

Connecticut Muse

A Celebration of Contemporary Connecticut Authors

Introductory Issue Spring 2005

Each year, the achievements of Connecticut authors are recognized by the Connecticut Center for the Book. In 2004, Connecticut Book Awards were given to some of this state's outstanding writers, including Wally Lamb, author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller, *She's Come Undone*. Lamb was awarded The Lifetime Achievement in Service to the Literary Community. Stewart O'Nan was given the Fiction Award for *The Night Country*. The Non-Fiction Award went to Christopher P. Bickford and Howard R. Lamar, editors, for *Voices of the New Republic: Connecticut Towns 1800-1832*, and the Biography/Memoir Award went to Colin McEnroe for *My Father's Footprints: A Memoir*.

In similar spirit, *Connecticut Muse* will showcase some of the many wonderful authors who call Connecticut home. Each issue of *Connecticut Muse* will be dedicated to a different literary genre, and will feature three or four representative authors from that genre. Readers will learn a little bit about each author and his or her works, including a review of the author's latest book. *Connecticut Muse* will also feature an in-depth author interview.

Many of the authors who will be represented in *Connecticut Muse* are not well known. Some have only recently published a first novel. And yet perhaps one of these authors will someday win a prestigious award or write a bestseller. Regardless of notability, it is the mission of *Connecticut Muse* to celebrate the literary talents of a diversity of contemporary Connecticut authors. The publication will highlight new releases by Connecticut authors and provide a list of book signings and/or book discussions in areas throughout the State.

It is our hope that *Connecticut Muse* will enable interested readers to discover and appreciate the literary talents of our State's finest writers.

IN THIS ISSUE

Reviews

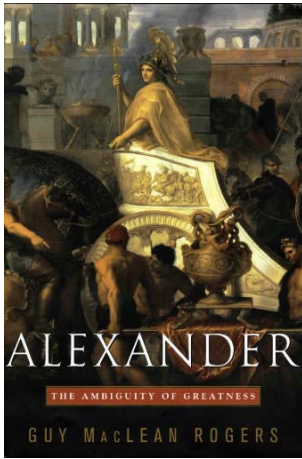
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Alexander: The Ambiguity of Greatness

Guy MacLean Rogers
Random House
464 pages, \$26.95

Hollywood loves heroes, especially controversial ones. It is no surprise, then, that perhaps the most illustrious warrior in history is currently the subject of a major motion picture starring Colin Farrell. The hero is Alexander the Great, who has not only inspired famed director Oliver Stone to make such an epic production, but who continues to fascinate us some twenty-three hundred years after his death.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that several new biographies of Alexander's life have recently been published, and still more are to be released in the near future. Why do we find Alexander so intriguing after so many years? Who really was Alexander III King of Macedon, and why was he considered great? More importantly perhaps, in what context should his greatness be viewed?

Connecticut author Guy MacLean Rogers has addressed these questions, after spending nearly a decade researching the life and times of the enigmatic Macedonian king. Rogers' exhaustive efforts have been documented in *Alexander The Ambiguity of Greatness*. And who could resist reading a book that endeavors to decipher the true nature of one of history's most famous conquerors?

Rogers, who holds a Ph.D. in classics from Princeton University, is well-qualified to write Alexander's biography. He was

Chairman of the Department of History at Wellesley College from 1997 to 2001, and his first book, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City*, won the Routledge Ancient History Prize.

Rogers notes in his book that he has been captivated by Alexander the Great since his early childhood. Essentially, his reason for writing Alexander's biography is to provide "a clear and balanced account of the life and legacies of Alexander the Great within the context of the time in which he lived." And Rogers acknowledges that his interpretation of Alexander's actions is very different from that of other historians.

The story of Alexander the Great is an amazing tale, particularly because he conquered the entire known world before the age of 30. That he accomplished so much in such a short time is testimony to his genius. Rogers argues, though, that Alexander's sheer intelligence has never been fully appreciated. He also believes that proper credit has not been accorded to Alexander the Great for setting in place "the fundamental political, cultural and religious framework from which Western civilization eventually was born."

