

OCTOBER 2017 to  
JANUARY 2018

Ned O’Gorman:  
through a  
poet’s lens

Special Collections Gallery, Georgetown University Library







## Ned O’Gorman: through a poet’s lens

*Time’s flying by, time we’ll never know again,  
while we in our delighted state savoured our subject bit by bit.*

*Georgics, Virgil*

An Exhibition Curated by:

Elizabeth Howard

Editor, *Ned O’Gorman: A Glance Back*  
and *The Book(s), Ned O’Gorman Artist(s) Books*



Beginning in the 1980s, Ned O'Gorman began making visual art. He worked with gouache, colored pens and pencils and found objects. Many of his collages and artist books were created at the Locanda Cipriani in Torcello, Italy, or during the month of August when he stayed at Nick and Cass Ludington's home in Sneden's Landing, New York. From the Leo J. Kasun Papers, box 1, folder 3.

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*Ned O’Gorman: through the poet’s lens* is dedicated to Nicholas Breier Scheetz (1952-2016), who was the Curator of Manuscripts at the Georgetown University Library from 1976 to 2013. Ned O’Gorman and Nicholas Scheetz developed a friendship and affinity that stretched beyond their institutional connection. Nicholas Birns reflects on their friendship on the following pages. Nicholas Birns, Ph.D., is a writer, educator, scholar and critic. He met Ned O’Gorman and Nicholas Scheetz through the author Shirley Hazzard.

# The Intellect Sprouts Leaves: The Friendship of Ned O’Gorman and Nicholas Scheetz

– Nicholas Birns

Nicholas Breier Scheetz, the Curator of Manuscripts at Georgetown University Library, met Ned O’Gorman through Joseph Jeffs, the former Georgetown University Librarian. In Scheetz’s own words:

*I met Ned through Joe Jeffs. Ned started to talk, with a very loud voice, so commanding, that people began to stop talking and look at Ned. I knew then we would become good friends. I met him often when I would come to New York. One memorable time I was meeting him at the Yale Club upstairs and he was nowhere to be found. In desperation, I began searching for him and found him having a drink, utterly insouciant. He was a lovely man, and had the great gift of living completely within himself.*

O’Gorman donated his papers to Georgetown’s Special Collections Archive in 1988. Although O’Gorman was not a Georgetown graduate and had no formal affiliations with the University, his mixture of Catholicism, connection to the Jesuits and his social advocacy may have been a factor.

The late twentieth-century cultural world in the United States, in which O’Gorman and Scheetz both lived, presented a paradox. On the one hand, there were more readers and writers than ever, and whereas in the past the literary world might have subsisted based on a few coteries, now it was far too heterogeneous and differentiated for that.

On the other hand, the number of people who cared about books and culture above and beyond their own careers, or who saw a literary life as something lived beyond the context of self-sustenance and self-promotion, remained selective. Both O’Gorman and Scheetz were part of a circle whose members were bound to meet each other frequently.

O’Gorman’s friendship with Scheetz was not just about the library or his own archive; though it had started there, it grew into a much broader affirmation of shared interests, pleasures, shared opinions and aesthetic commitments.

The O’Gorman and Scheetz friendship was not just a means but an end. Friendship, perhaps even more than love, is inherently the act of an amateur; and both O’Gorman and Scheetz were above all amateurs in this.

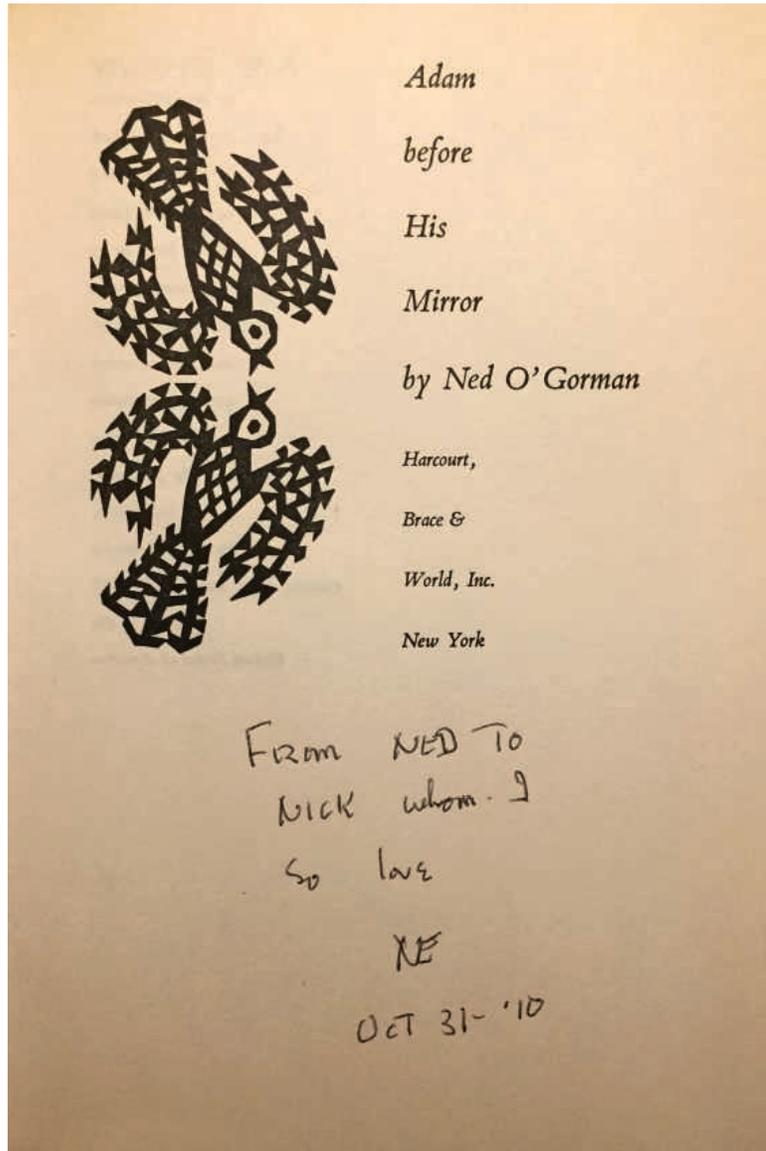
Yet, in another sense both men were highly skilled and uniquely equipped professionals, and their handling of their own friendship and friendships with others was done with an art that was thoroughly contemplated. Entry to their circle of friendship was not necessarily offered easily or casually but when it was extended it was like dining in a fine restaurant, with every gesture at once spontaneous and sincere but also part of an intentional ethic of care and regard.

Ned O’Gorman was already in his sixties when he met Nicholas Scheetz, continually seeking new experiences and fresh kindred spirits to join in his circle of meaning. In “Vegetable Life” (*The Buzzard and the Peacock*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), he speaks to this sense of plenty and profusion even amid a profound awareness of mortality and the limits time gives us:

*... In an ointment of wild saps, ripe fronds and mosses, tumid wheat  
and barley, Abundance pours down over the head, heavy with pollen  
and in the puce interrogation of the harvest  
the intellect sprouts leaves.*

In the friendship of O’Gorman and Scheetz, their intellects certainly sprouted leaves; but underlying their cultivation of learning and knowledge was a wild abundance.

The Intellect Sprouts Leaves:  
The Friendship of Ned O’Gorman and Nicholas Scheetz



*Adam*  
*before*  
*His*  
*Mirror*  
*by Ned O’Gorman*  
*Harcourt,*  
*Brace &*  
*World, Inc.*  
*New York*

From NED TO  
NICK whom I  
so love  
NE  
OCT 31- '10

Inscription in *Adam before his mirror*, by Ned O’Gorman, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, NY, 1961. Collection of Nicholas B. Scheetz (1952-2016).

## The Buzzard and the Peacock

If the mind could build its own paysage  
it would live in storm  
and typhoon where there  
was always wind.

But beloved by none other than itself  
the mind asserts its singular  
grace and elects to live  
in a land of

stillness and perfect vantages and cold valleys.  
It makes the heavens and the  
broad plain the holds and  
frames of sense.

On this resplendent pinnacle of fear  
the way to the center is a  
gnome's trick not the  
strategy of man.

It is difficult, but given the correspondence  
of the day, the stars and the spirit  
it is perhaps possible to  
find a sign

In nature to define it. The buzzard  
and the peacock on a summer day  
explained in the style and excess  
of their flights

the quest the lions urged upon my thought.  
The buzzard is the will; the mind,  
the peacock. Peacock-Mind  
trailing his

divertimento on the lawn, bearing in  
his tail the weightless  
tendrils of splendor  
and conception.

Buzzard-Will, plumed for carnage, flies  
straight up to the winds,  
seeks out new blood  
and finds one day,

strutting on the shadow of his hen,  
Peacock-Mind and eying her  
like lion meat,  
swoops

with plumes ploughing the wind.  
Blazons flame in the  
marigolds. But sure  
as death

one night, Peacock-Mind, in her slow  
sortie to the peak of  
the roof will knock  
down Buzzard-

Will, gorged to the chin with his  
hen, to the court where  
on triangles and squares  
he'll bite the night.

