

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 - .

SMITH, Beulah Fenderson, b. Ogunquit, Maine, March 31, 1915, d. Archie Collins and Sarah (Clark) Fenderson; B.A., Colby Coll., Waterville, Maine, 1936; m. Robert Morrill Smith Oct. 25, 1940; children -- Kaaren, Daniel, Stephen, Susan Lee. Author numerous poems published in nat. newspapers and periodicals, including Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, N.Y. Times, winner twice Me. Poetry Day Contest; winner several times, Me. Writers Conf. Mem. Delta Delta Delta. Address: Maple Shadows, North Berwick, Maine.

-- Who's Who of American Women, 1961-62

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
Encl--1

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

Time Runs Me By, Love Runs Me By

By WILLIAM M. CLARK

She was straight shouldered and 17 year old slim. 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 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 inclined 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 he told her she must live.

BUT SHE took this as one of the hazards of formal education. We all knew the hazards. The hazards lay in the possibility of becoming disciples to cold blooded codes.

We scattered after that. I saw her, knew her, only in flashes, star falls, scraps of news, casu-



al comments. But 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."

She said, "Only the lonely write."

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 lived. 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 Beulah Fenderson 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

I grieve 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 spindrift 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 moons that
wane;

And by one petal blown, is
honed

To razored edge of pain.

Beulah's first book of poems published; she writes sensitively of N. England things

Beulah Fenderson Smith is known partly to Star readers for the column "Touchstone", partly for her many poems that have appeared under the heading "Coast Singer", and to poetry readers across the country for her many, many poems published by national magazines and prestigious newspapers. She is known to us at the Star as a breath of a breeze, a breeze that has just brushed past woods grasses and wild flowers and dogs and toadstools and brooks and hemlock limbs and hayfields and fox lairs. She is known as the lady with the tangerine hair, the leopard-skin suit, the orange mouth and the dark glasses that lift to disclose eyes the color of Delft china and the brilliance of cut glass.

Beulah is a woman who retains the freshness of her girl's-eye view of the world. She is a woman who should be protected from her own wildness of spirit, sheltered from the common slings of life and the arrows of mundane people and places. One thinks of her as hyper-sensitive to pleasure and pain and sorrow and joy, not in the shy-furtive way of an Emily Dickinson or the bold way of an Edna St. Vincent Millay, but the way of a college girl, a dreamer, not yet disillusioned. In spite of Beulah's courses in disillusionment, she looks on life with tremulous longing and hopeful anticipation. One's heart goes out to the rare wild spirit that she has refused to deny.

Poetry is a young person's work. Most of the great lyric poetry has been written in youth. Very few can keep the lyric gift beyond youth, retaining the poet's view of the world. Beulah is the exception who has the ability to continue to look at everything for the first time. She has the true poetic temperament. She writes because she loves to write. She has an infectious enthusiasm, an infectious gaiety and exuberance. The pleasure in selling a poem is doubly sweet for her. The pleasure she had in bringing us an inscribed copy of the first published book of her poetry matched our own pleasure in receiving it, we are sure.

We have immediately read it through and hasten to share that experience with you. In "Heartwood" the 79 poems are grouped under the headings "Poet's Calendar", "Cry Down the Heather", "The Circle", "Legacy", and "Time Runs Me By".

If they owe their inspiration to any other poets we should guess Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sarah Teasdale and Emily Dickinson, but it is hardly fair to attribute to them anything more than the broadest of influence, just as all original work is influenced in some way by other original work.

The verse is unmistakably New England in character as it is unashamedly New England in imagery and purposefully New England in its subject matter and detail. The pages of "Heartwood" abound in moods built by piling one New England detail upon another. The sadness of New England is in the poems, and the warmth to keep out the chill.

LEGACY

When Grandmother died, the will was read.
She left to others the silver set,
The great highboy, the stencilled chairs,
And folks were wondering what I would get:
The picture of the drinking fawn
That hung above her bed;
A sampler worked when she was young,
"God Bless Our Home", it read;
A book of verse, well-underscored,
That helped her when afraid;
A Christmas star that shone the tree;
The work her needle made;
The blue and worthless glass that caught
The sunlight on the shelf;
The common rocker, one that held
The imprint of herself—

When grandmother died, the will was read
And all her goods were scattered.
They pitied me—to whom she left
The things that really mattered.

