November 2015

Benjamin F. Smith Correspondence

Benjamin Franklin Smith 1830-

William J. Hartford

Albert Eisner

Maine State Library

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SMITH, Beulah Fenderson

b. Ogunquit, March 31, 1915

February 8, 1954

Mrs. Beulah Fenderson Smith
Blueberry Hill Farm
Wells, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

It is always a pleasant day when we can welcome a new Maine book, and a new Maine writer. We read about your forthcoming book, TIME IS THE WIND, and look forward to its publication with eagerness.

The library will want to buy a copy of course; but at present we write to you with the Maine Author Collection in mind. Do you know of this permanent exhibit collection of books written by Maine people? It numbers about two thousand volumes now, most of which are inscribed presentation copies. We are very proud of this testimony to the literary ability and achievement of Maine people, and gratified at the number of visitors and students who are attracted constantly. The inscriptions are as varied as the subject matter of the books, and lend a special distinction to this valuable collection.

We hope that you will want to inscribe and present a copy of TIME IS THE WIND when it is published. Please accept our warm good wishes for its success.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
November 18, 1955

Mrs. Beulah Fenderson Smith
Blueberry Hill Farm
Wells, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Do you remember that some time ago we wrote to you about your book, TIME IS THE WIND, which we read in the Portland paper was scheduled for publication?

Since then we have been watching for it; but we cannot find that it has been published. Have we somehow overlooked it? We should be most grateful to have you let us know, for we want a copy if the book is available. If it is not, can you let us know when it may be published?

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Encl--1

Maine Author Collection
By WILLIAM M. CLARK

She was straight shouldered and 17 year old tall. She looked past that which she could see. Her feet brushed the ground but the grass was not bent. Her hair was a combination of all the shades of red and gold, shades then known to nature only, given not bought, bestowed not applied.

We were all young, but she was a younger. We were all old because it was a time that quickly aged the young, but she had aged and still stayed young. I suspect that this was why we knew that she was somehow marked.

We wrote. We all wrote. Some wrote words that dropped like stones and hit the solid rock and made no dent. Some wrote words that were already tired before they dragged themselves once more to light. Some wrote in labor, knowing all the violence and the things that should be said but lacking means to get the picture painted.

SHE WROTE in quiet melody.

Professors then were not intended to glow. Success was not supposed to be a stimulant for more success and so a thing to be pretended so that it might come. But the most stern, the one who praised the least, said, "You will be a great poet, but first you have to live."

I don't know if she laughed. I laughed. Because, really, every one of us had lived, already, more than that professor. He had been to school and school and school. He may have gone some Saturday in England to a pub and played at darts and then taken his notebook and crossed off one more planned requirement of preparation for his career, "Observed Raw Life." He may have taken a girl to a dance in college, then crossed off one more step, "Observed Women-Watched Organized Romance."

But he said, "... first, you have to live."

He may have shown her the outlined steps of living so that she would know just what to do.

But she had run barefooted through the morning grass and found the calf at the edge of the field. She had gone through the window to meet the moon. She had held a crippled bird until its heart slowed and stopped, and then she had cried and thought about the final forms of flight.

She was already touched with glory and she told me what happened."

"Too much," she said, "too much happened. Living here and there and splurges of action and no time... no time."

But somehow, surrounded by a family, sought by the things from the woods that she sought in turn, she wrote. She wrote about Maine. She wrote what she had to write.

The irony, the savage humor, the thing that brings me quiet laughter here and there, is that, in some new academic age, the dedicated ivory tower aspirants, the seekers of the endowed professorial chairs, the men whose lives are plotted step by step, will make a visit to the place where she once loved. They'll look around and nod their heads and then cross off that notation on their lists. They will have seen and therefore they will be qualified in one more phase.

They'll go back and tell their classes about the lives of the poets. They'll outline the periods in the poets' lives. The further irony is that they will tell the truth because almost anybody knows more about the periods in a poet's life than the poet.

