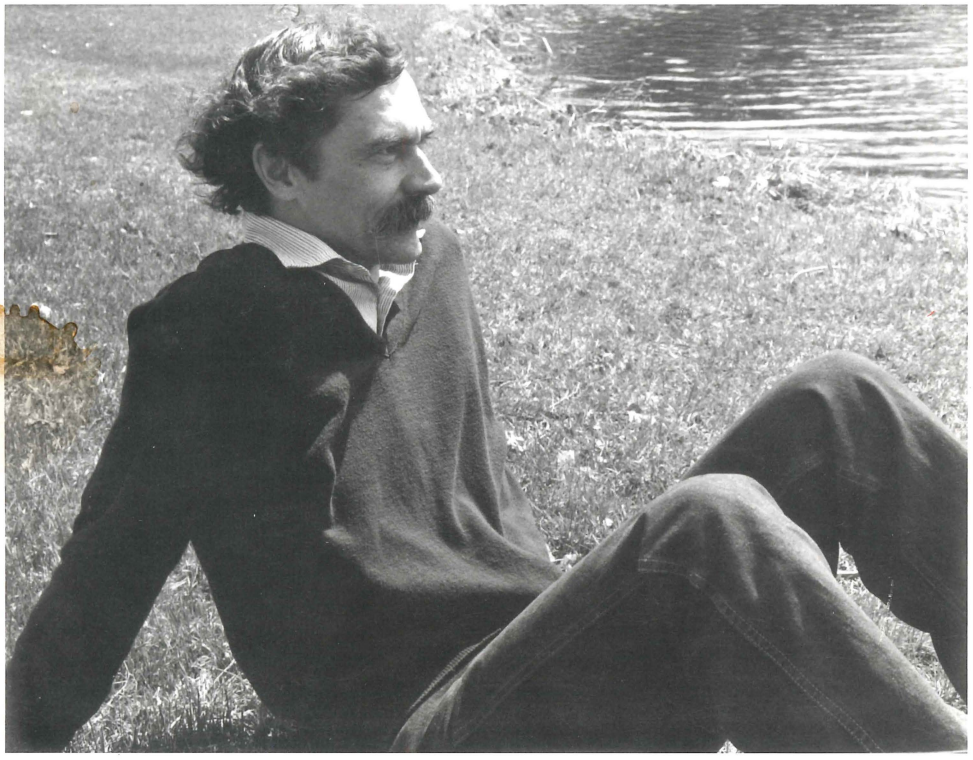


He knew where he was by the position of the river.

——Ernest Hemingway, "Big Two-Hearted River"

NDQ

North Dakota Quarterly

Volume 79.3&4

19 April 1979

The New Yorker
25 West 43rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10036

Attention: Fillers Editor

On page 8 of the 1979-1980 Bantam Paperbacks Literature catalog (enclosed), the first title, of Steinbeck's The Moon Is Down, is humorously misprinted The Mood Is Down.

Robert W. Lewis
Professor of English

RWL:uh

Enclosure



To make a prairie it takes a clover
and one bee,
One clover, and a bee.
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few.

—Emily Dickinson



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ON THE COVER

Photographer H. M. Scott took this picture of Robert Lewis on the banks of the English Coulee in 1982.

"In vain that you survived the bloody field. . .
Each one of us must leave the earth he loves. . .
And leave the trees he planted and took good care of. . . ."
—Horace's Ode, "To Postumus"

From *The Odes of Horace*, Trans. David Ferry.
New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997, 137.



Peter Nabokov took this picture in the 1980s in the Bear Paw Mountains in northern Montana, about 40 miles below the Canadian border. Nabokov and Lewis went there to pay their respects to Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce and his 700 or so exhausted and starving followers who, after fleeing through four states and covering more than 1,000 miles, finally surrendered to federal troops on October 5, 1877, having almost made it to what they hoped would be freedom in Canada.

NDQ
North Dakota Quarterly

Volume 79, Number 3 & 4 Summer and Fall 2012

Tribute

Robert W. Lewis
in memoriam

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Introduction

We offer this issue of *North Dakota Quarterly* as a tribute to Robert W. Lewis, longtime editor, good friend, talented scholar, and intrepid citizen. Bob died in August 2013, and we still miss him every day in the hallways of Merrifield, the building at University of North Dakota where Bob labored as editor of *NDQ* for more than 30 years.

We worked in two editorial groups for this project. The first editorial group focused on Bob's lifelong work related to Ernest Hemingway, collecting tribute pieces and articles reflecting his contribution to Hemingway scholarship and his contributions to the Hemingway Society. This selection of pieces opens the tribute issue and continues until page 141. Guest editors Donald Junkins, Linda Patterson Miller, and Richard Davison have crafted this section with care and talent. Thank you.

The second half of the issue, beginning on page 142, was edited by Guest Editors Michael Anderegg, Jeanne Anderegg, Sheryl O'Donnell, Kate Sweney, and Sharon Carson. This editorial team collected tributes and articles related to Bob's many lifelong passions: American and world literature; his teaching at UND; American Indian Studies; progressive politics; the natural world, conservation and birds of the upper plains; and last but not least, his daily composition of haiku.

We worked in this issue to honor Bob and the many things in this world that he cared deeply about, and we thank all of the editors and contributors for their wonderful work. We also wish to thank Bob's daughters Lisa Lewis and Nina Lewis for their thoughtful help.

—Kate Sweney and Sharon Carson

ALLEN JOSEPHS

The War in "Big Two-Hearted River"*

In memory of Robert W. Lewis

> The story was about coming back from the war
> but there was no mention of the war in it.
> —*A Moveable Feast* (76)

Heretical as it may sound, I must ask the question: *Was* "Big Two-Hearted River" about coming back from the war?

Edmund Wilson and then Malcolm Cowley were first to suggest that there was more going on here than a fishing story. In his introduction to *The Portable Hemingway* in 1945, Cowley wrote of "Big Two-Hearted River" as being connected to "Now I Lay Me," concluding that "Hemingway himself sometimes seems to regard writing as an exhausting ceremony of exorcism. And, as a young man after the First World War, he had painful memories of which he wanted to rid himself by setting them all down" (Cowley, Weeks 43). Cowley didn't state flatly that the story was about the unmentioned war, but he certainly pointed us in a direction that would prove difficult to reverse.

Other critics followed Cowley's lead. Carlos Baker in 1952 believed it was a "legitimate guess" that Nick was "a returned war-veteran, going fishing both for fun and for therapeutic purposes" (127). Philip Young's book appeared the same year, attributing massive and pervasive importance to Hemingway's wounding. Specifically he claimed that within "Big Two-Hearted River" a "terrible panic is barely under control, and the style—this is the 'Hemingway style' at its most extreme—is the perfect expression of the content of the story; with its fixation on detail and repetitive, almost mechanical, movement, it resembles the behavior of a badly shell-shocked veteran" (46). Young's assertion rather violently opposed Baker's opinion that "the close reader finds a carefully determined order of virtue and simplicity which goes far towards explaining from below the oddly satisfying effect of the surface story" (126), yet both critics believed that the story was about the effects of the war.

In 1989 Paul Smith in *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* wrote that Young's theory had a "profound influence" on critics considering "Big Two-Hearted River" and that "few contest his interpretation of the story in the light of the later war stories. . . " (89). Once Hemingway himself had written in *A Moveable Feast* that the story was about the war, the case was closed, even if only well after the fact, especially since he would reiterate the whole business in his 1959 piece, "The Art of the Short Story," eventually published in the *Paris Review* in 1981:

> "Big Two-Hearted River" is about a boy coming home beat to the wide from a war. Beat to the wide was an earlier and possibly more severe form of beat, since those who had it were unable to comment on this condition and could not suffer that it be mentioned in their presence. So the war, all mention of the war, anything about the war, is omitted. (88)

The author's recollection would seem to settle the issue, since, in spite of Hemingway's off-key tone, he cloaked the brilliance of the story, the seven-eighths of the iceberg left out—the war and all its consequent implications—in an invisible cloak of seemingly intentional or even obligatory omission.

Hemingway's fanciful explanation, as though he were fictionalizing the fiction, does not describe what I see happening in 1924, when the young and brilliant and relatively inexperienced Hemingway was actually writing the story, rather than recalling and embellishing the writing of it many years and a few wars later. Maybe in its first iteration, a three-page first-person autobiographical account of a fishing trip to the Fox River in 1919, along with two fishing pals, Al Walker and John Pentecost, it was to have been a story about going fishing after the war. But that first attempt, probably written in late 1923 was "a false start" that went nowhere (Smith 85).

The story then turned into a third-person omniscient account of a solitary expedition made by Nick Adams, with many fictionalized elements, including in its first finished version—one that Hemingway sent out for publication—the notion that "Nick in the stories was never himself. He made him up" (*NAS* 238). As we know, this metafictionalizing—Nick inventing Nick—complicated the story enormously, although that complication of what Hemingway later excised interests me less at this juncture than the problematic chronology of what Philip Young eventually published as "On Writing" in his attempt at a chronological compilation of Nick's life in *The Nick Adams Stories*. We will return to the metaphysics later.

In that original version, we find some interesting and pertinent information, chronologically and sentimentally linking Nick Adams and Hemingway. We encounter: 1) Ezra, presumably Ezra Pound, a buddy of

Nick's who seems to be a poet and thinks fishing is a joke. Hemingway met Pound in mid-February, 1922. 2) Bill Bird, a newsman who, like Pound, is in Paris. Hemingway met Bird in April 1922, when he went to cover the Genoa Conference for the *Toronto Star*. 3) We find Nick is married, not such a surprise assuming there is some chronological order to *In Our Time*—after all, Nick was already married in the Nick Adams story prior to "Big Two-Hearted River," which is to say "Cross Country Snow," married and with his wife Helen expecting a child. 4) Nick likes to travel to Spain, going to "bullfights," and he hangs out with historical figures such as Algabeño and Maera, matadors Hemingway mentions in his correspondence from Pamplona in July of 1924 (see particularly the postcard of July 13 to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, *Letters II*, 274). 5) Nick is in Pamplona with Hemingway's pal, Chink Dorman-Smith, putting us again into July 1924. 6) Nick had been on the road to Karagatch in the fall of 1922, in the Greco-Turkish war, and he's also written a story about it, transferring part of the action, the childbirth, to an Indian camp. Hemingway wrote "Indian Camp" between late 1923 and February 1924. 7) Nick also knows Gertrude Stein and James Joyce. He has read *Ulysses* and even undertakes to criticize it, especially Joyce's autobiographical rendering of Stephen Daedalus (*NAS* 234-40).

Hemingway included that original version of "Big Two-Hearted River" as the final story of the typescript of *In Our Time*, which he had Donald Ogden Stewart shopping around to publishers in New York during that fall of 1924 (Smith 86). How is that story, which covers some time at least up to mid-1924, about "coming back from the war"? "Soldier's Home," which he wrote the previous spring, was about a boy home from the war, but "Big Two-Hearted River," as he first wrote it, was not. In this first version, Nick is making himself up in the late summer or early fall of 1924, six years after the end of the war, a period that covered a quarter of Hemingway's life and most of his life as a writer. The chronology that Hemingway inculcated into the story assures us, via its many undeniable biographical references, that the story as originally conceived and submitted for publication as the clincher in a connected collection of stories could not possibly be construed as being about a boy back from the war. It was about a young man who wanted to write—and who was, in fact, doing so, more than six years after his wounding in the summer of 1918.

There are three references to the passage of time in the story that back up my assertion. The first occurs on the first page of the story when the narrator explains "It was a *long time* since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout" (163, my emphasis). At the end of Part 1, Nick reminisces about his fishing buddy Hopkins: "That was a *long time* ago (169, my emphasis). On the same page he remarks "That was a *long time* ago on the

Black River" (169, my emphasis). How many times do we need to be told that it was indeed a long time ago? I don't know what constitutes a long time, but I do know that three iterations of the same phrase are significant. To me they contradict the notion of "coming back from the war."

Toward the end of October of 1924 Gertrude Stein returned to Paris, read the original version of the story, and told Hemingway bluntly that remarks were not literature (Reynolds 247). She would recall the process nearly a decade later in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*: "[Hemingway] had added to his stories a little story of meditations and in these he said that *The Enormous Room* was the greatest book he had ever read. It was then that Gertrude Stein had said, 'Hemingway, remarks are not literature'" (219).

Whatever she actually said at the time, Hemingway immediately set about excising the so-called remarks, turning the story into the published version we have today. He cut away the offending pages and explained to Robert McAlmon in a letter of November 1, 1924:

> I have decided that all that mental conversation in the long fishing story is the shit and have cut it out. The last nine pages. The story was interrupted you know just when I was going good and I could never get back into it and finish it. I got a hell of a shock when I realized how bad it was and that shocked me back into the river again and I've finished it off the way it ought to have been all along. Just the straight fishing. (*Letters II*, 323)

No war, just the fishing. Then he quipped to McAlmon: "Wouldn't it be funny if some publisher had accepted it because of the stuff that I've got to cut?" (*Letters II*, 324). The material he cut is not about the war either—it's all about the things Nick loves, the bulls, fishing, and above all, writing, which is presumably why Philip Young titled the excised part "On Writing." Another curious chronological point: If "Big Two-Hearted River" is about being back from the war and the wounding, why did Young place the excised "remarks" in his last section, called "Company of Two" (that is, after Nick has married Helen)? For all the reasons I have been adducing—because the original chronology of the story, as Hemingway first wrote it, had nothing to do with coming back from the war. And I can't believe that, interruptions and all, Hemingway started out thinking it was about the war and then forgot about it, going on to write about Paris and Pamplona. The excised parts had nothing to do with the war but did have to do with Gertrude Stein, and there is a wonderful irony in that connection, because, as I have pointed out previously, the cut parts (except for a parodic poem or two), are the most Gertrudesque words he ever penned. So the excisions and revisions had the double

effect of freeing up the story to its essence and liberating it from her influence (Josephs 9).

Actually there is one minor, skewed mention of the war in the cut part. Nick is remembering how too much talking ruined everything, as the movies did, and he thinks "That was what had made the war unreal. Too much talking" (*NAS* 237). The use of the past perfect tense—what *had* made the war unreal—distances the war from the young man wading in the river and the adjective *unreal*, connected not to trauma but to *too much talking*, as in the movies, do not constitute any sort of argument for the unmentioned presence of war. Quite the opposite, especially given the history of talking movies, still in their infancy in 1924.

Two days after the letter to McAlmon, on November 3, 1924, Hemingway wrote to Don Stewart in New York: "I have discovered that the last eleven pages of the last story in the book I sent you are crap. [. . .] Under this same cover you will find five pages—These five pages are to take the place of the last eleven pages in the story called Big Two Hearted River" (*Letters II*, 326-27). He then proceeds to tell Stewart the same thing two more times in the same letter. Still no rumor of war.

In certain letters in the second volume of Hemingway's complete letters (1923-1925), he talks about his swell fishing story, but nowhere does he mention that Nick is back from the war. He tells his father: "I've written a number of stories about the Michigan country—the country is always true—what happens in the stories is fiction. [. . .] The river in it ["Big Two-Hearted River"] is really the Fox above Seney. It's a story I think you will like" (*II*, 464). Why will his father like it? Because of how the country is. As he had told Edward J. O'Brien, in September 1924, just as he finished the original draft, "It is much better than anything I've done. What I've been doing is trying to do country so you don't remember the words after you read it but actually have the country" (*II*, 304). If the story were really about coming back from the war with no mention of the war, wouldn't Hemingway—in his youthful enthusiasm about his experimental fiction—have revealed it? Instead we have the repeated issue of the country, such as in the August 15, 1924, letter to Stein and Toklas in which he specifies "trying to do the country like Cézanne [. . .] and sometimes getting it a bit. [. . .] and the country is swell [. . .] [and] it is swell about the fish [. . .]" (*II*, 288). He shares his secret about Cézanne with them, even though "It was a thing you couldn't talk about" (*NAS* 239), but there is no "swell" about the left-out war.

Contrary to Paul Smith's opinion, Michael Reynolds thought all along it was a story about writing. As Hemingway hacked away Nick's "meditations," Reynolds wrote in *The Paris Years* (which appeared the same year as Smith's *Guide*, 1989): "It was still a story about writing, but he did not have to tell the reader directly: fishing was an art form, so was writing"

(247). Reynolds ended that section with this comment on the cutting: "Thus his daring experiment disappeared, leaving the collection thematically linked but without the artifice of Nick the writer telling the stories" (248). All the metafictional niceties disappeared—and what replaced them? Nothing. Just the straight fishing. Until the critics came along decades later and decided that the thing left out was the war.

At about the same time, Debra A. Moddelmog, thinking along the same lines, introduced the theory that Nick was the author of all of *In Our Time*. This highly original piece, which I still remember in its prototypical "conference-paper" version, may well have been what initially spurred me to examine, twenty-five years on, this whole issue of the precise role of the war in the story, the war as opposed to the writing.

As I have written previously: "In its brilliant and original fusion of style and of substance, of form and content, of *fishing and writing*, 'Big Two-Hearted River' embodies, more than any other story, the early elliptical style that would profoundly influence the way we write today" (8, my emphasis here). The unspoken intertwining of fishing and writing carry the story, indeed they are the story. Writing, not the war, is the thing left out. Given the encompassing metaphysical nature of that deleted material, it may well be the definitive instance of omission in all of Hemingway's work, one in which the artificer erases the artifice but not the art, clearly a reason the finished story is so much finer than the original. What we lose in metafiction—perhaps the most prescient and revealing passage Hemingway ever wrote—we gain in solid composition, as with the painting of Cézanne. By removing Cézanne, he paradoxically achieved the writerly Cézannesque style he was so avidly seeking.

Does that mean I am categorically denying the presence of the war in the story? Not altogether. There *is* a residual hollowness in the story—something that clearly concerns Nick. But how are we to know what that is? Is it possible that the story is about fishing and writing on the surface and in its depths also about some inchoate expression of the lasting effects of the war? We don't know from the text—nor can we know—what it is that Nick seems to be holding at bay. Not until we read *later* stories do we begin to get possible clues. And from that original uncut version we are textually limited to Nick's concerns, years after the war, about his writing. Early on in both versions of the story, Nick tells us that he had "left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs" (*CSS* 164, *NAS* 179). "The need for thinking," synonymous with worrying, is vague and ubiquitous in Hemingway's work, from at least "The Killers" forward. "Other needs" is downright obscure. Only "the need to write" is specific. As any angler knows, one of the great appeals of fishing is precisely leaving everything behind. It is therefore ironic and poignant

that Nick failed to leave thinking and writing behind, especially in the uncut version in which he thinks about writing more than anything.

Virtually all the criticism that adduces the unmentioned presence of the war does so by quoting late Hemingway or by inferring from later stories—especially "In Another Country" (1926), "Now I Lay Me" (also 1926) and "A Way You'll Never Be" (1932). This inferred interpretation of "Big Two-Hearted River" depends on an extended, eight-year, chronology that has nothing to do with the writing of the story in 1924 and it cannot prove the (negative) presence of war in the story. The critics have instead assumed the war and continued to assume it in successive interpretations until we end up with a classic post-hoc-ergo-propter-hoc argument that bases its conclusions on the order of events, specifically the as-yet-unwritten stories mentioned above—*in the light of the later war stories*, to remember Paul Smith's phrase. The most subtle exercise of this procedure is Joseph M. Flora's conjecture that Nick's state of mind in "Now I Lay Me" forms "the deep memory that Nick in 'Big Two-Hearted River' holds back, the dark swamp" that he is reluctant to enter. I like Flora's idea and have elsewhere quoted it (8), but my preference doesn't keep it from being a post-hoc argument. I think Flora may be right on some subliminal plane, yet the practical problem of the chronology in the original material, which has bothered me for decades, still persists.

Hemingway/Nick did in fact make himself up. The stories are by no means strictly autobiographical. By way of example, "Three Shots"—another piece of excision (*NAS* 13-15), in this case the beginning of "Indian Camp"—dealt with Nick's discovery of the fear of death as a child but it used Hemingway's own concerns about such fears, *after* his wounding and near-death-experience, to introduce the allusion to the silver cord from Ecclesiastes 12:6—"Or ever the silver cord be loosed"—by way of the derivative hymn, "Some Day the Silver Cord Will Break," as well as his own need for a light at night. And as we've already seen, he used the Karagatch birth he witnessed in 1922 to fictionalize the published part of the story "Indian Camp," from Nick's childhood, even going so far as to comment on the exchange in the excised part of "Big Two-Hearted River": "[. . .] he'd never seen an Indian woman having a baby. [. . .] He'd seen a woman have a baby on the road to Karagatch and tried to help her" (*NAS* 238).

Bearing in mind that propensity to invent and to re-chronologize when it suited his purposes, let's return to Malcolm Cowley's statement: "Hemingway himself sometimes seems to regard writing as an exhausting ceremony of exorcism." Sounds good, psychologically sound—but what if it's the other way around? What if, instead of exorcism, it's incantation, bewitchment by word? Exorcism is singular, ugly, and abortive. "Big

Two-Hearted," *au contraire*, lines out a haltingly repetitive, awkwardly original, rhythmic lyricism and we read the story over and over, fascinated, as we would poetry or liturgy.

Cowley continues, "And, as a young man after the First World War, he had painful memories of which he wanted to rid himself by setting them all down" (Weeks 43). What if instead of ridding himself, he was incorporating, assimilating through the incantation, healing, with the words annealing? No casting out of evil spirits, rather a casting toward the sacred fish that were a salvific fashioning or forging out of his own spirit, something he clearly enunciated in the excised—but never exorcised—part: "He, Nick, wanted to *write about country* like Cézanne had done it in painting. You had to do it from *inside yourself.* There wasn't any trick. Nobody had ever written about country like that. He felt *almost holy* about it. It was *deadly serious*. You could do it if you would *fight it out. If you'd lived right with your eyes*" (*NAS* 239, my emphasis). These phrases—giving us an unparalleled sense of Hemingway/Nick's dedication to his craft—composed a kind of cryptic treasure map to the sacred font. But as in the case of "Three Shots," they revealed too much about the young author's intentions—doubtless what shocked him *back into the river again*—intentions that had nothing to do with the war and everything to do with learning to write. So, embarrassed by his transparency and scolded by Gertrude Stein, he threw away the map—which Philip Young later exhumed, *mirabile dictu*—and returned to the straight fishing.

As Hemingway delved deeper into his war experiences, always creating, always *making him up*, the more he came to understand, after the fact, the connected nature of those later stories, which, read in reverse order, send us back—even turned Hemingway back—to "Big Two-Hearted River," to the river that was the source, the literal stream of consciousness, the sacred spring that was the fountainhead of the stories to follow. Contrary to what he had written his father, it was not the actual Fox he had put in the story, it was the poetry of the invented, the realer-than-real, Big Two-Hearted River. It was country made immanent. Hemingway was closer to the source of the story when he wrote in *A Moveable Feast*: "What did I know about truly and care for the most? There was no choice at all" (76).

Then too, what if "Big Two-Hearted River" is not about the memory he would explore two years later in "Now I Lay Me," as Flora would have us believe? What if it's the other way around? In "Now I Lay Me" Nick, avoiding sleep in order to save his soul, invents new rivers to fish: "Some nights too I made up streams and some of them were very exciting and it was like being awake and dreaming" (*CSS* 277). The words *made up*, and *very exciting* and *like being awake and dreaming* suggest that in the same way that Nick in the stories was never himself, that he made him up, so

the Big Two-Hearted is not the Fox and that he made it up, exactly as Nick tells us in "Now I Lay Me," and that it is the writing of "Big Two-Hearted River" that had become the source and the inspiration—following the chronology of the writing rather than of Hemingway/Nick's biography—for "Now I Lay Me."

Nick explains that inspiration precisely in "Now I Lay Me": "Some of those streams I still remember and think that I have fished in them, and they are *confused with streams I really know*. I gave them all *names* and went to them *on the train* and sometimes *walked for miles* to get to them" (*CSS* 277, my emphasis). Names like Big Two-Hearted. You can still cross the railroad tracks west of Seney and walk for miles parallel to the Fox, seeing a landscape of river and pines and downed trees and cedar swamps—the swamps are very real—and it can be quite exciting and the river is a classic trout stream. But mere reality does not suffice: for it to be *made up* and *very exciting* and *like being awake and dreaming*—for it to achieve its full Platonic resonance—you have to read the story, itself a river flowing, ever with the same incantational waters.

Reading *The Trip to Echo Spring*, Olivia Laing's fascinating new study of alcohol and writing, I came upon this quote, written about Hemingway's insomniac nights during his separation from Pauline in the autumn of 1926, precisely when he was writing "Now I Lay Me." It seemed written as an illustration of what Nick was explaining: "Lying rigid in his bed listening to the sound of rain. Making up a man who makes up rivers and sits beside them with a rod, fishing for trout and sometimes losing them, until the sun comes up and it is safe to close his eyes" (98). Nick's fear in the story of losing his soul by going to sleep derives from a reversal of Hemingway's actual insomnia of 1926 as he lay awake remembering the creation of the Big Two-Hearted: *I gave them all names and went to them on the train and sometimes walked for miles to get to them.*

Just as many of the critics were seduced by a reverse biographical current, even Hemingway himself seemed to come in time to believe that "Big Two-Hearted River" was about the war (suggested, Heaven forbid, by the critics?). The inexact psychological and physiological experience of the memory of war is never wholly extractable from Nick once he is wounded, just as it is not extractable from Hemingway. I think that in some inevitable and unconsciously accretive way, some confabulation, with time and chronology compressing and rearranging in memory—"memory of course is never true" as Hemingway wisely wrote in *Death in the Afternoon* (100)—it became for him a story about the war, *mutatis mutandis*, just as it became one which in hindsight and seen through the prism of the later stories we have inevitably associated with the war. But in 1924 when he wrote it, it was not about the war. Nor did he say it was.

Not in 1924, not for many years. In 1924, as the text of the original ending makes clear, it was about a young man fishing and learning to write and discovering his commitment to art. As he fought it out—*wading into the picture, living right with his eyes*, then cutting loose the theoretical and aesthetic commitment and conjuring up in its stead the ominous and very real swamp—he was showing us (rather than telling us) how he wrote, working as best he could at the edge of the dark swamp of his creative unconscious, rendering base experience into gold.

Just the straight fishing but ending finally with an unrealized half-lit and tragic fishing to come. Is it there, in the final cutting and rewriting, that the war, in some recurring memory, began to infiltrate and replace the burden of Hemingway's creative consciousness? Or is that deep-water, half-lit, tragic fishing a congeries of all those initial feelings about writing, deep within him, tragic with the exposed core of sentience he tells us he was experiencing—*it was deadly serious, he felt almost holy about it*—feelings with which he was not quite yet ready to cope? Nick thinks, perhaps optimistically, in the story's last line: "There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (*CSS* 180). The intentional and opaque ambivalences of the story—half-lit and tragic reflections themselves—will doubtless keep us fishing for another hundred years.

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DONALD JUNKINS

Bob Lewis: At this Winding Bend

in the Turtle River, his soft spoken deck
leans almost over the sloping bank, the morning
after the second October snow, the dark
stream mirror-white, then dark again,
coming and going at this crowded turn where the brown
leaves of the green ash and the basswood join
in a watercolor stained with fall. The high
further slope is strewn with trunks and limbs,
stark against the snow where for many lines
a white tail doe has browsed the bank,
pausing and lifting to study the eyes
she cannot see that watch her. Her page is blank
as she stares, and she resumes her random
meal. When he returns she will be gone.

ROBERT W. LEWIS

from Letters to Donald Junkins

Editors' Note: *From more than 600 conversational e-mails, letters, ornithological reports, and holiday musings, we have culled a selection of personal exchanges between Bob Lewis and his Hemingway Society friend and later poetry editor of the* North Dakota Quarterly, *Donald Junkins, that reveal many of the essential qualities that endeared him to his friends and fellow associates who knew him best. We present these few epistolary pages with the hope of capturing Bob's passion for excellence, his unremitting dedication to literary quality, his humor, his loyalties to and love of his family, his valuation of personal friendship, his sensitivity toward all things small and beautiful, and his ultimate respect for literary craft.*

Robert Lewis was a renaissance man in a specializing age of letters; his interests were diverse and his expertise reached well beyond the written pages of his life. His loyalties were humanistic and his personal passions trans-local. As a literary man, Bob cared deeply about humanitarian causes and family enterprises and concerns. Bob's life filled his allotted page and he edited it with quietly understated passion. His personal paragraph was timed and textured and he knew when to close it.

Bob's touch was light, his perceptions deep. He practiced intuitively the subtleties of wit and wits. He lived alone for its compensations. Bob knew when to walk the woods in a light rain.

Bob Lewis was a man of letters who practiced what Henry David Thoreau practiced and was himself a self-appointed inspector of snowstorms, flooded prairie bridges, and other weather windfalls of the seasons. He wondered at all things growing, and he lived by a river that overrode its banks in spring and calmed down through summer and fall.

In his preferences he knew the difference between E. B. White and James Boswell, and he knew both their virtues. He was as careful in his daily life as an otter among coastal boulders in early evening.

Bob kept bees that stung, for their honey. He designed his house with high windows for all the light his kitchen, scattered library, and living room could absorb.

Bob's canoe in his garage symbolized life's possibilities, and he paddled it in his idle hours. He wrote daily haikus for their honesties. He held his ground on the prairie in all weather, and he counted birds for their own good. He fed the birds outside his glass doors for their reciprocal sakes.

We present the following selection of his letters with the above in mind.

August 3, 1995

Now between mowing & dinner on a good evening, the sun low, rose-breasted grosbeaks singing, mourning doves querulous, a pair of kingbirds noisily chasing by (re-mating?), the mosquitoes well fed (I must have a hundred welts on my back & shoulders), food cooking, a cool Corona Extra at hand, I finally enjoy a longer talk with you. . . . Now sunset & I'll eat. I'm worried about the mother raccoon who hasn't showed up in three evenings for her usual supper. At first she'd run off when I appeared on deck, but gradually she grew to trust me & would take food from my hands. Once in touching gratitude (so I thought), she first rose on her hind legs to hold my left hand between her two forepaws before she lowered herself to all fours & took a slice of bread from my right hand. She came on deck with her two young ones a week ago, but they ran off when I appeared to feed mama. Maybe she's having sitter problems. Where's the old man? This year he's never once appeared, but last year I occasionally had a pair together. Maybe he's been reading Schopenhauer.

November 8, 1996

Apropos your distant music, there are not many more sounds I love than trains & coyotes. But the trains should be pulled by steam locomotives. Until you assure that aural quality, I cannot leave my coyotes & great horned owls who regularly nest across the river & soughing or howling prairie winds. And a hunter north of here reported seeing a wolf. El lobo seems to be moving in from northern Minnesota, as moose occasionally do also.

November 15, 1997

Some moons ago I canoed the upper Missouri, the still free-running river, for a week with Ken Rosen, Peter Nabokov, Page Stegner, & Page's teenage son. Page had the Lewis & Clark journals with him & tried to spot features L&C had mentioned, including campsites. Page later published an essay on our trip. (I am "cookie," a job that required some grace under pressure when we began to run low on food with nary a resupply within hundreds of miles.) Page's son, built like a tight end, had a ravenous appetite & had showed up at Great Falls with his dad, unannounced. I'd planned on food for four, including some extras, but it was

tight, & I'll never forget the evening, after an all-day paddle, that I poured the freeze-dried ham & potatoes into the pot of boiling water as the others stood in a circle, silent, over me, & I saw that the food was filled with many dead black beetles. I didn't say a word, just stirred & decided that if anyone asked what the black stuff was, I'd say it was coarse ground black pepper. No one asked. All sullenly & quickly ate (me too—not bad!). (Have you seen the commercial in which the cowboys discover that the cook is feeding them salsa made in NEW YORK CITY?)

April 7, 1998
re: April 1, no foolin
I have windows floor to ceiling on three sides of my great room ("great" is the architect's name for it, not mine, but I think it's pretty darn good, anyhow). And I have several bird feeders. And birds are always whopping into my windows, often leaving trademark feathers there. Occasionally one will break its neck; sometimes they will be stunned & lie for some minutes in the grass before gradually returning to consciousness & flying off. But most often they'll just whump into the glass & fly off. One supposed safeguard is to paste silhouettes of hawks or owls in the windows. I've placed several hawk & owl carvings there to no deterrent whatsoever.

Last night was Korean night at our International Center. One of my colleagues in the medical school is Korean, & one of our grad students is too. So I attended the show & dinner, both largely unexceptional, but at the end I was moved to tears when a group of students sang the Korean folk song "Arirang" that I learned over there during the war. Pete Seeger used to sing it too.

Maybe sometime I'll emulate Robin & write about those experiences. There were also some curious parallels with Hem's WW I experiences. But my nurse was Dutch, not British.

September 21, 1998
re: fall and the flu
I have a new computer, unrequested but thrust upon me by CILT, anacrimonious/acronymonious bureau here that seems to have endless money. This computer also has a stereo CD player that enmoods my e-mail. But it goes so fast that when I prepare to answer e-mail, as now, it unscrolls the message too fast for me to take note of the Main Points.

Nonetheless, I reply. By now I hope the flu has flown or at least is testing its wings in preparation for leaving the nest. . . . .

Night thoughts: where were you, what were you doing, when you heard of Hem's death? What were your thoughts & feelings?

I saw a red squirrel on my deck stretching up to a potted plant, which I assumed it wanted to eat. I dashed out, shouting war cries, & it ran off dropping an acorn as it scattered, for its aim was to plant the acorn—or store it rather—in my pot. I had an oak sprout in the house last winter from a similarly planted acorn, & that oak is now growing outside. My aim is to restore my acres as oak savannah, with basswood too, since those are the two species native & apt for the place, & the once dominant elms are dying out from the Dutch elm disease, which took a while to march this far north.

October 19, 1998
Last night I took a break from reading student papers to fetch groceries & go via a nearby Natl Wildlife Refuge to check on the migrants—geese, swans, ducks, & other wetbacks. Instead I found a pair of duck hunters whose 4-WD had slid off a muddy road. Good Sam undertook to rescue them with my 4-WD, which promptly got mired up to the hubcaps. Hunters hitched to nearby farm to call buddies. Soon one came, & in trying to rescue me, he got stuck. Second buddy arrived. Knotted FOUR tow ropes together so last pickup could stay on fairly good traction. Then action, globs of mud flying all over. Pushing, I reduced to tar baby. But finally all out & joking after two hours in fading light, then rain. Now to pressure wash the pickup.

November 11, 1998
My most unusual sighting was last month: What I judged to be a white morph of a redtail hawk—not the Krider's which is white underneath, but all white. (I first thought it was a snowy owl.) But when it took off, it revealed in its spread tail about one-third of the tail feathers as the characteristic reddish brown of the redtail. *NDQ* fiction editor Bill Borden tells me it is an omen. He consulted an Ojibway elder he knows & he told Bill I might not know the meaning of it for some time.

Early winter storm yesterday; only 6" of snow but hurricane force winds all day long. I tried shoveling the drive with my big snow scoop & was nearly sailing south a couple of times. Gave up. Worked on my MLA paper.

Epiphany Letter, January 6, 1999
Yes, it's cold, predicted to be 30 below zero F. tonight. "A cold coming we had of it, / Just the worst time of the year / for a journey, and such a long journey. . . ." So begins T.S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi." Were they here in North Dakota, they'd be driving snowmobiles rather than sailing camels, those ships of the desert. I checked the stars, as I usually do each night. The sky is clear, no thermal blanket of clouds, no star in the east. The Big Dipper is hugging the northern horizon. The sun rose at

8:22 AM & shortly thereafter accepted a pair of sundogs, supplementary parhelia fires to ease the gelid day. Sunset was an early 5:02 PM but this day was one minute longer than yesterday, & so Earth is slowly turning to the morning of spring & Easter. What a great revolution! And unlike the analogs of it in the American colonies in 1776 or France in 1789 or Russia in 1917, this one takes place every year.

I am fond of friends of all degrees & places remote from me, but I suspect some of them are climatically deprived (C.D.) It's a condition more problematical than political correctness (P.C.). Flora & fauna, including people, respond to forces that wish to kill them (like hard winters). We adjust & resist, up to a point. Is Homo sapiens (you & I) as resilient as mosquitoes & tares & thistles? Here we don't hibernate or escape into dormancy. The colder it gets, the more alive we must be.

Yesterday as I was driving home from Grand Forks, the weather was still subzero, the wind was blowing & the snow was flying—perfect weather for the flock of snow buntings that flew across the road in front of me. They breed in the Arctic & spend their winters in North Dakota (!) & so put the shame to human complaints here. Outside the lilacs & oaks & other bushes & trees already have their buds set & ready to start growth next spring.

Predictable as regular as the migrations of birds, income tax forms & seed catalogs arrived this week, an annual confirmation of Emerson's doctrine of compensation. Also, indoors, some flowers bloom through the winter. An aloe, not scheduled to flower till June, has sent up some budded flower spikes, & also this week I noticed the first flower buds on the jasmine which should flower for many weeks, its rich odor filling the sunny, south-looking great room.

This aside: After writing the preceding Sunday afternoon, the Sun shining on yesterday's fresh snow, I bundled up, refilled the birds' suet feeder, & then took you with me (in spirit) for a walk across the frozen Turtle River & through the woods. We didn't find any of the discarded deer antlers I was looking for, but it was a lovely tramp. Thanks for coming!

January 18, 1999

I thought I'd stopped believing in Santa, but when the Vikings blew the game with the Falcons yesterday, in my grief I realized I was still a little boy. There ain't no justice. Not since Charley Choo-choo Justice.

September 20, 1999

re: autumn days

Thanks for the update on the conference, the aftermath of the hurricane, & hanging like a pall over everything news about Mike [Reynolds]. Pancreatic cancer is one of the more dangerous forms, isn't it? But the

way he worded his news indicated he was taking it as well as could be expected. Daughter Lisa just told me about a guy in Florida diagnosed with the same cancer who decided against treatment & staked out space on a beach to wait it out.

I wonder how I'll take such news. Yesterday I spent some time working outdoors, including planting some burr oak acorns. Grandson Dylan ruefully reminded me I'd never see them as mature trees. . . . Never mind. I'll keep planting them. The day is good, & I'll go home early & plant some more. Maybe Dylan will see them when they are mature.

In high school my American lit teacher had us memorize Bryant's "Thanatopsis": "the oak shall send its roots abroad & pierce thy mold" is one of the passages I remember yet. Strangely consoling. And Bryant was so young when he wrote that poem. Maybe he had to be.

April 26, 2000
The dandelions were back first, but now the violets are here too. Soon to be followed by the mosquitoes & ticks . . . I've long dreamed of breeding the ticks for size & opening a riding ranch at Turtle Oaks, & maybe have a small matched pair to pull a little cart for the kids.

> The springtime has come, & the leaves turn green.
> The springtime has come, & the leaves turn green.
> Your miserable face, I wish that I'd never seen.
>
> "Come oh, my love, & see me die.
> Come oh, my love, & see me die.
> Lift your innocent face & see
> me dance in the sky."
>
> A little madness in the Spring
> Is wholesome even for the King,
> But God be with the Clown—
>
> Who ponders this tremendous scene
> This whole Experiment of Green—
> As if it were his own!

"NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND"
January 26, 2001
I haven't quite been "crying for a vision," as some traditional Plains Indians put it, but would I not welcome one in these hours of blindness? To write you & to right myself.

This message should have been launched on Epiphany (as earlier ones often were), but I stumbled. Then I aimed at Martin Luther King, Jr., Day,

pleasing myself on such an innovation in celebration of peace & justice. No soap. I was not equal to the chance. What about Presidential Inauguration Day? What a Swiftian opportunity, I thought, given all the absurdity & comedy of life, until I recognized in a nanosecond I was no Jonathan Swift.

What next? One year I'd delayed until Valentine's Day, & that was OK (& gave the semblance of a procrastinator who was, at least, pro-loving). I also thought of February 2, Groundhog Day, soon upon us, that conflicted with my war with related burrowing mammals, pocket gophers, that have infested Turtle Oaks. Nix on that tribute.

Then today I left the University at 6 PM, twilight, & to the southwest the lately departed sun had left a peach blush on the horizon. Above it was clear blue sky & the first slim crescent of the waxing moon, & above it, in turn, as I took in the beauty, was Venus, bright, dominant (as the star of love should be?). The beautiful combination of sky, moon, & star in the cold stillness gave me joy & peace, & instantly I knew it was my epiphany, the unlocking that would let me write.

As the ancient poets had done, I bowed nine times to the waxing moon upon first seeing it, & I remembered an Italian friend's instruction years ago on a walking tour of Madrid when we saw another such moon: "The moon is a liar," she said because when it is *crescere* (growing), it arcs to the right (as capital D does); & when it is *decrescere* (waning), it arcs to the left (as C does). Liar or not, I thanked the moon & came to greet you.

May 7, 2001
re: spring and all

What a good spring report! You're doing all the right things—& making me a bit jealous. Communing with nature, writing: what else is there in life? But no Cooper's hawk poem! a serious omission.

And thankee kindly for the NYC invitation, but I'm up to my ass in work, & 2" of rain yesterday left my garden *inaccrochable* (as Gertrude might say) & my county road a mire in places, I had to shift into 4-wheel drive this AM. Between downpours I did manage to plant a ponderosa pine for Arbor Day & check out the budding of trees & shrubs.

Taking home 2 *NDQ* essays for the Hem special—yours & Jacque Brogan's, but tell Kaimei not to worry; I'll keep them at opposite ends of the couch & sit between them the whole evening.

Good birding now with transients passing through & summer residents nesting. The Cooper's hawks have finished the nest in a big elm, & the female is now in the nest rather than perched nearby. She's probably incubating but we can't see the bottom of the nest. The male occasionally

joins her, but I think she sends him out on errands—a rock dove here, a mouse there, a pint of ice cream & a jar of pickles.

October 1, 2001
I slept a little on the Mpls-GF flight, arrived refreshed, high on the ideas & talk & sea & sand & wind & good walks with you. It was 50F when we left Strathmere [New Jersey]; it was 75 F in Mpls & still in the 70s in GF. I hadn't mowed in weeks, & old friends, retired sculptor, his wife & son were coming this weekend—& I had to put the place in order. I started mowing, got into the rhythm in the setting sun, kept mowing until the dewy grass stalled me out and the nearly full moon rose.

October 16, 2001
Have a good Swan song for me. Tundra swans here are beginning to move south. Canada geese too. Robins are robbing the buffaloberries, haws, apples. Itinerant cedar waxwings stripped the chokecherries, relieving me of the difficult decision of whether to make chokecherry wine (v.g.) or chokecherry jelly (also v.g.).

Sunday afternoon was cold & windy, but grandson Dylan & I canoed the Turtle River for a couple of hours. Down in the shallow valley we were pretty well out of the wind. I let him have the stern; that meant a zigzag course as he was learning to steer (& trying to keep his pit bull from moving about so much). We spooked a great blue heron, a redtail hawk, & maybe twenty mallards. Once a small flock of mallards flew right down at us, hit the water, spotted us, & sprang up & off in a twinkling. As we prepared to beach the canoe, I went ashore over the bow & stepped onto slippery mud. Dylan said Chino the dog whined as I lost my balance & sat down in the river. Dylan refrained from laughing.

December 11, 2001
Well, my family is heavy in Sagittarians too, & the Centaur, half horse, half man, was an archetypal teacher, Don, & our English dept. is lousy with 'em. My bird-day is the 15th, yours the 14th?

But I don't pay no never mind to the daily horoscope unless I'm needing to be jollied a bit. But in Cairo, Egypt, I met a lady who read my palms one afternoon in the shade of an acacia tree where we sipped lemonade. Since I am left-handed, she started with that dominant paw & was spookily prescient. Then she said something about the off paw being important too, & what it seemed to reveal was that I was a divided self, caught between being & becoming. Well sho nuf lady, & if I could have remembered your palaver & how it tied to the life line & the heart line & the thickness of fingers & the space in a spread hand between thumbs & index fingers I could have made a million every year at the county fair.

But I began looking carefully at others' hands after that & thought I could tell whether I would like a woman by the nature of her hands (not her palm necessarily) & especially her fingers. I lost all interest in legs & hips & breasts & faces until one night, enamored with a woman I'd met at a party, I came to in una selva oscura to find myself holding the hands of a disembodied person—sans legs, sans hips, sans breasts, sans face.

She was a scholar who sometimes would take us several Fulbrighters on tours, & I always felt a bit entranced & bemused by her. Surely her palm reading was a clever game, albeit one at which she was very good. Midway through the year she & a French professor, coming back from a day trip to Alexandria at night were killed crashing into an army truck that had parked on the unlit roadway without having turned on any lights. Had she read her own palms, & was the lifeline of her dominant hand cut short?

October 5, 2001
Driving home from a grandson's 12th birthday party, as the harvest moon rises with a black cloud like a pirate's eye patch where Mr. Moon's right eye should be, I decide to write a Robert Bly poem for the celebratory occasion of the grandson named after my father. But the telephone brings Don's message of Gregory's [Hemingway] death at the other end of the ribbon of life: his three-score ten gone, almost to the day while the boy I love in a very different way learns to shine round-faced like Gregory, now lost to love but never to that moon.

April 5, 2002
The Gregory passage is from a journal, ditto this:

March 28, 2002

The sky was moody today. In the morning it was bright cloudless blue, & sang. I drove to the air base pharmacy to replenish two heart prescriptions & shop at the commissary. Driving back midday big white clouds came to speak an altered feeling, blown in perhaps by the strong west wind lifting topsoil off bare fields into grey ground clouds. The fields that had stubble kept their topsoil; some farmers seem not to care, spoiled perhaps by the deep dark loam—how could it ever be exhausted? At twilight going home from the university the sky was wild with clouds of white & grey & others oranged by the low sun, & some of them streamed rain from their bellies here & there around the horizon. After sunset I anticipated a full moon, but a bank of horizon hugging clouds to the east obscured its emergence until it was 10 degrees above the land. At first I'm not sure it is the moon or some reflection of light within the house. Slowly it edges aside clouds, plays off its light against their dark, persuades me of its name & then looks in on me from behind the big burr oak & is now staring me down: "I'm moon. I'm here."

April 15, 2002
I had good luck yesterday, in & out. Out was a fine spring day (finally), & I did some garage cleaning (not much, mind), raking some of the wood chips & sawdust from around the outdoor furnace, cleaning out & rehanging birdhouses, chewing the rag with a neighbor's garrulous grandfather who not finding his kin at home walked the lane until he caught me to hear his Ancient Mariner story from dropping out of school at 8, eventually becoming a regional manager for Minndak Power Co-op, knowing more about the cost of various fuels than I really needed to know (but I'll lessen your suspense & tell you that the cheapest & most efficient & cleanest fuel in these parts is dried corn kernels), but also knowing the best site in the county to hunt for arrowheads & other Indian relics—I'll check it out.

August 16, 2002
In matters medical I like to separate body & soul: parts of the body need repair or conversion, but it is not Me, who will merely look on, encouraging the body to do its level best but acknowledging, if need be, that it tends to be lazy, fitful, lacking focus on the needs & desires of the soul & eventually having to be cut adrift, all at once or part by part.

Before Robin [Gadjusek] left CA for VT with a side trip to MA he e-mailed me that he had taken a good photo of me on a Stresa ferryboat, the photo revealing me as a "strange angel." (Usually the halo doesn't take unless the film speed is very fast.) I'm much appreciative of the phrase, however, with its poetic repetition of—ANGE & ANGE—with the first element preceded by the liquid R & the second element followed by the liquid L.

My father was on a destroyer in WW I, and my uncle Fred, his brother, volunteered for the army though he didn't have to since Dad was already in service & their mother was a widow. Fred boasted to my father that "They'll never get me." But they did. He was a company runner, & he was blown away. A very little bit of Fred's & my dad's writing survived, but I have Fred's last letter to my dad & my dad's navy journal that I hope to incorporate in the family memoir I write on from time to time. (I'm also writing from time to time on the Korean journal Kaimei encouraged.)

Wednesday, August 28, 2002
No one has ever made a living forecasting North Dakota weather. Something's either late or early, more or less than average, too little or too much, fantastic or horrific. Fall is my favorite season, nonetheless. The weeds have stopped growing (& stopped my mowing), the mosquitoes have relented, the sun has stopped burning, the incessant winds have cessanted. . . .

Now I pick up this week's CSA delivery. Do you have that relatively new phenomenon, Community Supported Agriculture, connecting organic farms with nearby consumers who subscribe to whatever is seasonal & fresh (deliveries once a week here)? Even a half share at $75 provides me with much more vegetables (& sometimes eggs & honey) than I can eat in a week (so I usually share with my daughters). It's also a bit like Christmas every week, going to pick up a shopping bag full: what will it be this week? And then back home in the country I have to harvest some milkweed leaves for grandson Lewis's monarch butterfly project at school. And the light purple flowers smell so good!

And then tonight, if it's clear, maybe Northern Lights!

September 16, 2002

Robin sent me his long love poem "Ode to Illusion." lt does have some steamy images. He also sent four photos from Isola Pescatori, & the one showing me alive & not frozen at a dinner table or backed up against the bulwark of a ferry boat is my favorite. Robin was on Stoney's balcony & shot you & me on the embarcadero approaching the building & waving up at him. Was Yunwei with us? Another figure is next to you but a leafy branch of a palm tree hangs right in his face, protecting his anonymity.

Another photo shows Stoney & me at the Nick Adams banquet. Stoney all piped up & ready to blow, I am holding a salmon-colored napkin in front of my chest. The napkin looks like a pair of a lady's silk or nylon drawers. The azaleas & roses bloom behind us. Only two bottles of wine stand on the table between us & fatal discourse.

A few years ago I wrote a poem, "Milkweed," about the showy milkweed common here & of a lovely fragrance & the host of the monarch butterfly. It was to have been one in a series of poems about the wildflowers of North Dakota, but inanity interrupted me. No, milkweed was not used to make WW II parachutes but was used as a substitute filler for life jackets. But you could write a good poem about the war profiteer who did try it as a silk substitute & of how Kilroy parachuted from his burning bomber & how the millions of milkweed seeds took pity on Kilroy & rearranged themselves into a comforting cloud of infinite softness & wafted him to a gentle landing on a Kent haystack from which he tumbled to its base where a lovely milkmaid, Betty Sue, was dozing & dreaming of a strange lover who, behold!, was there when she awoke, singing "Blow away the morning dew, the dew and the dew. Blow away the morning dew, how sweet the winds do blow!"

Winter Count, 2002
[Christmas Greetings]

Old friends sent Christmas greetings, the burden of which was a challenge to answer at Epiphany "the state of our collective existence" in reference to the war in Afghanistan following the attacks in New York City, the Pentagon, & Pennsylvania. My friends' card was a fine photograph of their four children, 15 to 7 years old. They look angelic, beautiful, two young kings & two young queens who may trump all the knaves in the world. May they realize their futures well. For me, they & all like them & goodness & beauty (in art & nature) & work & prayer are all the answer we have to the vicissitudes of life.

If we were to choose a pictograph for 2001, what would it be? The Sioux Winter Count I have a copy of, including 1876, the year that the Sioux & their allies soundly defeated George Armstrong Custer & his 7th Cavalry at the battle of the Little Big Horn (U.S. dead 276), does not depict that historic event, but instead the "counter" chose to refer to Sitting Bull's leading his people to safety in Canada after the battle.

At the end of W. H. Auden's poem "September 1, 1939," on the beginning of World War II, he asks, "'Who can reach the deaf, / Who can speak for the dumb? / . . . May I, composed like them / Of Eros and of dust, / Beleaguered by the same / Negation and despair, / Show an affirming flame."

Samples of a Deep Winter Count:

1415, Agincourt, French dead 7,000; English dead 400-1600 /// 1775, Bunker Hill, American casualties 450; British casualties 1050 /// 1916, the Somme, 195,000 French, 420,000 British, 650,000 German casualties /// 1941, Pearl Harbor, U.S. dead 2330 /// 1942-43, Stalingrad, 400,000 Russian, 600,000 German losses /// St. Valentine's Day, 1945, bombing of Dresden by the RAF & USAF—a strategically unimportant & "one of the most beautiful cities in Europe"—estimated dead 35,000 to 135,000—even the free press in Britain & the US described the attacks as "terror bombing."

The sunflower is a major cultivar in North Dakota & elsewhere around the world. I nominate it as the pictograph for this Winter Count & advance Rolf Jacobsen's "Solsikke"—"Sunflower"—in support:

> What sower walked over earth
> which hands sowed
> our inward seeds of fire?
> They went out from his fists like rainbow curves
> to frozen earth, young loam, hot sand,
> they will sleep there
> greedily, and drink up our lives

and explode it into pieces
for the sake of a sunflower that you haven't seen
or a thistle head or a chrysanthemum.

Let the young rain of tears come.
Let the calm hands of grief come.
It's not all as evil as you think.
—Rolf Jacobsen (Bly's translation)

Love, Roberto

January 14, 2003
Seven inches of ice seems a bit much. Maybe your roof needs more insulation or venting. In Nodakland when the ice gets that thick we cut a hole through it & go ice fishing. (Did I tell you the latest method? After you cut the hole, you open a can of peas & place them around the hole. When the fish come up to take a pea, you hit them over the head with a hammer.)

March 5, 2003
A few years ago my annual Epiphany greetings did not get mailed until Valentine's Day, another day to celebrate, but this year, even though I started on my greetings before New Year's Day & added to them from time to time, I couldn't feel celebratory. Both local & global problems kept sapping my spirit.

Listening to the morning news in mid January, I heard the host interviewing the author of a new book, *Refrigerator Rights* (& as Dave Barry would write, "I'm not making this up"). Would this be the epiphany to get me going? The author's solution to our anxiety & alienation was simply to increase the number of people who would feel free to come into our homes & open our refrigerator doors without asking permission. Beyond general platitudes about "real" friendship, the author didn't indicate how one would go about reaching inner peace by having visitors opening one's refrigerator. (Hi Mary, come on in. Good to see you. Let me take your coat. Say, before you sit down, would you mind opening my refrigerator? YOU have refrigerator rights in MY home!)

So I thought about the zero times I had walked into a friend's or relative's home & opened a refrigerator or how many times my visitors had opened my refrigerator unasked. This contemplation did not serve to dissipate my blues, but for a day or two I thought it might serve to begin my annual letter as a kind of pseudo epiphany. After all, I believe you have a refrigerator or access to one. So you & I would have a head start in possibly exchanging refrigerator rights. But what of the millions on Earth who don't have refrigerators? Are they condemned to lives of desperation & loneliness, or perhaps more likely do they have alternative means, sym-

bolic or material, like rites (not rights) & shared labor & food by which they find some peace?

An even bleaker possibility for the hook to my greetings was my absorption with the word & the concept of hubris. The word kept popping up in the world news & commentary on it. Examples of it (at least by my understanding) were rampant. For instance, the very bright & talented National Security Adviser in the George Bush White House, Condoleeza Rice, released the "National Security Strategy" that begins by asserting that there is a "single sustainable model for national success"—America's—that is "right & true for every person, in every society." Thus, the U.S. "will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively." That certitude in that language of veiled arrogance would set the audiences of Sophocles & Shakespeare trembling.

I find compensation & consolation in great tragedies, but what I read in the news is base parody. Nature, the not human nature, comforts & offered a minor, lower case epiphany recently. I discovered a cottontail rabbit trapped in a basement window well. At first I thought it was dead, but it was frozen in fear at being detected in its cell. An ear twitched. When I approached, it dashed madly about its prison, too deep for it to jump from. As it raced it leaned to one side in order to keep the upper eye always on me, the Other. When I stopped & talked softly, it stopped & seemed to calm down, but when I dropped into the window well, it again leaped & ran about in trapped fear. But at last I caught it between the wall of the well & my boot where it froze. Speaking softly I lifted it up and continued to speak to it & stroked its silky head, its wildness calm in my hands & giving me peace even as I released it to run to the woods. The rabbit's soft warmth in my hands was a fine gift, as was the rising of the full moon that night.

