

Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia

P.O. Box 138, Great Village, Nova Scotia B0M 1L0

Volume 4, Issue 2

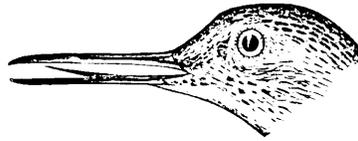
NEWSLETTER

Fall, 1997

Call for Papers!!

*'Division of the Heart':
Elizabeth Bishop's Art of
Place & Memory*

September 24 - 27
1998



HEAD OF SOLITARY SANDPIPER.

Acadia
University

Keynote Speaker: Anne Stevenson

Plenary Speakers include:

Thomas Travisano, Gary Fountain, Peter Sanger, Sandra Barry

***** Special Bishop Nova Scotian Exhibition *****

Optional Trip to Great Village, Nova Scotia, 27-28, September

Submit proposals for twenty-minute papers by February 1, 1998, to:

Elizabeth Bishop Conference Committee
Department of English, Acadia University, Wolfville
Nova Scotia, Canada B0P 1X0

**Tel: 902 585-1503; Fax: 902 585-1070 (Attn. Gwen Davies);
e-mail: gwen.davies@acadiau.ca**

Picture Raffle!!

Proceeds to Benefit the Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia



"In the Village"

by Joy Laking

The raffle offers as prize "In the Village," a serigraph colour print depicting the road along which Bishop walked with Nelly to Mr. Chisholm's pasture. Visible are the Presbyterian church and the house of Bishop's Bulmer grandparents (extreme left). The print is based upon a watercolour study reproduced in black-and-white above. It is one of a limited edition, signed by the artist, matted and framed (approximately 23" x 36").

Joy Laking, who has donated the print to assist the EBSNS to continue its activities, lives and maintains her gallery and studio in Portauipique, not far from Great Village. She is a member of the Society of Canadian Artists, the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour and the Nova Scotia Printmakers' Association. Her work has been widely exhibited in Canada and is represented in the Permanent Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Raffle Tickets Available

from

Mr. Allan Bray
Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia
P.O. Box 138, Great Village
Nova Scotia B0M 1L0

**Cost: \$2.00 each, or \$5.00 for three; books of 10 tickets available
for those who can help to sell them, please!**

Drawing: June 6, 1998

Editorial

Many of us have been living with a persistent undersong during the last two or three months. It goes: *All the untidy activity continues, /awful but cheerful.* Those words come, of course, from Bishop's "The Bight." As Crystal Bacon mentions in her essay on Worcester in this *Newsletter*, they are now monumental. Naturally enough, therefore, "The Monument" comes to mind and another quotation: *But roughly but adequately it can shelter/what is within (which after all/cannot have been intended to be seen).* Typical of Bishop (is it not?) to make us consider, among other matters, the appropriate propriety of a delayed commemoration on the very occasion and in the very place where her spirit, in some minds, may at last have been laid to rest.

Similarly timely are the three contributions in this issue of the *Newsletter*. Crystal Bacon's " 'In Worcester, Massachusetts,' We Sought Elizabeth Bishop" was commissioned for the

Newsletter when I learned that Crystal would be attending and making a presentation at the Worcester Conference. Crystal was born in New Jersey, where she now teaches at Gloucester County College. Her poetry has been published in *The Antigonish Review*, in *The Ontario Review* and in *The Massachusetts Review*. She is a summer resident of Sable River, Nova Scotia and hopes to move permanently to her home there in the near future. Many of us in the EBSNS know W.J. Keith, the author of the poems from "Elizabeth: A Verse Tribute," as a crucial supporter of the Society's activities. Now retired and a Professor Emeritus, he was for many years Professor of English at University College, University of Toronto, and editor of *The University of Toronto Quarterly*. He is the author among other books, of *The Rural Tradition* (Toronto, 1974), *The Poetry of Nature* (Toronto, 1980) and a collection of poetry, *Echoes in Silence* (Goose Lane Editions, Fredericton, N.B., 1992). Lastly, "Elizabeth Bishop as Heritage and *The Atlas of Literature*"

was written by Brian Robinson, who is a charter member of the EBSNS. He was born in Northern Ireland and is now an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at Saint Mary's University in Halifax. He is also the author of one of the best accounts of Bishop's Nova Scotian background, "Elizabeth Bishop from Nova Scotia: 'Half Nova Scotian, Half New Englander, Wholly Atlantic,' " published in *A Few Acres of Snow: Literary and Artistic Images of Canada* (ed. by P. Simpson-Housley and G. Norcliffe, Toronto, 1992).