BECAUSE the professor is definite and therefore needed. The poet dwells in the undefined. I'd like to read the definite details that will precede the works of Bertha Fenshaw Smith in the anthologies of the future. The indefinite is right here. This is the way she says it.

TIME RUNS ME BY

Time runs me by like sea-bourne winds

Irieve I cannot stay

The moon that slims against the night,

Quicksilver days of May,

The candle, gutted to its end

That once stood proud and tall;

The leaf that blows, the rose that spills

Its petals on the wall...

Love runs me by like sea-bourne winds

Our hours turn and go

As swiftly as the April sun

Devours the splintered snow... Would that my lips might hold your kiss

As like your whispered name...

Would that the passing wind of time

Might spare our candle flame...

For mine the heart that marks its time

By feathered m o o n s that wane;

And by one petal blown, is honored
to razored edge of pain.
Beulah Fenderson Smith, the writer, the poet, the orator, knew how to turn straw to gold and take the things that really mattered, the things that really counted, and weave them into the fabric of her life. Her readers, across the country and far, many, many places, read her words, her poems, her prose, her stories, and her message of hope and healing. She knew that life is a tapestry of experiences, and she wove every thread into her writing. Her words, her poems, her stories, were like threads of gold, woven into the fabric of life.

Beulah was a woman who writes from the depths of her own life. She writes about the things that really matter to her, to her readers. Her work is like a mirror, reflecting the world as she sees it, as she lives it, as she loves it. Her work is like a lighthouse, guiding the way for those who are lost or wandering. Her work is like a compass, pointing the way for those who are迷失方向. Her work is like a map, showing the way to the unknown.

When Grandmother died, the will was read. The will left her property to various charities, but it also left her property to her children. The will was read in the presence of witnesses, and the will was sealed.

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May 29, 1964

Mrs. Beulah Fenderson Smith
Wells
Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Congratulations on the publication of HEARTWOOD, which we have added to our order list, and hope to see soon. Meanwhile, we delight in advance notices and samplings of the poems.

We hope that you will want to inscribe a copy for the Maine Author Collection. It may be that we wrote to you some few years ago about this permanent exhibit collection of Maine writing. The books now number over three thousand, most of them inscribed presentation copies, displaying an important and ever-growing awareness of Maine's contribution to literature. The inscriptions are original -- some gay and humorous, some pen-and-ink sketches, occasionally a little autobiography, sometimes a tribute to Maine. These distinctive touches always fascinate the students and browsers. We also gather biographical and critical material so that we may have as complete information on our writers as possible.

You have our very good wishes for the success of HEARTWOOD, and we do hope that this in only the first book.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
DEAR MRS. JACOB$,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND NOTE OF THE TWENTY-NINTH. I HAVE ORDERED A BOOK FOR THE MAINE AUTHOR COLLECTION AND WHEN IT ARRIVES, I SHALL BE HAPPY TO INSCRIBE IT AND SEND TO YOU AND THE LIBRARY. I, TOO, HOPE THAT THIS IS ONLY A FIRST BOOK. I SURFELY HAVE ENOUGH MATERIAL FOR MANY, IF I NEVER WROTE ANOTHER LINE! HAVE TWO COMING OUT IN McCALL'S, EVENTUALLY...THEY DO NOT TELL ME WHEN...

I SHALL BE PROUD TO HAVE HEARTWOOD AMONG THE LITERATURE OF MY HOME STATE, UPON YOUR SHELVES.

GRATEFULLY,

BEULAH FENDERSON SMITH

(WILL DONATE BOOK FOR M.A. COLLECTION) AND I DO HOPE YOU WILL LIKE IT! FIRST BOOK SORT OF A SAMPLING..
June 23, 1964

Mrs. Beulah Fenderson Smith
Maple Shadows
North Berwick, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

The beautiful format of your HEARTWOOD is at once an invitation and a promise. Your warm and friendly inscription greets us first, and it is a lovely expression of your relationship to the state.

