

Horace Gregory, 1898-1982

May, 1982

10964 Newsletter

HORACE GREGORY, POET, CRITIC,  
ESSAYIST AND BIOGRAPHER

Horace Gregory, 83, died this spring in Shelburne Falls, Mass. only a few months after his wife, Marya Zaturenska. Until recently, Horace and Marya Gregory lived on Closter Road in Palisades and were special friends of the Palisades Library.

Mr. Gregory, a member of the National Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters, received the Bollingen Prize in 1965, regarded as the highest honor in American poetry. His wife, who wrote under the name Marya Zaturenska won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1938.

When Mr. Gregory's collected essays, "Spirit of Time and Place," appeared in 1973, Edgar Johnson, the Dickens biographer, said that "Mr. Gregory is not one of those scholar-critics who write only for other scholar-critics. He is a scholar without pedantry, who concentrates not on exhibitionism but illumination."

(Cont. pg. 3)

(Gregory)

His last book of poetry, "Another Look," came out in 1976. The critic R. W. Flint described Mr. Gregory as "a Depression poet, not a Villager of the first extraction, who wrote with muted eloquence in the highly civilized lilt of Manhattan-Hibernian Classic." Louis Untermeyer said that Mr. Gregory was under the spell of the Classicists until he saw the tenements of New York.

Mr. Gregory was born and grew up in Milwaukee. At one time he thought of becoming a painter, and studied at the Milwaukee School of Fine Arts for three years. "I decided to switch when I found myself writing poems on canvas," he later said. Mr. Gregory graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1923, and began writing poetry and criticism for the New Masses, New Republic and The Nation.

In addition to eight books of poetry, including "Collected Poems" in 1965, Mr. Gregory was known for his translations of the poems of Catullus and Ovid.

As a biographer, he wrote "The World of James McNeill Whistler" and "Amy Lowell." He also edited "Selected Poems of Robert Browning" and "The Portable Sherwood Anderson."

He began teaching at Sarah Lawrence in 1934 and became professor emeritus in 1960.

Horace and Marya Gregory are survived by a son, Patrick, of Northampton, Mass., a daughter, Joanna Zeigler of Edinburgh, Scotland, and five grandchildren.