This poem was published in *The Buzzard and the Peacock* (1964) and later  
reprinted in *Five Seasons of Obsession: New and Selected Poems* (2003).  
Reprinted here by permission of Jeannette Sanger.

Elizabeth Howard is an author and journalist. Her books include *Queen Anne's Lace and Wild Blackberry Pie* (Thornwillow Press, 2011) and *A Day with Bonefish Joe* (David R. Godine, 2015). She is the editor of *Ned O'Gorman: A Glance Back* (Eastman Studio Press, New York, NY and Westport, CT, 2016) and *The Book(s), Ned O'Gorman Artist Books* (Publication Studio, Hudson, NY, 2017). She met Ned O'Gorman in 1985.

## Ned O’Gorman: through a poet’s lens

– Elizabeth Howard

To read across the landscape of Edward Charles “Ned” O’Gorman’s life is to observe a flat stone skipping across the still surface of a pond, sending large circular ripples in its wake.

People who met Ned were drawn to him through the sheer force of his intellect and personality, and yet, he was an enigma. Sir Herbert Read described him as “...the most exciting poet to appear in America since the war. Indeed, his work gives me that shock of discovery and delight which I have not experienced since I read the first poems of Dylan Thomas.”<sup>1</sup>

As an advocate for oppressed children, he was profiled in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books* and other journals and newspapers. As a writer, he could use his intellect and poetic vocabulary to interpret and bring attention to contemporary and critical theological, political, and cultural issues through essays and opinion-editorials.

Yet O’Gorman always stopped just short of the recognition that could have come his way. His ambitious effort to write and publish a biography of the American poet and essayist Allen Tate was abandoned, although letters and research related to this project are found in the archives.

*Prophetic Voices, Ideas and Words on Revolution* (Random House, 1966) received little critical attention, yet the correspondence in the archives related to this effort to, “offer certain alternatives to destruction” are relevant to our current global situation and are valuable for researches thinking about “revolution.”

The three books he wrote around his pedagogical experiences in Harlem might have been published in a compendium so others could benefit from his insights into developing an arts-based curriculum. He recognized the critical need to bring a sense of self and beauty to those who had been oppressed because of the color of their skin.

It is in the mind that the poet resides, submerged beneath public styles and unamenable to criticism. Perhaps O’Gorman left us an insight through *The Buzzard and the Peacock*, Part III of a poem entitled “Three Explanations in a Time of Darkness,” in which “the buzzard is the will; the mind, the peacock.” In the end, “... Peacock-Mind, in her slow sortie to the peak of the roof will knock down Buzzard-Will, gorged to the chin with his hen, to the court where on triangles and squares he’ll bite the night.”

The stone skips across the water, until, long out of view, it vanishes.

*The Night of the Hammer*,<sup>2</sup> Ned's first volume of poetry, is dedicated to Annette de Bouthillier-Chavigny O'Gorman, his elegant, aristocratic French mother. Included is a poem entitled "Childhood."

*... The child races through the snow in circles  
and hears on the swing the sound of air;  
the world's grave mummery is everywhere  
and the sun like a falcon swerves toward his wrist. ...*

*The child is verb and hieroglyphic of his day  
and sits and broods like a thinking flame;  
That is called the playing of the game;  
A child tends to glory like a pirate in a church. ...*

Ned (the verb) moved (broods) with difficulty through his childhood. Samuel Franklin Engs O'Gorman had expectations that his son would share his love of racehorses, alcohol, and evenings defined by their glamorous excess.

Childhood memories for the O'Gorman children—Ned, Annette and Patricia—were formed in an eighteenth-century white wooden house overlooking the harbor in Southport, Connecticut, until, in 1942, Samuel O'Gorman uprooted the family from their sophisticated, urban terrain and moved them into a farmhouse, tucked along a dirt lane on the edge of a hillside in Bradford, Vermont.

Now Ned, at the age of fourteen, was in an environment filled with apple orchards, stone walls, the smell of wet hay wafting through the barn, the glow of kerosene lamps through the windows on black winter nights and a horse and gig he could hitch up and drive across the fields. Here he observed the field mice, toads, buzzards, rabbits, hummingbirds, hens and other creatures that would provide the metaphors and imagery that appear throughout his poetry, as we read in "Corn, Wine and Oil" published in *The Buzzard and the Peacock*:

*... Thought, said man, is the space  
between my whip and  
the bestial skirmish  
on the deserts*

*and upon the hills where the animals  
turning on their marauding wills  
gather to rejoice. Dizzy, embracing,  
howling they turn off into the hollows ...*

Ned, a vessel bursting with a vivid imagination and yearning for love, struggled with a crippling stutter and the realization that his sexual orientation was different. But not until his memoir, *The Other Side of Loneliness: A Spiritual Journey*, was published in 2006 did he admit to being gay.

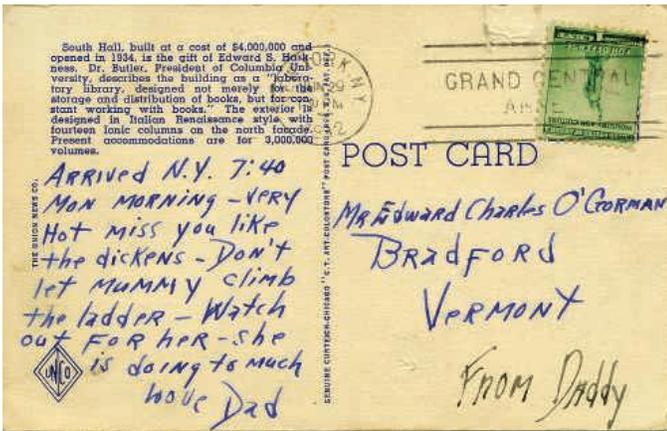
He discovered a rudder to steer him toward a point of balance at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church in Bradford.

*Then one day shopping with my mother, I found an escape. I asked her to drop me off at church, at the back entrance, where I could visit the Holy Redeemer Monastery Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. I told her I would await her there on her return trip home. I climbed the stairs into a hall of offices, opened a door, and walked down a flight of steps to a little cove of silence, candlelight, and the tabernacle. I sat down and looked up at the cross and over the altar and the statue of the Virgin. I cried and shook with convulsions of sadness, a poor, pimply, lusty, broken boy who loved waterfalls, horses, books and even the forever-ill chickens in the chicken coop.<sup>3</sup>*

Within the archives here at Georgetown is correspondence from John E. Doherty of the Redemptorist Fathers, the order of priests who lived in the monastery attached to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The two corresponded into the mid-1950s. In an undated letter, Doherty wrote, “You’re a creator, Ned. But the test of you’re [sic] creative power will be turning the dull, prosaic events of life into eternal spring yet.”

It was also in Vermont where Ned began writing poetry, influenced, according to his sister Patricia, by a teacher at Bradford Academy.<sup>4</sup> In *The Other Side of Loneliness* he writes that he “hated poetry. Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth wrote of no world I knew. It seems flimsy, feminine, and a bit breathless” as a child in Bradford. Yet he also recalls writing his first poem in 1944 and then discovering poetry as a student at St. Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont.

Ned graduated from Bradford Academy, briefly attended Notre Dame University and received a B.A. *cum laude* from St. Michael’s College in 1953. After 1955, he never returned to Vermont, although it is a totem he referenced throughout his poetry.



Dear Mother-

Buy the March 15 Issue of Commonweal or if you can't buy it, read it, for my two poems for M. Van Doren are in there; I got check today for them.

Tomorrow I have the first formal audience with the Pope. I see him, or course, with all the screaming Italians and the American's with their arms strung with rosaries to get his blessing, on Sunday at noon, attending and raising a hell of a fuss when he is late. Last Sunday he appeared twice, once after a Mass for all the kids of Rome and then at 12 for his usual benediction.

I went back to Florence (did I tell you in my last letter) for a 4 day rest (ha) and I'll go back before my ~~return~~ trip to Greece early in May. I'll be here for about 1 month more, since a friend arrives on the 5th and I will want to talk with her a little. All is very busy here; dinner thursday with a splendid White Father from N.Y. Lunch Friday with a friend of Anne Freemantle, a visit Saturday to a society for the reunion of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, dinner soon with some friends of your friend Mrs. Stokes (a blond daughter) and with the president of the American Academy. All terribly exciting and perhaps I'll get to Africa, as far as Tanganyika to visit the Governor General whose son I met and was fond of in Florence. But first Greece -- I'll sail from Naples or perhaps Brindisi

Today (Tuesday) I met a most gentle and splendid French Jesuit, Fr. Charles Boyer and then had to leave him to meet a fellow at the Notre Dame School for boys

Ned had a difficult relationship with his father. Clearly, this card had meaning for him. From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.

