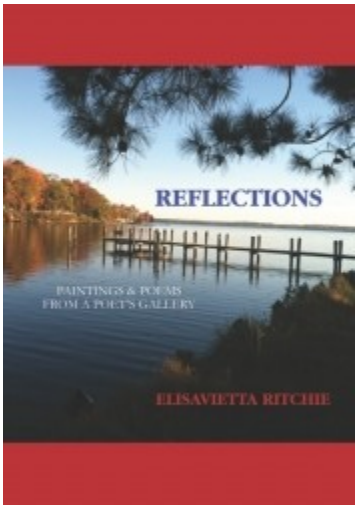
Creative Writing/ Creative Memoirs 14 December 2016, 2-4 p.m. Calvert Library. Bring about 800 words (but have more in reserve in case we have time for more). Meanwhile wherever you are, stay hard at work creating, reworking, reading and with luck publishing—My missives to you all are getting longer and longer but I keep coming across interesting articles and poems to share. And events!

==

Big book fair Saturday December 17, 2016 The Writer' Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, Admission free. Contact 301-654-8664

Reflections, Paintings and Poems from a Poet's Gallery Launched by Poets Choice Publishing and the William Meredith Foundation—first copies at Writer's Center Book Fair 17 December noon-five



This will be the third collection of Elisavietta Ritchie's work Poets Choice has been privileged to publish as a unique offering by the William Meredith Foundation. The foundation is dedicated to continuing the legacy of the former US Poet Laureate through publications and educational programs in the arts.

Washington, DC, November 19, 2016 –(PR.com)– Poets Choice Publishing is proud to announce the publication of Elisavietta Ritchie's third

collection of poems with the press, (previous two collections with the press include: *Babushka's Beads: A Geography of Genes* Poets-Choice Publishers (2016) and *Guy Wires* Poets-Choice Publishers (2015)). This remarkable collection, rich imagination and a talent for metaphors perfectly represent the unique voices the foundation wishes to present to the literary world. Here, a reader sees a poet at the top of her game, and game is the precise word for the often whimsical accounts she gives of the painting on which she reflects.

Poets often employ this symbiotic relationship with the visual arts, a literary device known as ekphraksis used to convey the deeper symbolism of the corporeal art form by means of a separate medium such as poetry. The poet contemplates a work of art and responds with a lifetime of experience and curiosity to imagine the world found in a given painting.

This happy collaboration between artist and poet enhances a reader's understanding of a painting, as well as taking joy in the work from a verbal prospective. These poems are a gift to all of Lisa Ritchie's devoted followers who love how poetry can buoy the human spirit in the hands of such a fierce intelligence and curiosity, as well as new readers unfamiliar with her work or the work of the William Meredith Foundation.

***Reflections* is available at Poets-Choice.com, on Amazon and other major internet outlets. Please visit WilliamMeredithFoundation.org**

==

Reading Makes You Healthier and Happier

There's reading — and then there's reading while you're doing something else! Emergency-room visits from distracted walking are up 35 percent over the past half-decade, and reading and texting on your cellphone while walking down the street accounts for more than 10 percent of pedestrian injuries. Don't get us started on texting and driving. None of that is the kind of reading that makes you feel younger.

But neuromarketing researchers from the University of Sussex's Mindlab found that reading an old-fashioned, open-a-book-and-learn-something text or an escape-to-the-beach novel for even six minutes a day is more relaxing than listening to music, taking a walk or even having a cup of tea.

The study says getting into a good read eases muscle tension, slows your heart rate…keeps your brain sharp, improves sleep, and makes you a more interesting social animal… Traveling the world through the written word opens doors in the mind and in life.

Dr. Mehmet Oz, host of TV's "The Dr. Oz Show," is a professor in the Department of Surgery at Columbia University and directs the Cardiovascular Institute and Complementary Medicine Program at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.
Dr. Mike Roizen is chief medical officer at the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute, an award-winning author, and has been the doctor to eight Nobel Prize winners and more than 100 Fortune 500 CEOs.

Albert Camus is one of my major gods. Here's a recreation of his protagonist by Clint Margrave:

Meursault Gets A Job as an Adjunct English Professor

It doesn't matter if he forgets sometimes
how to speak English,
slips back into French,
because he doesn't say much anyway,
just stares at the class,
while his mind drifts off across
the Mediterranean
to that beach in Algiers,
or the softness of Marie's hair,
or how the ocean breeze
once felt on his skin.
"Aren't you going to pass out the syllabus?"
a student finally asks at the third meeting.
Meursault shrugs.
"It doesn't matter," he says,
"but I could if you'd like."
Another student raises her hand
and wants to know
about his absence policy.
"Absence is the only policy," Meursault says,
before he kicks his feet up
on the desk and reaches
in his blazer pocket
for a cigarette.

