



Caxtonian

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Janet Lewis and Yvor Winters: Portraits of an American Literary Couple

Janet Lewis – Chicago’s Gift To American Literature

By Robert Cotner

Janet Lewis is one of Chicago’s great gifts to the world of American letters. Born in Chicago in 1899, she grew up in Oak Park, where she was a schoolmate of Ernest Hemingway and a friend of his sister Marcelline. Along with Fannie Butcher, Dorothy Thompson, and a host of other important writers, she attended the University of Chicago preparatory school, Lewis Institute, where Lewis’ father, Edwin Herbert Lewis, fulfilled a part of his UC teaching duties.

Janet then went to U of C. While a student, she worked for *Poetry* magazine, knew founder Harriet Monroe personally, associated with Harriet Moody, and participated in meetings of the Poetry Club at Le Petit Gourmet, located in a corner of Tribune Tower. Considered one of the leaders in the Imagist movement, she went off to Paris following her graduation from the U of C in 1921, to live, study, and write. But while in Chicago she had met Arthur Yvor Winters, here to visit his parents in Wilmette. He was on his way west to what would become a distinguished scholarly and literary career at Stanford University. They corresponded following their meeting, and both spent periods of time in Santa Fe, NM, being treated for tuberculosis. They were married there in 1926 and moved to Palo Alto, CA, so Arthur could pursue his doctorate at Stanford. They remained here the rest of their lives.

From my own reading, I should have known of Janet Lewis, as I knew of her husband. But my first association with her was a meeting in person on May 1, 1998. A friend and Salvation Army colleague on the Monterey Peninsula, Ione Thornton Strum — a Chicago person herself and former English teacher — arranged for my visit to Arthur and Janet’s home in Los Altos, CA,

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Janet Lewis in the 1920s (from the Winters’ family collection).



Arthur Yvor Winters in the 1920s (from the Winters’ family collection).

Yvor Winters – Stanford’s Formidable Intellect

By Edward Quattrocchi

Yvor Winters was the most formidable intellect and the most demanding teacher in the Stanford University English Department when I entered as a graduate student in 1960. As a teacher he was feared and avoided by many undergraduate, and some graduate, students because he was a tough grader who did not suffer fools gladly; but he was the favorite of, and an inspiration to, many aspiring poets and scholars. His adversaries considered him a curmudgeon, a tyrant of taste and tradition, intolerant of anyone who did not measure up to his poetic prescriptions. But he also had a following of devoted students and colleagues who considered him a champion, carrying the banner of truth, reason, and lucidity in the fight against the relativistic, romantic Philistines.

He influenced my reading and appreciation of literature in ways that were only evident to me years later when I myself was teaching English at Ohio University. Before Winters set an example for me, I had the opinion about poetry and poets shared by most of the general population then and now: poetry is an activity indulged in by a marginal and mostly eccentric segment of the population. The stereotype of a modern poet is one who writes as a leisurely pastime for pleasure but not as a guide to a serious consideration of what it means to be a human being.

For Winters, poetry was not an ornament of life. It was more like a theological discipline, the very essence of what makes life worth living. He had no patience for anyone who did not take

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Caxtonian

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Musings...

In 1984, N. Scott Momaday, Pulitzer Prize-winning Native American author, wrote: Janet Lewis's "*The Wife of Martin Guerre* is to my mind one of the great novels in world literature." I agree with this assessment.

An unusual story to be told by a young American writer, the novel is set in Medieval Europe. It opens in January 1539 shortly after the marriage of two children of rich peasant families in the village of Artigues in the French Pyrenees. The children, Bertrande de Rols, aged 11, and Martin Guerre, "who was no older," lay in the cold bedroom on their wedding night in the home of the groom's father. In the character of Bertrande, one of the most beautifully crafted in all of literature, lies the power of the novel. She is the fulfillment of the Emersonian ideal, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."

Abandoned by her husband when she is 20 years old, shortly after the birth of their firstborn, she must determine eight years later whether a man claiming to be her husband, who appears unannounced at the Guerre farm, is her long-absent Martin. Her priest, members of her household, and Martin's family accuse her of insanity, and only with incredible fortitude does she persist in her own beliefs to the truth of the case. She is forced into court trials, during which she stands firmly in her claims: the recently-arrived Martin is not, in fact, her original husband though she wished he might have been, for the new Martin is kind, sympathetic, and without the violent tendencies of the first Martin.

