the shock of a sudden severe cold spell that freezes the lake so swiftly that within only a few hours the ice progresses from shoreline to the lake's center, and tendrils of steam rise from the remaining open water in the far distance.

We turn to the topic of weather not reluctantly, but willingly, as if we are hungry for what our encounters with the weather have shown us. This is, in large part, due to the weather's ability to engage us in a drama of forbearance, surprise, and wonder. For we, by necessity, become part of the story. Stories of the weather's surprise and tumult, and our echoing answer and struggle: one way nature and humanity are reconciled.

In July, my husband's parents stopped by on their way through town. My mother-in-law brought out photographs of the Kentucky ice storm. The exasperation was no longer so evident in her voice as she recounted the storm's effects. In the retelling, beauty was given as much emphasis as hardship; she spoke of how the trees, coated with ice during the night, sparkled in the morning sunlight. And as she again told the story of my father-in-law's arduous feat of hand-bailing water throughout the night, he smiled. His aging but still agile hands flickered about the rim of his coffee cup. His eyes shone.



Elizabeth Ivers

Our strongest desire, in the face of inclement weather, is to remain secure. We shelter ourselves from rain and wind. We bundle up to protect ourselves from severe cold. Like the delicate *oenothera* that retracts its flower during the mid-day heat, we seek shade when temperatures rise above our body's own. We shuttle back and forth between climate-controlled homes and climate-controlled cars. On the occasions when we do step outdoors we wear clothing which is optimistically, even brazenly, labeled *weather-resistant* or *weather-proof*. And because security hinges on predictability we attempt to closely monitor all the factors that add up to what we call the weather. We assign numbers to temperature and humidity and precipitation and wind speed and air pressure. We are assured by forecasts dispensed in precise

percentages. We avidly watch meteorologists on the nightly news stand in front of satellite photographs, their bodies superimposed over an expanse of North America that stretches from Mexico to southern Canada. We nod acceptingly as they confidently wave their hands and strain to give viewers the impression that meteorologists are omniscient.

These efforts to predict and forestall are not surprising. Our first impulse, our most fundamental instinct, is self-preservation. Safety and comfort are persuasive. My husband and I have recently taken a more critical (and amused) look at what we have come to consider essential to camping. The single-burner, white gas stove has been replaced with a two-burner, propane Coleman. Real pillows, not spare clothing, serve as night-time headrests. And camp chairs are now more inviting than the bare ground. The nesting instinct in humans is strong; most of us eagerly pursue ways to buffer ourselves from life's small and large adversities, including the ones brought by the weather.

Clear, too, in the effort to outwit the weather is the challenge that animates scientists to try to unravel the complicated tangle of forces that create the weather. With the aid of satellites, research airplanes, sensitive radars, and some of the

world's largest computers, meteorologists have explored the intricacies of cloud formation, uncovered some of the mysteries of thunderstorms and tornadoes, and fine-tuned their forecasting abilities. They are inspired by the challenge that moves all scientists—the challenge of matching mind to matter, the challenge of knowing before-and-after before it occurs.

Yet, whether for reasons of security or scientific pursuit, the hermetic world we are moving towards is nonetheless disquieting. What we strive for may not be what we truly want, or need. For a life of heightened physical comfort dulls us into a strange forgetfulness, an inattentiveness. We become less alert to the improbabilities. The improbability of a western tanager's orange bloom on the branch of a gambol oak. The improbability of a lover's face outlined against the soft curves of a

pillow. The improbability of the gentle swaying of an old woman, dressed in mismatched floral blues and striped greens, as she walks down the street. The improbability of the sun's uneven warmth on the tilted globe, the temperature differential that sets into motion the weather's wild patterns of storms and rain and still, clear days. The improbability of life. The improbability that anything is as it is, and not otherwise.

Sealed from contingency, we become unmindful of these improbabilities. We are heedless to the shattering moments of time: the moments of astonishment, the moments of change, the moments that break open the stories of fiction and the stories of life. After he emerged from his two-year stint in the controlled environment of Biosphere 2, crew member Mark Nelson remarked, "I've missed the unpredictability of nature." Perhaps the most important thing learned from Biosphere 2's quixotic exercise is found in those words, that the simple elements of surprise and startlement are essential to making our lives worth living.