All these authors confirm, in one way or another, the justice of Bishop's exacting parenthesis in "The Monument." They leave intact what (... *cannot have been intended to be seen*).

Peter Sanger

News and Information

The Annual General Meeting of the EBSNS was held in Great Village School on June 7, 1997. Following the reading of the Directors' Annual Report by the Society's President, Angus Chisholm, the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Terry White, proposed a new list of Society Officers and Directors. The list was approved as follows:

Chairman:	Peter Sanger
Vice-Chair:	Donna Smythe
Treasurer:	Alan Bray
Secretary:	Art Chisholm
Past-President:	Angus Chisholm
Directors:	Sandra Barry, Lois Bray, Anne Marie Duggan, Joy Graham, Meredith Layton, Terry White

The new President welcomed the presence of three EBSNS members from Acadia University:

Gwen Davies (Head of the English Department), Donna Smythe (Professor of English) and Patricia Townsend (Acadia University Archivist). Later in the meeting, the Bishop Conference scheduled for September, 1998 at Acadia was discussed, and the Society elected Sandra Barry and Peter Sanger to serve as its representatives on the Conference Steering Committee. The next issue of the *Newsletter* will contain details about the Conference. Please note the *Call for Papers!!* printed as this issue's first page.

After Peter Sanger had thanked the outgoing President, Angus Chisholm, for his good judgement, courage and humour, the meeting adjourned. Members of the Society, friends and many Great Villagers then spent the rest of a very pleasant day attending ceremonies which designated the Great Village School and the Bulmer house as Provincial Heritage buildings. The Society is very grateful to Paul Tingley, the new owner of the Bulmer house, for his hospitality and generosity during the afternoon.

The Society also wishes to thank the artist, Joy Laking, for donating her beautiful and historically significant seriagraph, "In the Village," to the Society. The seriagraph, as noted elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, is the prize in a raffle intended to help replenish the Society's operating capital which was heavily drawn upon to enable the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives to purchase the Bulmer-Bishop-Sutherland Fonds.

One further note is needed: the Society membership list indicates that some members have not kept up with their dues. The Society has continued to send the *Newsletter* to these members in the belief that non-payment has only been a slip of the memory. The Society will do its best to continue to operate in the Great Village style of "Manners," and it trusts there will eventually be a "Good day!" by way of return.

**"In Worcester, Massachusetts,"
We Sought Elizabeth Bishop**

by Crystal Bacon

Start with the town itself, nestled under a relentlessly blue autumnal sky, its architecture, Victorian as well as modern, ringed with gold leafed trees. A short drive outside Worcester's city center takes one to Hope Cemetery where Bishop's ashes are interred in the family plot. The cemetery is remarkably large and serene. Its paved pathways curl among the graves of New England's settlers, of scions of its manufacturing heyday and of Armenian and Greek immigrants. The Bishop plot lies toward the farthest end of Beech Avenue (misspelled "Beach" on the cemetery map). The plot's monument stone bears on its face the names and dates of William Bishop and Grace Bulmer Bishop. Elizabeth Bishop's epitaph faces away from the pathway and bears a new inscription: "all the untidy activity continues, awful but cheerful." It is a worthwhile expedition to see the stone, to feel the cut of the figures into the granite. A roll of craft paper and a box of crayons yields a fine souvenir rubbing which allows one to spend a few moments of "perfectly useless concentration" with Bishop beneath a large maple tree which throws dappled shadows.