Beyond her superb character development, Lewis recreated the natural setting of the French Pyrenees in specifics of flora and landscape that give pleasure to the botanists among us. The eye and gift of the imagist poet created disciplined, elegant descriptions: "Across the valley and on the higher slopes, the beech and oak woods were tinged with gold and russet, and higher still the blue haze seemed to be gathering, like threads of smoke. Leaf, earth, and wine in the still sunlight gave forth the odors of their substance; the air was full of autumn fragrance."

With an historian's skill Lewis brought to life the Medieval culture of 16th Century France. In a most unassuming way — which was her consistent style — she recreated authentically the ancient culture of the rural mountain countryside, full of grace, beauty, and severity. Writing of her poetry, Turner Cassity said, "Her originality is in the perceptions themselves." That could be said as well of her prose. Her genius lay in permitting reality to emerge upon us through the astuteness of her perceptions captured in language that in its poetic brevity excels, it seems to me, Hemingway's best writing.

In searching for a working aesthetic to understand what Lewis achieved so masterfully, I offer Momaday's delineation of the four Kiawa ideals of a Native American hero: courage, fortitude, generosity, and virtue. These ancient principles carry Bertrande with grace through the novel to the Ibsenesque *denouement* that seals her fate in a shroud of mystery: it is the human gift to see; it is the human onus to have our sight clouded "as through a glass darkly."

Momaday holds that there is but "one story in all the world." Our heroes and heroines wrestle with overwhelming forces in subdued light. And when all is said and done, no one quite understands — for regarding matters of the spirit, we deal forever in circumstantial evidence. Aware of this, Janet Lewis gave us Bertande, her personal testimony to that truth.

Robert Cotner
Editor

Well, Well, Welles — Look What We've Found!

By Dan Crawford

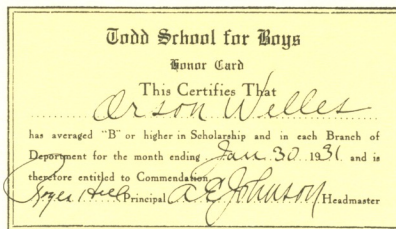
The Newberry Library Book Fair gets a lot of books that are, frankly, all used up. They're welded solid by mold, deprived of their covers, or thoroughly decorated with seven shades of highlighting plus ballpoint pen and blue pencil. Most of these go to the recycling bin; no one has a use for them. (Though we've been tempted to send some of the highlighted texts to the Museum of Contemporary Art.)

This was such a book. Not that it was particularly nasty. It was simply a cheap reprint on yellowed paper of a fairly common book — H.G. Wells' *Outline of History*. The previous owner had underlined throughout, and made notes in the margin. The notes were tidy, but combined with the aging paper and general wear of the book, they made it "bin-worthy."

But we can't throw a book away without a quick flip of the pages. A bookmark will occasionally turn up that has more value than the book itself. We've turned up Canadian currency, aging bus transfers, ration stamps, and a wallet photo of Adolph that belonged to a member of the Nuremberg Police Force. This book did

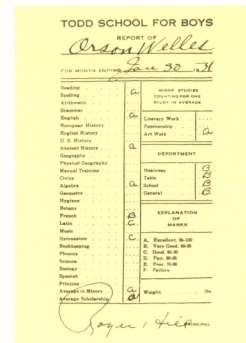
have a couple of stiff cards tucked into the back, one a report card, and the other a card stating that the recipient had been named to this term's Dean's List.

Outside of the fact that his underlining of H.G. Wells seemed to have had good results (An "A" in everything but his gym class: another one of us bookish chaps who never mastered the jump shot), this was of very little real interest. But on the off chance that we could find a library or museum that needed report cards from



the 1930s, we removed the two notices from the Todd School for Boys, and headed with the book for the recycling bin.

The lid of the bin was open before anybody chanced to look at the *NAME* on the report card. Flipping to the front of the volume, it was obvious from the signature that not just the report card but



Orson Welles

the book itself had been the property of one Orson Welles.

A little research was necessary for verification, but only one boy named Orson Welles attended the Todd School for Boys. He grew up to make a movie about a chap named "Kane," and include a few reflections about not only the Todd School for Boys but the dean who had signed his report card. Book and cards alike were bought up by the Lilly Library to add to the collection of Orson Welles papers.

The moral of this tale should be obvious: Always look at a book twice before you get rid of it. (Unless you are giving it to the Newberry Library Book Fair.)