Doug Henke

pected, potentially devastating, ways. Ironically, our efforts to understand and control the sky's movements may only have made them more dangerous and inscrutable. But this should not be surprising. The weather is a little like the fabled coyote, the trickster that often thwarts human effort for his own amusement. For the coyote knows that there is nothing more amusing than outwitting human beings who have too earnestly tied themselves to an expectation.

One recent spring, I was reminded of the weather's wily, prankish nature. I was also reminded that the weather—all its patterns and effects—not only tricks those who have tied themselves to expectations of power, but also to expectations of wonder.

I had been told that when the ice breaks up in the spring it sounds like a thousand bells ringing. I had never been near the lake at the right moment to hear this sound, so during that spring I kept a close vigil. Twice a day, I walked down to the breakwater at Tenney Park, gazed out at the lake, and listened intently. The snow melted. Seasonal change echoed geological change; the long winter gave way as the glacier once did. Long cracks developed in the ice, and small areas of open water appeared. During the day, hundreds of gulls collected on the frozen surface of the pale blue islands of ice. Muskrats took long dives under the newly opened water. In the evening, the oranges and purples of sunsets skipped across the lake from one fragment of water to the next like reflections of fire on broken glass.

Large sheets of ice began to shift south and eastward. The radius from the lake's center that marked the area of clear water grew wider each day. The winds were still. The lake waited for the strong, warm breeze that would free it of the last remaining ice.

One afternoon as I walked home from work, a westerly wind blew. I headed for the shoreline. The wind pushed the outer edge of the ice towards the shore. The juncture of water and ice formed a line parallel to the shore about a hundred yards out into the lake. Water pressed against ice. Ice pressed against ice further inland.

The sound I heard was not the ringing of bells. It was the sound of a rushing mountain stream. It was the rage of an April wind on the grass plains of eastern New Mexico. It was a roar.

It may be that in the not too distant future we will be able to completely seal ourselves off from those weathering forces that now have a way of entering our lives like a thunderclap. However—as the signs of global warming and ozone depletion seem to indicate—human actions have changed weather patterns just as they have other natural processes, and in unex-

Mesdames of the Tenth Muse

I say we'll be two gentlewomen
 sitting on the beach beneath
 stark white ruins; I with my
 Greek phrase book and cane
 across my knees, listening
 to the sea gulls squall
 as you read her Fragments
 in a haunted voice, while we
 wait for her beckoning hand
 across the millennia.
 And the wind shall bring the smell
 of crisp sardines from the low
pension and blow our hats off in turn
 and our hair will fly wild and coarse,
 and on trembling lips we will each
 mouth our own Sapphic hymns in silence,
 to the muse we know as sister,
 wishing for garlands before
 we are welcomed to her fold.
 And the German tourists will
 smirk, thinking us two aged
 lesbians when you take my hand
 as we edge near the foamy waters'
 lip, lapping at our sturdy shoes,
 but the old Greek fisherman,
 blunt fingers mending his eternal
 net, will see the truth,
 and know that our faded souls
 thirst only for one last
 taste of the lyric Muse.

Yvette Viets Flaten

The Deaths I Choose

I choose one by pulling out my hair
 and locking legs with my husband who
 doesn't notice me until I'm cold.

I pick a second by screaming in
 a jar when another woman fits
 my lover's passion like a new dress.

I come to a third by jumping off
 roof tops in Chicago on New Year's eve
 and fading in pink confetti clouds.

• • •

Death is the oyster I slide down my throat
 when no one is looking.

Death is a language I bleach off the page,
 before it is written.

Death is a codfish I catch and let go
 in an empty bathtub.

• • •

Each night I enter the arena
 as the knife thrower's wife and listen
 to drum rolls announce the whoosh of blades
 I have feared and wanted for so long.

Like wings I raise my arms to a cross
 a trapeze lifts me beyond myself,
 beyond the dome. Sheer lightness enters
 my butterfly cocoon and I glide.

Karin B. Gordon

Death of a Giant

A twister rolled off Lake Michigan
like a freight train, snapped a massive oak
in the ravine bordering our lawn,
left us to deal with the death
of a two-hundred-year-old giant
that had weathered ice-rain,
snowfall and drought, had budded,
burned and shed leaves like magic
grown crops, rained sap.

Now the enormous trunk
had come apart two-thirds up
jagged like a city skyline
heading straight for the ground.
But November is too hard
for roots to take hold,
and the stump toppled and spilled
its crown above the crevasse
like a truckload of kindling
right up against our foundation.
Twigs tapped our rain-streaked windows
like mud-caked nails of an injured woodsman
dragging himself to the nearest cabin
before passing out.
It looked like an airplane crash scene
seen from a news radio helicopter:
shattered limbs, branches broken open
like bodies, bone-pale splinters
fan-shaped across a winter lawn.

