Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia

# NEWSLETTER

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The EBSNS was formed in 1994 to celebrate the life and work of Elizabeth Bishop. It publishes an annual newsletter. In 1998, it also published *Elizabeth Bishop: An Archival Guide to Her Life In Nova Scotia*, by Sandra Barry, documenting Bishop and Bishop-related documents in the province. The EBSNS contributed to the purchase of an extensive family archive that documents Bishop's Nova Scotia childhood and is housed at Acadia University Archives, N.S. The EBSNS holds its AGM in Great Village in June. We seek through various activities to study and celebrate Elizabeth Bishop in many aspects, especially as a Nova Scotia writer, thus enriching our literary and cultural heritage.

## The Art of Losing: Translating Elizabeth Bishop into Czech

**by Mariana Housková**

I first came across Elizabeth Bishop's poetry as an undergraduate student of English in Prague, Czech Republic. She was just one of many unknown names in the hundreds of pages of *The Norton Anthology* where all poems look the same and get blurred even visually on the translucent thin pages. The thing which struck me, and the main reason I went to the library to get her complete poems, was the way she wrote about animals. The mixture of admiration and humour in her tone, the precision and economy of her descriptions, her subtle irony – I wanted to explore all these further. My teacher, the poet and translator Justin Quinn, liked my term paper which dealt with Elizabeth Bishop's animals, and he suggested I translate some of Bishop's poems. I worked on the translations for several years, and finally had a selection of her poems and letters published in Czech at the end of 2004.

Surprisingly enough, Bishop's poetry was virtually unknown in the Czech Republic before then. In my country, we have a very rich tradition of both the practice and the theory of translation. But Czech translations of modern American poetry are random and selective, and there are many great poets, such as Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore, who are still basically untranslated. A few translations of Bishop's poems were published in literary journals, but none were included in any of the Czech anthologies of American poetry. Czech translators and editors seemed to be interested more in the Beat aesthetics of Allen Ginsberg or the confessionalism of Sylvia Plath, while the seemingly less personal and less passionate voice of Elizabeth Bishop remained unnoticed. My task as translator therefore consisted not only of making a new translation of her poems, but also of introducing her to a wider Czech readership.

And it was the voice, the tone of her poetry, which proved very hard to translate at the beginning. It is hardly possible to find a similar voice in Czech poetry to which the translator could look for inspiration. There are some great Czech poets, but they write very different poetry; one hardly finds at all the descriptive, objective tone of the ironic observer we hear in Bishop. My first and most basic task was to

find an appropriate overall tone for Bishop's poems – combining detachment and emotion, conveying her irony, keeping the descriptive quality and yet making it sound like poetry to the Czech ear. I had to make the Czech language speak in a voice it had never spoken in before. This search for things in the language which are somehow hidden and as yet unexplored is one of the most fascinating parts of the translator's work. It does not mean that one should force the language or distort it; the point is to show that the language is so rich and powerful it even contains voices which have not yet spoken in it.

Another problem I faced when translating Bishop is one faced by every poetry translator: the question of whether to stick to the form of the original, or whether to abandon it to better render the meaning, the imagery, etc. An ideal translation should keep both, and I believe that a translator has to keep this ideal in mind as the inaccessible goal of perfection for which one longs although one knows it is beyond reach. One should aim for the perfect result, although something is always lost; one should not give up before even starting. Moreover, there is nothing more rewarding than when, after a long struggle with the impossible, the translator suddenly finds that the solution has been there all the time, hidden in the language, just waiting for him or her to discover it. Again I am returning to the concept of translation as a search for hidden possibilities. It has often been said that poetry translation is in fact a creation similar to the original poetic creation; but for me it is more of a search. (Just like the original poetry itself can be seen as a search.) The translator is like a sculptor, who gradually reveals a body hidden in a marble block and lets other people see it.

In accordance with the Czech tradition of translation, I tried to keep the original form (metre, rhyme, rhythm, sound) in my translations of Bishop's poems. At the same time I wanted the poems to be about the same things, to use the same imagery, to have the same tone. I would not make up meanings for form's sake. On the other hand, a poem like "One Art" would be lost to the reader if it wasn't translated as a villanelle. "One Art" is an obvious example of a poem which is impossible to translate into any language without losing a lot. In working with this poem I clearly realized that translation certainly is "the art of losing" – which is also the title of my book of Bishop translations. (In Czech it is *Umģnķ ztrįcet,* which sounds pleasant as a name for a book; the cover was by the wonderful Czech landscape painter Jiųķ Mģdķlek, who painted the picture for it after reading "One Art" in Czech.)

Elizabeth Bishop writes about many things which are foreign to the Czech reader. The landscape of "the sea and its shore," so common in her poems, is something we do not have in our landlocked Central European country. The same is true of the Brazilian jungle, and our houses look very different from those of Nova Scotia. The very first poem I translated was "At the Fishhouses" which is full of things unfamiliar to the Czech reader: lobster pots, a capstan, herring scales, the seal, Baptist hymns, the fishhouses themselves. It might seem that the Czech language would lack words and images to speak about this scene, but this was not so. Bishop's description is so clear and precise that even I, who had never been to Nova Scotia when translating the poem, was able to visualize the scene and to find Czech words to describe it. Reading Bishop's poem I didn't feel the landscape (seascape, in this case) was strange; on the contrary, it felt familiar. I might have never seen such landscape in reality, but it did not seem any less real for that. I almost felt I had always known it. And I suppose the Czech poet Petr Borkovec felt the same reading the six lines about the ramp for hauling up the boats, which he used to speak about his own landscape (a river and a lumber boat by a sawmill) in his poem "I Pick Up After Bishop."

When I was translating Bishop my only guidelines were her words. I knew the context of her work, but I had never been to the United States, Canada or Brazil. I believed (and I still do) that poetry is to a large extent independent of the world it is set in, and that great poetry can reach across cultures, across time and space. The world of poetry is the world of imagination, which is open to everyone and universal even in its particularity. Three months after the book of my translations was published, I had the opportunity to travel to Nova Scotia (thanks to the kind invitation of Sandra Barry who made my stay in Elizabeth Bishop's house a unique and unforgettable experience) and I finally saw the places I had to find words for in my language. The strongest feeling I had there was Bishop's "Heavens, I recognize the place, I know it!" After I returned from Nova Scotia I went through my translations to see if there was anything I would change on the basis of my immediate experience of the place. I found nothing, which I think is proof of Elizabeth Bishop's genius – her poems, often so closely related to particular places and scenes, create these places and scenes fully anew, and manage to bring them across to the reader by the sheer power of her words and images.

Mariana Housková, born in 1977 in Prague, teaches poetry and translation at Josef Skvorecky Literary Academy. She is doing her PhD in Elizabeth Bishop at the Charles University, Prague. In 2004-05 she was a Fulbright scholar at Boston University. Her book of translations of Bishop into Czech appeared in 2004.