Chronology of Books

By Janet Lewis
(1899-1998)

- The Indians in the Woods* (poetry), 1922.
- The Friendly Adventures of Ollie Ostrich* (children's), 1923.
- The Wheel in Midsummer* (poetry), 1927.
- The Invasion* (narrative), 1932 and 1999.
- The Wife of Martin Guerre* (novel), 1941.
- Against a Darkening Sky* (novel), 1943.
- The Earth-Bound* (poetry), 1946.
- Good-Bye, Son and Other Stories*, 1946.
- The Trial of Soren Qvist* (novel), 1947.
- Poems, 1924-1944*, 1950.
- The Wife of Martin Guerre* (libretto), 1958.
- The Ghost of Monsieur Scarron* (novel), 1959.
- Keiko's Bubble* (children's), 1961.
- The Last of the Mohicans* (libretto), 1976.
- Birthday of the Infanta* (libretto), 1977.
- The Ancient Ones* (poetry), 1979.
- Poems Old and New, 1918-1978*, 1981.
- The Dear Past* (poetry), 1994.

Edwin Herbert Lewis Recalled

God or fate or whatever divinity that shapes our ends must have seen to it that I landed in a class in English taught by Edwin Herbert Lewis. He looked incredibly like William Shakespeare, was a purist in the use of words, and loved and respected them the way an artist loves his colors or a sculpture his clay. Dr. Lewis was also the rarest of aristocrats of education, a born teacher. He wrote books (not unforgettable, alas), and he was able to communicate the sheer life-giving joy of writing, a bliss that to some authors I have known is what dope addicts seem to get out of their "trips." I remember a class discussion we had about Bacon's idea of the summum bonum in life and how strangely few in Dr. Lewis's class felt it was riches.

From Fanny Butcher, *Many Lives – One Love* (1972), p. 20.

Chronology of Books

By Yvor Winters
(1900-1968)

- The Immobile Wind* (poetry), 1921.
- The Magpie's Shadow* (poetry), 1922.
- Notes on the Mechanics of the Poetic Image: The Testament of a Stone*, 1924.
- The Bare Hills* (poetry), 1927.
- The Proof* (poetry), 1930.
- The Journey* (poetry), 1931.
- Before Disaster* (poetry), 1934.
- The Case of David Lamson: A Summary*, 1934.
- Primitivism and Decadence* (criticism), 1937.
- Maule's Curse* (criticism), 1938.
- Poems*, 1940.
- The Giant Weapon* (poetry), 1943.
- Anatomy of Nonsense* (criticism), 1943.
- Edwin Arlington Robinson* (critical biography), 1946.
- In Defense of Reason* (criticism), 1947.
- Collected Poems*, 1952 and 1960.
- The Function of Criticism: Problems and Exercises*, 1957.
- Forms of Discovery* (criticism), 1967.

Janet Lewis

(Continued from Page One)

where the mailbox still read "A. Yvors Winters" even though Arthur had died in 1968. A couple of years before my meeting with Janet, Ione had described to me her 30-year friendship with Janet and Janet's continuing participation in literature and the life of the mind. Ione spent a couple of weekends a month at Janet's home. They enjoyed conversing and reading to one another. Ione prepared meals for Janet and assisted her in other ways, especially as she moved into her 90s.

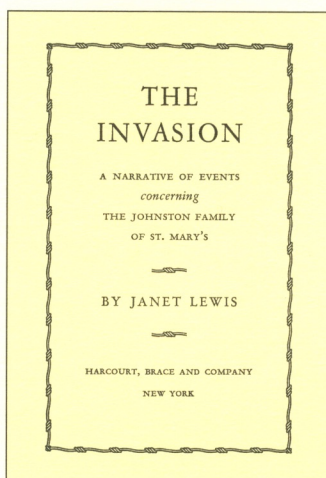
My *Oxford Companion to American Literature* (1965), said Janet's fiction is "marked by a pure, quiet style." I found that pure and quiet style marked her personality as well. A slender woman, she carried her 99 years well. She recalled her days in Chicago with obvious pleasure. Her father had been a link for her to many important persons. He was a close friend of Harriet Monroe, and Janet's association with *Poetry* came as a result of that friendship. She met, as well, Rabindranath Tagore when he came to visit her father, who was a member of the Hindu Society. Her father and mother were Seventh-Day Baptists, she explained, and her uncle wrote the well known Baptist baptismal hymn, "Shall We Gather at the River," which her family used to sing together.