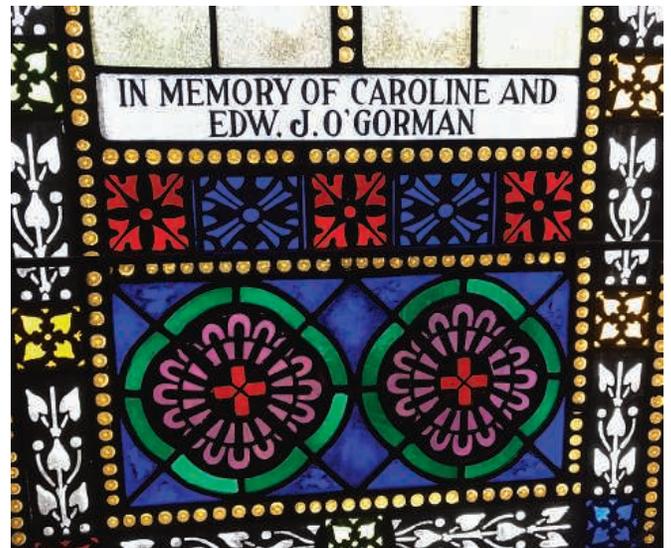
Ned adored his mother and corresponded with her regularly when he was traveling. From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.

Bradford, Vermont  
(1942 – 1955)

Color

*Blue is the stammerer's color.  
Yellow, the color of the lion tamer.  
Red, the signum of the clown.  
White is the flag the hawk flies.  
Orange, the kingdom's staff.  
Green, the water bug's legs on the bank.  
Black is the father's dream.  
Rose, the candle-maker's, purple, the jeweler's colors.  
Ochre, the potter's wrist.  
Lapis, for the seated knight.  
Opal, the bear.  
Burnt sienna, the plowman's hood.  
Cobalt, the color of the horse asleep...*

Excerpt from "Color," *Five Seasons of Obsession*



One of the stained-glass windows close to the altar in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church in Bradford, Vermont is dedicated to Caroline and Edward J. O'Gorman, Samuel O'Gorman's parents. The colors in the design of the windows flow through O'Gorman's poetry and are found in the accents in his New York flat, in his schools and in his visual art. Collection of Elizabeth Howard.

*Redemptorist Fathers  
Box 314  
Bradford, Vermont*

Dear Ned.

The end of June seems a long time, but I'm looking forward to seeing you. I think I shall still be here.

I think you've learned a lot out of your year in teaching. But at the same time I gathered from your letters that it wasn't the kind of environment in which you could really be happy. Without making a judgment I would think that they never had intended to take you on permanently. You helped them out of a difficult situation but if they really were in search of somebody valuable they would keep you.

What difference does that make. The point is, it was a good year of experience, and now what about the future? We can have some good talks this summer. I don't think you'll be required to take any great leap. Rather that you will meet the thing at hand with all the great resources of your personality. You will learn the ~~alchemist's~~ alchemist's secret of turning the dross of life into pure gold.

You're a creator, Ned. But the test of you're creative power will be turning the dull, prosaic events of life into Eternal Love.

We've just had Confirmations. It was very beautiful. We also had the Easter Vigil at Norwich and evening Mass throughout Lent. I'm a little wornout with the winter and we haven't really had Spring yet.

Sean O'Faolin spoke at Lantzouth but I didn't get a chance to hear him.

Gloris Brackett was Baptized on Holy Saturday. You must have heard it by now.

Well, this should be a decisive summer in many ways. We're looking forward to it.

God bless you and get up as soon as you can.  
Ever in Christ,

*Father O'Leary*

P.S. We specialize, Ned, in confessions. St. Alphonsus is the Doctor of Moral Theology and we are noted as confessors. I think in all orders there are priests who specialize in Confessions but as far as I know there are no orders which just year confessions. In the summer if you can give me a line on what you mean I can get more information.



*Pied-a-Terre*, the O'Gorman farm on O'Gorman Road in Bradford, Vermont.  
Collection of Elizabeth Howard.

From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.

## New York (1955 – 2014)

In 1954, Ned moved to the corner of Perry Street and Hudson Street in Manhattan and enrolled in a graduate program at Columbia University, where he would study literature and poetry with Mark Van Doren, the American poet, scholar and critic who taught at Columbia University for forty years. Ned's relationship with Van Doren was important because it gave him personal confidence and validated his poetry.

In a Christmas card from the Van Dorens dated December 1959, the same year *The Night of the Hammer* was published, a personal note from Van Doren includes the question, "That feasible plan of Jesus—is it still real?" probably referring to the notion O'Gorman had harbored of becoming a priest. After graduating from Columbia, O'Gorman studied Latin at Princeton University before making pilgrimages in 1957 and 1958 to St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, New York, and to Mount Saviour Monastery in Pine City, New York. His now confident and exuberant personality made it clear he was not suited to a monastic life. Nonetheless, it was his faith at the core of his being that remained the centering point throughout his life.

While studying at Columbia University and living downtown, he met the journalist, social activist and Catholic convert Dorothy Day and began volunteering at the *Catholic Worker* on the Bowery. Day and O'Gorman shared important similarities in their personalities. Kate Hennessy, Day's granddaughter, writes that Day "was fierce, dictatorial, controlling, judgmental, and often angry, and she knew it. It took the *Catholic Worker*, her own creation, to teach her lessons."<sup>5</sup> The same words could be used to describe Ned O'Gorman.

By the early 1960s, Ned had published three volumes of poetry, had been awarded the Lamont Poetry Award from the American Academy of Poets and had received the first of two Guggenheim Foundation fellowships. The fellowships allowed him to travel and continue writing poetry. He began by roaming across Europe—tracing family roots in Ireland, spending weeks in London, traveling to Rome to visit the Vatican. Then he moved on to Africa, spending three months in Ethiopia and visiting his sister Annette in Cairo. African imagery begins to appear in his poetry: lions, rhinos, pots of jasmine, leather, blazing sun and deserts.

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS  
&  
HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

---

DOROTHY AND MARK VAN DOREN, 1959

Dear Ned:

That was a sweet  
message.

and let me tell  
you this: you have  
influenced me, and  
made ~~they~~ would better  
by being in it.

That possible plan  
of yours - is it still  
real? Yours. Mark

From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.

New York  
(1955 – 2014)

MPA 1955 ©  
11 MAR 1965  
10:00 AM  
THE KING'S COLLEGE  
400 N. 10TH ST.  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48106

*The King's College*  
*Briarcliff Manor* *New York*  
presents

**NED O'GORMAN**

Author of *The Night of the Hammer*  
*Adam Before His Mirror*  
*The Buzzard and the Peacock*

CHOSEN FOR LAMONT POETRY SELECTION 1958  
RECEIVER OF THE GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP FOR POETRY

**SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1965**  
**FACULTY LOUNGE**

1:00 P.M. NED O'GORMAN  
2:00 P.M. INTERMISSION - COFFEE SERVED  
2:20 P.M. PANEL DISCUSSION

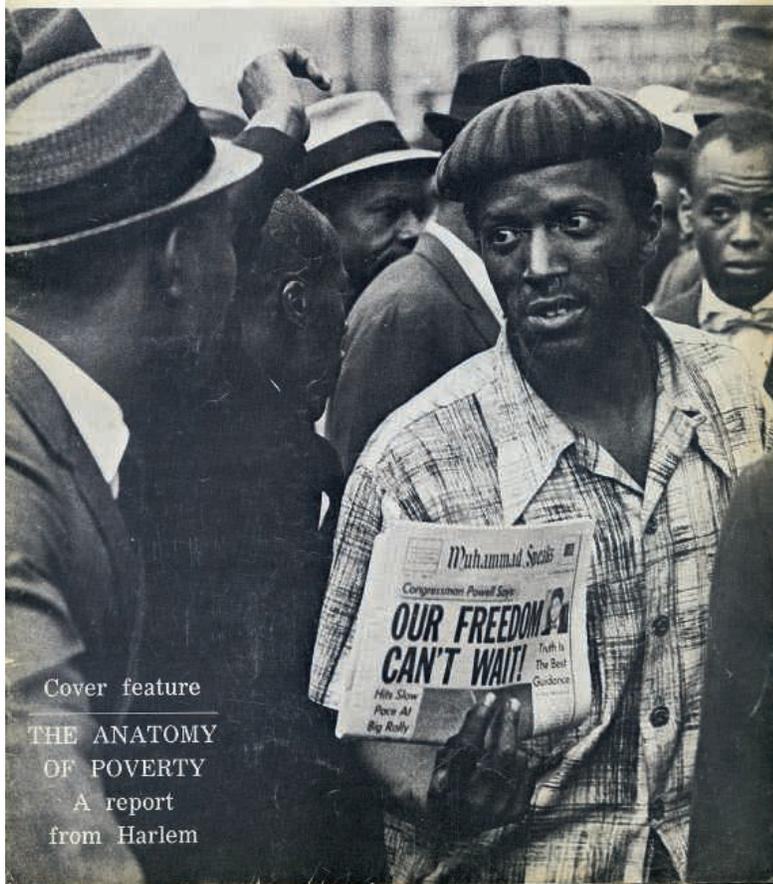
*For Reservations Write:*  
*Symposium, The King's College*  
*\$1.50 per person*

From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 3.