Alexander III of Macedon lived from 356-323 B.C. and died a mysterious death at the age of 32. According to Rogers, Alexander the Great was the greatest warrior in history. Calling Alexander a "prodigy of warfare" Rogers notes that he had keen powers of observation and was a brilliant military tactician as well as a master strategist. He relates that Alexander believed it was his divinely sanctioned destiny to "conquer and rule all of Asia and Europe as a god, in harmony and fellowship with the best."

In his biography, Rogers portrays the human side of Alexander; thus the ambiguity. According to Rogers, the nature of historical "greatness" itself is an ambiguous and subjective concept. It would be unfair to regard

Alexander, as some have, as a precursor of Stalin or Hitler. Rogers maintains that all of Alexander's actions must be understood within the framework of the time in which he lived, and not judged retrospectively from the far distant future.

Rogers believes that Alexander was "an ambiguous figure who combined great and admirable deeds and qualities with terrible mistakes, sporadic crimes and lapses of judgment." He enumerates those noble acts in his biography and explains the rationale behind most of Alexander's decisions throughout his extraordinary military campaign.

In *Alexander The Ambiguity of Greatness*, we learn that Alexander was pious and generous to the gods and yet respected the religious traditions of foreigners. He granted immunities to families of deceased soldiers, revealing his political understanding and his basic humanity. He also understood the fact that men who had experienced combat needed to release their emotions by sharing them.

Rogers' biography of Alexander the Great is well-researched and meticulously documented. It is a history lesson that is readily accessible to a general audience, but will probably be more appealing to true history buffs.

In the end, Rogers' goal of providing an objective and persuasive representation of Alexander appears to have been met. He offers a convincing portrayal of a remarkable man who has, and will continue to capture our attention for years to come.

"All modern American Literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*."
(Ernest Hemingway)

Armstrong Chamber Concerts at First Congregational Church of New Milford 32 Main Street, New Milford

**Tickets \$20 – Students are Free
Reception follows**

April 10, 2005 - 3 pm

Helen Armstrong, *violin*
Robert deMaine, *cello*
Todd Palmer, *clarinet*
Andrew Armstrong, *piano*



Zemlinsky: Trio in D minor
Stravinsky: Suite from L'Histoire Du Soldat
Arensky: Piano Trio in D Minor, Opus 32, No. 1

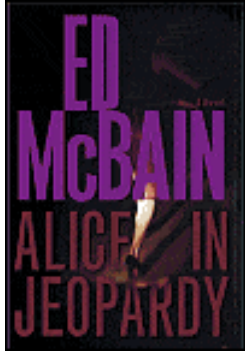
May 22, 2005 - 3 pm

Helen Armstrong, *violin*
Louise Schulman, *viola*
Wolfram Koessel, *cello*
Carol Wincenc, *flute*
Gerard Reuter, *oboe*
Gerald Robbins, *piano*



J.C. Bach: Quintet in D Major, Opus. 11, No. 6
Bruce Adolphe: The Tiger's Ear, World Premiere
Johannes Brahms: Piano Quartet A Major, Opus 26

**For tickets or information call:
(860) 868-0522
P.O. Box 367
Washington Depot, CT 06794**



Alice in Jeopardy
Ed McBain
Simon & Schuster
304 pages, \$25.00

Meet Alice Glendenning. She's a 34 year old widow and mother of two, whose life suddenly goes from bad to worse when her two children are kidnapped one sunny May afternoon in Cape October, Florida. Alice is the protagonist in Ed McBain's latest novel, *Alice in Jeopardy*, the first in a new series about women in jeopardy. And if *Alice* is any indication, it promises to be a terrific series.

Alice's husband Eddie is presumed dead, having drowned in a boating accident, although his body was never recovered. Eight months later, Alice who is still grieving the loss of her husband, is now working unsuccessfully as a real estate agent, trying to make ends meet while waiting for the proceeds of her husband's \$250,000 life insurance policy to be paid.

On an ill-fated day in May, Alice learns that her two children never made it onto the school bus and were last seen in front of their school getting into a blue car driven by a blonde woman. Shortly thereafter, Alice is contacted by a black woman who demands a \$250,000 ransom for the return of her children. Alice is warned that if she contacts the authorities, she will risk the lives of her son and daughter.