The Bishop conference proper began on Friday, October 10, and merged with a week of evening poetry readings by (as a publicity brochure put it) "prominent poets with some connection to Elizabeth Bishop." The readers included Sandra McPherson and Jane Shore, Kathleen Spivak, Donald Hall, Derek Walcott, Mark Strand, Frank Bidart and Lloyd Schwartz. The two day scholarly conference offered six sessions of panel presentations representing a rich variety of perspectives on Bishop's life and work. If there was a flaw in the conference, it was that there

were too many choices for any one auditor to make over too little time. Each session featured four continuous panels which resulted in many auditors starting a session at one panel and then moving to another one to catch subsequent presenters.

I chose to attend three sessions in addition to the one where I presented a paper. I began with the session entitled "The Examined Life," featuring papers on Bishop's translations of three stories from the Portuguese of Clarice Lispector, Bishop's use of memoir and (one of the exceptional occasions in the conference) "Luminous Lota: Her Influence on Elizabeth Bishop's Life and Work." The latter was presented by Carmen L. Oliveira, the author of a work in Portuguese on the relationship between Bishop and Lota de Macedo Soares entitled *Rare and Commonplace Flowers*. This book has generated a considerable amount of interest in Brazil where Lota was, until the book's release, little known among her countrymen. Given the recalcitrant attitude toward discussions of Bishop's lesbianism (which has often taken the form, to quote an earlier presenter in this session, of "another shovelful of dirt heaped" upon her), Oliveira's talk rang with an authenticity and verve about Bishop and Soares as a "remarkable modern couple." The presentation featured slide photographs of the municipal park which Lota designed (see Bishop's letters for an account of its creation), as well as humorous drawings of Lota by friends. Added at the end was a charming black and white photograph of Bishop and Tobias the cat poised upon one of the MG's Bishop was unable to learn to drive.

From the afternoon selections, I chose to attend the session on "Landscape and Travel" which proved very interesting, not the least because it forcefully reiterated, despite the Worcester location of the conference, the importance of

Nova Scotia in Bishop's psyche. That had been a theme already touched on in "The Examined Life" session. The first paper by Carol E. Miller, examined "Questions of Travel and/as Imperialism." A considerable part of the paper examined the ideology of the *National Geographic*, and the vision of "the" *National Geographic* featured in "In the Waiting Room," which haunted Bishop all her life. Despite her assertion that "it really happened just that way," she found that even though the issue of the *National Geographic* she remembered from her trip to "Aunt Consuelo's" dentist was the right one, its content didn't suit the purposes of the poem. Therefore, she had to "remember" another hypothetical issue of the magazine in which volcanoes, African women with brass-wired necks and "terrifying breasts," the Martins, and "long pig" occur. This invented issue served to reflect Bishop's (and most white westerners') imperialistic stereotypes and myths of the "other": the other who Bishop's seven year old speaker "was not."

This paper was followed by Priscilla Paton's look at Bishop and the "Landscape of Desire," which she defined as a landscape of longing for both mother and for Eros. This presentation formed a useful transition to an outstanding presentation by Nova Scotia Bishop scholar, Sandra Barry, whose "Invisible Threads and Individual Rubatos: Migration in Elizabeth Bishop's Life and Work" clearly established some little known facts about the pre-eminent role of Nova Scotia in Bishop's oeuvre. Countering a commonplace assumption that Bishop was by times homeless, restless, uprooted and displaced, Sandra's paper established the primacy of "out-migration" between the province and the so-called "Boston States." Using the analogy of patterns of bird migration, this paper established that rather than choose to settle down in one restricted place, Bishop moved between places, creating interstices between one place and another.

A highlight of the conference was the presence of Bishop's collected water colors which were on view at the local Fletcher/Priest Gallery. The gallery is an intimate space housed in a single family home on a short, suburban street. The main gallery space consists of two rectangular and adjoining rooms with simple white walls and wood floors. The space is light and airy. Against its sun-brightened walls, the simple charm of the watercolors sang. Here was Bishop's eye, wit and voice in an immediacy that rivals that of the poems. In a presentation, Bill Benton, editor of *Exchanging Hats* (the recently published book on Bishop's paintings), emphasized the intimacy of the watercolors. Despite Bishop's admonition that "they are not art!" the paintings possess a naive, yet consistent style which uncannily mirrors that of her poems. Line is important as is color and perspective. What she includes is what other painters might be inclined to exclude: wires and foliage, for example, which are treated as details rather than obstructions.