**Editor : Brian Bartlett**

**Contributing editors: Jeffery Donaldson and Ross Leckie**

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**Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia**
**P.O. Box 138 – Great Village, NS**
**B0M 1L0 Canada**

# Editorial

First of all, our apologies to Anne Shifrer, whose name was transformed twice in our previous issue. Editorial gremlins relocated an "r" and imported a "c." Also, our more bibliographically keen readers may have noticed that the previous issue (Winter 2005) was misnumbered 11/1//11.2, whereas the issue preceding that (Fall '03/Spring '04) was numbered 10/2/11.1. Formerly issued twice each year, this newsletter has become – at least for the meantime – an annual. This single-issue volume is identified simply as Volume 12. We trust that a substantial, full-to-the-brim issue once a year will make up for the infrequency of publication.

This issue demonstrates brightly the ways in which Bishop scholarship finds roots in her ancestral and childhood domain of Nova Scotia, while also radiating out to far-flung geographical, linguistic worlds. Previous issues of the newsletters have featured essays about Bishop relating to Russian, Portuguese, and Japanese, so we're glad to continue that tradition here with an engaging, informative essay by the first translator of Bishop's poetry and letters into Czech. In a further case of the internationalization of responses of Bishop, we include a poem originally written in Czech, linking to a few lines of Bishop's, then translated by an Irish poet.

Since the founding of the EBSNS a dozen years ago, appreciation of Bishop's Nova Scotia connections has grown. Whereas there was a time when Bishop's poetry never appeared in anthologies of Atlantic Canadian poetry, it has done so twice in the past decade. *Poetic Voices of the Maritimes: A Selection of Contemporary Poetry* (Hansport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1996), eds. Allison Mitcham and Theresa Quigley, while bewildering in its exclusion of such major poets from the region such as Robert Gibbs, Don Domanski, and John Thompson, commendably chooses eight Bishop poems, including poems of Nova Scotian imagery and setting – "First Death in Nova Scotia," "Cape Breton," "Sandpiper," "Poem," and "The Moose" – as well as "The Map," "Questions of Travel," and "Exchanging Hats." A more comprehensive anthology, *Coastlines: The Poetry of Atlantic Canada* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2002), ed. Anne Compton, Laurence Hutchman, Ross Leckie, and Robyn McGrath, includes the Bishop poems "At the Fishhouses," "Cape Breton," and "Poem." In a curious case of regional vs. national conceptions of identity, Bishop hasn't appeared in a general anthology of Canadian poetry, and it is hard to imagine her doing so anytime in the near future. If her Maritime identity is clear though complicated, it's questionable whether we can speak of her having an overall "Canadian identity." This strikes me as simply something to observe.

Since the purchasing of Elizabeth Bishop's childhood house in Great Village by a group of interested Canadians and Americans last year, many people have spent days and nights in the house. This issue features the impressionistic paragraphs of five such sojourners, who catch some of the pleasures, hauntings, and discoveries of walking around the rooms and the neighbourhood a beloved writer knew in her childhood.

Bishop's poem "One Art" has generated not only the title of Bishop's selected letters and of the first Czech translation of Bishop, but also a minute in a recent Hollywood movie, *In Her Shoes*. Though I've not seen this movie, it's reported that one hospitalized character has a visitor read to her an e. e. cummings poem and Bishop's "One Art." On the on-line *IMDB* movie data-base, "Memorable Quotes from *In Her Shoes*" transcribes under the character Maggie Feller "One Art" turned into prose, with no lines or line-breaks, and no mention of Bishop – a sad example of the sort of plagiarism rampant on the internet. (Thanks to Linda Hodgins for this observation.)

Questions about film are also at the heart of Alexander MacLeod's review-essay on Nexus Media's *In the Village*. MacLeod's essay is, among other things, one of the most sensitive commentaries anywhere on Bishop's "In the Village." One interesting overlap between it and Mariana Housková's essay is that both refer to the priority of art over biography: Mariana discovered how visiting the "real" Great Village didn't coax out any after-the-fact revisions in her translations, while Alexander asserts the primacy of Bishop's writings as the most essential source of our interest in her. I hope you will find other enlightening connections among the many offerings in this issue.

# Five Visitors, Five Voices: Sojourns in Bishop's Childhood House

Front of Bishop's childhood home, Great Village, with Nova Scotia flag, July 2005

## Carol Frost

The July days my husband and I spent in Great Village were sunny and filled with small coincidences involving our son and daughter-in-law, who are from Worcester, Massachusetts – Bishop's childhood home after Great Village – and our two-month old grandson Luca, who slept in little Elizabeth's room. In Bishop's unpublished Nova Scotia novel, Lucius occupied that room.

We visited Five Islands Provincial Park, saw the tidal bore on both the Salmon and Shubenacadie Rivers, drove to the beaches near Halifax – all lots of fun – but we enjoyed most seeing the roses, marigolds, and zinnias in the house gardens, the red bay, the cows in the pasture back of the house, the updated filling station, the grade school and its outhouse that Paul Tingley saved from demolition by placing in the back yard of the Bulmer house, the tin roof, the church steeples, the baptismal river, and the Acadian farm land in and around Bishop's childhood village, then re-reading her letters, prose, and poems. How lovely to be able to be in the kitchen where her grandmother made tea and in the pantry where, if Lucius' life was very like her own, Elizabeth may have spooned sugar in the rum for her grandfather's nightly "toddy."

My husband and I spent a part of one day looking for Uncle Arthur's secret fishing spot where he sometimes brought Elizabeth. Was it near the mouth of the Bass River or higher up the Cobequid range? Had they fished for striped bass or trout? Bishop mentions striped bass, by name, often in her journals and letters, and the pictures taped on the refrigerator at the general store in the village of Bass River show magnificent and large bass. Another summer I plan to fish for them and for trout, in Bishop's honour.

Hardly more than a week and it was time for our children to depart for Worcester, taking little Luca with them, and for us to step back out of Bishop's lost childhood time – not entirely lost, now, because her idyllic childhood house is in all our keeping and preserved in her timeless poetry and prose.

Carol Frost teaches at Hartwick College in New York State, and her many books of poetry include *Pure*, *I Will Say Beauty*, and *Love and Scorn: New and Selected Poems*.

## Janet Baker

Parlor? Parlour? Questions of travel and nationality preoccupied me as I entered Elizabeth Bishop's house in Great Village house for a three-day stay in mid-December, 2004. It had been thirty years since a fellow teacher, part of the Viet Nam exodus from the U.S., had told me about this marvel, this "local poet", fantastical, American, living exotically "away" and making fairly regular, predictable returns to the area and this shore. He admired her greatly and was stunned that Nova Scotians didn't. Over the years, having missed possible sightings of Bishop, notably at a Dalhousie convocation, and then (forever) in October 1979, I found the force of her writing beginning to take on form and scope for me, a Wordsworthian experience of drawing away from an imposing outcrop, coming to perceive its heft by putting together details and outlines and shades.

