



The Wallace Stevens Society

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The Wallace Stevens Journal

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Dear Fellow Stevensians,

With summer on the horizon, I write to reflect on the wonderful events that have taken place in the Stevens world over the past several months, and to make a few exciting announcements about upcoming Society activities.

Celebrating *Harmonium*: Stevens's first collection of poems, *Harmonium* (1923), entered the public domain this year. In celebration, we have created a digital edition for the Society's website: <http://wallacestevens.com/harmonium>. We hope you will take the book's newfound accessibility as an opportunity revisit this landmark volume of American poetry.

Recent events: The past few months have seen a wealth of events for admirers of Stevens's work. In January and February, The Grolier Club in New York City hosted a beautiful exhibition titled "Two American Poets: Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams," from the collection of Alan M. Klein. Among the items in the collection were editions of *Harmonium*, *The Man with the Blue Guitar*, and *Transport to Summer* inscribed by Stevens, as well as correspondence ranging from his college years to the days leading up to his death.

On March 9, the Brentano String Quartet gave a special performance devoted to Stevens at the 92nd St. Y in New York City. The program began with a recording of the poet reading "The Planet on the Table" at the Y. The group then performed a new quartet based on several of Stevens's poems composed by Martin Bresnick. In the second half of the program, the group performed Beethoven's quartet Op. 132, accompanied by a projection of lines from Stevens's poetry.

From January through March, the Art Museum at the University of St. Joseph (West Hartford, Connecticut) presented an exhibition titled "'The Tongue is an Eye': Poetry, the Visual Arts, and Wallace Stevens," by guest curators Dennis Barone and James Finnegan. In honor of Stevens's passion for the visual arts, the show explored the connections between poetry and painting with artworks—selected from the museum's permanent collection by local poets and scholars—intended to capture the spirit of Wallace Stevens's poetry.

Conferences: It has been a very active spring semester for Stevens scholarship. On January 5, the Society sponsored a panel at the Modern Language Association convention on Stevens and lyric theory, chaired by Henry Michael Weinfeld. The

speakers—David Ben-Merre, Paul Harrison Fry, Langdon Hammer, Christopher Spaide, and Zachary Tavlin—led a spirited discussion on how lyric theory can help deepen our understanding of Stevens’s poetry. The Society also sponsored a panel at the American Literature Association conference on May 24 about Stevens’s relation to Ralph Waldo Emerson. The speakers were Kristen Case, Paul Kane, Ben Leubner, and Jesse Zuba. Glen MacLeod served as chair.

We have already lined up a roundtable for the next Modern Language Association convention, which will be held in Seattle from January 9 to 12, 2020. Al Filreis will moderate a discussion among contemporary poets about Stevens. The title of the session is “Five Contemporary Poets on Wallace Stevens: An Open Discussion.” Al will be talking with Kate Colby, Monica de la Torre, Aldon Lynn Neilson, Tyrone Williams, and Daphne Marlatt. The Wallace Stevens Society and Kelly Writers House are co-sponsoring the filming of this conversation, and it will be available on the Wallace Stevens Society website and also through the Kelly Writers House.

Publications: Juliette Utard’s monograph, *Wallace Stevens, une poétique du fini*, appeared from Honoré Champion in November 2018. Juliette describes her project in the following words: “In stark opposition to the accepted definition of modernism as an aesthetics of the incomplete, this study on Wallace Stevens identifies a novel dialectic: a rejection of closure on the one hand, and an affirmation of finitude on the other, which requires a heightened investment in the materiality of the completed book.” Congratulations, Juliette, on this exciting new research!

The Wallace Stevens Journal released a special issue this spring with transcripts of discussions and readings held at the Liguria Study Center in Bogliasco (Italy) in June of 2017. Participants included Charles Altieri, Massimo Bacigalupo, Bart Eeckhout, Lisa Goldfarb, Gül Bilge Han, Daniel Jean, Glen MacLeod, Maureen N. McLane, Rachel Malkin, Edward Ragg, Tony Sharpe, Laura Slatkin, and Juliette Utard.

The upcoming Fall 2019 issue of the *Journal* will be devoted to Stevens and music. It will contain contributions not only by literary critics but also by a musicologist, a performing musician, and composers.

Website: Alongside a digital edition of *Harmonium*, the Society now also hosts an online version of Ronald Sukenick’s *Musing the Obscure: Readings, an Interpretation, and a Guide to the Collected Poetry* (1967) on the “Links and Tools” page, thanks to an agreement with Juliet Nolet, executor of the estate of Ronald Sukenick. We are proud to offer more widespread access to this important work of Stevens scholarship.

Changes: In January, Natalie Gerber stepped down as Secretary-Treasurer of the Wallace Stevens Society. Natalie has worked tirelessly for the Society; her dedication and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. We thank Natalie for her efforts and wish her the best with her future endeavors. We would also like to welcome George Burns, who has generously agreed to assume the position of Treasurer. The duties of Secretary will continue to be held by Florian Gargaillo.

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.

Have a wonderful summer!

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Goldfarb". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.

Lisa Goldfarb
President