A twister left a giant to die on our doorstep,
a confused raccoon licking its wounds,
sawdust to mop up blood.

I see trees that tried to catch it
stand with broken arms ready to fight
for sunlight.

Karin B. Gordon

White

Found a sand dollar

skeleton

under fresh snow,

low tide,

distant memory.

To think you

were once here,

transparent,

quick as snow

under the first

cold waves.

To think

I accepted that.

Christopher Tozier



ALEUTIAN ECHOES by Charles C. Bradley. The University of Alaska Press, 1994. 275 pages. \$25.00 (paper). ISBN 0-912006-75-7.

by Mark D. Van Ells

On the eve of America's entry into World War II, Charles C. Bradley sold his photography business and enlisted in the United States Army. *Aleutian Echoes* is Bradley's exceptionally interesting memoir of his five years of military service during World War II, focusing particularly on his tour of duty in Alaska's Aleutian Islands.

Bradley learned that the army was organizing a division of mountain troops soon after he entered service in 1941. An experienced skier who had studied geology in college, Private Bradley volunteered for the ski troops and soon became a lieutenant in the 10th Mountain Infantry Division. While Bradley was training on Mount Rainier in 1942, the Japanese invaded the two westernmost islands of the Aleutian chain. American soldiers fought the mountainous subarctic environment of the archipelago as well as the Japanese in order to recapture the islands.

In anticipation of similar problems in an invasion of northern Japan, the army established the North Pacific Combat School (NPCS), a top secret operation. In 1944 Bradley and a handful of other ski troops boarded a ship with sealed orders, learning only after they were underway that they were heading for the Aleutians to staff the school. The author spent more than a year in the islands studying survival and potential combat operations in the region. The NPCS staff drew up a field manual, designed a special combat uniform, developed tactics, and tested weapons in combat exercises. Five classes of trainees passed through the school before the Japanese surrendered in August 1945.

Aleutian Echoes is a remarkable war memoir in many respects. Bradley did not see combat, but his reminiscences nevertheless reveal much about military life during World War II. Because the author participated in a secret operation in a remote part of the world, his narrative describes the emotional impact of isolation and separation from loved ones that many soldiers experience in wartime. His memoirs also highlight the camaraderie between soldiers and the unique bond often fostered by military service. Bradley places his memoirs into historical context, but he also conveys to the reader the personal perspective of a junior officer. Veterans will find many of Bradley's ordeals and insights familiar, because they sum up those of millions of Americans during World War II. Historians will find this book a valuable resource for studying the experiences of individual service personnel during the war.

This is much more than a collection of war stories, however. Bradley also has written a natural travelogue of the Aleutians. Having spent months hiking, climbing, skiing, and camping in the islands, he became a close observer of the islands' flora and fauna, geology, and climate. In fascinating detail, he describes the many natural wonders of the Aleutian

chain, such as the fierce windstorms known as williwaws, the odd, human-like behavior of the northern raven, and the incredible diversity and fragility of the archipelago's ecosystem. Aleutian geology interested Bradley so much that after the war he undertook graduate study in the field and became a noted scholar and teacher of the subject. Skiers and hikers will undoubtedly enjoy Bradley's descriptions of virgin slopes and harrowing cliffs. The author's portrayal of this strangely beautiful land stands in stark contrast to the grim business of war preparations. When reading the book, World War II often seems distant and unreal, as it surely must have seemed to a man watching ravens frolic on a foggy Aleutian mountainside.

Bradley relates his experiences in an engaging, conversational writing style that is a pleasure to read. However, what makes *Aleutian Echoes* truly special is the abundance of photographs and drawings that accompany the text. The photographs, in particular, are stunning. Bradley brought a camera along on his many excursions, and his photographs capture both the human side of military service and the haunting beauty of the Aleutians in ways words cannot. These are not typical G.I. snapshots, but beautifully composed, crisply focused landscapes and portraits in clear and rich colors. The book is a delight to look at as well as to read.

Charles Bradley, a fellow of the Wisconsin Academy, is an honorary member of the board of directors of the Aldo Leopold Foundation and lives on the Leopold Memorial Reserve near Baraboo. His book is part war story, part natural travelog and will appeal to a wide audience. The combination of text and image creates an unusually vivid portrait of the Aleutian Islands and one Wisconsin man's experiences there during the World War II.