Beulah writes of love and death and children and animals and seasons and home. She writes of them all as embodiments of little tell-tale things. Love is a man watching a woman darning socks or a woman smiling to see her man tilling her flowerbeds. The countryside is loved as a receptacle of woodpiles and barns and New England trees, a place where stars and moon and love and longing shine like candles; the homespun interiors are loved for their jars of jam, old blue willowware, clothes sun-sweet from the clothes-line, singing kettles, high chairs, beads, broken dolls.

ROOTS

I know that we should sell and leave this place;
A house is lonely with its children grown;

It echoes of lost laughter, as a barn
Will echo songs with all its swallows flown.
So I would leave—if I could take along
The attic with its treasured, broken toys;
The path that rambles to the pasture brook,
Worn smooth by running feet of little boys;
If I could take the lilacs by the gate;
The apple orchard, bridal-sweet in May;
The whippoorwill that sings the Summer in;
The bright October blue upon the bay;
If I could take the starflakes of first snow;
The sentinels of pines on Winter sky;
The lanterns of the sumacs in the dusk;
The sunlit hillside . . . where the old dogs lie . . .

The themes of the poems are unspectacular, even slight. Effects are mildly-administered with small surprises and familiar objects, but the effects themselves are not mild. We love the second dog and his sadness at being second-best for his "first people". We see the deer at the apple trees, we feel the presence of the Old New England ghosts who have loved their New England loves.

Let us share a sampler of Beulah's poems and fragments of poems with you.

This is a good thing, coming from the wood

Topping the hill to see the barn's plumb line;
Stopping a pace to scan the mist-hung field,
Feeling the humble pride—this land is mine . . .

* * * * *

I must have walked this way, long years ago,
Before I took my casual grown-up leave—
Stood, spellbound, in the hush before first snow,
And marveled at a star upon my sleeve;
When geese went wedging down November sky,
Spelling their message of a season done.

* * * * *

Here, between the wagon ruts,
The sun goes down at night;
Just where they dip the crest of hill,
It glimmers from my sight;
And I would put a sign up there
That strangers to my town
Might know the magic place to stand
And see the day go down.

* * * * *

Someday I'll rock a child again,
And sing a sweet, familiar rhyme,
(Mine not to keep, but mine to hold)

This is a woman's waiting time . . .

* * * * *

Mothers and wives grow weary of their chores;
Too listless for a show of tenderness;
Crying for sleep, waiting to latch the doors;
But love grows on, and joy is never less.
For proud is she who wears a good man's name,
Bears sons, sweeps clean the hearth, and keeps the flame . . .

* * * * *

"Enough for a pie," they promised;
I smiled and watched them go
Along the clovered trail of June
To where the strawberries grow.
Remembering my tugging conscience
As I savored each sweet bite,
I await the shiny, empty pails
And the strawberry smiles tonight . . .

* * * * *

RETURN

If I come back, and well I may,
My dear,
You will not find me in a summer rose.
Nor in a twisting, withered copper leaf
That spirals from a naked tree and goes;
You will not find me in a swallow dipping
Through chiffon curtains of the April rain;
You will not find me in the rippling wind
That stirs a sea of golden August grain;
I shall not be a cheery hearthside cricket
Nor sing from plaintive throat of whippoorwill;
But when the Hunter's moon rides to the west,
If you should hear a fox bark on the hill,
Then turn you in your soft, smooth bed a bit,
Knowing, with shuttered eyes, the moon is bright—
Knowing a vixen runs, alone with stars,
Down all the frosty ridges of the night.

* * * * *

These are not all that caught our fancy, by any means. They are samplers to whet your appetites. Every York Countyman's library should have "Heartwood" on its shelves. The flavor is authentic. The flavor is the bayberry and wild honey and thyme of Beulah Fenderson Smith.

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 is only the first book.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

MAPLE SHADOWS
NORTH BERWICK, MAINE
JUNE 2, 1964.

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 SURELY 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
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.