==

"The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe."
Gustave Flaubert

ADVICE FROM KIM WINTERNHEIRMER IN *THE MASTERS REVIEW:*

Submission strategies are a tricky thing. Every emerging writer I know discusses submission failures and victories, and it's a topic that pops up in conference panels and workshop often.

Writers talk about submitting because the process itself *is* the road to publication…Success in selling stories rests entirely on that effort. Writers lament and analyze the form rejection they receive after eight long months, and applaud the personalized request for more work. Writers talk about the process because they want to see how others are navigating the labyrinth, and, because silently they wonder: am I tackling submissions the right way?
I am a huge fan of Karen Russell's stories and remember a time I was waiting for her to sign a copy of *St. Lucy's Home For Girls Raised by Wolves*…When I got to the table I asked: "What was your first Big Publication?" Karen replied, "It was *The New Yorker*. That was my first publication." "Ever?" I asked. She smiled and nodded, yes. Then she added: "I got very lucky."

I mention this because most writers—even very successful ones—don't publish their first story in *The New Yorker*. And while every person's path to publishing is different, I think most new writers understand the broad strokes are often the same: land stories in literary magazines, land stories in some *great* literary magazines, land an agent, sell a novel or story collection. So it's hard. *The New Yorker* hasn't gotten back to you. Maybe *we* haven't gotten back to you, and there's that nagging question again: am I tackling submissions the right way?

As an editor who sees and processes a lot of stories, certain submission strategies are apparent. We see multiple stories from the same writer in the same contest (as many as six to ten)…stories from writers with long stretches between submissions, and…submissions from writers only once.

I do feel that the kind of writer you are and the goals you have for your writing dictate your submission strategy. For example, prolific writers can submit multiple new stories to a contest at the same time without compromising quality, while others submit new work intermittently. Some

writers value the long bio, while others value the short and extremely impressive one. Here are a few strategies and issues I see with submissions. (Please note: it is impossible to go through the many varied and personal ways a person can go about submitting because each writer is different, is affected differently by the process, and has different goals for her writing.)

Top-Tier Publication Goals

What kind of writer are you? And what are your goals? For writers seeking top-tier publications, be realistic about what that means. With so few spaces for new writers who submit through the slush, this strategy inevitably means long wait times and many rejections. Take *Tin House* for example. They publish one new writer in each issue. That means they take one story that is *probably* not from an agent. That means out of the thousands of stories they receive each year, four are published from the slush. Four. And while an acceptance from a publication like *Tin House* will do wonders for your visibility, prepare yourself for the realities of this strategy. (It is worth noting they have an excellent track record of publishing flash fiction from new writers online and their platform offers incredible visibility. We love you *Tin House*!) If rejections get you down, you might be compromising confidence and the enjoyment of the process by setting your sights too high. It's also true that you might land the publication of your dreams.

Staggering Submissions

It's a strong strategy to have both top-tier and medium-tier publication goals for your work…I think it is wise to submit to handful of those when you feel your story is ready, let's say ten, and see what kind of feedback you receive before moving on to the other publications on your list. If you are getting all form rejections, it might be worth revisiting the piece, workshopping the story with friends, and editing before moving forward. It's wise to revisit a story after a little time away from it, but if you are getting positive feedback, then consider moving forward to the next round of lit mags on your list.

When To Call It Quits

No outside opinion can take the place of a writer's instincts for her work, so if you are submitting a story that you really believe in, I don't think there is ever a time when you should quit on it. I do think you should continue receiving feedback and improving on the piece to give the story its best chance, but trust your instincts. There are stories that simply aren't meant to be published and there are those you should never give up on. I believe strongly that if you

continue to service your work and grow as a writer, if you continue to believe in a piece, you will find a home for it.

Submitting the Same Story To a Lit Mag That Already Rejected It

We have writers ask if they should submit a story we've already seen, but for a different contest or category. Let's say, they received some positive feedback during our Short Story Award For New Writers, but it wasn't accepted for publication. Should they submit it to New Voices? Our Fall Fiction Contest? Again, this is a matter of preference, but with *The Masters Review* we consider all the work we read for publication. If a story isn't the winner of a contest, but we want to publish it anyway, we will accept that piece. With that said, if we passed on your story I think it's a waste of a submission fee to send it to us again. Are there exceptions? Of course. If you've drastically improved the piece or reworked it so that it is a totally different version of the story we first saw, then please send it our way. But in the end, more than your submission fee, we want to see your best work. And we want to publish that work. If we rejected a story originally we would probably like to see something new from you.