She was gone: the words remained, hi-jacked into American anthologies without a murmur from the CanLit people. My American friend had presented me with a cautionary tale of Canadian/Nova Scotian opportunity not seized. For the past twenty-some years, I have had periodic visions of the house sold, renovated, demolished, changed.

Being in it just before Christmas brought a kind of peace: for the moment, the house has been secured in its original place. At night, as the logging trucks passed by, my

Susan Crowe reading "The Moose" on the verandah; with Elizabeth Peirce and Elsie Baker

dreams were of a widened highway, the house expropriated – "kidnapped" – taken on a flatbed to a large, American museum where it would sit, like the Maud Lewis house in Halifax, an artifact and a relic, demonstrating to streams of visitors "the rural way of life in a foreign backwater, circa 1915." No doubt the outhouse would go along too.

Janet Baker, who has taught Canadian and Renaissance Literature at Saint Mary's University in Halifax for many years, is the author of *Alexander MacMechan: Canadian Man of Letters*. She published a piece on Bishop and MacMechan in *EBSNS Newsletter* (Fall 2003/Spring 2004).

## Marilyn Iwama

I wait for my first night in Bishop's house to begin. Petrified. Intruders in the shadows, in the furnace whooshing, whooshing. I try the kitchen, for the rocker and the memory of fire in the stove. And wine smoked almonds, for their calming. That wears away. Shovel the walk, unpack, settle in. Settle...in. Walk. Past the guinea fowl, past a fire that smells doused and the dog with no wag in its bark.

Morning comes, as it will. After reading Ishiguro to sleep and waking throughout to Radio Prague... Netherlands...Germany and the steady light of "Elizabeth's Lamp" toted up that ladder of a stairway. Concentrate on conversations in the journal: Susan and Cathy raising a toast to EB on her birthday, John's ms. on the living room floor, Gudi's currywurst, that damn Titanic book.

They wrote. I write. Find new ways through old words, poems that were trying to be. My house sells while I'm here. One son turns 20. They all manage ("O difference that kills, / or intimidates, much / of all our small shadowy / life!" – "Song for a Rainy Season").

Marilyn Iwama, born in Saskatchewan, lived in six countries and completed a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies before moving to Halifax and publishing her first book of poetry, *Skin Whispers Down*, in 2003.

## Thomas Travisano

On a balmy, sun-drenched day in late July or early August, few places in the world seem as idyllic as the centre of Great Village. The day-lilies and roses are in triumphant bloom. The white-painted wood-frame houses rest comfortingly in their sea of green grass. These, and the towering United Church – ex-Presbyterian – that faces Elizabeth Bishop's childhood home, seem to promise tranquility and endless summer. Yet, though no one hear it, the echo of a scream *still* hangs over that Nova Scotian village. At least it still rings in the ears of Bishop's readers when they make their pilgrimage to this place that was so central to her being. The ESSO station across the street from her home is now a Wilson's, but high-strung automobiles still round the curve past Layton's Store (now an antique-shop) and head over the iron bridge that Bishop herself sprinted across on her way to Primer Class as the warning bell clanged. It is impossible for one of Bishop's readers to be in this vicinity without seeing the place at least partly through her eyes or without her phrases echoing in one's ears. The bay when it is "not at home" still glistens with "lavender, rich mud." Even now as one drives the "Moose-Route" (Sandra Barry's phrase), one rolls past "rows of sugar maples, / past clapboard farmhouses / and neat clapboard churches." And a detour off the paved highway still forces one along "red, gravelly roads" whose dust clings to one's mini-van even as one writes so many hundred miles away and so many days after the event.

Bishop's home in Great Village was a place she loved and also the place of her most poignant and irreplaceable loss. Love and loss are the twin themes at the core of Bishop's work. The appeal of Bishop's house is the appeal of something that is at once transparent and mysterious -- in that way it resembles Bishop's work. Her house, like her work, embodies the mystery of life turning into art and then back into life again. So much life, so much art, still echo through this house.

Thomas Travisano is the author of *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Artistic Development* and *Midcentury Quartet: Bishop, Lowell, Jarrell, Berryman, and the Making of a Postmodern Aesthetic*. His edition of the complete letters between Bishop and Lowell is forthcoming.

## Sue MacLeod

It was winter, and what comes back to me first is the watery light pouring in through the multi-paned windows. Bouncing off white snow and spreading on a carpet full of roses. I have come here to work on a novel – a time-travel novel set in part at the Court of King Henry VIII – and what comes back to me next is auspicious coincidence. In the hallway, apropos of nothing: a portrait of that overstuffed king.

The rooms downstairs are cozy so I settle there, stretching out every night on the generous couch. I am drawn to small rooms that open into one another, drawn to secret places, and anyone who feels this way is bound to love...

...the pantry. If you haven't seen it, how to explain? How to imagine a room so small with so many drawers. Clean white paint and black hardware. The porcelain sink with its solid white curves. The pantry in the Bishop house: a cross

Donalda Nelson (daughter of Donald and Alberta McLaughlan – inspiration for the McLeans of "In the Village" – and sister of Muir McLaughlan); and Phyllis Sutherland (cousin of Elizabeth Bishop). Great Village, June 2005

between a kitchen and a jewellery box.

At one point I think I may count them: the drawers in the pantry; the panes that slice the outdoor view into liquid, subtly Cubist frames; the damask roses on the carpet in the study – my other favourite room. On the wall above the desk: a photograph of the house and its inhabitants many years ago. The father proud. The mother welcoming. The son, on horseback, poised to canter into the horizon. The dog, in the centre, moving eagerly and so – a blur.

If you know Elizabeth Bishop's story you may be shaken when you realize that the youngest, the determined-looking girl, her future spreading out in front of her, is Gertrude. If you know Elizabeth Bishop's work you may feel honoured to spend time here. Which, in brief, sums up the study. And, in brief, sums up the whole place.

Sue MacLeod has published two collections of poetry, *The Language of Rain* and, more recently, *That Singing You Hear at the Edges.* In her role as Halifax's first Poet Laureate she also edited a collection of Halifax writing.

**EBSNS Annual General Meeting**
**Great Village Legion Hall**
**4 June 2005 – Minutes**

1. Welcome from Sandra Barry, EBSNS president. Brian Bartlett agreed to record minutes, then read the 2004 AGM minutes. Motion for approval of minutes (Janet Baker; seconded by Lois Bray). Motion passed.

2. Treasurer's report read and submitted (Joy Graham). Joy made note of an encouraging increase in membership-renewal dues paid since March. Motion to approve (Joy Graham; seconded by Angus Chisholm). Motion passed.

