

Notes from the Palm Forest

The Merwin Conservancy
SUMMER 2014

A sanctuary for exploring the intersection of language, nature, and imagination as inspired by W. S. Merwin

Dear Friends of the Conservancy:

This spring marks four years since the launch of The Merwin Conservancy, which started as a poet's vision and which has become a vibrant, evolving organization. Our progress has been fueled and inspired by partnerships with the Hawaiian Islands Land Trust and Copper Canyon Press, a committed board of trustees, and the heartfelt support of our donors.

As we grow, it's important to pause and reflect on what we've accomplished together:

- Cataloging more than 800 species of palms
- Helping produce a documentary on W. S. Merwin
- Launching The Green Room, an arts and environment literary salon
- Developing a strategic plan and implementing its first phase

Even more exciting is the recent news that Paula and William Merwin have shared their intention to pledge their property to the Conservancy. This allows us to begin our endowment campaign in earnest—and the process of looking forward.

With gratitude and full hearts, we will be asking for your philanthropic investment in helping us continue the legacy we all hold so dear, to continue our vital programs, to protect the biodiversity of the palms, and—through events, study, and community outreach—to let the seeds of inspiration spread through W. S. Merwin's example of living in harmony with nature.

We look forward to your partnership and our joining together to make The Merwin Conservancy a lasting legacy.

Karen Bouris
Executive Director

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Invitation to the MERWIN LEGACY CIRCLE PLANNED GIVING GIFTS



Ruth Moser and W.S. Merwin, 1937

This summer, we're pleased to launch The Merwin Legacy Circle, with inaugural member Ruth Moser, the younger sister of W. S. Merwin. Ruth is making a generous bequest to kick off our endowment campaign. Planned giving, or bequeathing money upon your passing, is a meaningful way to express your values and to support that which you love.

"It is a great satisfaction to provide financial support knowing that it supports the desire to preserve a place on earth where natural systems are respected and encouraged rather than artificially improved. I invite others to join me in my commitment."

— RUTH MOSER

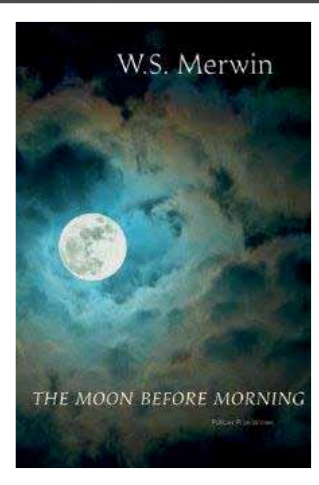
NEW WORK

The Moon Before Morning

W.S. MERWIN

By the Front Door

Rain through the morning
and in the long pool a toad singing
happiness as old as water



Excerpted from W. S. Merwin's latest collection of poems, recently published by Copper Canyon Press.

Palm Cataloging Update

As the palm cataloging project completes its final phase, we wanted to share excerpts from Dr. Dransfield's draft report:

"The garden in the Peahi Valley, Haiku, Maui, contains a significant maturing palm collection of great beauty. . . . The overall impression is one of lushness and beauty. Growth of many individual palms has been dramatic, and some species have reached or formed a canopy and are already mature and fruiting abundantly. . . . The garden is particularly impressive because of the bewildering variety of palms, densely planted to form a forest. . . . We are not dealing with the palms of a restricted geographical area—indeed, the collection has representation of all major palm floras and also all major evolutionary lines. . . ."

INTRODUCING THE POETRY LAB

A new feature on our website, The Poetry Lab offers an immersive experience exploring a single poem in concert with essays, letters, or related facts. The Poetry Lab invites you to dig deeper into the history of W. S. Merwin's poetry. The poems explored in our first two poetry labs were:

- "*The Real World of Manuel Córdova*"—which inspired a handmade book by the artist Carolee Campbell, who shares her process of marrying the art of bookmaking with a poem.
- "*On Losing a Language*"— which prompted a letter from a high school poetry class. As stated by National Geographic, "By the next century nearly half of the roughly 7,000 languages spoken on Earth will likely disappear, as communities abandon native tongues in favor of English, Mandarin, or Spanish."



Visit Our New Website
merwinconservancy.org



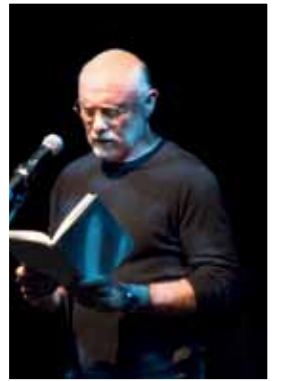
The Merwins with Hector Elizondo, Carolee Campbell, and Paul Sutherland

Engaging Events

A DOCUMENTARY BENEFIT

On a gorgeous November evening, Maui residents and visitors alike gathered at Seabury Hall's elegant Creative Arts Center for a private screening of *Even Though the Whole World Is Burning*. The event

began with poetry and poignant words by the beloved actor Hector Elizondo (photo right) and the author (and stepson of W.S. Merwin) John Burnham Schwartz. Directed by Stefan Schaefer, the film moved the audience to both laughter and reflection. "The evening far exceeded my expectations," said one guest, and added, "I left thinking about my own life choices."



INTRODUCING THE GREEN ROOM

THE GREEN ROOM NO. 1

August 31, 2013. Visiting from New York City, **Alexander Maksik** (photo right, W.S. Merwin, Paula Merwin, and Alexander Maksik) read from his lauded second novel, *A Marker to Measure Drift*, at Fort Faught. The event featured delicious eats, a vibrant photography exhibit by Daniel Sullivan, live music and dance, and a welcome by W.S. Merwin, followed by a reading and Q&A.



THE GREEN ROOM NO. 2

March 8, 2014. Physician and author **Dr. Abraham Verghese** (photo left) talked at the McCoy Theatre about the intersection of literature, medicine, humanity, and destiny. Perhaps best known for his *New York Times* bestselling novel *Cutting for Stone*, Verghese connected with the audience at a courtyard "prosecco & dessert" reception and book signing afterward.



Mark  your calendars

THE GREEN ROOM NO. 3

On **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**, we will host the formidable **Naomi Shihab Nye**, an award-winning Palestinian American poet, writer, anthologist, and educator. Sign up for our online newsletter to learn more.

With Gratitude

Poetry is there not to provide information, but to say what can't be said—to express love, grief, anger—these feelings that are inexpressible. —W.S. MERWIN

Special thanks to FIM Group for its sponsorship of the documentary benefit and *The Green Room* for 2014.

We are thrilled to have the expertise and can-do sizzle of Sandi Stoner and Sandra Florence as event co-chairs.

Thank you to Carolee Campbell for inspiring *The Poetry Lab*. Thank you to Dr. John Dransfield, Soejatmi Dransfield, Dave Lorence, Matt Lucas, Chipper Wichman, and the National Tropical Botanical Garden.

MISSION

To inspire reverence for language, nature, and imagination, as embodied in the poetry and palm forest of W. S. Merwin, through study, events and education.

Our Supporters

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If there are any errors or omissions on our list, please accept our sincere apologies and contact us at 808-579-8876.

And more than 100 other generous donors!



I say to my breath once again, little breath come from in front of me, go away behind me, row me quietly now, as far as you can, for I am an abyss that I am trying to cross.

—W.S. MERWIN

Paula and William Merwin with some of the Conservancy trustees and staff.