Your poems which so precisely capture emotions shared in varying degrees by your readers are exquisite. They speak of richly maturing experiences, and have clearly been refined in the crucible of meditation. The result is a book to treasure and re-read and quote.

Thank you very much for the gracious gift for the Maine Author Collection. HEARTWOOD is an affectionately prized addition.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Heartwood

Poems

by

Beulah Fenderson Smith

Wake-Brook House
EULAH FENDERSON SMITH writes in explanation of the title of this, her first book of poems: "Just as the heartwood in any tree represents the growth that has been stored away to add to the strength of the whole, my book contains the lessons learned and the philosophy accumulated through the growth of girl and woman. It represents that which has been stored through growth.

"It is the sapwood that keeps the tree alive. The heart can be dead to the point of rotting and the tree still will live. Strangely and wisely and not fully understood by man, a tree, when it has added its sapwood to its heartwood (one or two years or ten years after the sapwood was formed), it does some remarkable things. For one thing it buries its foreign objects. Its hurts from nails, and (if young and healthy) even from axe marks and blazes. It buries those in a kind of capsule of stagnant wood, neither alive nor dead. Solid but not crossed by the life lines. Sometimes of course a blaze in the sapwood will just start to grow over and not make it and then the exposed wood will start to rot. Rot might penetrate all the way to the heart too.

"The heartwood bears all the scars of the past years and holds the record too of life in its rings. Good years. Bad years. I thought this a good title for a tree and a person are so much alike and so is their life and the way they record their scars, one on the wood, one on the soul."

Mrs. Smith began writing professionally in 1953 and since then she has become well-known to the readers of such magazines as McCall's, Good Housekeeping, Ladies Home Journal, as well as through the columns of newspapers and the more literary periodicals here, in England and in Canada. In all she has sold over a thousand poems in a time and place where the market for poetry has become tragically small.

William M. Clark, celebrated columnist and author of Maine Is in My Heart, predicts that "you and I will see
her established before we die as this generation's Edna St. Vincent Millay." He has known Beulah Fenderson Smith since her girlhood and on a previous occasion he wrote in part: "She looked past that which she could see. Her feet brushed the ground but the grass was not bent. We were all young, but she was younger. We were all old.
because it was a time that quickly aged the young, but she had aged and still stayed young. I suppose that was why we knew that she was somehow marked. We all wrote. She wrote in quiet melody. One of the professors said, "You will be a great poet, but first you will have to live". She was already touched with glory and he told her she must live."

And Beulah Fenderson Smith has lived fully, greeting the good and the bad, the demands of human relationships as well as the needs of the wild things which sought her from the woods and fields, with equal responsive generosity. Always she has continued to write even though she once harbored the conviction that "only the lonely write". It is all here in this collection of poems which is her heartwood.

Born in Ogunquit, Maine, she majored in English at Colby College in nearby Waterville, receiving her B.A. and a secondary school teacher's certificate. She did advertising research in Boston for Lever Brothers; then went to California, where she was on the Bakersfield Californian. Homesick for her native Maine, she returned to marry her college fiance. The wife of Robert Morrill Smith, she is the mother of four: Kaaren, 22, married; Daniel, 19, an airman currently in Iceland; Stephen, 13; and Susan, 8. Her home is a venerable farmhouse with many fireplaces, wide floorboards, and surrounded by a hundred acres of fields and woods, where Bucky lives, in North Berwick.

Hobbies are riding, skiing, fishing and painting. Animal personalities are 1 English setter, 1 cocker, and the Deacon, 2 saddle horses, 2 ducks, 2 parrakeets, Stephen's guinea pig, Susan's pinto rat, 2 raccoons raised from babyhood, 7 pigeons, and rabbits un inventoried. She also raises wild things, injured or abandoned, for the Game Warden. (Bucky the recovered fawn is one.) And once she tried a kennel which was a failure; she could not bear to part with any of the 22 inhabitants.