# Jubilee

July, 1964 / 50¢

Special: Jacques Maritain today • The vernacular controversy  
Inside a Zen monastery • Discussion: the Episcopalian witness



From 1962 through 1965, Ned was an editor at *Jubilee*, a Catholic publication founded by Ed Rice with the assistance of Thomas Merton and Robert Lax. Rice had outlined his vision for the magazine in a letter to Merton in 1950, describing a journal that would focus on subjects that were being omitted from more traditional Catholic publications. *Jubilee* featured bold black and white photographs and illustrations, articles about Black Catholics and Buddhism, criticism and essays. The inaugural issue of *Jubilee* appeared in May 1953, and it ceased publication in 1968.<sup>6</sup> From the Ned O’Gorman Papers Part 2, Box 12.



Pope Paul VI at prayer at the Cenacle, Mt. Zion, Israel

## Jubilee Holy Land Pilgrimage

**Visiting: ISRAEL  
JORDAN  
LEBANON  
SYRIA  
ITALY**  
with  
extensions  
to  
**CAIRO**

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September 17, 1964  
October 8, 1964  
October 29, 1964  
December 10, 1964  
December 17, 1964  
January 21, 1965  
February 18, 1965  
March 18, 1965  
April 8, 1965  
April 15, 1965  
May 20, 1965  
June 10, 1965  
June 17, 1965

FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS CALL OR WRITE to JUBILEE or:



230 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016  
OR 9-6150

From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 3 (Jubilee Holy Land Pilgrimage).



## Prophetic Voices: Ideas and Words on Revolution (1962 – 1966)

For three months in 1965, April through June, O’Gorman was invited, by the U.S. Department of State and through the connections of his cousin, Harry McPherson, and senators Eugene McCarthy and William Fulbright, to travel as a Cultural Representative of the United States to Argentina, Chile and Brazil. He outlined the lectures he planned to deliver on the tour as follows:

Review Development of American Literature 1607–1850  
Whitman and Melville  
Early Twentieth Century—Revolt Versus Convention 1900–1919  
The Twenties: Passivity and Despair  
Thirties: Agitation and Faith  
The South in Literature  
The Negro Novel  
Writing in America since World War II

The trip began successfully, with one cable back to Washington suggesting that only the Harlem Globetrotters had made more of a sensation as Cultural Representatives. But as O’Gorman began meeting and talking with people—the intellectuals, artists and priests he was naturally drawn to—he began to recognize the corruption and right-wing ideology that was filtering across South America. The attachés and diplomats scheduling his travels and arranging his lectures began dispatching him to remote places. Returning to the United States, O’Gorman published an article critical of American policy in South America in the *National Catholic Reporter*, without the approval of the State Department.

O’Gorman had also spent time in the mid-1960s at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi, and was involved in the “Negro Revolution” in the United States. From his experiences in South America and at home, an idea for a book germinated:

*The idea for this book began deep in my mind during the three months I spent touring Argentina, Chile and Brazil for the Department of State. It has been intensified during these past months since my return, by teaching in Jackson, Mississippi in June and by my small labors for John Fitts Ryan in his campaign for Mayor [of New York]. These events, my four years as editor of Jubilee and my work in the Negro revolution, have brought to my life a certain urgency—to my life as a poet and to my life as a citizen.*

*During my tour I observed, in the three countries I visited—I had observed it in Africa too but I was not then able to read what I saw with accuracy—the very process of revolution. I saw that historical consciousness within the people that proclaimed: What is must disappear; a new world must begin, otherwise we perish. I had, of course, been close to such a consciousness in America: in the Negro Revolution and in the changes the Second Vatican Council wrought in American Roman Catholicism. The Americans in our Embassies were woefully unaware of the cosmic changes going on around them, in the country they worked in and in their own country. On my own, free of any government plans, I met “revolutionary”*

*minds of every kind: The Archbishop of Perambuco in the North East of Brazil, a Chinese Communist, The Bishop of Talca in Chile, Christian Democrats, priests, Marxists ..... In my conversations, I was astounded by the relevance and the urgency of their vision.*

*These encounters took root in my mind and two weeks ago it came to me that I would try to do a book, a collection of essays, on the nature of revolution and prophecy—for revolution is the form of a prophetic vision—in the world now. I based my lectures in South America on four revolutions occurring in the United States: in ideas of War and Peace, in Race, in Education and in the Catholic Church.*

*I discover each day how deeply America is implicated in a Revolution, as South America and India and Africa are, at the center of the state. I shall call this book, Essays in Revolution: A Search for the Prophetic Voice.*

The book was published by Random House with the title: *Prophetic Voices: Ideas and Words on Revolution* (1966).

  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
973477  
March 3, 1965

Dear Mr. O'Gorman:

Thank you for your recent letter.

The young lady in the Department who spoke to you recently concerning your grant is Miss Virginia Oram of our American Specialists Branch. She is the officer responsible for working out your grant and your program.

I understand that your compensation will be at the rate of \$750 per month. In addition, you will receive an amount for per diem, international economy travel, an amount, as appropriate, for internal travel within Argentina and Chile (depending on your program in those countries), and an additional amount for "educational materials". This latter could be used for the purchase of a certain number of your books for presentation to persons and/or institutions in the two countries. A certain portion of these various amounts would be in the appropriate foreign currencies.

Our embassies in Argentina and Chile have now accepted the dates, respectively, of April 20-May 10, and May 11-31. We would prefer you to keep these dates since the embassies have probably already started working out your schedule. Probably the plane for Argentina does leave at night. If you find it terribly inconvenient, we could probably shift the dates a little but we would have to know right away in order to inform the embassies. I am sure that Miss Oram would be pleased to communicate with the embassies to see if the dates can be re-arranged. Actually, to begin your program on April 20, we had assumed that you could leave on April 19.

Your idea

Mr. Ned O'Gorman,  
168 East 91st Street,  
New York, New York.

-2-

Your idea of stopping a few days in Brazil to meet with the JUC students seems like a very good one and I feel quite sure it can be arranged. We shall communicate with our Embassy in Brazil to see if it can make the necessary arrangements.

As far as your coming to Washington is concerned, this is no problem since we normally provide within the grant for a short time for "briefing" and "debriefing" here. I certainly would like to see you on both occasions.

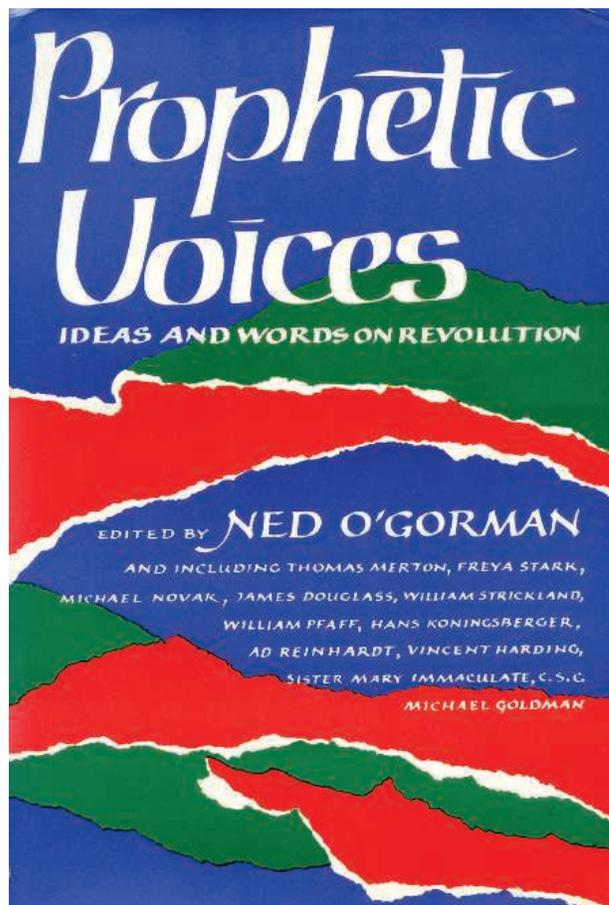
Have you thought further about the kind of program and the subject matter of your talks and discussions in Argentina and Chile? If you have, we should certainly like to have them in order to guide the embassies as much as possible as they develop their programs for you.

I am delighted that things are working out and am looking forward to an exciting project.

Sincerely,

  
Jacob Canter  
Director  
Office of Inter-American Programs

Letter from the Ned O'Gorman Papers, Part 2.



Book cover from the Collection of Elizabeth Howard.

Dear Professor  
Ned O'Gorman -

I have received your kind and interesting letter some days ago.

I felt many identical points between your ideas and mine after reading it and the outline of your book. I see the revolution, as you do, in an ample sense. I see it as a permanent search that man makes of himself in the world in which and with which he is. Permanent search that has its roots in his own inconclusiveness. As an inconcluded being with awareness of it, man is involved in a permanent process of search, creativity, transformation and humanisation. Within this framework, revolution can not be envisaged outside an integrated picture of man.

I deeply regret of not being able to attend your wishes due to the many commitments I have on the near future.

