

Literary and Historical Notes for Saturday, July 21, 2007

It's the birthday of cartoonist GARRY TRUDEAU, born in New York City (1948), the creator of the *Doodles* comic strip.

It's the birthday of poet TESS GALLAGHER, born in Port Angeles, Washington (1943).

It's the birthday of novelist JOHN GARDNER, born in Batavia, New York (1933), best known for his novel *Grendel*, a retelling of Beowulf from the point of view of the monster.

And today is the birthday of ERNEST HEMINGWAY, born in Oak Park, Illinois (1899). He went off to fight in World War I when he was just 17. He had bad eyesight, so he volunteered as an ambulance driver for the American Red Cross in Italy, and gave away chocolate and cigarettes to the Italian troops. And just about a month after he got to Italy, he was hit by shrapnel from an exploding shell. He spent weeks in the hospital before he came back home to his parents in Oak Park.

Hemingway was one of the first Americans to return from the war, and that made him a kind of celebrity in Oak Park. He gave talks to high school students and hung around home until his parents decided they wanted him out of the house.

He started writing stories for Chicago newspapers and magazines and then got a job as a foreign correspondent for the *Toronto Daily Star* and went off to Paris with his wife Hadley. They moved into an apartment in the Latin Quarter. Hemingway liked to give the impression that he was a poor bohemian, but he actually had plenty of money. He and his wife traveled around Europe and went to the horse races and dined in fine restaurants.

Hemingway became friends with a lot of writers who were in Paris at the time, writers like Fitzgerald and Joyce and Pound and Gertrude Stein. And he wrote every day, sometimes in his apartment, sometimes in cafés. He wrote about one of those cafés, "It was a pleasant café, warm and clean and friendly, and I hung up my old waterproof on the coat rack to dry and put my worn and weathered felt hat on the rack above the bench and ordered a café au lait. The waiter brought it and I took out a notebook from the pocket of the coat and a pencil and started to write. I was writing about Michigan and since it was a wild, cold, blowing day it was that sort of day in the story."

He wrote in a letter to his father, "I'm trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across — not to just depict life — or criticize it — but to actually make it alive.

His first collection of short stories, *In Our Time*, came out in 1925 and the following year, his first big success, *The Sun Also Rises*, and three years later, *A Farewell to Arms*. By the 1930s, he was one of the best-known writers alive, and young American men tried to act like "Hemingway heroes," speaking in staccato sentences out of the sides of their mouths. By the time he died in 1961, he was one of the most recognizable people on the planet.

Love's Philosophy

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine? —

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another,
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother,
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?

"Love's Philosophy" by Percy Bysshe Shelley.
Public Domain.

INSIDE PASSAGES by Holly Harden

Seems there's a point during a road trip where you need to pull over at one of those scenic overlooks and park the car in the shade and turn everyone loose awhile. Usually it happens about three quarters of the way through the trip, just after you and your partner have an argument interrupted by someone asking, "Are we there yet?" and just before you throttle the kids, the dog, or the cousin you agreed to bring along for the trip.

Our stop in Bergen was roughly three quarters of the way for us, and interestingly enough, several people on board have reported having had arguments with their spouse sometime on Thursday. More than several people. Some argued on the ship, some on their way into town, and some had it out in Bergen itself, right there on the harbor near the fish market. The curious thing is that many of the couples report that they normally don't argue much.

Well, I wouldn't call the past week normal. Which might explain why I blew a gasket on Deck 6 as we were leaving port. Something I do every other year, maybe. The heart of the issue was how my husband wandered off to look at a castle in Bergen (to be fair, he claims I ditched him) and I couldn't find him and we ended up spending the day apart, and, for all practical purposes, alone. Not that alone is bad. I like it quite a lot. But suddenly alone in a busy city in Norway is not my idea of solitude. So I let him know. I imagine we were overheard, but no one wrote it down.

Which supports my theory that in order to continue to enjoy the trip,

some of us may need to take part in a sort of Group Time Out, where we take stock of things and gather up some energy and proceed with renewed vigor. I propose that Saturday be, for all of us, a vacation from our vacation, when we each spend the day doing what it is we love to do, whether it's food, hot-tub, sleep, health, people, money, kid, shopping, or pizza-related. I say claim the day. No excuses. No guilt.

No, we're not there yet, people. You're on a cruise on the Norwegian Sea, and we've got a ways to go. Relax.

Holly Harden is a writer from Scandia, Minnesota. If it weren't for her co-editor, she'd be visiting the ship's psych ward.

YET MORE EDVARD GRIEG:
an invitation from Peter Sheppard Skærved

On the 22nd July the Kreutzer Quartet with Aaron Shorr will give our final concert as part of the PHC Norway 2007 cruise. Over the past week or so we have taken enormous pleasure in exploring the music of Edvard Grieg, alongside his contemporaries, and musical descendants. This has ranged from Ole Hornemann Bull, the "flax-haired Paganini" who "discovered" Grieg through to the work of Debussy, who was heavily influenced by Grieg's achievements.

