




May Swenson: Viewing Art as a Form of Religion

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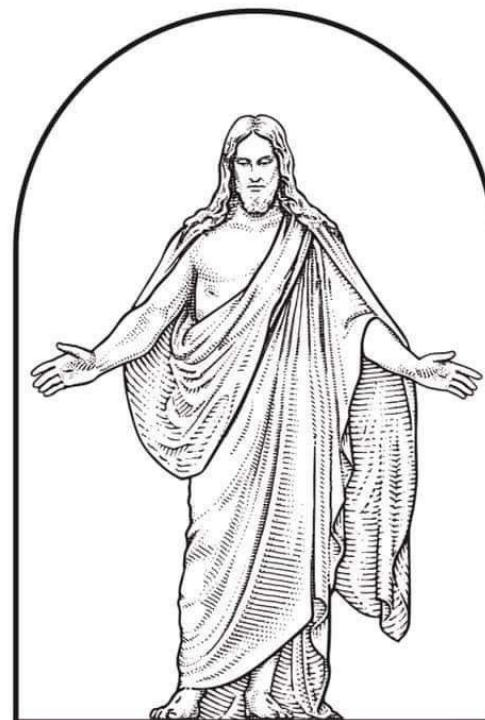
Mentor: Paul Crumbley // Utah State University



Research Questions

- How does Swenson view her poetry as her own religion?
 - What has led Swenson to this perspective?
 - Why does it matter?
- 

What Piqued my Interest



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

About May Swenson

- Born in Logan, Utah (1913-1989)
- Lesbian Poet and Playwright
- Belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
 - Baptized when she was 8 years old
- Left the LDS Church later in her life
 - “It’s not for me—religion. It seems like a redundancy for a poet”



Angles, Eagles

“Are more than merely alive. Yet all are metal, and dead. And the sculptor has been forgotten. Shadow without body, he slips mind’s view. Until we walk out of the gallery onto the city street. Now we remember him, *in his flesh*, walking, as we walk among people.”



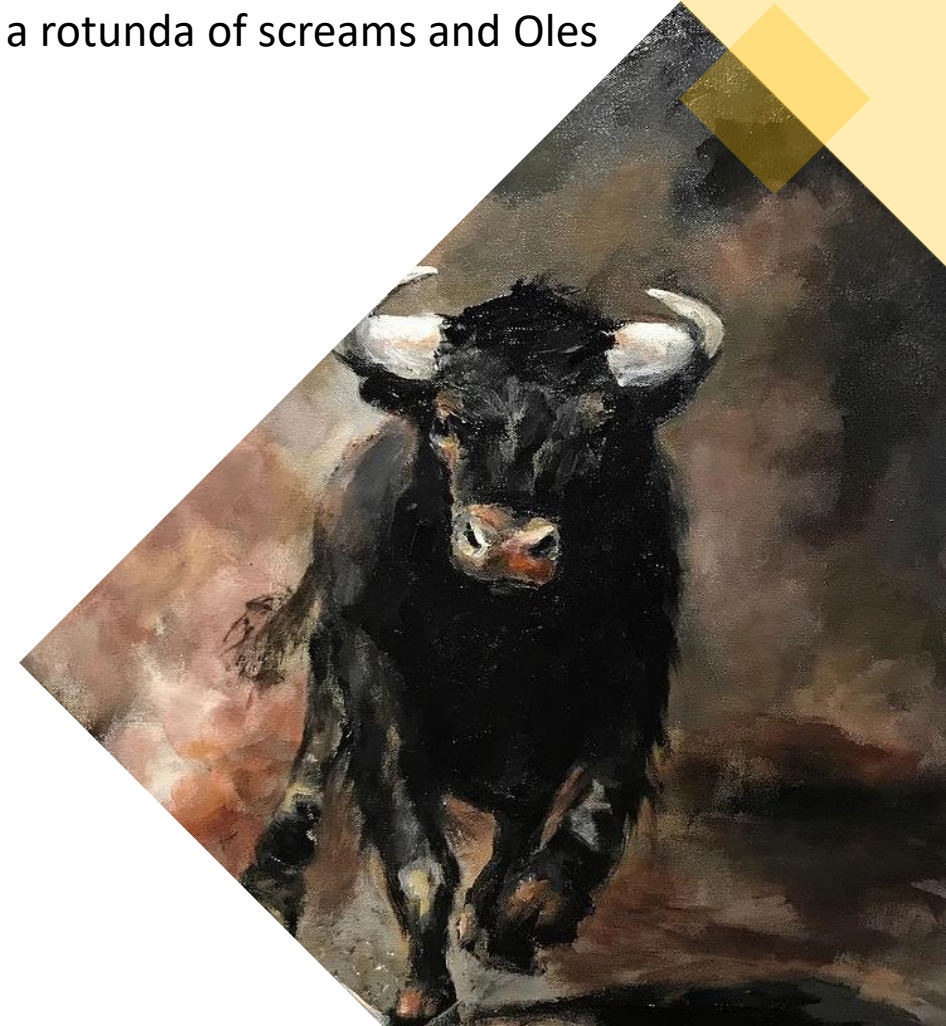


Death
Invited

Death Invited

The head
of death, with bewildered raging eye,
flagged down,
dragged down to the red
cloth on the sand.
Death invited to stand,
legs spread,
on the spot of the cape.
To buckle stubborn knees and lie
down in blood on the silken shape.
Beg blindness come to the sun-pierced eye.

Life is awarded ears and flowers.
Pelted with hats and shoes, and praise,
glittering life, in tight pink thighs,
swaggers around a rotunda of screams and Oles





Body My House

- “My theory: That the universe began to exist at the point when human language was born. That it began simultaneously with its expression through thought and word...”

-May Swenson

Conclusion

- Artistic creation serves as a vessel into spirituality
- Every person's upbringing is important
- Use art to help shape your future



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Sources:

- *May Swenson: Collected Poems*, Langdon Hammer
- *Body My House: May Swenson's Work and Life*, Paul Crumbley and Patricia M. Gantt
- Poetry Foundation, May Swenson



Questions