Mark D. Van Ells is the archivist/historian at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison.

CHILDREN OF STRANGERS by Anthony Bukoski. Southern Methodist University, 1994. \$22.50 cloth; paper \$10.95.

by Norbert Blei

There are fourteen short stories in this superb second collection by University of Wisconsin-Superior teacher/writer Anthony Bukoski, most of them set in Superior. And any one of them can break your heart.

Anthony who? Anthony Bukoski.

There are writers and there are writers. There are stories and there are stories, especially in Wisconsin. But then there are stories of the kind to be found in *Children of Strangers*. And writers perhaps you never may have heard of. Or heard enough of.

Part of the problem with American writing today is that we are always hyping the wrong books, praising too many of the wrong writers. Anthony Bukoski's *Children of Strangers* will never appear on *The New York Times* best seller list—or any best seller list in Wisconsin. Yet his collection of stories is as good, if

not better, than anything on anyone's best seller list of fiction anywhere in this country. Bukoski is simply a master of the short narrative form with some incredibly human stories to tell, but he is unfortunately (or fortunately) situated in the northern regions of Dairyland where both the news and the culture tend to remain "local." The word just never gets out as it should.

Good writing is often relegated to those forlorn pockets of America, where real stories are born and a certain honesty abides. Where writers find themselves in spiritual exile. Especially the ethnic-American writer, such as Bukoski telling of the Polish-American experience in Superior, Wisconsin. People with names like Vankiewicz, Slipowski, Burbal, Borzynski, Wilenski. "The Polkaholics," a title of one of his finest stories. Neighborhood organizations like the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Fraternal Lodge. The Whoop 'n Holler Tavern. St. Adalbert's Church, and Father Nowak, the parish priest.

"We didn't none of us discover America," says Father Nowak at one point in "The River of the Flowing Banks," a story of two cultures, two faiths (Polish-American and Native American) "not me, not the Sisters. Not me and you especially, Warren, we're Polish." But it's the humanity of the priest that shines through as he quietly brings both cultures together in a ritual of requiem both Catholic and Indian.



I have been an admirer and practitioner of the ethnic-American story from my early beginnings as a writer and consider it one of the most vital segments of American literature. It started in the oral tradition of my own family and neighborhood (Czech-American/Chicago). It continued with my discovery of Saroyan's Armenians, James T. Farrell's Irish, Isaac Bashevis Singer's New York/Polish Jews, John Fante's Italians, Harry Mark Petrakis's Greeks, and remains with me today. To this list I would add and highly recommend Anthony Bukoski's Polish-American stories which resonate far beyond Superior.

In every story Bukoski gets it just right: the place, the people, the story itself. The ethnic-attitude. The life and death struggle of a European sub-culture on its deathbed in so many parts of America. The whole human condition in Superior as seen through the eyes of "the children of strangers": Polish Americans as well as Native Americans (Ojibwa) and the latest wave, the Vietnamese.

Superior itself is poignantly captured in story after story—"The Tomb of the Wrestlers," "A Chance of Snow," "Country of Lent" ("I wish this sidewalk went someplace," says one of the characters)—as a midwestern wasteland of deserted shipyards, streaks of grain, ore and coal dust everywhere, rusted tracks, "a city that grows smaller the more they tear down." A city that has seen its better days and serves as a kind of counterpoint in setting to much of the despair felt by the people of ethnic cultures trying to fit in. People who have been beaten back by time and the diminishment of customs till their only faith is unexplainably "old world." And a matter-of-fact hopelessness uttered in the constant refrain: "*Nie szkodzi*" . . . it doesn't matter.

Only it does. And these stories by Anthony Bukoski are a living testament to the faith of memory and art.

Author/teacher/publisher Norbert Blei lives in Ellison Bay, where he now operates Cross + Roads Press. He recently contributed an essay to Wisconsin's Rustic Roads.

NELL'S STORY: A WOMAN FROM EAGLE RIVER by Nell Peters, with Robert Peters. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995. 161 pages. \$22.95. ISBN 0-299-14470-4.

by Willa Schmidt

Many of us are familiar with the Wisconsin Northwoods. We flee to its jewel-like lakes for fishing and swimming in the summer, roam its backroads for Colorama displays and hunting in the fall, seek out its snow-covered pine forests in the cold months for winter sports. As regular visitors, we may even think we know it well. *Nell's Story*, a lively, fascinating account by a woman who has lived most of her sixty-three years in the Northland, shows us just how narrow and self-serving our perceptions are, and for that reason alone it is a refreshingly necessary book.