Submitting to The Same Magazine with Different Work

I can't emphasize enough that continuing to submit to the same literary magazine is something you absolutely should do. As editors, we have a long list of writers whom we've declined but are eager to see work from. It's terrible to think they might not submit to us again when their work is so close and such a strong fit, but has otherwise been beat out by other stories. We've published several authors who first received rejections from us. They stayed in the game. They serviced their work, and in the end, they sold us a story.

The Right Fit

It almost feels silly to comment on submitting work to a literary magazine that publishes the kind of thing that you write, but you would be surprised to see the submissions we receive (poetry for example, when we do not publish poetry) that are immediate rejections because of fit. A writer should have a strong understanding of the kinds of stories a magazine publishes to improve their chances. Topically and in terms of style and tone, fit is tricky, but you will only improve your chances by reading that lit mag and knowing what kinds of stories they publish. Still, it's an obvious statement that many writers, in their zeal to publish, ignore. Do the research. It pays off. (At the very least, read submission guidelines!)

I feel strongly that outside of specific submission strategies, the cream rises. If you continue to submit, that means you are continuing to write, and the strongest strategy for submission success is writing, writing, and writing. As your work improves, the publications will come—and then the very good publications will come. Sit down and edit your work. Don't be afraid of change and don't be afraid to move on from a story or set it aside. Your writing might not be where you want it, but you know a good story when you read one. When your talents as a writer and your ability to identify what you love in fiction intersect, you will have success.

==

[whatever success is]

From "A Breath of Day":

Last night I slept on the floor of the sea
in an unsounded part of the ocean
in the morning it was a long way up
through the dark streets of a silent country
with no language in its empty houses
until I had almost reached the surface
of a morning that I had never seen
then a breeze came to it and I began
to remember the voices of young leaves . . .

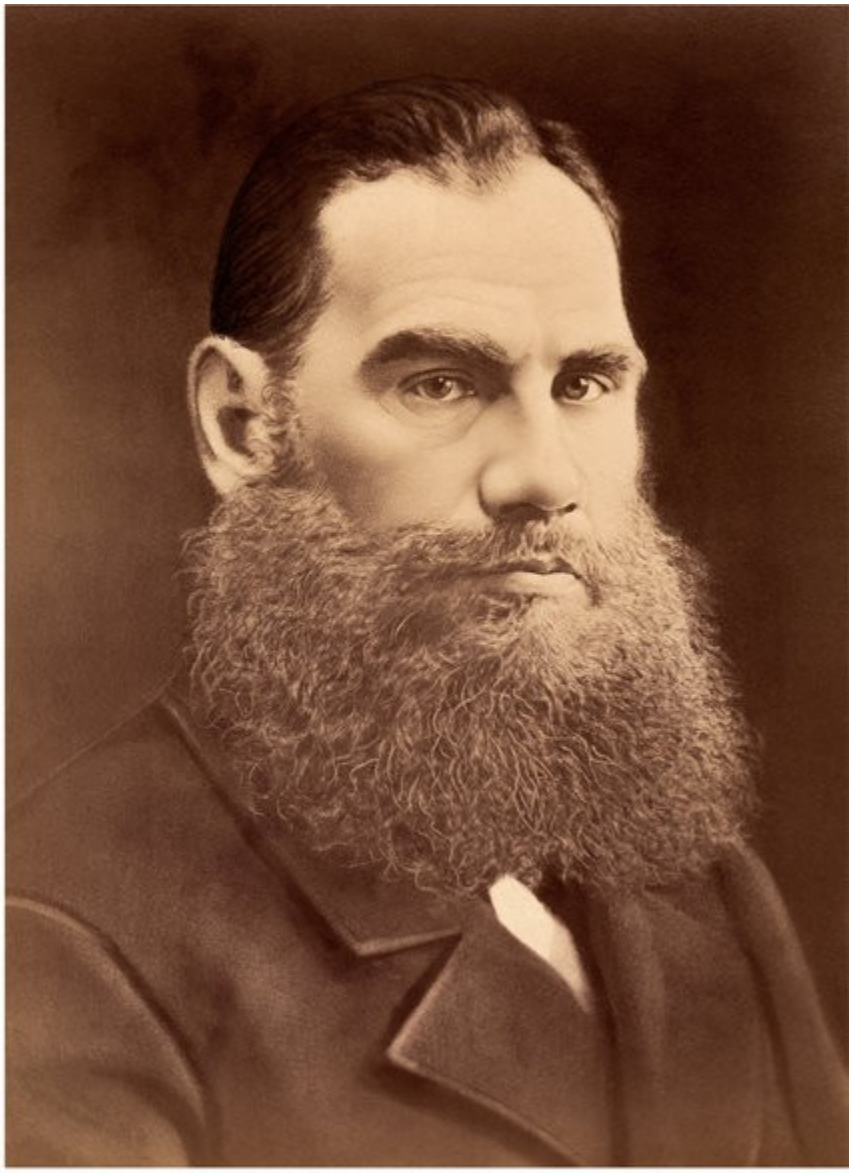
W.S. Merwin served as Poet Laureate of the United States and has received every major literary accolade, including two Pulitzer prizes, most recently for *The Shadow of Sirius* (Copper Canyon), and the National Book Award for *Migration: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon). He lives in Hawaii.