Janet remembered with a smile Harriet Moody, widow of William Vaughn Moody, as a "wonderfully generous" person, who took impoverished friends into her home. She once met in Chicago Elinor Frost, Robert's wife, and she told of Carl Sandburg's going on a picnic with her family. And of course her father was a close friend of Jane Addams, and Janet came to know her and her work at Hull House well.

In 1934, the Winters moved into the home in which Janet still lived when I met her. The home was a single-story edifice, typical of what one would expect a modestly paid college professor might live in. The living room, into which we entered upon arrival, was the family library. Two walls were floor-to-ceiling bookshelves filled with Janet's and Arthur's personal books. Janet and I sat on couches in the living room facing each other. Ione, who had read all of Janet's poetry and fiction, provided commentary and important

coherence for our conversation about Janet's literary works and her life. Ione had become a sort of auxiliary memory for Janet.

Janet talked of her family's early settlement in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and her keen interest in the Indian lore during the years of settlement.



Title page, first edition of *The Invasion*, (Courtesy of the Newberry Library)

Her first book, *The Invasion* (1932), is a narrative of those years and the events that surrounded Michilimackinac Island. Like the Hemingway family, Janet's had a summer home up in Michigan — on an island in the St. Mary's River — and she returned there as a young person each summer and developed an understanding of the wholeness of its natural setting and the people who first settled it. Many of her short stories recreate the wholeness she found. She was delighted that Michigan State University Press will reissue her 1932 book in the next few months.

Ione mentioned Janet's interest in "famous cases of circumstantial evidence." Janet told of Arthur's getting her into certain Medieval, and later, European legal histories that permitted her to use her personal knowledge of the French countryside and her extraordinary storytelling and character-developing gifts as a novelist in her second novel, *The Wife of Martin Guerre* (1941) (see page 2). Two subsequent novels, *The Trial of Soren Qvist* (1947) and *The Ghost of Monsieur Scarrom* (1959) complete her trilogy around this motif.

Ione spoke of Janet's association with the opera, and Janet then explained her

writing the libretto of an operatic adaptation in 1956 of *The Wife of Martin Guerre* in collaboration with William Bergsma. Her success in this genre led her to write, with Alva Henderson, the libretto for the 1976 opera, *The Last of the Mohicans*. Henderson said of her work with Janet, "It was the most fun in the world to make an opera together. She treated everybody with love." Janet wrote the libretti for five operas, all told.

Janet Lewis, I discovered, was first and foremost wife, mother, and friend. She spoke of her children, Joanna Thompson, who lives in Wisconsin, and Daniel, who lives in California. She explained in detail Arthur's and her interest in raising goats and Airedale dogs in the backyard of their home. And I witnessed the loving manner with which she enveloped her friend Ione. I was pleased to become included in her circle of friendship as we visited the morning away. Ione had read to her several years ago the collection of my

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A Winters' Memory

By Ione Thornton Strum

When Janet and Arthur Winters first moved to Palo Alto in the 1920s, Arthur was busy teaching and working on his doctorate, and she was recuperating from tuberculosis. She needed hours of bedrest every day. For all his intellectual domination in their lives, Arthur proved his devotion to Janet and her work early on, as he arose in the morning to prepare meals and type stories Janet would send off to publishers. As she developed enough strength, she bore two children. Much of what she earned from her writing, she invested in people to watch the children and keep house so that she was assured a quiet corner in which to write.

Arthur liked to entertain close friends, to cook, and to tend the garden and care for their little menagerie of goats and Airdales. But Janet was more gregarious and relished faculty gatherings. She liked to roam the hills — she even rode horseback in her late 50s — but when she took the children to the Sierras, Arthur stayed home. He had visited her beloved Michigan only once and didn't enjoy it. Yet that setting was the locus of her soul!