On Friday, I attended what I thought would be the most controversial session offered: "Bishop, Home and Racial Identify." Two of the three papers in this panel began what needs to be a larger discussion on the role of race in Bishop's life and work. Session Moderator, Renée Curry, began the presentation considering "Bishop at Home with Whiteness." This paper examined "The Imaginary Iceberg" as a symbol of female subjectivity and home, as well as a symbol for Bishop's ability to "take in otherness." Curry's paper provided an incisive introduction to the topic of race or racialism, and was followed up by the more daring "Was Elizabeth Bishop a Racist?" written by the absent Stephen Gould Axelrod. This paper considered the relation of "Cootchie, "Songs for a Colored Singer," "Uncle Neddy" and "In the Waiting Room" to racial issues. It is fair to say that of the works cited, the first two are easy to label as racist because they rely upon idiom and stereotype. Neither Curry's nor

Axelrod's papers did enough, however, to merge the Bishop of the letters (far more personal and uncensored documents) with the more measured Bishop of the poems. As with issues of sexuality, issues of race are tempered in her more public writings. Clearly, Bishop was as much a racist as was anyone else in her time. Her racist attitudes don't lessen the value of her poetry, however, nor do they warrant dismissal as merely characteristic of a specific time and place. Axelrod's paper asserted that the writings in question reflect "ubiquitous, unconscious bias," but whether (in my opinion) that "unconsciousness" can be fully substantiated is debatable.

The final session found me in my presentation panel on "Images in Bishop's Poetry and Painting." The papers in this session were well suited to one other because they addressed various uses of imagery in Bishop's poems, prose and paintings. Joan L. Fields (the contact person for the South Central Modern Language Association conference on Bishop's "Complexities of Estrangement as Reflections of Postmodern Culture" in New Orleans in November, 1998) was the first presenter. Her paper on "Aural Imagery: The Male Personae" was taken from a longer work on that subject. It revealed an interesting attention to the use of male personae in creating sound images. I followed with a look at "Images of Inversion as Encoded Lesbian Identity in 'Love Lies Sleeping' and 'Insomnia'." The two papers created a charged dialogue which we hope to follow up in New Orleans next year. The final presentation was a delightful look at "Bishop's Paintings and Drawings" by Lorrie Goldensohn.

The conference ended on Sunday after a sumptuous Brazilian brunch, complete with selections of Brazilian music provided by the three participants from Brazil: Carmen Oliveira, Maria M.L. Martins and Neusa da Silva Matte. The brunch was followed by a reading by Ann

Marie Shea of Worcester State College from *The Diary of Helena Morley*.

Overall, the conference was a feast for Bishop aficionados. It proved to me beyond a doubt that our appetite for new, and even not so new, ideas on Elizabeth Bishop and her life and work is far from sated. There's plenty of room for more.

(For information about the South Central Modern Language Association Conference, November 12-14, 1998, New Orleans, LA, contact Joan L. Fields, University of Southwestern LA, USL Box #4-4691, Lafayette, Louisiana 70504. Fax: 318-984-3883; Email: jlf3154@usl.edu)

Membership in the Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia is available for \$8 per year or \$20 for three years (Canadian funds). Either membership entitles the holder to take full voting part in the Society's deliberations and to receive the Newsletter for free.

The EBSNS Newsletter is published twice yearly in the Spring and Fall. Publishing history: 1(1), Fall 1994; 2(1), Spring 1995; 2(2), Fall 1995; 3(1) Spring 1996; 3(2) Fall 1996, 4(1) Spring 1997.

Subscription is by membership in the Society or \$5 Canadian per year, made payable to the Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia.

Editor: Peter Sanger
Associate Contributing Editors:
Jeffery Donaldson, John Barnstead
Editorial Assistant: Sandra Murphy, Humanities
Dept., NSAC, Truro, NS B2N 5E3
Phone: (902) 893-6725
Fax: (902) 897-9399
Email: smurphy@admin.nsac.ns.ca

Contributions to the Newsletter, or suggestions for its contents are most welcome. Please contact Ms. Murphy about either.