Through no fault of her own, Alice somehow gets caught up in a farcical quest to locate the kidnappers and her missing children. The local police are brought in by Alice's busybody housekeeper, and they ultimately prove themselves to be fairly inept at working a kidnapping case. As Alice gets drawn deeper into the nightmare, we too, become a part of the

drama that unfolds over what may very well be the darkest five days of Alice's life.

What makes the novel most compelling is the fact that *Alice in Jeopardy* is not just the story of a lonely widow who desperately tries to negotiate for the safe return of her kidnapped children. There are, in fact, several interesting sub-plots woven throughout the novel that involve the many colorful characters who are connected with Alice and the kidnapping case.

There's Jennifer, a ditzzy blonde who runs her car over Alice's foot on the morning of the kidnapping but fails to report the accident to the police. She wants to help Alice find her kids, but she is also very happy to help herself to Alice's brother-in-law, Rafe, an ex-con truck driver who just happens to be in the neighborhood as well.

There's Rafe, who is much more interested in "discovering" Jennifer than he is in helping Alice. He also tries unsuccessfully to enlist a couple of low life friends in a hair brained scheme to steal the counterfeit money back from the kidnappers without regard for the safety of his niece and nephew.

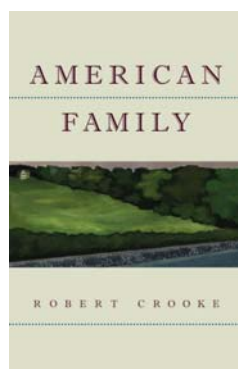
And then there's the motley group of local police officers who are more like Keystone Kops than modern day law enforcement officials, as they run around following false leads in an effort to track down potential suspects. Ironically, it is when the FBI arrives at Alice's house to join the investigation that she "really feels in jeopardy."

Although *Alice in Jeopardy* is a suspense novel that certainly keeps the reader guessing throughout, the mystery unravels through comedy, as off beat characters are introduced into the story by way of McBain's trademark wit. Engaging and snappy dialogue as well as delightful descriptions drive the plot and keep us interested, as Alice herself ultimately figures out who is behind the kidnapping.

Despite the very serious subject matter of the story, we find ourselves chuckling more than we do worrying when reading *Alice in Jeopardy*, because at times it is more a comedy of errors than a novel of drama. We also trust that Alice, a resilient and smart woman, will undoubtedly come out ahead, but not without suffering some serious heartache along the way.

In fact, the world of Alice Glendenning and company is certainly not seen through any rose colored glasses worn by the author. On the contrary, it is McBain's realistic, albeit cynical perspective about the nature of marriage and about life in general, that makes the novel intriguing and thought-provoking.

*Ed McBain, a.k.a. Evan Hunter, who has written more than 100 novels over the past fifty years, resides in Weston, Connecticut. He is currently working on the second novel in the series entitled **Becca in Jeopardy**. For more information about Ed McBain and his works, see www.edmcbain.com.*



American Family
Robert Crooke
iUniverse
356 pages, \$20.95

Once in awhile we are privileged to read a novel that not only affords us the opportunity to reflect on significant events in our country's history, but also engages and sustains our interest by providing us with an exciting and suspenseful story. Bridgewater resident Robert Crooke has accomplished just that in his stunning debut novel, *American Family*.

It is in the early aftermath of September 11th, as America lay stunned and shattered by the World Trade Center attacks, that 64 year old Tom Gannon finds himself returning to Garrison, New York to bury his mother. Having fled the United States during another dark time in America's history, Tom has lived in Europe since 1954.

That was the year his world was suddenly turned upside down by tragic and unforeseen events that would forever change his life. *American Family* is Tom Gannon's recollection of those events.

Robert Crooke's *American Family* is the poignant story of the Gannon family in 1950's America. The novel portrays a time in America's past which was characterized by fear and prejudice, political corruption and social injustice.