Thanking you for your kind proposal,

Yours sincerely  
Paul Dreier

SmD:sp  
16-5-66

Letter from the Ned O'Gorman Papers, Part 2.

MR. O'GORMAN'S SCHEDULE -

Mon. May 10  
 3:45 pm. Arrival  
 7:00 pm. Bohó, Teatro Municipal.

Tues. May 11 9:20 flight to Valp.  
 9:15 pm. Centro de Literatura Comparada  
Bulnes 140. Depto. 203 (Pomo 63900)  
Meeting with Mr. Roque Esteban Scarpa  
and Elvira.

7:15 pm. Canal 13 T.V. Interview

8:30 pm. Opening at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo  
 10:00 pm. Party at British Embassy.

Wed. May 14  
 12:00 am. Ambassador

11:00 am. Short speech on Civil Rights at  
 Workshop, Instituto Pedagógico

7:30 pm. Dinner at Luis Donalhue's  
 (Andrés Vespucio Norte 2470)

Thurs. May 13  
 9:30 am. Meeting with Mr. Stevenson

10:00 am. Recording of interview with Miss Ruth Chase  
 for program at Radio Prat, for Friday 14  
 at 5:30 pm.

11:00 am. Visit at Dept. of English of Catholic  
University, Sr. Jacques Minard.  
 (Rockwell Gray)

7:00 pm. Dinner at teatro Municipal

9:00 pm. Ronald Kay (To pick Mr. O'Gorman at Collin  
 for dinner at his home)

Frid. May 14  
 11:30 am. Lecture/call at Dept. of English University  
 of Chile

2:30 pm. U. Católica, Dept. of English, Rockwell Gray's  
 class (Relations between the Arts)

2.

Friday May 14 (cont. page 1)  
 4:00 pm. Recording of Poetry at Centro de Literatura  
 Comparada, Avda. Bulnes 140 Depto. 203.

8:00 pm. Dinner at Mr. Turner's house.

Saturday May 15  
 10:45 am. Meeting at St. George

7:00 pm. Poetry reading at REC (Public)

10:00 pm. Aurelius Fernandez meeting Escuela de Letras  
 Augusto A. V. de Chile.

Sunday May 16  
 11:50 am. Lecture Dept. of English U. de Chile

2:30 pm. Lecture Dept. of English, U. Católica.  
 Subject: I - Race  
 II - Church

7:00 pm. Chat at REC with PER Club. 7:30 meal

Wednesday May 19  
 11:00 am. Participate in Workshop at U. de Chile  
 Dept. of English (Sr. Rojas)

1:30 pm. Luncheon at Pan Pan. Mr. Turner & Mr. Mircemans  
 both

9:00 pm. Dinner at Miss White's - very good

3.-

Thursday May 20 visit to mine "El Teniente"  
 8:00 am. Pick up Mr. O'Gorman at Hotel

8:15 am. Pick up Mr. Donalhue at home

6:30 am. Proceed to Mr. Turner's from there to Rancagua.

Friday May 21 4:00 am  
 7:00 pm. Dinner at Aurelius Fernandez

Sat. May 22  
 8:00 pm. Dinner at Aurelius Fernandez

11:00 pm. Luncheon with Aurelius Fernandez  
 Lunch - Round

Sun. May 23  
 4:20 Depart

Mon. May 24  
 7:00 pm. REC. Lecture Modern American Poetry  
 1:00 pm. Lunch with Sr. Aurelius Fernandez  
 12:00 pm. Leave for Concepción

Tues. May 25  
 Concepción Chas Pratt's suite

Wed. May 26  
 Concepción

*Handwritten notes:*  
 These appointments will include some copies of V. Stud. etc. AF is to give as further details  
 42 479  
 4:30 update  
 10. B. market  
 Dep. for Rio 17:30 am  
 Iberia flight 994  
 Arr. Rio 21:15 pm

4.-

Thursday May 27  
 8:00 am. Arrival from Concepción  
 11:45 am. Departure to Valparaíso.

Friday May 28 (Valparaíso/VIÑAS)  
 Art. from Concepción  
 Dep. for Valparaíso  
 visit CD

Sat. May 29  
 Valparaíso

Sun. May 30  
 Dep. for Buenos Aires. 12:50 pm  
 Buenos flight 81:  
 Arr. B. A. 14:25 pm

Wed June 3 Dep. for Rio 17:30 am  
 Iberia flight 994  
 Arr. Rio 21:15 pm

Outline from the Ned O'Gorman Papers, Part 2.

## Harlem (1966 – 2014)

For O’Gorman, the decade between 1955 and 1966 was a productive one. He had wandered far beyond the hayfields and waterfalls of his childhood to places that had filled his imagination during those lonely years. Yet within the invention and elegant vocabulary of poetry, there is structure and resolution. Similarly, the artist, composer, poet, writer, must find resonance, structure and meaning within his own life. O’Gorman had found desire, dreams and obsessions, but not a mission. The restlessness was evident.

Valborg Anderson, a beloved professor of English at Brooklyn College, had written to O’Gorman in 1959 with the suggestion that he find a home: “...Ulysses too had to build himself a home.” According to O’Gorman, it was a priest who suggested he go to Harlem in 1966. And here Ned did indeed find a home. Already involved in the Civil Rights movement and referencing his own childhood, he recognized he could bring to children whose lives were defined by anger, violence, alcohol, alienation and hopelessness the possibility of developing a sense of self, experiencing a relationship with the natural world through gardens filled with moss, daffodils, ferns, rocks, worms, and birds and the beauty that streamed through stained glass windows or the music that filled concert halls. Childhood was

*a gift the gods give children. It is as precious as the rubies they give the earth and the sun they give the spheres. It is each child’s absolutely; as rare as a unicorn or a phoenix. One childhood to every child. No two childhoods are alike. If a man or a society taints a child’s childhood, brutalizes it, strikes it down, and corrupts it with fear and bad dreams, then he maims that child forever, and the judgement on that man and that society will be terrible and eternal.<sup>7</sup>*

In April 1966, O’Gorman began teaching in a Head Start program sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity at The Church of All Saints’ Poverty Program. In The Storefront, he writes:

*My first day in Harlem was a hallucination. I had no idea what to say to a seven-year-old black child; until then I had never walked down a Harlem street. It was “terra incognita” and the people there were as strange to me as if I had come one day, suddenly, out of a dream into a village on a star.*

*The room was a sea of children, seething with anger, distrust, and contempt. I was simply another “teacher,” another “ruler” who’d set them down, line them up, and bellow something at them that they had to “learn.”*

This experience led O’Gorman to open a storefront and name it after Addie Mae Collins, one of the African American girls killed by the Ku Klux Klan in 1963. The Storefront grew into a school, eventually attracting the attention of educators and the media. O’Gorman was the head of school from 1966 through 1998 until the Board of Directors, eager for him to name a successor and introduce a more rigorous curriculum so they could build an endowment, fired him. It was a

devastating blow. The next September, at the age of 68, he opened the Ricardo O’Gorman Garden and Center for Resources in the Humanities just down the block from the Storefront on 129th Street. It has been renamed the O’Gorman Garden and continues to provide learning experiences for underserved children based on the Montessori method of teaching.

The Children’s Storefront was renamed the Storefront Academy Harlem in May 2014. In 2015, the Storefront Academy South Bronx was opened as a public charter school, with the idea that the successful academic model which has defined the Storefront for over fifty years can be replicated.

Beyond discovering a mission, Ned had also found a child. Ricardo Frazier entered Ned’s life when Ricky’s grandmother asked if Ned would take Ricky for the night. Although never formally adopted, Ricky became Ned’s son, the center his life and a member of the extended O’Gorman family, adored by Ned’s mother, who lived in New York until her death in 1988, and Ned’s sister’s family. Ricky contracted AIDS after trying to bond with his mother by sharing a needle, and died in 1996. He was twenty-six years old.

FROM ARLINGTON JAIL  
Clouds low in overhead  
the day moves in its course  
and who are we  
and who are we

Majestic, undefiled  
nature goes her way,  
out of sight out of mind  
and who are we  
and who are we  
to this place  
in this time  
stalemated, checked, rooted  
we abide we abide  
in nature's lexicon  
of reason and unreason -  
in the mind's store  
of wisdom and mad omission

what abides  
what abides -  
beckon to our side  
great spirit, greater reason.  
The root has touched rock  
we abide  
we abide

220 West 98 Street, N.Y.C. 10025 Apt. 7-J  
March, 1977. Dearest friends,

I'm back again, unreconciled to America, undamaged  
by the rehab tinkers.

An extra; one day at an hour's notice, we were  
shunted from Alexandria to Arlington jail in chains.  
Even their whims come down hard.

The keepers keep Elizabeth McAlister segregated  
from her children. Her sentence of 90 days is  
too long for justice, too short for family visits.  
Thus the Catch 22 of the justice moguls.

We thank God for her strength and her conscience,  
which are clues to her real crime. In the macho  
world of victimized women, she cannot be reduced to  
a victim. Hence her punishment must be condign.

