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7-9-2014

Leonard B. Gilley Correspondence

Leonard B. Gilley 1929-

Daima Turner 1926-2000

Daima Turner Gilley 1926-2000

Hilda McLeod Jacob
Maine State Library

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GILLEY, LEONARD B.

April 14, 1970

Professor Leonard B. Gilley
Farmington
Maine 04938

Dear Professor Gilley:

Some few months ago we noticed an announcement of the publication of your book of poems, with the striking title HIPPOPOTAMUS AND FLOWERS. We hoped that we would see further information -- publisher and price, for instance -- but we must have missed these details. Can you tell us?

We want to note it in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, but we do need complete information.

We also want to mention the Maine Author Collection, a permanent exhibit of books by Maine writers. Most of these volumes are inscribed presentation copies, and make a most interesting and valuable collection. We are always delighted when we can welcome a new author, and we hope that you may want to inscribe and present a copy of your book of poems for this purpose.

Our good wishes go to you for its success.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

FARMINGTON STATE COLLEGE
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
FARMINGTON, MAINE 04938

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

May 25, 1970

Dear Mrs. Jacob,

Thank you for your kind letter regarding Hippopotamus and Flowers. I am sending you six copies — one for you, one for the library, four to give away (or start a fireplace flame!).

Additional copies, one dollar each, retail, are available from Holiards Press, P.O. Box 1292, Bellingham, Washington 98225.

Cordially,

Leonard Gilley

June 18, 1970

Professor Leonard B. Gilley
Department of English
Farmington State College
Farmington, Maine 04938

Dear Professor Gilley:

Your light-hearted generosity is delightful, and we are happy to acknowledge the gift of the several copies of HIPPOPOTAMUS AND FLOWERS.

The imagery and imagination, and power and humor, which are evident in these lines are indeed refreshing.

A copy goes into the Maine Author Collection, and of course one into the general section of the library. Sometime, perhaps you will be kind enough to let us have a little biographical material?

Meanwhile, thank you very much for HIPPOPOTAMUS AND FLOWERS.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

July 28, 1970

Professor Leonard Gilley
Department of English
Farmington State College
Farmington, Maine 04938

Dear Professor Gilley:

Thank you for the biographical information and the new poems, and congratulations on the acceptance by the Kansas City Times. The way of a poet if often slow, isn't it?

Probably we should have known, or surmised, that you were originally form Hancock County, because of your name. Apparently a strong creative streak runs in the Gilley family. We recall Wendell Gilley, for instance.

Congratulations on the promotion, too.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

PICNIC --written 7/23/70

by Leonard Gilley

After the picnic on the ledges
We gathered the wreckage--
Boiled-red lobster shells, white
Inside, feathery underbelly
Stained green, clam shells,
Cut and squeezed lemons, limes,
Corn-cobs -silk -husks and so on.

We poured the mess into a large,
Yellow, plastic sack we had purchased
From a laundromat vending-
Machine. The moon had already popped up,
Floated over the ocean; cold and fog
Drifted landward. We deposited
The gigantic sack of debris in the trunk
Of the car, added wood to the fire,
Pulled on sweaters. The ritual singing
Began. I thought of Robert Lowell,
American poet, slightly westward from here,
Sitting before the fireplace
In his Castine summerhome, oracle-like
Turning a martini-glass in his hand.

7/31/70

Dear Mrs. Jacob—

Thanks for your kind letter.

Wendell Gilley is my father.

Sincerely,

Leonard

The next line begins a new stanza.

As the others sang, I thought
Of Lowell's Notebook 1967-68 that I,
Confined by rain, had read the day before
Yesterday in the local public library.
Early in the book, Lowell mentioned
New Orleans and a ceiling fan dripping-wet;
I remembered all the huge fans,
Almost shaking the earth, that I had seen
In New Orleans and all the ice for drinks
And swimming pools loaded with people.

In New Orleans that summer only
A single old man whom I knew of,
An importer of fruit, "The Banana King,"
Running toward ninety years, was cold,
Had a robe over his knees and a fire
Crackling in the fireplace.

The surf beat in, cold air. Lights
Were blinking out to sea. Surely
"The Banana King" was dead by now and
Buried, well-rotted, and his heirs
Had carved his fortune, purchased
Air-conditioning, even traveled to Maine,
Yankee-land, for the cool foggy summers.

The next line begins a new stanza.

Agamemnon, arrogant Achaian, crept too
Into Lowell's Notebook dream.
Agamemnon slew readily and in turn
Was slain; he returned triumphant
From the destruction of Troy and his wife
Stabbed him in his bath, tamed him
Indeed! . . . The long-ago songs
("Show me the way to go home.
I'm tired and I want to go to bed.")
Dwindled, stopped, were replaced
By the metallic pop and pull of beer cans
Being opened. My wife thrust
A tall Schlitz into my hand and settled
Beside me. Sing she whispered.

Sing, Muse Homer wrote. Sing, Lowell--
Your work is good. Twirl the martini
Glass and sing. I drank a long slug
Of the cold, foaming-over beer. Someone
Threw a log on the fire, scattering embers.
T. S. Eliot wrote of Agamemnon too--
For example, "Sweeney Among The Nightingales,"
Circuit of music rolling around stars.
In fact, I thought, everyone seems to have
Written about Agamemnon, and even a few lines
About the Apenecked Sweeney, Banana King.
Sing on, Lowell, for God's sake, sing!