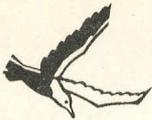
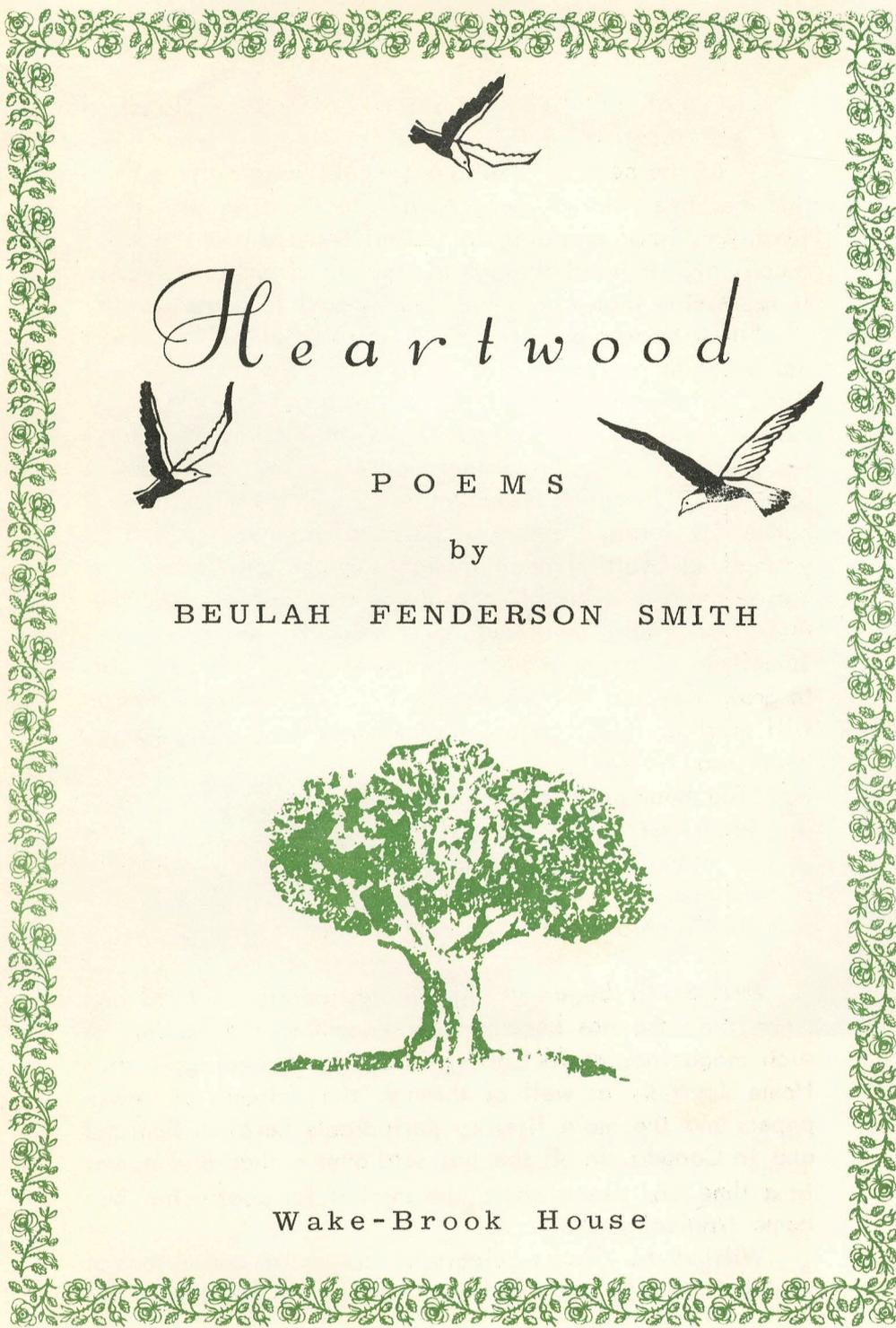
Your poems which so precisely capture emotions shared in varying degrees by your readers are exquisite. They speak of richly maturing experiences, and have clearly been refined in the crucible of meditation. The result is a book to treasure and re-read and quote.

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

Sincerely yours

hmj

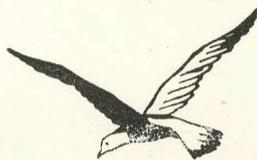
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Heartwood



P O E M S



by

BEULAH FENDERSON SMITH



Wake-Brook House

BEULAH 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



Beulah Fenderson Smith and The Deacon

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 uninventoried. 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.