It is an America in which people like Tom's father, Joe Gannon, pay the ultimate price for attempting to effect social change. For Joe Gannon believed that the world could be a better place and endeavored to make it so,

WARNER THEATRE

Nancy Marine Studio Theatre
68 Main Street, Torrington, CT
860-489-7180

Fri & Sat, April 8 - 23 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, April 10 & 17 at 2 p.m.



Set in pre-World War II Berlin and based on the diaries of Christopher Isherwood, *Cabaret* remains one of the most daringly modern of Broadway musicals. The story of a writer and his relationship with a performer at the Kit Kat Klub, Sally Bowles, it is about the seduction of fascism and the effects of fascism on simple people. [Tickets: \\$17.00](#)

even though the pursuit of his beliefs cost him dearly and brought heartache to his family.

Robert Crooke paints a vivid picture of American society in the 1950's, a time when Americans everywhere were given cause to question one another's allegiance to the United States. During this time, the McCarthy Senate Investigations and the House Committee on Un-American Activities ruined the lives of numerous citizens who were falsely branded as Communists.

This is the climate of fear in which Joe Gannon, who was accused of "subversive affiliations" himself, tries to champion the cause of underprivileged black Americans through the development of a low income housing project in Harlem.

His project is met with tremendous opposition, perhaps most ironically by Charles Stannard, the father of Tom's girlfriend, although it is not known to Tom until much later in the story just how serious Stannard's opposition to his father's project is.

Joe's worst opponent, however, is much closer to home, for it is his father, Hank Gannon, who has secretly plotted against the project's success. Hank's true nature is but one of the many distressing discoveries Tom Gannon makes throughout the novel.

At the beginning of his story, it is clear that Tom Gannon doesn't understand the powerful forces that are in play all around him. He is young and naïve and self-centered; refusing to see the painful reality of life. Tom is unwilling to connect the dots until it is too late for the truth he discovers to make any difference.

In *American Family*, young Tom Gannon is forced to experience the very real adult world of greed, betrayal, abuse, bigotry, and hatred. It is a powerful and tragic life lesson, and one which ultimately changes the course of his destiny.

Tom's story is one of loss and sorrow, but it is also the story of growth and understanding. The novel touches upon the themes of good versus evil, the value of a moral perspective and the importance of defending the less fortunate.

It is the story of family relationships and the struggles that often accompany those relationships. But it is Tom's dramatic quest for the truth that makes *American Family* the true thriller that it is.

Robert Crooke gives the reader a compelling and suspenseful tale in *American Family*. We are drawn into the mystery that surrounds his father's disappearance as Tom uncovers the ugly secrets and lies that lurk unsuspectingly beneath the surface of his once unsullied life.

We will not soon forget Tom's frantic efforts to find out, at any cost, what really happened to his father. And it is literally a race to the death when Tom faces down his father's enemy in his final act of retribution.

American Family should solidly establish its author as one of today's talented writers of fiction. *American Family* is available through www.iUniverse.com.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

50 copies = \$25.00

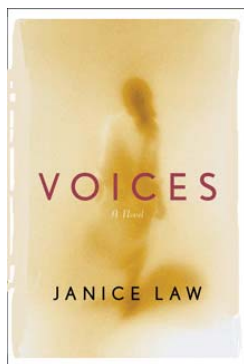
100 copies = \$40.00

200 copies = \$55.00

One issue \$5.00 or \$20.00 per year

(Single issue free with any ad)

Of Note



VOICES
Janice Law
Forge Books

It is easy to understand why *Voices* was chosen as a finalist in the 2004 Connecticut Center for the Book Award. The novel tells a poignant and moving story of one woman's search for her true identity after she suffers a memory loss following surgery. It is a journey that takes her back to her childhood roots in Connecticut, but through this journey, she ultimately discovers more about the woman she has become than about the child she once was.

According to author Janice Law, *Voices* recounts the fallout of the disappearance of a young girl from Connecticut in the early fifties. She notes, "I remember this story very well from my own childhood. Shortly after we moved to eastern Connecticut, a woman claimed to be the missing child, and I knew at once I had a story."

