
THE ELIZABETH BISHOP SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

NEWSLETTER

The EBSNS was formed in 1994 to celebrate the life and work of the poet Elizabeth Bishop. The society seeks through various activities and projects, to promote the appreciation and study of Elizabeth Bishop, as a Nova Scotia writer. The EBSNS publishes an annual newsletter and holds an AGM in Great Village in June of each year. For more information about EBSNS and about membership, visit our website www.elizabethbishopns.org.

Editorial

After a two year pandemic hiatus, the EBSNS held an AGM on 25 June 2022 at the Great Village Arts and Entertainment Centre (formerly, St. James Church). Our guest speaker was Nova Scotia writer and journalist Laura Churchill Duke, who gave a fascinating reading and a talk about her historical novel *“Two Crows Sorrow”*. It was good to get back together, to return to some semblance of “normal.” It felt like the society had awoken from a long sleep. After the meeting, members and guests went to the EB House to see Elizabeth Bishop’s childhood desk, a special artifact that is written about in last year’s newsletter.



The return to normal was short-lived when, early in September 2022, Hurricane Fiona ripped through Nova Scotia. Its impact in Great Village was sobering: the iconic steeple of St. James Church was perilously tilted off its axis; astonishing that it did not topple, a testament to the solid craftsmanship by the shipbuilders who had constructed this century-old building. But the steeple had to be removed and has not been — nor may ever be — restored. It now sits beside its base.

So much trauma happened in the Great Village area in April 2020 with the mass shooting, invisible now but profound and abiding. When the hurricane shoved this beautiful 112 foot steeple off vertical, a landmark for all who travelled Highway 2 from Glenholme to Parrsboro, it seemed to reflect the ongoing disorientation that resides in the wider community, a visible wound from natural disaster that echoed the hidden wounds of violent human action. Healing will take a long time.

The EBSNS will hold its 2023 AGM on 17 June. We are delighted to announce that it will be at the EB House. Check out the poster about this event, with information about our exciting guest speakers, elsewhere in this newsletter.

Also in this newsletter, Laurie Gunn offers a brief update (below) about the past year at the EB House. A recent development at the house is also described: the move of display cabinets from the church to the house. Finally we share a couple of Bishop images done by artist and translator Natallia Pavaliayeva, her whimsical takes on Bishop's Brazil.

The EB House

The EB House has been a busy place for the last year with lots of people enjoying the quiet and the unique place that it is. This spring the society realized that we had to find a new home for the beautiful cabinets that Garry Shears made to display our Bishop treasures; a safe place where people could enjoy them, now that the church was no longer an option. Thank you to Clair Peers and his helper for transporting the two cabinets to the EB House. Also, thanks to Garry Shears who adjusted the larger cabinet to fit in the space we chose for it.



Bishop in Brazil by Natallia Pavaliayeva



In 2020 Natallia Pavaliayeva generously gave the EBSNS permission to use her Bishop images in a fund-raiser, which proved popular and successful. The society is most grateful for her support and we wanted to extend our thanks and also to share a couple of her drawings. Bishop's life in Brazil (like her childhood in Nova Scotia) included many non-human creatures. One was a toucan, which she received as a birthday present in 1952. She called it Uncle Sam (or Sammy). Sadly, several years later she accidentally killed it with insecticide, something she deeply regretted for the rest of her life. Bishop often had a cat and in Brazil her principal feline was Tobias (whose marking looked like he was wearing a tuxedo). Natallia's drawing is her rendering of a famous photo of Bishop and Tobias sitting on the patio of the house at Samambaia.

Natallia Pavaliayeva lives in Minsk, Belarus. She is a writer, graphic artist/book illustrator, and a professor of English Literature at Belarusian State University. She teaches modern and contemporary English Literature. She is also a translator from English and Swedish. Natallia has been drawing since the age of two. She studied at an art studio under the Belarusian artist Vasily Sumarev and has taken courses in sculpture and art history. Her pictures have been sold in many countries around the world, including the USA, France, Germany, Norway, Finland, and Italy.



POVALYAEVA '2015



*Remember I bought you
a pair of ten-cent-store, Carnival
big earrings
and hung them in your cage for you
to play with*

I loved you, and I caged you.

·Elizabeth Bishop·

EBSNS Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 17 June 2023
1:30 p.m.

Elizabeth Bishop House, Great Village, N.S.

No admission. Everyone is welcome!

Special guests will be writer Rita Wilson, author of *A Pocket of Time: The Poetic Childhood of Elizabeth Bishop*, and the book's illustrator Emma FitzGerald. They will talk about the creative process for this delightful and important book about Bishop's deep and abiding connection to Great Village.



Author **Rita Wilson** with illustrator **Emma FitzGerald**