3. Revisions to EBSNS Board. Ruth Peppard has ended her service on the Board; all other members remain. Margo Wheaton has agreed to join Board and become Secretary. Motion to approve Board (Lois Bray; seconded by Phyllis Sutherland). Motion passed.

4. President's report read and submitted (Sandra Barry). The report provided an overview of many significant developments: a) purchase of Bishop's childhood house in late November by a group of interested buyers with hopes for turning it into a writer's retreat;

b) donation of $10,000. to the Society by the Freedom Forum, at the prompting of Robert McNeil (the donation to be used for helping fund the Great Village tour booklet and the open-air display panel);

c) setting up of Bishop-Bulmer-Hutchinson-Sutherland family fonds on-line by the archives of Acadia University (the fonds should be accessible on-line by July);

d) completion of Nexus Media's film about Bishop, its recent repeated showings on Bravo TV and upcoming showing on CBC;

e) further discussions and planning for an open-air display panel about Great Village, including its importance for readers of Bishop. The estimated cost is $20,000.-$30,000. The Board will meet on June 25 for further discussions;

f) completion of *Elizabeth Bishop's Great Village: A Self-Guided Tour*, written by Sandra Barry. Sandra praised the printing skills of Gary Dunfield at Gaspereau Press, and the design skills of Scott Dickson;

g) the well-attended, superbly planned and followed-through International Women's Day Concert celebrating Bishop's life and writings, at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium in Halifax in March (CBC has already broadcast excerpts from the musical aspects of the performance).

Motion that President's report be approved (Sandra Barry; seconded by Donna Smyth). Motion passed.

5. Miscellaneous items: An expression of gratitude from Donna for Sandra's many-faceted work for the Society in the past year (applause). Angus's recommendation, accepted by those present, that the Society contribute $50. to the Great Village Legion for the continued used of its space for meetings.

The business part of the AGM was then followed by refreshments and

food, and a chance for those present to peruse and purchase copies of *Elizabeth Bishop's Great Village: A Self-Guided Tour.* Between 2:30 and 4:30, "Room By Verse" tours were held nearby in Bishop's childhood house. In the livingroom, Elisabeth Peirce read "First Death in Nova Scotia"; in the study, Cathy Porter, "Filling Station"; in the diningroom, Rob Christian, "Manners"; in the kitchen, Margo Wheaton, "Sestina"; and on the verandah, Susan Crowe, "The Moose."

## "Impersonations of an Ordinary Woman": Bishop Tribute in Halifax

### by Margo Wheaton

On International Women's Day, March 6, 2005, the Aeolian singers presented "Impersonations of an Ordinary Woman: Reflections on the Life and Poetry of Elizabeth Bishop" at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium in Halifax as part of their annual "Celebrating Women" series. The event, a celebration of the life and work of Elizabeth Bishop and a fund-raiser for The Marguerite Center, an addictions residential center for women, drew a capacity crowd and was an event that was by turns both exuberant and haunting.

The event itself was presented in the style of a collage, a celebration of spirit and essence rather than a definitive portrayal of Bishop's life and art. As Susan Crowe, who along with Cathy Porter provided artistic direction, noted in her program introduction, the show was intended as an "invitation" to each audience member to discover Bishop in his or her own way, the event "a collage, a shadow-box."

Sandra Barry's inspired, chant-like introduction set the tone for the event by presenting Bishop's own words and phrases in a highly impressionistic, associative way, an introduction to Bishop that was moving and evocative rather than factual.

The evening included an abundance of songs, dramatic readings from Donna Smyth's play about Bishop, *Sole Survivors,* and readings of Bishop's poetry, all thoughtfully and sensitively arranged in a fluid, open style that along with well-timed variations of light and darkness created a feeling of depth and richness in a varied program that alternately reached hushed, reverent moments and instances of sheer exuberance.

The musical choices reflected various aspects of Bishop's life and own preferences and in various ways quietly highlighted themes that emerged from the readings. The program included hymns and traditional songs Bishop loved, contemporary songs like Cindy Church's affecting performance of Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You" and the Brazilian-influenced guitar of Scott Macmillan. The Aeolian singers alternately provided musical foreground and backdrop, their beautiful voices creating a highly atmospheric quality and surround for the spoken readings, just right for the innate musicality of Bishop's poems.

Though there was much celebration and joy throughout the evening, the organizers didn't shy away from the tragic aspects of Bishop's life. The dramatic readings from Smyth's play interspersed throughout the program created a powerful, sobering reminder of the reality of the loss and loneliness Bishop experienced throughout her life. Martha Irving in the role of Bishop convincingly presented the poet as being rocked by the inner pressure of self-doubt and

Margo Wheaton reading "Sestina" in the kitchen

conveyed, too, the unfailing graciousness and courage with which Bishop carried both the painful complexities of her relationship with her lover Lota and her own life-long pain over her mother Gertrude Bulmer's early confinement to a mental institution when the poet was only a child. So compelling were the dramatic enactments by Irving and Marcia Kash as Lota that my friends and I left the auditorium longing to have seen the play in its entirety.

Perhaps most stunning of all, though, were the individual readings of Bishop's poems. It was a rare treat to hear poems consistently read so well. All of the evening's readers (most of them musicians by training) displayed a masterful sense of pacing and rhythm, and even more strikingly, a deep engagement with Bishop's poems. Susan Crowe's resonant rendition of "The Moose" perfectly captured the slow lilt of a bus moving through the Nova Scotia backwoods and Lisa Lindo's delightful reading of "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore" created a palpable childlike yearning in the poem's refrain to "please come flying."

The evening ended with a spirited last song, "When the Day is Over," and with Crowe rightfully thanking Sandra Barry for her tireless efforts in "bringing Bishop back to Nova Scotia."

To see so many people turn up for an event related to poetry is practically unheard of in Halifax. It seems Nova Scotians are indeed keen to welcome Bishop "back" to the place of her childhood, to the home that lived in her imagination and informed so many of her finest poems.

Margo Wheaton is a Halifax poet who has published essays in *Don McKay: Essays on His Works* and *David Adams Richards: Essays On His Works.*

## Request for Support of a New EBSNS Project

The EBSNS and the Great Village Historical Society have combined forces and resources to construct a pergola-style Open-Air Historical Display in Great Village. This display will be located on the property of Wilson's Service Station at the centre of Great Village, adjacent to the picturesque Great Village River, and across the road from the Elizabeth Bishop House. Wilson's has generously offered the site for the display, which will contain information panels about Bishop and the history of Great Village.

Through the auspices of Robert MacNeil, the EBSNS received a grant from the American media-education organization Freedom Forum, part of which went towards the creation of the booklet Elizabeth Bishop's *Great Village: A Self-Guided Tour*, with the remainder ear-marked for the display. However, the EBSNS must raise more money in order to complete the project. The EBSNS is currently waiting to hear if it will be successful with an application for a grant from the N.S. Department of Tourism and Culture. In addition, the proceeds of the booklet will go towards the display; but the EBSNS is asking its members and friends to think about being either a donor or sponsor for this project. For a gift of between $100 to $499, the donor's name will be put on a plaque which will be incorporated in the display. For $500 or more, sponsors will be able to put their logo on the display panels, giving a permanent advertisement.