Yvor Winters

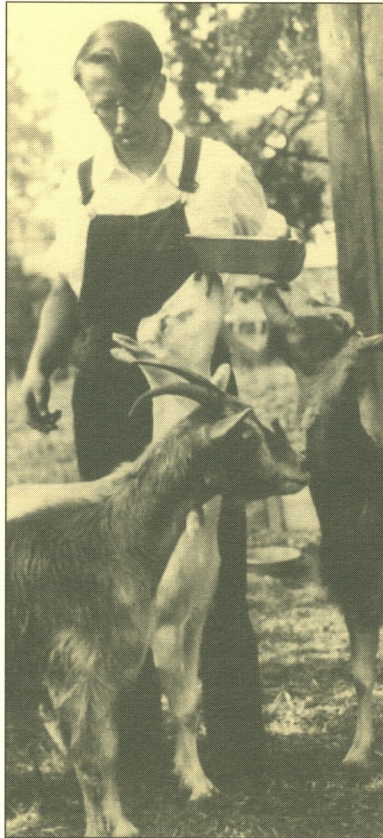
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it seriously and heaped his considerable reservoir of invective on those who wrote and criticized poetry in a way that he considered destructive. And he considered many poets and their devotees to be destructive, among them some of the best-known and most revered in the canon of English and American poetry.

As a classroom teacher, he was not dynamic nor even friendly. He seemed to be always saddened and distressed by the decay of standards of excellence in poetry as well as in the general culture. Standing at a podium in front of his class, he commanded almost rapt attention and with his vast knowledge and by his mesmerizing reading from the texts. He read many poems aloud in a kind of morbid, suppressed chant and freely dispensed his opinions about what was fine and what was coarse in them. From his readings I came away with some important gifts: his distinction between meter and rhythm, his insistence on the audible reading of poetry in a way that lets the listener feel the interplay between style and substance, his extolling of little-known poets as well as prose writers, and his own exemplary prose style, which I still enjoy reading.

Winters seemed to have anticipated the invasion of the Academy by the deconstructionists and fought that trend in everything he said and wrote. I especially remember his warning to a class of incipient college teachers that "any of you here who believes that the excellence of a work of literature is a matter of personal opinion will have a difficult time convincing your future students that they would be better rewarded for reading *Hamlet* than Mickey Mouse."

But when Winters made his absolute pronouncements on the excellence or deficiency of a work of literature, he would invariably support his assertion with a rational explication. And his praise of an individual poem was not a *carte blanche* endorsement of the poet's other works. He considered Wallace Stevens one of the finest poets of the 20th Century but lamented that his later works were corrupted by his hedonism. Here is what he says about Stevens' "Sunday Morning": "Whatever



Yvor Winters feeding his goats in the goat-yard of the Los Altos home (from the Winters' family collection).

the defects of the hedonistic theme, and with the possible but by no means certain exception of a few short poems by Stevens and of two or three poems by A.E. Robinson, 'Sunday Morning' is probably the greatest American poem of the 20th Century..."

Among Winters' contemporaries, the two undisputed arbiters of English poetic theory and practice were Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Although he read many of their works aloud in class and had good things to say about some of their individual poems, his overall assessment of both poets was that they had been corrupted by the pernicious legacy of romanticism and had a baneful influence on younger poets as well as on society and culture. His main objection to their works is synthesized in his most comprehensive collection of critical essays, *In Defense of Reason*.

Winters' main criteria of excellence in a poem is that it make sense, and that a work say something understandable about the human condition. His criticism was impressive not only because he fearlessly

published his opinions in scholarly publications, but also because he was a personal friend or acquaintance of many of the poets and critics whose writings he severely criticized, most notably Hart Crane.

He regularly championed poems and poets, neglected by almost everyone else, like Barnabe Googe, Thomas Vaux, Jones Very, Edward Taylor, and Frederick Tuckerman. He introduced us to the poems of these little-known poets as though their poems were gold nuggets he had panned in a stream trickling behind his Los Altos home. I remember one day in class, he prefaced a reading of a poem by Tuckerman, "The Cricket," with the pronouncement that it was one of the finest poems written in 19th Century America.

As one might expect, works by Tuckerman are not easy to find. I recently located one, *The Complete Poems of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman*, published by Tichnor and Fields, Boston, in 1865, listed on the Brick Row Book Shop web page for \$300. I own another, published by Oxford University Press, 1965. The latter was edited by N. Scott Momaday, with a critical forward by Winters. Momaday was one of Winters' proteges and has since become a well-known poet and novelist in his own right. He essentially created the Native American literary renaissance in 1969, winning the Pulitzer Prize for fiction with *House Made of Dawn*. Although I was not a personal friend of Momaday, I remember him as the brightest star in Winters' 17th Century English Literature seminar.