Nell Peters was born in 1932 in the Sundstein district south of Eagle River, an area of swampland, woods, and hardscrabble farms. Her older brother Robert Peters, who collaborated with her on this narrative, published his own story of growing up in the Sundstein several years ago in a memoir called *Crunching Gravel: A Wisconsin Boyhood in the Thirties* (reviewed by George Vukelich in the fall issue of the *Review*). But despite coming from the same family and geographical setting as her brother, Nell's is a highly original voice and a very different life. Bob joined the army at age eighteen, went to college on the GI Bill, and eventually became a professor and poet; he writes looking back over years and distance. Nell's attempt to leave was thwarted, and her story moves beyond memoir to the gritty immediacy of the present.

Even her memories, however, are stamped with her own colorful personality. Husky and strong, never beautiful like her mother and older sister, she identified early on with her beloved dad, who taught her boxing punches and wrestling holds so she could face down the schoolyard bully. He also taught her to use tools, and to hunt and fish. Interspersed with stories of the hard life of the farm and portraits of interesting characters, such as her belligerent brother Everett and the enigmatic Aunt Kate, are Nell's unabashed revelations about her own sexual development.

Upon graduation from high school she joins the WACs; shortly before leaving she picks the undertaker's grandson, a local lady's man, to relieve her of her virginity. By the time she has completed basic training she learns she is pregnant and must return home, her dream of independence and a new life shattered. After the birth of twin boys, cruelly rejected by the man who fathered them, she lives at home, working at various

low-paying jobs. Her later marriage to “the Finn,” a man who turns alcoholic and abusive, ends after six years, leaving her with four more children to raise. Finally, she attempts a relationship with a woman, only to have that too end in failure.

For all the hard times Nell Peters recounts, her story is not sad. She is blessed with an earthy sense of humor, a penchant for honesty, the ability to cut her losses and move on. Proudly she says, “I’ve used these woman muscles, tongue, and brain for nearly sixty years and have survived. Not too bad, right? A quaking aspen I’ve never been—more like a white birch, one that bends in a storm then flops back once the orioles begin their spring chirping.” While physical problems have scuttled her dream of roaring off into the sunset on a “big old used Harley Davidson,” she has hopes of expanding the garage sale she runs for the Disabled American Veterans into a storefront. “Eagle River needs a quality second-hand store,” she notes.

Like all good storytellers, Nell uses colorful language and the power of her plucky, indomitable personality to draw us into her tale and hold us spellbound. She mentions her hope of encouraging other women struggling to make ends meet, and doubtless she will. She has evoked a place, a time, an ordinary and yet extraordinary woman’s life with spirit and authenticity. Nell’s is a voice worth listening to.

Willa Schmidt, a reference librarian at the University of Wisconsin–Madison Memorial Library, has published short stories, poetry, and reviews.

THE CROSS AND THE RED STAR: JOHN FOSTER TRAVELS TO THE EIGHTH ROUTE ARMY by Richard Terrill. Asian Pacific Foundation, 1994. Available from the Mankato State University Book Store, \$9.95.

by Krista L. Finstad Hanson

China has long held fascination and mystery for Westerners. This mystery comes, in part, from an unfamiliarity with the country and its culture. China has been, for some Americans, a feared and misunderstood country, bringing to mind associations with the words “Red” and “Communist.” News headlines dealing with trade sanctions, birth rates, political prisoners, and the United Nations Women’s Conference have tended to bring China into the forefront of our consciousness. It is important to consider the history of our country’s questionable relations with China in light of this present resurgence of interest.

Richard Terrill’s book *The Cross and the Red Star* gives readers a segment of this history. It is the story of the small yet important role an unassuming American played in the beginning of the Communist revolution in China.

In 1938 Japanese armies entered China from Manchuria. The key players in this soon-to-be worldwide conflict were Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Chinese Army (the Kuomintang) and Mao Tse-tung, the emerging Communist leader. Both leaders were at the time engaged in a “united front” against the Japanese invaders. In northern China, Chu Teh and

the small Communist Eighth Route Army was engaged in war with the Japanese.