March 12, 2003
re: A little story

After John Smart's birthday brunch on Sunday I had a terrifying then beautiful experience. I was driving home through town, slowing down for a red light & curious about what seemed like a small snowman on the berm to my right, dressed in a jacket & hat. Suddenly it sprang to life just as my pickup was opposite it, & the young boy, about six, started across the street to the school playground. He had spun about from facing away from the street & dove into the pickup. I doubt if he had even seen it. He hit the right front fender & was thrown into the air. Even as I was shocked, I connected his body with arms thrown wide with the famous

Robert Capa photo of the Spanish Civil War soldier being thrown into the air by the impact of a bullet. (That photo was reproduced recently in a *New Yorker* that I am planning to use in an invited University talk on war; the article is by Susan Sontag.) What does that juxtaposition of old photo with new terror say about how my mind was working? I was also expecting to find a badly wounded boy. Instead, as I got out of the pickup, I found him hysterical but seemingly OK, screaming that he had lost his glasses and pair of sneakers he was planning to use in the school gymnasium. A good Samaritan heading the other way had stopped immediately too & seeing that I was trying to comfort the boy, he went to a nearby house & had an ambulance & police summoned. They arrived almost instantaneously after the other driver & I had found the boy's shoes under the pickup & his glasses in a snowbank. Then he was raring to get to whatever he firmly insisted he wanted to go to in the school gym. I wanted to carry him away from the street & check him out, but by then the ambulance crew had arrived & persuaded him to let them examine him inside the ambulance. In the meantime, his older brother had arrived to see him safely across the street. Maybe the impatient boy had seen him coming & decided it was OK for him to cross. The policeman meanwhile got reports from the Good Samaritan & me, both agreeing as to what had happened (except we weren't sure what part of the pickup the boy had run into. Thank god it was the fender & not the bumper.) Then the boy's mother arrived (they lived nearby) & the ambulance crew reported the boy was fine. So we were all tremendously relieved, but beyond that the beautiful part of the story was in the concerned gentle behavior of everyone—even the boy after he had calmed down. The mother & her two sons came to me with sweet gratitude. The policeman was thorough but concerned for my health—at one point I was shaking, & he expressed thanks to me & the G.S. & when he called the station to report, he recommended the incident as N.R.A.—Non-reportable Accident.

All my driving life I harbored a dread of ever being responsible for someone's death or injury, especially of a child. My oldest sister never recovered from a hit & run accident when she was a senior in high school. And I've been on the receiving end of some bad accidents (one of which was in Korea & which I'm including in the memoir). Does this add up?—one of the most awful seeming events, seemingly magically erased & transformed into a little story of human compassion & love among strangers.

April 4, 2003
LINES WRITTEN WHILE OBSERVING BIRDS OUT MY WINDOW AT THE START OF A SPRING STORM YESTERDAY

The storm started easily
but the birds sensed its danger.
Crowds of juncos flocked
to the feeders they hadn't needed.
Mating behavior, facing each other in pairs,
stretching their heads up, mixed with
feeding frenzy for survival. They sensed
the falling barometer, felt the wind push
their feathers. They didn't know whether to kill
or kiss in the weird weather. A lone tree
sparrow vied for the seed I'd spread
and jostled back at the juncos,
none of whom questioned my monkeying
with Darwin, or God, or the grand unknown,
only me wanting to seed & see.

Afterwards it occurred to me that Junco (Junkins) & Sparrow now have license to psychoanalyze those words.

Roberto

The storm began in a hush; hatracks
of juncos flocked to feeders brimming
with seeds. Mating faceoffs, pairings,
stretched necks gobbled the yellow pills
in a piranha frenzy. Bird barometers
falling. Wind lifted feathers. Kill
or bird-kiss in the foul weather.
One tree sparrow jockeyed for my spread
seed, jostling the juncos impervious
to my messing with Darwin, or the grand
unplanned. It was only me
needing to seed and see.

April 12, 2003

re: Lisa & haiku

"A Better Mousetrap by Little Giant" really is good (if you have a mouse in the house). I had many deer mice in my garage, & a pair of these traps cleaned them out in a week or so. Before I loaned my convertible to grandson Dylan, they had made a cozy nest in the trunk & even found a way to get into the glove compartment. They also had a nest on top of the carburetor of the pickup, & they raided a stash of candy in the cab.

Lisa is teaching a children's art class in the Museum, the haiku. So we were talking about it when I had need of a form for a Visiting Spider.

At breakfast a small
spider froze at my presence.
I preferred oatmeal.
The breakfast spider
had only seven legs yet
it was nicely good.
All lack a leg here
and there. He took his eighth limb
from a middle line.

April 22, 2003
Now would be the time to give you a tour of the plantings at Turtle Oaks when the tree buds are swelling. I'm always thrilled to discover some new appearances, some new plant, some survivals among the other plants that don't make it through the winter, some youngsters that are now teenagers & might even make adulthood if they are lucky.

Do you have wild leeks on your mountain? A former student just sent me enough for a soup, his recipe included.

The far roaming mottled duck that I & a few other birders spotted, the first one in recorded history in North Dakota, has been confirmed by the State committee on such ornithological matters. "Into the air, junior Birdmen, into the air upside down. Into the air, Junior Birdmen, but keep your feet right on the ground. And when you hear the postman ringing, & you get your wings of tin, you will know that the junior Birdmen have sent their box tops in!" (out of what fissure in the brain did that come from?)

May 18, 2003
I hadn't read *Across The River And Into The Trees* in a long time, & when I had written about it forty years ago, I had a special courtly love take on it. This time I hoped to tie it into the writing of "The African Book" that I'm editing & that he wrote only four & five years after *Across*. God, how he needed an honest editor instead of being led down the garden path by the idolatrous Adrianna Ivancich's flattering responses to the chapters he let her read day by day as he cranked them out at the Finca. I'm glad I re-read it. It was like the difference between reading "The Raven" for the first time in junior high & reading it with Jay in public years later.

June 9, 2003
After his erection of 20 earthen pyramids above my Nile, & after my one missed assassination attempt, I finally brought down the huge pocket gopher, the Pharaoh himself when he emerged from his 20th pyramid, the one that would be his tomb, & I shot him cleanly & well through the throat & buried him with dignity before the Dogs of War could drag his

splendid form before the toppled tower of Ozymandias. Look on my work, O Matey, & despair!

The River Cove Rover

June 10, 2003

I agree that having the place name in the titles alone works, for one sees them as quasi-Journal poems related to Red Point.

I also dislike poems called simply POEM (but no-title poems worked for Shakespeare & Dickinson). (Who was it started titling Shakespeare's poems after the first lines? I guess that's better than simply numbering them.)

But unlike your point in an earlier e-mail about *NDQ* submissions, your not liking submissions with cover letters, I think a minimal letter is only courteous. I do dislike familiarity & cuteness & boasting & kitchen sink inclusiveness of all writing since the third grade & all publications & honors & successful Thanksgiving recipes. We once got a submission that included a quarter, a 25 cent piece, that I Scotch-taped above my office door & told the staff that that was our MOBY DICK doubloon that was the reward to the staffer who first hallooed "Thar she blows!" And I: "Where away?" "Two points off the starboard elm!" "Lower away!"—and all the staff rushes outside to the quad never to be seen again!

August 7, 2003

When I first saw *MASH* (the movie), I was a little upset. I had spent 10 days in a MASH hospital after a jeep accident, & I was not amused & found the fast talk & action sometimes hard to follow. Later when the TV series started I was able to separate art from life & liked the series & began to see parallels with my own experience. (I write about the hospital interlude in the memoir.)

At the time of the truce I was camped with my truck platoon near 3rd Infantry Division HQs, on hold in case the brass needed to bug out fast. We had been screwed over so many times (regarding a cease-fire), that we didn't know if to believe that this time it was really happening. Then it happened. The shelling stopped at ten PM.

March 30, 2004

I am still marooned. I did drive to the first water-on-road, adjacent-to two pretty good sized lakes on either side, with a pretty good current over the road, the river taking a shortcut & cutting its usual meanders. The stretch of water I drove through was maybe two hundred fifty yards, but it felt like a mile for as soon as I was in it I regretted the decision, but neither was I going to try to turn around there. I had to drive slowly on as the water deepened & I felt the left wheels down on the shoulder. I fought the drift left & then feared going too far right, only able to guess where the

center of the road was. When I reached dry road again I wondered if the next water up ahead would be easier or deeper, & I knew from prior floods that there would be several more flooded places after it. I fast forwarded my thinking to a possible evening return & possibly even higher water. One of my neighbors had told me last night that his measuring stick indicated the river was still slowly rising. Of course I could stay in town, & I didn't relish turning around & going back through that scary stretch, but at least I knew I had just made lt. I calmed down, turned around, set my course for the middle of the road by looking up ahead to where the road was dry, & drove back more deliberately. Enough adventure for one day.

April 23, 2004
re: boids

Your namesakes are still hanging around the feeders here, but I suspect they'll soon be flying farther north. New arrivals include lovely song sparrows who like to nest in the undergrowth. Many robins singing, many flickers probing the earth for snacks, ants especially, & a few thrushes, the subjects of the *Globe* article that arrived, thank you.

The pair of Cooper's hawks right outside the English building repaired last year's nest, give the nest site call (warning? invitation?), hunt, feed, & now copulate. A colleague teaching a Spanish class on the top floor, of a reading "Erotica," was interrupted by a student looking out the window & saying "The hawks are on top of each other!" That's timing.

I'm driving hard on the "African Book," but Hem's regularly throwing in foreign words & phrases drives me bugs, especially the Swahili that he doesn't know very well. . . . If I survive this I'll become strong in the broken phrases—or places.

The damn pocket gophers are digging up the Landscape again. I had just been feeling good about early spring—no ticks, black flies, or mosquitoes yet, no grass to mow yet—then the damn pocketgophers (one word) spoil Eden. I've poisoned 'em, drowned 'em, castor oiled 'em, trapped 'em, shot 'em—all losing actions. Now I'm told that dropping half sticks of Juicy Fruit gum down their holes will do 'em in. They eat the gum & it clogs up their innards & they die. (That's the theory.)

November 29, 2004
The Turtle River has finally iced over, probably until spring. It can support Reno the Labrador, my outing companion, but I'll avoid it for a few more freezing weeks.

Still, one hundred tundra Swans flew overhead on Saturday, & one tardy chipping sparrow still lingered at the feeder. Today a pileated woodpecker flew by & landed in a hawthorn tree to feed on the apples.

January 14, 2005
I misspoke: it's 45 below with the windchill figured in. The air temp is predicted for only 30 below zero. Thus our cardinals only need to huddle in the lee of growth or buildings or crowd around some steam producer. If they can continue to feed, that will help a lot too. In "ordinary" winter weather I only need to replenish the suet & seed feeders a time or two a week. In this weather, it's about daily.

January 20, 2005
My lower back is not sweet but is aching somewhat from shoveling snow—& more is forecast for tonight. The snow is drifted a couple of feet deep around my prize apple, a Red Haraldsen, & I fearfully imagine the voles have tunneled their way there & are merrily dining on the bark.

I'm slowly working through the copy-edited manuscript of Hemingway's *Under Kilimanjaro*, & even though I worked through his original six times, carefully, the Kent SUP editor has raised a number of questions & pointed out a number of inconsistencies. Thus this nit-picking editor meets his Waterloo. The shoe is on the other foot. But of course better to be caught up short at this stage than after the book is printed. I would truly be Sisyphus reincarnated did I not believe that there will be finitude finally. And I am reconciled to the great likelihood that a number of readers will quibble over the eventual result of all this quibbling. (Do you know the practice of Navaho weavers to make one deliberate mistake in every weaving so as not to offend the gods with one's hubris?)

July 14, 2005
Yes, old Matt Arnold was solid; I taught him years ago. And us old farts could make up a pretty good list like Edmund Wilson's "The Literary Workers Polonius" that I still recommend; in it he categorizes reviewers, & only the last type passes muster. Wouldn't it be nice to wipe out the Balkanized English depts. & their pop culture fascinations & their P.C. obsessions & teach reading & writing? (I just glanced at this English Dept's course descriptions for the looming fall semester. Maybe half the courses are OK, half shabby or at least suspect to me. Maybe the Golden Age of new criticism had its problems too, but I don't think I ever had a bad undergraduate English class.)

September 15, 2005
Yeah, "mellow fruitfulness" is coming out my ears here too, & your citing "After Apple-Picking" fits into my mood nicely as my refrigerator overflows: . . . "I am overtired / Of the great harvest I myself desired."

The 20th was the American century. The 21st will witness the Decline & Fall of the Unholy American Empire. Bush will be gone in a few years,

but he has paved the way for a generation of vipers. You & I have been on a ride: Great Depression survivors, Great War survivors, riding technological revolutions (hanging on, barely), witnessing economic & social revolutions unrolling even yet, praying for sanity in a mad world where hypocrisy, incompetence, & mendacity are the three gracelesses.

I gotta get a better word for the end of that jeremiad.

September 28, 2005

Good to know you are rounding up those maverick poems of Bob Bagg's. One about him & Mad Gregory Corso (who last was heard of fighting the British in the War of 1812) intrigues me. Corso was here in 1975 with Snyder, Ferlinghetti, Patchen's widow, Kenneth Rexroth, & Allen Ginsberg for a Beat conference. I was chair then & feeling like a man sitting on a pile of dynamite wondering if the fuse was long enough, especially because of Corso's antics. The others were saints by comparison.

Good to know you had two great days with the Rosens & that your fall weather is kicking in softly. Same here. No hard frost yet though we've come close. The garden is still producing, but mostly underground veggies—carrots, beets, tatoes. The pumpkins are just starting to turn color. Like your wingeds, the birds here are heading south, but that means we now have a lot of warblers that breed farther north & stop off to fill up before continuing their migrations.

Dammit, you are reading *Under Kilimanjaro* all wrong; you're fighting it; if pastoral prose is inevitable, relax & enjoy it. Do you move your lips when you read? If you don't, that may be the problem as Hem said of another critic, he writes for people who do move their lips when they read. And you have conflated *Garden Of Eden* with the African book. The elephant hunt you are anticipating is in *Garden*, not in *UK*.

April 4, 2006

I don't think you would have been skeptical of my report of 2 feet of ice on the Turtle if you could have seen the breakup. Since Saturday morning the county road which has been closed because of deep water six places where the road dips. The water comes from both the river—now truly a wide river, not a winding prairie stream such as you saw—& also over-the-ground water from the land that rises ever so gently to the west. The prairie indeed often seems to be flat—until water is present. Neighbors to the north two miles have water between their house and the road. They have fashioned a jerry-built dock from which they can paddle their canoe to a dry stretch of roadway.

I didn't mind being marooned three days. I had plenty of food, & I enjoyed the solitude both indoors & out. But today the flood has begun to subside, & I dared to drive into Manvel through five flooded places to

leave my pickup to be fixed (ball joints & shock absorbers—old Bessie was hopping up & down like popcorn popping). And I have an afternoon committee meeting of Prairie Partners that's pretty important—to guard myself from being nominated as now president. . . .

August 28, 2006
And the relocation & repairs on my house drag on. The garage was detached today, & later this week, the house will be levitated—it all is mysterious to me—& moved. How will it stay in one piece? Today the movers scared me into unloading a number of upper shelf books to the floor to offset the left to right swaying when they extract the house. And after the move there will be the moving of the septic tank & field & the moving & re-hooking up of the outdoor wood furnace.

September 1, 2006
The Turtle Oaks house is off the foundation & onto a truck—perched in the air as if on steroids. The movers will chain it down now & let the harpies eat its liver until Tuesday morning when they will move it over the new foundation.

July 9, 2007
Although Millett's Korean War book that I sent is uneven, it does help to offset the impression one would get by reading only the Korean war books by Americans. Even when they are accurate, they tend to overlook or downplay the nature, roles, & reasonings of the enemies who, while not being stereotyped, are usually out of focus & largely unknowns—known only as the mostly faceless enemy. For instance, the UN Belgian battalion (on whom Millet writes), was attached to my Third Infantry Division, & I would occasionally see a couple of their officers who might trade a couple of their cool berets for some extra supplies from our company. Millett gives me just a little more information about the Belgians, but it's enough to individualize & humanize them.

August 8, 2007
Usually when you enter a Baptist church (but maybe not just for dinner), the sun bursts through the clouds.

January 8, 2008
Subject: Extending year-ending or year-beginning greetings
Reason: An annual rite to right the tippecanoe
How: By that habit of writing (that other right rite). My dear mentor Sherman Paul told me that he had the habit of writing a daily haiku based on his and his wife's life at their summer cabin (and later year-round

home) by Big Wolf Lake in northwestern Minnesota. That seemed like a good idea. Each evening reflect on one's day & encapsulate a small but memorable part of it in three lines of only 17 syllables keyed usually on the natural world. I got in that habit too & have written many haiku. But often when that happy duty was interrupted for various reasons I lapsed into long silences between me & my world.

Now you are on my mind and I've begun to resume my writing of daily haikus. Don't worry. I'm not going to dump a load of them on you. But this year's Epiphany dawned with a rose and blue sky after some weeks of bitter weather, and the sun set with those bright colors too—good haiku food. But after that fine week, mild and windless, another storm struck with snow and frigid winds. But that could be haiku matter too.

Never mind, the sun
shone and lit two bright sun dogs.
Then the full moon rose.

My calendar notes the times of sunrise and sunset. Each day is longer by one or two minutes. "The world is slowly turning to the morning." And in a recent issue of *Orion* magazine Rebecca Solnit wrote about the power of ideas nurtured in stories and other arts.

> What does it mean to be radical, to tell radical stories in our time, to win the battle of the story? The North American tradition seems to focus its activity on the exposé, the telling of the grim underside of what we know: the food is poison, the system is corrupt, the leaders are lying, the war is failing. There is a place for this, but you cannot base a revolution on the bad things the status quo forgot to mention. You need to tell the stories they are not telling, to learn to see where they are blind, to look how the great changes of the world come from the shadows and the margins, not center stage, to see where we're winning and that we can win something that matters, if not everything all the time. . . . we get to choose our stories—the stories that divide and conquer or those that tie things together with possibility.

And for you youngsters, don't forget Pablo Picasso's little story: "One starts to get young at the age of sixty, and then it is too late."

July 14, 2008

Another bee-plus surprise yesterday: neighbor Don called in some apprehension about a bee swarm about the size of a medicine ball in one of his chokecherry trees. I assured him that the bees were migrating and not aggressive. Then I called my bee partner who will gather up the swarm in a big box and relocate them (theoretically!). I look forward to helping him

do that tomorrow. (Folk wisdom tells me bee stings are good for arthritis. We'll, maybe, see.)

July 15, 2008
New Bidness: In trying to get going on my *Reading FTA* book, I put aside the extensive secondary material I've accumulated on it over the years & resolved to reread *Farewell* . . . as if it were a new read & NOT to have a pen or pencil in hand. What a great idea, for me, because it is after all his book that is center stage. And now my reading is fresh, as if this specimen I'd thought I KNEW, is something else, and something fine & fun & different in some subtle ways. What vanity we as perfessers & scallers can slip into but can avoid simply my returning to the original reason for all the hullabaloo.

Don—I forgot to say that my rereading of *FTA* is of a new, virgin copy, not one of the three old copies I have that I've annotated heavily over the years. If I "reread" any of those old copies, I'd also be tempted to read my scribblings too, infecting & deflecting the freshness I desired. Now I feel like I must have felt as a boy just learning to read.

November 14, 2012
I'm increasingly conscious of Father Time and his scythe, and you have had a similar epiphany?? I've been damn lucky in many ways. So I looked at myself in the mirror and gave thanks (pre-Thanksgiving) and told the mirror "You Complete Idiot" and it answered, no, I was still INCOMPLETE.

Nora Joyce complained to a friend that she wasn't sleeping well. Jim was up late writing *Finegans Wake* and laughing to himself. That's something of what my last night was like (except no Nora was awaiting me and no *Finegans Wake* was awaiting you).

When for the first time ever I got a small refund check from Blue Cross-Blue Shield, I knew the Apocalypse was imminent. And that was underlined as I held a classroom door open for some hurrying students and another one of them did the same for me (Whitman's avatar) in smiling courtesy.

BRAD McDUFFIE

From New York to North Dakota At First Light

For Mr. Lewis

With layovers in Philadelphia, Minnesota and Denver
there are no easy trails to the western edge,
and by the last flight, out of Dickinson, the plane
is rasping Dakota's horizons like midnight's farrier.

Then we drive on Interstate 2 east with *The Tennessee Fire,*
Mi Sei Apparso Come Un Fantasma, and *At Dawn*—
records I found at Bull Moose in New Hampshire—
and we're listening to the reverb of Jim James's murder

ballad of the morning when we stop west of Stanley,
awed by the floodplains, the cold, and the sign
with a death toll—of ghosts beyond the Enchanted Highway.

The flatlands allow you to almost believe there is no distance
into which you cannot see. You look out beyond your destination,
to Grand Forks, and see at last the place beyond the rise
where you are going.

LINDA PATTERSON MILLER

On the Road to Kilimanjaro: Bob Lewis as I Remember Him

Bob Lewis was the embodiment of Hemingway's theory of omission. What the writer left out, Hemingway would say, was more important than what he left in. But the writer had to know what he was leaving out, and then the reader would feel it more than understand it. Throughout the thirty years of my friendship with Bob, and even now as I write, I never knew for sure what he was leaving out, but I always felt it.

I remember sitting next to Bob as we rode a small airplane to arrive in Nantucket for one of our Hemingway Foundation Board meetings (I believe this was when the Foundation had first merged with the Hemingway Society and Bob had first assumed the presidency of the Foundation). I can still see Bob's face in dark silhouette against the window as the plane skimmed the American landscape. I began to see and feel the layers of our lives and recalled Hemingway's remark that it was while riding in a plane and watching the checkerboard landscape below that he first understood Cubism. As the landscape shimmered outside our shared plane window, I began to realize that I really didn't know much about Bob despite our times together at Hemingway conferences. The inherent intimacy of seats on a plane prompted me to ask Bob about himself: where was he born; where did he grow up? I was surprised when he said he was born and grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania along the Monongahela River. I had always imagined that, in his safari jacket and outdoor hat, he had arrived full-blown from the American West. Indeed, Bob was the dead ringer for the young Mark Twain, and he carried himself with the same ironic and laconic stance in the face of life's complications.

It was at that meeting in Nantucket that Bob and the newly established Hemingway Foundation Board members began to discuss Hemingway's unpublished manuscripts. There had been much talk about Hemingway's "African book," which many scholars had been referring to more generally as Hemingway's "African journal," and the Board members were reviewing that manuscript for the first time so as to make recommenda-

tions regarding its potential for posthumous publication. The roughly 850-page manuscript defied expectations. It had a sustained narrative with its structural and thematic unity, including a consistent voice (wry and understated) and carefully delineated characters. Bob hoped that the Hemingway Society/Foundation could find the way "to convey and present as carefully as possible in its entirety this last long book of the writer." Bob had the unerring vision to realize that the work needed to be published intact and entire without undue academic apparatus that might clutter up the text, and with his co-editor Bob Fleming, he held to this vision: "What a wonderful task it was," Bob wrote upon completion of the work, "living day by day with our master's words, guessing, researching, debating, and finally deciding, hoping we were right, hoping our conjoining with that man, that mind, that soul was neither abject nor peremptory, but sensitive and congenial. What responsibility, what joy came with that job."

Besides editing Hemingway's final and yet-untitled manuscript entire, Bob took on the awesome task of giving the book—most often referred to generically as "Hemingway's African Book"—a title. I remember that Bob agonized for weeks over that title until it came to him: *Under Kilimanjaro*. How perfect, and how reflective of Bob himself. Although Hemingway, by all appearances, had not finished the manuscript prior to his death, Bob argued convincingly that the manuscript did not seem "incomplete or flawed." Instead, with the book ending "as it began, in media res, omitting the anticlimax of the two nearly fatal airplane crashes, its major conflicts are resolved, its themes fully explored." And yet, probably because of its seeming open-endedness and the fact that the student of Hemingway is aware of the complicated ending to his life, the book carries with it an underlying sense of impending doom and loss.

Bob's personal attunement to Hemingway's texts began early on while he was doing his graduate work in Illinois during the 1960s and continued to grow throughout his productive career. He was one of the first Hemingway scholars to recognize the layered nuances of Hemingway's art. As more and more women began to read and talk about Hemingway with enthusiasm, Bob once confessed that he thought the new interest passed by his *Hemingway on Love* (1973) and other earlier work. And so he mailed me a copy of *Hemingway on Love*. I remember thinking as I first read it that although Bob had referred to Brett Ashley as a "bitch" (albeit "with class and a kind of barren fertility goddess") and to Catherine Barkley as "a hard-to-believe dream girl," views that many of the new-wave scholars had begun to challenge, this book truly did anticipate the recognition of Hemingway's profound understanding of the love between men and women and in the "brotherhood of man." To bring back Bob's prescience, we are reprinting the culminating chapter, "Black Christ," from Bob's book.

In looking through my copy of *Hemingway on Love* that Bob had mailed to me, I found tucked inside a letter from Bob dated July 22, 1987. "Dear Linda: Here is *Hemingway on Love*, the Haskell House reprint [of Bob's 1963 dissertation] with some corrections noted, not Jim Hinkle's copy that I mentioned. On second thought, I want to keep his copy, because it was a gift. The reprint should be wrapped in plain brown paper. That lime green cover is bilious and one change from the original that should be condemned." Later Bob told me that he had given me his only remaining copy.

I met Bob Lewis in 1983 at the opening session of a Hemingway conference near Boston. He carried his rugged good looks with an air of insouciance and seemed the epitome of a Hemingway scholar (most of them, at the time, being men). He asked me about my scholarship and seemed genuinely interested. "I'd love for you to send me something for publication in the *North Dakota Quarterly*," he said. Fresh out of graduate school, I tried to act nonchalant but could not disguise my delight at being welcomed so readily into the world of Hemingway scholarship. Later I realized that one of Bob's unique gifts was his sensitivity to young, untested scholars, whose work he would seek out for publication. From his first day at the helm of *NDQ* until his death, he courted and supported some of the freshest and the best new scholarship and creative writing, all of which came to define the *Quarterly*'s distinguished reputation for excellence under Bob's leadership.

Bob's commitment to new scholars continues even after his death as we are pleased to publish in this tribute issue the work of an emerging young scholar, Samantha Kelly. When Bob heard about Samantha's work on Hemingway and Cézanne, which Samantha presented at the 2012 Hemingway conference in Michigan, he embraced its originality and wanted her essay for *NDQ*. So for Bob, and for Samantha (and all those others that Bob has launched over the years, including myself), here is another original piece that will find its place in the pantheon of the best of twenty-first century scholarship.

While Bob was unabashed in corralling new scholarship, he was subdued in ladling out praise. Perhaps he embraced Hemingway's dictum that praise to the face was a disgrace, or that adjectives are deadly—the "scrollwork" that was best excised. Bob invariably responded to my submissions with a modest "thank you for your essay." No adjectives, no glowing expletives, like, "wow," or, "this is marvelous." One time I expressed to our mutual friend Donald Junkins my disappointment that Bob had not been more effusive. Donald replied laconically and knowingly, "That's all you're going to get." And Donald was right. We never got all of Bob. He had a reservoir of feeling that probably no one ever fully tapped, perhaps even Bob himself.

Yet, I came to learn that his emotions could erupt in unexpected ways, through both humor and grief. Bob's puckish streak often showed first in his eyes. He could look at you dead on—it could be a bit chilling actually—until you saw a glint in his gaze; and, without flinching, he might suddenly break into a vaudevillian dance, his body upright and his legs and feet tapping out a show tune. All the while he would sing the entire ditty flawlessly, his gaze sustained and his eyes sparkling, with a herky-jerky motion of his body and a sing-song lilt of his tune. Whenever and however unexpectedly Bob would begin to sing and dance to his own inner gauge, it was mesmerizing.

One of the most revealing moments occurred at the gravesite of our friend and fellow scholar Robin Gadjusek. There, Bob unexpectedly gave voice to the sorrow of all who were there standing silently around the rough mound of dirt topped off with a crude wooden cross and a bunch of wild flowers (fitting tributes to Robin's flamboyant and transcendent creativity). The California sky stretched long and thin as, suddenly, Bob began to sob openly. Later, at Robin's memorial service, Bob would state that he had often told Robin that he, Bob, sat on Robin's shoulder as his "Black Angel."

Thinking back yet again on that trip with Bob to Nantucket, I can still see us once we had arrived at our meeting in a Nantucket lodge. We all sat cross-legged on the floor with the many pages of Hemingway's African book in various states of disarray before us. As the afternoon light slanted through the sliding glass doors that fronted the ocean, it seemed to circle and contain us. I could see in Bob's face how profoundly moved he was by Hemingway's work, which spoke to his soul. Now, whenever I read Hemingway's "Snows of Kilimanjaro," I think of Bob. How can I not? As Harry the dying writer in the story is transported by a small cropper plane out from under Kilimanjaro to the top of Kilimanjaro and beyond, he lives in the moment and transcends time.

> Then they began to climb and they were going to the East it seemed, and then it darkened and they were in a storm, the rain so thick it seemed like flying through a waterfall, and then they were out and Compie turned his head and grinned and pointed and there, ahead, all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going.

KENNETH ROSEN

Bob Lewis and Me

Bob and I first met in the very early 1970s at a small Hemingway conference up in Oregon and I fondly remember many pleasant times together where Hemingway people tended to gather over the next forty-plus years, but these three moments in time that I intend to share with you here are of a somewhat different ilk.

In 1975-76 Bob was living on an island in the middle of the Nile River in Cairo, Egypt. He was on his second Fulbright-Hays lectureship, this one at Ain-Shams University; I was on my first at University of Thessaloniki in northernmost Greece and Bob had planned a visit to us for about a week during the midwinter break. He and his wife Leila and their two daughters, Lisa and Nina, arrived at our apartment in Thessaloniki as Bob had carefully arranged. We spent a few days walking through every neighborhood of Greece's second largest city; at breakfast on the third day Bob said, "OK, when do we get to see this island of yours, Thasos, that you've talked about so much?" Within the hour we were driving east in our two cars on the coast road that eventually ended at the Turkish border; we went only as far as the small Greek port of Kavalla where we caught a ferry for the hour and a half crossing to Thasos. It was the last week in December, very cold but very clear. There was only one hotel open at that off-season period and we got the last rooms available and we could stay until the hotel closed on January 1. The owner explained that most of the other guests were there to celebrate the very recent end to the relatively brutal rule of the Colonels in Greece. That night we went down to dinner with the dozen or so others in the hotel and we joined them in throwing white and blue dinner plates, carefully stacked on each of our tables by the owner, onto the tiled dance floor. The noise of their shattering was added to the music of a three piece group and the spirited dancing, mostly in a circle, that went on with few interruptions until closing time. Bob drank his share of the retsina and ouzo the owner and his wife provided and he danced almost continuously until the music ended. I can't

remember ever having seen him any happier than that night in Thasos. The collapse of the flimsy black-metal bannister as we pulled ourselves up to our rooms, singing "I'll build a stairway to paradise, with a new step every day," was merely anticlimax to it all.

About a decade later Bob called to ask if I'd be interested in joining a canoe trip he was organizing for the Missouri River. It would be for one week, with no place to take-out along the way. Two of his friends, Peter Nabokov and Page Stegner, had already agreed to go. Page's eighteen year old son was a surprise addition on the sunny day we put-in. In his own quiet way Bob had organized and taken full responsibility for every detail of the trip, including buying, packing, and distributing the water-proofed food bags to each canoe. Bob would do all the cooking, I would be the bottle-washer and clean-up person. At the end of the first day's paddle we each had our say about where to setup camp for that night, but Bob's suggestion was clearly both the most practical and the most aesthetically pleasing. On the morning of our second day Bob leaned into my tent before full daylight and informed me that during the night Page's son had eaten the entire supply of dry cereals for the trip. My initial response was one of outrage, but I kept it to myself. At breakfast I watched Bob handle what could be an awkward if not an explosive situation, given the personnel involved and our total inability to remedy the food loss. He spoke as he cooked the meal; his tone wasn't exactly casual but neither was it recriminatory or obviously angry. "You should all know that we'll be without the dry cereals I planned for the trip. I thought that I had put them in the waterproof bag with the rest of the breakfast things, but I must have misplaced them or simply forgotten them as we loaded the canoes yesterday at the put-in. Sorry about that." The rest of our trip was delightfully pleasant and almost tension-free.

My wife and I and our two sons, now older teenagers, were spending a year in Cambridge, England, on a sabbatical when Bob wrote suggesting a walking trip through parts of Wales and then most of Ireland. After five or six days of some spectacular hiking in the hills and rugged valleys of Wales we were both ready for the comparatively tamer topography of Ireland. The next ten days allowed me to see a side of Bob I'd only had glimpses of before. We began in the East in Dublin and made our leisurely way to Connemara in the West. Bob's knowledge about and enthusiasm for the various haunts of James Joyce's Dublin—particularly Trinity College and the pubs nearby—was truly eye-opening. As we moved westward the weather remained sunny and cool and Bob waxed eloquent about the variety of birds he could identify (he had brought no bird books with him) and the constantly changing flora he found so intriguing: no pedantic

discourses, just erudite and interesting stuff. By the time we got close to the west coast, I felt like I had been well schooled in the natural world of Ireland. Two nuns in full habit stopped their very old 2 CV to offer us a ride even though we hadn't been hitching and I listened to Bob, scrunched beside me in the tiny backseat, discuss the recent changes in Ireland's Catholic liturgy with the two women in front. A wonderful trip to remember!

Taos, New Mexico, 2014



A meeting of the Nick Adams Society in the St. Botolph Club, Boston, in 2007. Back row, left to right: Linda Patterson Miller, Bob Lewis, H. R. Stoneback, Don Junkins, Lisa Lewis, Allen Josephs, Richard Davison, Nina Lewis, Joanna Hildebrand Craig, Goretti Vianney-Benca. Front row, left to right: William Boyle, Matthew Nickel, Brad McDuffie, and Jamie Stamant.

RICHARD A. DAVISON

Memories of Bob Lewis*

Let me give you a sampling of the many distinctive aspects of Bob Lewis that made him so special:

His ramrod-tall graceful foxtrot across the Lion's Inn Hotel's patio of mountain grass to the tune of an Austrian oom-pa-pa band at the Hemingway Society Conference in Schruns, after his speech in carefully chosen German, delivered with a quiet dignity—a dignity that forestalled further shenanigans from the stocky and obstreperous leder-hosened band members who had slapped their leather-bottomed hot pants and poured a bucket of ice down the Program Director's shorts before up-ending him in a barrel. Bob bemusedly, quietly stared them down. No way would they up-end this President.

His quiet surveillance of, and then his hands-on help in, Donald Junkins' house-side vegetable garden in Deerfield, MA.

His cheerful and witty companionship as room-mate at the Parker House in Boston during yet another Hemingway Conference confab at the JFK Library.

His no-nonsense rebuttal of another former Hemingway Society President during a panel of presidents in Stresa, Italy.

His singing one evening at Stoney and Sparrow Stoneback's, when, for over an hour, he more than held his own, matching song for song, alternating old folk and pop songs with the other master singers in Highland, NY.

His swapping of dozens of Swedish/Polish jokes with the garrulous fellow former President James Nagel, spotting him laugh for laugh.

The tear in his eye when Donald and Kaimei interviewed him about his Korean war memories at the Key West waterside.

His tears at Robin Gajdusek's grave site in Bolinas, CA.

BUT—I was asked to talk about the origin of the Nick Adams Society that led to Bob's publication of *The Nick Adams Review*.

Some of us were distressed by the counterproductive directions of the Hemingway Society and its sponsored journal *The Hemingway Review* that had moved to more theory and thesis-driven articles in the name of "diversity." Too many *Hemingway Review* articles had become more about their authors and their hobbyhorses than about Hemingway and his art. Diversity often trumped quality. We moved to regain the society's original spirit and focus by forming a core society, named after the great character at the core of Hemingway's short stories. Nick Adams Society members supplied Bob with articles focusing on Hemingway's life and work that brought news about his art. The ensuing eight special issues of Bob's *North Dakota Quarterly* consistently contained the best scholarship, research, and writing on Hemingway. For the next 15 years Editor Bob prompted and demanded the best stuff always.

He drew from and nurtured and edited from the top of the line, beginning with the first *Nick Adams Review* (*NDQ* Summer 1996): Robin Gajdusek, H. R. Stoneback, Allen Josephs, William Braasch Watson, and Donald Junkins, followed in later issues by Erik Nakjavani, Linda Patterson Miller, and Michael Reynolds. Joining the ranks came the likes of Nobel-Prize winner Derek Walcott; Hemingway's nephew John Sanford; Hemingway's secretary, later daughter-in-law, author Valerie Hemingway; and editor and author Kaimei Zheng. He nurtured, edited, and published them all.

Nobody appreciated his nurturing and editing more than I. His quietly un-ostentatious acceptance of my article "Hemingway and Edgar Rice Burroughs" (to which he added a reproduction of a colored poster of a swinging, loin-clothed Tarzan sporting the head of Hemingway) meant more to me than any other acceptance during my 60 plus years of writing. Another piece he accepted reveals specifics of his catalystic encouragement. When at a 1996 Nick Adams Conference in Bimini (we also had them in NYC, Yonkers, Highland, the Jersey Shore, Stresa, Lake Placid, and Platzburg, NY), I discussed that picture of Hemingway kicking a can in Ketchum. I described the aging Hemingway as "utterly alone on that empty road." Bob's laconic response: "How could he have been alone?" In my romantically impressionistic description I had over-looked the obvious fact that a photographer had to have been there. Bob set me on the hunt for the very person who could shed light on the time, setting, and circumstance of that drop-kick captured for posterity. Friend and editor Bob set in motion a series of coincidences that occurred along the hunt, including actor Jason Robards (who, when talking about the 1959 television version of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, mentioned in passing that he had the original of a photograph of Hemingway kicking a can inscribed by his buddy, "the old snapshooter," John Bryson). John Bryson (who didn't realize that he lived around the corner from the Hemingways' post-Castro

NYC apartment) met me in his favorite restaurant, Nello's, coincidentally owned by a close friend of the owner of Hemingway's favorite hangout in Venice, Harry's Bar). Clementine Paddleford (journalist and cookbook author) initially brought Bryson to Ketchum to photograph Mary Hemingway for her interview and article "Cooking a la Hemingway." Bryson hit it off with the Hemingways, stayed on after Paddleford left, and took many more pictures of them. He gave Bob and me a copy of a previously unknown letter to him from Mary and Ernest, with Ernest declaring the photographs "damn good" and asking for "4 small ones of kicking the beer can." He also gave Bob permission to publish the photograph and the letter in *NDQ*. Throughout, Bob typically served as cheerleader, champion, editor, and publisher.

Bob's wit and whimsy—his love of camp—came in unexpected spots. The cartoon postcard enclosed in each issue of the *NDQ* encouraging new subscribers: Superman to Jimmy Olsen: "GEE JIMMY, YOU'D THINK MORE PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE 'NORTH DAKOTA QUARTERLY'. . . IT'S SUPER!"

His mock-horror at the atlas that had dropped North Dakota because "the format called for one less page than the publisher had available" and North Dakota was dropped as "one of the least populated states" and "not as well known as even Nevada or Wyoming that" at least "had Las Vegas and Yellowstone." But central to his scope and purpose were issues designed to "advance human awareness" that could begin with "the immediate and the local" but include "a consciousness and sentience for an all-encompassing hope and love for the distant, the generic, the biological vast wholeness of the known and the unknown."

He consistently called for and published essays on "books that mattered . . ." that "amount to a sea change in the lives of their readers."

He ended issues of *NDQ* with three words in capital letters: "EXPLORE . . . ENDURE . . . EVOLVE . . . "

Bob embodied a joyful calm and decency. He retained a soft-spoken certainty about all the things he knew were right.

He brought a quiet dignity to all he did.

I miss him. I savor all the memories.

*This is a printed version of the eulogy given at the memorial September 20, 2013.

DONALD JUNKINS

A Last Conversation with Bob Lewis

After Re-reading Hemingway's 20th Chapter of *Death in the Afternoon*

If I could have made this enough of a eulogy it would have had everything in it. Your house, Bob, in North Dakota on the edge of the Manvel prairie, its outside furnace and its underground heating pipes and your high windows originally facing the bend in the Turtle River, then later facing the prairie itself after the high waters of the Turtle ate at the house foundation; the dirt double lane to the tar road with your mailbox where you walked in all seasons or stopped on your way home from the office, the road flooding in early spring, even over the little bridge above the Turtle and over the few driveways in Manvel that became many on the drive into Grand Forks and your office in Merrifield Hall where you edited the *North Dakota Quarterly* for 31 years, even after you retired as chairman of the English Department, its books and odds and ends and percolating ideas for new quarterlies and letters to your friends and your own books on Hemingway that were always with you in your Manvel home and out on the prairie during your long literary life; it would have your days in the field in all weather, counting birds in their visitations and migrations; if this were enough of a eulogy it would describe the day we met in July 1980 at the dock in Boston harbor waiting for the ferry to take us to Thompson Island for the Hemingway conference where a small band of us sat under a tree and Allen suggested we form a Hemingway society, and the celebration a few days later in the Kennedy Library back on the mainland with Jacqueline and George Plimpton and Patrick and the ferry ride late that night back to the island with bottles of brandy from the party weighing down our summer jacket pockets; it would have our trips to Madrid and Lignano Sabbadioro north of Venice and Schruns when you were president of the Society, and years later in Key West when we met in Miami and drove with Richard and Kaimei, overnighting half way down the Keys, and last year in Petoskey with Nina and Lisa, your daughters whom you called your Iliad and Odyssey in the dedication to your Twayne *Farewell to Arms* book, and the Nick Adams meetings in New

Paltz at Stoney's when we broke into your room at three in the morning to wake you up but you weren't there, and on the river at Stoney's place in New Jersey where Allen needled Robin while he was reading his poems, and in Bimini when Gregory took us all wahoo fishing and Bickford whispered in your ear while you sat in the fishing chair after hooking a good one, "Listen to my voice only" then gave you all the wrong advice about how to land the wahoo; it would have all the letters you wrote us that dignified the e-mail medium, full pages in your impeccable Lewis tone, witty, ironic, loving, Dakota-esque; your moments afield, bird-counting; your dinners at Nina's—and the time your invited partner was to be the mayor's wife and you wrote, after a paragraph describing watching your last pro baseball game in Fargo when you sat with UND friends in prime seats along the third base line right behind the home team dugout and ate chili dogs with beer and gabbed and really enjoyed the game, and were now scared that in talking with the mayor's wife and wanting to be a hit but worried that you might pop up or, worse, strike out, ending the letter with, "I feel the season turning away from the sun" [9/20/04]; it would have all your friends in the Hemingway Society, and Robin's funeral in California when you and Bickford and Tod and Linda and Richard and I stayed in the redwoods in the neighboring town and you wrote a eulogy for Robin which began with a quote from another poet's words:

> "That time of year thou mayst in me behold
> When yellow leaves or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs, which shake against the cold,
> Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang. . . "

then began again, "Our Robin has migrated, but he leaves behind no 'Bare ruined choirs' and we choristers sing his praise and love," as we do you, Bob, whom we now praise here with your own words for Robin: "[Bob Lewis] was many persons. To certain others, a collective Goliath, he was the David who advanced in gentle aggression against narrow readings of literature and of Ernest Hemingway's writing in particular. With each of his many strong . . . [books] and essays he kept bringing us back to Hemingway's art and away from cheap or incidental divisions. . . . [Bob's] talent and energy and love of life were boundless. He left many lovely lessons in seeing, reading, writing, being" [7/10/03]; and you, Bob, wrote [7/4/03] "This morning I finished whipping Robin's Stresa paper into shape. . . . And as I read I wanted the paper to be worthy of Robin as well as *NDQ*, and it's damn good. But in a bittersweet way because it is as much about learning how to both live and die well in Hem's fiction."

No, it is not enough of a eulogy because the flood on the Dakota plains is always further than the eye can see, and the Red River will

always rise on its way north, and no words can match the feelings of those who love those who get the point of it all while they are here, not only with their minds but with the love that passeth all understanding, who delight in birds that sparkle in the rain and the sun while their lives are so brief and their eggs so fragile; and you Bob Lewis, calling yourself a Sleeping Poet when reminding us in your holiday card to "arise each morning and go about our business with smiles on our faces and songs on our lips," thanking us "in commemoration of a fine week in Florida." That was the week when you talked to Kaimei about the ending of the Korean War when you had been expecting the cease fire for a long frustrating time and wondering what it's like to be the last one to die.

Bob, later you write us by e-mail that we are on your mind, and you have begun writing daily haiku, three short lines of 17 syllables, and say, "But often when that happy duty was interrupted I lapsed into long silences between me and my world."

You end that letter with:

> And for you youngsters, don't forget Pablo Picasso's little story: "One starts to get young at the age of sixty, and then it is too late." [1/08]

How many of us here, Bob, know that you wrote your MA thesis at Columbia on Thoreau's humor in *Walden*? How many of us have read this Bob Lewis haiku?

> "That's knotweed," he said.
> "Not weed? Well, what's it good for?"
> "Well, knotheads maybe."

If this were enough of a eulogy it would have the cartoons you mailed us from *The New Yorker,* one titled YOUNG ROBERT FROST, and depicted a car approaching a divided road and a boy with a turned-around baseball cap grabbing the wheel from his bug-eyed mother at a crossroads, shouting inside the speaker's balloon, "LOOK MA! THE ROAD NOT TAKEN!!"

Another portrayed five plump, disinterested Chinese men standing still in a swimming pool up to their waists in water dotted with floating objects, looking past the others, the foremost with a bulge in the side of his mouth and holding one of the now visible objects in his hand. The bottom title reads: "The Dumpling Baths of Szechwan Province."

Bob, in June, 2005 you wrote me a "Happy Fodder's Day" e-mail in which you say

> . . . a few nights ago, maybe with this day in my sleeping mind, I dreamt of hearing a big hubbub at the door and pounding on it. When

> I reached the door, it had been broken open and I held the broken latch in my hand, and swung the door open and there were Lisa and Nina wrapped in white sheets, playing Halloween ghosts and shouting and laughing at old pops who they had tricked into being happy at their great happiness. I had dreamt of them off and on before, but they were always children and often in some perilous situation that I saved them from—like climbing a mountain or driving on ice floes in a river. Lisa was delighted with finally being grown up in my dreams. Me too, even though I'm going to have to get my door fixed. [June 23, 2005]

Dear Bob, this could never be enough of a eulogy and we've got to let you go, but there were a few things to be said. I'll close with two of your own thoughts. You wrote us,

> I drove home last night through a scary storm that hit by surprise. Through town was bad enough but in the open country visibility was sometimes zero, and I could only creep along, feeling the road. The last six miles I saw no other vehicles behind me or approaching me. The lane at home was crossed by finger drifts, and my driveway had a bed-sized drift blocking it. In FW [four-wheel] drive, I backed up and charged through the snow. In the morning, I half-dreaded what I'd find outside, but the storm had ended around midnight. I bundled up and put my snow shovel to work. The bed-sized drift was daunting, but once I cut it down, the rest was no great deal. It was like getting ready to play the best team in the league, going to the game half-resigned, and then at half-time leading and getting better by the minute—and then the euphoria of winning and polishing off the deck too and putting out more corn for the jays and squirrels.

Dear Bob, you sent us this valentine haiku, which we will never forget:

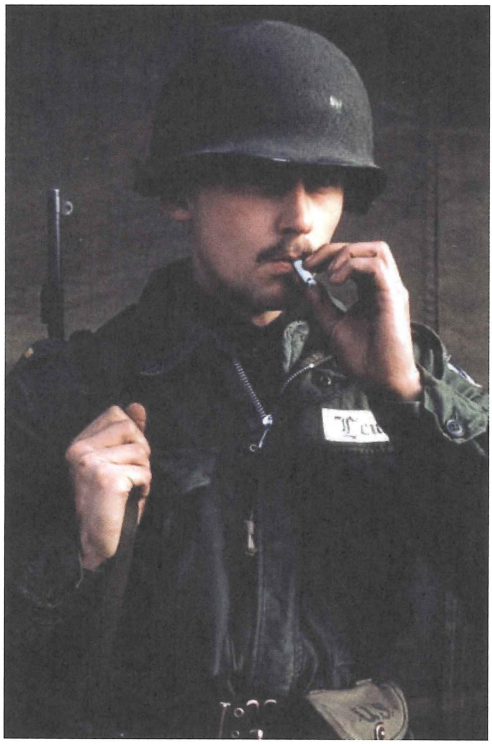
> Of course I love Don
> and Kaimei. This good story
> will outlast us all.

Deerfield, Sept. 13; Grand Forks, Sept. 20, 2013

KAIMEI ZHENG

Robert Lewis in Korea

The first time I met Bob Lewis was in Sun Valley, Idaho, in 1998 at a Hemingway conference. Don and I had lunch with him and something about Bob fascinated me. I didn't know then that part of it had something to do with Korea, a little peninsula jutting out and down from the north-eastern Chinese border, but later when I was writing a book whose American title translated into something like *Wars in American Soldiers' Eyes*, I found out that he had been an American officer in the Korean War.



In reality, the Korean War was a deadly encounter between China and the United States. Growing up in Communist China, I watched Chinese heroic movies about the Korean War in which all American soldiers were cartooned and demonized. We called them "American Devils." Yet, when I came to this country, and particularly after marrying an American, I found myself surrounded by American Devils, and Bob was one of them, as Don had told me. Beginning in 2002, I decided to write a book about these "devils" in Chinese.

When I later asked Bob during the Key West Hemingway conference if he would participate in such a thing, Bob's reply was quick, "That would be better than my having to write it down someday." Then he said, "I fought against your grandfather, you know."

I said "No, that was in my father's generation." In 1950 my father had been in the Chinese army, but he wasn't sent to Korea.

That was in June 2004 when Bob, Richard Davison, Don and I all landed at the Fort Lauderdale airport within an hour of each other and together drove to Key West for the conference. You can imagine the conversations in the car with Bob in it, full of good feelings and witty stories. The second day we were there, Allen Josephs rented a boat, and Bob Lewis, Richard Davison, Don, and I went fishing with him. The Mexico Gulf's water was bluer than the sky. Richard and I managed to get sea sick, but Bob steadfastly remained in his seat next to the fishing poles, and caught one Gulf yellowtail after another. (That evening the fish went onto the grill of the hotel kitchen, and five of us sat in the spacious dining hall as a pianist played romantic songs in the corner. We raised our glasses and joined our hands, toasting our friendship).



Fishing on the Gulf Stream, Key West, 2004. From left, Kaimei Zheng, Donald Junkins, Allen Joseph, Bob Lewis, and Richard Davison.

In the following five days, between conference events and listening to papers, Bob sat with Don and me in our hotel room, then later at the beach, and recalled his Korean War experience. The white beach of Key West on hot summer days seemed so far away from the frozen Korean

peninsula of 1953. As if musing in a seminar, Bob's recollections were full of "book worms" (in China, a humorous phrase that refers to literary references that required me to research and learn about).

Bob's grandfather had come to the United States from Wales, and his mother had emigrated from Ireland when she was sixteen. Bob's father became a railway engineer who later served in the Navy in WW I. During the recession of the thirties, his father had to constantly search for jobs to support the family's four children. Bob talked about his own love for singing and basketball since he was very young, and how he participated in church chorus and the school basketball team:

"When I was in college, one of my best friends on the basketball team was an excellent player named John. His family was poor, and John talked to a Marine recruiter who visited the campus. John thought that he could earn extra money by joining the Marines, a seemingly good deal right after WW II because you only were required to train a couple times a week.

"But then the Korean War broke out and all Marines were sent to Korea, including John. I went with him to the train station believing he would be OK because he was 'fast and fit.'"

I asked Bob why he himself joined the Army. Bob said, "During WW I and WW II, my father, my uncle, and my cousins all entered the armed forces because our family had a tradition of joining up during war time. So, while I was at the University of Pittsburgh when the Korean War began, I thought it would be better to join the ROTC than to be drafted, and I also could train to be an officer."

In the meantime, Bob received a brief letter from John, describing the frigid weather in Korea. From newspapers, Bob learned that General MacArthur had landed troops in Inchon behind enemy lines, forcing the North Korean troops to retreat steadily back north. Clearly the war would end before Christmas. Bob read the news every day believing that John would return safely.

When Bob said to me, "You must have read about the bloody battles that the Marines fought with the Chinese at the Chosin Reservoir," I nodded, knowing that the 1st Marine Division had been surrounded there by the Chinese army.

Bob said, "The newspapers said that the Marines eventually broke out with enormous casualties, and I thought about John."

Six months later, Bob received a letter from John's sister telling him that John didn't make it.

"I asked my ROTC officers," he said, "'I thought we were there for a police action. How come the Chinese got involved?' No one had any answers."

Bob himself had graduated in the summer of 1952 as an inactive Second Lieutenant, and now recalled, "At that time, the Korean War was really bloody and they urgently needed a re-supply of second Lieutenants." When he was ordered to leave for training, however, Bob was granted a few weeks leave and went canoeing on a lake in Michigan. When his orders came, he was sent to Virginia for three months' intensive training.

"I think I was ready," former Second Lieutenant Lewis said to me. "As new cadets we were given four choices: the Philippines, Alaska, European Headquarters, and the Far East. Of course everyone wanted to go to Europe. I didn't choose Japan or Korea, but when the results came, I was sent to Korea."

Bob was flown to Tokyo, then by troopship to Fushan in Korea, then by train north to Seoul where a truck took him further north of the 38th parallel to the infamous "Iron Triangle" and the Third Division's defense line.

This was June 1953, a month before the ceasefire agreement was signed. Peace negotiations had been dragging on for two years. Both sides had dug into trenches and underground tunnels and bunkers. "By the time I was there, the North Korean army itself was virtually not there and our main enemy was the Chinese, but you rarely saw the Chinese even when you were at the front. On a patrol you might see them, but you would not necessarily fire at them if you saw them. It was also somewhat of a game, and also true for the Chinese. There were good people on both sides dying."

At headquarters, Bob was assigned to command a truck platoon in the Third Division.

"I was close to the 38th parallel, north of Seoul. The 3rd Infantry was in the middle of the peninsula in a mountainous landscape. The Chinese had no airplanes except up on the border where they kept them north of the Yalu River.

"By this time there were only occasional artillery exchanges between the Chinese and us. They were conservative in their use of ammo and tended not to fire without specific targets. The Americans had pre-arranged targets and spent their money on ammunition. The Chinese were different; they preserved ammunition. General Ridgeway said, 'Let's not lose American lives when we can use more artillery and ammunition.' We used more American tonnage of firepower in the Korean War than in World War II."

When Bob received his first orders, it was a cloudy dark night and he recalled that he was simply told, "When you arrive, you'll get your final orders."

"We were not allowed to carry a map in case we got captured, and there were no stars overhead." So Second Lieutenant Lewis formed his 20 trucks and started out. No one was allowed to use lights and the platoon proceeded slowly in the dark. Hours later when they arrived at their desig-

nated position, he was ordered to transfer the Second Division replacement soldiers to the front.

"It seemed really chaotic but everything was done quietly and orderly, and no one talked. If the Chinese knew that we were changing troops, we would have been in trouble. The scene was like Goya's painting, 'The Disasters of War.' In the dark, I watched these soldiers quietly walking toward the front, some of them with A-frames on their backs, carrying supplies, looking both small in the night and very big at the same time as they disappeared into the darkness. I remember thinking that they seemed very courageous."