For our last concert, we would like to offer you all the chance to revisit some of this music. So, we will play two pieces by Stravinsky and Sibelius—both betraying his impact, and then will take requests from you, our wonderful audience. We will play any movement or piece which we have played in the past week. All you have to do is ask! *(continued next column)*

KIRKEGAARD a poem by Phebe Hanson

You handed him over to me in the Greyhound Bus Depot summer I left for Norway. He traveled with me on that Stratocruiser filled with fellow SPANNERS — Student Project for Amity among Nations — whose motto radiated sweet idealism: "Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."

On the plane pre-seminarians from Gustavus and Augsburg, philosophy majors from St. Olaf, were all reading him, too. It was nineteen hundred and fifty, the middle of the twentieth century, when all of us girls would do anything to get a man — yes, we were girls and they were men. I thought I could kill two birds with one book. If you did not come through with a marriage proposal after my brilliant and witty letters studded with references to SK, as we in the know call him, one of my plane mates might see me reading *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing*, and decide I would make the perfect soul mate and possible wife, or later when I get to Oslo, some Norwegian student would notice me in a konditorei, drinking coffee and reading, would glance at me from his table and immediately fall in love.

Later in our dormitory beds at the Studiehjemmet for Unge Piker – the Study Home for Young Girls — we girls talked back and forth: "How far did you go? Did you go all the way?" I came close that summer, drinking my first glass of wine in Ingar's room, smoking brown cigarettes on a bench overlooking the harbor, feeling for the first time a man's hand enter my blouse to touch my nipples.

But I never went all the way, because at the last minute I always remembered you and Kierkegaard, so I spent the rest of my summer, reading *Fear and Trembling*, dreaming I was your Regina.

From *Why Still Dance*. © Nodin Press. Reprinted by Permission

Here is the list:
Quartets in G minor and F major,
C Minor Trio, Prelude (Sigurd Jorsalfar),
Des Dichters Herz, Solvejgs Lied, Åsers Tod,
Jeg Elsker Dig, Slåtter, Sonata for Cello and Piano,
Sonata No 3 for Violin and Piano, 19 Lyric Pieces,
Svendsen-Quartet, Halvorsen-Passaglia,
Ole Bull-Et Sæterbesøg, Debussy-Quartet

The Kreutzer Quartet with Aaron Shorr will be playing at 2:30 PM in the Rubens Lounge on Saturday. They'll be taking requests so who knows what will happen.

FIELD NOTES **Fuglefjell – Bird Mountains** by Rich MacDonald

Norway is home to some of the largest seabird colonies in the world. As we cruise the coast, look to the shore for dense concentrations of birds flying close to the cliffs; this activity likely marks sea bird colonies. Locally known as “fuglefjell,” or bird mountains, the cacophony can be overwhelming, as can be the ureal aroma.

The Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) is by far the most numerous species nesting on the coast. Fully 40% of the global population breeds here. Look for the little football with wings, whirring away like one of those wind-driven lawn ornaments, and you may be watching

a puffin. Given that their breeding population here numbers nearly 2 million, chances of seeing a puffin are good (come join the Naturalists on Deck in the morning and maybe you can see one or a hundred). One study estimated that puffins consume approximately 240 tons of fish annually in Norwegian waters. That is a LOT of herring!

The Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), also a fish-eating bird, is less choosy in its diet. These are the large, all-black birds that can be mistaken for loons (which are not all black). To paraphrase John Milton in *Paradise*

Lost, “There stands a cormorant, wings spread, like Satin on a cross.” Couple that prose with the Levitanic proscription against eating cormorants, and it is no wonder that these birds are not looked upon very favorably. But if we were to anthropomorphize, they do make model parents, evenly sharing in all responsibilities to their offspring. Great Cormorants — “Shags” as they are called in much of Europe — can be seen just about any time we are within sight of land.

See the APHC naturalists throughout the day in various locations throughout the ship. They say old naturalists never die — they just become part of the food chain.

PASSENGER NOTES

ENLIGHTENMENT

As the northern sun works its magic
On the high mountain valleys
So we too are illuminated by our
Fellow sailors on these fjords
Appreciative listeners surround us
Brightening our spirits
Boosting our energy
We are changed

— anonymous, 7/19/07

QUESTIONS AS THE FJORDS SLIP BY

1. How many generations did it take to build the tightly-fitted stone terrace walls that form the downslope boundary of many fields?

2. Whether by raids, fishes, trades or émigré, to what distant places have the bloodstreams of these farmsteads and settlements flowed?

3. Growing up on a high, steeply-sloped farm, how could a kid find enough level to kick, roll, or throw a ball?

4. What gain and loss have tunnels, powerlines, and cruise boats brought to the lives of people here?

5. What's a one-word, true rhyme for “fjord”?

— Dick Pearson

FOR GARRISON AN ODE TO 65, MAYBE 66

Ok, the knees creak, and Oh, that back,
Faces appearing, names disappearing,
Wondering again,
“Why am I in this room?”
What's so great about 65, maybe 66?
I'll tell you —
Discovery, new eyes, wonder,
Twice a day library visits,
Keen eyes on those who govern,
Picking each perfect bean,
Robe-sitting dawns
on the front porch,
Newspapers collected,
admiring birds and flowers,
Planning next year's garden,
Waving “bye” to departing neighbors,
Joy in new friends,
rediscovery of old,
Joining more book groups,
Holding grandbabies close,
Singing yet one more
“Good night” song,
Rolling in the October leaves,
And, best, another day
with my life soulmate,
Finishing each other's thoughts,
Curling together in sleep,
Holding hands –
Soothing, calming, safe.