===

BOOK REVIEW NYTIMES

Throwing Anna Under the Train

Critic's Take By TODD GITLIN *New York Times* NOV. 9, 2016



Leo Tolstoy CreditAdoc-Photos/Corbis, via Getty Images

Dear Mr. Tolstoy:

It has come to our attention that you have offered for sale a book that purports to describe the world from the point of view of a woman — even as actual women everywhere are, in practice, erased. You try to disguise your appropriation by taking this woman's name as the title of your book. Women everywhere see through your ruse. Real-life Anna Kareninas understand that you are projecting your ignorant, arrogant phallocentric fantasies onto a female character whose humanity you have stripped away.

You have appropriated the experience of a subordinate group, liquidating her actual experience to capitalize on your own privilege and exalt your own reputation. Actual women are silenced while you arrogate to yourself the overweening role of ventriloquist.

From the available evidence, you are male — a white male, in fact. If you are not literally Caucasian, we know you invaded the Caucasus in your youth. Likely, it was there that you learned the ultimate male power — to kill.

Although your book is praised for laying bare the inequities of the Russian feudal system, a closer reading shows that you refuse to imagine any alternative to that system. In fact, the woman who is its most tormented victim must, in the end, be struck dead, lest she live to serve as a role model for women!

Were you yourself female, you would be able to penetrate, as it were, the suffering of a woman who lacks any independent means of support, reduced to dependency on a man, bouncing helplessly from her superannuated stiff of a husband to her swashbuckling, military-industrial lover, and forced to renounce her child when she attempts to fulfill her deepest desires, desires which have been inscribed in her by her lifelong subordination.

Even your celebrated opening — "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" — serves patriarchal interests by obscuring the way in which unhappiness is, in reality, structured. Unhappiness is neither equitably nor randomly distributed. It is structured, in fact, by the dominance of the male and the subordination of the female within the form of the bourgeois, not to say pre-bourgeois family, a formation that is, after all, backed by the threat of force and secured in an economy dominated by men.

Worst of all, you are unable to reveal and develop the complex strength of a strong woman. True, Anna Karenina in her doomed adventure with Count Vronsky seems for a while to exercise agency, but you produce this effect only to prepare her ultimate surrender. You have been quoted as saying that it wasn't you who sentenced Anna to throw herself under a train; it

was Anna herself. Such bad faith, Count Tolstoy! You conceal your own murderous impulse beneath this spurious attribution!

No, it is not the flesh-and-blood Anna who takes her life in her hands. It is your—need we repeat? —male fantasy of a weak, feverish, self-loathing neurasthenic woman, exhausted and sucked dry by this gilded, elegant popinjay Vronsky. When he objectifies her as a possession to brag about, when he torments and ultimately leaves, having drained her of the strength to sustain her freedom, *you* are condemning her for violating patriarchal norms.

If this is not enough, we note that you leave the last words of your novel to the liberal male Nikolai Levin, who arrogates to himself the power of goodness, having just declared his desire to express "knowledge in reason and words." So in your eyes it is the male who deploys reason and words to declare knowledge, while poor Anna is left with the torments of emotion — torments that cannot help but propel her under the train.

No doubt, Count Tolstoy, your privileged upbringing drives your abuses. You may object that we condemn you in an *ad hominem* spirit. But in truth we do not judge you for the accident of having been born to a so-called noble family. We know well the power of caste. We are aware that your serfs were freed when you were 33 years old. We are also aware that despite your high-minded claims, you continued to live on the economic surplus harvested from their unpaid labor. We know that you fathered a child with a serf — an unhappy woman who was not, of course, free to reject your advances. It is for your bottomless vanity that we condemn you.