We appreciate your consideration of this request, and hope that you will support this worthwhile initiative, which will be a significant addition to the community of Great Village. If you are interested in becoming a donor or sponsor, contact Sandra Barry at *slbarry@ns.sympatico.ca* or *902-429-6385.*

## A Life in Art, An Art in Life: Bishop and Nexus Media's *In the Village*

### by Alexander MacLeod

In the opening moments of Don Duchene's Nexus Media short film, *In the Village*, the American poet Kathy Spivak remembers a late-night visit she once made with Elizabeth Bishop in Boston. "She made me sit in this uncomfortable, squishy, leather, Harvard-man's-type chair," Spivak recalls. "And she sat on a little foot stool, and she read me 'In the Village.' She read the whole thing without a word. And it was so moving. It was electrifying because what she was trying to tell me 'In the Village' was so personal. She was not presenting it as a work of art. She wanted me to know her."

Anyone familiar with Elizabeth Bishop's work will likely recognize the kind of aesthetic metamorphosis Spivak describes here. The "moving" transformation she recalls – the "electrifying" charge Spivak felt as she witnessed "In the Village" changing from a "work of art" into something that borders on, but never actually becomes, a full-blown "personal" revelation – is precisely the kind of subtle yet significant transition we often associate with Bishop's best work. In fact, it is exactly this capacity – Bishop's unparalleled ability to move so deftly back and forth between the supposedly mundane surface of the "real" and the massive penetrating insight of the "artistic" – that gives her writing its signature power. Ordinary life and extraordinary genius are continually intermingled in Bishop's work and although it may seem counterintuitive, I think Bishop's most dedicated readers actually *expect* to be surprised by her writing. Even when Bishop turns her eye to the dullest, most boring or prototypically average attributes of a "normal existence," nothing can be taken for granted. As Helen Vendler observes, for Bishop, the "domestic and the strange" nurture, rather than oppose, each other (32). Like those initially disengaged, elderly passengers, gossiping away on board the bus, unaware of the "grand" and "otherworldly... sensation of joy" that awaits them at the end of "The Moose," Bishop's readers never know where they are headed when they enter into her work (CP 173). We can't predict or foresee the sudden swervings of her imagination and often we catch ourselves gasping those "sharp, indrawn breath[s]" that jolt us into understanding as we come face-to-face with Bishop's insight, her devastating but instantly recognizable images, the kind that say: "Life's like that. / We know *it* (also death)" (CP 172).

The close association that exists between life, death and artifice

influences much of Bishop's work and although the autobiographical and the artistic often intermingle in her writing, there is nothing simple about the way these two elements relate to each other. Bishop's work purposely positions itself on the line, or at that precise point of intersection, where the cultural forces that might or might not determine an individual identity in the twentieth century come together. Person and place, subject and object, home and away, fact and fiction, experience and its artistic expression: these are just a few of the basic oppositions Bishop interrogates. Her work perpetually questions the world as a whole as well as the world's role in the making or unmaking of the self. The overly simplistic before-and-after formulation that some biographical critics apply to the relationship between experience and art – the idea that the facts of lived experience clearly precede the making of art – simply does not correspond to what we find in Bishop's work. Even when we seem closest to the facts of Bishop's life – in well-known poems like "Sestina," or "The Moose," or even "In the Waiting Room" – that essential gap that opens up between truth and artifice is left purposely open and unsealed.

Perhaps no single work in Bishop's entire oeuvre demonstrates this capacity to write both toward and away from her own life experience more than the short story which provides the title, the subject matter and starting point for Duchene's film. "In the Village," the story, was written during Bishop's time in Brazil and first appeared in *The New Yorker* in December 1953 before being reprinting in 1965 as the dividing piece which separates the "Brazil" and "Elsewhere" sections of *Questions of Travel.* It is one of the very few (perhaps a dozen) prose compositions that Bishop published during her lifetime. Narrated from the point of view of a young girl, the story captures the child's thoughts and feelings as she pieces together the sad, confusing events surrounding her mother's inexorable descent into mental illness and eventual institutionalization at a local sanatorium. The connections between this story and Bishop's own childhood experience are unmistakable and well-documented. In June of 1916, Bishop's mother, Gertrude Bulmer Bishop, suffered through a similar collapse during a long convalescence at her parents' home in Great Village. Gertrude never recovered and was subsequently institutionalized for seventeen years at the Nova Scotia Hospital in Dartmouth before her death in May 1934. Gertrude's breakdown was perhaps the defining event of young Elizabeth's life. Her father had died of Bright's Disease in 1912, when Elizabeth was only eight months old, and after her mother's final collapse, it was decided that Elizabeth would return to the United States to live with her paternal grandparents. Bishop left Great Village in 1917 and never saw her mother again.

Because the autobiographical origins of this story are so clear, and because such direct connections between the life and the art of Elizabeth Bishop are often hard to come by and confirm, the special qualities "In the Village" possesses as a work of fiction are sometimes overlooked by those who wish to uncover or emphasize the "true story" behind the narrative. For these reasons, it is sometimes necessary to restate that even if it boasted no verifiable connection to Bishop's real life, "In the Village" would still be masterwork of short fiction. This is a story in which the stark tragedy of the mother's illness and the pain of the child's experience are expertly interwoven into the churning quotidian existence of life as it is lived in the village during one particular and peculiar moment in history. In fact, it is the all-encompassing intensity of this engagement with the life of the village as a whole – rather than with the lives of the mother or daughter considered in isolation – which acts as the primary focus of the story. Like one of those tenderly brutal reflections on the nature of suffering we often associate with Auden, Bishop's story stubbornly refuses to be reduced to just the tale of the nearly orphaned child who has lost her mother to mental illness. No matter how tragic the narrative *should* be, and no matter how directly we can draw connections to Bishop's life, it seems clear that, at least in this story, the searing sadness of the mother's experience can never be separated from the sometimes serious, sometimes comical, sometimes mundane events that surround it. As the title suggests, the mother's fall is more than just common knowledge, it is a common condition, a shared

experience felt by the child *and* by everyone else in the village. Although we are told in the opening lines of the story (and early in the film) that a tell-tale "echo of a scream hangs over that Nova Scotian village," it is important to understand that, for Bishop, the scream is a single note; it is one of the many sounds that, taken together, produce the cacophonous musical score of life in the village (CPr 251).