Two of Winters' essays are of particular note as an introduction to the body of his criticism. In his essay on Emily Dickinson, he has culled through the entire corpus of her poetry, singled out the best poems, and made some fine discriminations among them. And his essays on the English lyric of the 16th Century, which appeared in *Poetry* in the late 1930s, was really a revolutionary way of viewing that period of English poetry.

Winters' own body of poetry is neither as extensive nor as influential as his works of criticism. But many of his poems are minor gems, and they are especially interesting when read with his poetic theory as a

(See YVOR WINTERS, Page Six)

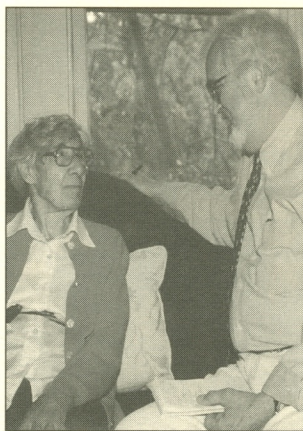
Janet Lewis

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poems, which I had read at a Caxton luncheon in 1995, and Janet spoke of them with fondness. She found it interesting that one of her novels was called *Against a Darkening Sky* (1943), and the historical novel on which I'm working is to be called *Against a Lonesome Sky*.

The complete friend, Ione had packed lunches for the three of us. "Why don't you show Bob Arthur's study while I set the table?" Ione asked. Janet and I walked out the back door and across what was once the goat-yard to an outbuilding surrounded by shrubs and trees and on the edge of a little orchard, possibly the last remaining one in Los Altos. Within, the walls of the study were lined with shelves filled with books — her husband's, her father's, and her grandfather's. A Royal typewriter sat in place upon a central desk as if its owner might return at any time to begin work on some important tome the literary world is eagerly awaiting. Inexpensively framed photos of Baudelaire, Robert Bridges, Thomas Hardy, and Verlaine were tacked up around the room. For more than 30 years, Janet had preserved this space as it was the day her husband died. I realized as I stood at her side that this small room was sacred to her. This was a living shrine to her late husband, whom she loved with love undiminished. I realized further that this stark room represented the High Sierras of the intellect from which critic Yvor Winters observed the American literary landscape. From here emanated the bare-knuckled judgments on American poetry and poets that offended many and drew so many others to him. This space was his domain. Here Arthur became Yvor, one of our literature's greatest intellectual warriors.

I followed Janet back across the goat-yard to the kitchen door of their home and to the lunches that Ione had prepared. The three of us sat at the small table in the center of the kitchen, and we partook as the Winters must have done for decades. We talked of my return to Los Altos in a year and another visit with Janet. She said that when the Lewis/Winters issue of the *Caxtonian* is printed, it would be the first time she and her husband were featured in a publication as equals — and she was very pleased about



Janet Lewis in her 99th year being interviewed by Caxtonian editor Robert Cotner, May 1, 1998 (photo by Ione Strum now in Caxton Club Archives).

that. When we departed, she walked us down the front path to the street and bade us goodbye with a wave and a smile as we headed back to Carmel.

Shortly after my visit, Larry McMurtry wrote a splendid essay, "The Return of Janet Lewis" in *The New York Review of Books* (June 11). I continued to communicate with Ione regularly by phone and mail, and she sent me signed copies of Janet's poetry, which I discovered, as McMurtry said, has a "wingspan all but incredible, and made the more so by the clarity and authority of a voice she has sustained for so long: a voice that is considered, lucid, spare, and tough on itself in a high Midwestern way." And Ione sent me the marvelous family photographs used in this issue of the *Caxtonian*, which Janet had provided at my request.

On December 2, Ione called with tears in her voice to tell me Janet had died the previous day. I was saddened by the loss of this new friend and the loss of a fine American voice that had sung so gently in every decade of this century since the first — one of the most remarkable, sustained literary performances in our history.

The New York Times obituary of Janet ran four columns on December 5 and included two of Janet's poems. The *Times* called Janet "Poet of Spirit and Keeper of the Hearth." She was both. She was, as well, a person of independence, which emanated from an intellectual strength and emotional self confidence that grew in her years as wife and colleague of Arthur. She became indeed one of Chicago's humane bequests to the nation's heritage.

Yvor Winters

(Continued from Page Five)

prompt. The several editions of his poems are becoming collectors items. My recent surfing of the <bookfinder.com/search/> turned up 20 titles of Winters' poetry with impressive price tags. The first edition of his poems, published by The Gyroscope Press in 1940, for example, can be ordered from Waiting for Godot Books for \$275.