— J. G. from Stillwater, MN

POLL RESULTS FROM THE HARRY POTTER FANS ON BOARD THE VENDAM:

Is Snape good or bad?

Good: 37
Bad: 13

Is Dumbledore dead or alive?

Dead: 25
Alive: 24

Will Harry live or die?

Live: 44
Die: 8

Will Dumbledore's army rise again?

Yes: 38
No: 7

How was Harry's summer on Privet Drive?

Great – not there: 22
Horrible: 11
Worse than horrible: 14

Who will be the next Defense Against the Dark Arts professor?

Harry: 4
Nobody – no Hogwarts: 5
Tonks: 6
Other?: 36

Thanks to everyone for your submissions to the Ballast. We've been having a wonderful time reading all of your entries. —The editors

THE BOOK NOOK by Marcia Pankake

They Were Like Us and They Were Not

Old Times in Norway

written by Jon Leirfall
translated by C. A. Clausen
Oslo, Det Norske Samlaget, 1986

“Handshakes were not for weekdays, except when you met people from other communities or someone whom you saw seldom. Handshakes were usually reserved for occasions when you had your dress clothes on.”

“In earlier days, children were to stand at the table while eating, and they were not to help themselves to food until the older people had started to eat; and above everything else, they were to consume all the food they had on their plate.”

Leirfall, from the Stjørdalen district in the Trøndelag region, explains naming customs, class structure, weddings, and other features of traditional Norwegian life. He thus provides a very good background to *Kristin Lavransdatter*.

Marcia Pankake is a retired librarian and long time editor of Prairie Home publications. She can tell you anything you might wish to know about “Kristin Lavransdatter.”

THINGS OVERHEARD

“I'm taking the day off.”
— a guest by the taco bar

“My troll needs have been met.”
— on the tender

“Is your cabin fore or aft?”
“It's kinda half-aft.”
— in the elevator

“Can I have cash instead?”
— after receiving a gift

“Your mom is one wild woman.”
— on the Navigation Deck Aft to the daughter some time just past midnight

“How many carbs in that?”
— in the Lido line

“My memory is getting better all the time. Now I can remember things that never happened.” — at Coffee with Garrison

VIKING NEWS by Christina von Nolcken

HOW TO GREET A KING, VIKING STYLE

This comes from *The Saga of the Volsungs*, ch. 9, tr. Jesse L. Byock (1990): I have abridged slightly. The saga tells of early Germanic heroes (several now also familiar from Wagner). The story would have been a favorite among the Vikings. King Helgi wants to marry Sigrun, but she has been promised to Hodbrodd, son of king Granmar. So Helgi sails to Granmar's kingdom with Sinfjotli and others to fight it out with Hodbrodd. Granmar asks who is leading their force:

Sinfjotli stood up, his helm shining like glass on his head, his coat of mail white as snow. This man knew how to speak with kings. “When you have fed your pigs and hounds and you meet your wife, say that the Volsungs have come and King Helgi can be found here in the army, if Hodbrodd wants to meet him. And it is Helgi's pleasure to fight with distinction while you kiss your bondwomen by the fire.”

Granmar answered: “More likely it is that you nourished yourself on the food of wolves out in the forest and killed your brothers. And it is strange that you dare to come in an army with good men, you who have sucked the blood of many cold corpses.”

Sinfjotli replied: “You probably do not remember clearly that you said you wanted to marry a man and you chose me for the role of husband. I sired nine wolves on you at Laganess, and I was the father of them all.”

Granmar responded: “You are a great liar. I do not think you could sire anyone because you were gelded by the giant's daughters on Thrasness.”

Sinfjotli answered: “Do you remember when you were a mare and I rode you at full speed on Bravoll?”

Granmar said, “I would rather feed the birds on your corpse than quarrel with you any longer.”

Christina von Nolcken is the PHC Norway Cruise Viking expert. She gets a wild look in her eye when she talks about all things Viking.



REMEMBER, SHOPS ARE CLOSED WHEN WE'RE IN PORT

LAST CHANCE TO PICK UP APHC MERCHANDISE IS SUNDAY FROM 1 PM-11 PM

You Really Ought to Know

Holland America will host a Debarck Talk today in the Rubens Lounge at 2:00 p.m. featuring all kinds of helpful tips to navigate departure from the *Veendam*.

If you've never cruised before, or even if you have, consider attending.



APHC Camera Club

Calling all shutterbugs!

Drop off your digital photo cards to the APHC Info desk in the lobby and we just might add them to a slide show.

Final opportunity to submit photos for the Camera Club is today July 21st by 3 p.m. Catch the show in the Rubens before the main stage shows.