In his discussion of the relationship between the real Great Village and the village portrayed in Bishop's fiction, Brian Robinson suggests that despite the "remarkably literal" details of geography that connect these two places, "the appearance of reportage is deceptive." He points out that although "'In the Village' may in fact be the place 'Great Village,'...there is no guarantee that what has been brought together is other than what has merely occurred within the spatial limit implied by the story's title" (79). Robinson argues that the mother's scream should be interpreted as "an attribute of the village" rather than an isolated cry that connects us directly back to Bishop's life.

Although it is both tempting and easy to zero-in on that single relationship between the child and the mother, and to map the relationship between Elizabeth and Gertrude directly onto these characters, it is also important to remember that this story is populated with many other characters that are all sharply drawn and specific. There is Miss Gurley, for example, the sad, old-maid dress-maker with her "bosom full of needles"; and Mr. Johnson, the gentle and understanding postman of the village, a man who, by virtue of his position, knows everything about everybody in his community (CPr 258). Then there is Mr. Chisholm, the strange neighbour who prays with the child and asks her how her "soul" is feeling. There is Nelly the cow, a character who dominates the central action of the plot; and there is Jock, the old, deaf and rheumatic dog owned by Mr. McLean. Physically decrepit, unable to run, sensitive to cold weather and completely ineffective without his teeth, Jock is a key figure in the story. Although he too, like the child's mother, has reached the end of his useful life, those who love him continue to protect him. Mrs. McLean wonders how they will ever get along when Jock is no longer with them. All these individuals factor into the life of the story, and taken together, all these lives factor into the story's individuality. Life in the village cannot exist without them.

The plot of Bishop's story is also extraordinarily busy. There is a lot for the young protagonist to do: errands to run, cows to bring home, a pair of new shoes to wish for, candy to buy, five-cent pieces to be accidentally swallowed. Above all there is that other significant noise in the story, the inviting clang coming from the Blacksmith's shop. This is described as the "beautiful pure sound" that "turns everything else to silence" (274). In the shop stands the imposing figure of Nate, a man who towers over the narrator and playfully welcomes her into a special place where the craftsman carefully practises his practical art. Unlike the house where the scream originates and the narrator's mother moves excruciatingly toward her final breakdown, the blacksmith shop is an alternative site where only good things happen. It is the place "where things hang up in the shadows and shadows hang up in the things," where beautiful rings get made out of painful shoe nails, where men spit, horses stamp their feet and nod "as if agreeing to a peace treaty" (253) and everyone is "perfectly at home" (257). The child narrator obviously needs and longs for the shelter of the shop, a site where, even in the midst of her family tragedy, the funny and the strange are still possible. In the shop, real art and real life come together.

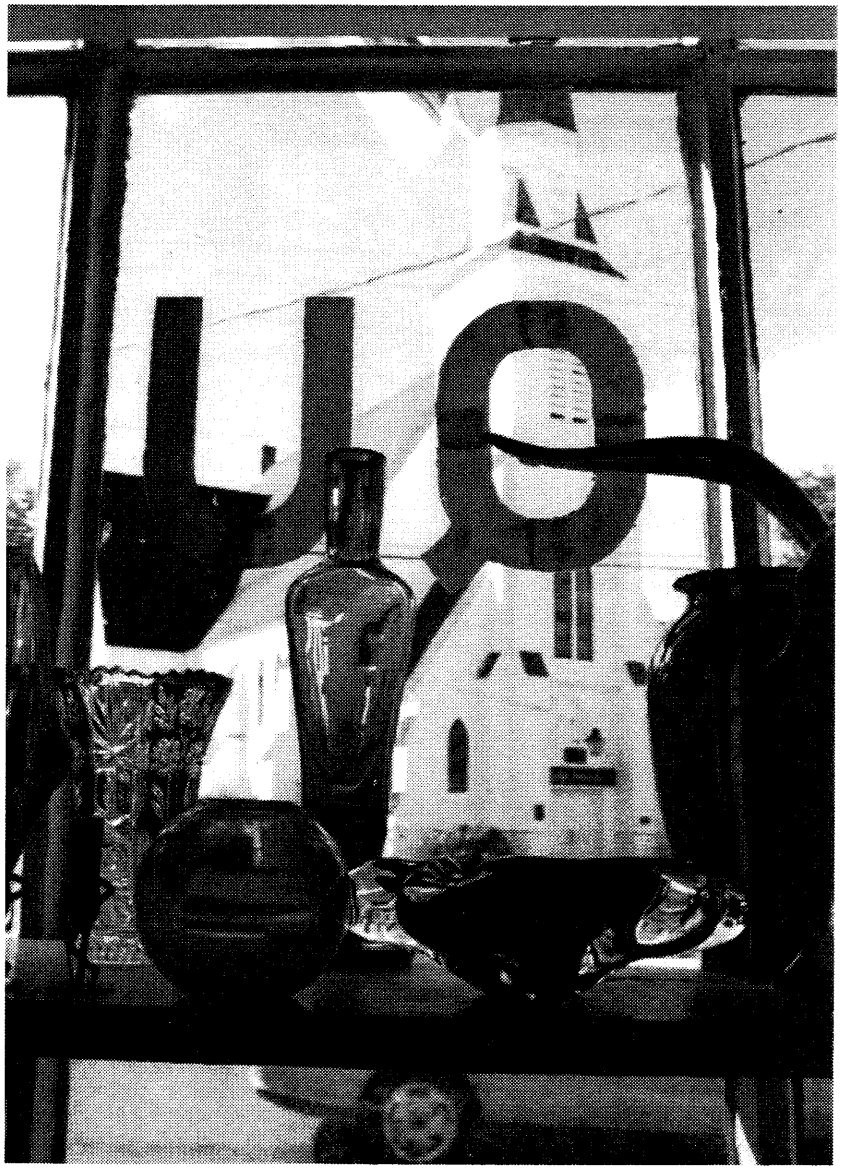
Any study or treatment of "In the Village" must eventually come to terms with the interdependence of autobiography and artifice in this story. Duchene's film clearly understands that the relationship between these two facets of the text must be addressed and it might even be argued that the entire structure of the project is based on just such a division. Although it is only twenty-two minutes long, *In the Village*, the movie, is actually two films in one. Divided almost perfectly in half, *In the Village* merges the format of a cinematic adaptation (a word-for-word, near literal re-creation of the key scenes of the story) with that of a more traditional academic documentary. Beautifully shot images of Great Village and a series of dramatic re-enactments staged in and around the community are combined with a collection of interviews, in which scholars, poets and friends discuss Bishop's life and the special significance "In the Village" holds in her life's work. In this way, the story is simultaneously re-presented and re-interpreted. To put it another way, we could say that Duchene gives us one film that attempts to reproduce "In the Village" and another one that *reflects* back on the story and provides commentary *about* "In the Village."