Returning to read the bulk of Winters' criticism in preparation for this memoir, I have had ambivalent feelings about his legacy, as well as his opinions about individual writers and their works. On one hand I renew my respect for his knowledge, his courage, and his brilliant exegesis of individual poems. But I sometimes wince at his stridency and his tendency to attribute bad faith to those he deems to be deficient thinkers. His reputation and influence, I believe, will continue to grow, while that of some of his better known adversaries will fade. But had he a few more dollops of charm in his style and a bit more tolerance toward those of a different persuasion, his legacy would have been even greater. Had he made a distinction between relativism and collectivism; had he accepted the inevitability that values can intractably clash without the necessity of some being true and other false, he would have been, in my opinion, among the top rank of literary and cultural leaders of the 20th Century.

A Poet's Gift

By Paul F. Gehl

The Newberry Library

Early in 1991 I had a call from Bill Kelly, proprietor of the Brighton Press, saying that Janet Lewis wanted to donate a copy of the Brighton volume of her poems to the Newberry Library. This gift was in recollection of the library's interest in printing and given as a gift to the people of Chicago, her native city. *Janet and DeLoss, Poems and Pictures* has become a favorite to show to visitors. Artist DeLoss McGraw reacts in vibrant woodcuts directly to the metaphors in Lewis' gem-like verse. He designed a 22" by 8" book "because Janet is tall and slender." Caxtonians are invited to come see this book in the Wing Collection any time. It was, after all, a gift to you!

Book World Loses a Friend: Herb Furse, Bookman and Caxtonian

By Frank J. Piehl

Caxtonians will miss a dear friend, Herbert L. Furse, who died January 30, at the age of 84. Born in Toronto, he moved to Vermont at age nine and later attended Harvard, graduating in 1938 with majors in history and economics. He started working for Youngstown Sheet and Tube in Roxbury, Mass. After a 3½ year tour of duty in World War II as an officer on U. S. Navy minesweepers, he returned to Youngstown, where he advanced to Assistant Vice-President of Commercial Sales for the Midwest.

Herbert began reading the works of Charles Dickens in secondary school and was enamored by *The Pickwick Papers* at an early age. During his business travels in later life, he haunted the antiquarian bookstores to satisfy his growing passion for the works of the English novelist. Eventually he acquired a collection of over 700 books by and about Dickens. And he read them all. After retirement, he began a second career as a book dealer, his bibliophilic interests having broadened to include a variety of out-of-print and rare books. He was a member of the Midwest Bookhunters.

Herbert L. Furse joined The Caxton Club in 1972 and served on the Council twice (1978-1980 and 1982-1984). He spoke at a dinner meeting on October 21, 1981, on "Charles Dickens and the Women in His Life," and at a Friday luncheon on November 1, 1991, on "The Works and Memorabilia of Charles Dickens." Fuzzy, as he was nicknamed by his friends, attended Caxton Club dinner meetings frequently. He will be remembered with fondness as a delightful dinner companion and an astute bibliophile by his many friends in The Caxton Club, who extend their sympathy to his widow, Mary Louise, and to the members of his family.



Herbert J. Furse, 1915-1999

The Marriage

By Yvor Winters

*Incarnate for our marriage you appeared,
Flesh living in the spirit and endeared
By minor graces and slow sensual change.
Through every nerve we made our spirits
range.*

*We fed our minds on every mortal thing:
The lacy fronds of carrots in the spring,
Their flesh sweet on the tongue, the salty
wine*

*From bitter grapes, which gathered
through the vine*

*The mineral drouth of autumn
concentrate,*

*Wild spring in dream escaping, the debate
Of flesh and spirit on those vernal nights,
Its resolution in naive delights,*

*The young kids bleating softly in the rain
All this to pass, not to return again.*

*And when I found your flesh did not
resist,*

*It was the living spirit that I kissed,
It was the spirit's change in which I lay:
Thus, mind in mind we waited for the day.
When flesh shall fall away, and, falling,
stand*

Wrinkling with shadow over face and hand,



Janet Lewis and Yvor Winters in the mountains near Pasadena in the early 1920s (from the Winters' family collection).

*Still I shall meet you on the verge of dust
And know you as a faithful vestige must.
And, in commemoration of our lust,
May our heirs seal us in a single urn,
A single spirit never to return.*

From *Collected Poems* (1960), p. 62.