Bob then ordered his 20 truck drivers to park their empty trucks sparsely along the roadside so that one enemy bomb wouldn't wipe out the entire convoy, and he remained in the first truck.

All of a sudden, waves of artillery were landing in the distance, and then they could hear rifle shots. (Actually, the Chinese had chosen a segment of the defense line being covered by South Korean troops.) Bob said, "People now talk about the fog of war; McNamara himself recently used this phrase to describe his Vietnam War, but I would call it the fog of the battlefield. It's much more intense, thick and mysterious. In the dark, I had no map, I couldn't see the stars overhead, and I didn't know my or the Chinese position, so I patiently sat and waited for orders.

"Finally around 4:00 A.M., the gunshots were lessening, and I still hadn't received orders, so I told my head driver to lead the whole convoy of empty trucks back to the barracks. I heard the truck behind me starting, but when we arrived back at our barracks and I stepped out of my truck, I was shocked to see that only one truck behind me had returned. I had lost the other 18 trucks!

"This had been my first mission. I didn't know what to do or where to look for the trucks. First light was now coming from the horizon and when I saw Sergeant Green, who was in charge of vehicle maintenance, I went over and told him the situation. The sergeant calmly said, 'Go get some sleep.' I thought about facing a court martial the next day, but by the time I woke up that afternoon, the trucks had all returned."

While writing *Wars in American Soldiers' Eyes*, I checked several Chinese accounts of that last battle in the Korean War; it took place on July 13th, 1953. The Chinese chose this cloudy night when they initiated their surprise offensive attacks on the South Korean army's section of the defense line in order to gain bargaining chips at the negotiation table. When an American officer had seen Bob's trucks idle on the roadside, he summoned them to carry ammunition closer to the South Korean front. No one had asked permission from the second-lieutenant sitting in the first truck. Bob said, "When I talked to Sergeant Green back at our home base, he was straight with me, explaining that these drivers had been in

Korea for months and they knew the road back." From that time forward, Bob, without checking with anyone, rode in the last truck of his convoys. Second Lieutenant Lewis had been christened during a strategic moment at the end of the war.

In Key West, on the morning after our first interview, Bob and Don and I sat at a table on the beach. Though it had rained the night before, the sun quickly dried the drops of water spotting the table. Bob had prepared for our continuing conversation. There seemed to be little emotion on his slender face, and his eyes were fixated on the table, his long eyebrows locked together.

Almost non-stop, he poured out his memories: "The United Nations was now experiencing its first big test. The Korean War was an international cooperative effort to fight against the Communists, and there were also troops from Greece, Ethiopia, Netherlands, and Belgium. We said that we were fighting for the freedom of the Korean people. The truth is that the top politician we supported in Korea, Syngman Rhee, was a dictator, and not until Rhee stepped down would South Korea gradually become a democratic country.

"The worst thing was that we didn't really know who the occasional infiltrators were, or where they were. One night I was checking guard positions in our barracks. Our tent was ten or fifteen feet from a stream bed. A guard had yelled at me in the dark from his position, and I could tell that he was scared. He was new and very young. I touched his shoulder and tried to calm him down. Later that night, because the guard was new, I couldn't decide whether I should sleep on my cot or on the floor with my blanket. I finally slept on the floor but was wakened by a whole clip of gunfire at midnight. The sergeant on duty ran in and told me that several North Korean infiltrators had come down the stream bed from the other side of the river to steal our stuff. The new guard opened fire and killed two but the rest escaped.

"This is an illustration of the problem: who was the enemy? Frequently, you couldn't be sure. One day I was in command and a member of the Counter Intelligence Corps came by. You don't even know who they are because they wore civilian clothes. This guy wanted to know about an American infiltrator in our unit. He said, 'Have you seen so and so?' This was during the Communist Red scare—they were looking for Communist sympathizers. We were being introduced to the ambivalence of loyalty. Often Americans in our own outfit were dangerous. Very often someone in an American unit would 'snap' and fire on our own troops.

"At the same time, Chinese intelligence was pretty good. For example, we had just exchanged troop positions, and they immediately began their propaganda through their loud speakers, such as, 'Lieutenant so and so,

welcome to the front. This war is not your war and you should go home.' The Chinese knew our arriving officers' names.

"The cease fire negotiations were dragging on, and every day more soldiers died. We had expected the cease fire for a long frustrating time, and as John Kerry said in his talk in Washington when he was a returning Vietnam vet, 'What would it be like to be the last man to die?' Then the Chinese began massing for a last drive. They had agreed to a cease-fire but were getting ready to come against us again.

"On the actual day that the cease fire treaty was finally signed, I was sent to division headquarters in the rear to help the rear echelon pull back in case of a Chinese attack. Actually, we did have records and supplies that needed saving, but I was not happy in the middle of nowhere. There was a real mix of characters, some devil-may-care, others really scared.

"Then there was an artillery alert, and half of our men dove into trenches while half continued to play cards where they were. The cease-fire itself was designed to take effect exactly 12 hours after the signing, and as you probably know, the treaty specified how much ammunition each side could keep. The problem became for each side, what to do with the rest of the ammo? The negotiators were not in the trenches, watching soldiers die.

"It seemed like a fixed moment in time. I was sitting on my bunk waiting near my ten trucks. A few hours before the ceasefire moment, both sides began to seriously unload their remaining ammunition to the other side: artillery, tank missiles, everything that could explode. It became the most heated moment in the war. Down the road a dozen guys got hit in our tank platoon.

"The ceasefire had been set for ten P.M., and everybody was awake, listening and waiting. Finally, it was dead quiet. Finally."

Bob choked up for a moment. He took off his glasses, rubbing his eyes with his handkerchief. I reached out and put my hand on his shoulder.

While Bob had been sitting in his bunker during the last day of the war, listening to the pounding artillery, a young Chinese soldier was running toward the front line, carrying a written note in his pocket. (The Chinese military writer, Wang Shu Zeng, describes this scene):

> The young soldier is running along the trenches, jumping from one shell hole to another, trying to avoid the bombs and bullets. He wonders why the firing is so unusually heavy on this day. He has delivered orders on this route many times and has run past countless bodies. He didn't want to die today any more than any other day. He manages to push himself back up from the ground several times. He touches the note in his chest pocket; it is still there. He wants only to deliver this note. Just as he approaches the front lines, he is hit.

> When he wakes up, he is instantly aware that one foot has been blown off. Lying there for a moment, he begins to crawl towards the front line, holding his blown-off foot with his shoe still on it. 'The doctors will put it back for me,' he thinks.
>
> By the time this young Chinese soldier reaches the Chinese front positions, he sees the last gleam of the crimson red sunset. Before he loses consciousness, he is able to give the note to an officer. It reads: "Order: ceasefire begins at 22 hours today. Not one bullet or shell will be fired from that moment."
>
> The officer looks at his watch; it reads "20 hours," two hours before the ceasefire. He holds the young soldier in his arms and yells, "You three, come over here! Carry this soldier to the aid station and don't let him die! Take his shoe and foot. . . ." (804)

Who will be the last one to die?

Back in Key West, the light clouds over the beach disappeared and the ocean sparkled again. More and more women in bikinis appeared on the beach among the men and kids. We moved our seats under the huge beach umbrella, out of the direct July sun, and Bob continued to talk:

"The war was over, and we were waiting for our replacements. No more battles, but thievery was everywhere. One day, an officer on duty had just come back from checking the guards, and he took off his uniform to rest. Suddenly, we heard him shouting. Everyone jumped up and loaded their guns. He was wearing just a T-shirt, yelling 'someone stole my uniform when I dozed off for five minutes!'

"On another night I was walking guard posts and came upon a vacant post. It was right in the heart of the company area and I went to the guard tent. There he was in his cot. I said, "Jones? Why aren't you on post? You'd better be out there.' Jones says, 'No, I don't want to.' He wasn't claiming sickness and I'm thinking of my options. I go back to the sergeant of the guard who was an obese black guy who had two cartridge belts hitched together to go around his waist, a wonderful, gentle guy. I said, 'Sergeant, we've got a problem. Jones won't walk his post.'

"In the guard tent, there's a dim light. Jones is still awake and we go up to him. The sergeant is no caricature. I expect him to yell at Jones; his sheer size will shake Jones up but he sits down next to Jones and talks quietly and persuasively to him. Jones still won't budge. I tell the sergeant to get somebody else on the post, and say, 'We'll report to the company commander in the morning.'

"Several days later, Jones was court-martialed, and I was the witness in the case. This time Jones stood upright. I was ambivalent about the whole thing. Jones in an ultimate sense had the right to say 'no,' I guess, but I was more sympathetic to the army's point of view. I felt that Jones

was more like Bartleby the scrivener in Melville's short story, with his passive resistance and his, 'I prefer not.' Jones must have thought, 'What can they do to me?'

"I don't know what the ultimate punishment became for Jones. If they sent him back to America, he would have been happy. If this had happened in the States, Jones would have been sent on the next ship to Korea as a punishment, but Jones was already there. I often thought about the black sergeant and the fact that he was so humane and decent.

"The expected tour of duty was one year. After the cease fire, I'm still there in Korea for another few months. It was all training, but a mundane life you're grateful for.

"Then came the announcement: 'All National Guard and Reserve Officers who want to get out can request it.' I myself wanted to get into grad school in time for second semester. Everyone except one regimental commander requested to get out. He himself announced, 'All promotions are cancelled for those who requested separation.' We were gradually rotated and new units were brought in. During the several months I spent waiting for my 'turtle' (the term used by troops waiting for incoming replacements), my military life in Korea continued.

"Korea is a mountainous country and the road conditions at that time were bad, plus the fact that mines were everywhere. We had more accidents now than we had dangerous incidents with the enemy, even when we had been at the front. I was now both in charge of vehicles and the safety officer, so I often wrote up the accident reports. However, one accident report had to be written by someone else.

"In the fall I was on convoy to Pusan to build up our fuel supply for our tent stoves, and we would go at twilight and return before dawn in the dark. We had been issued warmer wool winter uniforms. One afternoon, my truck platoon was returning from Pusan, and this time, I was sitting in the last truck of the convoy. My driver was a black man from South Carolina, and we called him a 'redneck.' It would be a mistake to underestimate this former farmer; he could speak some Korean and I learned many words from him. He previously had driven race cars and was the best driver in my platoon, so I always rode with him.

"Because it was late in the fall, the sun went down quickly, and on this one day there were still miles to go. The air got chilly and I grabbed a blanket to wrap myself in, periodically dozing. In the dark, my skilled but tired driver was getting hazy, and as he was blinking to stay awake, our vehicle veered off the road and hit a tree. He had held the wheel tightly and got away without much of a scratch but I was thrown from the jeep and lost consciousness.

"When I woke up, the scene was like Rembrandt's painting 'The Night Watch,' and in the dark, a Korean man about 40 years old looked at

me anxiously as he held a lamp in my face. Although I had no idea who he was, a sense of security came over me and I blacked out.

"I woke up briefly inside an ambulance and then blacked out again. When I woke up briefly in a hospital, doctors and nurses were talking: 'check his eyes; see whether he has any broken bones. . .'

"I said, 'I'm OK. . . ' and they said almost together, 'He's awake! He's awake!' Then I blacked out again. Everything seemed absurd and beautiful at the same time."

Bob had suffered injuries to his head and to one of his eyes, and he was kept in the hospital for more than ten days.

On the beach in Key West, Bob now recounted some humorous things he experienced in that hospital. An Italian-American nurse was often trailed through the wards by an Ethiopian soldier about 7 feet tall. Because it was a United Nations war, there were Ethiopian troops around. Bob described them as, "almost like magic. They often turned up on the battlefield and scared the shit out of the Chinese soldiers who had never seen black people before, particularly at night. The Chinese thought they were seeing ghosts.

"This Ethiopian soldier had a big bump on his head and he couldn't speak a word of English; however, because Ethiopia had twice become an Italian colony, in 1895 and 1935, he could speak some Italian. In the hospital, the Italian-American nurse became his only channel of communication so he followed behind her everywhere she went. They both spoke some Italian together. She was his only contact with this other world. It was a wonderful contrast, this five-foot tall nurse with a seven-foot man wrapped in a sheet, following her like a devoted puppy. She had no sense of humor but to me it was a wonderful scene.

"There were startling contrasts. I saw one healthy looking soldier lingering around the hospital and asked a nurse why he was there. She told me, 'he's here for a circumcision.' Next to me lay a breathless person with many connecting tubes, and I was told that he had massive bleeding in his stomach. He disappeared in two days.

"A Dutch nurse often came over to my bed. We couldn't really communicate but somehow we understood each other perfectly. One day, I woke up with a headache. She got me an aspirin and undressed the wound on my head. As she began to bathe my wound, I couldn't feel any pain. Suddenly, I heard someone yelling 'don't do that! You will leave a scar on his forehead!' I opened my eyes only to see the Italian-American nurse. The Dutch nurse quickly dressed my wound and left.

"From that moment, I hated that Italian nurse. I had read Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*, and later I believed that I had fallen in love with the Dutch nurse, and it was my first love. She never came back

and I don't even know her name. The magic is that her kindness with her hands didn't leave any scar on my head.

"When the TV show MASH began, I was very angry. How could anyone make fun of the Korean War—so many people died every day. Later I understood that they used the irony in the script to express their views against the Vietnam War.

"When the war was over I came home to Hemingway's 'Soldier's Home,' but I didn't come home to that family in his story. Most families didn't know how to ask questions.

"When our troopship arrived at San Francisco, one of our really emotional moments after being on the gray sea for so long, was passing under the Golden Gate Bridge, totally silent, and eerie.

"When Krebs [in 'Soldier's Home'] got home, there was no band to greet him and it was like that for us. We had done our job and survived and were home. A couple hundred of us got on a troop train with Pullman cars waiting for us. There were no civilians, no one asked us any questions. The train went all the way to Maryland. I felt comfortable with these guys. We played cards and sang to pass the time in our little capsule. The train stopped in Pittsburgh, my home. One guy had a car and I surprised my family. My father said, 'You should not have surprised your mother like that.'

"My mother's family was lace-curtain Irish with backbones of iron. The men were more emotional than the women but you didn't publicly display your emotions.

"When I left the United States, I had a girlfriend. On returning home, our college choir group got together, and when we were alone she said to me: 'Before you went to Korea I was afraid of you, but now it's OK.' I thought, 'Oh oh, I've lost my advantage,' but also I never wanted her to be afraid of me and I wondered what the connection was. It was like the guard duty incident when the sergeant was counseling that guy—it was the human thing to do as an officer of the guard. Now I tried to reduce my girlfriend's fear that she said was no longer there.

"After I later married a Filipino woman, we stopped in Pittsburgh where my mother had a relatives party. Afterwards, I embraced my father, who, in effect was disowning me, and we both cried. About eight years later, we made up.

"Having been in Japan and Korea with Asians, I obviously didn't have a race problem, but my father was a racist. I wonder how else my history was altered by my time in Korea. I still feel that it affected me for the better.

"I had had responsibilities before, but not like in Korea. Even after the truce, I was still at the front, never knowing when something was going to crack.

"If you behave in a better way, you have learned something. I became both a little harder and a little softer. If you have too much of it, it can harden you, like Audie Murphy [the American Medal of Honor winner and most decorated soldier of WW II] who was more than hardened. He was broken. It does different things to different people but your character doesn't change for the worse unless you have too much of it. But even a little bit of war can give you self-confidence both physically and mentally.

"I had decided in Korea that I wanted to go to grad school. I transferred to Columbia and later I took a teaching job at the University of Nebraska where Karl Shapiro was editing *Prairie Schooner*. I taught there for three years."

In Key West, the sun had come out, and kids began to play on the beach, pressing little footprints into the sand. That evening, we all boarded a cruise boat and watched the sunset on the Gulf Stream. Stoney [Stoneback] and Sparrow began to sing on the upper deck, and Bob, Richard, Joe Haldeman, and Don joined in. They sang WW I songs, the air force song, the marine hymn. Bob raised his fist, slender Bob, scholar Bob, now the singing ex-soldier Bob. Behind him shone the crimson sunset-dyed ocean.

In the following years, from 2004 to 2006 before my Chinese book was published, Bob and I had frequent e-mail conversations. Finally on September 17, 2006, he summarized his military career and unveiled a secret that no one in the Hemingway Society knew about. His e-mail to me said:

> Kaimei—
>
> At the time of my commissioning as a 2nd Lt., I had a six-year obligation to the army, two years on active duty, six months of which I spent in Korea, & then four years in the reserves. During my years in the reserves, I had earned an MA from Columbia Univ., become married, taught three years at the Univ. of Nebraska, & sired two daughters before returning to graduate school at the Univ. of Illinois. By then my extra income from the army kept increasing as I was regularly promoted, & that money kept the family more comfortable than we otherwise would have been. Thus while I was working on the PhD I was also an army reserve student in the Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where one of the instructors, I found out, was the husband of my old girlfriend from the Univ. of Pittsburgh whose first husband had been killed as a pilot in Korea.
>
> By the time I retired from the reserves, I was a Lt. Colonel, & during most of my last years I was myself an instructor in the army Command and General Staff College satellite program at the Univ.

of Nevada in Reno. During those summer weeks, friends & I could enjoy outdoor activities like hiking & horseback riding & whitewater canoeing in the nearby Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Bob

In July of 2013, when Bob was in his final hospital, Don and I called him on the phone. I told him that it was the 60th anniversary of the cease-fire in Korea, and he replied, "Ah, it was there I lost my innocence."

Years ago, back in the fall of 2001, all members of the Nick Adams Society had gathered in a rented house at the New Jersey shore, a rare occasion. In a morning session, everyone leisurely sat around the dining table and read their latest Hemingway essay. Bob read casually from his pages and one of his sentences jumped out at me. I heard him say, "One day, I will paddle a canoe like an Indian, drifting, letting the canoe take me away."

When Robin Gajdusek died shortly after his triumphant poetry reading in Paris, Bob wrote to Don: "Robin showed us how to die."

Today, I see Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis paddling his canoe, waving to us, and I hear him saying as he did in our last conversation back in July, forthright but reserved, "I love you."

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SAMANTHA KELLY

What Papa Saw: Hemingway and Cézanne in Paris

As most of us know, Ernest Hemingway's writing was greatly influenced by Paul Cézanne's art. Hemingway himself stated this up front in his Paris memoir, *A Moveable Feast*:

> I was learning something from the painting of Cézanne that made writing simple true sentences far from enough to make the stories have the dimensions that I was trying to put in them. I was learning very much from him but I was not articulate enough to explain it to anyone. (13)

Hemingway paid further tribute to Cézanne's influence in an initial draft of "Big Two-Hearted River" wherein his autobiographical character, Nick Adams, states that he wanted "to write about the country so it would be there like Cézanne had done it in painting. You had to do it from inside yourself."[1]

Scholars have speculated on what Hemingway may have taken from Cézanne's works, with many of them seeing the strongest influence on Hemingway's landscapes as depicted in his first story collection *In Our Time* (1925). Emily Stipes Watts was the first to discuss Cézanne's influence in detail in her book *Ernest Hemingway and the Arts* (1971), and her discussion highlights how both artists used color rather than line to define objects and forms and to engage their audiences emotionally. She argues that "Cézanne modulated his colors in such a way that they themselves defined the form" and that, in the process, "he ignored the traditional restrictions of light and shade." Hemingway also "seems to have been attempting to modulate with a mixture of color, not with the more natural light and shade." Rather than using pure colors, each artist diffused color into predominant shades of "gray-yellow" and "purple-brown" (36). In addition, each artist used similar techniques in the implementation of their medium, Hemingway using words like daubs of paint, each word chosen with calculated care to draw the reader in to the framework of the story.

I agree with Watts that Hemingway used color very deliberately. His muted color-scapes create clear and accurate views that bring to life the landscapes and the characters. Many of the stories in *In Our Time* capture, like a snapshot, a moment in time, and their evocative power often depends upon the way Hemingway's diffused colors surround the physical space so as to suggest subtly its emotional underpinnings. As the reader steps into the pictorial framework, as in "Big Two-Hearted River," the leaves of the trees feel lush and the reader can see them even though he can't see the veins running down their surfaces; the dirt on the ground feels dry even though he can't see the dust on his shoes; and the water in the river feels smooth and cold even though he can't reach into it. The reader doesn't need to know that Nick has brown hair, but he does need to know that the country was "burned-over" around him and that he felt emotionally depleted. Describing the landscape and colors that surround the characters and having them move through these scenes brings the characters and their story to life more poignantly than would any specific and linear depiction of clothing or eye color. By showing the burned over country in all of its hushed tones, Hemingway has revealed as well Nick's burned over psyche.

Similarly, many of Cézanne's portraits that Hemingway saw in Paris are done with fairly muted and even coloring—no one aspect of the subject is so shockingly colored that it stands out—and yet, there is still something to catch the viewer's eye. In *Madame Cézanne a l'Eventail*, she is holding a small red fan, yet the fan does not pop off the canvas saying "Look at me!" What catches the viewer's attention is Madame Cézanne's gaze, how she isn't quite looking *at* us but *past* us.[2] The texture in the painting lies only in specific areas: around her face and neck and down her arm and that of the chair. It's as if the texture on the arm is guiding you up to her face, lest you miss it when your gaze first falls on the painting. Although the chair and the fan are red, and the dress is blue and her skin white, the colors are still presented evenly. They aren't blended, but the smoothness of the paint causes a smooth transition from one color to the one adjacent. In using the colors evenly, yet heavier in one part more than another, the painter brings the subject to life. The viewer is drawn to the subject's gaze so as to have an exchange with Madame Cézanne.

Although Hemingway used words and Cézanne used paint, both artists used similar techniques in the implementation of their mediums, and the works of both artists, on first glance, seem deceptively accessible. Hemingway's stories with their quick, short sentences and their repetitive patterning read easily. Hemingway is known for his primer style with repetitive, staccato sentences that have a steady cadence: very clear, very precise. For example, in "Soldier's Home," Hemingway writes:

> It was a pattern. He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. He liked to watch them walking under the shade of the trees. He liked the round Dutch collars above their sweaters. He liked their silk stockings and flat shoes. He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked. (71)

This type of rhythm and repetition is not unusual for Hemingway's early stories, just as rhythm and repetition are not unusual for the works of Cézanne that Hemingway saw during the 1920s in Paris. Although it might be more obvious in writing than with painting, because we can almost hear the words as we read them, Cézanne's paintings utilize repetitive patterns. In many paintings, Cézanne will have quick, smooth, uniform bits of color scattered throughout making portions of the canvas seem smooth from a distance yet somehow alive with color and movement. Indeed, "from a distance," the works of both artists appear simple until seen up close. Then, these repetitive elements reveal their rich textures and complex layers. And from very close up, the texture and repetition becomes palpable and even mesmerizing.

Although the works of both these iconic artists are beautiful and seem, at first glance, easy to absorb, the experience becomes more complicated. Their works draw the viewer in even as these works prove to be arresting, even to the point of keeping the viewer at bay. The enthusiast is along for the journey even as she must also watch from the outside, like a spectator. In Cézanne's *Bathers* series (one painting of which Hemingway saw hanging in Gertrude Stein's studio on the Rue de Fleurus), the colors and textures entice the viewer while the angularity of the painting and the studied detachment of its subjects hold the viewer back. The colors are soft yet bright, and the leaves almost seem to blow across the canvas, the rocks also jut out from the canvas and the subjects do not face the viewer. The sunshine invites the viewer in even as the lack of human connection holds the viewer back. With subtle painting techniques, Cézanne conveyed his messages just as Hemingway used verbal nuance. Each stroke is strategically placed and loaded with color in the same way that Hemingway's words are loaded with meaning.

Beyond the way that both artists used color to shape form and mood, and the way that both artists used similar techniques in the implementation of their medium (Cézanne's paint and Hemingway's words), a profound similarity between their works resides in artistic perspective. Seldom does either artist present a direct, head-on view. In Cézanne's portraits, the subject is often looking away from the viewer, sometimes in an obvious pose—as in that of *Joueurs de Cartes*, or *The Card Players* (#714) and *Baigneurs*, or *The Bathers* (#861)—other times it is more subtle; the subject will be facing the viewer but with eyes averted, sometimes

looking just off to the side, as in *Portrait de Victor Chocquet assis* (#296). The subjects are sometimes turned toward the viewer as if to reveal something; other times they are situated in such a way as to conceal something—be it their hands, their gaze or their emotions. The viewer decides all sorts of things about the subject, just as Hemingway's readers decide all sorts of things about the characters—is she pregnant or isn't she? Does Nick love Marjorie or doesn't he? There is much room for interpretation.

Both artists plunge the viewer directly, and suddenly, into the heart of the scene. In Cézanne's *Le Golfe de Marseille a Vu de L'Estaque* (#390), the viewer is perched on the edge of a cliff or a mountain or a "who knows what," as if she could go right over the edge at any second. That is the feeling the viewer gets because the viewer cannot see what is to her side. This perspective puts the viewer right into the picture, in the room, on the path, or in the forest, and it makes the viewer emotionally vulnerable. Hemingway used this perspective as well. He would often drop his readers right into the moment with opening sentences like "Then there was the bad weather" as he did in *A Moveable Feast* (3). With sentences like this, the reader starts out right there in the moment and is led onward, instead of the traditional method wherein the reader is set up with background information to anticipate the situation at hand. From there, Hemingway's paragraphs unfold to reveal the big picture, whether it is in the description of the room or the country. Some may argue that this approach reflects a lack of perspective or an inconsistent perspective but it is certainly a calculated one, one designed to present the emotional more than the physical reality of his characters. We are rarely, if ever, given any one character's story straight on, nor are we given helpful descriptors like "she exclaimed" or "he said solemnly." Statements and actions are presented simply without decorative embellishment. "The young gentleman went back to the hotel and spoke to his wife" (97). How? In what tone? What did he say to her? "In the evening he practised on his clarinet, strolled down town, read and went to bed" (70). Stated very simply, we understand the routine of it all. We may be in the room with Hemingway's characters but we feel as if we are standing in the doorway, or looking out through the window with them. We don't know what these subjects are hiding or what they will reveal, but we know what they're feeling. It's clarity without detail.

The edges of both artists'works are blurred—Cézanne's literally, Hemingway's figuratively. The edges always have an effect and are always used with precision, yet without predictability. Sometimes we don't even know that one conversation has ended or that time has lapsed in Hemingway's stories as he blurs the edges of his characters and their relationships. We don't know what is going on between the doctor and his wife in the story by the same title, but we know that there is tension there.

We know that Marjorie and Nick in "The End of Something" are having some trouble but we don't really know what the fight is about and so, again—clarity without detail. Cézanne's blurred edges are those of buildings, vases, tables, clothing, etc., but also those of his human subjects. In the portraits, the faces, hands, and bodies are not crisp and crystal clear, they are soft and inviting; we can see their expression but not their freckles. In the buildings we can see the windows but not their panes, the doors but not their knobs, we know it is a corner or an edge but it doesn't look like it would hurt to bump one's knee on it. The walls that hold us back in paintings like *Cour d'une Ferme*, or *Courtyard of a Farm* (#389), are smudged; they serve as a barrier and yet they don't feel harsh. They hold us back while pulling us in.

Courtyard of a Farm is a painting that exemplifies many of the similarities between the artists' works. This painting hung in the Luxembourg Museum—the place to which Hemingway "went nearly every day for the Cézannes" while in Paris, as he mentioned in *A Moveable Feast* (13). It later hung in the Louvre, another Hemingway haunt. I see many similarities between the painting and the previously mentioned story "The End of Something." In the story, the reader is presented with a couple rowing across a lake and settling down on the beach to fish. The reader is given no history of the couple, but it quickly becomes apparent that there is tension between them. The man, Nick, is silent while the woman, Marjorie, tries repeatedly to initiate conversation. Finally Marjorie gives up on niceties and asks Nick: "Isn't love any fun?" We were in the boat, sailing across the water, now we are in the fight with them wanting to shake Nick or turn on Marjorie. A very short exchange follows before Marjorie leaves him alone on the shore and we, like Nick, are hearing her glide along the water, taking everything with her.

In the painting, the viewer looks upon a farmhouse and a shed from a slight distance away, held back by walls in the foreground just as we are held back by our lack of information regarding Nick and Marjorie's history. Although the house is the central subject of the painting—just as Nick and Marjorie are the central subject of the story—the subject is not actually *in* the center. It is in the bottom half of the painting, slightly to the right and partially obscured by a tree, two walls, shadows and other plant growth making the perspective unconventional and not directly accessible. Hemingway uses the same unconventional perspective by not telling us what has lead up to this moment and by using Nick's silence as much as Marjorie's words.

In the painting, the most prominent part of the piece seems to be the walls in the forefront. They pull the viewer *into* the painting as if the viewer is walking into the picture, yet at the same time, they hold the viewer back—much like Hemingway's "And then there was the bad

weather." His opening lines about the saw mill start you down a path before it drops away and you're in the boat. The viewer is held at a distance from the house just as the reader is held at a distance from the characters. If Nick said more, then perhaps those walls would open up a bit. If Marjorie talked less, perhaps the house would look different.

The painting has the same "singular moment" quality that the story has. Though there are no people or creatures in *Courtyard*, it gives the impression of movement. The viewer can almost feel the sun and the breeze and hear the leaves of the trees rustling. The walls move you and you are not just observing that farmhouse but you are truly there in the courtyard, as if you're about to get to the heart of things. We are only with Nick and Marjorie for a few minutes, but we can feel their history and know that it's more complicated than either of them is saying. When Marjorie leaves Nick on the shore, she takes everything with her—some see that as good, others as bad, but she has undeniably taken everything. The readers are carried across the water with her, or watch her sail away, but they definitely want to know what will happen next.

Although most of the painting depicts the buildings and walls, the lines are neither sharp nor crisp like most depictions of buildings. The corners are softer and slightly smudged, adding to the created feeling of wonder and curiosity. Had the lines been sharper and more severe, they might not have stopped the viewer at all. In my opinion, these walls aren't offensive and harsh, they're solid but also inviting, just as Marjorie's questions aren't nagging, they're probing but kind; Marjorie is never mean, but she is fed up. The softer lines bring the painting to life, as if it were a blurry photograph that captured one moment in the life of that farmhouse.

With many of Cézanne's paintings there are bits of black scattered throughout the work. This was unusual for artists of his time as the impressionists tried to avoid using the color because it is so rarely found in nature.[3] Coming at this from a psychological stance, I see these dark bits as very significant. In his many paintings of houses, the windows are often open, yet darkened, even when it is a sunny day; this juxtaposition automatically draws the viewer's eye to that area. These smooth black squares convey a message, but what is it? I suppose it's up to the viewer to decide, as it could be interpreted differently by many, but I believe that these blackened windows are carrying a psychological message, and one that alluded to the painter's depression, whether he intended it that way or not. Was he paying homage to his rebellious nature? Or was this color chosen unconsciously? Either way, it says something.

In the field of Art Therapy there is a projective personality test called the "House Person Tree" assessment, or "HPT." In projective tests, the test taker is presented with an ambiguous stimuli and asked to respond;

psychological conclusions are then drawn from these responses. The most popular projective test is the Rorschach test in which a person is presented with an inkblot and asked to describe what she sees; one person might see a bat, while another might see a hypodermic needle. The psychoanalytic community believes that the content from a projective test can be analyzed to reveal hidden conflicts or emotions

In the case of the HPT test, the client—often a child—is asked to draw a house, a tree, and a person or people. The therapist then uses these pictures to draw psychological conclusions about the test taker. This is done by analyzing the drawings and noting things that are present or absent and how things are portrayed. For example, the windows and doors of the house may indicate the child's relationship with the outside world. If the windows are covered or absent, the child may be hiding something or trying to deny access. In the pictures of people, if they are missing their hands, the child may feel limited or stifled. Though the house is bathed in sunlight, the painter has darkened the windows and thus we don't know what lies inside. Hemingway has hints of darkness in many of his stories but in "The End of Something" in particular, his darkened window is Nick. He stands before us and Marjorie, with a lot going on inside and obviously saddened by something, but we don't know what. I believe Cézanne's dark windows were conveying a darker side to the artist, one that Hemingway recognized and identified with. These subtle allusions to darkness and human interaction are found in both artists' works and I think it's something that Hemingway recognized in Cézanne's.

As I stated initially, many scholars have explored the possible influence that Cézanne had on Hemingway when he had determined early on that he wanted to write the way the painters painted, and some interesting scholarly speculation has emerged out of these studies over the years since Emily Stipes Watts' groundbreaking work. One scholar in particular, Meyly Hagemann, zeroes in on translating how Hemingway's work expressed the same elements as Cézanne's paintings in her essay "Hemingway's Secret: Visual to Verbal Art." Her study is particularly valuable because she recognizes the importance of identifying exactly which paintings of Cézanne's Hemingway would have seen in Paris during his years there in the early 1920s. Although Hagemann addresses this issue, she does not undertake any specific exploration of precisely which paintings Hemingway saw while in Paris during the 1920s. She acknowledges some "forty-three Cézannes, all within walking distance of Hemingway's apartment" without identifying how she came to this specific number or without specifying, for the most part, which paintings these were (89). I think that if we want to speculate on Cézanne's influence, we must first find out exactly which paintings Hemingway saw as he couldn't have been influenced by paintings he never met. Until now,

we did not have a compiled list of which Cézanne paintings Hemingway actually encountered (though Hageman alludes to knowing of a list she had seen) and which paintings he was able to spend time with in Paris, so the discussions of Cézanne's influence have remained very speculative.[4] This is a gap that I have started to fill.

When I first set out to explore the topic of Cézanne's influence, I realized quickly that we did not know which paintings Hemingway had seen. He did not mention them by name nor describe them in great detail, but he did give me just enough to go on. In a passage drawn from a deleted portion of the early draft of "Big Two-Hearted River" and later published as "On Writing," Nick Adams says: "He could see the Cézannes. The portrait at Gertude Stein's. She'd know if he ever got things right. The two good ones at the Luxembourg, the ones he's seen every day at the loan exhibit at Bernheim's. The soldiers undressing to swim, the house through the trees, one of the trees with a house beyond. . . . The portrait of the boy" (239-40). And there are also his references in *A Moveable Feast* to the Louvre, the Musée Luxembourg, and Bernheim's again. Knowing that he definitely went to these places during the years he was writing his early *In Our Time* stories, I thought they were the perfect place to start.[5]

A catalogue of Cézanne's paintings, published in 1996 as *The Paintings of Paul Cézanne: A Catalogue Raisonné*, provided me with an invaluable starting point. I went through the catalog from beginning to end—no easy feat with roughly 900 paintings in it—and compiled a list of paintings that were described in the catalogue as housed or exhibited in Paris during the period of 1921-1925 or otherwise unaccounted for. This brought the catalogue list, as pertinent to Hemingway, down to approximately 200 paintings. From there, I searched each painting for further information concerning its provenance that might have been discovered or released after the *Catalogue* was printed. I was able to rule out paintings that had only been in Paris as part of a transfer of ownership, were kept in private collections, or had been lost or stolen prior to 1921. Next, I researched what Cézanne paintings the Louvre and Luxembourg museums had displayed during Hemingway's timeframe, paintings that came to Paris for exhibition and paintings that had arrived in Paris prior to and had no activity listed until after 1925 and therefore must have remained in the City of Light. I was also able to find a 1913 guide to the Musée Luxembourg, *The Luxembourg Museum; Its Paintings*, to back up which paintings were displayed there.

Finding out which paintings were displayed at Bernheim's was a bit trickier but I was able to find various exhibits held during the desired time period and lists or partial lists of the paintings included. Between the Louvre, the Luxembourg, Gertrude Stein's collection, and the exhibits held at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery, I have determined with a great degree

of certainty that Hemingway would have seen the following 29 (maybe 30) paintings: 2 that were owned by Gertrude Stein; 2 displayed in the Luxembourg; 6 (perhaps 7; it is unclear if one of them was actually on display) housed at the Louvre; and 19 that were exhibited at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery. As Hemingway never spelled out specific names of paintings or exhibits, I cannot say with 100% accuracy that he saw these 29-30 paintings but, given that he said he frequented these places during the period of 1921-1925 and these paintings were housed in these venues at that time, one can safely assume that these are the paintings he encountered. I compiled this list into a spreadsheet that is an addendum to this essay. The Hemingway scholar and/or fan might now take this list so as to advance further this valuable discussion of just how Cézanne's paintings during Hemingway's Paris years influenced the specific construction of his early, and some would say, best stories. Through the generosity of Penn State Abington and the Penn State University Schreyers Honors College, who encouraged and supported my Hemingway research, I was fortunate to be able to travel to Paris to see and identify for myself some of these paintings that changed Hemingway's life and helped to transform the direction of American literature during the twentieth century. Now that I knew what he saw, I decided to study as many of these paintings as possible to see if I could find any similarities between them and the *In Our Time* stories and I found many. I set out to see as many of these paintings as I could in person so that I could see their dimensions, colors, brush strokes, and other details to try to find what spoke to the great writer. It is my belief that the connection between these two artists was far more psychological than terrestrial and that it related to their mutual desire to capture the emotional more than the physical reality of human existence. In any case, the list that I provide here might serve as a basis for further and more definitive scrutiny of those Cézanne paintings that Hemingway actually saw. Out of this might emerge further truths about the crucial artistic relationship between these two artists: Cézanne, the Father of Modern Painting, and Hemingway, the Father of Modern American Prose.

Notes

[1]This quote is taken from *Ernest Hemingway: The Nick Adams Stories*, as they were arranged and published in 1972 by Philip Young. The passage "On Writing" was later included in *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway,* The Finca Vigia Edition, Scribners, 1987. See Allen Josephs, in this issue, for a pertinent discussion of Nick Adams as the "writer" of "Big Two-Hearted River."

[2]This painting is listed as #606 in *The Paintings of Paul Cézanne: A Catalogue Raisonné*, and further references to particular Cézanne paintings are referenced in the text by their catalogue numbers.

[3]Black was not a conventional color among impressionists. There hasn't been an elaborate explanation for why black wasn't used, only that impressionists strived to use colors found in nature and believed nature rarely contained black. As such, blues, grays, and purples were often used to create shadows.

[4]In addition to the studies of Watts and Hagemann, more recent and also valuable assessments of Hemingway's relationship with Cézanne include Ron Berman's "Hemingway's Michigan Landscapes" in *The Hemingway Review* 27.1 (2007): 39-54; and "Recurrence in Hemingway and Cézanne" in *The Hemingway Review* 23.2 (2004): 21-36. See also Theodore Gaillard, "Hemingway's Debt to Cézanne: New Perspectives" in *Twentieth Century Literature* 45.1 (1999): 65-78. Anyone interested in Hemingway's relationship to art should read the famous 1950 *New Yorker* interview by Lillian Ross which recounts Ross and Hemingway's discussions of modern art as they visited together in New York City. As they surveyed the paintings by Cézanne at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hemingway told Ross: "I can make a landscape like Paul Cézanne." This interview was later republished as *Portrait of Ernest Hemingway*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961.

[5]I focused solely on his *In Our Time* stories so I omitted later excursions where he may have visited other museums. This is a separate project that I am further pursuing.

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Abbreviations for the following table:

Art Francaise—"L'Art francais au service de la science francaise" exhibit

Cent Ans—"*Cent Ans de Peintre Francaise*" exhibit

Cinquante—"*Cinquante Ans De Peinture Francaise dans les Collections Particulieres de Cézanne a Matisse*" exhibit

Expos.—"*Exposition d'oeuvres d'art*" exhibit

Exposition Benefice—"*Exposition au benefice de l'Hopital Saint-Michel*"

GBJ— Galerie Bernheim-Jeune exhibit

Grand infl.—"*Les Grandes influences au dix-neuvième siécle* (d'Ingres à Cézanne)"

Maitres—"*Les Maitres du Siecle Passe*" exhibit

"Prob"—Probably saw

Premiere Expos.—"*Premiere Exposition de collectionneurs, au profit de la societe des amis du Luxembourg*" exhibit

Science—"*L'Art francais au service de la science francaise*" exhibit

"Yes"—Hemingway did or must have seen this work as it was either owned by Gertrude Stein, or displayed/exhibited in the Louvre, the Luxembourg, or at Bernheim's, all of which Hemingway mentioned going to.

#505 lacks concrete evidence to say that it was part of that exhibit. As a result, it is unknown if it was and if EH saw it.

Other names listed are various art dealers and collectors.

Catalogue #	Title of painting	Exhibited	EH saw
182	Portrait de l'Artiste	1922, Maitres (No. 5, cat. 9),1924	prob
202	La Maison du Pendu	Louvre	Yes
220	Petites Maison Pres d'Auvers-sur-Oise	1924, GBJ (no #)	Yes
223	Dahlia dans un Grand Vase de Delft	1922, Cent Ans (No. 29)	prob
248	Baigneuse au Bord de la Mer	1923, Science (No. 161)	prob
275	La Route (Le Mur d'Enciente)	1923, Science (No. 165)	yes
296	Portrait de Victor Chocquet assis	1923, Science (No. 166), 1924,	yes
337	Un Dessert	1923, Science (No. 163), 1924,	yes
348	Le Plat de Pommes	1923, Science (No. 164)	prob
360	Trois Baigneuses	1922, Maitres (No. 7), 1924, GBJ	yes
375	Chemin a l'Entre de la Foret	1922, Cent Ans (No. 28)	yes
385	Portrait de l'Artiste	1922, Cent Ans (No. 27)	yes
389	Cour d'une Ferme	Luxembourg	yes
390	Le Golfe de Marseille a Vu de l'Estaque	1923, GBJ (no ex name or #), Lux	yes
400	Paysage d'Ile de France	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes
412	Paysage	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes
417	Pommes et Serviette	1922, GBJ (no #)	yes
436	Le Pont de Maincy	1923, Science (No. 162)	prob
444	La Baie de l'Estaque	1924, Premiere Expos. (No. 183)	prob
457	Le Jugement de Paris (Le Berge	1923, Expos. (no #)	prob
470	Les Begonias	1924, Premiere Expos. (No. 184)	prob
505	La Campagne d'Auvers-sur-Oise	1923, Art Francaise (No. 167)?	unk.
525	Le Jardinier	1922, Maitres (No. 13)	prob
528	La Campagne au-dela du mur du jas de	1924, Premier Expos. (No. 137)	prob
547	Les Grande Arbes au Jas de Bouffan	1922, Maitres (No. 11)	prob
566	Bassin det Lavoir du Jas de Bouffan	1925, Cinquante (No. 13)	yes
576	Portrait de Madame Cezanne	1922, Maitres (No. 12)	prob
581	Portrait de Madame Cezanne	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes
590	Femme Nue	1922, Maitres (No. 8)	prob
599	La Montagne Sainte-Victoire au Grand	1922, Maitres (No. 10)	prob
606	Madame Cezanne a l'Eventail	G. Stein	yes
617	L'Allee des Marronniers au Jas de	1924 GBJ (no #)	yes
647	Fruits et Feuillages	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes
673	Les Pommes	1924, Premiere Expos. (No. 136)	prob
675	Le Vase Bleu	Louvre	yes
680	Pot de Primeveres et Fruits sur une Table	1925, Cinquante (No. 12)	yes
701	Grosses Pommes	1925, Exposition Benefice (No.	prob
714	Joueurs de Cartes	Louvre	yes
743	Pichet de Gres	1924, Premiere Expos. (No. 135)	prob
791	Portrait de Gustave Geffroy	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes
800	Corbeille de Pommes	1922, Maitres (No. 9), 1924, GBJ	yes
805	Le Lac d'Annecy	1922, Maitres (No. 14)	prob
825	Jeune Homme a la Tete de Mort	1925, Cinquante (No. 15)	yes
836	Carriere de Bibemus	1922, Cent Ans (No. 26)	prob
847	Pommes et Oranges	Louvre	yes
848	Nature Morte	1925, Grandes infl. (No. 1)	prob
856	Les Grande Baigneuses	1925, Cinquante (No. 153)	yes
861	Baigneurs	G. Stein	yes
905	Interieur de Foret	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes
909	Rochers Pres des Grottes au-Doussus du	1924, GBJ (no #)	yes

Exhibits:

1922—Cent Ans at Orangerie
—Maitres, Paul Rosenberg. May 3-June 3. 21 rue de la Boétie.

1923—Expos., April 25-May15. Rue de la Ville l'Eveque
—"*L'Art francais au service de la science francaise*" Chambre Syndicale de la Curiosite et des Beaux-Arts
— an exhibit at GBJ but there is no title and no catalogue for it.

1924—Premiere Expos. Hôtel de la curiosité et des Beaux-Arts, March 10–April 10.
—"*Exposition Paul Cézanne (au profit de la caisse du monument Cézanne*)," March 3-24, GBJ. No catalogue was issued.

1925—Cinquante at Musee des Arts Decoratifs, March 28-July 2. GBJ.
—Exposition benefice (No info).
—Grandes infl. Galerie Paul Rosenberg (Catalogue # 848).

Other Information:

Names were Josse and Gaston Bernheim. They were collectors and dealers so if a provenance lists their name, they may have been buying or selling the piece for someone, not necessarily displaying it in their gallery.

For a while, the Steins had more Cézannes than the Luxembourg (Rewald 514).

Could not find any relevant catalogues for Bernheim-Jeune 1921-1926.

Maison du Pendu was important to Cézanne (Rewald 164).

#470 was formerly known as "Les Petunias."

Paintings 528 and 848 do not have pictures available.

*All of this information is as of the 1996 printing of John Rewald's *Catalogue Raisonné of Paul Cézanne.*

STEVEN FLORCZYK

Hanging Fire

I had spent the summer living in a quiet pensione at the top of a hill that overlooked the town. I decided to stay there based on the description in a popular guidebook that said it was a former monastery, and when I arrived I liked it immediately.

My room was large and clean with high ceilings and two beds and a desk that sat beneath a window that overlooked a large meadow in the hills that skirted the southern edge of the town. I kept the shutters open at night and could hear the sound of the train as it pounded the tracks at the base of the hill. One of the beds I used for sleeping and kept my papers on the second bed that was nearest the desk. I wrote first thing in the mornings and last thing at night when it was cool and the breeze came through the large open window and despite my drinking my head felt clear out of the heat of the day. At first I was there to write a book about a soldier on the Italian front in the First World War but after a few weeks in the town I didn't think about that any more other than when I woke in the morning and before I went to bed at night.

A year earlier I had told my father that I was going to Italy for research, and he said, "That was where I was stationed when I was in the Army." He was there for eighteen months, and he showed me pictures of him standing in front of St. Mark's in Venice, one of him riding an old bicycle that he picked up when he got into the town, and another one of him wearing a shit-eating grin while straddling one of the missiles that they trained him to operate. He had a military haircut and horn-rimmed glasses, and I was surprised how young he looked considering that I was older now than he was when he was in the Army. I thought about those pictures when I arrived in the town and drove by the Army base, which was still there.

I was at a restaurant one night and sitting at the table next to me was a group of U.S. Army officers stationed at the base. When they heard me order in English they asked me to join them. I sat at the table and listened to them talk shop and the only woman in the group asked me what I was

doing in Italy. "I'm here to write a book about a World War I soldier," I told her, and she was very interested, but the guys at the table quieted down once I started talking about it, so I changed subjects. I lit a cigarette after dinner, and I could tell they didn't like that either so I put it out.

We paid the bill and everyone got up to leave, including the girl, but the captain stayed behind and asked me if I wanted to get a drink at a bar that he knew. He had a bicycle with him but I didn't, so he walked it as we made our way downtown through the park and into the old quarter into a small piazza at the foot of a church. I recognized the place from old photos I had studied for my book, and I was surprised to see that we were seated across from the old palazzo that once housed the World War I headquarters that I was supposed to be researching. I told the captain about the coincidence, and he told me that his friend owned that building. The palazzo owner was also the proprietor of the bar that we were drinking at and he joined us for a while. I should have asked him about the old headquarters and maybe got a chance to look around, but I didn't and he went away when an American girl showed up to meet him. The captain and I were alone now and I tried to see if I could get on the Army base to look around but he said no since I was a civilian and then he quieted down for a time. I told him that my father was stationed at that base and when the captain got almost drunk enough that I thought I could ask him again he told me it was getting late and he had to turn in. I stayed at our table and watched him as he walked away holding the handlebars of his bicycle as he disappeared around the corner of the street.

After another drink I walked home to the hotel and wandered into the bar and the bartender poured me a beer and winked at me to show me that there was a pretty German girl sitting on the veranda. I took my drink outside and sat at the table next to her. We were the only two out there and I smiled at her and we struck up a conversation.

She told me that she was here with Mamma visiting from Munich to see the operas. She was a tall blond girl with well tanned skin and I liked the way she crossed her legs and smiled at me. I asked her if I might sit at her table and she said yes. After a few more drinks we were flirting pretty good but she told me Mamma would wonder about her and she should better get off to bed. I said okay but told her that I would be here tomorrow night and I hoped she would too. She said they would be away seeing an opera but maybe she would feel like a drink when she got back and we left it at that.

When I went back to my room I looked at the papers on the bed and sat at the desk smoking a cigarette and looking out the window. I listened to the train roll in and then I went to sleep.

In the morning I looked at the papers again and went early out to breakfast but the German girl and Mamma were already gone so I ate

alone and studied the timetable for trains to Venice. I made it to the train station on time but the train was late and the platform was crowded so I sat on the ground and wrote a postcard to my father. I read over the postcard before I tucked it away in my backpack and stood up to watch the incoming train as it rolled fast into the station.

The train was crowded but I found a seat in one of the compartments and listened to some American tourists talk about plans for their visit. They all agreed that it was no place to arrive by car. I kept quiet the whole time and in forty minutes we pulled into the station and it was hot and crowded as I walked inside. I followed the crowd as it moved through the station and boarded the first vaporetto that came in. The guidebook said that I should sit on the back seat and look at the buildings as the boat floated down the canal but there were no empty seats and all I could see was the back of the head of the person in front of me.

When we arrived at St. Mark's I got off and walked to the church. Inside the church I walked to the altar amidst the throng of tourists. Attendants asked for quiet every few minutes or so when the people began to converse at a level that they thought sacrilegious. I lit a candle for my father and knelt down to say a prayer.

After the church I went to a famous bar and had a drink that cost me fourteen euros and regretted doing it. When I left the bar to catch the next ferry back to the train station I walked across a footbridge over one of the canals and saw a gondolier steering through the water with a couple tucked into the seat in the middle of the boat. I watched them for a minute and then walked back to the platform to catch the next ferry to the train station.

Riding the train out of Venice I thought about the gondola with the couple in it and the candle I lit at St. Mark's and wondered how long it would burn. Then I thought about the time when I was in college and my father drove there to pick me up after the semester had ended. During the car ride back home he told me about the time he went away to school. His mother had her heart set on him being a priest so he tried to set his heart on it too and went away to a seminary in the Midwest. One day he told the rector that he realized that the priesthood was not his calling and that he had decided he would leave the seminary for good. The rector received that news with severe silence but there was nothing he could do so my father left and his parents picked him up to drive him home. He told me "that was the longest drive of my life" and when he got home he spent six months wondering if he had made the right decision. My grandmother had almost disowned him, he said, but eventually she forgave him and then he started dating my mother, who he had met on summer vacation after his first year in the seminary. He didn't tell me that though. All he said was that it took him a long time to realize that he made the right decision. I told him I'm glad he did and he looked at me for a moment while driving

and I looked at him and we both laughed. That was when I was in my senior year of college.

Later I learned from my mother that he had sent letters to her parents after the summer they met that said he was not happy in the seminary. He couldn't send the letters directly to her though because he knew he was still a man studying for the priesthood. But she got the message just the same and when he was ready they started dating. Not long after that they were engaged and not long after that he was drafted into the Army and ended up stationed at the military base in the town in Italy where I had come to research my book. They spent eighteen months apart while he was stationed in the town and when he came home he married her. My mother said she saved all the letters he wrote to her while he was away and one time I asked her, "Where are they?" and she said, "Oh, I have them alright but you'll have to wait til I'm gone to read them." I smiled and told her that I didn't want to read them I just wanted to know if she still had them.

When the train got back I walked up to the pensione and ordered a drink at the bar and the bartender winked at me again and tried to say something in English about the German girl but I didn't understand so he just pounded a fist in the air and smiled. I smiled too and shook my head so he gave me my drink and I tried to pay but he waved his hand.

I went out to the veranda and not long after the German girl came down and she sat at my table and I was happy that she was there. "How was the opera?" I asked her and she told me it was fine but she was smiling all the time and I could tell she didn't want to talk about the opera. She crossed her legs again in the way that I liked so I put my hand on her knee and she smiled at me again so we kissed. I liked kissing her and I told her that we should go back to my room and I felt the bartender watching from inside.

She said "I can't do that because of Mamma" and I cursed Mamma but not out loud. So we kept on kissing but eventually she said, "I have to go to bed," and I tried once more to get her to the room and she brought up Mamma again and then it was done.

But before she went upstairs we held hands until the last possible moment and then she told me she was leaving in the morning. "You should come to Munich," she said, and I told her I would think about it and then we kissed again and she said good night.

The next morning at breakfast I sat with her and Mamma and Mamma refused to speak English but I could tell she was insulting me by the way the girl looked at her. I walked them to their car and she told me again to come to Munich and I said I'd be in touch and let her know even though I knew that I wouldn't.

After they left I made my way down into the town and sat at a café where I wrote another postcard to my father. I wrote him about Venice and the candle but I didn't say anything about the German girl. Sitting at the café I saw the captain walking his bicycle through the park. He was at a distance but I waved hello and he waved back. I was hoping he would come my way but he kept on going and that's the last I saw of him.

When I got back to the pensione the bar was empty and I thought about having a drink but decided not to. I went up to my room and packed up the papers and my clothes and then I sat down at the desk and wrote to my girl back home. I thought about writing all about the train ride and Venice and the candle and even about the German girl but instead I told her: "I'm leaving today and should be back in the States in a few days. I'm stopping first to visit family and then I will drive back out west. I hope you will meet me at our favorite spot on the beach on the 24th and we will watch the sun go down together." I signed the card with love and thought about adding a postscript but decided not to.

When I got back to the States the first thing I did was to drive north where my mother was staying at our summer camp. It was late when I arrived but the cool night air was a nice welcome and she hugged me hard and said it was good to have me home again. Outside we sat around the fire with all the neighbors and I told them about Italy and the Alps and about the time when the lightening bolts flashed in jagged lines above the mountains at a distance from the view of my window at the converted monastery. My mother wanted to hear all about if I had gained access to the U.S. Army base and when I told her no she said, "That's too bad." So I told about Venice and St. Mark's and the candles burning in the church and my mother reminded me that when I was an altar boy I used to carry the candle and she told everyone about the first time I got to carry the cross and how when I got to the altar at the end of the procession the cross wavered in my hands as I tried to place it on its mount because it was too heavy and it took Father Leo to intervene and with one hand he took the tall top-heavy cross out of my hands and placed it on the pedestal all without skipping a beat and still singing the opening hymn. We all laughed at the story and then we turned in. As I got ready for bed I was thinking about fishing for lake trout again with my father.

I woke in the morning and looked at my watch and whispered to him that I had slept too late and that the trout would be too deep by now. But he whispered back and told me to go out anyway. So I milled about the cabin until I found the fishing gear where he had left it and headed for the beach.

The old metal rowboat was there too, in the sand just where he had left it. Squatting down I gripped the handle on the bow and taking hold underneath with my other hand I pushed hard, lifting and leaning into it at the same time and driving with my legs until I felt the boat give. I wiggled

it out of the deeper sand and pushed the boat into the water and then felt the weight go away as it floated in the shallows. I jumped in at the last second and stepped over the benches as the boat wavered until I found the center and got down on the bench in the stern.