Five Poems from:
Elizabeth: A Verse Tribute

by W.J. Keith

The Beginning

It all began
here
with smithy sounds and smithy sparks
and the smell of schoolroom slate-rags.

All:
fretful, unforgettable memories, yet
a sense that contentedness is possible,
though rare.

All:
ambiguous moments which, when recalled later,
are sad because they had seemed so happy
once.

It all began
here:
not the life, not even the misery,
but the poems.

Great Village

Handsome, though not more handsome
than other clap-boarded
Maritime villages,

yet explored, photographed,
because once a jettisoned child
found this place home.

School, church, cottage, graveyard, all
attest to a young girl's
erased footprints

preserved by the grown woman
in poems as unpretentious
as white-painted wood.

On Sable Island

"I've always felt a personal interest in the place.
So I thought I'd go..." EB to Robert Lowell

Think of her (1951)
on Sable Island, where
last century a great-grandfather
perished in shipwreck,

where herds of raggedy wild ponies
gallop the shifting sand-dunes,
the sole place in the world
where Ipswich sparrows breed.

Think of her watching
those ponies whose ancestors
(unlike her great-grandfather)
survived shipwreck;

think of her watching,
along with obsessed sandpipers,
those sparrows that return each year
with resolution and luck --

if they stray off-course
or the buffeting winds
alter direction, they die
(like great-grandfather).

Think of her pacing the sands,
receiving a first faint hint
of embittered Crusoe; think
of the poem she wrote later.

In the next few hundred years
this island, scientists forecast,
will slowly erode away,
the sparrows homeless.

Think of the poem
she never got around to writing
about Sable Island, its threatened ponies,
its doomed sparrows.

Sleepless

Sleepless, not wanting to think
of anything potable,
she recalls the salty tang
of Great Village and other
smaller villages hugging
the Fundy shore, remembers
those ebbing and flowing tides
that move, cleansing, through her veins,
innocent childhood liquid
that neither intoxicates
nor harms, but offers comfort,
sustaining, inducing sleep.

**Elizabeth Bishop as Heritage and
*The Atlas of Literature***

(General Editor Malcolm Bradbury,
De Agostini Editions, London, 1996)

by Brian Robinson

Once I came across the grave of a very famous author entirely by accident. Easy enough to do if you are in Highgate or Père-Lachaise Cemeteries but not in the streets of a city like London. But then the haphazard geography of London lends itself to such surprises. And so there I was in a cul-de-sac of lawyers' offices in The Temple hesitating beside the grave of Oliver Goldsmith. Like most tourists I would have preferred not to have been caught out like that. After all, since tourism is a secular pilgrimage, I am usually on my way to specific sites, each with its own uniquely determined drawing power: I don't have time for tales along the way...

Of course, the heritage industry knows this only too well. It prepares us with themed representations of identity and landscape to such an extent that besides the "Goldsmith country" in

Last Word (6 Oct 1979)

A superb letter
about poetry (what else?),
written with passion, conviction,
and (what else?) love.

Within an hour or so,
the body short-circuited, death
intervened conclusively.

The last composed word: "Affectionately..."

Ireland there is already a Heaney country (complete with manuscript room) in conflicted Northern Ireland. There, as Heaney has said of his own work (which is located in so many pilgrimage sites), the tourist can only be "unhappy and at home" (compare Heaney's words to Bishop's epitaph for a much travelled life; on her grave in Worcester the inscription is "awful but cheerful"). But, as I say, I am a tourist which is why I turn to *The Atlas of Literature* for safety's sake concerning a favourite author or two -- in this case Elizabeth Bishop -- under the heading of "Places to Visit." And there she is... in Canada, Nova Scotia, Great Village. In fact, she is the only literary person of any kind given for Nova Scotia. (Hugh MacLellan's demolished Halifax house, a blank parking lot behind an equally blank wire fence beside an entirely blank Canadian Broadcasting Corporation building, rates no more of an entry than it apparently rated municipal planning mercy.)