And so Law set about weaving together those two details – the kidnapping of a child and the return of a grown woman – and created a fascinating and suspenseful story of how one woman learns that she may indeed be the child who was kidnapped twenty five years earlier. After this realization, suddenly nothing in Leslie Austin's life is as it once was, and no longer sure of anything at all, she decides that she must uncover the truth of her identity no matter what the cost.

Needing desperately to make sense of her past, and hoping to reunite with the family she lost, Leslie finds that she may have much more to lose in the process, as she jeopardizes

her relationship with her husband and with the woman who has raised her.

She must come to terms with some difficult questions – Will her life be any better if she really is the missing child? Does the love and support of the mother who raised her mean any less if Leslie isn't her real daughter? How will her reappearance affect the family that believes she is dead?

Voices - the story of a young woman who must rediscover her past before she can understand and accept who she is and move forward into the future. It is a journey with heartache and sorrow along the way, but in the end, one that is indeed worth making.

Upcoming New Releases

Five in a Row
Jan Coffey

On a Wing and a Prayer
Katherine Valentine

The Headmaster's Wife
Jane Haddam

Every Move You Make
M. William Phelps

Restless Waters
Jessica Speart

A Little Change of Face
Lauren Baratz-Logsted



An Interview with M. William Phelps

Author of:

PERFECT POISON:

A Female Serial Killer's Deadly Medicine
(June 2003)

LETHAL GUARDIAN:

A Woman Who Would Stop At Nothing . . .
Even Murder (June 2004)

EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE:

A Serial Killer Who Preyed On His Closest
Friends--And A Tough Cop's Relentless Quest
To Catch Him (June 2005)

CM: How long have you been writing
professionally?

Phelps: I have been writing full-time since
2000, when I received my first book deal and I
have been publishing "pay" articles since 1998.
My first book, Perfect Poison, was a huge
success commercially. Out almost two years
now, it's in its third printing. My second book,
Lethal Guardian, was an even bigger success.
Out only eight months it is heading into its
fourth printing as we speak. I have sold in the
neighborhood of 100,000 copies of my books.
This coming June, with the release of my next
book, there'll be about 200,000 copies of my
books in print.

CM: What's it like being an author?

Phelps: I work about 15 to 17 hours per day
while I am writing and researching a book--
sometimes even weekends. It's nice to work at
home. But because of that, work is always here,
so it's easy to keep working and working. Plus,
I'm a type-A personality, so I have never
missed--and never will--a deadline. I generally
hand in all of my books and midway
commitments months ahead of deadline. I am
obsessed with my work!

CM: Have you lived in Connecticut all your
life?

Phelps: I grew up in East Hartford, near
Millbrook, and have lived in CT all of my life.
I currently live in a small farming community
in North-Central Connecticut.

CM: Does Connecticut figure into your books
at all?

Phelps: Only if it happens that a murder
occurred in the state and it interests me--as did
the Beth Carpenter case, which was the subject
of my last book, Lethal Guardian. I don't
necessarily look for stories in Connecticut to
write about. I first look at the crime--and if it
has certain elements that belong in a crime
book, then it really doesn't matter where it took
place. Setting is always secondary to
characters, the crime, the social significance of
the crime and its impact on society as a whole.

CM: How do you get ideas for your books?

Phelps: I look for specific crimes and certain
historical ties to those crimes before I even
consider doing a book. Ideas, I guess you could
say, come to me from the news, people, books I
read, places I visit, magazine articles, etc. I
read A LOT. Something I read might spark an
interest in a subject and then I begin doing
research and the story either falls apart or I
become obsessed with it. If the passion isn't
there from the beginning, I generally toss the
idea and begin another. I have book ideas that
will last me another ten years.

CM: What are you working on right now?

Phelps: My agent is in the process of securing me a book contract for a book proposal I have spent five years working on and researching. In fact, I filmed a Discovery Channel documentary about the subject last year that aired this past Tuesday to huge ratings. The working title of my book project is THUNDER OF HEAVEN: Murder, Disaster, & Innovation in the Gilded Age. It is the story of "Sister" Amy Archer-Gilligan, a self-proclaimed nurse who pioneered--invented, really--the concept of elderly home healthcare/nursing home in Windsor, Connecticut, back in 1906.