Do not think, either, that we are unaware of the selfless devotions of your much younger wife, Sophia, or how rejected she felt when, while writing your book, you cut her off from the joy she had previously derived from copying your manuscripts. You used her and you discarded her, as you did indeed with your invented Anna. It is a wonder, in fact, that Sophia herself has not jumped under a train.

Todd Gitlin, Corresponding Secretary, Committee for Literary Purification

Nelson Algren Chicago's Other Writer

By BLAKE BAILEYNOV. 11, 2016

Nelson Algren sitting beneath a viaduct in Chicago. CreditLibrary of Congress

ALGREN: A Life

By Mary Wisniewski. 362 pp. Chicago Review Press. $30.

At Richard Yates's memorial service in 1992, his friend Kurt Vonnegut gave a eulogy reminiscing about their faculty days at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. "One of our colleagues was Nelson Algren," he concluded, "another world-class storyteller and outsider who died broke, but who was more famous than Yates because he had made love to Simone de Beauvoir. These things matter." Algren was more famous than Yates in the mid-1960s, when both men taught at Iowa, and perhaps even more so when Yates expired in that dingy bungalow in Alabama. In the years

since, Yates's reputation has undergone a revival of sorts, whereas poor Algren, arguably, is all the more dependent on his long, problematic affair with the author of *The Second Sex*.

His origins didn't augur well, though they provided a lifetime of grist for his fiction. Born Nelson Ahlgren Abraham, in 1909, he was four when his family moved from Detroit to the South Side of Chicago, where he gave little indication that he'd someday grow up to be the first-ever recipient of the National Book Award for fiction. The five years he took to graduate from high school (141st in a class of 149) seemed a source of sly pride, to say nothing of his hardships in the early years of the Depression, hopping freight trains and once landing in jail for stealing a typewriter. "His heart and imagination settled in 1931, at the bottom of the wretched 20th century, among the rags and bones," *Chicago Tribune* reporter Mary Wisniewski writes in her biography, *Algren: A Life*. As she points out, some critics would dismiss him as "the bard of the stumblebum," a relic of so-called proletarian fiction, though he was largely influenced by nothing less than the teachings of Christ — timeless, in other words, albeit not so much in midcentury America, where the worst stigma was poverty: "The great, secret and special American guilt of owning nothing, nothing at all," Algren wrote, "in the one land where ownership and virtue are one."

Algren's heart went out to the lowest of humanity, but his prose was a lot more lurid than anything found in the *New Testament*, often reading like the field notes of an oddly lyrical skid-row ethnologist. His best novel, *The Man With the Golden Arm*, follows the everyday life of a morphine-addicted card dealer called Frankie Machine, though the narrative pauses every so often to light on this or that other "tortured, useless, lightless and loveless" life — that of a blind lush named Piggy, for instance, who memorably flashes his gums with a ghastly smile: "They were gray and lined by a livid margin of rawest red, where the teeth bled at the rotting roots; as he sloshed the beer around them it became infected with the pinkish spittle." Not for Algren the "silence, exile, and cunning" of James Joyce and the like, who saw fit to evoke their native soil from a distance. During his most productive years, Algren refused to stray any farther from Chicago than across the lake near Gary, Ind., and he even broke

off an old friendship with Richard Wright, the great black novelist, because Wright had abandoned Chicago to live in Paris with his white wife. As Wisniewski puts it, Algren "offered a path to real art as rough and narrow as the way into heaven."

At the height of his fame in the 1940s and '50s, Algren did not want for admirers, foremost among them Ernest Hemingway, who confided to his editor that Algren's second novel, *Never Come Morning* (which had raised the ire of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America for its "unsavory description" of Polish life in Chicago), was "as fine and good stuff to come out of Chicago" as James T. Farrell "is flat, repetitious and worthless."

On behalf of Algren's next effort, *The Man With the Golden Arm*, Hemingway raised an even blunter cudgel against writers who weren't two-fisted enough: "Into a world of letters where we have the fading Faulkner and where that overgrown Lil Abner Thomas Wolfe casts a shorter shadow each day, Nelson Algren comes like a corvette…Truman Capote fans grab your hats, if you have any, and go. This is a man writing and you should not read it if you cannot take a punch." No hats, mind; we all know what *that* means. But then, Algren himself wasn't above renting a monkey suit when his third novel won the National Book Award. A despondent reporter for the defunct *Hobo News*, watching his hero take a plaque from Eleanor Roosevelt, prompted a *New York Times* correspondent to quote Browning's threnody: "Just for a handful of silver he left us / Just for a riband to stick on his coat."

