

Please join The Worcester County Poetry Association as it presents the

## Stanley Kunitz Medal to Fran Quinn

for his life-long contributions to poetry, best exemplified by Worcester's own (twice) U.S. Poet Laureate Stanley Kunitz

### LOVE IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC WOE

I came to you with rye bread  
and a full moon. I slice the round  
words from my lips. I offer them  
to you. The full moon offers  
its garnish of light. And we wait.

We wait for the ages to pass, pouring  
us out like wine – the age with its hors d'oeuvre  
of thick hunger, its onion of poverty,  
its olive-stone stupidity on which  
we break our teeth.

And yet we feast. We feast as all  
lovers feast. We open wide  
the gates that bar us from  
the future, rending the veil  
that keeps us in place. And we fly.

We fly where we will. We fly past  
cribs and college degrees, past wars  
and resistance, past stalwart hearts,  
past the chimney of grave stones  
still hot with burning lives.

We fly past incense and candles, past  
the stripes of whips and their bloody stars,  
past crescent moons and rising suns,  
and when we land (and if we land)  
we land softly in each other's eyes.

Sweat rolls, tears roll. I am here  
by your side, a phone ringing,  
which I do not answer. I need  
No proof there is a world outside.  
And as for me, I

will not go. They have nothing  
to match this gift of you, this  
life we lead, this moment  
peppered with pain, salted with joy.  
This rye bread. This full moon.



## The Worcester Historical Museum

30 Elm Street, Worcester, MA • Thursday, July 25, 2019, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

**THE STANLEY KUNITZ MEDAL** is presented annually to a person with a strong Worcester County (Mass.) connection who best exemplifies Stanley Kunitz's life-long commitment to poetry and poets. The award recognizes the total commitment to poetry as Stanley lived it: teaching poetry, mentoring poets, speaking poetry, publishing poetry, and supporting organizations which nurture poetry.

**Stanley Kunitz** (1905-2006) was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, a city he said, "provoked him into poetry." After studying at Harvard University he worked as an editor, writing poetry for his first book, *Intellectual Things* (1930). After serving in World War II, he began work as a professor and completed his collection *Passports to the War*, (1944). He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1959 for his work *Selected Poems, 1928-1958* (1958). His later collection *Passing Through* (1995) won a National Book Award. He served as Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 1974-1976, and again from 2000-2001. He was instrumental in founding both the Fine Arts Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and Poets House in New York City. After his death he left a bequest with The Worcester County Poetry Association to establish a poetry award in his name. The awarding of this medal is the legacy of Stanley's request.

Poet and teacher **Fran Quinn** was born in Easthampton, Massachusetts, in 1942. He was one of the founders of the Worcester County Poetry Association in 1971 and established, with Etheridge Knight, Worcester's Free Peoples Poetry Workshop which still flourishes. He was an early editor of the WCPA's nationally-recognized journal, *The Worcester Review*, and taught poetry at almost every college in Worcester.

Though he moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, at the end of the twentieth century, and established an internationally known center for poetry at Butler University, he continued to promote Worcester as a center of poetry. Retired scholar B. Eugene McCarthy of Holy Cross wrote, "For the program at Butler University, Fran brought in Wole Soyinka, the first African Nobel Prize winner; he phoned to ask if I wanted Soyinka to read at Holy Cross. I said yes. Always alert to maximizing exposure to poets, Fran knew it would be affordable for us to invite him already in this country—only one example of Fran's consistent dedication."

#### **The Stanley Kunitz Committee, 2019**

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Rodger Martin - *Committee Chair*

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