

HAYDEN CARRUTH

*"...The poem
has grown on this screen like a flower,
letter by letter, cell by cell, color by
color, assuming its own brief
identity in the efflorescence. I am
the inelegant gardener soiling my
hands in the humus of the alphabet."
— "Isabel's Garden, May 14"*

Hayden Carruth, noted poet, critic, editor, anthologist and novelist, was born in Waterbury on August 3, 1921. His father, Gorton Veeder Carruth, was a reporter for the Waterbury Republican. Possessed of a strong interest in poetry, he not only read verse to his son, but also wrote poems especially for him.

During the early 1930s, the family lived in Woodbury, and Carruth became editor at the newspaper until his departure for Westchester County in the mid-Depression years.

Carruth was educated in public schools and graduated from the University of North Carolina. After serving with the Army Air Corps in Italy, he enrolled in a G.I. bill program at the University of Chicago. From 1949 to 1950 he was editor of Poetry magazine. He has served on the faculties of Syracuse University and Bucknell University and has received numerous awards and honors, including a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship in 1965 and 1979; National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship in 1967 and 1988; the Carl Sandburg Award in 1963 for *The Norfolk Poems*, the Emily Clark Balch Prize in 1964 for "North Winter" and the Shelly Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of America in 1978.

Hayden Carruth has written more than twenty volumes of poetry and is widely admired for his craftsmanship, integrity and a controlled intensity of verse that resonates with affirmation and quiet resignation in the midst of the ravages of sorrow and loss. "He is one of the most prolific poets of his generation and still he is not as widely known as many of his peers. He has not been interested in promoting himself. He has preferred to spend his time perfecting his art", Joseph Parisi, the editor of Poetry magazine, said when he bestowed the prestigious Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize on Carruth in 1990. Adrienne Rich has called him "a part of our country's poetic treasure."

In November 1996, Hayden Carruth won the National Book Award for Poetry for his book *Scrambled Eggs & Whiskey*. He had been nominated twice previously; in 1974 for *From Snow and Rock, From Chaos: Poems, 1965-1972*; and in 1992 for *Collected Shorter Poems 1946-1991*.