Considered separately, each half of the film offers a different way of thinking about the story. In the scholarly analysis, the ongoing meta-commentary on the story, Spivak's personal recollections – the words that open the film – are well-supported by other leading Bishop experts, such as Tom Travisano, Gary Fountain, Neil

Besner and Lloyd Schwartz. Early on, Travisano establishes the dominant reading which will be continually re-enforced throughout the film. "I don't think this story was recognized as a masterpiece instantly," he argues. "That was a work that needed some grounding in her biography for people to fully appreciate it. Now everyone in Bishop Studies or who is interested in Bishop sees it as absolutely pivotal." For Travisano, clearly, the factual connections to Bishop's life that we see in "In the Village" are among the story's most valuable assets. He observes: "The sequence of events. What's happening to this mother? Who is the child? How do they intersect with each other? My sense is that without a little bit of biographical background it would have to be puzzling."

Much of what Travisano says here is true: The broader significance of "In the Village" did emerge gradually in Bishop Studies and, without a doubt, some knowledge of Bishop's biographical information does improve our understanding of the text. However, I fear that at some level Duchene's film embraces that one-to-one correlation between Bishop's biography and the life of the story a little too directly. Early on, when the depersonalized "objective" narrator of the film tells us that "the story may have been Bishop's way of dealing with a voice that haunted her since she was a child in Great Village, Nova Scotia... a painful voice in her own mind," we, as listeners and viewers, understand that any useful distance which might once have existed between Bishop, the author, and the character who inhabits the world in "In the Village" has been closed down. In the film, these two individuals are seamlessly and unproblematically combined. The author *is* the character and the writing of the story is presented almost as a kind of therapy, a way of dealing with the challenges of the author's life. For a writer like Bishop – a figure who is often characterized (fairly or unfairly) as a poet who stood solidly *against* the confessional school which dominated American literature in the mid-twentieth century – the suggestion that a strictly biographical reading of her work might be the best way to interpret this piece seems ill-fitted. It goes without saying that Bishop's "In the Village" is deeply committed to an analysis of the relationship between life and art. I'm just not sure if the direct relationship the film embraces corresponds to what is actually happening in the story.

In the second half of the film, the cinematic adaptation, Duchene repeats his central interpretation and compliments his biographical reading with several fascinating visual images. In a series of dramatic re-enactments, Duchene stages many of the key scenes of the story. Viewers actually get to see the plot unfold: we watch the mother getting fitted for her purple dress; we see the child walking the cow, meeting her neighbours and visiting the Blacksmith's shop. We watch a stylized fire burning in the night. Interestingly, however, we also see



the protagonist move through several scenes that are not in the story at all: we watch the whole family sitting together in church; we see the daughter and mother walking along a beach and playing on the shore. Most significantly perhaps we watch as the mother is carried away from her home, presumably to the sanatorium. Vacantly staring out into the distance, the mother seems unaware of what is happening. When the credits roll by at the end of the film, we learn that the actors in *In the Village* have been cast into roles that easily move back and forth across that line between fiction and reality. In this film, there is a character called "Elizabeth Bishop" (played by Maria Wood) as well as a "Pa" and a "Gammie Bulmer" and a "Grace Bulmer Bowers." These real historical figures intersect and interact with characters from the story, such as the Blacksmith, "Mr and Mrs Chisholm" and "Nellie the Cow." (The final credits tell us that the role of "Nellie the Cow" was played by a – presumably – professional actor-cow named "Sandmore Sprite.")

It is certainly not my intention to dismiss *In the Village* as a flawed film. All the cinematic elements of Duchene's work are impressive: the photography is vivid, the casting spot-on, the sound track evocative and the editing crisp and clean. It is probably a good sign that my first reaction to the film was a feeling of disappointment only because Duchene's piece seemed too short and I wished for it to be longer. I kept wondering if I had seen the whole thing, and hoping for a few more minutes. Obviously my commentary here is more clearly focused on Duchene's interpretation of Bishop and the reading of the story endorsed by his film. In its current compact form, I just don't think there is enough time for Duchene to explain to a general audience exactly why Bishop is so important and why this story is essential. Although almost all the Bishop scholars in the film sit in front of those crowded floor-to-ceiling bookshelves that seem like an architectural certainty in any academic's home, not one of these experts ever provides us with that valuable, broader literary perspective so much reading encourages and allows. Nobody ever tells us why Bishop matters. Nobody ever says something like: "This poet was one of the twentieth century's most challenging, insightful and original voices." Instead, it seems almost like a distraction when Travisano spends two minutes reading Bishop's uncollected early childhood poem "Ballad of the Subway Train." Again, if we consider these things in isolation, the poem and Travisano's reading are strong, and the long sequence of animated dragons, planets and lights that Duchene uses as a visual accompaniment to the piece are fantastical and full of wonder, but in this motion picture – a project which already seems to have bitten off more than it can chew – these extras carry us away from the true center of the film.

It probably shouldn't be surprising that the two versions of "In the Village" we receive from Bishop and Duchene cannot come together easily. The story and the film are directed by different ambitions. The former focuses on the power of the smallest gesture, the most evasive hint and the slightest suggestion; while the latter, by necessity, must present us with a clear-eyed shot, an expertly delivered university lecture and, ultimately, a documentary truth. All those "things damaged and lost, sickened or destroyed" that Bishop writes of at the conclusion of her story – all those tragic "raw" materials gathered from her life and skillfully shadowed into her fiction – must be brutally brought to light by the film and captured by a seeming clarity that actually obliterates their deeper and darker significance (CPr 274).

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Alexander MacLeod teaches Atlantic Canadian Literature and Writing Fiction at Saint Mary's University in Halifax. His short stories have appeared in various journals and won various awards, and his first fiction collection will appear from Biblioasis Editions in 2007.


Photo credits: p. 4, A. MacLeod; others, except for p. 1, B. Bartlett. Photos on pp. 9, 11, and 13 are of the Great Village antique shop, formerly Layton's General Store, next door to Bishop's childhood house.


**Copies of *Elizabeth Bishop's Great Village: A Self-Guided Tour* available from EBSNS ($10.+ 2. postage)**

## The Poem – i.m. E.B.

**by KathrineTalbot**

She had folded the poem
typed on flimsy paper
and held it in her hand
carried it down the stairs
to the dining-room with its paintings of sailing boats,
carried it through the kitchen

to the verandah overlooking the bay,
held it out to us askance
like a child with a first crayoned picture.
We read and praised the poem
finding, inanely, a line to commend
as if she were a novice of the art.

'I crave praise like the next,'
she wrote in a letter, 'need to boast,'
carried the poem like a flimsy handkerchief at a ball,
brought it to the lunch table
to lie beside her plate
regarding it with a lover's abstraction.

Towards evening the island floated in sunset mist,
the swallows darted and perched,
the schooners paraded towards harbour,
no white-throated sparrow sang.
She carried the poem across the blueberry patch,
the flimsy white paper catching the last light.