John Burt Foster, a native of Fairbault, Minnesota, served as a missionary to China from 1933–1947. Foster had become an American professor of English at Central China College upon graduation from Swarthmore College. He was a member of an Episcopal missionary contingent in 1934, and was part of the first foreign group to visit the Eighth Route Army in 1937.

In September 1938, Foster was selected by Evans Carlson, the U.S. Marine attaché at the embassy, for a risky assignment: A hospital was to be set up with the Church of the Brethren Mission in the Taihang Mountains behind Japanese lines; a Canadian doctor had pledged to come. Foster’s assignment was to bring medicine and supplies to the Shansi Province and the headquarters of Chu Teh, commander of the Communist forces and right-hand man to Mao Tse-tung, who had settled there after the Long March. Foster was the lone foreigner, accompanied by soldiers needed to get the shipment out of Hankow. Upon reaching the Shansi Province, Foster was appointed director of the encampment.

Foster waited from October until December 13 when Dr. R.F. Brown arrived. The hospital was in operation until Sunday, January 22, 1939, when a letter arrived warning that the Japanese were nearby. The previous supplies were packed up, and Foster and Dr. Brown left by donkey for Chu Teh’s headquarters within two days of the Japanese arrival. The hospital, while only open six weeks, made possible 130 operations to Communist troops and Chinese civilians.

Foster was never through with China. He worked as a bureau officer for the Office of War Information in Chungking in the 1940s, and became affiliated with the Soong Ching Ling Foundation. Upon returning to Minnesota, Foster continued to make trips to China, and his affiliations were scrutinized during encounters with the FBI during the Red Scare of the 1950s that took hold of the nation’s interests.

The Cross and the Red Star is an interesting mix of nonfiction, memoir, and biography. Richard Terrill, a current professor of English and creative writing at Mankato State University in Minnesota, came across the story of Foster, now a Mankato emeritus professor of English. Foster originally submitted his manuscript of notes and journal entries to Prentice Hall in 1940; it was rejected. During his retirement, Foster opened his files and began the purging experience of retyping and compiling these writings for possible publication. Foster ironically finished revising his manuscript and put his typewriter away on June 4, 1989, coincidentally the day of the Tianamen Square massacre in China.

Using the original and revised manuscript, Terrill took on the role of biographer as well as informed observer. Non-fiction writing is Terrill’s forté. His own memoir, *Saturday Night in Boading: A China Memoir* (University of Arkansas Press, 1990) recounts Terrill’s own initial experiences with China, while working there as an English teacher. Terrill left China less than three years before the Tianamen Square massacre.

Notably, Terrill is able to use his own frames of reference to refute or comply with Foster's recollections of China, although they were there during times that must seem worlds apart.

Terrill presents information taken from his interviews with Foster and provides a text interspersed with original documents and photos, as well as the narrative of the journey and Foster's recollections. The images of China are stark, yet beautiful. Foster, in his letters home, often compared the foreignness of China to his familiar home in Minnesota. Terrill writes of Foster that he "has been not one retelling what he remembers of his life, but one trying to think through the events again." As narrator, biographer, and colleague, Terrill deftly and knowingly captures this story of a man, once involved in a tumultuous time in history, making sense of his past in light of his and the world's present circumstances.

Krista L. Finstad Hanson lives and writes in Minneapolis. Richard Terrill's interview with musician Lyle Mays appeared in the Summer 1995 issue of the Wisconsin Academy Review.

"A GREAT AND GOOD WORK": A HISTORY OF LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY 1847–1964 by Charles Breunig. Lawrence University Press, 1994. 315 pages. \$19.50.

by Heidi Espenscheid Nibbelink

Charles Breunig, professor emeritus of history at Lawrence University in Appleton, takes the title of his book from a letter written by the school's founder, Boston textile merchant and philanthropist Amos A. Lawrence (the same Lawrence after which Lawrence, Kansas, is named). Lawrence wrote to his wife, Sarah, during his first and only visit to the campus in 1857, "It is a great and good work, and I am glad to have had a hand in it."

The first two chapters, "The Founding and Early Years" and "Constantly Running Behind: Struggle and Survival," offer an engaging look at some of the difficulties faced by the fledgling institution. In chapter one Breunig documents the university's incorporation in 1847 and its situation on land purchased under "less than regular" circumstances from a part-St. Regis Indian named Eleazar Williams who claimed to be the Lost Dauphin of France. Amidst the details of the physical and philosophical growth of the institution, Breunig includes anecdotes that capture the realities of life at a university in the then "Wild West" of Wisconsin. To erect the first building, a road had to be cut through the forest "with the aid of four men and a team of oxen." In addition to their studies, male students had the responsibility of splitting wood for the stoves in the classrooms and the women's residence hall.

