

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

ARTHUR YVOR WINTERS (1900 – 1968)

Arthur Yvor Winters died Thursday, January 25, 1968. He was born in Chicago in 1900. After living in California and Washington, his family returned to Chicago, where he went to the university for one year. At this time he contracted tuberculosis and moved to New Mexico for a period of three years of convalescence and two years of primary-school teaching. In 1923 he went to the University of Colorado, where he took B.A. and M.A. degrees in Romance Languages in 1925. For two years he taught French and Spanish at the University of Idaho, and he came to Stanford as a graduate student of English in 1927. He joined the faculty in 1928 as an instructor. He took his Ph.D. degree in 1934, and became a full professor in 1949; in 1961 he became the first holder of the Albert Guérard Professorship of Literature.

He began publishing his poems in periodicals in 1919. From 1921 on he brought out his poems in fourteen books and pamphlets. In 1929-30 with his wife, Janet Lewis, and Howard Baker he edited a mimeographed journal, The Gyroscope, and printed it on his own press, and on the same press in 1940 he printed his first collected poems. In 1952 Alan Swallow published the Collected Poems, which was revised in 1960. In 1966 he collected his experimental poetry in The Early Poems of Yvor Winters 1920-28. Most of this experimental verse had appeared previously in his early books, The Immobile Wind (1920), The Magpie's Shadow (1922), The Bare Hills (1927), and The Proof (1930). The Proof also contained poems in traditional meters which he continued to develop in his subsequent books: The Journey (1931), Before Disaster (1934), and The Giant Weapon (1943). He edited Twelve Poets of the Pacific (1937), which contained a selection of his own poems, Poets of the Pacific, Second Series (1949), The Selected Poems of Elizabeth Daryush (1948), and the forthcoming Quest for Reality, an anthology of short poems to accompany his recent book on the English lyric, Forms of Discovery (1967).

His reviews and critical essays began to appear in 1922, and he became the regional associate editor of Hound and Horn for the years 1933-34. His major critical works are Primitivism and Decadence (1937), Maule's Curse (1938), The Anatomy of Nonsense (1943) -- all three were published together in In Defense of Reason (1947) -- Edwin Arlington Robinson (1946), The Function of Criticism (1957), and Forms of Discovery (1967).

It is a tribute to his extraordinary energy and generosity to recognize that during the years that he was writing his poems and his criticism the number of Ph.D. dissertations he directed was among the largest in the university, that in the classroom he was for years the most painstaking and effective lecturer, and that some of the most distinguished poets and literary scholars writing today were among his students. Along with his influence as poet and critic he took a very responsible part in the various duties of the department and was happily gifted with a wide range of interests, which he

enjoyed discussing with his colleagues. Beginning with a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1952 he received a series of awards recognizing his international importance as poet and critic: he received the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award in 1960, the Harriet Monroe Poetry Prize from the University of Chicago in 1961, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1961-62 (for the first sabbatical leave he had ever taken), the Bollingen Prize in 1960, and the National Endowment for the Arts Award in 1967. Such awards inadequately reflect his contribution to letters and to the individual development of those who studied with him. He revealed to many of those a life which without him they could not have perceived, and this is, perhaps, the final objective of the studia humanitatis. He has honored his students, his colleagues of the university, and the profession of literary studies more than it is within their power to honor him.

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