Gilligan offered care for life for \$1000, but after the beds in her home filled up she began killing patients. 64 in all, I will argue in the book. The book, which focuses on Gilligan and her crimes, along with the investigation, trials and the story of a brave Hartford Courant obit writer who broke the story to police, is set against the backdrop of the Gilded Age and a massive heat wave that fell upon New England in 1911 and killed thousands (hence the disaster portion of the subtitle). I am also going to explore the history of weather forecasting, forensics and law enforcement as it pertains to the Gilligan story (hence the innovation part of the subtitle). It's a huge undertaking – a big project that I have put my soul into. As soon my agent secures the deal for me, I am off and running with the writing and a ton more research.

CM: Do you participate in any book signings in Connecticut?

Phelps: Generally, for each book, I do a 20-city book tour all over New England and parts of the Northwest, and give several lectures at libraries, schools, etc. I generally do about 20 TV spots and 20 radio spots all over the country for each book.

CM: Are you involved in any writing groups?

Phelps: I teach a six-week course on publishing/freelance writing every spring and fall at Rockville High School and have been doing that for about five years. I don't work with authors or writer groups one on one but I've been hired in the past to give private courses to aspiring authors and freelancers, but haven't done that in a long time. Most of my time is spent writing, researching, reading and promoting my books.

I have a book coming out this June, EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE, and I am already working on publicity and promotion for that. It takes a lot of time. I am not going to teach my course this spring because I simply don't have the time. I may be offering a weekend seminar (along with a critically acclaimed novelist I know) this summer or fall, though.

CM: Do you have a website where readers can get information about you and your works?

Phelps: Yes, www.mwilliamphelps.com

ADVERTISE IN CONNECTICUT MUSE

Full Page

1 X = \$350

2 X = \$300 X 2 = \$600

4 X = \$250 X 4 = \$1000

Half Page

1 X = \$175

2 X = \$150 X 2 = \$300

4 X = \$100 X 4 = \$400

Quarter Page

1 X = \$90

2 X = \$75 X 2 = \$150

4 X = \$50 X 4 = \$200

Business Card

1 X = \$75

2 X = \$60 X 2 = \$120

4 X = \$40 X 4 = \$160

Connecticut Author Book Signings and Discussions

March 12 at 3:00 – **Kate Walbert** reads from her new novel, *Our Kind: A Novel in Stories* at New Haven Library, Main Branch.
203-946-8125

March 13 at 2:30 - Book Discussion of Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* at Darien Public Library, 35 Leroy Avenue, Darien
203-655-1234

March 20 at 2:00 – Slide presentation and book signing with **Brendan Hanrahan**, Author and Publisher of the *Great Day Trips to Discover Earth History in Connecticut Series* at Ridgefield Library, 472 Main Street, Ridgefield
203-438-2282

March 29 at 7:30 pm - Book talk and signing with **Roberta Isleib**, Author of *Fairway to Heaven* and **Jessica Speart**, Author of *Blue Twilight* at Salem Library, 264 Hartford Road, Route 85, Salem
860-859-1130

April 1 – Meet **Gene Wilder**, Author of *Kiss Me Like a Stranger*, Ferguson Library's 25th Annual Book and Author Luncheon, at The Sheraton Hotel, Summer Street, Stamford.
203-964-1000



Poetry Readings

April 1 - Cheney Hall Broadside Series: A series of readings, receptions and music. Featuring Connecticut poet, Susan Kinsolving. Reception and music begin 6:30 p.m., reading at 7 p.m. Free, donations appreciated. Cheney Hall, 177 Hartford Road, Manchester. (860) 647-9824.

April 3 at 1-4 p.m. CPS Celebrates
The Connecticut Poetry Society presents a reading and signing by poet Margaret Gibson. Event includes a poetry open mic featuring members of the CPS and contest winners. Southbury Public Library, 561 South Main St., Southbury. (203) 753-7815.

Russell House and the Distinguished Writers Series Celebrate National Poetry Month,
Russell House, Wesleyan University, 350 High Street, Middletown. (860) 685-2280.

April 7 at 8 PM - Harriet Mullen, the author of five books of poetry including *Sleeping with the Dictionary*.