How is my question of travel answered? The *Atlas* states: "This hamlet was the childhood home of American poet Elizabeth Bishop and the setting of many of her poems." Fair enough, although the juxtaposition of *Great Village* and "hamlet" might leave some perplexed.

"American" in the Canadian part of the *Atlas* will annoy some; but then British Columbia's candidate in this section of the *Atlas* is the Englishman, Malcolm Lowry's Dollarton (the shack has gone, and so I learn from the *Atlas* that "the site" can be toured in Cates Park). In fact many of the *Atlas's* Canadian sites are one way or another "foreign," for example, Uncle Tom's and Jack London's cabins in Dresden, Ontario and Dawson City, Yukon respectively. Are entries for these places artifacts of either the publisher's sense of the market for the *Atlas*, or the nature of literary tourism in Canada, or both? Whether either or both, it is hardly surprising then that *none* of the authors deemed worthy of visits in the *Atlas* is included in the *Atlas's* section on Canadian literature. Symptomatically titled "Canadian Images," it leaves the impression that most Canadian literature could be found by making a visit to Ontario Place in Toronto. At any rate, it is interesting to turn the question and sift the *Atlas* for Key West, Florida, one of Bishop's other homes. Her house there is not listed. Instead, there is the Hemingway House (complete address, telephone number, open daily) where we are told, he wrote *A Farewell to Arms*. The obvious Hemingway myth makes one of the "settings" of the poem "One Art" seem more like a secular inventory. But still...

Does one's sense of being shortchanged maybe derive from a certain expectation? What, after all, is meant by "setting"? Where Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms* is not quite the same as a brief "childhood home" even if it is the setting of "many poems." To notice the difference is partly to ponder what must have been the difficulty encountered by the editor of the *Atlas* when trying to grade sites and authors. The inconsequentiality of terming a place a "hamlet" is in no way commensurate with the consequential myth of Hemingway's Key West. Also the difference is the degree to which one author has

been for many merely a reputation, and the other a capability, the art of losing. Still we do know which author's repute is on the rise!

As for Brazil, it is perhaps expecting too much in the era of Latin American "Magic Realism" to find a dead Anglo poet listed. Nevertheless, the editors of the *Atlas* have somehow found room in the section designated "Latin American Writing: a literary heritage explored" for a subset on "Honourary Latin Americans and their fiction" which includes Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* (complete with a still of Julie Harris and Laurence Olivier from the film version), but nothing at all about Bishop. The translator of *The Diary of Helena Morley* deserves better, but then Bishop hasn't had much luck with the caption mentality of publishers. In her personal copy of her Time-Life edited book on Brazil she wrote, "I am not responsible for chapter headings or captions -- although I tried to correct captions." I include that here for the record. More significantly, perhaps, my *Atlas* tourism is obviously not informed of what she wrote to Robert Lowell on January 8, 1968: "Petropolis was the worst -- I shall never go back there."

So many "buts" and "maybes" in my divagation that, while Great Village residents and Elizabeth Bishop tourists alike must be grateful for what has been put on the map (it is after all the same as putting a plaque on her home and school), there is a wider geography which no atlas could manage to catch in its graticule. And maybe that's the point or the real difficulty which might explain why Bishop is not even included in the *Atlas's* index. We (as tourists and markers of "heritage") have no way of finding a geography for her life or, rather, the map is a kind of geography whose grid she is not to be trapped in. Here I would make a comparison with Walter Benjamin, who is not in the *Atlas's* index either. His was a marginal life, in a sense -- marginal even in literature.

Benjamin died almost literally in the no-man's land of a frontier. Since he belonged nowhere and everywhere, where is the *Atlas* to index him (and by implication Bishop)? It is disturbing, therefore, to find Benjamin in the section of "Berlin: the centre of German Modernism" where he is mentioned three times. He may not be in the Index yet he is apparently, like Bishop, deserving of an honourable mention. Of course, what is most deeply disturbing is the horrifying fact that Benjamin *was* surveyed in someone's index with complete vengeance: "Berlin's intellectual and artistic life, no doubt, was burned in the actual and symbolic fires of 1933, before most of its protagonists would be murdered or, like Walter Benjamin, kill themselves in despair" (*Atlas*, p. 185). *In extremis* then, and risking the trivialisation that even pointing the way implies, let it be recorded that there is a recently opened memorial to Benjamin on the French-Spanish frontier.