What Hemingway or *The Hobo News* thought of Algren's romance with the existential feminist Simone de Beauvoir isn't recorded in these pages, though it's likely they heard about it at some point, along with just about anyone else who read books in English or French. The affair began in 1947 and was immortalized seven years later in Beauvoir's roman à clef, *The Mandarins*, where Algren appears as the American writer Lewis Brogan. One gleans from this portrayal that it wasn't Algren's charm or lapidary prose that most attracted Beauvoir, so much as his being a palatable sexual alternative to her usual boyfriend, Jean-Paul Sartre. On paper the match is hard to figure. It's true the younger Algren was something of a heartthrob as novelists

go — "an amalgam of Robert Mitchum and Kirk Douglas," his friend Art Shay recalled, "with a healthy dash of Woody Allen" — but his main reaction to the girlfriend he called Crazy Frog seemed a kind of irritated puzzlement, and he later claimed that he "never understood a word she said." Above all, he deplored her slavish devotion to Sartre, who insisted on their pursuing "contingent love affairs" while otherwise living as a de facto married couple. "Anybody who can experience love contingently has a mind that has recently snapped," Algren wrote in 1965, officially killing whatever lingered of the romance. "Procurers are more honest than philosophers."

Algren's peculiar mix of boorishness and sensitivity is nicely illuminated by his interlude with Beauvoir, and throughout Wisniewski characterizes him with laudably objective empiricism. The Chicago bookseller Stuart Brent is one of many who remember him as a good listener, an essentially diffident man who was "quiet and careful in his speech"; he also stole books from the store, as Brent later discovered to his dismay. Nor did Algren shrink from obloquy, though he professed shock at the sometimes cruel indiscretions — especially the ones visited on himself — in Beauvoir's work. In 1973, angered by the meager sales of *The Last Carousel*, Algren told the *Chicago Daily News* that his editor at Putnam, Bill Targ, was "an inept blob." Targ fired back with a letter describing Algren as "a liar, an ingrate" and a turd. Algren, delighted, kept the letter folded in his wallet and liked to produce it for his friends' amusement.

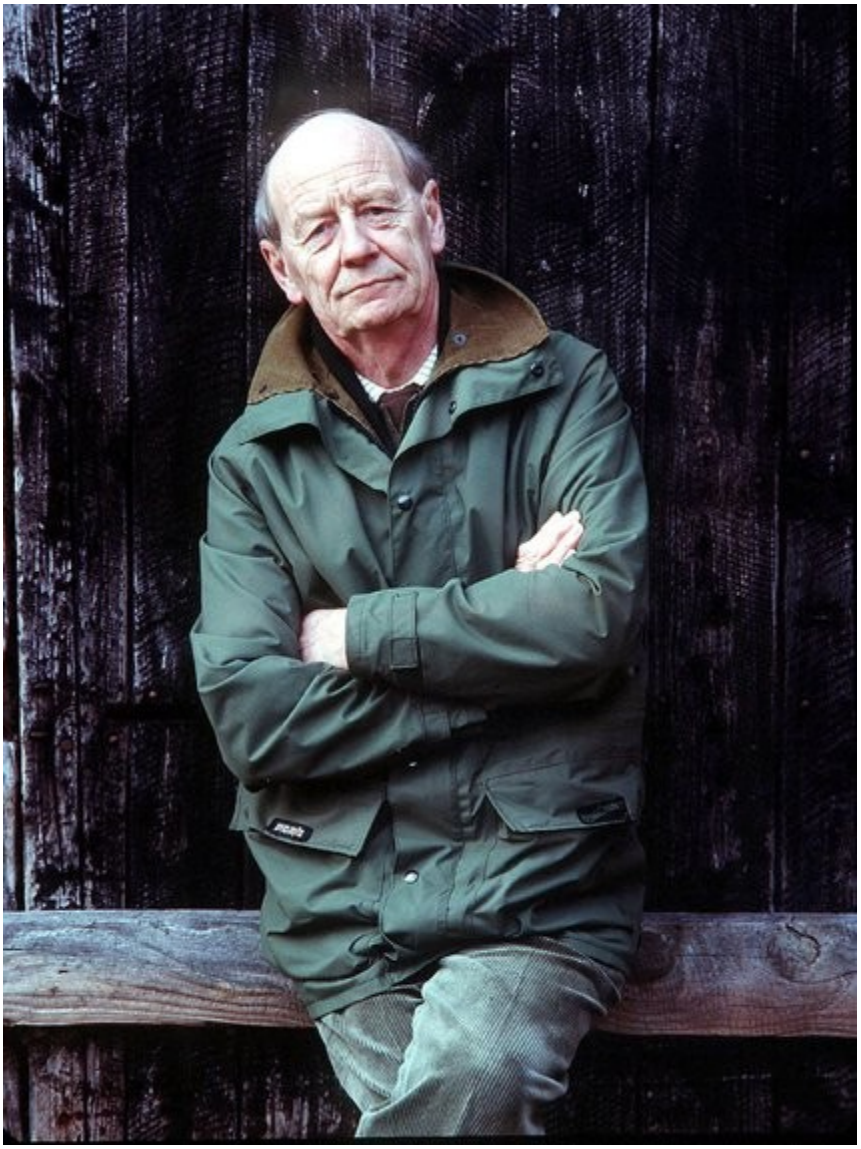
Wisniewski is astute about the relative merits of Algren's work… she remarked of the last novel published during his lifetime, *A Walk on the Wild Side*, that it was "more fun to read" than the others. "Ah," I thought, "she gets it." Which is to say: Algren had a fine ear for the nuances of Chicago Polonia dialect, and the felicities of his prose are many, and cumulative, but getting through it all can be a slog. Wisniewski is not above describing Algren's unfinished novel, "Entrapment," as "a picaresque muddle," an apt phrase for most of his longer fiction…Somebody in Boots' doesn't have much of a story," she concedes of Algren's first novel, after a rambling blow by blow, then points out that its lack of suspense, humor and character growth is also a problem: "It is a tough read….Algren may not be taught in classrooms