Breunig organizes the remaining six chapters by the tenures of the university's fourteen presidents. Two of its presidents are of special significance: Samuel Plantz (1859–94), who secured the physical and financial future of the institution, and Henry Wriston (1925–37), who firmly defined Lawrence as a liberal arts college against a tide of vocational and technical emphasis sweeping university campuses across the nation. Also of note is president Nathan Pusey (1944–53), who left Lawrence in 1953 to become president of Harvard University.

Breunig's larger context is to consider the place of the liberal arts college in American higher education. As he notes in the epilogue, the current president, Richard Warch, has continued the debate over the necessity of a liberal arts education, reiterating the ideas of Wriston and Pusey for the 1990s and into the future. (Indeed, at my own graduation ceremony I was handed, along with my diploma, a copy of Wriston's *The Nature of a Liberal College*.)

Three themes that emerge and re-emerge throughout the book are: Lawrence's position as a co-educational institution, the university's relationship with the Methodist Church, and the reasons and timing for the institution's four name changes—from the Lawrence Institute of Wisconsin, to Lawrence University, then Lawrence College, and back to Lawrence University in 1964.

Breunig's account ends with Lawrence's merger with Milwaukee-Downer women's college in 1964. This episode offers some of the most fascinating reading in the book. The deal was sweet for Lawrence, adding fifty students, twenty-one faculty members, and \$13 million to the endowment. It's an interesting exercise to compare the histories of the two institutions; the financial and circumstantial shipwreck that sank Milwaukee Downer could have been Lawrence's fate at many moments during its first 100 years.

The epilogue was a bit disappointing; it reads more like an excerpt from a Lawrence promotional catalog rather than showing the range and depth of content and analysis found in the earlier chapters. Given Breunig's forty-year association with the institution, I suppose the somewhat congratulatory tone of the epilogue can be overlooked. Overall, I found the book to be a bit heavy on the details of finances and presidents and a bit light on details of faculty and student life, but altogether a worthwhile, interesting read for anyone curious about the little university in Appleton that aspires to be the Harvard of the Midwest.

Heidi Espenscheid Nibbelink is an editor and assistant to the senior associate director at the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. She graduated from Lawrence University in 1991.



Harriet Bell Merrill

Mrs. Doris Wright sent me a photocopy of the article by Merrilyn L. Hartridge about her great-aunt, Harriet B. Merrill, which appeared in the Spring 1995 *Wisconsin Academy Review*.

I would be very grateful if you would forward this letter to Ms. Hartridge. If she is willing, I would like to send her some small articles of mine dealing with the scientific contributions of Stillman Wright. Dr. Wright's thesis was in part based on Miss Merrill's collection of plankton from South America. His eventual employment in Brazil and further contributions to South American limnology were a direct result of this early work.

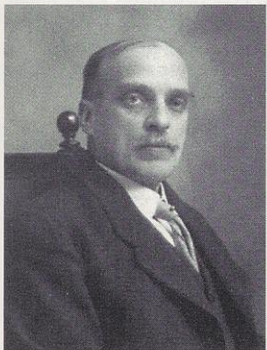
We now have some of Miss Merrill's specimens in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology. They have descended to us as gifts from Dr. Wright and later as part of the David Frey Collection.

I thought that Ms. Hartridge would like to know that Miss Merrill's early collections continue to contribute to knowledge of the taxonomy and distribution of South American microcrustaceans.

I am grateful to Ms. Hartridge for writing her article. I found it fascinating, partly because I have worked with some of her great-aunt's material myself, and partly because I have some experience in Brazil.

Janet W. Reid, Research Associate
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution

Harriet B. Merrill was a vice president of the Wisconsin Academy from 1896 until her departure for South America in 1902.



Amos Parker Wilder

I was delighted to receive the copies of the Fall 1995 *Wisconsin Academy Review* and have had the pleasure of circulating them to my family. Professor Daniels did a fine job of beginning to open the scholarly window on Amos Parker Wilder, an overlooked, important, and complicated figure. I learned new information from reading her words and look forward to learning more from her in the future.

What a good idea it was to also include the Glenway Wescott excerpt. It's a remarkable piece of writing, a polished little jewel. As Glenway notes, the two men shared a "slight family connection." The wife of a latterday piece of that connection had twins recently, and will soon see your issue.