April 14 at 8 PM - United States Poet Laureate Louise Gluck, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of nine books of poetry, including *The Seven Ages*, *Vita Nova*, and *The Wild Iris*, as well as *Proofs and Theories: Essays on Poetry*.

April 28 at 8 PM - Jerome Rothenberg, award-winning author, translator and editor, who has worked in ethnopoetics, Native American and tribal poetics, Jewish identity studies and avant-garde poetry.



THOMASTON OPERA HOUSE
158 Main Street
Thomaston, CT

[The Adams Foundation Classical Piano Series featuring STEVEN MAYER](#)

March 12, 2005 at 8:00pm

Pianist Steven Mayer's engagements include appearances with the New York Chamber Symphony and Gerard Schwarz in Beethoven's Concerto No. 4 and with the Prague Symphony under Jiri Belohlavek in Dvorak's Piano Concerto on the Carnegie Hall International Orchestra Series.

Since his prize winning performance of Leon Kirchner's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Dennis Russel Davies and the American Composer's Orchestra at the Third Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition, Mr. Mayer has brought his unique repertoire of classical jazz legends Art Tatum, Fats Waller and Jelly Roll Morton to festivals worldwide.

The Classical Piano Series is made possible through generous support from THE ADAMS FOUNDATION.

Tickets for the Classical Piano Series are \$25.00 each. Student Discounts Available.

For Tickets Call 860-283-6250
www.thomastonoperahouse.org



In the next issue of Connecticut Muse

Connecticut Mystery Series Writers

Jessica Speart – Rachel Porter Mystery Series
Review of *Blue Twilight*

Roberta Isleib – Cassie Burdette Golf Mystery Series, Review of *Fairway to Heaven*

Mary-Ann Tirone Smith – Poppy Rice Mystery Series, Review of *She Smiled Sweetly*

Jane Haddam – Gregor Demarkian Mystery Series, Review of *The Headmaster's Wife*

Author Interview An interview with Jim and Nikoo McGoldrick (Jan Coffey and May McGoldrick)

A Look at Connecticut Independent Bookstores

Book Signings and Discussions in Connecticut

New Connecticut Author Releases

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The Autumn of Our Lives

If the average lifespan is eighty odd years, then “middle age” is really the autumn of our lives. As such, it is indeed a splendid place to be, for autumn is by far the most beautiful season of the year. And it is an equally wonderful part of life.

We spend the first twenty years or so in the spring of our lives; growing and developing into maturity. The next two decades are spent blossoming in the summer of our lives. It is a time when we bear fruit, and we work hard to nurture our creations and to sustain our bounty.

In the autumn of our lives, however, we can finally show our true colors, like nature’s beauty all around us. After sweating through the long, hot days of summer (for the most part happy, but often arduous days) we can start to harvest the fruits of our labor. We should not be tempted to work so hard through this season that suddenly one day we wake up and discover that winter has arrived. Winter is no time to start learning how to enjoy life, after all.

Autumn is the time to enjoy one’s life; before the vibrant leaves fall off the trees and they become bare. The autumn of our life reflects the splendor of those deciduous trees as they display their glorious hues. Like the fall foliage, we are in many ways more beautiful now than we were in our young, green state. And we will never be quite this gorgeous again.

But autumn is truly a bittersweet time. The days may still have summer-like warmth, but the nights can have the chill of impending winter. That is why we should savor each splendid day of this season. For too soon a barren landscape replaces the magnificent surroundings, and the frost descends to destroy the summer’s last blooms.

As surely as the dappled autumn sunlight fades earlier each afternoon from the sky and gives way to the shortened days of winter, so too the bright days of our lives begin to diminish. We cannot stop the season’s progression, but we need not hasten its end by our failure to admire all that it has to offer.

We should make our way carefully through autumn, stopping often to appreciate its gifts and taking time to notice nature’s most dynamic exhibition. Life gives us autumn as a reward for surviving the fickle weather of our spring and the sweltering heat of our summer. It is a season of good fortune; one to be celebrated and cherished.

Autumn truly is the best season of our lives.

Patricia F. D’Ascoli