"Kathrine Talbot " is the pen-name of Ilse Barker, author of three novels and several short stories, and translator of works from German. She and her painter husband, Kit Barker, met Elizabeth Bishop in Yaddo in 1950, and in subsequent years the Barkers met their friend at their Sussex Cottage and in Maine and at Harvard. In *Elizabeth Bishop: An Oral Biography*, complied by Gary Fountain and Peter Brazeau (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1994), p. 344, Barker describes the situation that inspired the above poem. The Bishop poem alluded to is "North Haven."

Some of Bishop's letters to the Barkers are reprinted in *One Art: Letters*, ed. Robert Giroux (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994). They were the recipients of a letter that said: "A story was to be called 'Clothes. Food. Animals.,' which I still kind of like, but finally decided it was a little chichi – so now it's simply 'In the Village'.... It is funny to come to Brazil to experience total recall about Nova Scotia – geography must be more mysterious than we realize, even" (Oct. 12, 1952). Less than a year later (Aug. 29, 1953), Bishop wrote to Ilse: "I am sorry for people who can't write letters. But I suspect also that you and I, Ilse, love to write them because it's kind of like working without really doing it."

# I Pick Up After Bishop

**by Petr Borkovec**
**translated from Czech by Justin Quinn**

Down at the water's edge, at the place
where they haul up the boats, up the long ramp
descending into the water, thin silver
tree trunks are laid horizontally
across gray stones, down and down
at intervals of four or five feet.

As though it will never move again,
clamped by flowing water, to the left
it stands, branches grown over the watermark,
and bits of board that weeds have caught hold of,
a lumber boat, its coat of yellow
slowly grading into rust.

Above the dusty bow, above the cone
of smooth rocks which supports
a platform at the far end, as though hung in mid-air,
with conveyer belt, there stands
an articulated jib with half-turned scoop
in which rainwater shines like oil.

A track runs to the sawmill in the field,
straight and roasted hard as bricks,
and there it turns and skirts it
in four rounded angles,
and stretches off far across the fields,
beaten, straight and exact.

Up from the river, on the opposite bank,
vertical and smooth as a wall, the rock rises.
Pines sway languidly,
and in between these, through wide breaks,
other pines unfold,
these a little higher, on the grassy top.

Petr Bokovec, born in 1970, has published seven books of poems, with some works translated into German and Italian. He works as an editor for the literary magazine *Souvislosti* and translated Russian poetry (including Navokov and Brodsky) into Czech. He received the Jiųķ Orten Prize for his book of poems *Ochoz* in 1994. His poem above begins with six lines from Bishop's "At the Fishhouses."

Justin Quinn, born in 1968 in Dublin, has published three books of poems, *The O'o'a'a Bird*, *Privacy*, and *Fuselage*. He teaches modern American poetry at Charles University, Prague, and is the author of *Gathered Beneath the Storm: Wallace Stevens, Nature and Community*, and *American Errancy: Empire, Sublimity, and Modern Poetry*.

## *From* Saint Mary's U Études: on listening to a first-year student read Bishop's "One Art"

**by Brian Bartlett**

Far from her family and home in Glace Bay,
a shy girl lifts her hand and volunteers
while those to her right and left glance away
as if asked to confess their deepest fears.
Flushing, blinking, she begins with a soft cough:
"'The art of losing isn't hard to master....'"
Launched like a boat downriver, she's off,
she gives us the words – *keys, realms, disaster,*
*gesture* – as if they were her own to give.
Her pacing, perfect. Her ear, sure. Each lift
and dip of her voice suggest she's lived,
beyond her eighteen years, a century.
Does she know it's a gift, this euphony? –
"One Art" held in the breath of Stephanie.

Brian Bartlett's most recent books are *Wanting the Day: Selected Poems* and the chapbook *Travels of the Watch*. He has edited a book about Don McKay for Guernica Editions and is currently editing a selection of Don Domanski's poetry for Wilfred Laurier Press. The above poem originally appeared in *The New Quarterly* 95 (Spring 2005).

## Where the Old Filling Station Was

**by John Barnstead**

My but it's clean!
Streamlined, its signs truncated
like the elm next door – ATM –
("atmosphere?" you might've speculated)
but at least there's COFFEE left,
white weave on an oval of Delft blue weft,
its first syllable looming
soft as in "CA-sa Mariana,"
Walcott soft, softer even than rumours
relayed in Lowell's pseudo-southern drawl,
softer certainly than the cot somebody left
against the wall in your old bedroom,
where the skylight's secured from the wind
with a pair of snub-nosed scissors
left by some roomer put to rest at last here.

Signs of the times left about just everywhere.
The yellow diamond for CAUTION you'd swear
from a distance was meant to say YIELD
to agnostics: black arrow picking out the plaque

on Saint James's Church, or maybe the church itself,
with its dentil moulding, and still somewhat hopefully spired.
Caddy-corner from here and off in the shade
the Great Village & District Volunteer Fire Brigade
has CIVIC NO SIGNS FOR SALE. Just PHONE
668-2314. But perhaps you'd as soon Myles left
you alone? Is he the letter carrier, too, on foot since the last
of three loved autos went? Or has he been put out
to pasture? Was all this heaven-sent?
Anyhow, last Sunday morning he played the Lord God
in *The Potter and the Clay* – an experiment: a mod-
ern service, "not something we normally do," said the pastor.
Coming here is like coming to your senses, only faster:
sight striated by the parlour window's chequerboard
of bubbly, wavy glass, with certain panes too perfect, flat,
clear; sounds of central heating but lately acquired.
"Feel free to make an entry" on the cover of the house journal
somebody left on a shelf, this house once hauled
from Scrabble Hill and left now across from –

My but it's clean!
Like the view of a sky from the kitchen window
or E. M. Forster's Machine –
WILSONS GAS STOPS – there's a windrow of tire-tracked snow
where somebody left a portasign of that No Name yellow
repeated evidence has proved you can't not look at.
It was cold when poor Tony was left without his jacket
to set its black block letters, one by one.
Fetch from its battered tin bucket the squeegee
left there to do the windshield of Mrs. Layton's car,
or later (so, so, so much later), leaving all that aside,
stare out over Minas Basin and the dikes the French
left behind, their outskirts defeated yellow,
dim against the bright sky of a high window.

John Barnstead has taught Russian at Dalhousie University for the past 29 years. A previous contributing editor of the *EBNS Newsletter*, he had articles in the Spring 1995 and Spring 2001 issues. His current projects include "Russian Imagery in Canadian Poetry" and "Ekphrasis, Deixis, and the Chronotope" (a study of poems about paintings that depict pointing figures – "now *that's* esoteric," comments John).

**Annual General Meeting**
**Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia**
**in Great Village**
**Saturday, June 17, 2006**

**In our next issue: Ross Leckie reviews *Edgar Allan Poe and the Jukebox: Uncollected and Unfinished Poems of Elizabeth Bishop,* edited by Alice Quinn**
**Nancy Bauer reviews *God and Elizabeth Bishop*, by Cheryl Walker**