Phil, Jerry, Ed Clark were ideal fellow felons.  
We studied scripture and rapped and lived together  
well in the metal capsule into which we had been  
sealed, then hurled into space. For that month,  
we were the guarded, pampered, monitored darlings  
of America, hostages of the future, destiny's  
children. We were required neither to pay taxes  
nor go to war nor earn our keep. We were in fact  
forbidden access to the tree of Genesis and all its  
vile fruits. We were ex-Americans, free at length  
to harken to the primordial invitation; 'come  
apart into a desert place, and rest your spirits.'

No competing, jostling, consuming, proving. We  
were useless as zen monks, weaving mats in a mad  
world - then, for the sheer fun and hell of it,  
raveling them again.

What we wove, what we raveled - well, that's no one's secret.

There will be more Pentagon doings during Holy Week and the week following,  
April 7 - 8 and 14 - 15. On the first dates Jesus pays up, dear; on the  
second, Americans pay up, for death. We would like to render unto the  
First and refuse unto the second.

Come join us as we weave our future and ravel theirs. Write or phone  
Jonah House, 1933 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland (301) 669 - 6265.

♥ Daniel

Dear Ned, I was sorry to miss supper, and →

From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.

June 11, 1959

Dearest Ned,

No, of course, I'm not mad, and I'm very sorry you've had reason to be wondering about me. But you surely got a long letter that I sent in charge of the Lorimers -- it was written about the time that you began wondering where I was and since I knew you'd soon be getting it, I, in the midst of my awful tensions at the college and elsewhere ( I wrote you, didn't I? that my young brother-in-law is very ill and for weeks was between life and death and is still not back at work and we don't know how long he will survive and I'm the only one my sister has to lean on since I'm the only member of the family near her and so on) decided that letter would allay your concerns. But instead you sound as if you have never received it, and no doubt by now you feel as if you haven't. Understandably, since that was a long time ago. But you did have a message from me via your sister, which at the time was all I had in me. School has been awful for me for political reasons I won't go into except to say that I had to take it all -- the Majors committee of which I am chairman brought in a report and the idea that we might just possibly change our approach to literature even very mildly sent people into a frenzy and I became the "ephistopheles to Peck's Devil. But now it's over -- school, that is, not the committee's business -- and I'm trying to wash it right out of my air!

Before I talk about anything else including your poems, which you so sweetly sent me, I want to say that I hope your soul is getting more peaceful. You sound sort of harried and worried about your future. I ~~know~~ think traveling can be a great frustration unless it has a special point, which your trip may not have any more. And ~~man~~ people with a great sense of the importance of purpose and direction probably can't float along for long. Remember my telegram to the boat -- did you get it? -- "~~man~~ Ulysses too had to build himself a home." You have to do whatever you decide to do with will and purpose or it won't be a home. I like my misprint -- I'm going ahome; when are you going ahome? where are you ahome? isn't it nice ahome? Etc.

I saw your annihilation, and Margaret was not the least bit upset by it, and Jack probably explained it best when I mentioned the review to the Mathews and Sylvia Beach yesterday at lunch, "You know he's a Catholic, Sylvia?" The Partisan Review crowd can't read religious poems, especially not if they are passionate ones. And I'm afraid you're also going to be disposed of by somebody in the Hudson. Saul said he had seen the review ahead of printing time. Saul told me about it with such fervor that I spontaneously said to him, "What do you think of Ned's poetry?" Answer: "I think it's very good." And so does everybody still. Did I tell you that I heard three young students reading you and exclaiming with pleasure at the 8th St. store? And that one of our budding poets at Brooklyn -- he's another one we hadn't seen as writer before (there are about five now) -- wrote a good poem which has been influenced by you. I read it when it came in for the poetry prize and said, "O'Gorman's influence has already begun." Later Marjorie spoke to the boy and mentioned what I had said and his reply was, "I wrote it one night after I had heard him read!" If you're really any good people are bound to dislike you as much as they like you. And it looks as if it's the "intellectuals" who are going to have the most trouble with liking you. Well, "ripeness is all."

Enclosed is a lively letter which will cheer you. Obviously Victoria liked what she had read. Why don't you write her a note saying you'd love to have her translate you? Margaret says she has to do is to write her a note saying which poems she'd like to translate. The implication was that they'd give permission without charge. I don't think the exchange rate right now would encourage her to do it otherwise. Well, you need not mention that. Just say you'd love it, if you would, and I'll write her the other matter. And you might save this letter for me since I have not answered it and may need to refer to it.

Your poems are beautiful -- nicer every time I read them. Anything I might say is no addition. I just continue to give you as present to my friends when present time comes around, and all are excited by what I have given them.

So be good and calm and be poet. Love to you. I was going to WashDC on about the 20th but will be

*the sending this to you and to your letter, etc. it comes day before yesterday.*

*took in a week and will be in from several weeks before I leave again. So I'll see you soon!*

From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.



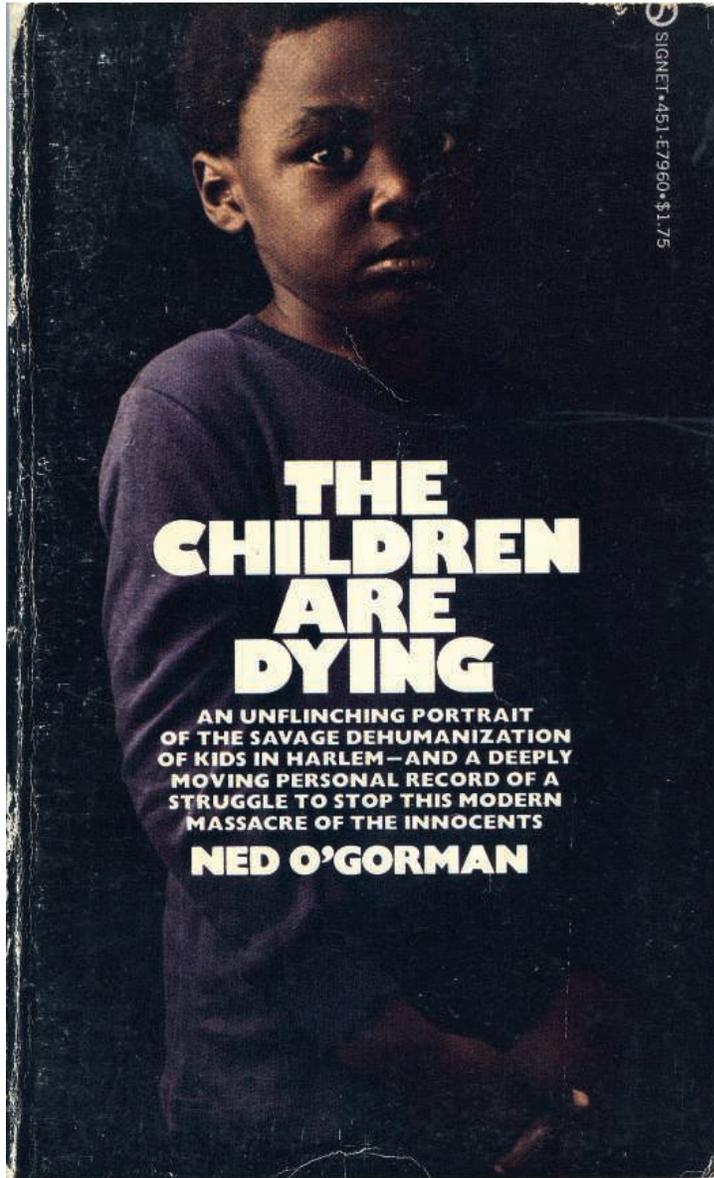
Photograph of Ricardo Frazier O'Gorman (1969-1996) with Ned O'Gorman, circa 1974.  
From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 2, Box 12.



Ned O’Gorman, Elizabeth Howard, Arthur Ashe, Tania Clark and Elsie V., at the Children’s Storefront. Tania Clark and Elizabeth Howard co-chaired a polo benefit for the Storefront in Greenwich, Connecticut. Arthur Ashe was the Honorary Chair. Circa 1990. Collection of Elizabeth Howard.



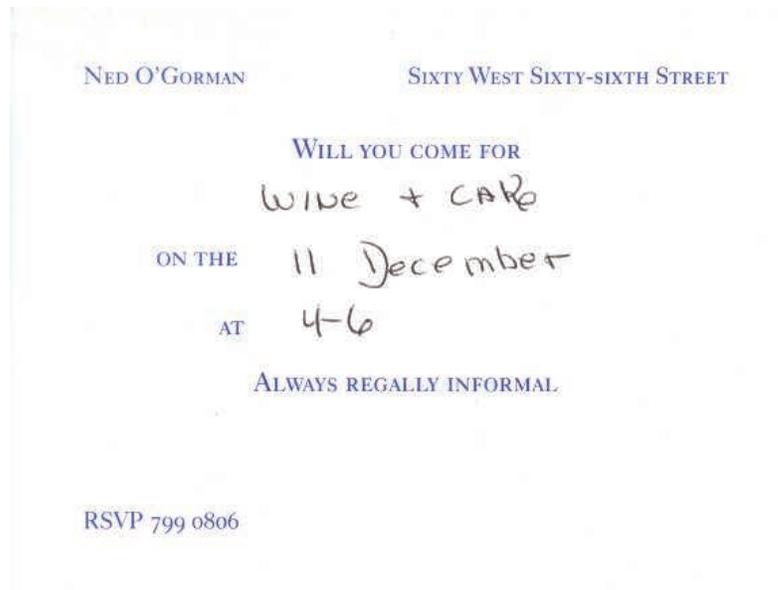
Photograph of Millie Harford, Joe Simon, Jeannette Sanger, Ned O'Gorman and others at the Ricardo O'Gorman Garden & Center. Photo by Joyce Ravid, 2000. Collection of Elizabeth Howard.