After several tries I got the motor started and steered the boat to the middle of the lake. Then I went to work rigging one of the rods. Once the line was out I settled into the back of the boat and set the rod down next to me and held the line tight. I was sweating even in the cool air but now that the work was done it felt good to be out on the water again and I thought about the many times that I had fished this lake with my father hoping that a trout would rise.

Holding the line over the side of the boat I jigged the lure as I watched the mist move above the lake and could see the sunlight breaking through as the sun rose over the tops of the trees. I was thinking about what he might have been thinking about the last time I saw him. Tugging the line forward again I let the slack out and then after another tug I felt a heaviness on the other end and I wasn't thinking anymore. I scratched around in the back of the boat and picked up the rod and reel so that I could take in the line. I pulled him in all the way to the boat and lifted the trout from the water in my net, setting him on the bottom of the boat to watch the squirming and flipping while I smiled a shit-eating grin as he thumped around in blood and sand at the bottom of the boat.

After taking the hook from his mouth I watched him breathe heavy and flatten out and then I knew without a rule that he was a keeper. Holding him in the silky water afterward I could feel as he came back to life slowly at first as he slipped out of my hand and floated just beneath the surface and then all of a sudden as he disappeared down into the darkness. Sitting on the bench in the back of the boat I rested my forearms on my thighs as the boat rocked to and fro from the slight chop on the lake and I could feel my heart beating fast.

When I got back to camp they asked me how the fishing was and I said okay and they said, "you know it took your father a hell of a long time to start catching fish around here and they all thought he was crazy for trying but once he figured it out he brought them in alright."

And I said, "Yeah, I know I can remember when I was little and he first started." My mother smiled and asked me if I had any keepers and I told her, "No, not this time," and she said better luck next.

We had supper that night and I told more stories about Italy, and she reminded me that he was there eighteen months while they were engaged. I joked again about how she stole him away from the Church and she smiled and then I told her, "I'm glad you did," and we laughed.

After we ate she cleaned the dishes, and I went down to the lakeshore to light a fire. Kneeling in the sand in front of the pit I fanned the kindling

with a stack of old papers feeling the warmth of the flames as the firewood began to catch. Once I had it going good I watched the sun go down behind the mountain on the other side of the lake, and I thought about what that must have been like for him driving back from the seminary after quitting the priesthood for a girl. Then the sun was gone and there was only the dark mountain, the sound of the water as it raked the shoreline, and the fire. I sat there watching the fire for a long time, and then I thought about driving west.

ALEX SHAKESPEARE

All Things Broken, All Things Saved: On William Boyle's *Gravesend*

William Boyle. *Gravesend*. Norman, OK: Broken River Books, 2013. Pp. 216, $13.95 pb.

On a map, Brooklyn looks like nothing so much as a crumpled napkin. Its thousand gridded streets are set at odd angles, like so many fractal variations or redoubled imitations of its slim-waisted sister city to the west. Brooklyn, of all great cities—in the words of James Agee—is the nearest to Manhattan's "mad magnetic energy," yet it is provincial nonetheless. It is a patchwork of neighborhoods, as he says, "where people merely live." Perhaps this is no longer the case, at least in the desirable northwestern quadrant, where people now flock to live and, one way or another, to write.

As no reader of contemporary American fiction can fail to notice, the recent surge of interest in Brooklyn real estate has coincided with a surge of interest in Brooklyn-based fiction. The last fifteen years have given us too many "Brooklyn novels" to count. Jonathan Lethem and Paul Auster have surveyed the blocks between the waterfront and Prospect Park; Adelle Waldman and Joanna Smith-Rakoff have occupied themselves more exclusively with the interiors of modish restaurants and brownstones. And then there are those novels, which readers seem either to love or never finish, about Olde Brooklyn. Of these, Michael Chabon's *Kavalier and Clay* and Colm Toibin's *Brooklyn* are perhaps the most memorable two.

With the exception of Lethem, none of these writers are natives of the city. A few of them aren't even locals. And that's all right by me. In fiction, what matters is the quality of the words on the page, not the quality of the experience behind them. Sometimes, though, the native writer's arbitrary relationship to his place—a sort of Jacob-and-Esau love-and-hate for the homeland—animates his experience uniquely. So it is with William Boyle's deft, dark first novel, which has its eyes on a Brooklyn neighborhood down toward the bottom of the city's crumpled map, not

quite far enough north to count as Bensonhurst and not quite far enough south to borrow the faded glow of Coney Island: a gray stretch of avenues and chain-link streets named Gravesend.

If you search for *Gravesend* online, you'll probably find it called a crime novel or hardboiled fiction, "Brooklyn noir" or even "neo-noir." No doubt there is some truth in all this shorthand. But only some. It's true that Boyle's characters tend to live outside the law, or at the very edge of it, and it's true that his style owes something to the now venerable tradition of hardboiled American fiction stretching from Raymond Chandler to Walter Mosley, Daniel Fuchs to Daniel Woodrell. But I don't think Boyle's knowledge of the hardboiled tradition even begins to account for just how good, how singular, how stunning *Gravesend* turns out to be. Of course, I don't claim to take a dispassionate view on the matter. We're friends, Boyle and I. When you go out and buy his book, you'll find my name on the Acknowledgments page. (I mention this because I'm proud to be thanked by him and because I don't want anyone thinking we're a couple of log-rollers. I want to go on record here that even if I had never laid eyes on a guy named Bill Boyle, I would admire *Gravesend* to no end.)

The first thing to admire in the novel is its style. Boyle has an eye for precise pictorial detail and an ear for the minute modulations necessary to *le style indirect libre*—for language that cleaves close to a character's way of seeing the world and makes poetry of that way of seeing. So, through the eyes of Conway D'Innocenzio, we see a big moon "shaded rusty"; we see pigeons congregating on the sidewalk and boots flung up on telephone wires near Augie's Deli; we see seagulls pecking at dirty sand where condom wrappers rim a "seaweed-skirted shoreline." At a dive called The Wrong Number, we see bartenders with "bad histories, greasy, balloon-chested fucks in Nautica gear with Yankee tats on their necks and white date rape caps." Through the eyes of Alessandra Biagini, we see a "bearded dude eating mangled fries" at a trendy bar in Manhattan, "washing them down with a wet-labeled Coors Light." Through the eyes of Eugene, we see a kid named Tommy Valentino—a tall, B team basketball player—who is always "hunched over his locker… spooning candy from an envelope into his mouth with a wooden stick and washing it down with Gatorade."

These subjective images allow us to imagine Conway and Alessandra and Eugene, and the world they inhabit, in a measure of detail that no amount of objective physical description could supply. Such images play a large part in making *Gravesend* so stunningly good. You want to keep reading because you want to know what you'll see next; you will admire the way Boyle makes you see it all anew. But I wouldn't want to suggest that *Gravesend* is only a stylistic tour de force, because it's more than

that. The style is striking, surely, but the story is a knockout. Like Thomas Hardy and Bernard Malamud before him, Boyle is many things at once. He is a novelist who, as Auden said a novelist must, knows how to be just among the just and filthy among the filthy. He is a wordsmith with all the devices of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels at his disposal. He is, in short, a damn good storyteller.

In the first pages of *Gravesend*, we learn that Ray Boy Calabrese is about to be sprung from prison, sixteen years after he and some friends murdered a young gay man named Duncan. Duncan's brother, Conway, has never really left the old neighborhood, nor does he have any intention of letting the past be past. He hates Ray Boy for what he's done, and the reader hates Ray Boy in turn. *Gravesend*, at the end of its first chapter, seems made to run along ancient lines. We're expecting a kind of *Revenger's Tragedy* for the twenty-first century, and we think we know what questions to ask. How long will it take Conway to track Ray Boy down? How long until Ray Boy, or Conway, or both of them, end up dead?

As it turns out, though, blood vengeance isn't really what drives *Gravesend*. What drives it are the characters and their experience of the neighborhood, which is as cluttered with bygone artifacts as any Old World rag-and-bone shop. This is clear to us from the second chapter, when we first meet Alessandra Biagini, a failing actress returned from a stint in Los Angeles back home to Brooklyn, where everything smells "like dirty sponges":

> a puzzle she'd done with her mother when she was ten or eleven was on a TV tray next to the cabinet. Dust bunnies poked from between the wilting pieces like weeds. Her father came over and sat next to her. He smelled like a dirty sponge, too.

Were this a purely plot-driven novel, Alessandra would probably be confined to a narrative corner or molded into a femme fatale. That she is neither a novelistic tool nor a voluptuous fantasy, neither altogether sexy nor chastely sexless, makes this novel stand apart from the chauvinist tendencies of the hardboiled tradition and even from some of the more "enlightened" crime novels of recent years. There are a number of characters in *Gravesend* you are sure to remember long after you've finished Boyle's novel. There are the high school boys Eugene and Sweat, who worship Ray Boy for the crime he's committed. There's Ray Boy himself, the murderer who thinks of nothing so much as death. There's Cesar, who seems straight out of Charles Dickens, except he's a gun-dealing, rap-writing purveyor of exotic birds, working out of a thrift shop back room on Mermaid Avenue. And there are all the mothers and fathers of *Gravesend*, for whom the neighborhood has become the story of their life,

the jigsaw puzzle they're never going to finish. But it is Alessandra's story that's at the heart of the novel.

Alessandra's story—and the way her story gets tangled up with the stories of Ray Boy and Conway and Eugene—may remind readers less of George Pelecanos and Dennis Lehane than of Malamud's masterpiece, *The Assistant*. In *Gravesend*, Boyle shows both a similar command of idiom (Italian-American here, rather than Yiddish-American) and a similar willingness to blend the conventions of the urban crime novel with literary realism writ large. Alessandra, like Malamud's Helen Bober, lets us, as readers, see into the life of the neighborhood, and this in part because she is so constantly conscious of the world beyond the neighborhood. "I want a larger and better life," Helen tells a young man hoping to court her (and ultimately to keep her in Brooklyn): "I want the return of my possibilities." Alessandra would sympathize, I think. She, too, wants the return of her possibilities. And I hope she finds them, as I hope someday she finds a copy of *The Assistant* among the paperbacks at East Village Books or the Strand.

Throughout *Gravesend*, Boyle's great gift is to make the reader care about his characters—to make them come alive in the reader's mind. In this, the novel is not only a display of talent; it's a rare demonstration of such talent going beyond the flash of isolate words and well-made sentences to enliven every page. This is a Brooklyn novel, yes, but it cuts the new ballyhoo Brooklyn back down to sorrowful human scale; this is a hardboiled novel, without doubt, but it has the realism of Malamud and Yates and Bukowski in its blood. The writer John Brandon has said of *Gravesend* that he "can't remember being more convinced by the people in a novel." I couldn't agree more. Fiction, even of the relatively realist variety, is a deeply mystical business. It requires a summoner of souls. And Boyle has what's required.

H. R. STONEBACK

Happy Chandler

For A. B. Chandler, Kentucky Governor, U. S. Senator, Would-be President & Commissioner of Baseball

I. Sturgis, Kentucky, 1956

I was fifteen and vaguely drifting westward, hitchhiking down the Kentucky side of the Ohio toward my goal: first sight of the Mississippi. As always, the guitar on my back made hitching easy, though many rides were short and circuitous in those days before Interstate highways. Somehow, I found myself in Sturgis when the riots happened over the black kids trying to go to the white high school. My politics were simple then, but I knew where

I stood on this issue. After all, I was a folksinger and it came with the territory. And I would sing anywhere. So I sang near the angry mob, maybe 500 or more. I sang on the street with a few counter-protesters, nothing very hard-edged, not even *If I Had a Hammer*, just *This Land is Your Land* and a few gospel choruses. It looked like that mob could get ugly and besides my goal was the Old Man so around dark I walked to the edge of town and put my thumb

out. A '49 Ford stopped: three guys inside, in their mid-twenties maybe. Driver said: "Where you headed kid?" "Paducah," I said. "Can't take you there but we'll get you somewhere. Hop in." The guy I sat next to in the back seat looked at me slit-eyed and his thin lips said: "Ain't you the boy what was singing in town a while ago?" "That was me." I saw the driver adjusting the rear-view mirror, looking back at us. Then he turned down a narrow road,

said: "We'll take the back way." He made a few more turns and I was sure we were going the wrong way. I edged closer to the door, studied the lock and the doorhandle but we were going too fast to jump out. He was hitting 80 on the straight stretches, barely slowing down on the curves and there were no other cars on the one-lane road and a only a few distant farmhouse lights. The silence in the car felt deliberate, ominous. Then the guy next

to me said: "You one of these-shere outside agitators, you and your little songs?" "No," I said. And then I thought about that new phrase I'd just read and I was happy to be called an *outside agitator* for the first time, especially since I'd thought of myself as a loner, an outsider, for a long time and while I wasn't over-agitated I always liked to stir things up. Then I said: "I don't know what those words mean." The driver turned around and looked at me: "It means

you one of Happy Chandler's nigger-loving boys?" I knew Chandler was Governor then but knew nothing about him. "Don't have the pleasure of knowing the Governor," I said. He slammed the brakes on: "You got a smart-ass tongue on you, boy. Why don't you just git out right-chere and maybe you'll meet your Governor." I got out and thought *OK is this where I get to fight all three of them*. I wish I could say I fought them,

mopped up the road with them while I chanted *freedom and justice for all* but no, they just drove away, the driver spitting on me as they scratched off. I stood there on the pitch-black road and looked around and saw no light anywhere. I didn't have a clue where I was but I knew they'd been driving away from where I had to go. I walked a long time in the blackness and then I came to a barn next to the road and decided to rest there until first light.

I went in under the hanging tobacco and froze, hearing-feeling something move, then went into the stripping room, climbed on the table where they stripped tobacco, put my shoes and guitar under my head and tried to sleep. The table was hard but I wasn't going to lie down on ground I could not see where snakes might be. After I got used to the good smell of curing tobacco I smelled something else, not-snake, and knew it must be the Ohio River. Went

to sleep smelling the river. In the early-morning light I stepped out of the barn, stretched. A man was coming toward me across the pasture driving a tractor. He stopped in front of me: "What you doing here?" "Just passing through." "Nobody passes through to anywhere on this road." He looked hard at my face, then at the guitar. Then I said: "I do believe I should be thanking you for your hospitality since I slept in your barn last night mister."

"That's an *old* song. What's a boy like you doing knowing such an old song." "I like to sing the old songs." "Yes, you do," he said. "I saw you singing in the streets of Sturgis yesterday. Whyn't you come up to the house for some breakfast." I suppose the storyteller's voice must now say the man was black though his skin was the color of the wood on my guitar. We walked up the front steps onto the porch of his small one-floor house, the porch

like everything else neat and clean and then we were inside a dark kitchen. He lit a kerosene lantern which I regarded then as a mark of privileged coolness not poverty since I loved it in the summertime when I stayed in the old family cottage on the camp-meeting grounds and we had no lights but kerosene lanterns. He stood over the gas stove a few minutes then handed me a heaping plate of biscuits and gravy. "It's all yours," he said. "Grandson

and I already had our breakfast." Starved, I dug into the delicious gravy and watched him shaking a red portable radio, trying to tune away the static, shaking it hard, trying to hear clearly the voice that was saying something about *900 National Guardsmen* and then the word *tanks* and then *Governor Happy Chandler* and finally the static quit and the voice said: *The protestors outside the school have dispersed without violence and order is restored*

in Sturgis, where the negroes will enroll in their new high school.
"Thank the good Lord and Old Happy," the man said. "Happy always done right by us, from the beginning, even long before he allowed Jackie Robinson to play big league ball." So that was how and where I first learned that Happy Chandler integrated the schools of Kentucky and major league baseball. Before that I'd read in the East Coast newspapers where I lived, heard voices on the big

network radio stations imply that Happy Chandler was a nickel-dime Dixiecrat racist, a kind of jovial buffoon who thought singing *My Old Kentucky Home* would make everything OK. I finished the plate of biscuits and gravy, cleaning the gravy off the plate with the last half-biscuit. "You got an appetite on you young man. That's a good thing." He asked where I was headed and I told him. He said he'd take me to Sturgis, get me on the right road, after he dropped

his grandson off in Corydon. I heard a basketball bouncing outside. He said he'd be leaving in a few minutes so I went outside toward the sound of the ball. When I turned the corner I saw a kid my age swishing a sweet hookshot through the old peach basket nailed to a tree that slanted over the smooth clay court at the perfect angle. He got the rebound, saw me, hit me with a perfect pass and I swished a long
jump-shot. "Good one," he said. "This court, no backboard, we got to be accurate."

We dribbled and passed showing off our best moves and shots. Then the old man, maybe 50-something, said *let's go* and the kid passed the ball to him and he sunk
a two-hand set shot from what had to be half-court distance. On the way into town,

he talked about Happy Chandler being from there, how he was the best athlete in those parts when he was a kid, then baseball, basketball, and football star in college,
then pitched a no-hitter in the minor leagues before he gave up baseball for politics.

But he kept on coaching, he loved the game, all the games. "And when he was back
here and the wrong people wa'n't looking, he'd coach and play ball with all of us. Seems like when a man loves to play ball you can count on him to do the right thing."
After we dropped his grandson off at the school in Corydon, the man said: "And one
more thing about Happy Chandler I didn't want to say with him in the car. When my
daughter, his mama, was killed in a car wreck last year the Governor sent flowers

to the funeral and a handwrote letter of sympathy." We drove on down Route 60
toward Sturgis. He stopped at a gas station and talked for a few minutes with some
older black men. They all seemed very happy. I could hear one old man saying *Ole Happy done it yessuh he done it.* When we went on down the road, he said: "There's some talk of white kids who been friendly to blacks being roughed up."
I finally told him the whole story of why I slept in his barn that night. He looked

at me: "You'uz lucky last night. You be careful on this road, all roads, you hear? Don't stop singing your songs—just be careful." In Sturgis, he drove right up to the National Guard roadblock around the highschool. We saw the tanks, the uniforms and helmets and rifles everywhere, but all was serene and the mob
was gone. Then he drove me to the edge of town and let me out on Route 60.
"You should catch a good ride to Paducah here. You remember Happy Chandler.

You remember about sports and courage and doing the right thing." "I will."
"And one more thing—why aren't you in school?" "I'll get there a few days late
but first I have to see the Mississippi." "Good luck son." "Thank you. Thanks for everything. *Sir.*" He drove away and waved and blew his horn when he passed

me going back. I got a ride right away. A white kid, said he was a college student
there to support the struggle for integration. He had a black eye and his head

was bandaged. Said three rednecks had taken him out on a back road and beat
the hell out of him. "*Three* guys?" I said. "What were they driving?" He thought
it was a '49 Ford. "You're lucky they didn't kill you." That's all I said. He was
the kind of guy you couldn't tell anything. Said he'd be happy to get back to college
in New York and continue the struggle. I didn't like the way he said *struggle.*
I tried to talk about sports but he wasn't interested. You could see he'd never

played any game. He said *don't be deceived Happy Chandler is still a racist.*
He dropped me off in Paducah. I got a ride right away with two blondes in a '56
red-and-white Chevy Bel Air convertible. We laughed a lot, sang along with Elvis
on the radio. They hadn't heard the news from Sturgis. The driver said her daddy
had voted for Happy Chandler so he must be OK. They made me move up front
tight between them playing the guitar and we sang everything they knew. They

were cheerleaders. They did some cheer-chant and both of them raised their arms
in a high-speed convertible V. I put my knee against the steering wheel. When I
finally left them in Cairo, I hiked down to the big river got up under the bridge
played a few soft licks on the guitar thinking of everything then smelling and
feeling the river flow through me thinking of nothing I fell asleep until
a tugboat pushing some barges blasted its horn and I woke at first light—

I looked at the river. I had seen the Mississippi. It was OK then.
I could hitchhike back to tenth grade. Didn't even think of *Huck Finn.*

II. Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, 1962

I don't remember talking or even thinking
about Happy Chandler again for many years
even though a few years after Sturgis I lived
in Kentucky and should have paid more attention
to local politics. And the story of Sturgis
was a good story that I wanted to tell
but there were so many stories piling up
behind me and I was living so fast and
traveling so far that even though I always said

I was a writer the stories just kept piling
up until they fell behind me untold, forgotten
on the road under the omnipresent burden
of the song of the present the dream of the future
the song that had to be sung in the living moment.

After I was expelled from college, I joined
the Marines. In '62 integration was a hotter
issue than it was in '56. Johnny T was my good
semper fi basketball buddy—we played together
on the regimental team, better than most college teams.
He also played a mean guitar and blues-harp
so we made music together—*on the base.*
As long as we were in uniform and on the base
things were OK, but when you left Lejeune
things could get tricky in J-ville and elsewhere.
Since it's a key to the story I have to say
that Johnny T was the only black guy
in my platoon. And the only other Kentuckian.
One night about six of us were in the canteen

having one of those heated sports discussions
guys will have when there's no women around.
Some baseball history junkie from Boston
kept saying Branch Rickey was the best thing
that ever happened to baseball and then—looking
at Johnny for his racial-token support the way
certain Yankee liberals always do—he underlined
his argument, saying *Without Branch Rickey*
no Jackie Robinson without Jackie no baseball.
After he said that two or three times, Johnny T
looked him in the eye and said *Bullshit it was*
Happy Chandler who put Jackie R in the bigs.
Nobody wanted to argue the point with Johnny T
and it was even conceded that Happy Chandler,

Commissioner of Major League Baseball,
really was, as he was called, "The Players'
Commissioner." This point was granted by all,
given Happy's creation of the first ballplayer's
pension fund. That was the night I remembered
and decided I had to tell Johnny T the Sturgis Story.
As athletes and entertainers, Johnny T and I agreed

that the best path to integration was through sport
and song. We might have been Civil Rights
Crusaders, outraged by history and injustice,
but we were low-key cool then and disagreed with some
paths taken and would never use the word *Crusader*
or even say the phrase *Civil Rights* but we lived it,
cared and shared the view that sports and music would

make the right thing happen. One night after
Johnny T and I played flawlessly, combined
for 60 points and our regimental team destroyed
some Carolina college team in an exhibition game—
it had to be played on base because it was
a segregated college and we had two starting
black players—we went into J-ville to some
semi-integrated club we knew and made music
together and we knew without saying anything
our vision was right. Then things got race-ugly
so we left, took a six-pack out to Onslow Beach
and I told him the Sturgis Story. Johnny T
remembered Sturgis, that was his part of Kentucky.
He was in a black school then, playing ball,

setting the courts on fire, breaking school records.
Scouts came, and he was recruited by a dozen
schools, all in the East, none in Kentucky or Indiana.
He said he never heard his family or friends
say anything bad about Happy Chandler and they
always admired his *guts* in approving Jackie
Robinson's contract. *Without Happy*, they all said,
it wouldn't have happened. Happy even came to one
of JT's games, two black high schools, and after
the game Happy said to Johnny T: "Son, I don't
care what Mr. Rupp says—I'll do everything
in my power to see you play basketball in Kentucky."
But Chandler's power was slipping away by then,
it didn't happen JT said *and here I am in the Marines*.

I lost touch with Johnny T after I left the Marines
but I later heard that he went to Vietnam. I hope he came
back. Once I thought I heard his voice and harp on some
small-label blues release but band information and names
were hard to come by when you couldn't google anything.

I hadn't really remembered Johnny T for years until that
brouhaha at UK over Happy's use of the N-word
at some meeting when he was 88 years old. Professors
and students, black and white, marched, protested,
demanding that Racist Chandler be dismissed
from the UK Board of Trustees. I wondered then
what my old friend in Sturgis and Johnny T would say.
But all I had for sure was the memory of biscuits
and gravy and *semper fi* games and riffs with Johnny T.

III. New York, 1988

I hadn't thought of Happy Chandler in decades.
Didn't know he was alive. Then, suddenly,
age 88, he was back in the news.
After a lecture by some sport and cultural historian
on the role of sport in the long struggle for integration—
in which he stressed Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson
and never mentioned Happy Chandler—I went outside
on campus. There was some kind of demonstration
in progress, a few marchers with signs, something
about race. One sign read: *Unhappy Chandler—*
the only good racist is a dead racist.

It seemed a little harsh, as such signs must be,
an ungracious thing to say about somebody
nearly a century old.
I hold no brief for Happy Chandler:
I've never read a book about him
and have no intention of doing so.
I did meet him once and I knew that day
I had stories that must be told.

IV. Versailles, Kentucky, 1962: Happy Chandler's Refrigerator

In '62 I drove the big delivery truck
for the Lexington Sears and Roebuck.
My truck-mate, called *Tiny*, was 6-foot-4
300-some pounds. We were the heavy
items specialists. Delivered a big refrigerator
to Happy Chandler's house in Versailles,
right after the last time he was Governor.
Happy was very friendly, joked, asked me

if I filled the refrigerator full of groceries.
I said, "No sir, I'm a poet, a singer,
so it's full of poems and songs for you."
He gave me a strange smile, opened the door,
stood there staring at the empty shelves,
then said: "I see that now. Bless you my son
thanks for the songs and poems."

He said *maybe you'll go down in history*
as the neglected poet who delivered a refrigerator
full of poems to the famous Governor of Kentucky.
Said lightly, it did not sound as self-absorbed
as those words now look in print.
Same goes for my reply: *maybe you'll go down*
in history as the neglected governor who received
a refrigerator full of poems from a famous poet.
We both laughed. "That's the spirit, son," he said.
"You're not from around here are you?
Where you from?" "Jessamine County," I said.
"Before that," he said. "I was born in Pennsylvania
if that's what you mean." Still holding the door
open, looking at the bins and shelves of poems
and songs I believe he truly envisioned, he said:

"Then let's sing that song by that old
Pennsylvania Foster-child of Kaintuck"—
he sang "My Old Kentucky Home"
and I harmonized with him. Tiny added the bass.
(Later, Tiny said *he sings that song*
with everybody. I said *OK but today*
he sang it with and for me.) Sense of Place
in a Kenmore refrigerator.
"*Kin you get more poems in there*,"
Happy said, "or is that a pun beyond your ken?"
"Been singing *D'ye Ken John Peel*
since I was ten." "You're quick, son."
Then he offered us a sandwich. We sat down
and ate. He apologized for the meager fare.
Said Mildred was out making preparations
for his birthday party that night.
"Risky business being in Versailles
on Bastille Day," he laughed.
I said it was my birthday, too,

and I was happy to be in Versailles
and honored to celebrate my birthday with him.
He said Ver-*sigh* to prove he knew French.
I said Ver-*sales* to prove I was Kentuckian.
Tiny asked him how his campaign
for a third term as Governor was going.
I didn't know anything about it.
Happy said: "On Bastille Day, especially
in Versailles, it's an appropriate
political reflection to say that good works
often lead to a Reign of Terror."

He changed the subject to UK basketball.
Looks like we're in for a rough season.
All we got is Cotton Nash. Tiny agreed.
Then he said *Our boy Stoney here played*
at Memorial Coliseum, was recruited
by Rupp after he burned Billy Ray Lickert
in a pre-season exhibition game.
Happy was interested: *Who'd you play for?*
"Asbury," I said. "My daddy wanted me
to be a preacher," Happy said. "I'm a poet-singer
not a preacher. Tiny here's the preacher." (Tiny
did preach on weekends.) It was a strange
conversation and I downplayed my basketball
exploits that Tiny overstated. Said that when I switched
off on Lickert I blocked a couple of his shots. Scored

a few on him. Said I liked Billy Ray and he
was one hell of a shooter. *All-American and*
Mr. Basketball too Happy said and stared
at me: *If you'd played for Rupp you could be*
Governor on that alone. "I didn't want
to play for Rupp and I don't want to be Governor."
That's right you're a poet-singer. Rupp might be
an SOB and a racist artifact but he's one hell of a coach.
The sports-talk wound down, the sandwiches were gone.
It was time to leave and Happy walked us to the door.
He shook my hand and held it, putting his other hand
there, too: *Your poems won't spoil in my refrigerator,*
son. You can rest easy on that subject. And don't
forget what we sang on our birthday and how
and where we sang it. "I won't forget, sir."

As we backed the truck out of the driveway,
Tiny yelled: "Give 'em hell, Happy!" Mr. Governor-
Senator-Baseball-Commissioner-almost-President
Chandler stood there, waving goodbye to us.
On the drive back to Lexington, Tiny filled me in
on Chandler's history—*star athlete, young political star,*
almost Roosevelt's running mate, always believed
he was destined to be President. In 1960 he sought
the Democratic nomination. Said JFK was a nice
young feller but not ready yet. What Happy can't see
is that his time is over. He ain't made for television.
He won't win his third term as Governor either, but
he'll keep on trying. Ain't no man ever done more good
for this state and more good for sports in this country
than ole Happy Chandler. He'll always have my vote.

That night, on stage at a country music joint down
the street from Rupp's Memorial Coliseum, I wanted
to sing *My Old Kentucky Home* for Happy
but the crowd wanted more Elvis and Buddy Holly.
I thought about Happy's easy jovial ways like certain
athletes, singers, and politicians, and though I was still
a kid I think I already believed that when it came
to politicians it was a matter of the greater the charm,
the greater the corruption. I hoped I was wrong,
hoped all the stories I'd heard proved me wrong.
And I resolved not to forget that Happy kept my dream-songs
and poems in his refrigerator. But I almost forgot.
Until 50 years later, Derby Day 2013, I looked at TV,
and smiled at my Kentucky Colonel Commission received
the week before, made my mintless julep in New York—

> then sang loud along with the entire sporting world
> of Kentucky and the vast wide earth of the great derby
> *My Old Kentucky Home* and Happy Chandler sang with me

1988/2013

ROBERT AND MARY BAGG

Back Where Safety Was: Richard Wilbur in Childhood (1921-1938)[1]

Growing up in North Caldwell in what amounted to a little British colony, it was understood that anything British was better than anything American, at least contemporaneously. Of course we felt that George Washington was better than George III.

—Richard Wilbur, April 2006[2]

In "This Pleasing Anxious Being," written at age seventy-seven, Richard Wilbur opens each of the three stanzas with a memory from his childhood. The poem's title comes from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," in which Gray reflects on the lives of those buried there and, in the lines that follow here, imagines a ghost who hovers over a grave and revisits scenes from the very life he has just departed: "For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, / This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned, / Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day, / Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?" To paraphrase this compressed eighteenth-century diction: *What dying person, about to be silently forgotten by his community, ever departed from life or the comfort of life around him without looking back, longing to remain?* Thus the context in which Wilbur presents his own life (and invites us to explore it through his poem) comes into view.

Each childhood scene unfolds from a slightly raised vantage that, combined with the poem's gentle but pervasive consciousness of death's approach, evokes the posthumous tone of Gray's newly deceased villager. In each stanza Wilbur looks back and then feels time pulsing him forward. He accentuates that feeling of immersion in life's flow with photography and painting, artistic genres that often influence our memories by reifying and lifting them from their contexts. He begins abruptly with a glimpse of his family's dinner table on a day in the mid-1920s:

1.
In no time you are back where safety was,
Spying upon the lambent table where
Good family faces drink the candlelight
As in a manger scene by de La Tour.
Father has finished carving at the sideboard
And mother's hand has touched a little bell,
So that, beside her chair, Roberta looms
With serving bowls of yams and succotash.
When will they speak, or stir? They wait for you
To recollect that, while it lived, the past
Was a rushed present, fretful and unsure.
The muffled clash of silverware begins,
With ghosts of gesture, with a laugh retrieved,
And the warm, edgy voices you would hear:
Rest for a moment in that resonance.
But see your small feet kicking under the table,
Fiercely impatient to be off and play.

As the octogenarian poet hovers over the table he at first spies a reassuring scene of "good family faces," illuminated by candlelight and compared to Georges de La Tour's nativity painting. (The dramatic chiaroscuro of this otherwise serene canvas conjures an uneasy premonition Wilbur will introduce in the second stanza, with the appearance of a shadow across a photograph, as if cast by the angel of death.) The maid Roberta, having been summoned by the mother's bell, "looms" while the family sits, unnaturally frozen in the lines of verse, waiting until "ghosts of gestures" from the poet's memory disturb the artificial tableau, the place "where safety was." Wilbur then recollects that while actually living it, "the past / Was a rushed present, fretful and unsure," and that as a child he was anxious to bolt from the table (and from the adult edginess he observed there). A few biographical details will help to complete this picture.

Richard Purdy Wilbur was born in New York City on March 1, 1921. He grew up in the rural village of North Caldwell, New Jersey, living with his parents and younger brother Lawrie in a house at the southeastern edge of a sprawling gentleman's farm created by Joshua Dickinson Armitage, a booming-voiced British-born industrialist, known to Wilbur and others who lived on the estate as "Uncle."

Wilbur's father, Lawrence Lazear Wilbur (1893–1976), had left his hometown of Omaha at seventeen to study at the Art Students League of New York and eventually became a freelance commercial artist. Though he hadn't the public recognition that J. C. Leyendecker, Norman Rockwell,

or Howard Chandler Christy enjoyed, he was just as sought after by ad agencies and lithographic companies. His poster commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Red Cross in 1931, for which a New York model named Marie Bard achieved fame when she posed as a nurse, was made into a two-cent U.S. postage stamp, and during World War II several of his posters addressed Uncle Sam's need for working women to support the war effort. In midcareer, at a time when technical advances in photography led to diminished commissions for magazine illustrators, Lawrence left a practice that had also included billboard-sized portraits of each year's "Rheingold Girl" and frequent *Saturday Evening Post* and *Colliers* covers to become a successful portraitist and a devoted landscape painter, not unhappily escaping the four-color limitations of lithography to experiment with casein and watercolor.

In the second section of "This Pleasing Anxious Being," two artifacts frame a scene that takes place on the Maine coast where the family vacationed: a photo of a picnic party, and a painting in progress (by Wilbur's father).

> 2
> The shadow of whoever took the picture
> Reaches like Azrael's across the sand
> Toward grown-ups blithe in black and white, encamped
> Where surf behind them floods a rocky cove.
> They turn with wincing smiles, shielding their eyes
> Against the sunlight and the future's glare,
> Which notes their bathing caps, their quaint maillots,
> The wicker picnic hamper then in style,
> And will convict them of mortality.
> Two boys, however, do not plead with time,
> Distracted as they are by what?—perhaps
> A whacking flash of gull-wings overhead—
> While off to one side, with his back to us,
> A painter, perched before his easel, seeing
> The marbled surges come to various ruin,
> Seeks out of all those waves to build a wave
> That shall in blue summation break forever.

These lines invite close reading: Wilbur's grammatical economy, which pairs the nouns "sunlight" and "glare," enables the verb "notes" to acquire not only perceptive power, but also to confer backward on "glare" the judging and killing force of time itself. That word "glare"—an unusual personification—portrays the future as a glowering prosecutor/judge who uses the photo as evidence to "convict" the people it captures "of mortality." Wilbur thus exposes a strange though mundane aspect of our culture's affection for the family photo album. These Kodaks of

yesteryear exert over time their power to both preserve and doom their human subjects.

Also present, within the very photo Wilbur describes, is an image that transcends a photo's ability to freeze time: Wilbur's father painting a wave. What the father sees, as his son recalls it, is "the marbled surges [coming] to various ruin." Though "marbled surges" nicely catches the white inlay of foam within the swelling darker water, it also involves us in real and historical time by connecting the waves to their imminent breaking or "ruin," as if the wave were an artifact (which of course it is becoming on the canvas). One word choice characterizes Wilbur's unflagging resourcefulness at the most critical moments in this poem: he calls the welling up of the water, just before it breaks, a "summation." But artist and ocean also come together in that word as the artist's imagination sums up many waves from reality's repertoire to paint and preserve the perfect one. Here is a beach scene, unlike the photo's, that has literally no downside, no mortal undertow.

In the third and final section of "This Pleasing Anxious Being," Wilbur will continue to frame events through the play of artistic technology, beginning with a scene in which the family travels to visit his maternal grandparents in Baltimore.

Wilbur's mother, Helen Ruth Purdy Wilbur, was the daughter of a prominent Baltimore newspaperman, Clarence Melvyn Purdy, who worked for most of his career at the *Baltimore Sun*, moving through the ranks to become its city editor. Helen often spoke about her childhood memory of hearing the laughter of H. L. Mencken, one of the paper's eminent contributors, when he came to dinner: it "began at the door and never stopped until he went out" (RW, 27 Jan. 2006). When Wilbur was a boy, his grandfather, whom everyone at the paper fondly called Pop, took him to the *Sun* offices to shake hands with Mencken, Frank Kent and the cartoonists Edmund Duffy and Richard Q. Yardley. (This exposure to journalism as a literary and visual medium influenced Wilbur's early ideas in pursuit of a career.)

Looking again at "This Pleasing Anxious Being," notice how in the third section Wilbur's swift cuts from one scene to the next, as well as the word "flicker" in the last line, invoke the medium of cinema, new to popular culture during his childhood:

> 3
> Wild, lashing snow, which thumps against the windshield,
> Like earth tossed down upon a coffin-lid,
> Half clogs the wipers, and our Buick yaws
> On the black roads of 1928.
> Father is driving; Mother, leaning out,

Tracks with her flashlight beam the pavement's edge,
And we must weather hours more of storm
To be in Baltimore at Christmastime.
Of the two children in the backseat, safe
Beneath a lap-robe, soothed by jingling chains
And by their parents' pluck and gaiety,
One is asleep. The other's half-closed eyes
Make out at times the dark hood of the car
Ploughing the eddied flakes, and might foresee
The steady chugging of a landing craft
Through morning mist to the bombarded shore,
Or, a deft prow that dances through the rocks
In the white water of the Allagash,
Or in good time, the bedstead at whose foot
The world will swim and flicker and be gone.

That cinematic focus seems to imply: *what we see is all we know, the rest is inference; our lives are films that, like poems, flash forward and must always end*. As the car plunges toward Baltimore through snow, its momentum in the dark gives the child a foretaste of the thrust he will ride throughout (and finally out of) time. Wilbur disperses this thrust among three other vehicles, all of them relevant because they too impart an awareness of danger and mortality to the person who once rode in them, whether they were real or metaphorical. The black hood of the yawing Buick morphs first into the landing craft that carried the poet to an embattled French Riviera beach on August 15, 1944, then into the "deft prow" riding over stomach-churning rapids in the Allagash—Wilbur admits that this river appears in the poem only because he liked the sound of its name, and that the "stomach-churning" can characterize any number of real-life experiences and adventures—then into the bed in which he will die. The family car is transformed into a ship of death, crossing imagined waters over a lifetime.

Wilbur's construction of the stanza's last sentence demonstrates his mastery of precise and powerful implication. "The world will swim and flicker and be gone," while the hovering anxious being remains the observer of his earthly life, just like Gray's ghost. Thus Wilbur quietly asserts his belief that the soul is immortal. The projection of his earlier self—as a boy with "half-closed eyes" who "might foresee" the dangers and death that lie ahead as snow thumps the windshield like clods of dirt on a coffin-lid—implies a prefiguration that also has the feel of predestination. The entire poem, like his father's breaking wave, is a *summation* of mortality as an invisible tidal force that shapes and darkens vivid childhood memories. Where those memories lead evokes the most famous line

Gray wrote, a line also from his "Churchyard Elegy" and the poem's implicit epigraph: "The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Because "This Pleasing Anxious Being" works as a summation of the way Wilbur has come to terms with his mortality through memory (now that so many of the physical attributes and people in the scenes are no longer present to bear witness), we have presented it to our readers—either those who have just begun to read about Wilbur, or those who have followed him over the years of his long career—in the first chapter of our biographical study and discussion of his work. As Louise Bogan wrote in her 1947 *New Yorker* review of his first book of poems, *The Beautiful Changes*, "Let us watch Richard Wilbur; he is composed of valid ingredients."

Orchards, Meadows, and the Deep Tangled Wildwood

In 1923, when Richard Wilbur was two, his father, Lawrence Lazear Wilbur, met a British expatriate named Joshua Dickinson Armitage on a golf course in northern New Jersey. The men played their round with an Englishman named Stanley Pigeon, a mutual acquaintance. Armitage took a shine to Lawrence and offered him and his family, for minimal rent, residence in a handsome pre-Revolutionary-era stone house on Greenbrook Road, part of the otherwise British-style estate he was building for himself on 450 acres. Across the road, on property purchased from Armitage, lived Stanley Pigeon and his wife Helen. Lawrence Wilbur had met Stanley—whose "extraordinary career . . . doing this and that" included stints as a cowboy and on a naval training ship, where he served with the British poet John Masefield—while they were both enrolled at the Art Students League (RW, 27 Jan. 2006).

Armitage, a Yorkshireman who was born circa 1866, had immigrated to Boston's Beacon Hill from Manchester with his wife and a servant, listing his occupation in the 1890 census as a fabric designer. He held the patent for oilcloth and subsequently owned successful textile and paint-manufacturing operations in Newark (New Jersey), and New England. In the early 1920s, then a widower, he populated his North Caldwell "farm" with a British-accented community of relatives including the Nashes (his niece and her florist husband), friends and business associates (for one, a lawyer named Habberton), and other kindred spirits. Armitage maintained he had left England because of its landed gentry's disdain for men who made their fortunes "in trade." That may have been the only aristocratic prejudice he rejected, for he retained the British aristocracy's Tory politics, albeit naturalized into reflexive, anti-FDR Republicanism. More congenially for the open-minded Lawrence and his wife Helen, those who lived on the estate in various separate dwellings were, in Richard Wilbur's words, "decent, attractive, civilized, kind, and gay." Uncle

presided over his domain as if he had been born to the Manor he created, and young Wilbur came to believe "that if the British did it, it was better" (RW, 27 Jan. 2006).

The estate, a multifaceted and instructive environment in which to grow up, offered Wilbur his first glimpse of adult society. The grown-ups organized cocktail parties and dinners, played bridge, lawn-bowled, and competed at tennis, although Uncle himself never appeared on the court. Wilbur describes the court, which was right across the dirt road from the Wilbur house, as "rather strange."

> [Armitage had] laid it out in the wrong direction so that the sun was always in someone's eyes, and it was surrounded by Japanese honeysuckle which flourished there and was very deep so that every ball that went over the fence took a lot of cussing to retrieve. I've never seen a surface like that since. It was fine gravel, so that one had to drag and roll between sets; it became very dug up by people's sliding on it. But nevertheless it was not a bad court, and it was a very important center of the farm for everybody involved. (RW, 9 Dec. 2005)

Either church or tennis occurred on Sunday mornings. "The flavor of both was remarkably similar," Wilbur remembers. "The rules for behavior were very strict, and it was a very high-minded sort of game." His early religious education was somewhat less intense.

> We did say grace at dinnertime. I don't think we did for lunch, and it was never a long one . . . probably a brisk saying of "For what we are about to receive let us be thankful." My father would never have been the one to say the grace. He'd been raised in the Presbyterian Church, but not much raised. He didn't care for the piety. He'd go to the Episcopal Church down in Montclair sometimes at my mother's instance, and he come away saying, "Luke White seemed to talk sense this morning." He wanted people to talk sense and therefore had a resistance to a lot of religious talk. On some Sundays when my family was otherwise occupied I was taken by the head gardener of the farm to a nearby Baptist Sunday School, where we sang marvelous, rousing hymns and were given little tracts illustrated in terrible colors. (RW, 19 Dec. 2005)

The social spirit on the farm was cordial, inclusive, and respectful, though there were disruptions. One evening during the crisis that surrounded the abdication of King Edward VIII, Armitage declared thrice-married Wallis Simpson to be little better than a common whore. Mrs. Habberton shot her chair back—*Uncle, I cannot stay at this table any longer*, she fumed—and abruptly left the room. The Nashes, who took a

romantic view of Edward and Wallis, were distraught as well. Wilbur remembers the issue "caused a real division" and "broke up the universal admiration of England" held by most on the farm.

But civility returned and prevailed, especially when Armitage's celebrity friends visited. Uncle arranged one afternoon for Helen to invite Sir Harry Lipton, the tea and America's Cup magnate, to the Wilbur home for some late afternoon refreshment. On bidding goodbye he complimented her, saying she was as charming as an English hostess. She replied, "And you, Sir, have the manners of a Southern gentleman" (RW, 4 April 2006).

Wilbur's mother was lively, literate but not learned, and driven—a perfectionist. She was also an expert whistler who encouraged her eldest son's eclectic enthusiasms, from cartooning to short wave radio. Helen's upbringing in Baltimore, a city with a strict black–white dividing line, complicated to some degree the Wilbur family's relationship to the black servants they occasionally employed during Dick and his brother's childhood. The first of the servants came to Helen's aid while she suffered from exhaustion after a miscarriage when the boys were very young. Wilbur's wife Charlee—who got to know her in-laws intimately, living with them when Wilbur was in the army during World War II—described Helen as "strong of will but not of body. . . . This driving nature of hers made her crash periodically, and it turned out later that she had blood sugar problems with attendant fatigue" (CW, 9 Mar. 2006).

Charlee also sensed that the cloistered ambience of the farm, with Helen in the midst of people who had more money than she and Lawrence, exacerbated Helen's aspiring social desires and thus compounded the stress of running the household. Wilbur's "Tears" (published in a journal in 1949, but never in one of his books), suggests that his own class-consciousness remained acute at least into his late twenties. Wilbur begins the poem by sarcastically describing the rich, with all the "burdens" their possessions and privilege entail: "The straight old men with scalloped skulls who bear / The Atlas weight of eighty years of ease." In the last stanza, after categorizing them as ignorant, insatiable, and unappreciative, he can only hope they get to experience what they've missed: "Pale porters of our wealth, who may not see / The least magnificence with grateful eye, / O takers of our ease, sad spenders whom / The world can tease but never satisfy / I wish you other lives beyond the tomb, / Of hunger, loss and sweet anxiety." Wilbur remembers that reading "Tears" circa 1947 at a lawn party—most likely hosted by Helen Pigeon on the occasion of his visit, and attended by friends and family members of Armitage who lived on the estate in various rental property or sale arrangements—failed to upset his parents' moneyed neighbors. They were

telling themselves, with some truth as Wilbur agreed, that they weren't "that kind" of rich. *And isn't that Wilbur boy a wonder?*

The Wilbur's eighteenth-century stone house, venerable enough to be counted among those where George Washington spent a night, had small rooms by 1920s standards. A large kitchen had been added to its rear to feed the hands before Uncle's day, when the estate first became a farm. There was room enough for a servant's bedroom and bathroom, an ideal situation because the family never boarded more than one servant at a time. One man, Raymond, made a lasting impression on Wilbur.

> Raymond . . . was a pretty good cook, and when not cooking would whip on a cap and become chauffeur, and then appear in another rig as a butler; I remember him with delight. . . . He had an amorous setback at one time. A new [child's model] typewriter had been given me and on it he typed, for the sake of a "true confessions" magazine, I suppose, a story called "My Stolen Love" [that] was never published. But he ruined my typewriter in the process. (RW, 27 Jan. 2006)

Once when Helen and Lawrence were away, the servants had an unauthorized party—"marvelous and spirited," as Wilbur recalls it. During that gathering a man taught Wilbur to pare an apple so the peel fell away in one unbroken, spiraling strip. When he demonstrated this trick to his mother, Helen responded with suspicion about the circumstances of this tutorial: "What are you trying to tell me?" Although Helen worked hard to be inoffensive, and genuinely liked the people she and Lawrence employed, she made a few unconscious slips. One evening at the dinner table, calling attention to her son's table manners, she commanded, "Dickie Wilbur, you eat like a white man" (RW, 27 Jan. 2006). Roberta, another of the black servants Wilbur became attached to—she's the maid who "looms" over the dining room table with a platter in "This Pleasing Anxious Being"—was passing more vegetables right then, in real life. Everyone at the table winced. But Roberta, however she felt, remained outwardly cheerful.

In "A Summer Morning" Wilbur imagines two servants relishing quietude—taking in the order and beauty of the household and in the natural world—as their young "masters," who had partied too hard the previous night, decide to sleep in past breakfast. The female cook sees "the jelly where it should be on the shelf / . . . and hears / The sweet efficient sounds of thrush and catbird, and the snip of shears / Where, in the terraced backward of the grounds / A gardener works before the heat of day." Wilbur's distinction in the lines below, between what one can satisfyingly *possess* and what one can obliviously *own*, conjures a similar judgment made in "Tears."

His young employers having gotten in late,
He and the cook alone
Receive the morning on their old estate,
Possessing what the owners can but own.

Though Armitage's emigration from Manchester was driven in part by class resentments, Wilbur surmises that Uncle "wanted to set up as a country squire. He had the money at least initially to do so . . . [but] less money as time went on. The scale of the farm was such that it can't ever have been profitable. . . . The whole thing was charming, professional—he had good employees—but uneconomic," with saddle horses, milk cows, a bull, chickens, pigs, orchards, extensive vegetable and flower gardens, and hayfields. A crew of farmers and gardeners allowed Wilbur and Lawrie to interfere in (or at least observe) all their operations. As Wilbur recalls:

> I was involved in everything, tolerated as a child by the hands and allowed to participate in all sorts of exciting things like the spraying of the orchards and the killing of the pigs. I didn't kill a pig, but I was there when they were killed. They make an awful noise. I think if I was older I would have found some of this horrifying. But I found it fascinating as a child. Chopping off chickens' heads seemed the normal thing, and I thought it was funny when a chicken was decapitated and the body thrown out the window to run around for a while. . . . There was a lot of fun about it; I was allowed to ride in the hay wagon and bring the hay into the barn. And the shooting of the silage up into the tower, and of course a farm like that is wonderful for playing games in, although Lawrie and I were repeatedly asked not to climb on the tiled roofs. (RW, 4 April 2006)

However matter-of-fact Wilbur's acceptance of death among the barnyard animals, the loss his beloved dog triggered in Wilbur childhood responses of fear, grief, and guilt. The collie, named Brownie, was struck by a car and dragged by its hit-and-run occupants into the honeysuckle at the edge of the farm's tennis court. In "The Pardon," published in *Ceremony*, the dog lay dead long enough for him "To sniff the heavy honeysuckle-smell / Twined with another odor heavier still." Afraid—"In my kind world the dead were out of range"—the ten-year-old Wilbur, transfixed, can approach no closer. His father buries the dog. This failure of nerve inspires a dream in which the dog is still alive: while "death was breeding in his lively eyes / I started in to cry and call his name, / Asking forgiveness of his tongueless head. / . . . I dreamt the past was never past redeeming." This dream moment enables the poet to achieve physiological and moral closure, since mourning happens within the psyche of the mourner, where dead creatures do indeed still live.

This exposure to life and death of the farm's flora and fauna grounded Wilbur's imagination in the natural world—not the usually vague and distant landscape Wordsworth spiritualizes but one precisely and intimately observed with a budding naturalist's informed eye and exact vocabulary. Wilbur's early enthusiasm for the world of the farm moved him to learn from books and observe in meadows, fields, orchards, and streams the life cycles of insects, creatures, and plants, which became the inspiration for the metaphoric structure of many poems, notably "Cicadas" (written in 1943), "Water Walker," which uses the caddis fly as a trope (1945), and "Mayflies" (1999).

Wilbur has been considered a religious poet (at least one-third of his published poems are clearly so inflected) but almost never a visionary one. When his visionary quality does surface in poems that recount a dream or memory, it subtly imbues his earthy and earthly imagery, carrying readers through a cycle from life to death and beyond. Of his six poems set (or beginning) on the farm, all of which qualify as visionary, two warrant mention here: "He Was," published in *Ceremony*, and "Running," from *Walking to Sleep* (1969).[3]

The title of "He Was" runs right into the first of its eighteen lines, "a brown old man with a green thumb." The sounds Wilbur hears from the gardener "all my childhood long" come not from the man's mouth but from his tools: the *screak* of his hoe and the "*chug, choke, and high madrigal wheeze*" of his spray-cart soaking the orchard's trees. In the poem's last lines Wilbur finally experiences a language (unheard now, but seen), a "voice" the old man expertly cultivated during his working life.

> Having planted a young orchard with so great care
> In that last year that none was lost, and May
> Aroused them all, the leaves saying the land's
> Praise for the livening clay,
> And the found voice of his buried hands
> Rose in the sparrowy air.

In these lines Wilbur not only demonstrates his belief in a benign higher power at work in the world, but he also celebrates the gardener's connectedness to it, registering pleasure to see a man's labor come to fruition after his death. For Wilbur, the gardener's legacy of flowering trees sends a message as meaningful as (or more meaningful than) any rendered by the spoken word. In evermore ambitious poems over the decades he continues to explore the way the natural and spiritual world reflect each other.

In the first stanza of "Running," dated 1933 and set in North Caldwell, Wilbur recalls his fondness in childhood for playing games like prisoner's base, propelling himself with "whacking keds" at a good clip, then vault-

ing airborne and sidewise off a hummock—too young to tire or even to fear tiring. In the second stanza Wilbur is among spectators ("we fathers and our little sons") as Boston Marathon runners sweep by on Patriots Day in Wellesley, "stamping on the sun" as they ascended Heartbreak Hill. The third and final stanza finds Wilbur pushing fifty, jogging up out of the woods bordering his home in Cummington, Massachusetts, slowing "to a swagger there / . . . A good ache in my rib cage," and then heading down to "Where the road turns and debouches, / the land sinks westward into exhausted pasture." The poem ends after he meets two boys throwing rocks and chasing a dog as it yaps and flushes out a pheasant "flying full tilt already," lifting itself from "blustery" grass.

Imagery in all three stanzas evokes movement (of humans, flora, and fauna, in varying degrees) toward and away from the heavens. Such activity brings to mind the "going" away from and "coming back" to earth in Robert Frost's "Birches," as well as its famous line, "One could do worse than be a swinger of birches." The poem, which begins with Frost admiring saplings bent nearly to the ground, is often interpreted as a desire for a temporary escape, through the imaginings of childhood, from the real world and the adult rationale that explains it. Frost, as the poem's narrator, would prefer to think that youngsters who swayed through the air on the pliant tree trunks caused them to bow so low, not "Truth . . . With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm."

But Wilbur conjures more than Frost does in "Birches" with the longing to dip in and out of the pleasures of boyhood exuberance. In the third stanza of "Running" he reflects on an intrinsic value of life that humans search for and want to cling to, first by acknowledging the near impossibility of possessing or even recognizing it:

> What is the thing which men will not surrender?
> It is what they have never had, I think,
> Or missed in its true season.

Wilbur, who in the poem is "still part of that great going" himself, thinking the "thoughts that turn in / At the same roadhouse nightly, the same cloister," is thus running too in pursuit of something he alone cannot sustain. His answer is to take that joy from childhood—"Thinking of that, I think of happiness," the North Caldwell stanza concludes—and bestow it as best he can on the future: "I make a clean gift of my young running / To the two boys who break into view." In both "Running" and "He Was," Wilbur's role as a visionary poet is grounded in the idea of legacy, of spirit invested and reborn.

Joshua Armitage was something of a Maecenas: it was his generosity to an artist that brought the Wilburs to his estate in 1923. In December

1928, perhaps as a Christmas gift to his patron, Lawrence created a whimsical watercolor map of the property.

Under a banner with the title "A portion of the estate of Mr. J. D. Armitage in North Caldwell, N.J.," Lawrence painted an unfurled scroll with a key to the map and the following disclaimer: "A graphic design executed with an eye for depicting a few salient details and interesting truths rather than accurately conforming to the physical facts." The compass arrow points "somewhat North," and the main locations, labeled A, B, C, and D, are identified, respectively, as The Orchard, The Meadow, The Deep Tangled Wildwood, and The Old Oaken Bucket (the latter planted in front of the Wilbur abode). Besides houses, outbuildings, and farm structures like the silo and the chicken coop, other notable features of the landscape include the misaligned tennis court and the swimming pool. With a quirky sensibility (one that the young Richard Wilbur seems to have observed, internalized, and then expressed in even the earliest of his sketches and cartoons), Lawrence leaves the tennis court and swimming pool uninhabited but illustrates the actions that in real life would take place on or in them—namely, serving a ball, doing the crawl stroke, and diving—on a patch of painted lawn. And lest an important activity be overlooked (hunting, bird watching, planting, or frolicking, for instance), disembodied hands point their fingers at various human and animal figures so engaged, scattered as they are throughout the map in woods, meadows, and cultivated fields.

