



FROM  
**THE BARNESVILLE ENTERPRISE**  
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Stanley Plumly  
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# Rambling Remarks

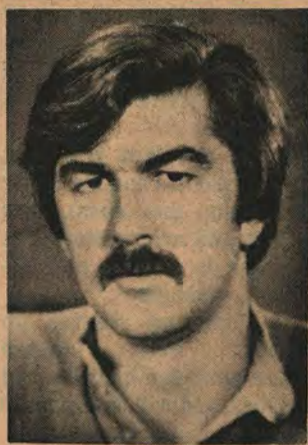
By d.a.b.

FOR MOST OF US, poetry to be "poetry" must rhyme and reveal an obvious meaning; free verse which challenges the imagination we generally leave to specialists who delight, so we surmise, in the difficult and the obscure.

The poetry of Stanley Plumly, a native of Barnesville, is certainly not the former variety of verse, which commonly conveys a clearly perceived message in compact lines; but while challenging, his poetry is not necessarily obscure, even for the casual reader, for messages — often profound messages — pound their way through from the page to the mind.

This space is too limited, and this writer too little qualified, for a critique of the writing of Stanley Plumly. But what can be done here is to bring to the attention of his "hometown folks" the accomplishments of a native son who has gained a literary reputation of national stature.

Readers will recall that Plumly was briefly the subject of this column a few months ago when his friend, Professor Samuel Crowl of Ohio University, introduced Barnesville Rotarians to Plumly's poetry during a speaking engagement here. In the meantime, I've been able to chat with Plumly via telephone (he's a resident of New York City), and have secured two of the three volumes of his published work. Barnesville's Hutton Memorial Library has also secured the two volumes; the third is on order. Plumly's poetry is now available for public review on the library's "Barnesville Authors Shelf".



STANLEY PLUMLY

To give an immediate idea of the excellence of Plumly's poetry, one need only note that his third volume of verse, entitled "Out-of-the-Body-Travel," was one of five recently nominated for The National Book Critics Circle Award. Announced only a few weeks ago, the award for 1977 went posthumously to Robert Lowell (1917-1977), a Pulitzer Prize winner and a major architect of contemporary American poetry.

In 1970, Plumly received The Delmore Schwartz Memorial Award for his first collection of poetry, entitled "In the Outer Dark". Subsequently, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in poetry, that in 1973. He has taught poetry and-or writers' workshops at the University of Iowa, Ohio University, and Louisiana State University. Presently, he's teaching Creative Writing workshops at Columbia and Princeton universities.

Plumly has fond memories of Barnesville and Ohio and is eager to return to the land of his birth. He's hoping to be able to return to the faculty of Ohio University, Athens, perhaps as soon as next year.

Now, for some background information on this extraordinarily talented man.

Plumly was born here in 1939, in the old hospital on E. Main St. which in recent years has been the Venora Drummond property, and a few months ago was purchased by David Stanley and his family.

The poet is the son of the late Herman Plumly; his mother, a native of Piqua, is currently residing in Garland, Texas. His grandfather would have been the late Park Plumly; Francis, Gene, Max and the late Bob Plumly of Barnesville, and Dale Plumly of Somerton, are the poet's second-cousins.

Plumly said he lived in Barnesville "off and on" for about seven years, later moving to Virginia and returning here occasionally in the summers to work on family farms near Friends Boarding School. While a boy, he remembers that he lived on Cherry Street; in Virginia, the Plumlys lived in Winchester.

Subsequently, the future poet moved to western Ohio where he attended, and graduated from Piqua High School. He continued his education at Wilmington College, a Quaker school and, following graduation there, went on to earn a master's degree in Literature from Ohio University. Plumly has done doctoral studies as well.

Plumly said he is "very proud" of his local heritage and noted that "the early years in Ohio and Barnesville" figure prominently in his poetry, particularly in his third volume of verse.

"'Roots' is my subject, really," the poet said, explaining that where a man comes from is indispensable to him in gaining "a sense of identity in life in the present tense".

Plumly hopes to return to Barnesville some day to trace his own heritage, which includes a Quaker background, and to pursue the emphasis of "place" in his work. He brought his wife here for a few hours about four years ago, while driving through Ohio via Interstate 70. "I found Barnesville remarkably as I remembered it," Plumly said: "a sort of special community, forgotten in a way. . . very attractive." He remembers that he ate lunch at Bohandy's Restaurant, which he termed "a landmark".

Space, today, unfortunately, is about gone, and there are many other items of interest about this gifted man yet to be passed on; another column some time will be in order.

For now, here's a sample of Plumly's emphasis on heritage from a poem entitled, "Still in Ohio", and included in his second volume of verse, "Giraffe":

"We start out in the same room  
in the same hospital, now a house,  
in Barnesville, Ohio".

The reference, of course, is to the former Drummond property.

The following lines are taken from the poem, "From Athens County, Ohio," which is in Plumly's first, award-winning volume:

"Belmont County is pure  
with pedigreed Quakers  
addressing the inner-light—  
the soulself candle-flame  
of God's clean fire,  
within a ribcage,  
behind a breastbone".

**ROOM IS GONE.** We must return again to the life and writing of a native of our soil, and of our community, who is making significant contributions to the literary life of America.



# BARNESVILLE ENTERPRISE

*Established 1866*

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BARNESVILLE, OHIO 43713

March 2, 1978

Stanley Plumly  
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Dear Mr Plumly,

With this note, you will find a column about you which I published in today's edition.

I certainly hope it meets with your approval.


From the local librarian, I learned last night that your third volume is temporarily sold out, at least that's our surmise, for it's been placed on "Back Order". So, when it arrives, I'll send along all three and ask that you inscribe them; I'll send the library's set, too.

If you'd ever care to use my column, or any section of the paper, for an article about your roots here, or for any other purpose, please be sure to let me know.

Sam Crawl has requested that I send him anything about you, so you can be sure I'll send him a copy of the column, too.

Thanks again for your kindness and thoughtfulness,

Cordially,



David A. Bovenizer