Words for a Song

By Janet Lewis

*Love is a constant
Like the speed of light,
Unbroken spectrum
Of the purest white,
Rainbow unbroken
In the beam of light.*

*Love is an anguish
That, gathering at the root,
Rises in sap along the rugged branch,
Pulsing in sunlight,
To lose itself in fruit,
To break in fragrance
Above the sunny ground,
Like wine in autumn,
Like insect wings unbound,
Like wings of gauze and rainbow.*

*Or so I dreamed.
Or so I found.*

From *Poems Old and New, 1918-1978* (1981), p. 109.

with good wishes

Janet Lewis

Book Marks

Luncheon Programs

Your Special Luncheon Invitation. . .

Date: March 12, 1999

Place: Mid-Day Club

Speaker: Edward W. Rosenheim

Our own Ned Rosenheim will honor us with a presentation — he was snowed-in in January and didn't make the luncheon. He will talk on "Reflections on Bad Poetry." In his book, *What Happens in Literature* (1960), Ned defined for a generation the essentials of traditional poetry. In that book he wrote, "At its best, modern verse does not challenge our ingenuity or erudition, but our modernity. Its special characteristics are largely the products of our own age and world. And at its heart is the ageless power of all poetry — to appeal to the eternal human gifts of sympathy, wisdom, and imagination."

His presentation at the Caxton luncheon may well describe bad poetry as the "ageless powers of verbosity of certain eminent and many, many not-so-eminent scribes — the appeal to the eternal attraction of wordiness in which the gift of language was either asleep or non-existent and thus is created a fascinating world in which didacticism, distraction, and tiring rhetoric, upon occasion humorous, is created for the pleasure of a very few." This adaptation by the editor of Ned's book comes fairly close to the spirit in which one of our wittiest and most popular Caxton members will approach this interesting and timely subject. In his presentation, he will discuss works by some of our best-known poets — Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Poe. And he will share "bad poetry by bad poets," as well. Join your friends for a thoroughly enjoyable luncheon with Ned Rosenheim.

Edward Quattrocchi
Leonard Freedman
Co-Chairs

All luncheon and dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of the First National Bank of Chicago, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon and discussion, 12:30 p.m. Dinner meetings begin with spirits at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., lecture at 7 p.m. The First National Bank of Chicago's parking garage, 40S. Clark Street, offers a special parking rate after 5 p.m. to guests of the Mid-Day Club. When you leave, please tell the parking attendant you were at the Mid-Day Club, and your parking fee will be \$6. Members planning to attend luncheons or dinners must make advance reservations by phoning the Caxton number, 312/255-3710. Luncheon for members and guests, \$20. Dinner, for members and guests, \$35.

Dinner Programs

Your Special Dinner Invitation. . .

Date: March 17, 1999

Place: Mid-Day Club

Speaker: Robert K. O'Neill

"Begorra, ov corse it's agreea' day. Th' riv'r turns green. Th' beer's green 'n they's a bif parad' that striches fer blocks, led by the' Mayer Hi'self 'n Irishmun — ever'uns happy, they's dressed 'n green — an' they's lots ta eat an' drink!" Such is March 17, our dedicated St. Patrick's Day.

Robert K. O'Neill, himself an Irishman, currently is Director of the John J. Burns Library at Boston College, traditionally linked to the Irish and distinguished by its Irish collections, particularly those of W. B. Yeats and Samuel Beckett.

O'Neill's credentials include Bachelor's and Master's degrees in history from Merrimack College and the University of Arizona, followed by a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and another Master's in Library Science.

His numerous publications include *English Language Dictionaries, 1604-1900*, *Ulster Libraries*, as well as many articles on historical, Irish, and library topics such as "Preserving Ireland's Cultural Heritage" (1966) written for *Biblio* magazine.

But is this for real? — a librarian involved with the FBI and a "sting" operation — definitely not the usual image. Come to our March 17 meeting and hear Dr. O'Neill speak on "Sting! The Irish Stones Caper at Boston College."

C. Fred Kittle
Vice President and
Program Chair

Nominating Committee Named

Caxton President Karen Skubish has appointed the following members to serve on the Nominating Committee to select club officers and Council members for the Class of 2002. The members are Robert Karrow, chair, Evelyn Lampe, and Charles Miner. The committee will meet during the week of March 15 to consider candidates. Members are asked to recommend names of prospective members to the committee sometime before their meeting.