Lawrence and Helen after some years bought the stone house. Armitage built a north-lit studio for Lawrence, where he could pose his portrait clients on a dais. But Lawrence kept his studio on Twenty-Third Street in Manhattan, necessary for his commercial work and contacts, and commuted to it from North Caldwell. For young Wilbur, his father's urban workplace offered a different base from which to investigate and explore. He haunted bookstores and magazine vendors, acquiring and reading much current fiction and a huge range of political journalism, including the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses*. (Curiously, says Wilbur, his family never had a subscription to the *New Yorker*, but their modest house was full of copies of *Town and Country* and other magazines with images that would inspire scenes and settings for his father's commercial work.)

And yet Lawrence, who was "utterly devoted to painting," found nothing more relaxing after a tiring day at his easel than to sit in a chair turning the pages of art books, all of which became part of Wilbur's own collection after Lawrence's death. Art (in practice and as a subject of historical study) pervaded the household in Wilbur's childhood. The influence is palpable, not only in references to paintings (like the Georges de La Tour in "This Pleasing Anxious Being") and in whole poems about

them (as with "Wyeth's Milk Cans"), but also in a remarkable essay Wilbur wrote while a graduate student at Harvard, in which he distinguished Degas's approach to representation from that of his Impressionist contemporaries.

In an interview with Wilbur in 2007, the subject of "modesty" crept in and out of the conversation. "I don't believe in a modesty gene," Wilbur exclaimed, talking about the way fixed personality traits were portrayed in characters of the seventeenth-century dramatist Pierre Corneille's *The Theatre of Illusion*, which Wilbur was translating at the time.[4] Before long Wilbur settled into reminiscing first about his upbringing and then about his father:

> I am sure I was encouraged by my parents to be modest about any little thing I'd done, and there were a lot of negative terms for those who were not. . . . I don't remember my father as saying a bragging thing, and he was the sort of person who is good at everything he does. And he was never daunted on the croquet court or anywhere else. When he was dying my father . . . had a feeling which many dying men must have, that he was going to disappear without a trace. And he said to me during our last conversation, "All my paintings are scattered all over the place; you're lucky, all your stuff is in books." And I said to him, "But Dad, a book can sit on the bookcase untouched for decades, whereas your paintings are up on the walls and people are looking at them and in many cases admiring them." And he agreed, tentatively, 'Yes, I guess that's true.'" (RW, 29 Oct. 2007)

An Adolescent Neck Stuck Out for the Yoke of Adulthood

Wilbur's private and public persona—long remarked upon by those fortunate to have spent time in his presence, whether those are counted as friends or in the audience at a reading—is one of utmost grace and eloquence. It is odd to imagine him otherwise, but *odd* is exactly how he described himself in adolescence, all the while admitting that the feeling is more or less what being an adolescent means for us all.

> I was thinking last night about my early years, and partly because we lived so far out in the country. . . . I felt like an odd bird when I was young, and I gradually became capable of the sort of ease and complacency it seems to me that some people are born with. Having had these thoughts about my feelings of oddity I thought maybe that's of no interest at all, maybe that's what everybody feels. Not everybody will own up to it, but I think of the teenagers I have known and it seems to me that most of them have had an awkwardness and inner agony going on. If there's anything interesting about me to tell [in

> that regard] it's mostly the struggle to find out to what uses I could put my verbalism. I enjoyed drawing pictures and using words and I've tried all kinds of ways of doing both. (RW, 27 Jan. 2006)

When Richard Wilbur was eight years old *John Martin's Children's Magazine* accepted his poem "Nightingales," a precocious but otherwise unremarkable submission, at least considered in the context of his second submission. That poem, "Puppies," ignited a set of poetic reflexes that has stayed with him throughout his life. One word in it will jump out at Wilbur fans:

> Said puppy one to puppy two,
> "I'm just the opposite from you.
> I always love a good hard scrub
> In a little wooden tub."
>
> Said puppy two to puppy one,
> "I was like that when I'd begun,
> But now I hate a good scrub
> In a little wooden tub."

Wilbur's fascination with "opposites" sparked an entire poetic genre drawn from the oddities of language; it extended his own mastery of lexical mayhem into a series of playful books: *Opposites* (1973), *More Opposites* (1991), and a collected volume of "opposites" with the addition of *A Few Differences* (2000), all self-illustrated in a style he began to develop with some notoriety in grammar school. Other books of verse, "for children and others," followed. In *The Pig in the Spigot* (2001) he delights in exposing shorter words hidden in longer ones, and then creates perfectly silly reasons and rhymes to justify how and why they came to be that way. ("Moms weep when children don't do as they say. / That's why there's a *sob* in *disobey*.") *The Disappearing Alphabet* (1998) works—well, in an opposite way—by imagining the absurd results if a particular letter were suddenly unavailable. ("No *N*? In such a state of things, / Birds would have WIGS instead of WINGS.")

Throughout childhood and adolescence Wilbur fed his early talent for developing surprising connections and comparisons by ingesting the humor of renowned writers and cartoonists of the era; in the process he honed his skills at teasing out implications and moral consequences through pictures and words. As a child Wilbur amassed a collection of clippings that recounted bizarre incidents and absurdities deemed newsworthy, including this one dating to 1933:

SUICIDE WILLS CIGARETTES TO 1st POLICEMAN THERE

Leaves Autographed Pack Before Hanging Self in Hotel

A man registered as Frank Lynch, of Fairfax, VA., hanged himself yesterday in his room at the Hotel Webster, 40 West Forty-fifth Street, after writing six notes, one of which bequeathed an autographed pack of cigarettes to the first policeman who entered the room. . . . Patrolman Joseph Glennon, of the West Forty-seventh St. station, was the first to enter the room.

It's hard to read Wilbur's "Pity," published in *Ceremony*, without thinking he had been inspired by another such clipping in the annals of *News of the Weird*. This poem reports the story of a murderer who leaves a canary trapped in its cage at the scene and then, haunted by remorse, returns to set it free: "All day the starved canary called him back / In newsboy's whistle, and crying of a tire, / squeak of a squeegee, sirens finding fire":

. . . And he went back and climbed the stairs again,
Stepping across her body, freed the bird,
Which left its cage and out the window whirred
As a bad thought out of a cracked brain.

And yet, as the narrative of "Pity" unfolds (and with the simile of the final line), Wilbur reveals a darkly ironic justification manifest in a damaged human soul: that after taking a woman's life it is possible to clutch at redemption by saving a bird's.

Critics have noted Wilbur's sense of sublimated irony and black comedy, notably Adam Kirsch in the *New Yorker* (2008). Evidence of both appeared in grammar school musing and writings, and certainly in the jaded voice of "puppy two."

When it came time to enroll their sons in first grade, Lawrence and Helen Wilbur chose to look beyond the mediocre local schools. They arranged to send Dick and Lawrie to Essex Fells Primary School and then to Montclair High, both with high academic reputations. (A look at June issues of the school's paper, the *Mountaineer*—in any given year, in that and future eras—shows a list of grads moving on to Ivy colleges.) Wilbur remembers that his parents had a talent for getting him into good schools: "I don't know how they wangled it . . . it can't have been with money" (RW, 16 July 2006).

Essex Fells was a miniscule and unique residential community, originally incorporated as a borough with a charter that explicitly prohibited commercial development. Its zoning restrictions also ensured that its

house lots would be irregular and spacious, and its residents well off and disposed to support a superior school system.

Since Wilbur grew up within the Armitage farm's rural community, immersing himself in its distinctive agricultural and sporting activity—including exploring in the woods (where, during prohibition, he discovered a huge cache of discarded liquor bottles because the local bootlegger also lived on Greenbrook Road)—he rarely experienced the companionship of age mates in his preschool years. Lawrie, two-and-a-half years younger, was his lone buddy. Self-reliance was not an optional virtue but inherent in their daily existence. Wilbur remembers only two boys who lived within walking distance, Rob Roy Tredennick and Medford Bach (pronounced *batch*), not for the frequency with which they visited the farm, but for their unusual names. Without regular neighborhood pals to absorb and conventionalize them, the Wilbur brothers invented their own games and inflicted them on each other and their parents. Once assigned to clear snow off the short front walk, Dick and Lawrie shoveled a sinuous path, several times the length of the walkway "as the crow flies."

At Essex Fells Wilbur became a natural Pied Piper. Instead of joining his schoolmates in their playground games, he sometimes conscripted them into eccentric rites of his own devising. This trait often disturbed his teachers and, in more than one instance, the school's principal, Cathleen Tufts. During recess one morning Wilbur persuaded the entire school to forgo their usual rope skipping, hopscotch, marble shooting, and ball games to assemble en bloc and parade around and around the school building, counting the laps. Miss Tufts came outside and called a halt at lap number 14. As the more "normal" kids became more intrigued by Wilbur, who evidently had the ability (in his words) to "turn his eyes inside out" so only the whites were visible, Miss Tufts began to think of him as *capable of anything*.

On another morning before class in fourth grade, waiting for his teacher to arrive, Wilbur drew a caricature of her on the blackboard. When she saw it, and was offended, she sought to identify the artist. Well aware of Wilbur's precocious draftsmanship, she asked him if he knew who had drawn this chalk likeness of her. He answered, "I do, but I don't want to tell on him."[5] Flummoxed, and probably impressed, she eased up and complimented him for upholding the schoolboy honor code he had coolly ducked behind.

During seventh grade at Essex Fells, Wilbur organized something he invented called the Death Club. The club had no function other than to initiate new members (boys only), and involved a bit of harassing as he remembers, but its only relation to death was his "fascination with making jokes about morgues." Nevertheless, its troubling name reached adult ears

and, of course, gave the ever-present Miss Tufts one more reason to watch Wilbur like a hawk (RW, 16 July 2006).

Stand Next to a High School Boy and Hear Him Maturing

In spite of Miss Tufts and any reservations she might have passed along concerning his obstreperous classroom antics, Wilbur was accepted at Montclair High School, which was academically superior to Caldwell High (and to many high schools in the country at the time). But the school was quite far from the Armitage estate. The physical distance intensified what Wilbur remembers as "feeling at odds" with his surroundings during adolescence, especially because it prevented him from joining up with a regular neighborhood or after-school "gang." The seven-mile commute, which began along back roads and short cuts through open country and then continued by trolley, limited his extracurricular activities. Though he doesn't dwell on it, or think it unusual for a teenager, Wilbur admits he was lonely during most of his high school years. As a boy he had developed many "one-man interests" through which he continually sought ways to connect to the world beyond New Jersey. He took to the airwaves, for instance, constructing his own crystal set in eighth grade and learning to tap out Morse code. In ninth grade he assembled a short wave radio with directional antennae on the roof so he could listen to voices from Europe and Asia, and to broadcasts from the Progressive Liberal Party on the island of Java (RW, 16 July 2006). Wilbur's radio and code hobby, an early instance of his lifelong fascination with puzzles and riddles, led to his taking a US government course in elementary cryptography as a teenager and acquiring an expertise that facilitated his enlistment in the Army Signal Corps in 1942.

But Wilbur had other opportunities to be part of a group, significantly the Boy Scouts, making his mark by editing, writing, and cartooning for Boy Scout–sponsored publications. For *The Nottingham News*, a mimeographed newsletter distributed to Boy Scout campers in 1933, his reporting ranged from the mundane—for instance, an announcement that one Mr. Bartlett, a recent graduate from Springfield College with a bachelors degree in physical education, would be returning the following summer to correct the boys' posture—to the more whimsical, as in the short piece called "What It Takes to Put Out a Paper (and what a paper)" ghostwritten under the name of Buglestein P. Potts. The article accused the editors of procrastination: "neglecting [the news]" Wilbur's Potts opined, "is what they're good at."[6] Wilbur wrote for the *Scout Herald*, for the *Tulip Leaf* distributed to the Boy Scouts of Camp Glen Grey, and also for the YMCA's *Hi-Y*. He published as well long, anticipatory articles in the daily *Montclair News* on the upcoming Boy Scout National Jamboree

scheduled for the summer of 1935 in Washington, D.C., an event that never happened because the Depression's financial woes caused its cancellation a week or so before it was to start. Wilbur reached Star Scout rank and was leader of the Silver Fox patrol when it won a knot-tying contest at a camporee.

Though naturally athletic on the Armitage estate's rural playground, Wilbur never joined a sports team. He did compete in a single interscholastic event when Montclair High's track team conscripted him to contest the high jump at a meet, an event he won. His ability to leap obstacles had begun on the farm and continued at Essex Fells, where he excelled at informal broad jump competitions. Running became his natural locomotion for the first leg of his high school commute, and he continued to run for most of his life. (Helen Pigeon, his godmother, a nationally ranked tennis star who had played at Longwood, was the one who taught him to play tennis early, at age eight, and well.) But Wilbur never took to golf, the game that connected his father to Joshua Armitage. Actually, as this line about cocktail party chatter from "Lying" suggests—"talking with toxic zest / Of golf, or taxes, or the rest of it," he developed an aversion to it.

Wilbur's progressive politics and his attentive and respectful manners sprang, at least in part, from the unusual circumstances in which he was raised. While Dick and Lawrie Wilbur absorbed social graces from the estate's milieu, and while personal affection between the rich landowning industrialist and his artistic tenants flourished, Helen and Lawrence, who were also Republicans, did not share Armitage's extreme right-wing views or impose any of their own politics on their eldest son. They didn't discourage his fascination with the entire political landscape and its global cast of characters (dozens of whom he sketched in pencil, including Wendell Willkie, Groucho Marx, and Adolf Hitler), his reading of radical publications, his support for FDR's New Deal legislation, his investigation of socialism as an alternative to capitalism, or his sympathy for the nation's suffering population during the Depression.

Every issue of Montclair High's *Mountaineer* published during his term as editor in 1937–38 includes a Wilbur cartoon that reveals his political sympathies and his capacity for indignation. One cartoon responding to the Congressional debate on the Child Labor Law shows the ghost of Lincoln quietly calling Uncle Sam's attention to a young boy staggering under an adult's load. Another cartoon shows a matron out Christmas shopping, laden with purchases, snootily ignoring an unshaven, shivering, and crippled homeless worker and his toddler huddling in a doorway.

As Wilbur further developed as a writer in high school, the performer's instinct evident during his Pied Piper phase at Essex Fells surfaced in an increasingly exuberant and sometimes reckless sense of

humor. (A teacher named Mr. Byrd, a cautious man who oversaw the Montclair High newspaper and didn't want the editorials to be too violent, was always after Wilbur to read Wordsworth as a calming influence.) When his sophomore English teacher assigned him and his classmates to cover Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* as if they were news reporters, Wilbur handed in a detailed story with a series of headlines, including these two:

> BASSANIO FAILS IN CASKET CHOICE AT BELMONT
> Thereby forfeits right to marry
>
> "POUND OF FLESH" TRIAL BEGINS TODAY
> Shylock expresses his confidence in the outcome;
> Antonio seems concerned[7]

Wilbur's *Mountaineer* editorials, not unlike the ones he would write for Amherst College's *Student*, have almost nothing to do with high school issues, but instead address either national controversies or whatever idea irritated or animated his sense of folly and the ridiculous. He seemed not to have (as yet) internalized much in the way of inhibition or self-censorship. He chronicled, usually gently, sometimes abrasively, the foibles and the follies of whatever authority figure crossed his line of sight—his local Episcopal priest, his teachers, women bridge players, hometown or national politicians orating on Memorial Day, celebrity newspaper columnists—with fearless glee. Over the nine months of his senior year Wilbur wrote in the *Mountaineer* on many subjects with a consistent contrariness. The attitudes he displayed as a teenager are worth recording in some detail.

Advocating pacifism, he assailed and then advised his readership: "You are the war makers. You, at the ringside watching bullmen batter each other . . . Peace is an individual effort. Peace is you saying 'I will not fight.' People laugh at you when you talk about turning the other cheek. Try it. It is the ultimate test of self-control" (*Mountaineer*, 19 Nov. 1937). He used the *Mountaineer* forum to complain about a panoply of topics: the dullness of editorials written about "Christmas Spirit"; the pervasiveness of cynicism (in which he included a primer on how to make oneself a thoroughgoing cynic); the banality of suburban conversation; the insincere, automatic side of etiquette; the towering stupidity of the American voter and the politicians who exploit it; and spongers who cadge pens, cigarettes, and other handy items instead of buying their own.

On the other hand, Wilbur championed the unique nature of American humor and its brilliant contemporary practitioners, including Don Marquis, Robert Benchley, James Thurber, and E. B. White; the need for

both radicals and conservatives to engage in a rhythm of creation and stability if the U.S. political system is to work; and government support for the arts (but not governmental control and/or censorship of artists' works). He wrote about the characteristics of true thinking and how we mostly avoid it; the imminent decline and fall of the English language (with multiple examples cited from idle chat heard in North Jersey; and, with similar themes in several editions, the foibles of adults traveling down the path to self-improvement and the wrong-headed idea that youth is the salvation of our nation. The following excerpt targeting adulthood appeared in the *Mountaineer* issue dated October 15, 1937:

> Stand next to a high school boy and you can almost hear him maturing. Hundreds of adolescent necks stuck out for the yoke of adulthood. . . . One of these years a younger generation is going to rebel. It is going to say: "The heck with becoming adult; we're immature and we love it. Go ahead and stay grown up if you want to—we're not interested." . . . The whole system of adulthood is all wrong, and has survived merely for the lack of an alternative. . . . Adulthood has degenerated into a mold. Dale Carnegie has just gotten out a book of exercises showing people [how] to be different from what they are. *Scribners* [magazine] and the psychologists have got the middle class half crazy wondering whether they are neurotics, escapists, psychotics, introverts, or just people. Think of the street of the future: throngs of people making friends and influencing people on every corner. Thousands of people who want to talk about YOUR problems. Eternally smiling, solicitous, engaging and thoroughly boresome. A frightening prospect.

Some six months later, in the issue of June 3, 1938, he turns the table of criticism on his peers.

> Where, ladies and gentlemen of the older generation, did you get this Youth idea anyway? We are not inspired but foolish, not keen but apathetic. We reflect all of your stupidity, your wishful thinking, your selfishness, your superficiality, your muddle-headedness, your rationalization, your hatred of truth, your fear of change, your smug egocentricity, your lack of individuality, your genteel and pseudo-cultured barbarism. You must stop spelling Youth with a capital "Y." . . . If you must idolize an age group—and there is no conceivable reason why you should—why not take the men and women between thirty and forty-five? This is the group in which the constructive minority has both the realistic stability and the physical and mental aggressiveness to accomplish work of lasting significance.

The seventeen-year-old Wilbur who drove to Amherst with his parents in September 1938—through Connecticut and Massachusetts up routes 5 and 10 (then called the College Highway)—had graduated from high

school demonstrating exceptional success as a writer and as an impromptu spellbinder. He was well grounded in the literary and intellectual habits he was exposed to in his childhood and adolescence, impelled to explore the larger world (physical, natural, and scientific), impatient with convention and foolishness, and attracted to the grotesque and the absurd.

Although he left North Caldwell ready for academic and extracurricular challenges in the coming years, he was less prepared for the social festivities involving girls, parties, and proms. He was also uneasy about himself, despite his deep and assertive voice and his youthful but dashing appearance. Working against a seamless adjustment to Amherst's sophistication and mores was his awareness that he played roles in order to impress and possessed an overwhelming drive to succeed as a writer and editor. As the grandson of a highly respected newspaperman and the son of a commercial artist, the lure of journalism held him in a thrall that would defer his success as a student but not interfere with his matriculation as a scholar and intellectual.

Notes

[1]Chapter 1 from "Let Us Watch Richard Wilbur: A Biographical Study," to be published by University of Massachusetts Press.

[2]Wilbur, Richard (RW) and Charlee Wilbur (CW). Interviews with authors, Cummington, Massachusetts.

[3]"He Was," "The Pardon," "Digging for China," "This Pleasing Anxious Being," "A Summer Morning," and "Running."

[4]The word "modesty" appears as a genuine concern of (and it is ironically attributed to) several Corneille characters; it also describes the means Corneille was born to, the renown he achieved in his lifetime, and was one of the traits ascribed to him by an astrological horoscope for those who share his birthday June 6, 1606, along with *competent*, *scrupulous*, *logical*, and *tidy*.

[5]Selvage, Irving. Interview with authors, November 2, 2006, Camden, Maine.

[6]RW, "The Difficulty of Getting Out a Newspaper," *Nottingham News* (Robin Hood Camp, Sargentville-Herricks, ME), 2 Aug. 1933, 2.

[7]RW, "The Heck with Blood and Bodies," *Mountaineer* (Montclair High School, Montclair, NJ), 20 May 1938, 2.

ROBERT W. LEWIS

from *Hemingway on Love*
"Black Christ"

It is good to be merry and wise,
It is good to be honest and true,
It is best to be off with the old love,
Before you are on with the new.
—Anonymous

If we are directed only by our particular Natures, and regulate our inclinations by no higher rule than that of our reasons, we are but Moralists; Divinity will still call us Heathens. Therefore this great worke of charity, must have other motives, ends, and impulsions.

—Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW of this study, what tremendous irony there is in Hemingway's posthumous *A Moveable Feast*. Here Hemingway tells us that in the twenties he was practicing with his wife Hadley the kind of love he later understood was best for any man. He had to lose this love in order to find it, and the rest of his life was perhaps lived in some regret over what he had lost and in making attempts to recapture it. The understanding came gradually, and in *A Moveable Feast* he does in fact tell us that it began after he fell in love with another woman, presumably his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, and was on the point of leaving his first wife though he still loved her too! Thus Hemingway looks back at those intense years of found love and ironically writes of lost love. Apparently his own early love of Hadley was more like the loves of his later "happy lovers" Robert Jordan and Colonel Cantwell than it was like the loves of the "sad lovers" Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry. Later art imitated earlier life while earlier art imitated an ideal, an abstraction of love; when Hemingway practiced this mythic love, it proved to be unsatisfactory and a sham.

Of course such a line of thought is highly speculative, and neither is this study biographical, but it seems that Hemingway's life does here give us hints by which to interpret his writing. Having divorced his wife, it really didn't matter how many more Hemingway had, for he had tacitly accepted the possibility of attaining "true love" within the bonds of marriage. Yet because his last marriage was his longest and most durable, may it not have been a biographical complement of Santiago's endurance and love? With the rejection of his first wife, the search for Iseult was on. That he began it was his personal problem; that without the search we might be without the literature, and certainly without the particular emphasis that occasions this book, was his triumph. Because A *Moveable Feast* now makes the beginning of this search public, it is easier and no longer improper to discuss it.

This latest book, *A Moveable Feast*, balances *Green Hills of Africa*, that other work of nonfiction that also tells a love story. The African book is pivotal in that it is the first extended story of Hemingway's struggle to conquer the self, to transcend the role of the "four-letter man" that he sometimes played in the safari drama that became a morality play. *A Moveable Feast* tells the end of that struggle as well as some causes for its beginning. Hemingway's ability and desire to write such a book, which required moral courage, evokes the same sort of admiration that the first autobiographical book did.

The author of *A Moveable Feast* is no saint, but neither is he the defamer of character that one reviewer called him.[1] He is, rather, one of the most painfully honest of writers who does not flinch from what he sees as the truth, whether it is about Gertrude Stein, Scott Fitzgerald, or, the difficult part, himself. And he knew what he was doing; Mary Hemingway wrote of her thoughts after reading some of the book-in progress:

> "It's not much about you," I once objected. "I thought it was going to be autobiography."
>
> "It's biography by *remate*," Ernest said. *Remate* idiomatically is used to mean a two-wall shot in jai alai. "By reflection."[2]

So was *Green Hills of Africa* autobiographical. So was it an attempt "to write an absolutely true book." And so they both have a curious ambiguity in Hemingway's Foreword in the earlier book and Preface in the latter about each book's fictional quality. "Unlike many novels," Hemingway wrote in *Green Hills*, "none of . . . this book is imaginary." In *A Moveable Feast* he concludes the Preface:

> If the reader prefers, this book may be regarded as fiction. But there is always the chance that such a book of fiction may throw some light on what has been written as fact.[3]

In addition to calling it one of Hemingway's better works, Lewis Galantiere thought that *A Moveable Feast* was not fragmentary and "should be read as a novel"[4]—a judgment equally appropriate for *Green Hills of Africa.* The four parts of the African book were entitled "Pursuit and Conversation," "Pursuit Remembered," "Pursuit and Failure," and "Pursuit as Happiness" (with a play on the "pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence). The continuity was climactic and led to the conclusion that only in the pursuit—the attempting, the fighting, the struggling for what one believes in, even when one knows the attainment is impossible—only in that pursuit is there happiness.

A distinction must be made between this kind of striving or becoming and romantic yearning. The hunter seeks the prey knowing it is desirable. Tristan seeks his lady knowing instinctively that she is but a woman, though they both act, as the common expression would have it, as if her ass *were* a gold mine. Accepting pursuit-through-agape as happiness requires a tremendous effort of will and self-denial, because it is only through self-denial that one becomes an individual and also transcends self. The hunter paradoxically concedes the elusiveness of his natural goal; the lover acts as though his seeking were the sheerest agony, and perhaps his suffering is real in terms of impeded circulation, tasteless or neglected meals, and, in general, life missed or passed by. The hunter—and Santiago is the climactic embodiment of that allegorical role—anticipates no trophy, though he must believe in the worthiness of it and in the virtue of action (not passion), and the happiness of being, becoming, and pursuit.

The hunter metaphor is absent in *A Moveable Feast*, but here Hemingway suggests a source for the demi-Christ metaphor that occurs in *Across the River and into the Trees* and *The Old Man and the Sea.* One winter while he and Hadley Hemingway were skiing in the Alps, he grew a beard and let his hair grow long, and the peasants who saw him one night skiing down a mountain called him "the Black Christ" (206). What a wonderfully poetic phrase! What suggestions of bitterness and struggle and hope it conveys; and what electric insight into Colonel Cantwell and Santiago and surely Hemingway himself, whose personal generosity and warmth could be clouded in an instant with hate and rage. For instance, in an incident reported by Morley Callaghan, the Canadian author, and Hemingway had been boxing, and Callaghan was getting the better of the larger Hemingway, whose mouth was bleeding. Then Hemingway spat a mouthful of blood in his friend's face and solemnly explained it was merely a bullfighter's gesture. Callaghan rather suspected that the "barbarous gesture" had come from some "strange nocturnal depths of his mind" that drew him unnaturally close to destruction and yet could exist

at the same time with a "sweet and likable" nature that strangely drew Callaghan "closer than ever to him."[5] Or as Lewis Galantiere put it:

> Two natures struggled in the breast of this Faust—and they died in each other's grasp, so to say, the lower nature resisting with its last breath. Because there was this struggle, we must speak of tragedy, not of pathos.[6]

Black Christ indeed.

Thus, while the setting of *A Moveable Feast* is in Hemingway's first period of the twenties, thematically and developmentally it belongs with his last fiction of the fifties. In it Hemingway looks back with the experience and wisdom of his maturity to work out on paper what he was then; and knowing that younger man, the older man instructs us of the final fruit that his youth was inevitably to bear. Being of Santiago's years, the author is physiologically no longer driven by eros or obsessed by romance. A coolness in writing about these feverish forms of love might be cynically read as stemming solely from organic causes, but there is more to Hemingway's detachment than that.

Eros is not here merely in an impotent man's memory, although the tenor of his attitude is modulated. Eros is no blind Cupid now, but a fairly well disciplined handservant of agape. This return of the old writer to his youth provides an instructive double or comparative focus, and Hemingway was perhaps aware of the value of it. In any case, his wife Mary has written that before he began *A Moveable Feast* he gave her the manuscript of a novel set in southern France in the twenties, at least indicating the time and place of his current thoughts.[7]

Tracing the theme of eros with this double focus in mind, one finds sexual love as vital as ever for the author. There is no nostalgia or mourning for something lost; eros is still alive and productive, the functional opposite of the destructive love that Hemingway saw in the relations of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald. "A Matter of Measurements" tells the partly comic, partly pathetic story of Fitzgerald's agony caused by his wife's telling him that his "measurements" made him sexually inadequate and led to her mental breakdown. Hemingway inspects and assures Fitzgerald and then takes him to the Louvre for further anatomical study and reassurance. Though there is a comic absurdity in this picture of the three-years-senior Fitzgerald (who had made a fortune as the "historian" of a sex-hungry jazz age), our knowledge of his romantic and idealistic nature and his adulation of Hemingway's "know-how" verifies the poetic truth of the story. Hemingway felt that Zelda was jealous of Fitzgerald's art and tried to destroy it. She was trying to put Scott "out of business." Hemingway urges Scott to cultivate an unnamed girl who likes him and forget the crazy Zelda who "'just wants to destroy you'" (190-91).

The bitch-wife corrupts eros and uses it as a tool, though I do not mean to judge Zelda personally, for her reasons were no doubt complex, and one can readily imagine this Golden Girl, a descendent of Iseult, waking up to the loss of her Tristan to—not another woman but—his art. What an insult.

Contrasted with the Fitzgeralds'corruption of eros from a productive to a destructive power is the Hemingways' frankness and warmth. He is very much in love with his wife, and yet he notices and admires the beautiful women around him (5-6, 102-104, 199, 205); he greatly enjoys good eating, that other lifegiving activity; he takes great pleasure in the rebirth of nature in the spring and in the excitement of horse racing. As always, he puts in what might seem merely incidental information—the Kansas City whores "who were marked for death" swallowed semen "as a sovereign remedy (126)—and he compares Fitzgerald's excitement at drinking wine from a bottle to a girl's excitement at swimming nude for the first time (163). In another comparison, he says that "After writing a story I was always empty and both sad and happy, as though I had made love" (6); and unless he was careful in what he did between writing sessions, he would become impotent (13). Whether it was eating or writing or making love, there were organic connections between these productive pleasures.

Making love "with whom you loved," in fact, was "better than any thing" to keep the goodness in his writing (25), and at that time in his imagination making love was the natural end of other activities, for other people (100) as well as for Hemingway (38, 57). If one kept this balance between work, play, eating and drinking, and talking with friends, and if the culmination of this balance was the act of love, then one was happy. When Hemingway occasionally lost this productive balance, he called himself stupid, and when he threw it off for good, he began the tortuous life that was simply his payment for the ultimate recovery of the moveable feast, the Paris of his youth before his own corruption of love.

He knew of certain corruptions, like Zelda's and Gertrude Stein's. Miss Stein had undertaken to instruct Hemingway on sex, and she tried to weaken what he admitted were certain prejudices against homosexuality—meaning, presumably, that in Stein's view Hemingway's dislike of homosexuality without first trying it was like refusing to taste snails. Her argument on behalf of toleration of homosexuality and her picturing of it between women as in no way leading to criminality or unhappiness, however, stemmed from an argumentative position made suspect by her personal involvement, which Hemingway later accidentally discovered. Perhaps his dislike of homosexuals stemmed also from a personal experience, and perhaps it was involved, like his sports, with some inner fear or doubts of his own masculinity. *A Moveable Feast* clearly supports

the first supposition and gives no evidence for the second, which flourishes best from the nourishment of legends rather than direct evidence. After Gertrude Stein's "instruction," he returns to love his wife in a happy rejection of that attitude described and practiced by Miss Stein.

His "corruption" was not the perversion of eros, but of agape into romance, and against that change he was defenseless. Gertrude Stein initially liked the Hemingways so much that she could even forgive them for being in love, for she knew "time would fix that" (14-15), and she could always pretend that Hadley didn't matter (54). Hemingway's bitter irony can be appreciated fully only in light of its composition thirty-five years and three wives later. "'. . . we'll read and then go to bed and make love,'" Hemingway says. And he has that first wife answer:

> "And we'll never love anyone else but each other."
> "No. Never."
> "What a lovely afternoon and evening. . . ."
> "We're always lucky," I said and like a fool I did not knock on wood. There was wood everywhere in that apartment to knock on too. (31-38)

His foolishness was more than neglect of a superstition. It becomes a longing, a "hunger," for people and times lost. "'Memory is hunger,'" Hadley reminds him, and "'We should live in this time now and have every minute of it'" (57, 55). As Hemingway creates a woman of great attraction with simple womanly wisdom, he remembers that he "was being stupid;" and he describes his "stupid" longing in memorable language:

> It was a wonderful meal at Michaud's after we got in; but when we had finished and there was no question of hunger any more the feeling that had been like hunger when we were on the bridge was still there when we caught the bus home. It was there when we came in the room and after we had gone to bed and made love in the dark, it was there. When I woke with the windows open and the moonlight on the roofs of the tall houses, it was there. I put my face away from the moonlight into the shadow but I could not sleep and lay awake thinking about it. We had both wakened twice in the night and my wife slept sweetly now with the moonlight on her face. I had to try to think it out and I was too stupid. Life had seemed so simple that morning when I had wakened and found the false spring and heard the pipes of the man with his herd of goats and gone out and bought the racing paper.
>
> But Paris was a very old city and we were young and nothing was simple there, not even poverty, nor sudden money, nor the moonlight, nor right and wrong nor the breathing of someone who lay beside you in the moonlight. (57-58)

That passage is at the heart of the book, and in a later chapter, the greatly comic one about an automobile trip with Fitzgerald, Hemingway subtly indicates how carefully these Paris "sketches" are organized. As Lewis Galantiere suggests, the book should be read as a novel. And the study of love is this novel's chief concern. While we can laugh at the telling of this insane journey taken by two of our greatest authors, Hemingway also prepares us for the quite natural conclusion of the chapter which returns us to Hemingway and his relations with his wife. On the trip Fitzgerald had been telling Hemingway the sad love story of his life with Zelda. He paradoxically enjoys their brief separation; he is "happy with the tragic implications" of the separation, and he even tells modest lies about it to Hemingway in order to heighten the drama of it.

With this distorted, comic romance on his mind, Hemingway returns to his wife, having learned "'Never to go on trips with anyone you do not love'" (175). In contrast to the Fitzgeralds, the Hemingways feel they are "'awfully lucky'" in their love, but their happiness has already been infected by some canker that hints at Hemingway's longing for the unattainable; perhaps it is a longing generated in the racial subconscious that neither logic nor conscious desire can suppress.

> But what we wanted not he [a waiter] nor anyone else, nor knocking on wood or on marble, as this cafe table-top was, could ever bring us. But we did not know it that night and we were very happy. (176)

Yet while eros and romance are important to *A Moveable Feast*, agape is at the heart of the book. The full pleasure of eros is attained with one you love, and in part *A Moveable Feast* tells a warm story of the fine practice of a love which is eros and agape combined. From the first chapter to the last we feel the respect, delight, care, and admiration of Hemingway for his wife:

> She had a gently modeled face and her eyes and her smile lighted up at decisions as though they were rich presents. (7)

> In the night we were happy with our own knowledge we already had and other new knowledge we had acquired in the mountains. (21)

> . . . it was very good to make love with whom you loved. That was better than anything. (25)

> We ate well and cheaply and drank well and cheaply and slept well and warm together and loved each other. (51)

And when his wife speaks, the feeling continues and is expanded by her mundane remarks in a warm and idyllic tone:

"The Sion wine was even better. Do you remember how Mrs. Gangeswisch cooked the trout *au bleu* when we got back to the chalet? They were such wonderful trout, Tati, and we drank the Sion wine and ate out on the porch with the mountainside dropping off below and we could look across the lake and see the Dent du Midi with the snow half down it and the trees at the mouth of the Rhône where it flowed into the lake." (55)

. . . it was wonderful to see my wife. . . . We were happy the way children are who have been separated and are together again. . . . (175)

. . . and I was very happy to see my wife who had the villa running beautifully. . . . (185)

. . . Hadley and I had all the new country to learn and the new villages, and the people of the town were very friendly. (199)

Hadley and I had loved skiing. . . . She had beautiful, wonderfully strong legs and fine control of her skis, and she did not fall. (200)

And finally, climactically, the point of the last-long sketch that ends the book, that ends the moveable feast, that begins the loss and destruction, then the seeking and rebuilding of his life that shaped the mastering theme of his literary career: Hemingway had fallen in love with another woman, a friend of Hadley, who had "unknowingly, innocently and unrelentingly set out to marry" him (209). It is his bad luck to be in love with two women—the "new and strange" one and his wife. Whatever the truth of the moment was, the truth of his bitter recollection is clear:

When I saw my wife again standing by the tracks as the train came in by the piled logs at the station, I wished I had died before I ever loved anyone but her. She was smiling, the sun on her lovely face tanned by the snow and sun, beautifully built, her hair red gold in the sun, grown out all winter awkwardly and beautifully, and Mr. Bumby standing with her, blond and chunky and with winter cheeks looking like a good Vorarlberg boy.

"Oh Tatie," she said, when I was holding her in my arms, "you're back and you made such a fine successful trip. I love you and we've missed you so . . ."

I loved her and I loved no one else and we had a lovely magic time while we were alone. I worked well and we made great trips, and I thought we were invulnerable again, and it wasn't until we were out of the mountains in late spring, and back in Paris that the other thing started again.

That was the end of the first part of Paris. Paris was never to be the same again. . . . (210-211)

True to the spirit of Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, and Frederic Henry, he learned that what was at first "stimulating and fun" was caused only by his and his lover's wicked innocence. Tristan and Iseult had not known the power of the love potion, but Hemingway says he cannot plead his ignorance, for "All things truly wicked start from an innocence. . . . You lie and hate it and it destroys you and every day is more dangerous, but you live day to day as in a war" (210). Like his early heroes, Hemingway needed to learn to avoid romantic wickedness, which tended ignorantly to trade the grace of love for the misery of "true love."

Of course the proportion of the book devoted to his wife Hadley is slight, but one can see a pattern in the chapters that may seem to be independent episodes about random events and people, and the pattern dramatizes the theme of love. Each episode in one way or another shows an aspect of love at work, as indeed any narrative involving two or more persons may. The "characters" can be loosely grouped into those whom Hemingway likes and those whom he dislikes. In spite of the reviewer who saw mainly defamation of character and loathing, Hemingway's friendships, or at least admirations, are as numerous as his enmities, and the latter are usually tempered by a humor that converts loathing into laughter, for him as much as for the reader. And not only does Hemingway have friendships with Sylvia Beach, "Chink" (Eric Edward Dorman-Smith), Mike Ward, Pascin, Ezra Pound, Evan Shipman, and the waiter Jean, but he also has friendships with Gertrude Stein and Scott Fitzgerald; although relations with them were not so simple and were often strained. The fact is that Hemingway purposely elaborates on the two relationships not only to "set the record straight," but because they are the chief complementary illustrations for the problems of loving which he has been concerned with. On the one hand is the illustration of Gertrude Stein's egotism and perversion, on the other Fitzgerald's idealism and tragic involvement with a bitch wife. Even if Hemingway's evaluation of these people were inaccurate or distorted or ungenerous, the depictions would be thematically right. His sardonic frankness is refreshing in an age of innuendo and false flattery, and his courage in assuming and defending an esthetic or ethical position should likewise be welcomed, even applauded, in an age of hypocrisy and ego-serving caution.

Fitzgerald and Stein are transitions between the other more stable friendships (Ezra Pound's for example) and the less than cordial relationships between Hemingway and Ford Madox Ford, "Hal," Wyndham Lewis, Ernest Walsh, Zelda Fitzgerald, and the anonymous figures of the German ex-naval officer and the "pilot fish" who leads the corrupting rich to the innocent Hemingway. Appropriately enough, the "enemies" are sometimes described through sexual images. Hemingway asks Hal (who may be a homosexual) if he went to Greece or used it (grease), and he

decides the best way to describe the supercilious, cruel, vain, nasty-looking Wyndham Lewis is to say that his eyes were "those of an unsuccessful rapist" (93, 109). Fitzgerald's prostitution of his writing talent in his *Saturday Evening Post* stories Hemingway calls "whoring," and Fitzgerald agrees (155). Zelda Fitzgerald tries to destroy the sexually naive Scott by criticizing his sexual shortcomings. Gertrude Stein is a Lesbian, and Ernest Walsh is a con man with two wealthy, innocent "nice" girls in tow.

But even with the incitement toward alienation provided by these deviations that Hemingway could not tolerate, the burden of his self-examination is maintenance of a demanding standard that often made him regret his cruelties and stupidities, no matter how much justified. Ezra Pound provided a standard in his kindness and "beautiful" loyalty to his friends.

> Ezra Pound was always a good friend and he was always doing things for people. . . .
>
> Ezra was kinder and more Christian about people than I was. His own writing, when he would hit it right, was so perfect, and he was so sincere in his mistakes and so enamored of his errors, and so kind to people that I always thought of him as a sort of saint. He was also irascible but so perhaps have been many saints. (107-108)

> Ezra was the most generous writer I have ever known and the most disinterested. He helped poets, painters, sculptors and prose writers that he believed in and he would help anyone whether he believed in them or not if they were in trouble. (ll0)

For the sake of Pound, Hemingway even tried to like Wyndham Lewis but it was easier to like someone like the modest and kind Evan Shipman who "knew and cared about horses, writing and painting"—the things Hemingway cared about too (135). A key difference between Hemingway and Fitzgerald is indicated through their differing attitudes toward Shipman's friendship with Jean, a French waiter. Hemingway also liked Jean and was concerned about his future and a petty assault on his dignity: "I thought of telling Scott about this whole problem . . . but I knew he did not care about waiters nor their problems nor their great kindnesses and affections. At that time Scott hated the French" and the Italians and the English too (168). Fitzgerald's personal relations were almost abstract; even his animosities were generalized to include whole nationalities, and his likes were perhaps not so much of individuals as of groups, like writers.

But Hemingway "could not be angry with Scott" (66), and he had "no more loyal friend than Scott when he was sober" (184), and when Fitzgerald was drunk or otherwise difficult, Hemingway accepted, in spite of his own anger, the painful necessity of helping him and defending him, of "riding herd on Scott" (167) and trying "to be a good friend" (176). No

matter what the record of letters or other accounts might objectively indicate (such as Morley Callaghan's account of the year 1929 that climaxes in the angry rupture of Callaghan, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway's friendship), the *last* Hemingway here looks back and convinces us, after all, that his heart was in the right place. He is above making excuses, and he is neither sentimental nor nostalgic.

But *A Moveable Feast* is in the nature of an apologia. It contains no surprises. It is humorous and bitter by turns, and it informs us of facts we might not have known, but the author is a familiar figure consistent with the image that evolved through his previous work. The one lasting impression that it leaves is of the courage Hemingway had in perceiving his divided, conflicting emotions and then in writing of them with an honesty presumably not even masked in the form of fiction, and sparing himself least of all.

Notes

[1]Brooks Atkinson, "Hemingway Turns to Defamation of Character," *Houston Chronicle*, July 8, 1964, Sec. 7, p. 6.

[2]Mary Hemingway, "The Making of the Book: A Chronicle and a Memoir," *New York Times Book Review*, May 10, 1964, p. 27.

[3]Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, p. ix. Subsequent references to this book in this chapter will be in the text itself.

[4]Lewis Galantiere, "There Is Never Any End to Paris," *New York Times Book Review*, May 10, 1964, p. 26.

[5]Morley Callaghan, *That Summer in Paris*, pp. 122-123.

[6]Galantiere, "There Is Never Any End," p. 26.

[7]Mary Hemingway, "'The Making of the Book," p. 27.

A SELECTED READING LIST

In addition to sources cited, this list includes those works consulted that are of some significance to the subjects of Hemingway and love. It is by no means a complete bibliography of either subject. The best checklist of Hemingway criticism is in Carlos Baker's *Hemingway and His Critics*; the best descriptions of Hemingway's writings are in Baker's *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 3d ed., and Lee Samuels' *A Hemingway Check List*, all cited below.

Across the River and into the Trees. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950.

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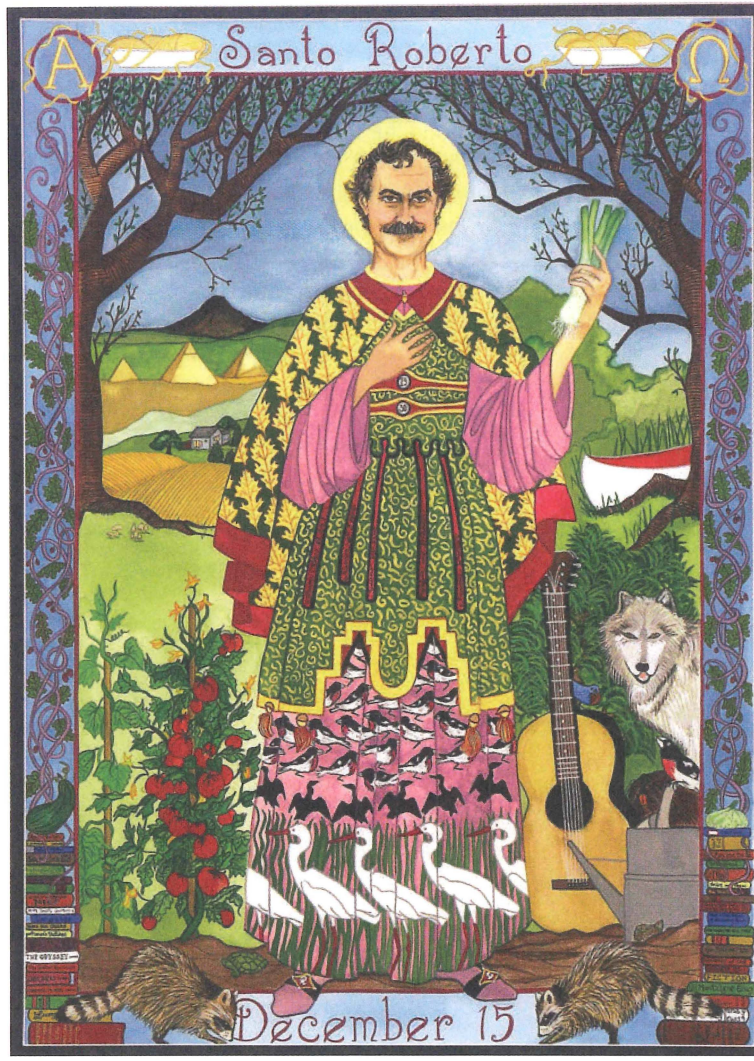
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In 1994, Nina Lewis began a series of paintings depicting friends and family members as saints. *Santo Roberto*, her father, was the first. Symbols of events and insights into his character inlcude the red ribbons on his tunic for his grandchildren. The leek he holds represents Wales, home of his paternal family. In the background, Mount Etna near Catania, Sicily, and the Pyramids of Giza near Cairo, Egypt, represent his Fullbright sabaticals. Stacks of some of his favorite books include the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, which represent his daughters, Lisa and Nina.

THOMAS PALAKEEL

Uncle Shakespeare

I was twelve years old when my brother Jacob brought home a set of English books. The five volumes arrived just as termites were finishing off the last of the books at our rural home on the southwestern coast of India. The year was 1971. At first, all I could do was smell the leather and the paper and watch the ribbon bookmarks escaping into each volume, each a gold embossed mystery, but slowly deploying my elementary knowledge of the alphabet, I managed to decipher each title: *Thus Spake Zarathurstra* by Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ethics* by Baruch Spinoza, *Utopia* by Thomas More, *Advancement of Learning* by Francis Bacon, and *The Great Tragedies* by William Shakespeare. I had heard that name: Shakespeare.

Not long after the books were put away on the high shelf, I read in the paper that Shakespeare was not Shakespeare. He was not even an Englishman but a south Indian Brahmin named Shaker P. Iyer. Next I heard a local Catholic priest praised as a great English scholar. How did the reverend achieve such greatness? I was told he earned it by "grinding and drinking up" all of Shakespeare. Soon I began to notice Shakespeare quotations in Malayalam-language newspapers: "Frailty, thy name is woman"; "Brevity is the soul of wit"; "To thine own self be true," and "Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan often loses itself and a friend." Everywhere I turned, I heard someone speak of Shakespeare with the easy familiarity accorded to a rich uncle. As evidence of the glory of Shakespeare and his language piled up all around me, I started making public announcements at home about my interest in studying at the English School in the neighboring town.

I did not fully understand what I was getting into at that Jesuit-run school. To make it to school on time, I had to rise and shine earlier than my siblings, and every morning, often in rain, I had to run up a steep hill to catch the bus, a bus usually packed tight with merchants heading to the market as well as clerks, professors, school teachers, and boys and girls heading out to three different schools. All instruction was conducted

exclusively in English. Right from the start, I realized that I was practically illiterate, and I considered switching back to my old Malayalam-language school but I stayed. I endured corporal punishment and the arrogant attitude of the boys who flaunted their wealth and privilege. Many of the boys at our school had parents and even grandparents who had earned degrees from renowned Jesuit colleges like Loyola, St. Xavier's, and St. Joseph's.

In my first year I did so poorly I was held back in the same grade for another year, and it was in my repeat year I became a thinker—I started writing down exactly what I was thinking. In a notebook, I wrote in my mother-tongue: "Even the arrogant and the privileged will grow old and die." I became aware that writing had brought me strength even in the midst of such abject helplessness and I was determined to cultivate it. Not knowing any better, I started imitating the quotations I found in the newspapers, and soon, I had the audacity to think that I could easily crank out wise sayings, just like Shakespeare, and for clues on the man's genius I studied the steely Droeshout portrait on the frontispiece of my prized *The Great Tragedies* volume. What I saw in the black and white woodcut was not an ordinary uncle, but a supernatural being, at least someone who had commerce with witches.

The first Shakespeare characters I came to love were indeed the witches. I heard of them from my brother, who was studying *Macbeth* in college; he used to torment us in the dark with enactments of the witches. The ghoulish voice giving a human being the license to commit a foul deed terrified me, yet it was profoundly satisfying, especially because of the evil ingenuity with which the witches assured that "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / shall come against him" (4.1.108-10). I have retained in my memory the picture of the woods on the move, and it is more chilling than in any movie version. My encounter with *Macbeth*, I suspect, was my first gaze into the abyss, which also brought me an early recognition of the pleasure of words and the dark power of drama; it was "a new joy," for me—it was Emerson who characterized the Elizabethan embrace of the theater at the country-fairs and inn-yards all over England in defiance of the Puritans as a "new joy."

I survived at the English School, partly on the strength the new joy I found in books and ideas, and I started writing stories and essays. On occasion, I toyed with the five impossible volumes in my possession. Aided by a dictionary, I learned many words in those books—*utopia*, *renaissance*, *ethics*, *tragedy*—and I only managed to make my way through the first three pages of *King Lear*. When I reached Goneril's line—"Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter"—I paused. It must have been the unmistakable beat, the iambic line got trapped in

my memory and I found myself chanting it to the air and sky, mistaking it for wisdom, clueless that Goneril was uttering a treacherous falsehood. Even though I misunderstood, the line glowed for me, and over the years, I have come to think that the pleasure of Shakespeare is more often than not derived out of context. It was also out of context I studied the song from *The Tempest* in the eighth grade and found in it great beauty and personal meaning:

> Full fathom five thy father lies
> Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes;
> Nothing of his that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

The entire class memorized the lines—those of us who stumbled received a stinging blow with a cane twig in the palm of our hands. Our teacher, a Jesuit priest, explained "sea-change" at length, and he bemoaned openly that in his view memorization of poetry was a waste of time; if it were up to him he would have us memorize prose. Prose, he argued, was more useful in daily life, and a student could build on memorized prose.

In my time at the English School, we studied the poetry of Donne, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Rossetti, and four sonnets of William Shakespeare—30, 106, 116, and 135. The teachers clearly played down the poet's passion for his beloved. The most passionate lines about the lover's veneration of the beloved's hand and foot and lips were treated with indifference. Love itself was just "friendship." In Sonnet 30, the line about "time's waste" meant that we, the boys, must not waste time, and waste I did not, yet everyone else in our class seemed to pick up the secrets of mathematics and the sciences easily, and I continued to face some unclear "impediment," a word that joined my vocabulary early in boyhood, courtesy of sonnet 116. When we studied Sonnet 135, everyone in our class was amused by the kaleidoscopic twists of the word "will" which occurs fourteen times, but I can say that by the will of Will the mystery of the English verb tenses began to unfurl for me. In my eyes, Shakespeare's greatness kept rising whenever I spotted a line from his sonnets used in the title of some new work being reviewed in the newspapers. I discovered on my own that the title of Malcolm Muggeridge's autobiography *Chronicles of a Wasted Time* had come from Sonnet 106 and *Remembrance of Things Past* from Sonnet 30.

Many of the Jesuit teachers took personal interest in my education, especially after I had a lucky break winning a coveted short story prize—I received a check and I also received mail from admiring readers, one of

them a school girl. One teacher was appreciative of my unexpected accomplishment but he told me in no uncertain terms that since I was doing poorly in my studies, I might consider letting go of English and perhaps even go back to the Malayalam-language school. He agreed that English was a difficult language, to learn well at least, it was hard to write well, harder to speak well.

There was no going back. A sea change had occurred and I had found new friends, most of them adults on my bus route. Persevering in my study of the English language and Shakespeare, I started ordering books from Orient Paperbacks in New Delhi. One of the first books I sent for was *Cat and Shakespeare* by Raja Rao. I had been reading about the US based philosophy professor and novelist who had switched to writing fiction in English after early success as a novelist in his native language—he also wrote a novel in French!

All I knew about *Cat and Shakespeare* was that it was set in my home state of Kerala, in the early phase of World War II. When the book arrived, I found on the cover a Shakespeare stylized to look like an Indian gentleman, an uncle, everyone's uncle, and the eponymous cat was shown carrying a kitten by the neck. The story is a simple fable about a cat brought into a wartime rations office to control the mice: the bored clerks gather around the cat, and one of the clerks who had been carrying on and on about philosophy seizes the moment to start a debate on the state of the world, and on their part, the other clerks also start showing off their erudition. In the final years of the English rule in India, erudition meant knowledge of the West, of England, and of course, Shakespeare. An impromptu performance of *Hamlet* ensues; there is the obligatory "to be or not to be" speech, one clerk declares that the rations office is "Denmark"—indeed there is rottenness in this Denmark, shipments disappear, files vanish, there is adultery and too much philosophy. The talkative clerk starts a bombastic soliloquy: "We marry the wife in dream and wake up king of Denmark. We marry Ophelia in dream and wake up having a Polonius to bury. We live in continual mystery. In fact, my friend, when one commits murder in a dream, is that murder or not?"

After I waded through the muddle, I drew a cartoon on the flyleaf depicting a man in a suit, declaring in broken English, "Excellent heart-beating novel," and another man in suit, in a thought-bubble says: "I can't make it out." I suspected the novel was a debate about the East and the West in the middle of a war of West's own making. The talk about *Hamlet* was realistic in the sense that the Indians who received English education in the years leading to Independence in 1947 took great pride in using and abusing Shakespeare. But what exactly did the cat symbolize? Early on in the novel the question is raised: "What is death to a kitten that walks on the wall? Have you ever seen a kitten fall?" The epiphany at the

end of the novel is presented as a mystical garden scene, in which the Brahmin narrator gets to watch the mother cat atop the high wall ferrying each blissful kitten to safety.

With some effort I found out that in the Indian philosophical tradition of Vedanta the kitten symbolized the ideal of radical passivity—the logic of the kitten, *marjara kisoru nyaya*. All that is expected of the kitten is acceptance and submission to the mother cat and the mother cat grabs each kitten by the scruff of the neck and carries it around in this world as she goes about the work of living and dying, scaling the walls and jumping over the roofs. The opposite ideal is *markata kisoru nyaya*, the logic of the baby monkey—to live in the world, the baby must religiously cling to the mother's breasts. I asked myself whether the cat represented the Hindu view of life, and Shakespeare, the opposing Western view, the Christian view of working for one's salvation. The novel as a whole seemed ambiguous, but the contrast became part of my intellectual make-up, and I became convinced that my short stories needed to be explorations of the mother cat and the mother monkey, submission and perseverance, otium and tedium, radical rest and toil in the world.