Collection of Elizabeth Howard.

## Circle of Friends: Writers, Poets, Musicians, Dancers (1953 – 2014)

Beginning in 1966, from September into early June, O’Gorman’s day began perched on a stoop on 129th Street, greeting children with a warm embrace. Late in the afternoon he drove downtown, stopping at the West Side YMCA for a swim, and would spend the evening at the opera or a concert, entertaining a small group of friends for an informal dinner or writing.



Collection of Elizabeth Howard.

O’Gorman’s friendship with British explorer and travel writer Freya Stark began after he sent her a book of poetry. The two corresponded until the late 1970s.

Letter to Mrs. T. Deuchar  
3 February 1965

Darling Dulcie,

...It is such joy to be reading for pure pleasure again and I have discovered a young American poet, Ned O’Gorman; at least he discovered me and called on me once in London and has sent his little volume, *The Buzzard and the Peacock*. It is modern, and bits of exuberance are too frequent, but there are images of thought and power. With any luck he may grow and grow and one feels there is something to grow from. ...<sup>8</sup>

Asolo (Trento)  
1/6/80

My dear Ned

I have sent you a telegram, because I shall not be here till the 2nd half of July - Simply unbearable your coming just as I go, & by then we may be in middle of a war - I long for news of you too. Letters seem very difficult & take very leisurely ways - The little boy must be growing up and I do hope he is still your joy & happiness & that you write poems? My writing is over, I think, & every little bit of work feels heavier than it should be: but the joy is still deep, set off by some loveliness with which this poor old world is blessed, & I am spending my last years reading history from the earliest I happen on (& am now with the Romans), & wondering if I shall come upon what & why we are here. Dear Ned, August would find me here, or else mid October. Do come down Freya

Via Canova,  
Asolo, Treviso.  
Tel. 52732

18/10/74

Dear Ned - You were in China  
when your last little note reached  
me & I am so anxious to hear that  
you are safely out - I am only  
just home again, with a new  
& still rather uncomfortable  
hip: it has taken me months  
waiting for a hospital bed & then  
6 weeks to get to the stage  
of getting around with a stick -  
& all I hope is well now -  
My tower is lovely & waiting

for you - but this note is  
really to ask if you are safe.  
It is a poor world just now  
& I feel that a war for Oil  
might come any moment called  
by any old name to make  
it smell less hideous -

Love to you in your children's  
garden dear Ned. Do send  
a word  
Fveya

In correspondence to Ned from mezzo-soprano Dame Janet Baker she writes:

Bamford cottage

Dear Ned,

I have heard about Mr. Coombs, it scares me in case I can't manage his sort of music; I do not have perfect pitch which, to my mind, is an absolute essential; this is one reason why I do so little contemporary music, the actual technical difficulty of pitching the notes makes concentration on interpretation impossible.

The Argentine piece I did

in New York this January nearly killed me and that was easy stuff compared with most.

Your post script saddened me immensely; it was so calm and yet so full of horror.

We are in desperate straits here. So many good people are leaving the country and we need them - and will feel this need more and more in the difficult years to come.

Here is the photograph you asked for

3  
It's less formal than many of the  
others.  
I was so glad to have one of your  
lovely boys.  
Must finish off with a different pen.  
The spring is here: awaited with so  
much impatience; as soon as we put  
our clocks to 'summertime' the evenings  
begin to draw out; we feel winter is  
truly over. I am enjoying my garden  
and books and Easter. You are  
right - there is much to be grateful  
for. Our love to you both  
Janet

O’Gorman’s friendship with philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin lasted only six years. It was a friendship Ned treasured.

“In December 1995, I had gotten the notion that Isaiah and Mitsuko Uchida, the colossal Japanese pianist, should meet. I brought them together in a lowly basement bar in Piccadilly. ... We drank champagne, and oh, what wonderful stories I heard.” *Commonweal*, 14 August, 1998. Collection of Elizabeth Howard.

## MY DINNERS WITH ISAIAH

### *The music of a philosopher's life*

Ned O'Gorman

Isaiah Berlin (1907–97), my friend of only six years, was the happiest man I ever met. He simply knew all about it. He saw the shadows and the terrible light hidden in the shadows. He listened to the world as he listened to Schubert and Bach, as he read Akhmatova and Herzen, touching them with his wit and the speed of his manner. What he perceived in literature and art, in political epochs and in their recorders, in composers and musicians, in the fine differences between virtuoso pianists Alfred Brendel and Sviatoslav Richter and their interpretations of Schubert, was a prodigy of practical knowledge, grace, and almost transcendent intuition.

He told me at our first meeting in Oxford, in April 1991, that he was an old man and would soon die. Might I have lunch with him in Salzburg in August at Tomaselli's? It was a café I loved, and our conversation that April day was filled with wonderful correspondences. Who, he asked, were the pianists I most admired? I named five and was right on the money: Radu Lupu, Richter, Brendel, Murray Perahia, and Andras Schiff. I asked him, quite terrified that I would be taken for a fool, did he not think Horowitz was very bad? He did.

When Isaiah was twenty-one, he wrote music criticism for the *Oxford Outlook* under the pseudonym of Albert Alfred Apricott. Even then he knew who he was—a mixture, a plural man, part Ariel, Puck, and Falstaff, and part sage, each lovely human facet of him cohering and radiating complete delight and the most elegant and yet not unflamboyant manner. He made the balance endure with grace.

I think that Isaiah found the world a marvelously interesting place. He was caught up in it, in its curiosities, in its absolutes, in its queer turns and sudden precipices, and how one wanted to know *all* about it. We used to play a little game: we thought of an imaginary line. On one side was genius and a sort of dwelling place of the great, and there was the space leading to it. Who got close, who got over the line, and who didn't get anywhere near it? We deliberated long about the quartets of Shostakovich, five of which I had heard the previous night. We decided that no matter how harrowing and tragic his quartets, somehow they are too exposed to the tempests of his feelings, too raw, too muddled to achieve the divine. But Isaiah could move with the agility of a tumbler to exclaim the next instant over what a "fine

picture" Georg Frederich Kersting's *Lesender bei Lamenlicht* was. (He did not make it over the line.) It was the mix Isaiah understood so well. Pluralism is a mix, and in it one can discern, if one looks with a pure eye, the lineaments of truth.

I used to come to London or Salzburg, where we met over the years, armed with ideas, a new book, and once with the discovery that Andras Schiff played Bach quite as well as Glenn Gould, if not better, perhaps, being less rigid and less technical and closer to the soul of Bach. Isaiah loved Schiff's Bach. It was that mercury in Isaiah, that breakneck way he had of going from one thing to another as if he were composing a sonata: the melodies and sonorities of the mind and the imagination always in tune, at perfect pitch. During a chat about the Jewish mystics, especially about one Uriel Acosta who was a heretic and died a most gory death, a rich American lady, a friend of a certain great age, entered the restaurant and sat across from us. Isaiah said, "I cannot talk to her," and was out onto the sidewalk in a flash.

