

Please join the Worcester County Poetry Association in presenting the

## Stanley Kunitz Medal to Rodger Martin

in honor of his commitment to poetry and in celebration of the legacy of Stanley Kunitz



### Pondicherry Winter

*for S.K.*

The frost is short tempered, my dawn.  
Snow crunches beneath weary boots  
and trees creak against the nip of breeze.  
Somewhere a report cracks the silence—  
a maple squeezed too hard by the cold.  
I trudge, a quarter century behind, from one  
of the tribes less taken with vortex: swaddled  
with comfort, drowsy in warmth, bounded  
by frozen windows, slow to grasp what lies  
beyond the glass also thrives and is more  
and less than the sum of these parts.

This early hour, from the pond, under the thick ice  
sonorous, mellifluous echoes undulate  
like a pod of polite whales waiting church breakfast.  
Above, vapor's curtains sweep across the glaze  
until they hang upon soft mounds of snow  
muffling the shore of this rimed garden: the realm  
of the ice spirit who has passed through many names.  
He announces his own and with majestic wave and wing  
silences the wind and brings the unveiling of miracle—  
great flocks of heat rise as if translucent white starlings.  
They carve and curve into and out of each other, a thrum  
of transparent migration toward that pale, that distant sun.

Rodger Martin, *Writing the Land: The Connecticut River*, NatureCulture LLC, 2023



**THE STANLEY KUNITZ MEDAL** originated with a bequest from his estate to the Worcester County Poetry Association. It is presented annually to a person with a strong Worcester County connection whose dedication to poetry parallels Stanley Kunitz's lifelong commitment to poetry: teaching poetry, mentoring poets, speaking poetry, publishing poetry, and supporting organizations which nurture poetry. Stanley Kunitz (1905-2006) was born in Worcester, a city that "provoked him into poetry." After completing his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Harvard University in 1927, he worked as a reporter and columnist for *The Worcester Telegram*. He then moved to New York City and Mansfield, Connecticut, and became an editor at H. W. Wilson Company, a publisher of reference books. Collections of poetry, such as *Intellectual Things* (1930), *Passport to the War* (1944), and *The Testing-Tree* (1971) earned critical praise. Kunitz was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1959 for *Selected Poems 1928-1958* (1958); *Passing Through* (1995) won a National Book Award. He served as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 1974-1976 and as Poet Laureate from 2000-2001. His teaching posts included Bennington College, Brandeis University, the New School for Social Research in New York, and Columbia University, all of which provided him with the opportunity to influence generations of writers. His association with younger poets was "one of the happiest chapters" in his life. Kunitz cofounded the Fine Arts Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and Poets House in New York City.

Whether in New England, Great Britain, or China, **Rodger Martin's** mission is to bring poetry into the public arena. The Worcester County Poetry Association grew and prospered under his leadership as president, board, and committee member. He served as managing editor of the nationally recognized journal *The Worcester Review* for almost three decades. As a devoted volunteer, his work in poetry communities in New England exceeds the highest standards demonstrated by medal recipients.

Born in Pennsylvania, Rodger Martin spent his childhood in England, served as combat engineer in Vietnam, and is a journalism professor at Keene State College in New Hampshire, where he resides. He has won an Appalachia Award for poetry and a New Hampshire State Council on the Arts Fellowship for fiction. Simply put: Martin has earned the right to be called a citizen and poet of the world.

A seven-time recipient of the Bruce Kellner/Monadnock Fellowship, Martin mentored poets through a series of cultural exchanges between Monadnock Pastoral Poets and Writers, including a collaboration among poets, colleagues from Keene State University and pastoral poets and calligraphers in China. He was co-director of the New Hampshire Poetry Out Loud Program. For twenty-eight years, he led a poetry reading series at Del Rossi's Trattoria in Dublin, New Hampshire.

Rodger Martin's publications include four books of poetry, most recently *All the Tea in Zhōngguó* and *The Battlefield Guide*. He currently serves as co-editor for Hobblebush Books' Granite State Poetry Series.

**The 2023 Stanley Kunitz Medal Committee**

Joe Fusco Jr. – John Hodgen – Heather J. Macpherson – Susan Elizabeth Sweeney –  
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**Stanley Kunitz Medal Ceremony** - Thursday, July 27, 2023, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Worcester Historical Museum

30 Elm Street

Worcester, Massachusetts 01609