Even after I had read over a dozen novels in English, I had not developed adequate skills to reach for the great jeweled volumes in my custody. On the rare occasions I dared to open *The Great Tragedies* by William Shakespeare I closed it shut after gazing helplessly on the title page of the renowned *Hamlet*. When our school staged *Hamlet* in English, I was not deemed worthy of an invitation to join even the crew, but I lingered on the peripheries of the production, ogling at the royalty. One memory that I have retained is that of the lovely boy who played Gertrude: after the curtain fell on the last act, he came running back into the green room, aghast, "I forgot to drink the poison!"

In the following year I was invited to play Velu Thampi Dalawa, in a Malayalam-language play. Retrospectively, I see the resemblance of Thampi's story to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. In the early days of the British incursions into our region, Thampi, who had become a general, disagreed with the Maharaja, who conveniently sacrificed the great patriot in a sly attempt to appease the British—the defiant general took his life in 1809. Even before we started the rehearsal, I realized that I could not act so I served as the prompter, and later, I was named the director.

By the time I graduated from the English School, my circle of friends included mostly adults, one of them, a college student named Paul opened to me his home and his brother's home, both packed with weighty English books and stacks of the venerable literary journal *Encounter*. I was told to take home as many books as I wanted and to keep them as long as I wanted. One of the first books I picked was Miguel de Unamuno's *Tragic*

Sense of Life. It was the word *tragic* that attracted me, but even now I am not sure what I was hoping to learn about the tragic. After a few attempts to read Unamuno, I shelved the book along with my five prized, unread volumes.

Another adult I befriended in the bus was Paul's professor, who turned out to be a translator of English books into Malayalam. Soon after our friendship began, the professor took me home and presented me a copy of his latest publication, a translation of Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*. When I confided in him about my interest in writing books, he asked what kind of books I had in mind. I was already at work on a novel in Malayalam, but I did not divulge it. He said there was no point in writing third-rate books. Since I was so young, I could aim high, he said, and then he said I ought to aspire to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. I shuddered hearing it, and I redoubled my effort at reading and writing. I corresponded with the renowned Malayalam short story writer Zacharia, who lived in New Delhi, and the philosopher Nitya Chaitanya Yati, who was teaching in California. I started writing a new novel, this time I was aiming higher, choosing to write in English. I wanted my novel to be better than *Cat and Shakespeare*. As soon as I started writing, I knew I needed to move to a metropolitan city. Yet again, I started making public announcements about my interest in continuing my education at the Jesuit-run Loyola College, in Madras—now known as Chennai. Yet again, at great expense, my family packed me off to the city to study English literature.

In college, I finally received proper instruction in Shakespeare's plays. It used to be a matter of private shame for me that in spite of all my effort, I could not finish any of the plays in *The Great Tragedies*. I acquired a copy of *The Complete Works*. The size of the book itself was an education, paging through it humbling, vertiginous. We started our first term at Loyola with *1 Henry IV*. The professor was a gruff-voiced Jesuit priest who spontaneously acted out Hotspur's speech about being pestered by a popinjay who demanded the handover of prisoners on the behalf of Henry. Such was the professor's histrionic skill, he became Hotspur one minute, and next, he was the messenger who arrived "perfumed like a milliner" and using "many holiday and lady terms," demanding the prisoners Hotspur was holding. That the messenger, in the tone of a "waiting gentlewoman," dished out trivial advice to a war hero, the professor performed with precision, alternating between the roles of Hotspur and the messenger and even becoming the woman for a split second, without forgetting to project the part of the messenger taking the snuff with a loud sniff and a cluck of the tongue. With that first scene of *1 Henry IV*, my true education in Shakespearean drama had begun in earnest, and to bring

Falstaff to life, the Jesuit professor did not have to do anything: he embodied Falstaff.

The professor procured for us a rare black and white film, *Richard II*. What I took out of it was more than the historical context. I was moved by the mirror scene, in which the triumphant usurper King Henry torments the usurped King Richard. Unwilling to accept the reversal of his fortune the self-dramatizing Richard requests a mirror, so that he could see his bankrupt face. When he gets the mirror, he stares at his face long and hard and then shatters it in a fury, crying out that his sorrow has destroyed his face. Henry, unimpressed, snaps back, coldly: "The shadow of your sorrow has destroyed the shadow of your face."

The next term turned out to be even better, and the professor who taught *Twelfth Night* was one of the few women on campus at the time; she was the first lady teacher I had since the days of the nuns at the elementary school back home. On our first day, madam professor told us that she had studied with a great scholar, whose books on Shakespeare are widely read in England and America. She also confided in us that she tends to get giddy when she thinks of Viola. As the professor made Viola come alive through her rapturous reading and interpretation, I became engrossed in the play, and in madam professor, who became Viola for us. She was so witty and so blunt I suspected that under her skin she might be the wise fool, the singing fool, Feste. By the time I concluded my college education, I was able to study *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, the plays I had been nibbling at unprofitably ever since *The Great Tragedies* arrived at our home.

I was taught that Shakespeare's genius primarily rested in his "negative capability," a unique term coined by John Keats, a concept that was easy to understand and easier to embrace. I became convinced that pitting contradictory powers against each other while keeping absolute authorial distance was Shakespeare's secret, although I kept open the possibility of a singular Shakespearean view of the world.

As an aspiring novelist, I kept revisiting *Cat and Shakespeare*. I began to wonder whether *Cat* or *Shakespeare* or perhaps *Cat Hamlet* might have been a more apt title. After all, what Hamlet seems to learn from the chop-fallen, jawless skull of Yorick is that there is no point in much of the human effort in this world, a prince is no different from a sparrow—or a kitten, a kitten abandoned by the mother cat. In the novel, the kitten is not abandoned; in the play, Hamlet the kitten slips and falls into the abyss, no one catches him. I took the motif of falling as "tragedy" whether it is the fall of a prince or a sparrow.

Throughout my youth, I had been a secret skeptic seeking a secular religion, and naturally I sought existentialist affirmation in Shakespeare. In much of the criticism I read in college, particularly A. C. Bradley's

assurance that Shakespeare's heroes, when facing tragedy, do not look to "gods or God," made Shakespeare dearer to me than ever, yet I felt that I failed, as a seeker, to elicit existentialist consolation from any of the plays or sonnets. Over the years that I had spent paging through Miguel de Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life*, I have come to suspect that Shakespeare's secret must be hidden in the idea of the tragic and that *tragedy* needs to be understood as the normal condition of human existence, not a dramatic form. The tragic is the burdensome awareness, of what Hamlet calls "this too, too, solid flesh." Unamuno has said so in crystal clear language: "The man of flesh and bone; the man who is born, suffers and dies." Above all it is the condition of man who dies.

What I was taking with me after studying Shakespeare and other writers was the conception that the tragic sense was the source of Shakespeare's genius and that it was the singular view he has buried deep in his works, to be read between lines, perhaps meant only for the initiates. Not abandoning the professed aesthetic of negative capability, Shakespeare is teasing us from behind the many formal masks, including that of Polonius, who in *Hamlet* declaims every configuration of the masks, "tragedy, comedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical pastoral, tragical historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" (2.2.379-382); behind each mask is the same face, different form, same content, different shapes of pottery, same clay, same avuncular wink.

When I finally made my way through the *Tragic Sense of Life* I was disappointed that Unamuno did not include Shakespeare on his list of great writers who possessed the tragic sense. On his list of "men burdened with wisdom rather than knowledge," I took the liberty to insert Uncle Shakespeare in between the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and Saint Augustine as the greater visionary who possessed the rich redeeming sense of the tragic. By the time I left college, I had resolved to seek this wisdom and to live my life in the light and the darkness of the tragic. Perhaps it was a mistake so prematurely borrowing the wisdom of Prospero who bids farewell at the end of *The Tempest* resolved that "every third thought shall be my grave" (5.1.314).

Of course, what awaited me in the years after completing my studies was failure after failure in finding my way as a writer, but in 1986, somewhat unexpectedly, I was given another chance, and I was able to travel to the United States to pursue higher studies in creative writing. Sending me off to the West the distinguished Malayalam writer, my mentor Zacharia, cautioned me about taking academic studies too seriously if I still cared to be a writer. *If you want to write, sit down and write*, he said to me. *If you manage to sit down, there will come a stage called "sudden blossoming!"*

I started imagining Shakespeare coming home and sitting down at the writing desk. I could see that what did the trick was that at the end of the day, the man sat down, even after a long night at the theater, laboring on one production or other, if necessary stepping in to take the role of the fool or a ghost. In addition to averaging three plays a year, he also found the time to polish a private gem, a sonnet. With an unmistakable chuckle, Zacharia made a parting remark, "Don't turn into one of those professors!"

At the university, I turned my attention vigorously to my studies, and I also sat down and wrote. The first lesson in writing I received from my new mentor, the novelist John Keeble, was that what I had embarked on, the task of creating fiction, had nothing to do with ideas, nothing whatsoever to do with wisdom or knowledge. I was shocked. Had I taken a wrong turn? Writing fiction is primarily craft, creation, fabrication, not analysis. Some reader might analyze a novel and isolate an underlying philosophy, but the obligation of the novelist is to create the world with words, with nothing but words. In workshop after workshop, my peers also pointed out that the short stories and the novel chapters I had been submitting for critique were all about bearded men who were thinking too much.

In my two years at the creative writing program, it became obvious that what lay ahead was a long apprenticeship. After a year at University of North Dakota, working on a creative dissertation for my doctorate, I switched to a scholarly dissertation on the Renaissance—I considered specializing in Shakespeare, but ended up choosing a contemporary of Shakespeare, Richard Hakluyt, in whose *Principle Navigations* lay hidden the seed for *The Tempest*.

Now, I am older than Shakespeare himself when he died at the age of fifty-two and I am still in my long apprenticeship. I no longer seek wisdom or knowledge but I stay close to Shakespeare through an excess of books, stage productions, and films. I have walked in his backyard, and stood near his bed in his bedroom, his Globe is my globe, and I have become what I was cautioned against: a professor. I am still writing, nothing has changed, except that I write without ambition, and the Shakespearean sense of the tragic is never far from my thoughts.

Iris Murdoch, in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, has written that Shakespeare reminds us that "art must not console us too much." If art were meant to console, at the end of all that King Lear unleashed upon his world, the chain of violence and the suffering on the innocents would not have culminated in the final horror of Cordelia hanged and her senile father staggering on to the stage, bearing his child's body. Unlike the art of the novel which is essentially funny and comforting, *King Lear* howls at us: Do not expect consolation! Even in the comedies, Shakespeare seems to include the same message as a proviso about deriving comfort in

the comic ending, the poetic justice, and the group weddings—what happens to Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* points at Shakespeare's caution. The play's subtitle *Or, What You Will* can be read as an explicit proviso. Doesn't the title *As You Like It* mean the same as "Or, What You Will"? Even the comic Shakespeare includes a whisper behind our backs: If you are the type that needs consolation, here it is, take it, just "as you like it."

In the light of Harold Bloom's bold claim that Shakespeare invented our sense of what it is to be human, the question can be asked, what is more human and sensible than the tragic sense of life in this world? As someone who found the welcoming shade of Shakespeare's secular scripture, I look to the English speaking world, and the non-English-speaking world, and in the names of those who engaged Shakespeare—Milton, Dr. Johnson, Goethe, Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Virginia Woolf, Iris Murdoch—I see testament enough in support of the claim that Shakespeare provided us the language for our human striving.

As I welcome my old age, in the spirit of embracing the tragic sense, I attempt poetry, mostly as a private meditative exercise. One such poem started out as a description of an unnamed poet who comes home and sits down to write a sonnet for his own satisfaction. While I was polishing the first draft, an odd bit of information I came upon about the great Michelangelo and John Calvin changed the direction of the poem—both men died in 1564, the same year Shakespeare was born. Mulling over the coincidence of the deaths and the birth, I reached for Michelangelo's book of sonnets. I noticed that several of the immortal artist's sonnets were left unfinished, and I asked myself: What made Michelangelo fall silent mid-sonnet? Did he tire of the toil, was he weary of life? Was he suicidal? Did he try to speak of the unspeakable torments of the artist in his sonnets and fall silent in the attempt? The following poem turns into a series of questions, an ode:

> Forgive me, Michelangelo, my attempt on your attempts
> to end your life. In my tedium, alone on Moss Avenue,
> I, too, once looked to Death as the world eyes your marvels,
> your David, your Pieta, the frescoed heavens you made anew.
>
> Was it Mr. Death who came to you in the guise of Miss Muse
> while you were laboring under high ceilings? Did she urge evil?
> Did you tie the knot? Did a marble hand unknot the noose?
> What else did you suffer rendering God in oil?
>
> You fall silent in sonnet after sonnet, you blame futility.
> For us, nothing you touched is futile, be it marble or rhyme.
> We are grateful you did not rush the brush with mortality.
> You lived long, even in death you continued the dark theme,

reborn, you rose in forty days, beating that boor John Calvin,
flew north: to complete your "works" at Stratford-upon-Avon.

What I am privately proud of is the title of my poem: "To Complete the Works." The reference to Calvin and his rejection of the "works" in this world and the conceit that Shakespeare is the completion of the earlier work attempted in marble came together in the poem spontaneously.

Now, I am also at work on a series of prose poems based on what I think of as hidden epiphanies in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*—the great glowing moments in the plays that tend to go unnoticed—and I am aware that I may be misreading some of the moments. I, who found Shakespeare through a series of misunderstandings, have come to think that Shakespeare misunderstood is no less valuable than Shakespeare understood.

The poem below is based on such a moment that occurs in *Twelfth Night*. The wise fool Feste enters into a prolonged banter with Viola who initially teases him by hair-splitting a sentence. Feste pushes back: "A sentence is but a cheverel glove to a good wit, how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward." The banter turns into a philosophical glove game: a glove can be turned inside out and outside in, there is no fixity. Viola who happens to be cross-dressed as Cesario, readily agrees that nothing is fixed, words can be twisted, prostituted. Feste, to emphasize the point, swears that he would not dare to christen his sister because her name being a word would be prostituted. He also informs Viola in uncertain terms how he loathes the act of reasoning with her because he is forced to use words. Words! Michelangelo had marble, but what do we have other than words? As human beings burdened with so many urgencies, we live in the trembling house of words.

In the following poem, "The Glove Game," written on the occasion of Shakespeare's 450th birthday, I have tried to bring together in my own trembling words, my secret joy in thinking that Shakespeare's "Works" present a singular view and that it is the tragic sense of life:

> Look, who just turned four and five and zero, his name shall remain unknown, what's in a name, what's in a profession, yes, he was born a glove-maker's son, no one would know his persuasion, believer or skeptic, his vocation and avocation are well known, and there are whispers about his orientation; on this day of birth and mirth, one wonders what he said in summary of it all, can it be known, was name his game, or game the name; in play after play he put words in the mouth of fools, everyone is a fool, user of words, words, words, words, our pledge of breath is no more than a soft glove, says the fool Feste, and a glove that can be turned inside out, outside in, in the manner the right often turns wrong; the birthday boy is telling it

like it is: words are rascals; showing and telling was his game, naming names was another, like Adam, he named all that we needed named: tragedy, comedy, what else is there, what else Will be there, one Will he was, for years I took him for an uncle, his fools call him "Nuncle," uncle or nuncle, he Will be Will, the fellow of infinite jest, everyone knows Will will be Will.

FRED WHITEHEAD

Blues for Robert Lewis

Over the decades, I've written several short tributes to departed friends and colleagues in literary studies under the rubric: "Blues for . . . ." In a way, it's a sort of formulaic title. Sometimes those friends died too young, from illness or accidents. So I want to compose some Blues for Bob Lewis, though in a different spirit. "Please Mr. Johnson," begged Big Joe Turner in a song, "don't play the blues so sad / Last night I lost the only little girl I ever had." Bob enjoyed a long, happy, and productive life, so these blues won't be sad, but a kind of account of what he achieved.

In the late 1970s, a series of cultural conferences in Kansas City, was held at the Foolkiller center. Tom McGrath came to the first of these, in 1978, as did Meridel LeSueur, Jack Conroy, Truman Nelson, and other veterans of the radical literary movement from the 1930s. Unlike most of the New Left of the 1960s, we in Kansas City earnestly desired to make contact with these legendary writers, to learn everything we could from them. In particular, Meridel urged that we start saving the writings and the memoirs of the older generation. She herself had spent decades traveling the Midwest, finding old radicals, not just writers, but farmers and miners—people from the working class. In the early days she even collected oral histories on wire recorders, which actually had a spool of wire, reeling from one terminal to another. The machines were impossibly heavy, and the quality of sound was often pretty bad. But she did it, and I think many of these recordings may now be in the Minnesota Historical Society. In any event, it was at that time that I started following her example, and amassed extensive collections of oral histories of activists, especially in the Midwest, everyone I could find of whatever political stripe, who lived in or passed through this region, from 1910 to the 1980s and 1990s.

Parallel to that impulse, I realized that many activists and writers who had known Tom McGrath were getting elderly ("up in years," as we say out here), and that it was urgent to collect their memoirs. I got in contact with Bob Lewis at *NDQ*, and "the rest is history," literally. *The Dream Champ* issue of *NDQ*, dated Fall 1982, was the result. I won't attempt to recount the contents, except to say that several contributors are no longer

living. Harry Merer, for one instance, was in Alaska with Tom, who dedicated at least one poem to him: "For One Who Has Looked at the Dark." I ought to put down one marvelous story that Harry told me about his days as a kind of clerk for the San Francisco Water Department. Part of his job was to administer the required anti-communist loyalty oath. Harry recalled he would ask the applicant to raise his hand and swear: "Do you solemnly swear to (mumble, mumble, mumble)." Even though the applicant had no idea what was said, Harry would instantly confirm: "You are hired."

When *The Dream Champ* issue was published, a few of us realized that some kind of event should celebrate it. The Wichita poet Tom Page, his then young son, and I drove up to St. Paul, and made our way to Meridel's house. The venue for the celebration was someplace in Fargo. I asked Meridel if she really wanted to drive off into the country with these radical men, and she responded: "That's why I'm coming!" En route, she observed: "See how the fields are shaded" in grades of brown and tan. When we passed by Sauk Centre, she recalled that she had been at Sinclair Lewis's funeral there: "We were about finished, when a wind came up and blew the ashes all over everyone."

In Fargo we stayed in a sort of rooming house—it must have gone back to the Thirties. I cannot now recall exactly where we all converged, but Tom was deeply moved, especially that Meridel had come all the way across Minnesota. It was right then that I met Bob Lewis for the first time. He was tall, wiry, and handsome, with a bushy mustache, rather in the manner of the actors Sam Elliott or Tom Selleck. Bob took out his guitar, we all sang "This Land is Your Land." And at that moment, it came true.

Later I went to downtown Fargo, near the railroad tracks, to what appeared to be a small but rough skid row district. I went in to one place that was a kind of hardware store, though it also was a place that had large institutional-type grills, probably for breakfast. A nearby bar was full of big rowdy guys—including several Native Americans. The police were on hand, expecting fights to erupt. Tom wasn't there as a guide, so not wanting to witness the arrival of a paddy wagon, I didn't stay.

The next morning, Meridel joined Tom, his son, and me for breakfast someplace. She peered at us and declared: "You're getting all the bears out of their caves."

Subsequently, Bob asked me to serve as a contributing editor for *NDQ*, which I have gladly done. Our association was unfailingly pleasant, with an emphasis on workmanship and significance in the contents of the magazine. I was always impressed by the reach of the journal—most if not all issues had international contributions. In addition, many important books were reviewed in *NDQ*, which never got one word in the "big" magazines of the East Coast. Along those lines, the novelist Robert Day, author of *The Last Cattle Drive*, a rambunctious and now classic novel,

was in the 1990s having no luck getting published back East, even though he had a distinguished literary agent. I recommended that he send stories to *NDQ* and to *New Letters* at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Both magazines have published several of Day's stories, and thus maintained the record of our region in at least recognizing our own best writers.

It is for all these reasons I am pleased to recall the steady hand of Bob Lewis, a man who in the expression of William Blake, "kept the divine vision in times of trouble." Truly, he sustained the ideal of the Republic of Letters, right here in the American Midwest.

ROBERT W. LEWIS

The Agony and the Ecstasy of Editing

A friend who was thinking about editing and publishing a new "little" magazine wrote to ask me what the pluses and minuses of editing were. He already seemed committed to his venture, he had good ideas to individuate the journal—it wouldn't be a clone—and he was himself a good writer. Thus, I didn't feel any need to warn him off. The only important factor I didn't know about was monetary. He hadn't said anything about how he would finance his journal. That factor can be crucial, but I was sure he knew it. He was not asking for Business-Manager information but for some experiential observations: what would be good, what not so good? I would refer any person contemplating such a venture to the 3d edition of *Words into Type* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974) which has a good commentary on editing. But what of my own experience?

His inquiry threw me. I have been editing *North Dakota Quarterly* for five years, and before that I had helped edit two other journals (*Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, and *Abstracts of English Studies*), and I help edit *The Hemingway Review*. And like all professors worth their salt, I had been editing student writing all my academic life. But what were the reasons I had wanted to edit a journal? Frankly, I had never thought about it. Editing was corollary to my profession; the former editor had retired, the University had solicited applicants to replace him; I had applied and was chosen. Why?

Power. That's the drug. I'm pretty sure. We each have our predilections, our own desire to be in print, our theoretical and practical ideas of how to enact our urge to power. We are word creatures, and at the crux of our reading and writing actions are the editors who determine what we read and whether or not we will be published. Editors *are* constrained in various ways—by their advisory editors or readers, by their budgets, by their reputations, by their actual or imagined quality, by their circulations, by their own limited energies and ideas. But given the urge to print so widespread in our culture, the availability, even eagerness, of writers and their works longing for print offers a great incentive for editing. Indeed,

as my friend's initiative demonstrated, virtually anyone with a little capital, a little energy, and an idea can start a journal. Many, of course, do not last long, capital, energy, and ideas being often evanescent. Some very good little magazines lasted little longer than mayflies.

I was once a substitute on a pretty good softball team. In our league, each team provided an umpire for the games, and if our regulars were all present, I umped. It was second-best from my point of view, but apparently I was pretty good at it, and I was rarely disputed and sometimes congratulated for calling a good game.

Editors are like umpires. They are in control, calling the balls and strikes, the safes and the outs. But the writers are playing, and if you are umping, you ain't playing. Or, on my team, you're playing only if a superior player (writer) doesn't show. Editors and umpires have that narcotic power, but I suspect that most of them would rather be playing. So, offsetting that *plus* of power is that minus of at least partial *disengagement* from the very arena to which one is committed.

Beyond that basic split, there are other contrasts: I am humbled by writing that reveals talent, and editors are *in position* (as another editing colleague put it) to act as a catalyst for that talent. There is pleasure in promoting (from typescript to print, from little known or unknown to more widely known) good work. If an editor can be open to any work satisfying a free, catholic, yet demanding taste, and after publication look at the result without cringing, indeed looking at it with at least satisfaction, then one has had a simple, honest pleasure.

Editors also have an often overlooked power in determining format. Isn't the physical appearance of a literary work as important as the physical appearance of a work of "visual art"? Is not literature (essay, poem, fiction, review) visual too? Who has not been struck by the qualities of paper, binding, dust jacket, and printing as well as graphic art itself? And what the words might have conveyed when spoken aloud without the presence of a text is nevertheless in a physical form. (Should each poem, no matter how short, deserve a separate page? Should each story or essay begin recto, never verso?) A certain political (and correct) stance pertains to the rudest physical presentation. Yet similarly, a refusal of grey paper, crowded typography, and other false economies (economy in Thoreau's sense) pertain. Be, editors, the artist of Karoo.

Another great pleasure may be that of a family watching a beloved child mature. You *help* to conceive a journal—never (or rarely) a parthenogenetic act. If you are both lucky and good, your child will catch hold, avoid the childhood diseases of funding cut-offs and public indifference, be noticed enough, somewhere, to give you courage to go on. The family that works with you provides the most intimate of your pleasures just as, with them, you are likely to have the most frequent stress.

Different family members have different ideas about raising the journal. Decisions have to be reached on each of the endless stream of submissions. I have been lucky in having a generous and cooperative group of advisory editors for essays and assistant editors for art, fiction, and poetry. On occasion, we have had guest editors from outside the in-house editors, and people have enlarged my understanding greatly. For no matter how well read one is, if one's journal is of some breadth in what it undertakes to publish, one is constantly learning, and often in areas where one otherwise would not go. So the many dialogs not only with authors around the country and world, but also with one's family of helpers, often over new material, are gratifying and enlarging, perhaps the strongest pleasure of all.

Academics tend to specialize or become dilettantes (to their and the profession's loss). I think that editing an interdisciplinary journal containing some fiction, poetry, and reviews as well as essays is the best of all possible assignments. But one could easily imagine a string of problems emanating from that editing and making it an unpleasant burden.

—One's other work (teaching, research, creative work) would ideally be in balance with the editing, but they may suffer in point of time available for them.

—No matter how hard one works at editing, mistakes are overlooked or errors creep in. At first I had to drive myself to read corrected proof. Having read the original script, possibly having discussed it or at least read the reports of readers, having edited it before sending it to the press, I was resentful of reading it yet another time. But that feeling has waned, possibly (I like to think) because the quality of acceptances has improved. Further our time schedule has lengthened so that there may be more than a year between acceptance and re-reading of corrected proof, and the good work deserves re-reading. At this stage, I feel intimate with the issue; I know it pretty well, blemishes well as strengths.

—A related bugaboo, a pet peeve that I would not have expected the scope of, is the widespread failure of authors to quote accurately. When we send galley proof to authors we ask that they carefully check the accuracy of quotations. Creative writing seldom has quotations in it, but otherwise I think creative writers, on the average, proofread more carefully than academic writers, and the latter are, on the average, careless, indeed cavalier, in quoting. Sometimes the misquotations are substantive and would be extremely embarrassing in print. They are often common; one full professor of English at a university had 14 misquotations in 14 lines. I do resent time spent chasing down and searching for garbled passages or even minor errors. As a book reviewer also, I know misquotations get into print, and it's my impression that editing at even prestigious university

presses has seriously deteriorated. There seems to be a widespread and undeserved confidence in the accuracy of quotations.

—Other editors report fund-raising as their most resented activity, diverting from more important work. Other editors with strong institutional support are lucky, but I do have a staffing problem. I have great academic and artistic help (all volunteer), but I have no business manager or staff. The secretary and I must fuss with that work, and I do not like it, important though it may be in helping promote the journal.

—The longer I have been at the job, the easier the routine part of it has become. Evaluation remains difficult and challenging, but I find I can accept the possibility that we may reject deserving work and publish some mediocre work. The latter is more a threat than the former since there are other journals around and good work tends to survive.

I expect that editing with good support from helping people and not too much funding hassle is something one might like to do for some time. Burnout is likely under other circumstances.

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ROBERT FLEMING

Remembering Bob Lewis: Bobcat and Bobolink

I first got to know Bob Lewis in Schruns, Austria, during a biennial meeting of the Hemingway Society in 1988. I was presenting a paper as a relative newcomer, with a half dozen or so Hemingway articles published, one of them in the *North Dakota Quarterly*. Bob was there as president of the society, serving his second term as I recall. I remember that he gave an appreciative response to our Austrian hosts in fluent German. (Having spent so much time in North Dakota, he could probably have given it in Norwegian, had the conference taken place in Norway.)

Bob was a sharp-eyed editor, the kind who was not intrusive but who caught any error. He saved me from embarrassment by catching a couple of mine in the manuscript of an article for a 2003 *NDQ* issue. I served as his editor only once when I published his essay "'The African Book': Hemingway Major and Late in the Natural World" in *Hemingway and the Natural World* (1999). I had no opportunity to repay his favor; I found no errors. That essay, published in 1999, was commented on favorably by Patrick Hemingway when the society met in Oak Park in 1999, and marked Bob as the natural choice to edit the unabridged "African Book" manuscript in a clear text edition, pursuant to an agreement with the Hemingway estate. Although Bob had co-compiled an 80-page collated and annotated text of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" for *Texas Quarterly* in 1970, he felt, and I agreed, that a reading text of "The African Book" was preferable at that time.

We had both served on the Board of the Hemingway Society and Foundation in the 1990s, and we usually ended up going to the airport together after every meeting. It was a good time to talk informally about the meetings and to get to know each other better. Bob had enjoyed a cordial relationship with Patrick Hemingway, who, I think, trusted Bob to respect his father's work and reputation, a trust which not all Hemingway scholars have enjoyed. This was an asset when we began to work on the edition. Sometime after the publication of *True at First Light* in 1999,

Bob called me and asked me to serve as co-editor of "The African Book," assuming Board approval. I replied that I would work on it as his associate or assistant editor, but that he would have to be the senior editor, as he was familiar with the manuscript and had advocated strongly for it. At that point I had not even read "The African Book."

To keep the two "Bobs" straight, Bob suggested that he would be "Bobcat" and I would be "Bobolink," and we signed each e-mail that way. We illustrated the principle of a third "Bob," Robert Frost, by "working together though apart." Our single face-to-face planning meeting took place during the 2002 Hemingway conference in Stresa, Italy. After that we worked by e-mail, each with his own copy of the manuscript, passing attachments of edited chapters back and forth. Our last meeting was at the reception in Grand Forks after *Under Kilimanjaro* came out in 2005.

Bob was a generous and congenial partner. We had long discussions to debate readings when the text was hard to read but never a heated disagreement. A good example, not surprisingly, was a reference to a drink. Hemingway's usually clear penmanship left us puzzling over a "gin and it" or a "gin and t." Could this be shorthand for gin and tonic? Bob thought so. On the other hand, Hemingway sometimes liked to use British terms. A "gin and it," otherwise known as a "pink gin," or gin and bitters, is favored by the British, but so is a gin and tonic. I established that the party was supplied with bitters, and I also found Hemingway drinking gin and bitters earlier in the text. Since the Hemingways were being supplied by air, I also argued that one could get many bottles of bitters into the space of one bottle of tonic. Bob conceded that one. But I realized just how generous he was only when I saw the title page of *Under Kilimanjaro* in proof. Bob had listed me as his co-editor.

A real fringe benefit of the project was that I sometimes felt that I was corresponding with Henry David Thoreau. Bob constantly kept me informed of "how the weather was"—especially the coming of spring. He always knew and informed me when the first bobolink appeared in North Dakota. He kept me up to date on the snow, the rising river waters, and the first spring flowers. I will always treasure the experience of working so closely with Bob. It was a high point in my career and in my life.

LAUREL REUTER

Robert William Lewis As I Remember

A few days after Bob died, Lisa came to me and asked if she could rent the North Dakota Museum of Art for a memorial service for her father. I replied, "Are you crazy? Of course you can't rent the Museum."

That would be like asking Bob to pay to spend an afternoon in his own garden, the North Dakota Museum of Art, an institution he tended from its beginning. I said, "We at the Museum will help make the garden beautiful for this final goodbye."

Then I thought, "Lisa learned those lovely manners from her father."

Robert Lewis was a gardener in every aspect of his life. I am only one example.

He was my professor in graduate school and continued as my personal editor for decades. Back then, as a graduate student starting the Museum, I lost interested in pursuing a PhD in literature. I lost interest in finishing my MA.

Bob came to me and said, "You must have at least a master's degree if you want to work on this campus." So he cut me a deal:

I would curate an exhibition of Kenneth Patchen's picture poems in conjunction with the 1974 Beat Writers Conference. I would publish a small catalog, and Bob would accept it as my thesis in American Literature. Years later, the University of North Dakota gave me the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters—with Bob's full approval and quiet nudging.

A few months ago, Bob was in the Museum with a small group of people. In a nostalgic mood, he mentioned, "I feel that I'm the Stepfather of this Museum—first I had to get you through school."

I thought, "What an accurate naming. As always, he had the words right." Stepfather.

He was the first President of the Museum's first Board. He gave generously of his time, his resources, his appreciation, his love—and his red pen. His daughters were told to look it up; I was given the corrections in

red. For example, if he saw an error in an exhibition label, he would correct it in red and personally deliver it to my desk.

And for years and years, he came to the Museum—for lunch, for concerts, for openings—always accompanied by beautiful daughters, or granddaughters, and lately, his great granddaughter. You could see the warm and respectful bonds between Bob and them. I loved him for this.

In 1969, Bob accepted an offer from UND's Arts and Science's Dean, Bernard O'Kelly, to move from Austin, Texas, to North Dakota as Chair of the Department of English. He quickly became the stepfather of the UND Writers Conference, begun in 1970. John Little gets all the credit, just as I get the credit for the Museum. John, however, could not have built this great, annual, cultural institution without the full and behind-the-scenes support of his Department Chair, Robert Lewis. It was he who earmarked departmental money, enticed the University to open its coffers, invited the whole community in, and released English classes for the full conference week so the students could attend all the events and hear the voices of America's great writers.

That same year, indigenous scholars gathered at Princeton University to draft a plan to develop "Native American Studies as an academic discipline." Seven years later, the University of North Dakota Department of American Indian Studies came into being, among the first in the United States. Bob was at the table negotiating for the Native position. It was here he earned his Indian name "Iron Butt" for his ability to sit through the "endlessly tedious, bureaucratic meetings necessary to introduce a new academic department into the system." Another of Bob's carefully tended gardens.

How he loved his many gardens. He would not bring you a tomato and say, "Look at this gorgeous tomato I grew." No, he would say, "Isn't this a beautiful tomato?" and then tell you its botanical heritage, and where he got the seeds—maybe they came from daughter Lisa, maybe he ordered them from a catalog or swapped them with a friend, maybe he tucked them into a suitcase and brought them home from his travels.

He would bring other gifts, not for the usual holidays but instead when he came across something he thought you would like.

- He gave me my first potted basil plant one dark fall day.
- He found William Spratling's autobiography in his own library and brought it to me. It was of great interest to me as Spratling started the Mexican silver movement in Taxco. I knew the silver; I didn't know Spratling. With the book came another of Bob's quiet nudgings: "I hope you are working on your own. Histories need to be written down."
- I still use his recipe for borsch.

I once kept a couple of bee hives in my garden. Then, disrupted by construction, I turned my equipment over to my nephew Dean Wallace. Matt Wallace, another nephew who is now Associate Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art, came home from the Peace Corps, saw his cousin's operation, and said, "I want to keep bees."

Living in Grand Forks, Matt was casting around for places to put hives. I suggested he talk to Bob who lived on forty acres along the Turtle River west of Grand Forks. Of course Bob said yes, and of course they became friends. What pleasure I took in watching that friendship grow, seeing the books and articles from Bob pile up on Matt's desk as Bob himself became a bee keeper, a role model for a young man, and a passionate student of the life of bees. In the book bag that accompanied him on his last trip to Altru Elder Care were two books on bees.

The last book I saw in Bob's hands was titled *Crows*.

I must accept that this elegant gentleman, who moved with ease in the natural world, the human world, and the life of the mind, is physically gone from us, but he will live on in our lives and our memories until we are no more.

In front of you today hangs James Rosenquist's monumental painting, *From the Eye of the Needle to the Anvil*, which he created in memory of his mother, a pioneer North Dakota aviator. High in the upper left corner is a small black cubical is an inscription:

After all
in awe of itself
is death

September 20, 2013
North Dakota Museum of Art

GAYATRI DEVI

When Hellhounds Became Horses: Robert Johnson Seeks Medicine in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*

It seems that sin is geographical.

—Bertrand Russell, *On the Value of Scepticism*

But still the crossroads does have a certain dangerous potency; dangerous because a man might perish there wrestling with multiple-headed spirits, but also he might be lucky and return to his people with the boon of prophetic vision.

—Chinua Achebe, "Named for Victoria, Queen of England"

In a 1978 photograph of the American Indian Movement's "Long Walk" from San Francisco to Washington, DC, for tribal rights, black civil rights celebrities and the activists of the native rights movement sit together: Muhammad Ali, Buffy St. Marie, Floyd Red Crow Westerman, Harold Smith, Stevie Wonder, Marlon Brando, Max Gail, Dick Gregory, Richie Havens, and David Amram.[1] The Smithsonian exhibition *Indivisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas*, which displays the photograph, indeed follows the premise set by the ethno-historical and historiographical work done by Native American scholars such as Jack Forbes on the links between the two communities. Forbes's *Black Africans and Native Americans: Color, Race and Caste in the Evolution of Red Black Peoples*, for instance, offers a fascinating corrective to Eurocentric narratives of pre-colonial and colonial Americas that prefer the Europe-Africa/Europe-Native America distribution to tell the story of colonialism, and not its African/Native American vector. Focusing primarily on the language of race terminology from the 1500s to post-Civil War and Reconstruction, particularly the official use of the term "colored," Forbes claims that "it seems highly likely that pre-Civil War society was more ethnically diverse and culturally pluralistic, at least in so far as non-whites were concerned . . . 'free people of color' included all kinds of persons

and all kinds of communities, from Indian reservations, to Indian rural communities, to mixed Indian-African-white populations, to European-African mixed-bloods, to free Africans, etc." (263). Analyzing pre- and post-Civil War census records as well as other official proclamations, Forbes categorically concludes, "there was no solid line between 'free colored persons' and 'free negroes,' unmixed Indians, or even whites before the Civil War," and that "we cannot make the mistake of translating 'colored' as 'negro', black, or African" (264). Forbes further cautions that "I believe it will be quite important for scholars to study the evolution of 'colored,' mixed groups in the Americas on a comparative basis without becoming locked into paradigms formed essentially by North American white racism and fascination with only the black-white nexus" (264).

African American scholar, critic, and culture theorist Henry Louis Gates, Jr., would disagree with Forbes' assertion. In a 2013 article entitled "How 'Black' is Black America?" Gates describes his participation in the PBS series on genealogy and genetics, *African American Lives 1 and 2*, and *Finding Your Roots*, where five DNA companies analyzed the autosomal DNA of Gates' guests to determine how much of their ancestry traces to "each of the world's ancestral populations, people who lived in particular geographical regions, say, 500 years ago, via an 'admixture test.'"[2] The admixture results were generated for three large regional summaries: sub-Saharan African, European, and Native American. While the ranges differed between the five companies, the average African American is 65 to 80 percent Sub Saharan African, 19 to 29 percent European, and 0.6 to 2 percent Native American. In the above article, Gates emphasizes, "even the most phenotypically 'African' (or what used to be called 'Negroid') African Americans have dramatically significant levels of European ancestry." Gates calls the common claim that many African Americans make about their high percentage of Native American ancestry "a myth," and asserts that "the bottom line is that black and white Americans are inextricably interconnected at the level of their genomes, and African Americans are a profoundly 'mixed' people, far more than anyone thought possible before these DNA tests were invented."

The native rights movement also evolved in a distinctively different direction from the spirit of that shared moment in 1978, particularly in its relation to the nation-state of the government of the United States. Thomas Biolsi in "Imagined Geographies: Sovereignty, Indigenous Space, and American Indian Struggle" cites the "Declaration of Sovereignty" enacted by the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon to exemplify the enduring sovereign character of the native rights movement:

> Our people have exercised inherent sovereignty, as nations, on the Columbia Plateau for thousands of years, since time immemorial. . . . We . . . Hereby declare our national sovereignty. We declare the existence of this inherent sovereign authority—the absolute right to govern, to determine our destiny, and to control all persons, land, water, resources and activities, free of all outside interference—throughout our homeland. (239)

Biolsi notes that the above language distinctly echoes the content and intent of the worldwide discourse on anti-colonialism and nationalist self-determination. Indeed, in an interview with *Sonoma Independent*, Sherman Alexie emphasized as much: "I'm a colonized man. We're a colonized people. This *is* South Africa here, and people don't want to admit that. The United States *is* a colony, and I'm always going to write like one who is colonized, and that's with a lot of anger."[3] Alexie's outrage is justified. In 2007, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," a total of 144 states or countries voted in favor of its adoption, while the United States, along with Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, voted against it.[4]

I propose that reading Sherman Alexie's writings from such a "postcolonial" perspective highlights their striving towards the "ethical universal" that suffuses these stories and gives them what Kwame Anthony Appiah terms their "agonist" character.[5] In *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, Native American scholar Jodi A. Byrd theorizes that racialization and colonization are conflated in the United States, and that this "conflation masks the territoriality of conquest by assigning colonization to the racialized body, which is then policed in its degrees from whiteness" ("Introduction"). Byrd concludes that the meshing of colonization and racialization tactically "disappears" indigenous rights for sovereignty, self-determination, and land rights "into U. S. territoriality as indigenous identity becomes a racial identity and citizens of colonized indigenous nations becomes internal ethnic minorities within the colonizing nation-state" ("Introduction"). This conceptual and ideological contortion is at the heart of Alexie's writing. Further, I ask how both the Native American and the African American communities might benefit from an awareness of this conflation of categories.

As postcolonial texts, Alexie's stories problematize nation building, whether American or Indian. They call attention to what it means to be a sovereign Indian without sovereignty in the United States in a historically contingent manner. Alexie has no particular use for representational realism, sacrificing the granularity of this mode in favor of a dense textual matrix of many master narratives of colonialism and its losses from the perspective of the colonized. In its meanderings through such a palimpsest, these stories become necessarily aporetic. Alexie's *Reservation Blues*

(1995) is a cautionary tale about the cost of assimilating oneself to the nation-building project, represented in the archetypal story of the artist who sells his soul to the devil to advance himself. The figure of the blues-man at the crossroads selling his soul to the devil becomes an allegory for the desire to belong. But, the novel shows that you can be "theoretically" free and still sing the reservation blues with no irony. A reflexive perspective that is at once both that of an insider and an outsider, here, the Indian and the African American, is necessary to narrate this allegory of loss. Each needs the other and their "myths" to expose the horror that lies at the root of this allegory. *Reservation Blues* is a dense palimpsest of the white/non-white color line experienced by two "colored" groups who come to the aid of each other. I explore two particular nodes in this palimpsest: the Blues as a trope and the conflation of colonization and slavery.

Notwithstanding Gates' scientifically backed assertion regarding "the myth" of Indian (Alexie's preferred term) ancestry to African Americans, African American-identified performers and writers, from the musician Jimi Hendrix to the writer Alice Walker, have actively echoed this myth in their own creative productions as a crucial constituent of their American identity. The textual bonds they create are sacred, symbolic, and life sustaining, as myths tend to be. In Alice Walker's novel *Meridian* (1976), for instance, the young African American protagonist Meridian, a civil rights activist, not only disassociates herself from her mother's Christianity, but bends strongly towards her father's animistic and mystic spirituality, a spirituality that is bonded in passion and tears with the Cherokee memorabilia that he collects. Like her father, and the Cherokee wanderer Walter Longknife who visits them, whose ancestors once owned Meridian's father's land, Meridian too experiences intense visions of a connectedness and personal responsibility to all that is sacred within and without her. Meridian's vision binds her with renewed commitment to the African-American struggle for civil rights, but also much farther back to a well-spring of spirituality to guide her in her efforts, a source clearly associated in the novel with Indian beliefs. She forges this authentic bond with herself as a civil rights activist and as a "just" human being not through her romantic and personal relationship with her lover Truman, nor her sisterhood with fellow activists at Saxon college, but through an intense vision at the Sacred Serpent Burial Mound, an Indian burial site. Discussing the thematic and symbolic significance of the excerpt from *Black Elk Speaks* appended as an epigraph to Walker's novel, Anne M. Downey in "'A Broken and Bloody Hoop'": The Intertextuality of *Black Elk Speaks* and Alice Walker's *Meridian*," asserts, "the two texts share symbols, seers and spirituality. In my reading, Black Elk's epigraph is the call, and *Meridian* is the response" (38). Gates, in the chapter on "The

Trope of the Talking Book," in *The Signifying Monkey*, reiterates the difficulty to extricate the "speaking voice" in African American texts, which he attributes to "blackness" as an absence in the master narratives of slavery. Gates notes, "shared modes of figuration result only when writers read each other's texts and seize upon topoi and tropes to revise their own texts" (128). Walker's use of Black Elk's words as epigraph to her novel animates such a shared mode of figuration between two colored groups. Gates further argues that "this form of revision is a process of grounding and has served to create curious formal lines of continuity between the texts that together comprise the shared text of blackness, the discrete chapters of which scholars are still establishing" (128-29). Walker's *Meridian* is one example of African Americans and Indians sharing elective textual blackness, a mythical affinity that surpasses genetics. Meridian is adrift in the emerging 1970s militant Black movement without the (mythical?) spiritual succor she finds in the parallel (and shared) Indian history.

Elective affinity brings together a father, son, and Jimi Hendrix's music in Alexie's short story "Because My Father Always Said He Was the Only Indian Who Saw Jimi Hendrix Play 'The Star-Spangled Banner' at Woodstock" from *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. Victor Joseph, the young Indian protagonist, watches his father slide deeper and deeper into alcoholism and despair through an uneventful life in the reservation interrupted by two iconic cultural moments. In one, Joseph Sr. joins others in demonstrating in Spokane, Washington, during the Vietnam War and gets arrested. In two, he hitchhikes to Woodstock, New York, to hear Jimi Hendrix play "The Star-Spangled Banner." Victor Joseph is one of the main characters in *Reservation Blues* as well, and in this early story we see the "agonist" challenge Alexie presents to the master narratives of the nation and its ideological machinery. As with Alice Walker in *Meridian*, African American history is pivotal in telling Victor's story. This time it is the Indian story told through African American history. Hendrix's performance of the "The Star-Spangled Banner," with its "high-volume electric guitar distortion" and "his riffs often interpreted as mimicking weapons (sic) explosions and bombs dropping from the sky,"[6] help render the song and its performance into a palimpsest and a contested site.

Alexie's postcolonial critique becomes visible in the space opened up by the two renditions of the national anthem. The patriotic anthem promises the soundtrack of a successful, cohesive nation, the land of the free and the home of the brave. Hendrix's version is a tendentious critique of that war culture, a war of aggression fought against another foreign sovereign nation, Vietnam, performed at an optimal moment in the nation's history: "Over and over, the house filled with the rockets' red

glare and the bombs bursting in air" (26). If we read this sentence literally to mean Victor's house bombed, it is intended, I would argue. In the reservation, "Star-Spangled Banner," both the patriotic as well as the countercultural, become the mass-produced, commodified go-to song about the original war of aggression in the eyes of a dissipated man. Jimi Hendrix chokes on his vomit and dies. Victor's father, increasingly drunk and dissipated, leaves the family and moves to Phoenix, Arizona. After his father leaves them, Victor finds himself listening to the blues of Robert Johnson in the way his father listened and cried to Jimi Hendrix: "The first time I heard Robert Johnson sing I knew he understood what it meant to be Indian on the edge of the twenty-first century, even if he was black at the beginning of the twentieth" (35). Victor's experience of loss transcends generations and race. Alexie deepens the palimpsest of the song by inscribing it with multiple signifiers of loss: Victor's loss of his father; his father's loss of himself to alcohol; Jimi Hendrix's loss of faith in the nation; and Robert Johnson's blues played over "The Star-Spangled Banner." The national anthem becomes an anthem of loss in Alexie's retelling.

The bluesman Robert Johnson himself visits the town of Wellpinit in the Spokane Indian Reservation in 1992 as *Reservation Blues* begins its story. The opening chapter introduces the temporal and spatial dislocation in the narrative through an intentional disruption of chronology that plunges the entire narrative into mythical time. The events move back and forth between the narrative present of 1992, 1938, the year of Robert Johnson's death by poisoning, and 1858, the year of Spokane Wars. This temporal dislocation makes it possible for the allegory to peak through successive generations and race-relations with their varied socio-historical settings and cast of characters. Johnson, the narrator tells us, did not arrive at the Reservation "by accident" (3). Indeed, the framework of mythical time tells us he is on a mythical errand. Johnson tells Thomas Builds-The-Fire that he "made a bad deal years ago" and that he is looking for the old woman who lives on a hill who "can fix what's wrong with me" (5).

Johnson is not the first African American to seek out the Indian Reservation. Both Blacks and the Blues had intersected with Indians as far back as 1901. In *Transit of the Empire*, Byrd describes the Harvard archeologist Charles Peabody's visit to the Chickasaw and Choctaw burials mounds in Coahoma County, Mississippi, where he heard the black workers hired in Clarksdale singing work songs as they dug the burial mounds for his excavation (ch. 4). Upon his return, Peabody published what is perhaps the first academic exposition of African American blues music, detailing its underlying heteroglossia, improvisation, and call and response antiphonal structure (ch. 4). In "Going to the Nation: The Idea of Oklahoma in Early Blues Recordings," Chris Smith notes that in the post-war years, Blues songs between the years 1920-1940 made numerous ref-

erences to "goin' to the Nation," and "goin' to the Territo'(ry)," where the "nation" stood for the Indian nation, and the "territory" stood for Oklahoma before its 1907 statehood (85). Blues compositions such as Bessie Smith's "Work House Blues," Freezone's "Indian Squaw Blues," Papa Charlie Jackson's "The Faking Blues," Priscilla Stewart's "Going to the Nation," Leroy Carr's "Long Road Blues," and Bo Carter's "So Long, Baby, So Long," "World in a Jug," and "Country Farm Blues," all employ the trope of a black man or woman traveling to the "Indian Nation" in search of freedom. These blues lyrics follow a formulaic development with expository verses describing the hardship followed by the solution. "Work House Blues," made famous by Bessie Smith, represents the typical form:

> Everybody's cryin' the workhouse blues all day, oh, Lord, oh, Lord
> The work is so hard thirty days is so long, oh, Lord, oh, Lord
> I can't plough, I can't cook.
> If I'd run away wouldn't that be good?
>
> 'Cause I'm goin' to the Nation, goin' to the Territo (2x)
> I got to leave here, I got to get the next train goin'. (85)

Smith notes that Oklahoma or the Indian Nation were by no means a just safe haven for the racially segregated, poor, exploited, overworked southern African Americans (86). I would add that the "Indian Nation" as a symbol of freedom and the trope of "goin' to the Territor'" as a passage to freedom constitute an early Blues myth, a myth of migration, refuge, and settlement for the African Americans from the disenfranchised south. This mythical function of the Blues is evident in the fact that Charlie Patton's "Down the Dirt Road Blues" (1) and Jesse James' "Lonesome Day Blues" (2), both discussed in Smith's article, speak about "goin' to the Territor'" with disillusionment:

> I feel like choppin' it, chips flyin' everywhere (2x)
> I've been to the Nation, lord, but I couldn't stay there. (1) (93)
>
> I've been to the Nation, round the Territo'
> You hear me talkin' to you, you got to reap what you sow!
> I done been all through the Nation and round the Territo'
> But I ain't found no Heaven on Earth, lord, nowhere I go. (2) (91)

Both Patton and James are contemporaneous with the other compositions that speak of "goin' to the Territor'" and "going to the Nation" as a passage to freedom. They are also contemporary with Robert Johnson's

life, and death in 1938. *Reservation Blues* commences with this myth of "goin' to the Nation," which directly plunges the reservation into mythical time.

Mythical time is equal opportunity and fairshare. Soon after Thomas agrees to take Robert Johnson to Big Mom, the medicine woman, Alexie deepens the palimpsest of time by adding 1858 on top of 1992 and 1938. There was music in the reservation before the Blues. Wellpinit Reservation is still shrouded in the screams of the 800 horses General Wright slaughtered in 1858 in an exercise of shock, awe, slaughter, and devastation that brought Eastern Washington under the authority of the United States through the defeat of the Coeur d'Alene, the Spokane, and the Palouse Indians in the Spokane Wars.[7] Thomas Builds-the-Fire tells the story of the horse slaughter in the short story "The Trial of Thomas Builds-the-Fire" in *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* in the voice of one of the slaughtered ponies, but in *Reservation Blues*, Alexie consigns the slaughter to the third person perspective, to Big Mom, the reservation's medicine woman. In 1858, after the slaughter of the horses, Big Mom had gone out and collected the bones of the most beautiful horse and made a flute from its ribs (10). The slaughtered Indian horses came to her in the form of musicians like Jimi Hendrix. She had taught "all those great musicians who shaped the twentieth century," including Elvis, Diana Ross, Chuck Berry, and Les Paul; she taught Paul McCartney how to play "Yesterday" (201). Big Mom lives simultaneously in the past, present, and the future. Big Mom's character makes the reservation into a liminal space and reservation time into mythical time. The liminal character of the reservation is evident in the two epigraphs to the novel. Charles Mingus contributes "God's old lady, she sure is a big chick." Robert Johnson adds "I went to the crossroad / fell down on my knees / I went to the crossroad / fell down on my knees."

Alexie tell us that Big Mom did not accept Jim Morrison: "Please don't say that name," Big Mom said. "I'm so tired of that name. It's irritating how much I have to hear that name" (207). Big Mom's rejection of Jim Morrison as a wannabe costume Indian is part of Alexie's postcolonial critique of the United States. Because, what does it mean to be an Indian in the United States? When Robert Johnson's guitar attaches itself to the young Indian Victor Joseph, it is opportunity; when Victor, Thomas, Junior Polatkin, the sisters Chess and Checkers Warm Water form "The Coyote Springs Blues Band," it is opportunity; when the talent scouts for Cavalry Record company, Wright, Sheridan, and Armstrong, show interest in them, it is opportunity; when the band auditions for Cavalry Records, it is opportunity. It is opportunity for Indians to belong to the United States, to be successful colonized subjects. That is one way to be an Indian in the United States.

When viewed through the palimpsest of mythical time, the bluesman Robert Johnson selling his soul to the Devil has more in common with an Indian treaty with the United States—or a contract with a record label—than with the legendary Faust who bartered his soul for Knowledge. Face to face with the "Gentleman" at the crossroads, Robert Johnson offers the "handsome white man" his "freedom," in return for him teaching Johnson how to play guitar better than anybody ever. The Gentleman mockingly informs Johnson, "You are a black man in Mississippi. I don't care if it is 1930. You ain't got much freedom to offer me" (264). When Robert Johnson tells the Gentleman "I'll give you all I got," inside mythical time, we hear the horses scream (265).

Alexie inscribes the colonial conquest of Indian lands and the enslavement of the African Americans within this mythical time, with Robert Johnson/Blues serving as the overdetermined signifier carrying the allegory into the future. The colonial past is intact when it reaches the Coyote Springs Blues Band. Cavalry Records and its scouts and agents, Armstrong, Wright, and Sheridan of the various US/Indian Wars notoriety represent the United States. The enslavement of African Americans is the commodified Blues. Coyote Springs wrecks their audition; Robert Johnson's guitar gouges Victor's hands, as he plays for Wright, Sheridan, and Armstrong in an act of divine intervention. Victor smashes the studio saxophone and the band returns back to the reservation with a broken contract.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson identifies the "cultural roots of nationalism" as the source of the profound emotional legitimacy nations command from their members (ch. 1). The carnivorous appetite of nationalism is nowhere more evident than in the dissemination and consumption of its cultural artifacts such as religions, monuments, sculptures, paintings, books, music, etc. The deep and profound epistemological violence engendered by colonization lies in the conscription of the colonized for nationalism's cultural projects, make them a part of the nation's repository of images. Cavalry Records will make Indian records without Indians; Armstrong and Sheridan sign Betty and Veronica, two white groupies of the Coyote Springs, when they were a Blues band, as a girl folk duo. "And it don't matter who you are / You can be Indian in your bones," they sing (295).