What is to be expected then of Bishop's more neighbourly heritage in Great Village? As was announced in the previous issue of this *Newsletter*, during June of 1997 two of the "settings of her poems" (and memoirs and short stories) were designated by plaques as Nova Scotia provincial heritage properties. One of these, The Great Village Elementary School, would probably have been accorded this status anyway. It is of architectural interest, it makes a "statement" in the village's landscape, and few of its kind are left. But it is unlikely that Bishop's "childhood home" would ever have made the grade on its own structural, functional, or aesthetic merits. Described by Ann Marie Duggan in the *Newsletter* (Vol. 3:1) as "Classical Revival... in vernacular form," much of the house is actually made up of extensions that include a kitchen ell, entry porches, dormers, and, like an inconsequential afterthought at the end of the ell, a shed! In a sense the good people of Nova

Scotia have put an architecture which questions classical symmetry with vernacular necessity (a corrugated iron shed) on the "world class" map. Inconsequentially, then, to this divagation I would point out that the Elementary School's former outhouses are now also a shed. It has been relocated a kilometer or so away from the school in Great Village's cemetery...

I do not say that altogether facetiously because, as Seamus Heaney characterized Bishop's poetry during, of all occasions, his Nobel Prize for Literature acceptance speech (to add another world landmark stamp to our "hamlet"), it is marked by its "pure consequence," part of which involves the way in which the inconsequential (an occluded village, a Post Office left at the side of the road like a package, a shed at the back, an Esso station at the front, an awful metal bridge) can, through literal attention and pure observation, come to mean more than virtual "historic" and themed "heritage." Not that this means forgetting the school. On the contrary, I will end my divagation by adding a footnote which pays tribute, not only to all of those from the Nova Scotia Department of Cultural Affairs, from The Great Village Historical Society and from the Elizabeth Bishop Society, who worked to have these buildings marked and who appropriately conducted the ceremonies, but also to "Manure" MacLaughlin who... well perhaps I should let Elizabeth Bishop explain his name, as she does in her autobiographical piece about the school called "Primer Class." When, she says, she went home from her first day of school "and was asked who was in Primer Class with me... I replied, 'Manure MacLaughlin,' as his name sounded to me. I was familiar with manure -- there was a great pile of it beside the barn -- but of course his real name was Muir, and everyone laughed." Of course "Manure's" living presence was acknowledged last June as a living link to Elizabeth Bishop. He attended, in person, and

was welcomed and honoured. In so doing, those there were also enacting the fact that the Village can never be the same. Certainly, what with the shrines and the officialdom, it will be more difficult to stumble across things by accident. Nevertheless, in provisioning the village with

plaques, hopefully those responsible may also have created a space for Bishop's writing which, after all, has its basis in our anonymities. At least this is the kind of difficult line we, who are also tourists, will constantly have to remind ourselves about...

Add to Your Bishop Collection!

**Expulsion From Paradise:
Elizabeth Bishop 1927 - 1957**

By Thomas Travisano

The First Elizabeth Bishop Memorial Lecture: Presented in Great Village on June 9, 1995. This lecture contains material about Bishop's childhood and adolescence not yet available elsewhere.

Price: \$10.00 Canadian (Postage Paid)

The remittance payable to: Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia,
P.O. Box 138, Great Village, Nova Scotia B0M 1L0

Elizabeth Bishop: An Archival Guide to Her Life in Nova Scotia

by Sandra Barry

Published by The Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia, 1996, 226 p, \$25.00 (no tax), postage included

The EBSNS is proud to offer this description and analysis of the Bishop and Bishop-related archival material which is held in institutions in Nova Scotia.

Send order with cheque or money order to:

Alan Bray, Treasurer, EBSNS
P.O. Box 138
Great Village, Nova Scotia
B0M 1L0