alongside Hawthorne and Austen," Wisniewski concludes, "but in backpacks across America, Algren still lives." Especially if the backpacker in question has heard of Simone de Beauvoir.

==

William Trevor, Writer Who Evoked the Struggles of Ordinary Life, Is Dead at 88

By WILLIAM GRIMES NYTimes NOV. 21, 2016



William Trevor in 1993. CreditRex Features, via Associated Press

William Trevor, whose mournful, sometimes darkly funny short stories and novels about the small struggles of unremarkable people placed him in the company of masters like V. S. Pritchett, W. Somerset Maugham and Chekhov, died on Sunday in Somerset, England. He was 88. His death was confirmed by his son Patrick Cox.

Mr. Trevor, Irish by birth and upbringing but a longtime resident of Britain, placed his fiction squarely in the middle of ordinary life. His plots often unfolded in Irish or English villages whose inhabitants, most of them hanging on to the bottom rung of the lower middle class, waged unequal battle with capricious fate.

In "The Ballroom of Romance," one of his most famous stories, a young woman caring for her crippled father looks for love in a dance hall but settles, week after week, for a few drunken kisses from a local bachelor. The hero of "The Day We Got Drunk on Cake" repeatedly phones a young woman he admires in between drinking sessions at a series of pubs. The relationship deepens and, during a final call in the wee hours, takes a sudden, unexpected turn.

The emotional weather in Mr. Trevor's world is generally overcast, with a threat of rain. "I am a 58-year-old provincial," the narrator of the novel "Nights at the Alexandra" (1987) begins. "I have no children. I have never married." From this bleak premise, a mesmerizing tale unfolds.

"I'm very interested in the sadness of fate, the things that just happen to people," Mr. Trevor told Publishers Weekly in 1983. "I'm a short-story writer who writes novels when he can't get them into short stories." His cast of characters, nearly all of the middling sort, was extraordinarily varied.

"Trevor has fashioned a remarkable gallery of contemporary figures," the critic Ted Solotaroff wrote of "Beyond the Pale and Other Stories" in The New York Times in 1982. "His farmers and priests and men of the turf are as convincing and suggestive as his Hempstead aesthetes, his suburban swingers, his old-boy homosexuals, his mod clerks and shopgirls. Nothing seems alien to him; he captures the moral atmosphere of a sleek advertising

agency, of a shabby West End dance hall, of a minor public school, of a shotgun wedding in an Irish pub."

Although he wrote nearly 20 novels, many of which won top literary prizes, Mr. Trevor did his finest work in short bursts, and tended to be dismissive of his ventures into the longer form. "I'm a short-story writer who writes novels when he can't get them into short stories," he once said. On another occasion, his called his novels "a lot of linked-up short stories."

His fiction could be wry, satirical, boisterously comic, lugubrious or pathetic. He delved deeply into the hearts of his struggling characters, whose limitations, frustrated ambitions and self-delusions evoked an authorial sympathy that became more pronounced over the years.