The allegory of the sold-out soul has a deeper political function for Alexie. Alexie preserves and updates the myth of the African American who went to "the Nation" for freedom and peace. "This Tribe's been waitin' for me a for a long time. I'm goin' to stay right here," Robert Johnson tells Thomas. Big Mom does cure Robert Johnson; she gives him a cedar harmonica that she carves herself: "You were supposed to be a harp player. You're a good harp player. All by yourself, you can play a mean harp" (278). As Chinua Achebe notes in the epigraph to this article, the cross-

roads where Robert Johnson encountered the Gentleman is a liminal place of prophecy. It is not geographically delimited to Mississippi; it exists in the Spokane Indian Reservation as well. The bluesman brings the prophecy to the Indians. When Thomas, Chess, and Checkers decide to leave the reservation and go "west" to "Spokane," they do so after having fallen down on their knees at the crossroads as a place of liminality. But they go west, not with hellhounds on their trail, but with shadow horses galloping down the road in front of them, "leading Indians toward the city" (306). Alexie updates the myth of the crossroads: when the colonized survive and overcome the offer of the crossroads, they are in eternal transit. Aporetic? Perhaps. But they are not alone. They travel with the shadow horses from their own history.

Notes

[1]"Indivisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas." *Smithsonian Institution*. 25 May 2014. <http://nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/indivisible/civil_rights.html.>

[2]Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Exactly How 'Black' is Black America"? 25 May 2014. <http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2013/02/how_mixed_are_african_americans.html.>

[3]Gretchen Giles, "Seeing Red." 25 May 2014. <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/10.03.96/books-9640.html.>

[4] "International Indian Treaty Council: History is Made for Indigenous Peoples at United Nations." *IITC*. 25 May 2014. <http://web.archive.org/web/20071021193647/http://www.treatycouncil.org/PDFs/IITCPR_DRIP091607FINALcWEB.pdf.>

[5]Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern." *The Post Colonial Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995: 123.

[6]"Song Stories: 'Star-Spangled Banner,' Jimi Hendrix 1969." *Rolling Stones*. 25 May 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/song-stories/star-spangled-banner-jimi-hendrix.>

[7]"History of the Northwest: Oregon and Washington." 25 May 2014. <http://archive.org/stream/historyofpacific01nort/historyofpacific01nort_djvu.txt>

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PETER NABOKOV

A Goodly Fere

Seeking a port in the storm of the 1977 Modern Language Association annual meetings, I gravitated towards the man standing calmly and somewhat apart with a plastic glass in his hand and an approachable half-smile on his face. He could have stepped out of a sepia photograph of a Yale rowing team or a barber shop quartet from a century ago. Straight bearing, photogenic cheek bones, unruly curly hair force-parted high so as to leave a rebellious wave springing over to one side, that distinctive swashbuckling mustache bespeaking adventure and maybe a touch of vanity, and the twinkle in his eye.

And when we introduced ourselves, there was that accent, almost a slow southern drawl mixed with the western flattened vowels and a cello-like resonance. And fairly soon, and then to be counted on, that easy laugh, which even when it was hardly warranted seemed to roll up from his tummy to his grin, and when something truly smacked his funny bone, it quaked his torso, threw his shoulders into spasm, his eyes to crimp with pleasure, and sounds to erupt from his mouth like a deranged Santa with hiccups. Bob, Bob, it remained like that until the end. The first thing I'm grateful to Bob Lewis for is being Bob Lewis. He made me feel good. I always got a kick out of his company. Besides that, he was extremely good and patient with me.

That occasion was a cocktail party of the newly-formed American Indian Literature wing of the MLA. I was a writer then, not an academic, and on the strength of few books I was allowed to provide an amateur's overview of Indian literature, a "Tradition of Renewal," I called it, which climaxed with pushing a button for a taped recording of the great Acoma Pueblo poet, Simon Ortiz, reading a piece during an anti-Vietnam War rally in Berkeley. In those pre-post-colonial and pre-post modern days, I was tolerated, and I think Bob liked the presentation. And of course he was a true poetry aficionado, so our conversation launched into Indian poets, Scott Momaday, and writing in general. And when I sent him a piece I'd written about American Indian sacred places, entitled "America

As Holy Land," he graciously featured it in the *North Dakota Quarterly*, and we were off and running.

Funny, we never talked Hemingway, although I was a diehard fan, read it all. Others can testify about Bob's central scholarship, and about his singing that I lamentably missed out on, and so much else. But it was as if the virtues of Papa's work, the miraculous invention of a whole new language which Bob had analyzed from the inside, we knew we admired equally. Pity, I should have asked him more, I would have learned so much. But I was selfish, and just relishing his generous company was enough. Also, Bob always wore his learning and love of language lightly, at least with me. Or maybe I sensed how personal they were to him and never wanted to trespass. Few men I've known have exuded their discretion or established their gentlemanly boundaries more gracefully. Rather, we usually dealt with what was before us, and when he invited me to come and guest teach for a semester at UND, what was before us was Indians. Bob extended to me a kind of trust and respect that mostly made me better than I was.

Our shared seminar on Experimental Ethnographic writing about Indians was such a joy as we batted around form and content, the students read some terrific, often marginalized writings, and I found North Dakota a delight. Bob found me a room across the tracks. I walked in the morning dark through the snow and clang of trains being made up to my capacious old office on the 2nd floor of Babcock Hall, with its creaking wood floors and huge windows. Thanks to Bob, the teaching responsibilities he arranged for me over there led to friendships that deepened my career and my life—working with Stan Ahler on Hidatsa and Mandan architecture, the discoveries at the Flaming Arrow site, future collaborations with Larry Loendorf at Big Horn and Yellowstone, not to mention the fellowship of Gretchen Lang and the Schneiders.

After that our contacts were mostly long distance. Always late with assignments, he indulged me beyond reason for *NDQ* pieces that I am still proud of—that Holy Land article, which would bear fruit a quarter-century later in my book, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*, my Kerouac response for his terrific column, "Books That Mattered," and my overlong and overdue piece on Indian round houses for one *NDQ* issue I guest-edited on American Indians. With patience, humor, support, and what felt like that rarest of gifts, limitless affection, and an unforgiveable absence of professionalism, he let pass my every whim, and I tried to justify his faith by making those offerings as strong as I could. Thanks, Bob, I'll be forever grateful.

But not always long distance—the most notable exception being our ten-day canoe jaunt down the wilderness stretch of the Missouri River in the wake of Lewis and Clark and Prince Maximilian and Karl Bodmer. Then he became "Cookie," jaunty feather in beat-up hat, absorbing the taunts and teasings of Page and Page Jr. Stegner, Ken Rosen, and yours truly for his carefully prearranged menus. Birder that he was, I saw his very heart lift up to those inland pelicans coasting on the thermals. For a little break from the world, we were way back in time, the same eroded spires from Bodmer's magnificent watercolors, the same eagles the Hidatsa trapped in hilltop pits, the same antelope that fed those early travelers, and one time, coming up on a shoal of mating carp, their golden bodies frothing up the water, as if from the privacy of an earlier age. Perhaps more than any of us, Bob was in his element.

Some people don't get replaced in your heart. The place vacated in mine by Bob Lewis is tender, gentle, manly, funny, and yet cool, mysterious, a bit removed, wistful and to me still unknown. And the same guy you'd want in your foxhole—quoting poetry, noticing wildlife, appreciating absurdity, and having your back. I miss him starkly and must fill up the diminishment on my own. Thanks, again, Roberto, you goodly fere.

BIRGIT HANS

American Indian and Indigenous Literatures: A Tribute to Bob Lewis

Throughout its life the *North Dakota Quarterly* has published three special issues dealing with American Indian literature—Spring 1985, Summer/Fall 2000, and Summer 2005—and one special issue containing examples from the indigenous literatures of Siberia in Summer 2002. In other words, Bob Lewis consistently gave the same importance to those literary expressions that were not and, to some degree, still are not considered part of mainstream literature as to the works of Ernest Hemingway and other greats of the western tradition, thereby advocating their importance to the Western literary cannon.

My first encounter with *NDQ* occurred in the 1980s when I was a graduate student in the English Department at the University of Arizona and served as an assistant to Larry Evers' National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar. The 1985 *NDQ* special issue of American Indian literature was handed out as one of the central texts to the participants. I still remember vividly the animated discussions of the writings it contained as well as the participants' appreciation of its availability. It was a time when the general reading public was just beginning to become aware of American Indian writers, a process that began with the publication of N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *House Made of Dawn* in 1968. During the next two decades a multitude of American Indian writers published their fiction and poetry, and anthologies of oral traditions became available. At the same time literary criticism of American Indian writings also began to appear but was still in its beginnings when the *NDQ* special issue came out.

The 1985 special issue itself contains poetry, short stories, and essays by a number of American Indian writers who are now regarded as some of the greats of that period; to name just a few Gerald Vizenor, Diane Glancy, Joseph Bruchac, Linda Hogan, and Gordon Henry are included. There are critical essays on the trickster, James Welch, and other subjects and American Indian writers, interviews with well-known authors Louise Erdrich and Joy Harjo, as well as book reviews. It is a rich collection that

encourages the reader to recognize and celebrate a different literary tradition by providing texts and ways to think about them critically. My copy of the special issue has always been on the bookshelf dedicated to American Indian literature to be frequently consulted and handled carefully to prevent its falling apart.

The other two American Indian special issues published by *NDQ* in 2000 and 2005 follow a similar format of mixing literary texts with critical voices. However, there is another dimension as well in the 2000 issue; Bob Lewis moved away from including literature-related pieces only and included pieces that spoke to all aspects of American Indian cultures and historic as well as contemporary experiences. He recognized that an appreciation of American Indian literature required a broader knowledge of Native historic and cultural issues. The 2000 special issue includes such essays as "Indian Women in the Red River Fur Trade" and "Is Bilingual Education Feasible? The Future of the Ojibwa and Michif Language in North Dakota" in addition to literary pieces. It is a double issue, but, of course, even at that the cultural and historic content merely scratches the surface; however, the important thing is that the reader is introduced to the concept that such knowledge will enrich his or her appreciation of the text.

The 2005 *NDQ* special issue focuses almost exclusively on the literary contributions and literary scholarship. American Indian literature had become a firmly established part of the literary canon by then, and the educational missions of the earlier special issues were no longer needed. In many ways this special issue conforms to what we expect of special issues in literature, and Bob Lewis asserts here that the reader is dealing with a complex and rich literary tradition equal to any other.

The 2002 *NDQ* special issue deals with the literatures of the indigenous people of Siberia; by the way, it is the only one of the special issues to be titled, "The Way of Kinship: An Anthology of Native Siberian Literature," and identifies the translators of the texts and editors as Alexandr Vaschenko and Claude Clayton Smith. The introduction was written by N. Scott Momaday, who had actually visited and met many of the writers included in this anthology. The Kiowa author says about the relationship of American Indians and the indigenous peoples of Siberia: "I have found ancient bonds of kinship, common denominators that are indispensable integrations of the indigenous world" (5). The fiction in this issue is based on the oral tradition of the indigenous people, and it leaves the reader with a haunting sense of the Siberian landscape and communities.

Famous American Indian writers such as Ojibwa Louise Erdrich, some of whose novels have turned up on the national bestseller lists, make it difficult today to imagine a time only forty years ago when most people who appreciated literature had never even heard of American Indian liter-

ature. Bob Lewis was an early and vocal advocate of American Indian literatures; throughout his editorship of *NDQ* he saw it as his obligation to educate people about Native literatures. Many of his readers might never have encountered the rich and complex Native literatures without his persistent efforts.

THOMAS VAN NORTWICK

Bob's Gift

For Robert Lewis, *in memoriam*, and Kathleen Norris, with gratitude and affection.

Now nearly all those I loved but did not understand when I was young are dead, but I still reach out to them.

—Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*

This will be a story about homecoming. The Greeks called such stories *nostoi*, "returns," and not many of them were happy (see Agamemnon). Thus our word "nostalgia," *nostos* plus *algos*, "pain," a bittersweet longing for the past. There will be some of that here, but mostly gratitude. It begins in 1984, at a conference in Madison, Wisconsin. I have traveled there to meet with teachers and librarians about reading and discussion programs for public libraries. The warm-up exercise is a discussion, in small groups, of Carson McCullers' "Member of the Wedding." In my group is a lanky, laconic guy with curly black hair, who joins me in pushing back against the prevailing interpretation (whatever it was). After the discussion, he walks up to me and sticks out a hand: "Hi, I'm Bob Lewis." I learn that he is a professor of English from the University of North Dakota and has recently become the editor of a literary journal, the *North Dakota Quarterly*. He asks me if I would send him something for the journal and I am delighted, since no one has ever actually asked me for a piece of writing. All my publications until this moment have come in over the transom. I send him an essay about the end of the *Iliad*, which appears in the Fall 1985 issue (55-65).

Some months later, Bob writes to tell me that *NDQ* is planning a special issue on travel. He wonders if I would want to write something on the *Odyssey*, suggesting in his gentle way that I might try something more "informal." His shrewd nudge (and retrospective review of my first essay) turns out to be a pivotal moment in my story. In early 1986 I was in something of a limbo state, having divorced in 1984, fallen in love with the woman I would marry in 1987, and begun to explore, ever so carefully,

the effects on me of the family disease of alcoholism. My number had not come up in the genetic lottery for physical addiction, but in every other way my life had been shaped by my membership in an alcoholic family. I had so far avoided looking at this rather large elephant in my living room, but the failure of my first marriage with its attendant miseries had driven me to Al Anon. My experiences there gave me a taste of what honest self-examination might yield. Another failure, to find a publisher for a book manuscript I had written in 1981-82, had prompted me to volunteer for the state humanities council in Ohio, to see if I could find another outlet for my ideas that would feel less distanced from the rest of my life. I went to Madison as the Ohio Humanities Council's delegate to the conference.

While contemplating Bob's later invitation, I unconsciously edited his suggestion, replacing "informal" with "personal." I was apparently ready to look at the elephant and the result was an essay published in 1986 called "Travels with Odysseus," the first of a dozen or so essays I would write for *NDQ*. The work was challenging for me. Though I wanted on some level to begin looking at my own life, I had never done so in writing and had no voice to speak the words. I found myself fighting against the kind of automatic scholarly writing learned in graduate school. Now the words were personal. How I said anything was as important as what I was saying. As it happened, the particular kind of essay that I gave myself permission to write, following Bob's lead, made these first attempts at self-examination possible. What if I were to think about Odysseus and his journey as a paradigm for my own struggles? Homer's hero survived through self-concealment and duplicity. How had that worked for me? Using this hybrid form helped me to ease into autobiography by filtering such questions through the poem. I can't say that I had mastered the form by the time I sent in my essay, but I had begun to learn a new way to understand myself and my life's work. These were the first fruits of Bob's gift to me.

I would need all the understanding I could muster in the next six years, to navigate the tsunami of feelings released by the death of my mother, father, and nephew. I was able to address these losses in three more essays for *NDQ*. Achilles's struggle with grief gave me a way to confront my complicated emotional ties to my mother; my father's opaque presence in my life led me to write about Aeneas and his father; my nephew's heroic battle against cancer became a part of my experience of teaching Thucydides' description of the plague that swept through Athens. Writing these essays helped me through a hard time and also changed my approach to teaching. The detachment that I had cultivated as part of my academic persona gave way to a more direct engagement with the Greek and Latin poetry I was teaching. Once I began asking myself what these stories had to do with me and my life, it was natural to ask my

students the same kind of question. I didn't invite them to write autobiography, but to ask themselves why these works ought to matter to them.

In the spring of 1993, my friend Bill Hood, with whom I had shared many of the struggles that appear in the essays, told me excitedly of a book he'd just finished by Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*. It was, he said, unlike anything he ever read. I had better read it and soon. He'd also discovered that Kathleen was going to be leading a workshop in nonfiction writing at Bennington College in the summer of 1994. He thought we should both sign up. I took the book with me while tagging along with my wife on her research trip across Canada in the summer of 1993 and read it over several lunches in Calgary. I was powerfully moved by its compassionate but unflinching look at people living hard lives and its spiritual depth. Bill and I applied and were accepted to the workshop.

Though the writing I had done since 1986 had helped me to be more honest and thoughtful in looking at my life, Kathleen, as it turned out, wanted more. She spent the entire two weeks urging me to "loosen up." Apparently the academic voice was not completely gone. I was having trouble in the first few days even accepting that I belonged at something called a "writer's workshop," and the fear of being exposed as a fraud lingered. One of Kathleen's exercises early on was to write a series of sketches about our childhood, focusing on a particular sight, sound, or smell. The idea, I suspect, was for us to write about something potentially emotional through something concrete. I did not hold out much hope for myself in this venue. The essays for *NDQ* had helped me to look at my past, but always with a literary filter. Now I would have nothing to hide behind. But after all, I told myself, who's going to see these little sketches except Kathleen, whose compassion and patience were evident from the first day?

I wrote the first couple arguing with a committee in my head. What if I couldn't remember whether it was May or June? (Choose one.) Did these things really happen or am I making up events to create a false sense of coherence? (Making stuff up is allowed.) Were those my actual feelings at the time or what I now thought I must have been feeling? These quandaries lasted for a day or so and then I was having too much fun to care. I began to realize that no matter what the committee said, the past only existed in my present memories of it. I was on a mission not to establish the facts about my childhood, but to go home again and see what happened.

I spent the first thirteen years of my life in a small Illinois town on the Fox River, the repository of powerful but fuzzy emotions. In my mind, the place remained as it was in about 1956, when I was ten years old, before I left for boarding school, before hormones kicked in. But though I liked to think of that time and place as pastoral and stress-free, I knew by

1994 that strong and often dark emotions lurked somewhere behind the Norman Rockwell façade. Kathleen's exercise—another beneficent nudge—gave me the courage to try setting the training wheels aside. So effective were they in loosening me up that I struck a deal with Kathleen to keep writing them well after I had left Bennington. Once a month for about a year, she would send me a postcard with an assignment, for which I paid ten bucks. I decided that I couldn't ask her for feedback on that pay scale, so I kept the sketches to myself. I offer three of them here with thanks to her and in grateful memory of Bob, who gave me the first push. I have resisted the urge to edit, leaving them as they were twenty years ago, a record of my *nostos*.

The Pleasures of Awnings

No one needs awnings anymore. Air conditioning teaches disregard for the elements. So what if the sun is beating in the windows, just turn the knob to "super-cool" and relax. And we are relieved of those scourges from my youth, the awning salesmen, who called on the phone right at dinnertime. There are now substitutes aplenty for these latter, but nothing gives back to us the pleasures of awnings. Remember when you didn't have to run around closing the windows when it started raining? Remember how the rain sounded on the awning on a late summer afternoon, gentle and persistent, wild and wind-driven? Sounds were always the best part of rain, the part you didn't mind inviting in. The modern window, naked and defiant, will not let you issue selective invitations: if you want rain, you have to take all of it.

Thunderstorms traveled east across the side yard in late afternoon, slapping the elms around, combing the grass, flipping the awning edges up, then poking under them to blow across my ankles as I sat on the screen porch. First, lightning; then count five and grab the arms of the wicker chair—bang! The freedom to experience vicarious violence, dry but close to the soaking, at ease a mere few feet from life-threatening power, seemed a magical dispensation. Even now, when the menacing calm descends and the sky blackens in the west, when responsible parents and homeowners take inventory and hunker down, I head for a porch.

My bedroom was the best one in the house for listening to rain. Right over the south half of the screen porch, it was what was called then a "sleeping porch." Crank-out windows covered with canvas awnings lined the entire south and west walls. My bed ran under the west wall, so the storms that came east from the plains got to me first. I moved to that bedroom when I was 13, spending all of my teenaged summers there. The oak tree at the southwest corner of the house branched in front of my windows, providing further shelter and a stage for mourning doves, whose

arias suit the more poignant aspects of adolescence. Their cooing puts me immediately in bed under the awnings, luxuriating in Saturday morning, in the freedom to turn over, pull up my knees to my chest, and listen. Add then the sound of rain on the awnings, and I am as close to serenity as I ever got before the age of 35.

I may have been drawn to this particular haven because shelter from other kinds of storms was scarce in that house. Alcoholic weather veers wildly, and defies prediction. Certain patterns did recur: any mention of my father drew a tornado, angry, destructive, leaving wreckage in its wake; remembrance of my mother's late father conjured a drizzle of maudlin self-pity; asking for money could produce arctic conditions in seconds; sunshine and gentle breezes were intermittent at best. I was a frightened little boy, scared of my mother's rage, and of the wintry self-absorption that accompanied it. I was also my mother's favorite child, her proudest achievement. The combination kindled in me a fierce determination to put myself beyond reproach by pleasing her any way I could. The imperative grew slowly, along with my mother's addiction, but by the time I left for prep school at 13, it was in full bloom. I became a star pupil, a class leader, an athlete. In the summers after my 16th birthday, I worked for my brother-in-law at a factory, punching in at 7, out at 3:30, earning my own pocket money so as to avoid having to ask my mother for it. Most of the money went for gas in the various used cars my mother bought for me.

I lay in my bed under the awnings one summer afternoon, exhausted from the combination of hard work and little sleep. It was not raining, but hot, close. My mother appeared in the periphery of my somnolent vision, walking with uncharacteristic determination.

"How long has it been since you washed the car?"

"I don't know, a few weeks."

"I give you the car and you can't even take the trouble to wash it, it looks like a pig pen inside."

"O.K., I'll wash it, but can't . . . I'm tired, can't I wash it tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow, tomorrow, when are you gonna start doing some work around here, instead of sleeping all afternoon?"

"I said I'd wash it, goddammit. Why are you yelling at me? I take damn good care of the car! I wash it all the time, and keep it serviced. Why don't you get the hell out of here and yell at somebody else?"

I had never raised my voice to my mother like this. The fatigue and sleepiness must have depressed my usual emotional governor. I was surprised to hear my own anger, and a little frightened about what kind of weather might be coming next. Not what I expected. My mother suddenly went silent, then choked out a few words:

"You can't talk to me like that, I'm your mother!"

She burst into tears and ran out of the room. I lay there, confused and shaken. The entire exchange had been so extraordinary, my anger, her collapse. Underneath my surprise, I felt anger returning—what right did she have to yell at me? But beyond indignation, something else, something I would not understand for many years. I never yelled at my mother again.

Epiphany

Shooting baskets at the Moxleys' would fill the gaps in any boring day. Everybody played, summer and winter, in shorts or mittens, boys and girls, all sizes, and no one was without at least one good scoring move. Sometimes kids from outside the neighborhood would come to play, but they were rarely as good as the locals, because of the special shape of the court. The basket hung on the front of the Moxleys' two-car garage, about nine and a half feet from the ground right under the hoop. But the driveway sloped away to the street, so fifteen feet out, the basket was ten feet off the ground, and so on down to Easton Avenue, well beyond the range of even the best shooters.

Along the right edge of the driveway, a six-foot wooden fence protected the flowers bordering the walk up to the Moxleys' side door. The wall must have been sturdy, because it played a major part in the articulation of strategies, both offensive and defensive. Right handers who couldn't go left could be funneled up against the wall and wedged in, the height of the wall preventing the pass crosscourt to someone cutting for the hoop. And even if he could go left, no one took a fake right, because you knew he wasn't going past that fence. Lefties like me could back in, using the fence to protect the ball, and if you got the defender lunging around you, and downhill, for the ball, you could spin around him and drive to the basket.

The left side of the court offered a whole new range of possibilities. A tall hedge lined the drive, the branches hanging overhead as lefties drove to the baseline. My best shot was a running hook that snuck through the full summer foliage. I was neither the tallest nor the shortest kid who played, neither the slowest nor the fastest, good enough not to be chosen last when we split into teams. But time and chance, the exigencies of busy schedules, produced an overwhelming preponderance of one-on-one, or "horse," my game of choice. This latter venue was a great leveler, rewarding accuracy and concentration rather than speed or strength. Just as well for me, since my opponent most of the time was Mike McCleary, taller, stronger, with big square shoulders and a big square jaw.

He arrived in our seventh summer, glimpsed from the upstairs window throwing other kids out of a flatbed trailer, a shirtless king of the mountain. The oldest of four, he was already moving out of narrow-shouldered pudginess, developing a body to go with the jaw. He was, as he tri-

umphantly announced to me, "Scotch-Irish!" This signified nothing to my homogenized Midwestern sensibility. He looked like the rest of my friends and neighbors: white, clean, dressed to fit in. But the McClearys never penetrated the social screen of my parents and their friends, were never sponsored for membership in the golf club. Not for lack of means. Their house was large and gracious, across the street from ours in an upscale area. Mr. McCleary wore a suit to work, Mrs. McCleary drove her children to school in a new station wagon, but somehow the family lacked entree.

If Mike knew any of this, he chose to stomp over it. In the complex power structure of our friendship, he led, I followed; he fought, I fled. When he informed me that my parents were divorcing, it seemed right that he should know first. Aggressive and physical, he kept me always wary, ready to duck. His preferred mode of friendly interaction featured punching, poking, and twisting, but we seldom had real fights. I was the better student until hormones pickled my brain, but it would never have occurred to me to think of this fact as a source of leverage. Smart boys got their arms twisted just as often as anyone else. In his commanding presence, I developed a counterpuncher's finesse, looking for openings to sneak in irony, ambushing with bons mots. Observing Mike taught me a valuable lesson early: leading offers the prospect of glory but also the risk of exposure.

If aimed in other directions, however, his thrusting nature proved invaluable, leading me into the unknown terrain of male adolescence: dirty magazines, masturbation, French kissing, the arcana of girls. Mike's record of dating cute girls was, in fact, admirable. Amid milling crowds of shuffling, slouching, pimpled skulkers, his air of command shone forth like a pheromonal beacon. I often found myself on the seventh-grade version of double dates with him and his paramour. Not yet drivers, we searched for venues that offered opportunities for displaying mastery and social finesse. Bowling alleys and miniature golf courses were best, since both allowed the girls to participate without sweating, and encouraged hands-on coaching from us.

The sessions in front of the Moxleys' garage were framed by the terms of our friendship. In my memory, the game begins with a walk through the elm cathedral of our street, one long block downhill, always in the street to allow room for dribbling and passing back and forth. We warmed up, then haggled over terms. It made more sense to me—looking for a confidence-builder—to begin with "horse," then move on to one-on-one; Mike pushed for the big contest up front. His approach in either case was frontal, squaring up, tucking the ball into his stomach, then driving for the hoop. I liked to back in, nudging him toward the basket, protecting the ball with my body, looking for room.

In my memory it happens during a game of "horse." A shot caroms off the rim and past Mike into the hedge. My father appears at the edge of the driveway as from nowhere, holding the ball. I realize I have never seen my father anywhere near this court, have never seen anything bigger than a golf ball in his hands. He calls over his shoulder to Mr. Crull, into whose yard the ball has strayed: "How much?" "Ten bucks," comes the reply. My father is wearing a long camel hair coat; it must be autumn. He is at least 20 feet from the basket, at about a 45-degree angle, a tough shot even for a good player who knows the peculiarities of the site. I am tense, hoping the next moment will not confirm the feeling I always have that my father is different from other men, distant, fleeting, slightly out of place. I have never seen Mr. McCleary near a basketball either, but he has other credentials: scout leader, lawn mower.

My father turns back to face the basket, takes the ball in what I recognize as an old-fashioned "chest-shot" grip. Hope flickers: he must have played as a boy. He squints slightly, pushes the ball away into the air. It arcs up through the branches and floats, floats—swish! My father acknowledges applause from the next yard, smiles, waves, is gone.

I never saw him take another shot, there or anywhere. Adolescent boys need to compete with their fathers, driving the baseline, sinking the jumper from the top of the key. But his single, perfect appearance offered no room, funneled me into the fence. I could have tried to borrow luster from him, but Mike knew as well as I did that what we had seen was unavailable to me. To be heroes, fathers must be fallible, showing behind their triumphs the dangerous possibilities of defeat and ruin. When we cooked breakfast together with the Cub Scouts—another once-in-a-life-time-appearance—my father's equipment was shiny, his food delicious beyond reach. By the time I beat him at golf, he was 75 and dying from the stress of living his life. I had to sink a long putt on the last hole.

Gramp

He was 76 when I was born, by then a legendary bastard. They say that ornery men live longer than sweet ones. He died at 97. His wife, my "Grammy," rode the other end of the teeter-totter, famous for her sweetness. I can only remember her in tiny snatches, mostly the last days of her life, when I went to see her in hospital: "Come and give Grammy a kiss." She may well have been sweet—my mother certainly loved her—but you couldn't prove anything by me. I wonder sometimes whether she didn't get the mantle of goodness partly by contrast to Gramp. Indeed, much of my adult revulsion at his gloomy temper is inspired by rumors of how he treated her. The story is that when she would displease him, the penalty

would be total silence for a month. It takes a special man to deal out that kind of punishment.

He looks severe even in pictures from his twenties: dark hooded eyes, a large nose with a bump in the bridge. By the time I noticed, he was in his eighties, a Humpty Dumpty figure, spherical on top, skinny bow legs underneath. He smelled of lavender, which seems more the scent of old ladies to me now, but that memory is firm. He was a playboy in his youth. The son of the local banking magnate in a little Illinois river town, he graduated from Princeton in 1890, then went to Texas, a real frontier in those days, to tomcat around and misspend his youth. He was finally recalled in his thirties to take over the family businesses, and was no great success. He and my father, between them, went through an immense fortune, both dying broke.

Most of this was behind him by the time I was old enough to notice. He lived the last fifteen years of his life with my father and stepmother, and the exchange I remember must be from around 1959, when I was 12, and he was 89. I was playing Little League baseball that summer, a left-handed pitcher. Gramp was apparently an exceptional pitcher himself in his teens, having once struck out 27 men in one game, so the story goes. I was getting instruction from him on how to throw his famously fiendish "drop curve," a sure strikeout pitch. The idea was somehow to tuck the ball down into your palm and roll it out overhand, though I never really got it. Part of the difficulty for me was that I was always a little afraid of Gramp, because of his severe looks and vocal disapproval of little boys with too much energy, so that I tended to be a nervous pupil.

That day, as I was trying to wedge the baseball into my palm, something made me think of Grammy, who had died in 1954 of cancer. No doubt to cover my manual struggles, I began to babble about her, how nice she was, how I was sorry she had died. "Gee, you must miss her," I ventured. Gramp wasn't saying anything, so I looked down at him and was amazed to see that he was weeping silently. The sight of any man crying, let alone my grouchy grandfather, was bewildering to me, as my family were all Anglo-Saxon stiff-upper-lippers. I crept away and left my grandfather to his pain.

This encounter brought my first inkling that there might have been more to Gramp than his reputation suggested, but I was too young and wrapped up in myself to pursue the thought. Twenty-five years later, snooping in my uncle's apartment, I came across a file of letters that took me back to Gramp, dead then for 17 years. I was staying with my uncle in New York City during spring vacation from Oberlin, where I was a Classics professor. My first wife was moving out that week, and I had just the night before had dinner with the woman I would marry three years later. A week for changes and surprises.

My uncle was out for the afternoon, and I was nursing a hangover. Why I was nosing around in my uncle's private papers I do not know, and I am a little ashamed to admit it now. But once I started the first letter, any chance I had to think better of my sneakiness was swept away. The correspondence was between Gramp and my uncle, his younger son, covering a period in the late forties and early fifties. Many of Gramp's letters were written from Florida, where he and Grammy went for the winters, and were full of weather and golf. There were also ominous references to my grandmother's stomach trouble, showing a more loving and concerned husband than the stories had implied. And in some there were stern lectures from Gramp about the need for Uncle Bill to stop interfering in the family business.

Here lies a potent subject. Gramp and my father were old fashioned midwestern males, who put great store in the manly art of "doing business." My uncle was openly gay, summa cum laude in art history from Princeton, living off the proceeds from investments in an apartment in New York City. Part of the family money was tied up in a holding company which met in Appleton, Wisconsin. There were monthly meetings there, which Gramp chaired until his retirement right around the time of these letters. The board had named my father as the next chair, a dismal decision as it turned out, and Uncle Bill had descended on the meetings with a lawyer, trying to dislodge him.

Too bad Uncle Bill didn't succeed. The great embarrassing fact about my grandfather and his two sons was that the mind for "business" in the group belonged to the disgraceful "fairy." Uncle Bill was a brilliant manager of money, living off the very top of the hog on Sutton Place, never working a day after his fortieth birthday, while his father and brother squandered millions on bad investments and their wardrobes. You may imagine then, the height of my grandfather's dudgeon. The very idea of Uncle Bill presuming to block the accession of the favorite son, a handsome womanizer with a 2 handicap, was blasphemy.

But the astonishing thing about the letters is how sweet they were. Even in the midst of the tongue-lashings over business, my grandfather's love for his impossible, inscrutable son showed through. Uncle Bill was a challenge to his family in many ways. Though homosexual, and thus presumed to be lacking in masculine force, he was by far the toughest of the Van Nortwick men. I suspect, though this is for another essay, that he grew a tough hide to endure the horrendous situation he landed in, a brilliant, effeminate young man in the middle of the cornfields, living in the shadow of his gregarious, handsome, athletic, and heterosexual brother, just 11 months older.

In any event, he was tough. His letters to Gramp were decidedly lacking in sweetness of any kind, full of complaints about how things were

being "handled," peppered with nastiness. In the face of this, my grandfather tried various tactics. He asked solicitously about his son's life: was he finding it tough living in the big city? Did that job in the travel agency work out? (Uncle Bill must have thrown him a bone—he was well beyond worrying about a job at that point.) It would be nice to have him come down for a visit in Florida—could he get away? (He never went.) Uncle Bill's replies brushed these offerings aside, relentlessly homing in on my father's stupidity and ineptitude.

I sat on the floor and read them all, riveted by the revelations. The experience was a lesson in the power of myths, in our willingness to put people into convenient slots, rather than try to accept their complexities. In that afternoon, I came to know my grandfather for the first time, as an affectionate father to two troubling sons, a husband trying to hide his fear over his wife's fatal illness. I thought about something my mother once said to me: "You just love all your children no matter what, you can't help it." Gramp couldn't help loving his children, and it brought him enormous pain. Living with it, and prevented by the codes of masculine behavior from showing vulnerability, he lashed out and became a "bastard." I wish now that he had written me letters.

Invited by Bob, prodded by Kathleen, I was able to return home in these sketches and learn things I needed to know. Without curling up again on the sleeping porch, I would have missed the chance to see my mother for the suffering woman she was. Seeing my father vanish again into the hedge by the Moxleys' driveway helped open my heart to the pain and yearning he roused in me. Meeting my uncle and grandfather in the throes of their corrosive dance ambushed me into some acceptance of their human complexity. The small town is gone now, replaced by something bigger and more conspicuously upscale. The Moxleys are long gone, as is everyone else from my memories, except my younger brother and his family, who live in a lovely house he bought from my mother's estate, and Mike McCleary, now my Facebook friend. The streets of my old neighborhood, once lined with elms, feature a more cosmopolitan mix of ornamental shrubs. In the shady lawns next to my friends' houses stand other houses. Property values are too high for most to hold on to the large yards where we played baseball until it was dark on summer evenings. Behind the McMansions hover ghostly remnants of my childhood, awash with pleasure and pain. But thanks to Bob and Kathleen, I can go back there with some measure of detachment, some understanding of what made the pain and how to find the pleasure. The road home runs through the Dakotas.

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ROBERT W. LEWIS

The Marsh Hawk

I watched the marsh hawk harry:
Sky-borne in the wind-torn air
hovering headfirst in the north wind
searching the stubble for prey
head turning side to side
noting each gust with a tilt of the tail
til gone with three strokes of up-angeled wing sails
to the next field's crop of mice.

Intent on his intention
released me to his airy element from mine
where other prey are harried in that care
he did not know in flying search
of real fields for real food.

Prairie Chicken

Every spring until he dies he booms—
inflating gold sacks, erecting sharp tufts,
spreading tail feathers, stamping on the prairie
like a magnificent spoiled child—
nothing savage about it, so ordered and precise,
directed by the sun to speak once more
as the year turns around to Taurus,
his month for talking, miming bull strength
in feathery bravura, rehearsing alone on the edge
of the booming ground his flock has always used
for the annual conversation, turning with each other
to spar and stammer with their feet, to boom
each morning for a month not wondering
if anything is said or meant beyond
the articulartion of a need so deep
the weird resounding boom
draws the hens around them
to witness the dance and the speech
just in time for all their birthdays.

Vole

Angry with me and people and lost loves
all over an uncreated world, I
sought night air, a few stars, and half a moon;
ice talked to me along the coulee but
I had no answers. It tried again with
the sound like a fox stepping here and there
on iced puddles. No message, no one, no
phone ringing anywhere. Orion hid
too so I scavenged, looking down instead
of up, turning earthward for that good length
of hemp the thoughtful worker left, the gift
to me from an unknown friend for strangling
anger. The next gift brought me back to words:
a vole darted in the light, stopped short to
eye me as I eyed it, grey-brown fur, white
beneath, black-eyed, cone-snouted, short-tailed. As
I asked it how it was and what it was
about, it listened, came back towards me,
sat and eyed me, the only other night
creature abroad. Perhaps I made some sense
to it in rambling on of love and pain,
some sense equal, I might hope, to what that
curious vole, unafraid, said to me.

DAVID LAMBETH

Birding with Bob

It was half-a-lifetime ago when I first met Robert Lewis. It was in the fall of 1977 after I arrived to take a position in the School of Medicine at the University of North Dakota. However, it was not because of my professional life as a biochemist that resulted in meeting Bob. Most likely I met him at an Audubon chapter meeting in the fall of 1977. We both were interested in natural heritage, and more specifically, birds.

The initial outings I took with Bob and others, sponsored by Grand Forks Audubon, were canoe trips on the Red Lake River, and early morning outings to see greater prairie-chickens southeast of Crookston. Bob Lewis was impressive with his presence and had an aura of wisdom. He always spoke from a background of knowledge.

Bob was one of the most multifaceted individuals I have had the privilege to know. He read widely and voraciously; he was a renowned Hemingway scholar. He championed the *North Dakota Quarterly*, a shining beacon of literature in the upper Midwest. He was a master of the English language and its literature.

Each year over the 35 years I knew him, I could expect several items in my campus mailbox. Often the item was an issue of *The New Yorker*, the *Smithsonian*, or the *New York Times*. A particular page would be marked, flagging an interesting article or cartoon about birds. He had an eye for the unusual; one article in the *Times* was about a female turkey perched on the railing of a 28th-floor apartment in Manhattan.

About 1993, Bob had a home built on the Turtle River a few miles south of Manvel. I often got a report of some bird that he saw as he drove to and from his office in Merrifield Hall. He maintained bird feeders that, due to his near woodland and river location, attracted a variety of birds. Some surprising ones included black-throated blue warbler, Northern mockingbird, American woodcock, the rare dark morph of broad-winged hawk, and red-bellied woodpecker. But it was the behavior of a bird that really seemed to capture his attention: The bouncing behavior of an American woodcock as it foraged on damp ground, a dark-eyed junco that seemed to be playing with a feather.

In 2000 I formed a Yahoo e-group called the Grand Cities Bird Club with the intention that those of us interested in birding would have a forum for sharing. Bob was one of the first members, and he was still posting information in late 2012. He was a frequent contributor, describing his observations of birds that he thought would be of general interest. For several years that included status reports on a pair of Cooper's hawks that nested in view of Merrifield Hall.

Bob refrained from correcting contributors' English. When responding to someone's post, he was always thoughtful, respectful, and supportive. Occasionally he would make a contribution based on his professional expertise. He wrote a thoughtful and scholarly piece on the varying guidelines regarding when to capitalize bird names. He highly recommended that those interested in natural history read Bernd Heinrich's *The Snoring Bird*. On another occasion he quoted from an article in the August 2006 *Smithsonian*, "An Etude for Egg Laying." The gist of the article was that female canaries laid bigger eggs for males that were better singers.

On 2 February 2006, he contributed:

A Groundhog Day Haiku:

Now the nuthatch sings,
driven by what stirs woodchucks
and seed catalogs

Bob was a unique individual who enriched the lives of everyone around him. I remember him fondly.



Robert Lewis with Evelyn Labun and Cecilia Volden, Lambeth's wife.

MATTHEW J. SPIRENG

Early Arrival

The fields are still snow-covered
at the tail-end of hard winter, and
more snow may fall late tonight, but
today the first killdeer I've seen

since fall cried out in that bird's
distinctive way as it landed on a
narrow strip of damp dormant grass
at the edge of the long gravel driveway

across the fields, then flew up
and away at my approach. One bird,
there and then gone, unlike
the small flocks that gathered

in autumn, killdeer that lingered
for days before flying on, almost
nowhere now to settle, snow
most everywhere on the ground.

Owl Calling, Midday, Early April

It's a cloudy
dark dank day,
but the sound
of an owl calling
while the sun is up
seems odd
until I consider
it is spring
so a mating call
might be offered
at any time,
a seasonal imperative.

The Wish of an Eagle

We walked the whole three-mile loop
around Snow Goose Pool looking up frequently
to get a glimpse of a bald eagle, but
this day all there seemed to be were a few

turkey vultures soaring in the wind, and low,
near the water, cormorants about to touch down.
There was, though, the wish of an eagle
in a high-flying bird that was large

and appeared white underneath, though its
silhouette seemed not right for an eagle,
wings pitched wrong, vulture-like, although still
I am uncertain if the wish was the bird.

ROBERT W. LEWIS

Haikus

Editors' note: Robert W. Lewis wrote many haiku. As he wrote to his friend Donald Junkins in 2008: "My dear mentor Sherman Paul told me that he had the habit of writing a daily haiku based on his and his wife's life at their summer cabin (and later year-round home) by Big Wolf Lake in northwestern Minnesota. That seemed like a good idea. Each evening reflect on one's day & encapsulate a small but memorable part of it in three lines of only 17 syllables keyed usually on the natural world. I got in that habit too & have written many haiku. But often when that happy duty was interrupted for various reasons I lapsed into long silences between me & my world." *Below is a sampling of his many haikus.*

4 June 2008

The garter snake lurks
gliding between railroad ties
patient unafraid

Passing some photos
is like walking through an old
graveyard sadly clad

How is daylight "broad"?
four deer bound through CRP
in full flight, full heart

Trees are sure in growth
but young plants budding anew
quietly thrill me

Morning orange light:
a huge honking flight of geese
what are they speaking?

Now botany reigns,
not birds but blooms draw my eyes
to ground-bound flyers

10 May 2009

At dusk great horned owls
across the river call me
on our party line

30 March 2010

Full moon in dark sky
rushing waters, slow feelings:
via media

31 March 2010

The news brings "the olds":
human inhumanity.
Spring dreams bear strange hopes

The patient black cat
slowly stalked the meadow vole,
quick, nervy, then dead.

3 April 2010

State-bird Meadowlarks
have returned and shall sing well
their bright state anthem

The Northern Pintail's
songless plight is well lost in
its grace and beauty

4 April 2010

Easter Sunday and
Isabel's 2nd birthday
bound in family love

6 April 2010

Still leafless black trees
etch patterns on the western
salmon sunset sky

Cora's big grey eyes
argue my words in choosing
journal cover art

8 April 2010

Big dipper above
bright fourth quarter moon low, east
Great-horned owl calling

12 April 2010

Fifty migrating
robins paused on the wet lane
drinking and dining

14 April 2010

Frog singing, redwings
croaking, harriers harried
April upside down

A pocket gopher
has mined a basswood tree's roots
two natures at war

14 April 2010

Snipe at Turtle Oaks
earlier than ever before
their odd spring music

15 April 2010

At last! black night stars
joined my eyes with ancient minds'
amazed sights like mine

16 August 2010

Diving from a high
its throbbing tail sings love from
the un-common snipe

Vanquished from the west
the vagrant new moon smiles bright
on its eastern stage.

17 April 2010

A happy visit
shared with friends to Kelly's
Slough and Yeats' wild swans

5 August 2012

Matt lifted honey—
weighty, sweet, tasting of this
land and its flowers.

6 August 2012

Reading Rilke preps
Me for my own *irdischen*
and talking *mit gott*

DAN SHANAHAN

Sound and Sense in Two Contemporary American Poets

In memory of Bob Lewis

Jack Gilbert. *Collected Poems*. New York: Knopf, 2012. Pp. 408, $35, hb.

Ingrid Swanberg. *Ariadne & Other Poems*. Huron, Ohio: Bottom Dog Press, 2013. Pp. 120, $16 pb.

In the spring of 1967, at the ripe age of nineteen, I had the good fortune to enroll in my first—and only—creative writing course. The venue was San Francisco State College, then one of the centers of the creative renaissance that was taking place on the West Coast, and the course was divided into three parts: one for poetry, one for fiction, and one for drama. I'd never been much into poetry—truth be told, I didn't understand it and didn't like it—so it was with no little surprise, even awe, that on the first day of class I fell into something of a trance when a short, sweet-tempered man named Jack Gilbert opened the course with a reading of D. H. Lawrence's "Snake."

I think I'd read the poem once in a Freshman English course and, though it had been one of the less tedious poems I'd read, I still didn't "get it." But when Jack Gilbert had finished his gentle, slightly lilting, and at times almost whimsical reading of Lawrence's poem, I remember thinking, "So *that's* what poetry is all about."

I'd heard poetry read before, and I would hear Gilbert read a good deal of his own poetry during the first third of that semester. But what distinguished everything I'd heard before that morning at SF State and everything I heard after was, simply, the *sound* Gilbert brought to his reading.

Looking back, I realize that you could say that Gilbert didn't read, nor did he recite: in a sense, he acted out his reading; but where a thespian might use his body and props and movements across the stage, Gilbert simply used his voice. I think of Richard Burton doing George's "Burgen

and water" soliloquy in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" The lines are not written in verse, but Burton—using nothing but his voice and a few slight movements of his eyes and head—turns the words into pure poetry of almost unimaginable power. Gilbert did the same, in reverse: by using his slight but pleasant voice, adding a touch of whimsy to the words of the speaker and a curious but entirely appropriate fondness to his tone when he spoke the words "my snake," he turned a piece of writing into a living, breathing experience for his listeners.

Of course, Lawrence had created the poem that Gilbert brought to life, and therein lies one of the keys to understanding poetry: its sound. (The part I never got 'till that day in the HLL building.)

I had read Poe's "The Bells" in high school, but it wasn't until after hearing Gilbert read for four or five weeks during that semester that I came to see that poets invest their poetry with sound that the reader must sometimes ferret out for him or herself. One day in that same semester, for a different class, I reread the Poe, and thanks to the epiphany Gilbert had produced, I realized that the "bells x 7" refrain that comes at the end of each section was broken into chunks of four and three—just the way, as children, we would break repeated words into chant-like mantras, or as my father might have done on the night he sat at his desk each month doing the family finances: BILLS, bills, BILLS, bills . . . bills, **bills**, ***BILLS***! Coupled with an understanding of how narrowly Poe tread the line between art and insanity, the sound of the refrain becomes chilling—as Poe intended it to be.

Poe had built the sound into the way he broke his lines, but such overt sound cues are relatively rare. The truly gifted poet—and Gilbert was certainly one—invests his or her poems with a voice, a voice that relies heavily on the sound of the language itself, and it remains for the reader to slip that voice on like a glove, thereby allowing the voice to come alive, whether the poem is read aloud or silently. Thus the opening lines of an early poem that appears in Gilbert's *Collected Poems*:

> Suddenly this defeat.
> This rain.

There is nothing soaringly dramatic about these two lines, nothing bombastic after the fashion of Whitman or, say, Gilbert's contemporary Allen Ginsburg. One has to look to Emily Dickinson to see how this opening is to be heard: with the short, sharp finality of . . . well, of defeat, underscored by rain. The lines practically speak themselves and, in so doing, set up the way the rest of the poem is to be read:

The blues gone gray
and yellow
a terrible amber.
In the cold streets
your warm body.
Among all the people
your absence.
The people who are always
not you.

These short, not-quite-staccato glimpses of the speaker's reality gradually assemble themselves into an insight—that he has been lured into comfort by the presence of a lover's body, now gone, tricked by the (unnamed) fates into a kind of complacency that forgets how much suffering is a part of life:

I have been easy with trees
too long.
Too familiar with mountains.
Joy has been a habit.

Finally, the poem ends with a return to the opening motif:

Now
suddenly
this rain.

The short, sharp finalities of the opening, followed by the not-quite-staccato glimpses that form the body of the poem, resolve themselves into the only slightly more fluid continuity of the ongoing rain—continuity that is part of what the poet is seeking in the writing of the poem.

In a 2013 issue of the *New York Review of Books*, novelist Michael Chabon wrote a witty, endearing self-reflection on poetry, prose, and rock lyrics, with special attention to the way in which one finds in each so many things that one finds in the others: "Tropes and devices, rhetorical strategies, writerly techniques, entire structures of allusion and imagery." But what's remarkable about Chabon's list—and, I fear, of much poetry today—is the complete omission of sound, as though it played no role in Juliet's "I look to like, if looking liking move," or Melville's "There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness"—not to mention Martin Luther King's "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, we're free at last."

Like the best of modern poetry—that of people like William Stafford, Richard Wright, and Adrienne Rich—*Collected Poems* is filled with

poems which rely, sometimes so slightly that the effect is almost subliminal, on sound to carry their meaning. And therein lies the second of the poetic cornerstones which seems to have taken a back seat to the experimentalization that has come to dominate poetry since the 1960s: sense—though here Chabon's insistence on avoiding clichés puts him firmly in the camp of those of us who may believe that poetry should "make sense"—that is, have meaning. Archibald MacLeish put it best when he said that poetry creates a center from which we are meant to view the world or at least the "world" which the poem encompasses. Perhaps the best characterization of the sentiments which have drawn poetry away from having a coherent center is the tendency to think in terms of "poetry as": poetry as dream state, poetry as political statement, poetry as personal statement, the poet as dreamy political personality, and so on. Of course, many of these can produce quite good work; but, as the *Blue Guide to Paris* says of the cafe *Deux Magots*, once a gathering place for the literati, "perhaps *poseurs* are now predominant." One imagines that the tendency to treat poetry as an infinite field for experimentation—much of that experimentation so codified by the rules of the group that was "in" at the moment that everything became quite predictable—contributed to the fact that Jack Gilbert withdrew from "the scene" after having first streaked across its sky, and never really spent much of his productive life in the midst of those who were at the center of things. Thus his "A Poem for the Fin du Monde Man" opens:

> In the beginning
> there were six brown dragons
> whose names were
> Salt, Salt, Salt, Salt
> Bafflebar
> and Kenneth Rexroth.

But Gilbert's poems are richly laced with meaning. They convey powerful insights—most of them, like "Rain," an insight the voice of the poem has into himself and his life, many of them centered around the early death of his second wife, the sculptor Michiko Nogami. But perhaps the Pulitzer jury put it best when, in nominating *Collected Poems* for the 2013 prize in poetry, it cited the "author's commitment to living fully and honestly and to producing straightforward work that illuminates everyday experience with startling clarity."

There are those who would look askance at any poetry that wins praise for its startling clarity. But, of course, one need only look at the greats—Shakespeare, Donne, Milton—to see that clarity is no vice. While younger poets will always, and rightly, look for new ways to express what

they have to say, the invention of novel means must always take a back seat to the communication of meaning—though other greats, like Blake, Poe, and Eliot, make clear that meaning may be mysterious, evocative, even seemingly obscure at first reading. Gilbert's great gift is to combine clarity with depth. In reading his poetry, one sometimes feels one is looking into a clear, deep pool, the depth of which casts an entirely new light on the normal, the typical, the everyday, or even the exceptional. And where some poetry may allow one to see into the depths without really plumbing them, the sound of Gilbert's poetry is a plumb line that the reader can follow like a free diver gliding down into, not just the vision, but the experience of meaning.

In 2005, Meghan O'Rourke said of Gilbert, who died only months after *Collected Poems* appeared:

> Today, he's relatively unknown except to a few ardent devotees, such as Gordon Lish. His fourth book, *Refusing Heaven*, was published this March, in his 79th year, and hasn't received much attention. His poems aren't included in any major anthologies on my shelf. This is not only a shame, but somewhat mystifying.

In such an environment (the Pulitzer nomination for *Collected Works* notwithstanding, little has changed in the succeeding eight years), one might expect that poetry of such artfully balanced sound and sense is a rarity, and while that may be true, it is nonetheless still there to be found. Ingrid Swanberg's *Ariadne and Other Poems* is a collection that, while it may owe little to Gilbert's poetry, is decidedly the work of a like-minded artist.

Where Gilbert's poetry can be like a series of spare but finely-crafted etchings carved in warm-colored wood, Swanberg's poems are more like deftly-woven gossamer lace, remarkable, like a spider's web, for their ability to support the weight of meaning and to enfold us in it. But, like Gilbert, she weaves her meanings with an exquisite sensitivity to the sounds of the words and phrases she uses. Take the opening stanza of "powder blues," a poem appropriately dedicated to another artist with a tendency to shy away from the stylized experimentation of the moment, California painter Fred Dalkey:

> this far north
> there is an early morning light
> already crumbled into gold
> and softly thrown over the chicory
> thriving along the rails

Seen from the perspective of sound, the opening two lines are almost conversational, with just a hint of "once upon a time" folded in to create

atmosphere. But in the third line, the meter shifts to something almost Shakespearean with its three iambs, the word "crumbling," so like "stumbling," allowing the line to syncopate slightly as the light it describes does. In the next line, "softly thrown" gives the sound of its softness to the light spilling across the chicory plants, and in the final line the sustaining sound of "thriving" echoes the vibrant growth taking place next to the railroad tracks.

The sound of rest of the poem continues to echo the unfolding description that is its heart:

> their blue rises
> unassailable
> closed by noon
>
> it is the blue of those
> small butterflies
> nectaring on lupine
>
> or sipping at the mud
> of some clear stream
> there in the west
> where the light
> is always young

Here again, the sounds—the slightly abrupt "closed by noon" underscoring how the plants seem to refuse to take in more sun than they need—reinforce the meanings, carrying the poem that extra mile that lies between mere conceptualization and experienced vision. And the poem is just that: an experienced vision of light and color, poignantly rendered in sound and sense, and turned to the proper light with the slight note of melancholy in the final two lines.

In a way, *Ariadne and Other Poems* provides an apt counterpoint to *Collected Poems*: Gilbert the hard-scrabble poet who roamed the world in search of places that would allow him to speak with authenticity, Swanberg the muse-like presence who has spent her life in the cold of Wisconsin and weaves delicate tapestries from the daily life she finds there. But both are, if not unique, rare in their dedication—one suspects that it is based on intuition rather than being a determined decision—to the ineffable union of sound and sense that lies at the heart of a poet's best efforts. They are not completely solitary singers: their American roots hearken back to Dickinson, to William Carlos Williams, and Wallace Stevens; and they have other contemporaries—William Ehrhardt comes to mind. But their accomplishment is formidable. Amidst the cacophony of modern life, which verbal arts from *Howl* to *My Beautiful Dark Twisted*

Fantasy seem to try to overcome by radical imitation, poets like Gilbert, Swanberg and a handful of others take the simpler, but more difficult route, allowing the sound of their language to give voice to their vision of life, most especially in the poignant nuances which make language a powerful tool of experience and insight.

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ERIK NAKJAVANI

On Remembering Bob Lewis

Bob Lewis and I saw each other at Hemingway conferences for decades. But we often wrote each other letters and later sent e-mails. Bob was not much older than I was. Just the same, in my mind, he was my older brother and remains so. He was more astute, poised, and deliberate than me. He was also less prone to feel off balance by contingencies, vagaries, and uncertainties of our life-world, or so I thought. Looking at him in that light, he made a fine, compelling, and imposing older brother—understanding and caring, if exigent sometimes to the maximum.

Bob asked me once to excise a nearly 3500-word prologue from a longish essay of mine for *NDQ*, "Hemingway on War and Peace." Remembering how difficult it had been for me to write it, as one is prone to do at times, I did it somewhat regretfully but without hesitation. All the same, he later wrote that it was a good introduction and that he hoped he had made the right suggestion. One remembers such acts of generosity of the spirit. After these long years, his request has proven to be sound on many levels.

