



The Wallace Stevens Society

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The Wallace Stevens Journal

Published for The Wallace Stevens Society by The Johns Hopkins University Press

October 2020

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Dear Fellow Stevensians,

We hope that this newsletter finds you safe and well. Though the past eight months have thrown our lives into upheaval, we have several exciting items to share with you about upcoming events in the Stevens world, as well as new publications and resources.

Recent events: Unfortunately, the Stevens Society panel slated for the American Literature Association in May 2020 was canceled due to COVID-19. The panel, organized by Hannah Simpson, would have considered Stevens's drama, his use of speech rhetoric, and the role of walking as a performative art in his poetry, with presentations by Kathryn Mudgett, Wanyu Lin, and Ian Tan. We hope to offer the panel at the next ALA conference.

Upcoming Events: While many events have been canceled or postponed because of the pandemic, two will go forward virtually.

First, the Wallace Stevens Birthday Bash, organized by the Friends & Enemies of Wallace Stevens, will be held via Zoom on Saturday, November 7, at 3PM. The event will include a short video performance titled "The Blackbird" by puppeteer Blair Thomas, followed by four presentations by Alfred Corn, Glen MacLeod, Karim Ahmed and Dennis Barone. For further information contact Jim Finnegan, JforJames@aol.com.

Second, the Society is sponsoring a panel at the next Modern Language Association convention (January 2021) on Stevens and popular culture. The organizer and chair is Stephanie Burt, and the presentations will include Kamran Javadizadeh on "Stevens's Banjos," Zachary Tavlin on "Operatic Stevens," and Rachel Trousdale on "Stevens's Dirty Jokes." We hope you will join us for what promises to be a stimulating discussion.

Awards: We are pleased to announce that Bart Eeckhout won the 2019 John N. Serio Award for his essay, "'In, On, or About the Words': The Latent Music of Stevens's Poetry," which first appeared in *The Wallace Stevens Journal* in Fall 2019. The committee members—Glen MacLeod, Edward Ragg and Lee Jenkins—describe the article as "an ambitious and original contribution to Stevens studies, demonstrating Eeckhout's exceptional competence in both poetry and music. It is organized as a series of case studies—presented as musical movements—

comparing four Stevens poems with particular works by Richard Strauss, Mahler, Hindemith, and Debussy. Eeckhout's detailed characterization of each of these composers is impressive and his critical observations about their relations to Stevens's poetry are consistently perceptive. He shows a clear awareness of the difficulties involved in discussing such interart parallels but treats them with imaginative flair and a sense of humor, bolstering his argument with careful, wide-ranging scholarship." Congratulations, Bart!

Publications: This year has seen the publication of a new monograph on Stevens by Cary Wolfe, titled *Ecological Poetics; or, Wallace Stevens's Birds* (University of Chicago Press). The press describes the book as follows: "The poems of Wallace Stevens teem with birds: grackles, warblers, doves, swans, nightingales, owls, peacocks, and one famous blackbird who summons thirteen ways of looking. What do Stevens's evocations of birds, and his poems more generally, tell us about the relationship between human and nonhuman? Stevens, Wolfe argues, is an ecological poet in the sense that his places, worlds, and environments are co-created by the life forms that inhabit them." We encourage you to check out this notable contribution to Stevens studies.

New Resources: A video recording of "Contemporary Poets on Wallace Stevens," a roundtable discussion at the 2020 MLA convention, is now available on the University of Pennsylvania website (https://media.sas.upenn.edu/app/public/watch.php?file_id=226751). The chair was Al Filreis and the speakers were Kate Colby, Mónica de la Torre, Aldon Lynn Nielsen, and Tyrone Williams. In addition, the panel's conversation about "The Poem That Took the Place of a Mountain" can also be found as a podcast on the *Jacket 2* website (<http://jacket2.org/podcasts/word-word-poemtalk-152>), where it is listed as PoemTalk episode #152.

We are also happy to announce that an updated and improved version of the concordance is now live on the Stevens Society website (<http://www.wallacestevens.com/concordance/>). We hope that you will find this tool useful in your research.

Call for Help: As you can see, the Stevens world is so active that it is quite possible we have overlooked some relevant news items. In the future, if you know of any Stevens-related events or publications that might otherwise escape our attention, please alert our secretary, Florian Gargaillo, at gargaillof@apsu.edu. We greatly appreciate your help.

In closing, the officers of the Wallace Stevens Society would like to thank you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact me at lisa.goldfarb@nyu.edu with ideas, responses, and reflections.

We look forward to being in touch with you again soon.

Best,



Lisa Goldfarb
President