



# *The Wallace Stevens Society*

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## *The Wallace Stevens Journal*

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Dear Fellow Stevensians,

With fall on the horizon, we wished to note recent events in the Stevens world and make some announcements about future meetings and changes within the Society.

**John Serio Award:** The Society is pleased to announce that Hannah Simpson is the recipient of the John Serio Award for the best article published in *The Wallace Stevens Journal* in 2022, for “Stevens and the Necessity of Distance: International Influence and the Theater Auditorium.” The awards committee, chaired by Glen MacLeod, describes the essay as “a superb examination of Stevens’s brief foray into playwriting in 1916-17. Simpson places this episode authoritatively in the broad contexts of world literature and theater history, convincingly analyzing its importance to Stevens’s poetic development. The essay is sharply focused, well argued, deeply informed, and well documented—a significant contribution to Stevens scholarship.” Congratulations, Hannah!

**Recent events:** The Society sponsored a panel celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Harmonium*’s publication at the 2023 American Literature Association conference in Boston on May 26. Charles Altieri delivered a talk on what makes *Harmonium* a “complexly unified volume.” Kathryn Mudgett considered the parallels between Stevens’s early war poetry and the war poems of contemporary Ukrainian writers. Jon Hoel explored the intersection of Stevens’s landscape poems with the concept of the “necropastoral.” Finally, Jonathan Ivry traced the history of Stevens’s quotations of, and allusions to, the theologian Benjamin Jowett. Florian Gargaillo served as chair.

**Future Events:** The Society will also sponsor a panel, chaired by Alexandra J. Gold, on Stevens and contemporary poetry at the Modern Language Association annual convention, which will take place in Philadelphia on January 4-7, 2024. Andrew Epstein will give a talk on Stevens and the contemporary “philosophy poem.” Ian Tan will consider Stevens’s influence on A.R. Ammons and Charles Wright. Jon Hoel will trace Stevens’s concept of causality as it manifests in Mary Ruefle and Jorie Graham. Michael Pontacoloni will analyze Jay Hopler’s use of Stevensian humor. Noa Saunders will examine the influence of Stevens’s approach to cognition in Bernadette Meyer. We hope you will be able to join us for what promises to be a wide-ranging discussion!

**Publications:** This month saw the publication of *Wallace Stevens in Theory*, a collection of essays edited by Thomas Gould and Ian Tan, from Liverpool University Press. The book is described by the publisher as follows: “The modernist poetry of Wallace Stevens is replete with moments of theorizing. Stevens regarded poetry as an abstract medium through which to think about and theorize not only philosophical concepts like metaphor and reality, but also a unifying thesis about the nature of poetry itself. At the same time, literary theorists and philosophers have often turned to Stevens as a canonical reference point and influence. In the centenary year of Wallace Stevens's first collection *Harmonium* (1923), this collection asks what it means to theorize with Stevens today. Through a range of critical and theoretical perspectives, this book seeks to describe the myriad kinds of thinking sponsored by Stevens's poetry and explores how contemporary literary theory might be invigorated through readings of Stevens.” Contributors include Charles Altieri, Bart Eeckhout, Marta Figlerowicz, Thomas Gould, Kelly MacPhail, Ariane Mildenberg, Kathryn Mudgett, Wit Pietrzak, Stephen Sicari, Johanna Skibsrud, Lisa M. Steinman, Ian Tan, Zachary Tavlin, Rachel Trousdale, and Krzysztof Ziarek.

**Passing of Robert Buttel:** The Society notes with sadness the passing of Robert Buttel at the age of 99 in Providence, RI. Buttel was a major Stevens scholar, author of the ground-breaking *The Making of Harmonium* (1967) and co-editor with Frank Doggett of the essay collection *Wallace Stevens: A Celebration* (1980). He taught at Temple University in Philadelphia. The Fall 2023 issue of the *Wallace Stevens Journal* will include a celebration of his life and work. The Society would like to express profound condolences to his family.

**Changes to Society:** After many years of service, Bart Eeckhout, Glen MacLeod and I will be stepping down from our respective roles as Editor of the Journal, Vice-President and President of the Society in January 2024. Andrew Osborn will be taking over as Editor; Florian Gargaillo will now serve as President, with Juliette Utard serving as Vice-President; Christopher Spaide will be joining as Secretary; and George Burns will continue in his current role as Treasurer. Bart, Glen, and I will remain on the Editorial Board of the *Journal*. Andrew Osborn generously offered the following description to introduce himself to the Society:

I grew up in Concord, Massachusetts, then near Augusta, Maine, and served as Poetry Editor of *The Harvard Advocate* in college, where I studied poetry with Seamus Heaney and Lucie Brock-Broido. I then attended the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where my thesis project was directed by Denis Johnson and Jorie Graham. I wrote my doctoral dissertation on "The Use of Difficulty in Twentieth-Century American Poetry" at UT-Austin under the direction of Kurt Heinzelman. A version of my chapter on "the Uses of Unclarity" in Wittgenstein and Stevens was published in *WSJ* 28.1 (Fall 2004). My essay "Stevens's Soil: Intelligence, Conceptual Affordances, and the Genius Beyond" is forthcoming in this fall's "*Harmonium* at 100" issue.

Having taught at Miami University of Ohio on a Woodrow Wilson postdoc and at Whitman College for four years as a visiting professor, I have been at the University of Dallas since 2007. It's a small Catholic school with a robust core curriculum, so I (enthusiastically) teach works outside my area of ostensible expertise—Homer, Greek drama, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Melville—as well as lyric poetry throughout the centuries. My scholarship focuses on modernist and more recent lyric and the drama of Edward Albee. I'm

writing a monograph provisionally titled *Meaning the Earth: Jorie Graham's Lyric Negotiations*. I direct both the graduate English and doctoral literature programs.

Kari, my wife of 27 years, is a pediatric hospice nurse. She and I have two daughters: Riley, a U of Chicago graduate who works in finance in NYC, and Zoë, a U of Chicago senior who double-majors in East Asian Studies and political science and coaches the nation's top-ranked brief-writing team. When not teaching or writing about poetry or hanging out with family, I like to cycle on my purple road bike.

Additionally, the Society would like to welcome the following members of the newly-created Advisory Board. These members, most of whom will also serve as Associate Editors for the *Journal*, will provide valuable insights as the Society continues to develop conference panels, events, and research projects on Stevens.

David Ben-Merre, Buffalo State College  
 Nikolai Duffy, Manchester Metropolitan University  
 Bart Eeckhout, University of Antwerp  
 Lisa Goldfarb, Gallatin School, New York University  
 Gül Bilge Han, Mälardalen University  
 Glen MacLeod, University of Connecticut  
 Ian Tan, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University  
 Zachary Tavlin, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

**Donations:** The Wallace Stevens Society welcomes donations in support of its work. Please contact George Burns, the Society's Treasurer ([gburns6126@gmail.com](mailto:gburns6126@gmail.com)), if you wish to make a donation.

**Call for Help:** As you can see, the Stevens world continues to be so active that we may have overlooked some relevant news items. In the future, if you know of any events or publications that might escape our attention, please alert our Secretary, Florian Gargaillo, at [gargaillof@apsu.edu](mailto:gargaillof@apsu.edu). We 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](mailto:lisa.goldfarb@nyu.edu) with ideas, responses, and reflections.

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

Best,



Lisa Goldfarb  
 President