

FALL 2019

THE MERWIN CONSERVANCY



Dear Friends,

When W.S. Merwin died six months ago, he left a legacy of boundless imagination, insight, and literary genius. He wrote over thirty books of poetry and prose, won two Pulitzer Prizes, the National Book Award, and twice served as U.S. Poet Laureate.

William, together with his wife Paula, left another gift: the exuberant, ever-evolving palm forest and home they created together and lived in on Maui for over forty years. From a landscape that was once dry and denuded after decades of neglect, the Merwins made a place that now thrives with color, life, and biodiversity.



A view of William and Paula's house in the early '80s. Four decades later, a glimpse of the house is the reward of a hike through the palm forest that grew up around it.

This December, The Merwin Conservancy will become permanent custodians of this extraordinary place and its clear, unequivocal message of renewal, possibility, and integrity.

We hope you will join us as we prepare to share the Merwin house and garden as a wellspring for the imagination, and a testament to what can happen when one person's care for the world is put into daily practice.

With aloha,

Sonnet

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“In gardening, as my wife and I go about it here, what are called concerns—for ecology and the environment, for example—merge inevitably with work done every day, within sight of the house, with our own hands, and the concerns remain intimate and familiar rather than far away. They do not have to be thought about, they are at home in the mind. I have never lived anywhere that was more true.” – W.S. Merwin

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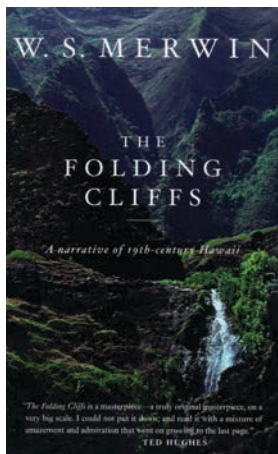
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**In Memoriam*

The Merwin Conservancy's mission is to inspire innovation in the arts and sciences by advancing the ideas of W.S. Merwin – his life, work, house and palm forest – as fearless and graceful examples of the power of imagination and renewal.

THE GREEN ROOM MEMORIAL SERIES



DR. PUALANI KANAKA'OLE KANAHELE

In this special presentation of The Green Room, Dr. Kanahele - a dear friend of the Merwins and one of Hawai'i's most beloved scholars, kumu hula, and educators - will read and discuss *The Folding Cliffs*, W.S. Merwin's epic narrative poem about 19th century Hawai'i.

October 9th, Honolulu Museum of Art, 7 PM
October 13th, Maui Arts & Cultural Center, 7 PM

ROBERT HASS & FORREST GANDER

In recognition of W.S. Merwin's work as both a poet and translator, Hass (former U.S. Poet Laureate) and Gander (winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry) will share the stage in a celebration of the beauty of language. Both have had acclaimed careers in translation.

December 11th, Honolulu Museum of Art, 7 PM
December 13th, Maui Arts & Cultural Center, 7 PM

From its inception six years ago, The Green Room has convened an intellectually curious public and sparked conversation about such topics as ecology, botany, wildlife, Hawaiian language and culture, Eastern philosophy, poetry, and climate. Recent speakers have included Richard Powers, MacArthur Fellow and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Overstory*; Robin Wall Kimmerer, plant ecologist, author, and Director of the Center for Native People and the Environment, and Lewis Hyde, a scholar, MacArthur Fellow, and award-winning author of *The Gift*, and most recently *A Primer for Forgetting: Getting Past the Past*.

RESERVE TICKETS FOR THE FULL MEMORIAL SERIES AS A GREEN ROOM PATRON

Support this special series as a Green Room Patron with a \$500 contribution. We will set aside two tickets for each of our four events, seat you in our VIP section, and welcome you at our VIP pre-event reception.

Visit www.merwinconservancy.org/patrons to learn more.

In the coming Memorial Series launching on Maui and O'ahu this October, we will celebrate W.S. Merwin's love of language, nature and the imagination and will feature readings from some of our most celebrated writers, thinkers, and poets, many of whom were close friends with him. Some are past speakers returning, others joining for the first time. It is sure to be a beautiful and meaningful continuation of this beloved series, and we look forward to seeing you there. This series is made possible by the generous support of our partners at Honolulu Museum of Art and Maui Arts & Cultural Center, and is presented by Aqua Aston Hospitality. Additional support generously provided by Atherton Family Foundation, Halekulani, and Casa de Flores.

The Memorial Series of The Green Room
is Presented by:

AQUA ASTON
HOSPITALITY

Fostering a reverence for language, nature, and imagination



JOY HARJO, U.S. POET LAUREATE

In 2019, Harjo became the first-ever Native American poet to earn the title U.S. Poet Laureate, a title W.S. Merwin held twice in his career. The Merwin Conservancy is thrilled to bring her to Hawai'i for readings from her stunning works of poetry.

January 28th, Honolulu Museum of Art, 7 PM
January 30th, Maui Arts & Cultural Center, 7 PM



EDWARD HIRSCH, NAOMI SHIHAB NYE, JANE HIRSHFIELD, & KEVIN YOUNG

For an evening that celebrates W.S. Merwin's indelible mark on writers worldwide, four leading poets of our time gather together to share the impact Merwin has had on their own lives, careers as poets, and as advocates for the power of language, nature, and imagination.