You should know that I spent two years in Madison (1965–1967) getting an M.A. in American history. One day on the steps of the State Historical Society I met another graduate student named Robin Gibbs, and we've now been married for twenty-six years. So paint us Badger Red, too.

My regards and very best wishes.

A. Tappan Wilder
Chevy Chase, Maryland

A. Tappan Wilder is the grandson of Amos Wilder and the nephew of Thornton Wilder.



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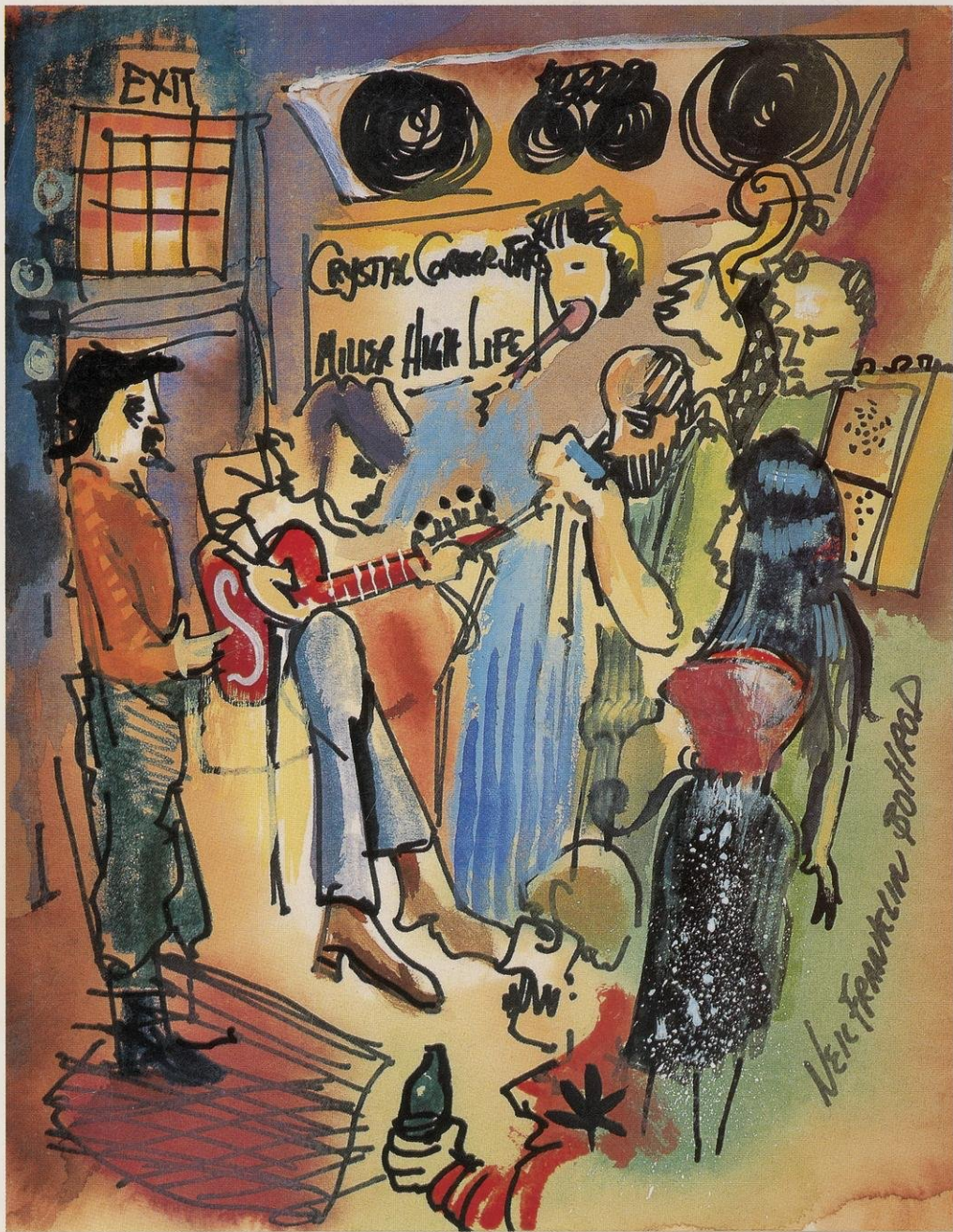
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