As with Chekhov, the comic brio of the early stories mellowed with time, giving way to a more muted, sorrowful tone, although, like Chekhov, Mr. Trevor achieved some of his finest effects by blending comedy and tragedy.

Robert Cooper, a producer who adapted several of Mr. Trevor's stories for radio and television in Britain, wrote in an email in 2009, "I shall always imagine him, diffident and comfortable in tweeds, arriving in a tranquil, well-ordered and beautiful place full of nice-looking people, and thinking, 'This looks lovely — I bet it isn't.'"

His language was precise, his narratives marvels of condensation. In an interview with The Paris Review in 1989, he defined the short story as "the art of the glimpse." He continued: "It *should* be an explosion of truth. Its strength lies in what it leaves out just as much as what it puts in, if not more."

William Trevor Cox was born in Ireland on May 24, 1928, in Mitchelstown, County Cork, to Protestant parents. His father, James, was a bank manager who took his wife, the former Gertrude Davison, and children from one town to another, as promotions and transfers arose.

An outsider by family circumstance and religion in a predominantly Roman Catholic country, Mr. Trevor learned at

an early age to observe quietly from the sidelines, a skill that served him well as an Irish writer describing the British, and as an expatriate looking across the Irish Sea at the towns and villages of his youth. "I was fortunate that my accident of birth placed me on the edge of things," (*The Guardian* in 1992.)

After graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1950, he taught at a preparatory school in Northern Ireland…In secondary school, Mr. Trevor had begun sculpting in wood, and his growing proficiency led to a job in England teaching art at schools in Rugby and Taunton as he developed a sideline carving statues for churches. He began showing in exhibitions and, working in wood, terra cotta and metal, he embraced abstraction.

In 1958, he published a wispy comedy of manners, "A Standard of Behavior" (1958), which he later disowned. He also dropped his last name, to avoid confusion with his identity as a sculptor, although that chapter in his life was already drawing to a close. His abstract work, he later said, dissatisfied him because of its remoteness from human beings. "I sometimes think all the people who were missing in my sculpture gushed out into the stories," he told The Times in 1990.

To bring in income, he began working as a copywriter at Notley's, a leading advertising agency in London, where, he once said, he failed to produce a single usable line of copy. The job left him plenty of spare time, which he used to write fiction.

He grabbed the attention of critics in 1964 with "The Old Boys," a blackly humorous account of former schoolmates who resume their old rivalries when they gather for a reunion. Evelyn Waugh called the novel "uncommonly well written, gruesome, funny and inspired," and it won the Hawthornden Prize. As a writer, Mr. Trevor was on his way, and Notley's lost one of the least promising copywriters it had ever hired.

For the next half-century, mostly spent in the Devon countryside — he most recently lived near Shobrooke — Mr. Trevor turned out stories, novels and plays at a steady rate, developing an expanding world that readers came to recognize as Trevor territory, and a galaxy of characters that included the village

sociopath of the novel "The Children of Dynmouth" (1976), the fabulously boring Raymond Bamber in the short story "Raymond Bamber and Mrs. Fitch," and many variations on vacillating, timorous Prufrock Man.

"I don't think there is another writer from Ireland with his range," Gregory A. Schirmer, the author of "William Trevor: A Study of His Fiction" (1990), said in an interview. "With total conviction he has written about the rural Irish on their farms, about provincial towns, about commercial Dublin, about middle-class Protestants and the remnants of the aristocracy. He offers a complete picture of life on that island."

In 1982, Mr. Trevor told *The New Yorker*, which published many of his stories: "Each character is somebody that I know very well — as well as I know myself. You become very interested in that person. You become immensely inquisitive, immensely curious…I'm sort of a predator, an invader of people."

The settings changed. Most of the early novels and stories take place in English villages. On his attraction to England, he told *Publishers Weekly*, "I knew enough about it to be fascinated."

As Ireland became more remote to him, he found it more congenial as a subject — observed most closely from a distance — although he often turned back the clock, writing about the Ireland of 50 or 100 years ago, but with a keen historical eye for the signs of sectarian conflict that would explode later.

The novel "Fools of Fortune" (1983), which opens in 1918, develops into a parable of the Troubles, and there are, inevitably, historical foreshadowings in the novels "Other People's Worlds" (1980), "The Silence in the Garden" (1996) and "The Story of Lucy Gault" (2002), which begin at the close of the First World War and the early years of Irish independence, and even in "The News From Ireland," one of Mr. Trevor's most celebrated later stories, set during the famine years of the 1840s. "I have no messages or anything like that," Mr. Trevor told *The Paris Review*. "I have no philosophy and I don't impose on my characters anything more than the predicament they find themselves in."