March 18th, Honolulu Museum of Art, 7 PM
March 20th, Maui Arts & Cultural Center, 7 PM



A TRIBUTE TO W.S. MERWIN

A Special Memorial Event in New York, NY

Monday, October 21st at 8 PM

92nd Street Y

This event is free,
but tickets must be reserved
at www.92y.org/poetry

In the New York area this October? Please join us as friends and fellow writers gather in Manhattan to read from the work of W. S. Merwin. This event is co-sponsored by the Academy of American Poets, Copper Canyon Press, The Merwin Conservancy, Poets House, and the Poetry Society of America.

Featuring readings from Sonnet Coggins, Robert Hass, Edward Hirsch, Howard Norman, Naomi Shihab Nye, Michael Ondaatje, John Burnham Schwartz, Tracy K. Smith, Michael Wieggers, and Terry Tempest Williams.

Special thanks to our friends at 92nd Street Y for hosting this event.

WITH GRATITUDE FOR OUR DONORS

We thank our generous donors for their investment in conserving and sharing the legacy of W.S. and Paula Merwin, their beloved palm forest and home.

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These donors made a seed gift of \$10,000 or more at the founding of the Conservancy

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Through a gift of \$15,000 or more, these donors together plant a memorial grove of palms to remember William and Paula Merwin.

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The list that follows includes donors who have made gifts within the last 18 months.

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IN THE GARDEN



Photo: Deyaa Mounir



OPEN GARDEN DAYS

Remaining Open Garden Days in 2019*:

Wednesday, October 9th
Saturday, November 16th
Wednesday, December 11th
Saturday, December 28th

Upcoming Dates in 2020*:

Wednesday, January 8th
Saturday, January 18th
Wednesday, February 5th
Saturday, February 22nd
Wednesday, March 4th
Saturday, March 14th
Wednesday, April 8th
Saturday, April 18th
Wednesday, May 6th
Saturday, May 25th

This free public program invites the community to hike through William and Paula Merwin's extensive and wild garden of palms. Led by knowledgeable staff, these 3-hour intimate and rejuvenating experiences share the land, the vision, and the poetry of our founder, and inspire conversations about possibility through the lens of ecological restoration and the power of imagination.

Due to popular demand, we will be offering two programs per month in 2020.

Join us! Submit a request here: www.merwinconservancy.org/open-garden-days

"I'm still floating in that vibrant pure essence of the garden. I've never felt so connected and literally immersed, it seems, in my surroundings. You created and shared a rare experience."

— recent Open Garden Day participant

*Registrations are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, and Open Garden Days fill up at least a month or two in advance. Early requests are encouraged. Dates for the second half of 2020 will be published in our Spring newsletter.

FROM THE GARDEN TO THE WORLD



The Merwin Creative Teaching Fellows together on Maui with fellowship co-directors Sara Tekula (The Merwin Conservancy) and Marnie Masuda-Cleveland (The Creative Core). Photo: Bryan Berkowitz

MERWIN FELLOWS ANNOUNCE NEW ANTHOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

Now at the end of their fellowship year, the fifteen Merwin Creative Teaching Fellows are reflecting back on a transformational program that brought them together on Maui's North Shore for mini-residencies in W.S. Merwin's garden twice, first with poets Naomi Shihab Nye and Cathy Song in June 2018, and again in April 2019 with indigenous environmental scientist Robin Wall Kimmerer. These Hawai'i educators have been reflecting on W.S. Merwin's poetry, ecological stewardship, and ways of living—especially his emphasis on valuing attention and imagination—and designing ways to bring these habits of mind into the lives of their 1,500 students throughout the state. The result of these studies, conversations, and reflections has culminated into a curated digital anthology for teachers edited and designed by Conservancy staff and our partners at The Creative Core. Now, teachers around the world can access and use these lessons, thereby bringing the teachings of the garden to classrooms everywhere.

To download the Fellows' Anthology for Teachers, visit www.merwinconservancy.org/fellows-anthology-2019



Multi-modal artist Cara Griffin making new work in the garden for the Malama Wao Akua native species exhibition, Summer 2019



THE NOMAD FLUTE

You that sang to me once sing to me now
let me hear your long lifted note
survive with me
the star is fading
I can think farther than that but I forget
do you hear me
do you still hear me
does your air
remember you
oh breath of morning
night song morning song
I have with me
all that I do not know
I have lost none of it
but I know better now
than to ask you
where you learned that music
where any of it came from
once there were lions in China
I will listen until the flute stops
and the light is old again

– W.S. MERWIN

“The Nomad Flute” is found in W.S. Merwin’s Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Shadow of Sirius* (2008, Copper Canyon Press). Used by permission of the publishers. Copyright © 2008 by W. S. Merwin.

SUPPORT WILLIAM AND PAULA'S VISION

In December, The Merwin Conservancy 'ohana will become permanent custodians of the palm forest and Merwin house. Please join us in securing the future of this extraordinary place. Together we will share it with generations to come.

Make a Memorial Gift to Tend the Garden and the Vision

Your gift will ensure that the land and beloved palms are tended in perpetuity, with the same care and attention that William and Paula devoted to their garden. Visit www.merwinconservancy.org to make a donation securely online.

Become a Steward through Monthly Giving

Sustain our growth and deepen your impact through a recurring gift. Become a Steward at www.merwinconservancy.org/donate

JOIN THE GROVE GIVING CIRCLE WITH A MAJOR GIFT



Plant one of the potted keiki palms that William left on the shadehouse shelves. As the Conservancy flourishes, so too will the grove of palms we will plant together.

For more information, visit www.merwinconservancy.org/grove
Contact Sonnet Coggins, Executive Director, at 808-579-8876 to learn more.

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*Featured images of Merwin's garden generously donated
by our friend, photographer Larry Cameron.*