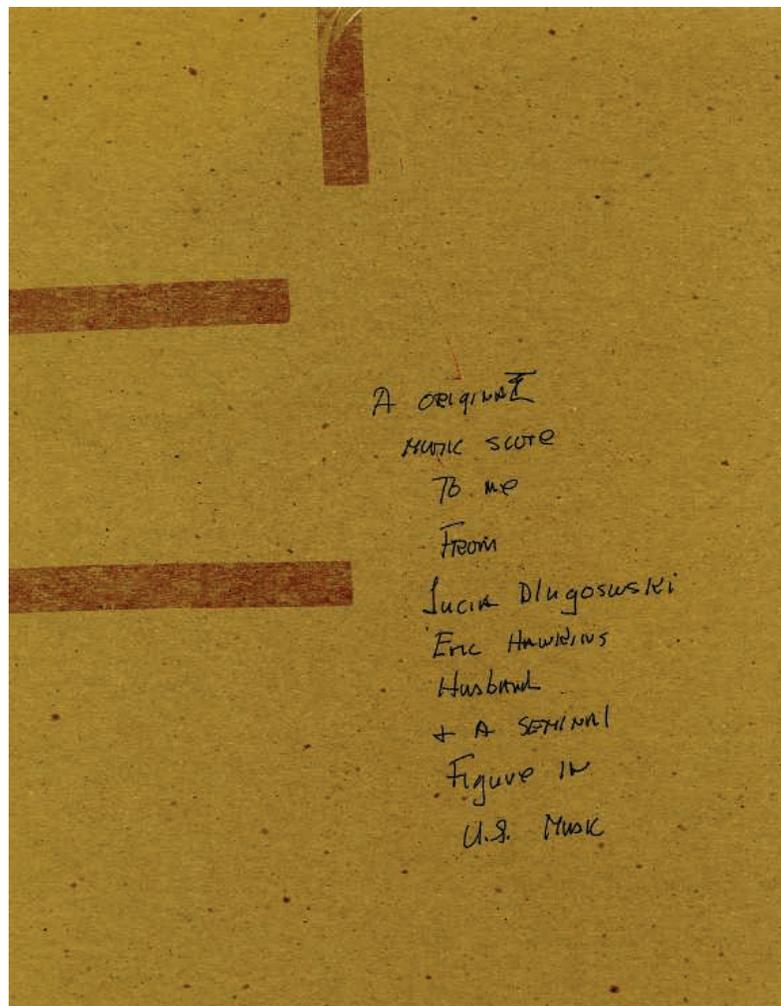
I think that the notion that the speed and the dance of the mind might soon stop made him so resent the idea of death. He was annoyed that he had to die, as if one had to expect that in the middle of a Schubert sonata or a Beethoven string quartet the music would stop and the players would sprint out for a game of cricket, leaving the beauty and the wonder abandoned to the void. There was still so much to do, to see. Once, at the Atheneum, one of his London clubs, he reflected that he had never written about the Romantic poets and wished to do exactly that soon. Isaiah was intent on it because I do not think poetry came easily to him. I once sent him a first edition of the American literary critic Richard Blackmur and wonder if he had a chance to look at it. I think they would have been great friends. And at that tea, in the midst of musings about death and the Romantics, we talked of Verdi's *Falstaff* and of his sublime aria in the second act when Falstaff recollects his life as a page in the Court of the Duke of Norfolk ("*Quand ero paggio del Duca di Norfolk*"). We sang it loud enough so that some eyes turned toward us. I pronounced some word incorrectly. Isaiah corrected me and looked at that moment at a beautiful young woman with a fall of the most luminous blond hair who was seated nearby.

In December 1995, I had gotten the notion that Isaiah and Mitsuko Uchida, the colossal Japanese pianist, should meet. I brought them together in a lowly basement bar in Piccadilly. All the clubs were closed. It was a terrible day—sleet, rain, snow, strong winds. We drank champagne, and oh,

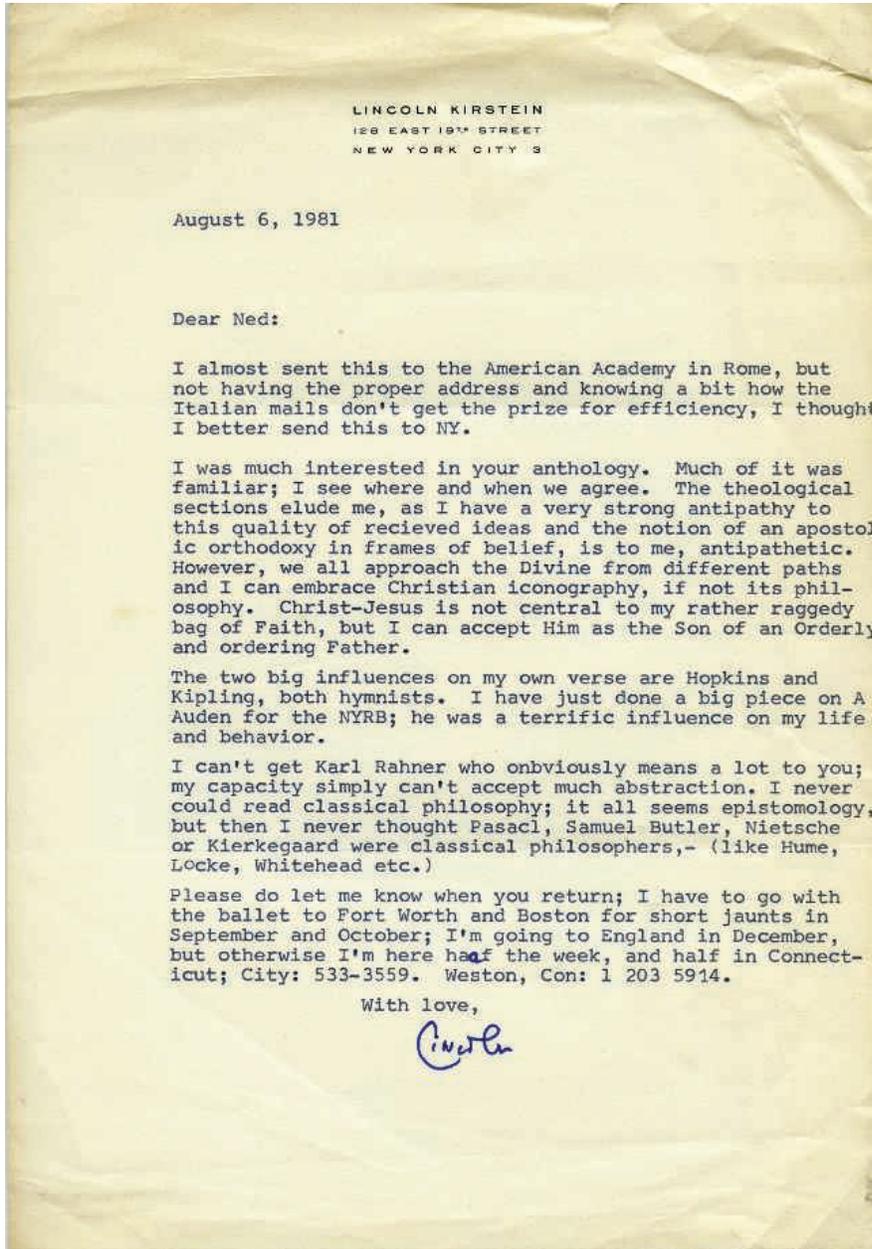
Ned O'Gorman is a poet and educator who lives in New York City.



Circle of Friends: Writers, Poets, Musicians, Dancers  
(1953 – 2014)



Letter from Lincoln Kirstein, writer and co-founder of the New York City Ballet. From the Ned O'Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 1.



### Poetry:

- The Night of the Hammer*, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1959
- Adam Before His Mirror*, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1961
- The Harvesters' Vase*, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1968
- The Flag the Hawk Flies*, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1972
- How to Put Out a Fire*, Eakins Press Foundation, New York, 1984 (limited edition of 200)
- Five Seasons of Obsession: New and Selected Poems*, Books & Co., a Turtle Press Imprint, New York, 2003

### The Children's Storefront Books:

- Storefront: A Community of Children on 129th Street & Madison Avenue*, Harper & Row, 1970.
- The Wilderness and the Laurel Tree: A Guide for Teachers and Parents on the Observation of Children*, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1972
- Children Are Dying*, New American Library, New York, 1978

### Children's Literature:

- The Blue Butterfly*, illustrated by Thomas di Grazia, Harper & Row, New York, 1971

### Non-Fiction:

- The Other Side of Loneliness: A Spiritual Journey*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2006

### Anthologies:

- Prophetic Voices: Ideas and Words on Revolution*, Random House, New York, 1969
- Perfected Steel, Terrible Crystal: An Unconventional Source Book of Spiritual Readings in Poetry and Prose*, Seabury Press, New York, 1981

The two schools Ned O’Gorman founded in Harlem continue to educate children.

### The Storefront Academy (originally The Children’s Storefront)

Since 1966 the Storefront has been educating urban youth of all learning abilities, unlocking young minds and expanding the possible for generations of students. Cultivating intellect and character in equal measure, Storefront Academy schools instill a powerful sense of self, and give students the tools to own the future and create meaningful adult lives.

[storefrontacademy.org/](http://storefrontacademy.org/)

### The O’Gorman Garden

The O’Gorman Garden has been serving children in Harlem since 1998. The school was founded by the late Ned O’Gorman, an acclaimed poet and inspirational Harlem community activist. In the 1960s, Ned was part of a movement of thinkers who aspired to repair the inequities of the education system. Along with visionaries including Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, and Paul Goodman, Ned wanted to free schools from stifling conformity and provide underserved children a better chance in life.

[ogormangarden.org](http://ogormangarden.org)

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5. Hennessy, Kate, *Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved by Beauty*. New York: Scribner, 2017, p. 343.
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## Acknowledgements

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## Colophon

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The endpapers are a poster painted by Ricardo Frazier O’Gorman, probably at the Children’s Storefront. From the Ned O’Gorman Papers Part 1, Box 3.







Ned O’Gorman:  
through a poet’s lens

An Exhibition Curated by  
Elizabeth Howard, editor of  
*Ned O’Gorman: A Glance Back* and  
*Ned O’Gorman Artist(s) Books*

**OCTOBER 1, 2017–JANUARY 30, 2018**



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