FARMINGTON STATE COLLEGE
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
FARMINGTON, MAINE 04938

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SHRUBS
by Leonard Gilley

accepted 7/6/70
editorial page
Kansas City Times

Shrubs, evergreen, appear in the night
To be tumbleweeds caught in stillness,
Crayoned in black this time,
And smudged indefinite.
The landscape seems black-ceramic
Whirled here and there
With patterns of magnetic iron.

July 7, 1970

Dear Mrs. Jacob,

Thanks very much for your generous response to H & Flowers.

I'm trying to become an important American poet. I've been writing for ten years. Perhaps in ten more I'll be recognized!

Enclosed is a bio sheet, and poems written July 5, 1970, by my wife (Daima Turner Gilley) and myself. We have three children--Anne, 6; Amy, 5; Thomas, 3.

I was born at the ~~H~~hospital in Ellsworth, grew up in Southwest Harbor.

I served in the US Army, Europe. I believe in my country.

In September, 1970, I'll be Professor of English here at Farmington (a promotion subject to trustee approval this summer--luckily it doesn't have to go on referendum!).

Sincerely,

Leonard Gilley

Leonard Gilley

Name:
Leonard Gilley

Education:

B.A.	Bowdoin College	1951	Government
M.A.	Johns Hopkins University	1961	Creative Writing
Ph.D.	University of Denver	1966	English

Teaching:

Farmington State College	1968-
Bloomsburg State College	1967-68
University of Denver	1962-67
Washington College	1961-62
Johns Hopkins University	1960-61

Publications:

Essays in MIDWEST QUARTERLY and PRAIRIE SCHOONER.

HIPPOPOTAMUS AND FLOWERS, book of poems.

CONFESSIONS AND EXPERIMENTS, anthology of poems.

LAWYER NEAD AND OTHER POEMS, pamphlet of poems.

Individual poems in NEW YORK TIMES, KANSAS CITY TIMES, SUNDAY DENVER POST, SOUTHWEST TIMES RECORD, SOUTHWEST REVIEW, PRAIRIE SCHOONER, MIDWEST QUARTERLY, CHRISTIAN CENTURY, AMERICAN WEAVE, WORMWOOD REVIEW, VERB, CARAVAN, DESCANT, GW: THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE, NEW LANTERN CLUB REVIEW, DUST, GOLDEN CIRCLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE PROFILES, GATO, BALL STATE FORUM, MAINE DIGEST, NEW CAMPUS REVIEW, THE GOLIARDS, POET (INDIA), FINE ARTS DISCOVERY, LAUREL REVIEW, CIMARRON REVIEW, THE SMALL POND, MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM, THE MIRROR--FARMINGTON STATE COLLEGE, MAINE TIMES, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSLETTER (AUGUSTA).

FOR THIS IS SUNDAY MORNING

by Leonard Gilley

For this is Sunday morning and the frontdoor stands ajar--
The preacher with his head like a freshscrubbed skull
Offered on an outstretched hand will be with us presently
For coffee and crullers before the Service--caffeine
And sugar tinkering in the blood toward the unscrolling
Of a great sermon, ha! ha! ha!

Yes, here he is now hurrying up the walk dressed in his
Sunday best, boots gleaming, generous grin. At the door ajar
I say Good morning Reverend Hindhead (that really is his name--
I'd change it if it were mine), so good of you to come.
The coffee is piping and my wife fried crullers last night.

The children, well-dressed and -mannered, sit in a semicircle
Of sofas and chairs and after grace, my wife pours the coffee
And our eldest hands around the cruller-platter. And, bless
The good Lord Himself, how those crullers vanish down Hindhead's
Throat--and the coffee flows into his grin as if bulwarking
A small infinity!

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAINE

by Daima Turner

A float, and a float and a float--
One--covered with
Artificial flowers spelling
Hope, Faith and God;
Another--
A truckload of bleating lambs
Facing a 4-H boy chopping a lamb-shank
With a crimsoned knife--
Children, mothers, proud men
Waving flags--
Next, an antique car
With an old gentleman, face
Ashen, dressed in black in black,
Holding a golden cane--
We wave--we too,
We push the young ones (still
90 years to live) to qualify
For the great golden cane--
We push them to salute
The antique car!
"Why?" they ask. "Why?"
Another float:
A clever builder selling bungalows
Squirts water from a hose
Hidden inside a mobile outhouse.
The State Troopers' boots gleam,
Traffic piles up,
Sun x-rays maple leaves onto
The Indian band drumming
In worn shiny costumes--blue eyes
Framed with heavy paint, flesh--flesh abundant--
The Baptist Church launches Faith, Hope, God
Into the fairground, dusty
To sell polished apples and pickled
Eggs adorned with toiletpaper roses.
The golden-caned man babbles
Alone on an opened folding-chair.
We chew Maine barbecued chicken, laugh,
Wipe sweat, salty, into papernapkins
Embossed with lobster-designs.
It was good of us to come!