Once I wrote Bob to apologize for being late in finishing another essay for publication in *NDQ*. My excuse was that the spell of my totem turtle was exercising powerful effects one me, hoping Bob would overlook my tendency to write so slowly but more or less steadily. He replied "I'm pleased to know the turtle is your totem animal. Although mine both in Chinese and Western mythology is the horse, because of my macro Turtle Island orientation and micro Turtle River and Turtle Mountain orientations (the mountain northwest of me on the North Dakota-Manitoba border), the turtle has special meaning for me too." That was Bob, as I knew him. He made the point that his totem was the horse, which is well known and appreciated for its grace and speed. Yet he couched his response to me with an extraordinary touch of empathy, thoughtfulness, erudition, and thorough *particularity*. For him, discovering the particular in all its concreteness became the gateway to the universal. I would say his approach was Hegelian. In that sense, he appeared to be a classic intellectual, although I am not at all sure how he might have reacted to such a

designation. The forays he had to make from the concrete and the specific to the general and universal in his teaching and his literary critical work took him into many as-yet undiscovered and unknown territories.

So he understood without any difficulty the nature of my uneasy relation to writing and the signification of the turtle totem for me, in a sense more than I did myself. He was fully aware of inextricable, if hidden and complex, spiritual bonds between the human and non-human. He believed in and relished such bonds unreservedly. What he resolutely rejected was the inhuman in all of its many manifestations, entirely too many. The inhuman tore apart the fabric of the human and non-human, doing incalculable damage to them and their invisible interconnections. Through his own experiences and his extensive studies of American Indian mythology, my totemic turtle would signify for him veritable transcendent benefactions of a "spirit-being" at work in our daily lives, which surpass our inhumanity. Such lessons tend to remain with you as what contributes to life, if you are lucky, and you would have to pass it on in some way as a living legacy.

On another occasion, in response to a statement I had made in an essay, Bob wrote:

> The concept of self from African cosmology is a happy one, and it parallels and is consistent with some American Indian beliefs. . . . As to totems, in a pop psychology quiz I heard this year, one of four questions is what animal one most identifies with, then what four characteristics you associate with it. Those characteristics supposedly represent your public persona, how you wish to be or are perceived by others. Needless to say, I chose that erotic and funerary beast the horse. But I am really a fox. Or a beetle. Or a snail, moving forward on its own ooze, antennae alert, carrying its home wherever it goes.

The horse is a dignified and proud animal; in short, the horse imparts a sense of nobility of spirit. However, one needs the space of an essay to comment on Bob's attribution of the "erotic and the funerary" to the horse totem with which he identified himself. I believe that he appreciated the concept of love as Eros or evolutionary matter as "life-energy" in philosophy and psychology of our time and death as a return to the infinite foundational matrix of existence: matter. As a truly solid and distinguished Hemingway scholar, Bob knew that Hemingway embedded his works in the vast provinces of love and death. He wrote splendidly about these wide expanses of ecstasy and tragedy in Hemingway's fiction. His choice of the horse totem as erotic and funerary attests to the accuracy and depth of his observations about himself and the mainsprings of his life's work as a literary critic.

Yet he went further with his totemic self-analysis, perhaps going beyond a psychoanalysis, feeling utterly at ease with its ebb and flow, looking objectively at his own subjectivity, the hardest thing in the world to do. He emphasized that he was *really* a fox, who is a Trickster or a Transformer in American Indian mythology, acting in its beneficent mode, transmuting the as-yet inchoate and "undifferentiated" into the distinct and "differentiated." In an e-mail, he reminded me that "Yes, Hemingway in TRUE [*True at First Light*] is 'cunning' [my word], but perhaps not so much by conscious design, no more than the fox is cunning (real foxes, that is, not Reynard or Aesop's foxes) but inherently, instinctively." This goes to the very heart of Bob's comprehension of the significance of fox as the Trickster. His life as a teacher, writer, editor, and his interests in music and the visual and language arts affirmed his recognition of himself as fox the Trickster and Transformer in its highest archetypal signification.

Then there is the beetle totem in his composite personal totems. I wonder if Bob, who taught at American University in Cairo, Egypt, was not thinking of the Egyptian scarab beetle so religiously significant in ancient Egypt as a symbol of rebirth and regeneration. I would imagine his spiritual connection with the snail totem, which like the turtle moves unhurriedly but purposefully, was expressive of Bob's moving along his life-path ever so *mindfully*, creating a spiral pathway to scholarly, intellectual, as well as visionary and artistic domains, always in nearness to the natural world. As a snail, his antennae would always be alert to his sense perceptions that fed his imagination, feeling at home in the world because the world of nature at large finally became his shell. Very few of us gain such a well-examined, clear image of our life and ourselves, which translates into a rare state of grace in oneness with the environing natural world. He had gained the right to refer to Turtle River as "my Turtle River," which goes to the heart of how he perceived his environment.

Every piece of correspondence Bob and I had carried the poetry of his love and communion with the natural world. On April 10, 1995, in an e-mail, he said, "After a relatively mild winter, spring is slowly coming. But the spring migration began several weeks ago, and it is always thrilling to hear (first) and then see the big flocks of geese and swans flying overhead. My latifundium seems to be on a line between the Red River of the North and several nearby refuges where the big waterfowl stage." On September 6, 2001, referring to an e-mail of mine, he wrote,

> Your wood walks are no doubt good for your imagination as well as your health, & Indian summer is a favorite season for me too. Tell Jeanne [my wife] that my garden is virtually exhausted too. But the wild flowers of fall are in peak form—wild asters, maximilian sunflowers, bread-&-butter flowers. . . . And the chokeberries, wild

> plums, buffalo berries, & highbush cranberries are bountiful—the domestic apples are Ok but not unusual.

I received many such lyrical descriptions over the years, which showed the utter richness of Bob's world and his desire to share it.

Another time, I asked Bob whether he wanted me to bring him back anything from Gothenburg, Sweden, where I had to attend a doctoral dissertation defense at the English Department of the University of Gothenburg. The gentleman that he was, Bob answered, "Why don't you take a favorite local drink on my behalf, kind of a toast in absentia?" I did so, toasting him by drinking a shot of Absolut Vodka. I would like to make one more toast to you in absentia, Bob, now that you have made it an absolute state of being.

LAWRENCE H. MARTIN

A Man in Full

In Memoriam

Robert W. Lewis
December 15, 1930-August 26,2013

Horace
Odes, I, xi, *Carpe diem*

Don't ask! It's a crime to guess what the fates will give to you and me,
my friend.
Ignore the stars and signs!
It's far better to take what happens,
Whether chance grants you many seasons,
Or only this tide, which breaks upon the rockbound shore.
Be wise; drink wine; life is short.
Make no long plans, for even as we speak, what time we have is fleeing.
Have scant faith in tomorrow. Now, seize the day!

—Translated by Lawrence H. Martin

Tu ne quaesieris, scire nefas, quem mihi, quem tibi
finem di dederint, Leuconoe,
nec Babylonios temptaris numeros, ut melius quidquid erit pati,
seu pluris hiemis seu tribuit Iuppiter ultimam,
quae nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare Tyrrhenum:
sapias, vina liques, et spatio brevi
spem longam reseces. Dum loquimur, fugerit invida aetas:
carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.

Editors' note: along with the translation, Martin sent the following letter.

Perhaps you can use this translation from Horace in the Bob Lewis memorial issue of *NDQ*. It's not the sort of memoir that you're probably expecting to publish (and which I look forward to reading), but I think that it says something about the core of his character and the way he lived.

Bob and I met in the early days of the Hemingway Society and saw each other at meetings here and abroad over the years. At his invitation, I published several Hemingway articles in *NDQ* and always found him a meticulous and encouraging editor—the best combination.

I have a number of recollections: First, at the Kennedy Library in Boston in 1990 when Bob, then the Hemingway Society president, was the host for Jaqueline Kennedy Onassis, she petite and elegant in canary yellow couture silk, with Bob towering over her. Norman Mailer was there, too.

In Paris in 1994 Bob and I took the Metro together into the city, managed to misplace our exit tickets and had to climb over the turnstile when no one was looking. No police, no fine, thank heavens.

In the years when I was dean of my college, I tolerated endless jokes about "Dean Martin." When I told Bob, he replied with stories about his army days under the name "Jerry Lewis." We decided that one day we would appear jointly on an academic program as "Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis," a joke that only people of a certain age would get. Actually, we did appear together, in the fall of 1999 at the Air Force Academy. I read a paper that eventually came out in *NDQ*. Bob was the star of the show with a work-in-progress report on his definitive edition of the Hemingway African manuscript, published as *Under Kilimanjaro*.

One afternoon in Key West in 2004 at the Hemingway international biennial Bob found me by the Casa Marina swimming pool, where it was so hot that attendants were floating blocks of ice in the pool to cool the bathwater temperature, to ask for the paper that I had presented. Of course, I gave it to him, and he published it. I always knew that my work would be treated fairly and honestly under his pen.

Sometimes years would go by between meetings, but Bob always kept in touch and from year to year remembered names, interests, and half-finished projects. His own scholarship (as well as his editorship), as everyone knew, was top-flight. He left behind work that will be used for years–generations, more likely.

There will be no better memorial for Bob than an issue of the multifaceted journal that he tended with so much care.

MATTHEW WALLACE

It's Just What They Do

Who in their right mind would want to be a beekeeper? It is unlike all other hobbies. There's no glamour or glory to be found in beekeeping. From the time the dandelions break ground until the last oak leaf falls, it's a hot, messy undertaking. The car door, the kitchen sink, and everything in between gets covered in either wax or honey. Your hive tool or soft bristle brush continuously sticks to your leather covered hand. The prized golden honey globs the car mat to the bottom of your boots, ensuring a clumsy exit at the least. Then there is the inevitable sting—the season's first pierce that stiffens your mind and body for one second before realizing it was bound to happen. It's just what they do.

From what I was told of bees, they were an awful creature—fine in the wild, but why would anyone want to "keep" them? I laughed until it hurt listening to my father's elaborate stories of being chased through shelterbelts as he made his daring escape from the 50,000 bees bent on protecting their winter supply. According to him, all the honey in the world wasn't worth that attack. Thirty years later, it is still an image I hold onto—a dying shelterbelt running east and west behind the old red house with a man in Carhartts ducking and dodging through the brittle branches as if his life depended on it. I guess when you have bees, but lack the necessary equipment, you make do and see what happens.

In my family, hobbies come and go like days of the week. No one really sticks with a particular interest very long. It could be growing unheard of tomatoes, collecting found fishing lures along the rising lake shore, or woodworking. You just never know. Five or six years ago, I found myself in the bee yard belonging to an older cousin inspecting two hundred hives. It was his latest venture, although I don't remember what came before. Until that point, I only knew bees would put you in a world of hurt if given the chance. Yet there sat millions of bees unconcerned by the fact I was popping their roofs and inspecting their living rooms as if their hive were a dollhouse. For me, the hum was overwhelming. It ran contrary to everything I knew of bees. At that moment I jumped into this game head first.

Like my father's first and only attempt at beekeeping, I didn't have the equipment to make this a pleasant endeavor. All I knew was that an auction in Pembina, ND, was two days away and beekeeping equipment was on the bill. No description followed, but that didn't matter. The only other interested party was a woman slightly older than myself who wanted her grandfather's extractor as something to remember him by. Three or four bids in, she and I cut a side deal—I got the boxes, she got the extractor. I threw up my paddle sealing the final bid, paying too much for two van loads of broken down bee boxes, but I was on my way to being a beekeeper.

I quickly realized that being an apartment dweller wasn't conducive to beekeeping. Neighbors weren't thrilled with me, and the hour and a half drive to the farm wasn't ideal. I was told to call Bob Lewis, as he would surely be excited about the prospect. Asking someone to keep bees on their property had never been easy. I felt the need to explain away fear or describe the benefits of pollination before the landowner could say "no thanks." Not with Bob. I called a day or two later and a long friendship started. The phone rang a few times and a gentle voice answered. I always heard wonderful stories of how he devoted his life to studying Hemingway and loving his daughters and how his face would light up at the mention of his grandchildren. The gentle voice on the other end of the phone confirmed these stories in my mind.

"I have five acres of grassland that would be good for bees, if you think that'll work," he said. "Take the highway north until it dead-ends, turn west, then north again. You'll see it." Kicking alfalfa stocks and shuffling dirt with our feet, we selected what we assumed would be the perfect spot for a bumper honey crop. Never mind the fact that neither of us had ever attempted to keep bees. The location had water, wild flowers, and faced the south and the east; it was ideal for bees in our minds. In the few minutes we talked, I saw a regard for the land and flowers I have only seen in my father as he talked to us kids about stewardship. "If you lose everything you have," he said, "you will still have these hills if you take care of them." Standing in that alfalfa with Bob, I couldn't help but see my own father in front of me.

Later that week I called to tell Bob the bees had arrived from California and I could deliver them in a week. "If you need my truck, it's parked in the garage with the keys in it," he offered. Right. There was that part of beekeeping I hadn't anticipated. How to move ten hives with a 1999 Saturn four-door sedan? The sun was hitting the horizon as I backed his truck out of the drive and made my way along the Turtle River. As I unloaded beehives in the dark, I could only guess Bob's excitement would equal my own. As we approached the hives the following morning, it was like Christmas in May. We resisted opening the tops to see what we got.

Instead, we commented on the dew glimmering off the painted white boxes as we neared, I in a nylon veiled jacket and Bob wearing a mosquito hat and a long-sleeve flannel shirt. Standing with the sun on our backs admiring the sound of bees waking in the morning sun, I couldn't help but think of the stories I had heard of old-time beekeepers who wore only veils and T-shirts to the bee yard. If they were good bees, and if you did it right, you didn't need all the fancy get-up, I was told. In the tall, wet grass, Bob carried himself the same way I imagined those old-time beekeepers had—calm, gentle, and observant.

The new bee yard was perfect, or so we thought. Not anticipating a late rising Turtle River that spring, I returned from a trip after a phone call from Bob notifying me that the bees had washed away in the high waters. Disappointed, we trudged through the knee-high flood and mud to retrieve the boxes. Walking in silence, he turned, looked at me and said, "This river. It's just what it does." Approaching the bobbing boxes, the hum of industrious worker bees could be heard from along the tree line. Disappointment turned to resolve as we lugged boxes of bees out of the washed out field and reassembled them on the concrete slab where the old garage once sat.

In the years following our first attempt at beekeeping, we learned the process together. Every Saturday morning from May through September we would drink microwaved espressos and eat one piece of chocolate together before inspecting the hives. Every *New Yorker* article or poem about beekeeping was saved and handed to me as I departed from our visit. Between visits, intra-campus envelopes would show up on my desk containing books he had just finished, articles on bee social structure, or hand-written notes detailing where he had planted or found pollen producing flowers. Other days, after returning from lunch, I would find scribbles on used paper describing the benefits of Bee Balm or Bass Wood honey neatly folded laying on my keyboard. Opening these envelopes or unfolding a letter, I knew my friend had been by just to say hi.

Together we had lost bees, and together the bees had chased us through the woods in a last ditch effort to save their coveted honey. It was always fun, and sting by sting we learned a little more. One hot September day we geared up for what was going to be a major honey haul. Forgetting the smoker at home, we forged ahead with extracting the liquid gold. As we sweated and turned on the crank, tension rose—a specific tension felt when the buzz of a hive changes. It was clear we were unwanted and disruptive and having forgotten the smoker, we were certainly at a disadvantage. Before we could put the hive back in order and close the top, we were under attack. A full-on attack from every direction. An attack unlike any we had experienced. I ditched one way, Bob in his mosquito net hat, another. Walking through the tall grass and trees did lit-

tle to shake the bees free. As I reappeared from the woods at one end of the property, I could see bees had made their way under his face veil. There was little I could do. Going to help would only have drawn more bees his direction. We had to wait and let the bees calm down. Twenty minutes later, we rested on the raised flowerbed rubbing our swollen fingers, necks, and legs, talking and laughing about what went wrong. Certainly we would need the smoker before trying that again. In the commotion of it all, Bob lost his glasses. Sore, and in pain, we decided it was safe to comb the grass and nearby CRP. Not finding his glasses, we decided it was best to nurse our stings and try again another day.

With a yogurt container full of pale yellow honey, wax flecks, and chunks of comb, we returned to our spot at the flowerbed. "Bob, you okay?" I asked.

"Oh, sure," he replied. "You can't get mad at them. They are only doing what they do." As we sat taking deep bites from the comb honey while the nectar dripped down our arms and chins, I could only think Bob was in fact one of those old-time beekeepers I had locked away in my mind—gentle and observant.

Two or three months before his passing, I sat at my desk staring at nothing in particular recalling how honey shimmered in the afternoon light as it ran out of the extractor into whatever container we had available. The light honey dotted with bits of wax pleased Bob to no end. He always tasted the basswood or wild flowers he had planted the year before. A slight knock on my door snapped me out of my daydream. Bob, standing tall in the doorway said, "Matt, I brought you a little something I found. I hope you can use it." With that he turned and left my office. Opening the envelope I pulled out a crumpled gray T-shirt that read:

> To make a prairie it takes a clover
> and one bee,—
> One clover, and a bee,
> And revery.
> The revery alone will do
> If bees are few.
>
> —Emily Dickinson

Erratum: Bob was fond of saying that the Navajo introduced deliberate mistakes into each weaving so as not to offend the gods with their hubris. Although unintentional, we did introduce an error in Andrea Herbst's essay, p. 225; the title should be "Bob the Grasshopper." We hope Bob is at least smiling at the mistake.

ANDREA HERBST

Bob the Gasshopper

Of being a scrap collector, I am most certainly guilty. The piles I've collected over the years verge on the ridiculous. Postcards, letters, comics, advertisements, transit maps, ticket stubs, wrappers, coasters, bits of paper with book titles and band names and long-forgotten appointments—all important at the time and seemingly vital. But now, as I open boxes and pull out the stacks, they seem like nonsense. It's both a joy and a drag to go through them. Some, like a letter from a high school pen pal in Germany, bring back happy memories. Others, like a chocolate wrapper saved because it had a funny-looking cat on it, are just irritating. *Why on earth would I save this?* I ask. *What was so important about it that I needed to shove it in a box?*

It was in this frustrated, tired, and above all annoyed state that I picked up a German beer coaster (I must have enjoyed the thirsty blue hummingbird pictured on it) and underneath found a slightly crumpled *New Yorker* cartoon. It wasn't very funny. I doubt I found it funny six years ago when it was given to me. But it was the sentence scrawled across the top that told me why I'd kept it all these years. *What did it say?* you may ask. *A life-changing quote, a piece of priceless advice?*

I haven't the slightest idea. It's incredibly, impressively illegible, but then, that was quintessential Dr. Lewis. Despite its unreadability and lack of funniness, it was a puzzle worthy of keeping. In another pile (this time wedged between a couple of pulp fiction paperbacks) I found a small booklet entitled *A Lewis and Clark Chapbook*. Inside the cover is a sticky note I can actually read: *Andrea—see? FYI*, it says, signed *Bob the grasshopper*. At least I can remember the history of that one; I'd been writing a lengthy paper on Sacagawea that he'd taken an interest in.

When I started working at the *North Dakota Quarterly* in 2008, Dr. Lewis was already spending a fair amount of time outside of the office. He was something of the elusive editor, a man passionate about Hemingway who looked, to me, like he should have been passionate about Mark Twain instead. He would come and go throughout the day, editing, cursing his old computer, taking walks, sharing bits of news he

found interesting. But above all, he was interested in seemingly everything and always ready for a discussion. Even if I had nothing to contribute on a topic, he never made me feel silly. Instead, he encouraged (if you'll forgive the phrasing) the pursuit of knowledge, even if just for knowledge's sake. And his office—his office is still, to this day, one of the most fascinating spaces I've ever been in. Full bookshelves with tchotchkes and photos littering the open spaces in front of the book spines, an antiquated beast of a computer taking up what little available space there was on the desk, piles of books and papers all over the floor. . . .

Unfortunately, the piles also blocked the door that led to the hallway and, one day, it was finally too much for the fire marshal. *Clean your office*, he decreed (I imagine with shiny red firefighter's helmet and bejeweled fire hose). I don't know what the "or else" in this situation was. Whatever it was, Dr. Lewis finally straightened up his office. Slowly. Very slowly. And then, just as slowly, it built back up. By the time I left *NDQ*, it had returned to its cluttered glory. We once joked that we should give him $5.00 for a paper grocery bag to buy whatever would fit in it.

The obvious question is: why was it so difficult for him to go through it all and clean it out? *Come on. Those torn papers? Garbage. Those figurines? Sell them on eBay.* Simple, right? Yet as easy as it is for us to decide what others should do with their things, we become defensive when those others want us to do the same. Instead of cleaning up, we cling to our objects desperately.

We save the things we do because they mean something to us in the moment and we're sure they will in the future. Whether happy or sad, there are memories in the scraps we burrow away. But returning to those hoards isn't always what we expect it to be and maybe, in the end, that's our hesitation to look through them. The letter from an old beau no longer makes our heart long. The ticket stub from a river cruise makes us question how our lives have become so boring. The photo of friends at dinner no longer makes us smile. And we can't even begin to remember why we saved the museum pamphlet, the scribbled quote, the never-used postcards.

Or maybe not. Maybe it's just daunting to think about digging through years of accumulation.

Whatever the reason, these things tell stories, and those stories are the important part. Our memories— and hence our past—are built of stories. The actual objects are just vessels. But sometimes they cease to be even that; sometimes, the stories no longer need a vessel. If that's the case, then it may be time to let those things go. Perhaps it's the spring cleaning bug I've caught, but sitting down and looking, remembering, deciding if something is worth keeping—it's healthy. It's cleansing.

Ultimately, we all need to fire marshal ourselves every few years. That may be the only way we scrap collectors can force ourselves to decide what is essential. Otherwise, we end up buried. So if we're going to keep scraps, we may as well keep the ones that move us forward. There's no sense in constantly lugging around all that dead weight. Our minds store enough of that— we shouldn't overburden the world with our physical things. But we also shouldn't assume to know what is valuable to another.

I, for one, will be placing the Dr. Lewis scraps back in my pile.

KATE SWENEY

The Things He Left Behind

When Robert Lewis left the *NDQ* office for the last time in June 2013, he left behind many things, including about 2,500 books in his office, many thousand pieces of papers (sometimes tucked into one of those books), memorabilia including pictures of and by family members, stacks of calendars and *New Yorker*s, and various cartoons and sayings often cut from the *New Yorker*s but sometimes written out on a piece of paper. He apparently liked a quote from Kurt Vonnegut so much, he had two copies of it taped to his computer: "True terror is to wake up one morning and discover that your high school class is running the country."

As indicated by his collection of books and detailed by other contributors to this issue, Bob left an enduring legacy in many areas both scholarly and personal. He was a preeminent Hemingway expert, he promoted Indian Studies, Peace Studies, environmental concerns, and as more than one contributor has said, he was interested in everything.

He also left children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and hundreds of friends and colleagues scattered all over the country and beyond who still miss him. I started working for him in 2002 and though it was, and still is, the best job I ever had, it is not the same without him. He had high expectations for accuracy and effort expended in our mutual endeavor, but he treated lapses with humor. "You're ignoring my outbox," he said, one day when I had indeed been ignoring it. He was fond of telling the interns and work-study students that Labor Day meant they were supposed to be at work, betrayed only by the hint of a smile or as Linda Patterson Miller termed it in her essay, "that glint in his gaze." His humor and generosity made for an extremely congenial working environment which extended to everyone. He distributed jokes, books, and articles to anyone who expressed interest in a topic. Visiting his office was like a trip to the best library in town. In the summer when he collected his share of the weekly distribution from the Community Garden, I often received some of the produce: tomatoes, cucumbers, or whatever was in season. He brought flowers from his garden and yard for the office in the spring. In the fall, I might get dried cottonwood leaves, a feather from a bird, or a

bag of apples. I don't remember ever leaving work without Bob thanking me, even if I hadn't really accomplished much that day.

No matter how long or how closely you work with someone, there are bound to be secrets, hidden, unknown parts of that person. Bob didn't talk much about his personal life. We shared an interest in books and writing and the Cooper's hawks which nested in front of our office windows. But I didn't know until Bob was no longer with us that he wrote haiku, and not occasionally, but every day. The selections of his letters to Donald Junkins, also in this issue, were a revelation in many ways. I knew that Matt Wallace kept bees on Bob's land, and I remember one day when Bob came to work with swollen eye, but until I read Matt's essay in this issue, I didn't know the full story.

One of the most enduring parts of Bob's legacy is the "Sea Changes: Books That Mattered" feature, which began with the second issue under his editorship, Vol. 50.2, and the publication of four Sea Change essays. His Editor's Notes called for submissions for the feature. The Editor's Notes from Vol. 50.3 include this notice: "The feature 'Sea Changes: Books That Mattered' . . . cannot be continued if none of you readers-writers are moved to respond. We solicit more essays, personal or not, on Books That Mattered" (149). Vol. 50.3 merely says: "We continue to solicit essays for Sea Changes. What book got you going?" (147). Vol. 51.1 requests "essays, of any degree of formality, on the personal affects of a book (or related books) on you at some important point or turning point in your life" (208). Now, more than 60 Sea Change essays have appeared in the *Quarterly*, and the feature continues with Thomas Palakeel's "Uncle Shakespeare" in this issue.

Sea Changes essays were also my favorite *NDQ* reading, among them: "Is this Green Town? My Life According to Ray Bradbury" by Jonathan Larkin (74.1), "Joanne Kathleen: The Anti-Proust" by John Wenke (78.1), "At the Bottom of the World with Bruce Chatwin" by Richard C. Kane (75.1), and finally, "A Requiem in Books" by Neil Mathison (78.4).

In the years I've worked at *NDQ*, I occasionally thought about writing a Sea Change essay of my own. We moved often while I was growing up and I came to depend on the company of books in a way that set me apart from many children my age. I read voraciously. In high school, on my own, I read *Hiroshima* by John Hersey and *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck, the first of which gave me a life-long horror of nuclear anything, and both of which imprinted me with an appreciation for cultures and societies totally unlike the small towns I knew in Kansas and Nebraska.

At some point, maybe in junior high, I picked up *Toro of the Little People* from one of the bookcases in our house. *Toro*, written by Leo Walmsley, was first published in 1926 in England. My copy was printed

in the United States and once belonged to the Camden Free Library in New Jersey. My father acquired it because he had measles. I know this because it says so in his handwriting on an inside page: "Wayne Sweney, Glouchester, N.J., acq. thro help of measles." I don't remember what my reaction was then, beyond a slight puzzlement. It was an adventure story about a group of pygmies set in East Africa, something I couldn't connect with—in my teenage mind—my boring father.

I don't remember how or when I acquired *Toro*. I know it was on the shelf in my parents' home almost from the time I have any memory. It traveled with us everywhere we lived, from Kansas to Oregon, back to Kansas, and then Nebraska. It finally landed in their house in Arizona and survived a "flood" when a water pipe broke during a long absence. At some point, I got it. The cover is dark green cloth covered cardboard with frayed corners. The spine is loose, and its pages are fragile, pulpy, and stained. It is not a first edition. It is not in pristine condition, but it is among my most valued possessions because it speaks to me of a side of my dad I never knew.

Wayne Sweney was an engineer and my brother and I used to jokingly wonder whether he was rigid because he was an engineer or vice versa. In high school, I was appalled to learn that he had refused an overseas job because he and mom were afraid that it might "hurt our education." He had no hobbies, except reading the daily newspaper and doing the crossword puzzles in ink, a habit both my brother and I picked up. He would have loved the Sudoku number puzzles now widely published. On Sunday his routine was to walk to the nearest gas station and buy two or three different papers. By contrast, my mother, Dona June Sweney, though she shunned the newspapers, read constantly, mostly Westerns and historical romances. If Mom was reading a book, usually a paperback, Dad would occasionally sneak some time with it. While she was busy making dinner, for example, he might read the end. If he liked that part, he'd read some in the middle, and if *that* met with his approval (the criteria of which was never specified), he'd start at the beginning and read it through. But I have no memory ever of him going to the library with the rest of us, of buying a book, or reading a magazine except *Reader's Digest*, a yearly Christmas present from his mother. He obviously valued books. We had a lot of them including a set of the *Book of Knowledge* with yearly updates, and he had ordered the children's version for us when we were still in grade school. He also ordered and collected *National Geographic*, a collection that moved with us from place to place along with our furniture. He may have read them; he was usually up hours before we were. But I have no memory of him even holding a copy.

So, *Toro* is an anomaly. Maybe it connects to the *National Geographic*s, which portrayed far off exotic places. But *Toro* is a work of

fiction, a fanciful adventure story of pygmies in East Africa. According to the Walmsley Society website, Walmsley "was awarded the Military Cross whilst serving with the Royal Flying Corps in East Africa during the First World War and later travelled widely in search of adventure. . . . Readers of Walmsley's books will know that they are largely autobiographical." Many of the book's details ring true, the way, for example, the pygmies hunted elephant (driving them into a pit), or the way they made poison for their arrows. On the first page, Toro's group of "Little People" are said to live in the "Forest of Always Night" to the west of the "Mountains of the Moon," a term once used to describe mountains in East Africa near the source of the Nile River. One of Toro's hunting exploits involves an okapi, so elusive it was once thought to be a mythical creature, but Wamsley's description matches the picture and characteristics on *Nova*'s web site.

I re-read *Toro* occasionally, usually when I'm missing my dad. Over the years, I have had to ask myself, what does this book—and the fact that he held onto it for more than fifty years—say about my father? Did he have a rich interior life, a sense of curiosity that wasn't apparent? Did it make him nostalgic for his boyhood? I wish I had the answers. I wish I'd known my father better. I wish I had a chance now to go back and ask him. I'll never know, but it *is* comforting in a way to know that there is more to everyone than the obvious, a reminder to look for what is below the surface, that seven-eighths of Hemingway's iceberg. And this writing has helped me to reevaluate him, or at least my image of him. I've said that he had no hobbies other than the newspapers, but as I was working on this essay, I remembered how much he loved to play cards. Cribbage was his game and his children and grandchildren could play almost as soon as we could hold the cards. So writing this essay helped me shape a different narrative about my father.

Similarly, working on this Tribute issue has presented me with a different, much fuller picture of Bob. To see in his letters to Donald Junkins, for example, that he was "thrilled" to discover some new plants is to see the person behind the normally laconic editor I knew. Reading Linda Patterson Miller's eulogy for Bob and his "joy" at working on *Under Kilimanjaro* has a similar effect. As Miller recounts, Bob would thank her for her essays without effusion. When she expressed her disappointment, Junkins told her not to expect more. She concludes, "We never got all of Bob. He had a reservoir of feeling that probably no one ever fully tapped, perhaps even Bob himself." And to read Fred Whitehead's "Blues for Robert Lewis" and learn that Bob played guitar and sang "This Land is Your Land" with Fred and Meridel LeSuer is to be reminded of Michael Beard's comment at the memorial in September, "Bob *was* the tune."

We never got enough of Bob, but the tune is still there.

Editor's Notes

CALL FOR PAPERS

North Dakota Quarterly (*NDQ*), Volume 80, Number 2
Special Issue: Slow

Guest Editors: William Caraher (University of North Dakota)
and A. Rebecca Rozelle-Stone (University of North Dakota)

North Dakota Quarterly, an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal, seeks contributions for a special issue on the theme of "Slow." In recent years, there has been increasing attention paid to slowing down various aspects of our lives as we attempt to navigate a fast-paced, instantaneously gratifying, highly technologized, and digital milieu. The "slow movement" has become a distinct cultural presence, affecting our thinking about food, art, design, religion, travel, parenting, recreation, pedagogy, and more. We invite non-fiction essays, short fiction pieces, poems, and artistic images that address or are inspired by this concept of "slow" and its emerging importance. We are interested in perspectives on the significance of "slow" from a diversity of disciplines, including: art, cultural studies, history, literature, philosophy, religious studies, and sciences, among others. Non-fiction submissions should be written for a broad audience. **Length**: Non-fiction essays and fiction writing should be no longer than 6,000 words, inclusive of notes. **Deadline**: October 1, 2014

Send hard copy submissions to:

Kate Sweney, Managing Editor
Slow Issue
North Dakota Quarterly
Merrifield Hall Room 110
276 Centennial Hall, Stop 7209
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7209

Or send electronic submissions and all inquires to the following email:

Rebecca Rozelle-Stone at: adrian.rozelle@email.und.edu
with subject heading: "Slow Issue NDQ"

Please Note: Reading Period For Fiction and Poetry

The reading period for fiction and poetry is from September through May. Fiction and poetry received at other times will be returned unread. Please note that we do not accept nor read simultaneous submissions of poetry.



Cover Date

Yes, our calendars, probably like yours, read 2014, and this issue of *NDQ* is the third and final in Volume 79 of 2012. All subscribers receive four issues per year, and eventually we hope that those years will be the same as on your calendars and date-obsessed magazines and newspapers.



Sea Changes: Books That Mattered

Just as they provide pleasure and prompt criticism, books have a role in the developmental history of their readers. For the impact of a book depends not only on *how* it is read but *when*. Many books fortify or deepen the beliefs of readers; others prompt adaptive responses—that is, the newly read text is fitted to its reader's fund of knowledge and experience. Encounters with some texts, however, amount to a sea change in the lives of their readers. They produce fundamental reorientations of belief, understanding, and purpose. *North Dakota Quarterly* publishes occasional accounts of books that mattered, books that produced a sea change in their readers. These personal essays have been about well-known books like Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and lesser known ones such as George Morgan's *The Human Predicament*. As one contributor has proposed, books that matter "liberate the reader from a parochial view of experience . . . and usher their readers into a fuller understanding of self, society, and culture." **NDQ** continues to invite contributions of personal essays on a book or books that mattered.

Explore . . . Endure . . . Evolve . . .

Contributors

Robert and **Mary Bagg** are the co-authors of "Let Us Watch Richard Wilbur: A Biographical Study," forthcoming from University of Massachusetts Press. Robert taught in the English Department at the University of Massachusetts from 1965 until 1996. His translations of plays by Sophocles and Euripides have been staged in 60 productions worldwide; his versions of *Antigone* and *Oedipus The King* are in the *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, 3rd edition. His latest book of poetry is *The Tandem Ride* (Spiritus Mundi Press, 2011). Mary is a free-lance editor for several university presses, and a frequent collaborator with her husband. They live in Worthington, Massachusetts.

Richard Allan Davison is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Delaware. He has published articles on figures ranging from Shakespeare and Melville to Hemingway and Albee and books on Frank, Charles, and Kathleen Norris; with Jackson Bryer he co-edited *The Actor's Art* (2001) and *The Art of the American Musical* (2005).

Gayatri Devi teaches English at Lock Haven University. She studied under Robert Lewis at the University of North Dakota where she earned her PhD. Along with several other faculty, Bob Lewis performed "Tea for Two" at her wedding. "Humor in Middle Eastern Cinema" (Wayne State University Press) will be published in November 2014.

Robert Fleming, Professor Emeritus at the University of New Mexico, is the author of *The Face in the Mirror: Hemingway's Writers*, editor of *Hemingway and the Natural World*, and co-editor with Robert W. Lewis of *Under Kilimanjaro*. He has published some two dozen articles or chapters on Hemingway, including several in *NDQ*.

Steven Florczyk is the author of *Hemingway, the Red Cross, and the Great War* (Kent State University Press, 2014) and co-editor of *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Essays of Reassessment & Reclamation* (Wind Publications, 2008). He is past president of the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society, and

his work has appeared in the *North Dakota Quarterly*, the *Hemingway Review*, the *Shawangunk Review*, and *Hemingway's Italy: New Perspectives*. He teaches in the English Department at Longwood University.

Birgit Hans has been a member of the Indian Studies department at UND since 1991. Her specialty is American Indian literature and oral traditions, but she also teaches writing and history courses and has an interest in popular literature. As a former German citizen, she is interested in, and has conducted long-term field research on, European perceptions of American Indian cultures. She is also interested in historical and contemporary quilting, particularly star quilts. Her publications include papers in *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, the *North Dakota Quarterly*, and *Studies in the Western*, among others. Her newest book is *D'Arcy McNickle's The Hungry Generations: The Evolution of a Novel* (University of New Mexico Press 2007). Her current book project is a study of German hobbyists.

Andrea Herbst graduated from the University of North Dakota in 2009, after which she spent six months interning for a development politics magazine in Frankfurt, Germany. She now lives in Minneapolis with a very chatty cat, where she works in publishing, letterpress printing, and as a freelance translator/copyeditor.

Allen Josephs is a world-renowned Hemingway scholar and past president of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation and Society. His published works on Spanish culture include the critically-acclaimed Ritual and Sacrifice in the Corrida, four critical editions of the works of Federico Garcia Lorca, and numerous essays in the *Atlantic*, *New Republic*, and *New York Times Book Review*, among others. He has been University Research Professor at the University of West Florida since 1986 (where he began teaching in 1969). New Street Communications has just published his *On Hemingway and Spain: Essays and Reviews, 1979-2013*.

Donald Junkins has been the poetry editor of the *North Dakota Quarterly* for ten years. His most recent book is *BUSTER'S BOOK: Family Voices to and from the front, WW I, WW II, Korea and Vietnam*. His poems have appeared several times in such publications as *Sewanee Review*, *American Poetry Review*, and the *New Yorker*.

Samantha Kelly has her BA from Penn State Abington and is beginning a graduate program in Counseling Psychology at Columbia University this fall. She was drawn to the world of Hemingway research while study-

ing with Dr. Linda Miller and found that it was an amalgam of her interests in literature, art, and psychology.

David Lambeth came to North Dakota in 1977 to take a faculty position in the Department of Biochemistry. He has been a birder all of his adult life and founded the Grand Cities Bird Club. He is a guide in the Turtle Mountains Birding Festival and the Prairie and Potholes Birding Festival. In retirement he and his wife Cec enjoy travel, photography and birding.

Lisa D. Lewis is an adjunct lecturer in the English Department at the State University of New York in Plattsburgh. She has edited several texts for publication and co-authored four books on art and music. She has taught at the American College in Norway, and for many years, at the University of North Dakota's Honors Program, English Department, and Medical School, where, with her father, she lectured to medical school students on Hemingway's "Indian Camp."

Nina Lewis is an artist living in Grand Forks. She and her dad were working on a book of his haiku.

Lawrence H. Martin, who wrote for *North Dakota Quarterly* many times under the astute editorship of Bob Lewis, is Elliott Professor of English *emeritus*, Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia. He lives in Bar Harbor, Maine, and continues to teach Hemingway courses and to write about Hemingway and his era.

Brad McDuffie is a Lecturer at Nyack College. He has frequently published poetry essays and reviews in *NDQ*. His book *Teaching Salinger's Nine Stories* was published in the fall of 2011 (New Street). He is currently finishing his PhD at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Linda Patterson Miller, Professor of English at Penn State Abington, was appointed as the 2011-12 Penn State Laureate for the Humanities. She publishes in all areas of American literature, but her specialty is the cultural milieu of the American expatriate artists of the 1920s. She has served as a scholarly consultant for public broadcasting projects and museum exhibitions that focus on twentieth-century life and art, and she is Chair of the Editorial Advisory Board for the *Hemingway Complete Letters Project* (Cambridge University Press).

Peter Nabokov is professor of World Arts and Cultures and American Indian Studies at UCLA. An author of many books about American

Indians, his most recent is *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*.

Erik Nakjavani is *Professor Emeritus* of Humanities at the University of Pittsburgh. He has published on American literature, interdisciplinary studies, literary theory, and psychoanalytic criticism. He specializes in Hemingway studies with an emphasis on philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the visual arts. He is a founding member of the Hemingway Society. His recent publications include: "Evil: A Psychoanalytic Meditation"; "Alchemy, Memory, and Archetypes: Reading Hemingway's Under Kilimanjaro as an African Fairy Tale"; "A Visionary Hermeneutic Appropriation: Meditations on Hemingway's Influence on Mailer"; "Hemingway's African Book of Revelations: Dawning of a New Religion in *Under Kilimanjaro*"; "The Living George Plimpton: Taking a Sporting Stance between Hemingway and Mailer"; and "Now that the Greatest Living Romantic was Dead, Norman Mailer and Mary Hemingway's Eulogies to Ernest Hemingway."

Thomas Palakeel teaches at Bradley University, in Peoria, Illinois. He holds an MFA in fiction from Eastern Washington University and a PhD in English Renaissance Literature from the University of North Dakota. His fiction and essays have appeared in *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Short Story International*, *Manoa*, *Journal of Modern Literature*, and *Christian Science Monitor*.

Laurel Reuter is the Founding Director and Chief Curator of the North Dakota Museum of Art. She was born and raised on the Spirit Lake Dakota Reservation in North Dakota. She completed her MA degree in American literature at the University of North Dakota in 1977, and as a graduate student established a gallery in the Student Union that evolved into North Dakota's first art museum, the North Dakota Museum of Art. She won the 1999 Award of Distinction from the National Council of Art Administrators "in recognition of her dedication to art and to culture in North Dakota and her struggle to create a world-class museum in a remote environment. She helped a devastated community draw together and recover its spiritual existence." In 2007 she received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of North Dakota. As curator for the Museum she has organized more than 100 exhibitions.

Ken Rosen reads a lot. . . . . Writes a little. . . . . tries to catch the sunrise over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico as often as he can.

Alex Shakespeare is a visiting assistant professor at Skidmore College. His essays have appeared or are slated to appear in *Literary Imagination*, *The Battersea Review*, and *The Hemingway Review*.

Dan Shanahan is Professor of Humanities at Charles University in Prague. His work has appeared in *NDQ* for more than three decades. His most recent book is *Sparky's Folks: A Tribute to the Life and Work of Charles Schulz* (Prague: Togga, 2012).

Matthew J. Spireng's book *What Focus Is* was published in 2011 by Word Press. His book *Out of Body* won the 2004 Bluestem Poetry Award and was published in 2006 by Bluestem Press at Emporia State University. His chapbooks are: *Clear Cut*, a signed and numbered limited edition of his poems and photographs by Austin Stracke on which the poems are based; *Young Farmer*; *Encounters*; *Inspiration Point*, winner of the 2000 Bright Hill Press Poetry Chapbook Competition; and *Just This*.

H. R. Stoneback is Distinguished Professor of English at the State University of New York (New Paltz). He is a leading Hemingway scholar and poet of international reputation, author/editor of 35 books (roughly half literary criticism, half poetry) and more than 200 essays on a wide range of American and British authors. Recent critical studies include co-edited volumes on Aldington, Pound, and Imagism—e.g., in 2012 *Imagism* (University of New Orleans Press) and *Ghosts in the Background Moving* (Florida English Press)—and *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Prospect and Retrospect* (2012). He has published four volumes of poetry since 2011, including *Voices of Women Singing* (Codhill 2011). In 2012 he served as Vice-President of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association and he was elected President of the Hemingway Foundation and Society (2014-2017).

Kate Sweney is the managing editor for the *North Dakota Quarterly*. She worked for Robert Lewis for twelve years.

Thomas Van Nortwick is Nathan A. Greenberg Professor of Classics at Oberlin College, where he has taught since 1974. He has published scholarly articles on Greek and Latin literature, autobiographical essays, and five books, *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled: The Second Self and the Hero's Journey in Ancient Epic* (Oxford University Press, 1992), *Compromising Traditions: The Personal Voice in Classical Scholarship*, (Routledge, 1997, with Judith Hallett), *Oedipus: The Meaning of a Masculine Life* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), *Imagining Men:*

Ideals of Masculinity in Ancient Greek Culture (Praeger, 2008), and *The Unknown Odysseus: Alternate Worlds in Homer's Odyssey* (University of Michigan Press, 2009). "Late Sophocles: The Hero's Evolution in Electra, Philoctetes, and Oedipus at Colonus" will be published by the University of Michigan Press in 2015. He was awarded the American Philological Association's "Excellence in Teaching Award" in 1993, and "The 2005 Award for Excellence in Teaching" by the Northern Ohio Council on Higher Education. He is a contributing editor of *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Matthew Wallace is the Associate Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art and a hobby beekeeper. He still maintains hives on Robert Lewis' property and in backyards throughout the Grand Forks region.

Fred Whitehead is a contributing editor for *NDQ* and lives in Kansas City, Kansas.

Kaimei Zheng spent six years in the Heilongjiang countryside during Mao's Cultural Revolution, later graduated from the People's University in Beijing, and represented China in a cultural exchange in Ethiopia. She now teaches internet business at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Bob Lewis was one of the thirteen American veterans she interviewed for her Chinese book, whose title translates roughly into *Wars in American Soldiers' Eyes*, and presented to the Chinese people for the first time a humanized view of American soldiers. The book has sold out in China.

Memorials

Michael and Jeanne Anderegg, St. Paul, MN
Clarence Bina, Bismarck ND
Patricia Bohnet, Grand Forks, ND
John and Dawn Botsford, Grand Forks, ND
Donna Bott, Grand Forks, ND
Mary L. Cochrane, Palm Desert, CA
Glinda B. Crawford, Kirksville MO
Sandra Donaldson
Dean Engel, Grand Forks, ND
Robert Fleming, Albuquerque NM
Yahya Frederickson, Moorhead MN
Gretchen Lang, St. Paul MN
Paula Lee, Grand Forks ND
Lisa Lewis, Plattsburg, NY
Kari Jo Lommen, Grand Forks ND
Mary Beth Kelley-Lowe and Scott Lowe, Eau Claire WI
Lynn C. Miller, Los Ranchos, NM
Janet Moen, Bemidji MN
Phil and Phyllis Norgren, Grand Forks ND
Becky L. Olson, Devils Lake, ND
Mark Phillips, Cuba, NY
Janet Rex, Grand Forks, ND
J W Scott Farm, Gilby, ND
Thomas Van Nortwick, Oberlin OH
Anne Wilson, Detroit Lakes, MN

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported *NDQ* through monetary means and words of encouragement during this difficult year.

Letters from Lisa

Introduction: In the months immediately preceding and following Robert Lewis's death, his daughter Lisa Lewis corresponded with Donald Junkins and Kaimei Zheng. Donald had received Lisa's first letter of July 23 describing her father's now precarious health and he immediately contacted Bob by phone. "We talked to Bob yesterday," Donald wrote Lisa on July 24, "and he was upbeat and funny and tired-sounding and sweet and told us he lost his innocence in Korea. It was heart-rending." During the days ahead, Donald would serve as the conduit between Lisa and Bob's close Hemingway colleagues and friends (those Donald calls "the original believers). "Your letters will be all our mainstays in the coming weeks," Donald wrote on August 8. Lisa replied that same day: "Please don't be sad, dear, dear, strong, stalwart, brilliant friends, all. The heart-rending details are mere accoutrements at the end of a story. You knew Bob best, at his best. He still has a few short miles to go." On August 15, ten days shy of Bob's death, Donald wrote: "Have just read your lovely Lisa letter for today, laughing through it and feeling more secure about some parts of the world. What are we really going to do when we have to say our last goodbyes?" Receiving the news of Bob's death the morning of August 26 Donald wrote: "You have kept me above water when it was up to your own lips, and I heard Bob's spirit in all you said to me. You always knew the smallest treasure box held the platinum. Thank you for everything, for giving me pure Bob up to the last tide." Lisa's letters indeed reveal her own spirited voice along with that of her father, whom she called "Pops." In one instance after his death she references him as "her father" only to realize how silly that seems—"too proprietary when he is everywhere yet [tangibly] nowhere." Lisa's letters to Junkins are eloquent and above all honest, and they provide a rare and intimate glimpse into Bob Lewis's final days. Lisa's father loved his two daughters Lisa and Nina, and he would have smiled had he read Lisa's reflections on October 14, several weeks after his death. "The other night I dreamed my father said to me: Don't worry. You are the oceans and the rivers. And right away I thought, what about the seas? Why am I not the seas, too?"

—Linda Patterson Miller

July 23

After several falls at home over the weekend, Pops was taken by ambulance to Altru Hospital in Grand Forks. . . . His liver is failing; he has dementia. Goodness knows what else, if that, as when we talk on the

phone we don't talk about his ailments, it's as if they almost don't exist and conversation revolves around tomatoes and the weather and my class and his writing. . . . He told my daughter Chloe, yesterday, when she called him, that he was in Hawaii, at an Audubon birding conference. That bit of news actually cheers me as he would have once detested the atmosphere of hospital rooms. . . . He's dying, and he knows it, and he's ready.

August 8

The bleak picture? Pops has Lewy body dementia. That, in conjunction with his liver failing (cirrhosis caused or not caused by alcohol) and congestive heart failure (though his heart is in basic good condition) make for a dire combination. He is often very tired, and when he is, his speech is slurry. . . . Yesterday he spoke in terms of being on an army base, surrounded by the wounded, and asked my daughter Chloe and me to check out the surrounding culture of the town, to see whether we might go out and find a suitable restaurant to visit. He said in the mess hall, he wouldn't give the food to a dog. This morning, I brought him a beautiful banana. He showed me the banana he had gotten in the commissary. It was a shriveled, brown pathetic thing with his name on a sticker.

He often considers the duration of his stay in the hospital/nursing home, and speaks of when he can be discharged. But he was in good humor this morning, amused by the nurse's aide who was so flummoxed by his wearing two different colored socks—one beige, one white. . . . He fell yesterday, bruising and scraping his right arm, and felt he'd be a candidate for the Purple Heart. . . . I am not sad for my father. He's not uncomfortable nor is he suffering. He has lived in the woods deliberately, and fully.

August 11

One of the presentations of Lewy body is animal visualization. Several times, Pops has remarked upon a mouse darting in his room. This morning he said he saw two large rats creeping underneath the bird feeder outside his window, and he shivered. He has also asked about the dog in the room. "Is that a dog there?"

But today we also talked about the iconic pop artist James Rosenquist and his exhibit, opening August 22, at the North Dakota Museum of Art. After having had a visit from Laurel Reuter, the museum's director and curator, Pops was very eager about Rosenquist's possible visit and, he said, Peter Nabokov's writing about Rosenquist. Rosenquist was born in Grand Forks, ND and has done recent work in Fargo. Pops considered NDQ's involvement and collaboration. He also explored the future of NDQ and his possible successors where, in a roundabout turn, the suggestion for editor segued into a consideration for Shelby, one of his nurse's aides. "She may work well in tandem with someone else."

During my afternoon visits I often read aloud poems from the online app, Poetry Daily. Pops lies in bed, closing his eyes, listening. Many of the poems—coincidentally—are about death. One of the very recent poems, "Reading Will Kill You," by Barbara Hamby, I liked very much. We survived to read Larkin's "Aubade." Later, as Pops sat in his wheelchair, I cut his toenails, and could not help thinking of "The Emperor of Ice Cream."

When Pops stands to transfer from chair to bed, he is momentarily catatonic—barely able to move. . . . But as soon as he sits down, that seizure, all that inability, goes away, and he relaxes and looks very small again, lying on a white hospital bed with white cotton covers. . . .

Gott im Himmel! Gott im Himmel! This was Pops's refrain on Tuesday afternoon. I thought his accent sounded a little Marlene Dietrich. Sometimes he feigns senility, and often he breaks out into song. "I like New Orleans. . . . when you. . . . love!" Did you know he sang in the Heinz Chapel Choir when he was in college in Pittsburgh?

Later that day, August 11

Please do believe on this sunny Sunday in August that all is right with the world, that all shall be well. Pops was cheerful this morning, despite a midnight fall in Gloria's room where his abrasions to his side and the knob on his head prompted a Percocet from the staff nurse. He rolled his eyes mischievously when asked what he was doing in Gloria's room, who thought—when Pops came crashing to the floor—a bomb had exploded. Gloria was later heard to remark of her midnight visitor, "I'm going to have a hard time explaining this to my husband."

August 12

Your well wishes and remembrances of happy times are coursing their way over mountain, valley, river, and prairie to room 119 in Valley Elder Care where Pops lies sleeping a good deal of the time, eating little, asking today, for the first time in my presence, anyway, for pain medication. "A pain pill or two would be fitting, I think." He is so polite. Tomorrow he will receive anointments for the sick from Father Dan of St. Mary's, our home parish. He's taken several falls which have abraded his side, so he asks that you not make him laugh. His liver is also visibly palpable on his right side, and he is looking smaller as he doesn't eat much, not even the quivering neon jell-o in a glass bowl.

August 17

I took Pops for a wheelchair stroll this afternoon around Valley Elder Care, and he told Priscilla, the CNA, he was never coming back. Once outside, on the last leg of our sidewalk journey, I told him we could stroll

to Turtle Oaks [Bob's home]. He scoffed, the literalist wheelchair Bob response. . . .

It has been very dry the past month in Grand Forks, the elms trees weeping with sticky, syrupy aphid excrement, covering the asphalt and all cars, but the corn, beets and potatoes are lush.

Pops is not eating much, but sleeping much. Peter Nabokov spent a tender day and a half at Pop's bedside before departing for LA today. This, despite telling Peter, "You sing like you fuck." Pops was, shall we say, curmudgeonly. His sarcasm often has a bite. Peter was a good sport, however. He laughed, and I with the fading memory, I can't recall the song Pops sang which Peter then sang, too.

Don't make me laugh, don't make me cry, Pops often says, as it hurts his ribs to do either. Though he can barely walk, eat or dress without assistance, and it is 1913 and morning in his mind, and sock, blue, bed are invisible words in his memory, he remains too quick and clever for me. I will not ever catch up.

August 26 [the day of Bob Lewis's death]
Underneath a haze of morphine and Ativan, with labored breathing, he died. He lived a good life, and I am so, so very fortunate because of it.

September 18 [preceding the memorial celebration to honor Robert's life held at 5 pm on Friday, September 20, 2013, at the North Dakota Museum of Art. Lisa sends directions to Bob's home, and the twists and turns of getting from the airport to Bob's house almost metaphorically embody the complex journey into Bob's own heart and soul.]

[From the airport road and going west on Hwy 2] take a right, north, at Generous Jerry's Fireworks stand, on County Road 5. Travel north on County Road 5, cross over County Road 11, after the stop sign, and continue going straight north, now on the gravel road. Follow the curves on the gravel road. You'll cross the Turtle River twice. After the second crossing of water, take a right at River Cove. There will be a group of mailboxes to the left and a group of trees hugging a gravel road to the right. Several houses will be tucked away there. Follow that gravel road to the end and on the right you will see the two story blue house with the cathedral-like windows. That's Bob's place.

September 30 [following the departure of Donald Junkins, Kaimei Zheng, Will and Myra Watson and Richard Davison at the conclusion of the memorial celebration weekend]
Now that is has become relatively quiet again and outside it is crushingly beautiful, I have been writing to my father, because, after all, he is no

longer there to read my emails or to receive my phone call. There is a lot I'd like to tell him, about the bees hovering around the slender verbena, and the geese and their chthonic cries overhead.

November 18

It is November in the soul—chill, still and damp. Moby Dick-ish, for sure, and the weather report. But the November weight may be due to the recent spate of Danish films and Swedish crime dramas I've been watching on Netflix.

Next week I am flying home to Grand Forks for a week to see my mother and to mash potatoes, among a few other things. My longer sojourn will be reserved when I return during the Christmas holidays.

Last December, Pops and I, Mark and all our children, drove to Fargo/Moorhead to watch grandson (Pop's great grandson) Jonas play in a hockey tournament. We drove home in the northern twilight. It was gently snowing. When we took Pops home, he stood outside his blue door, the snow falling gently, wearing his blue parka and his Peruvian blue sweater, and he stood still, not moving until he could see the last of us, and we saw the last of him, from the bend in the gravel road. I cannot forget the look on his face. I think he knew he was going already.