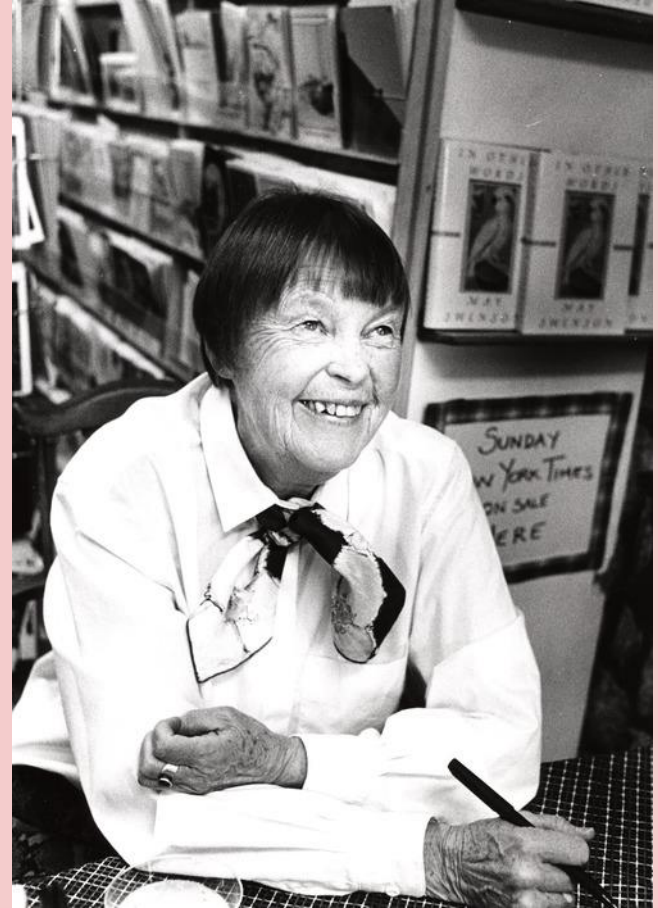


MAY SWENSON AND USING POETRY IN THE FORM OF SELF DISCOVERY



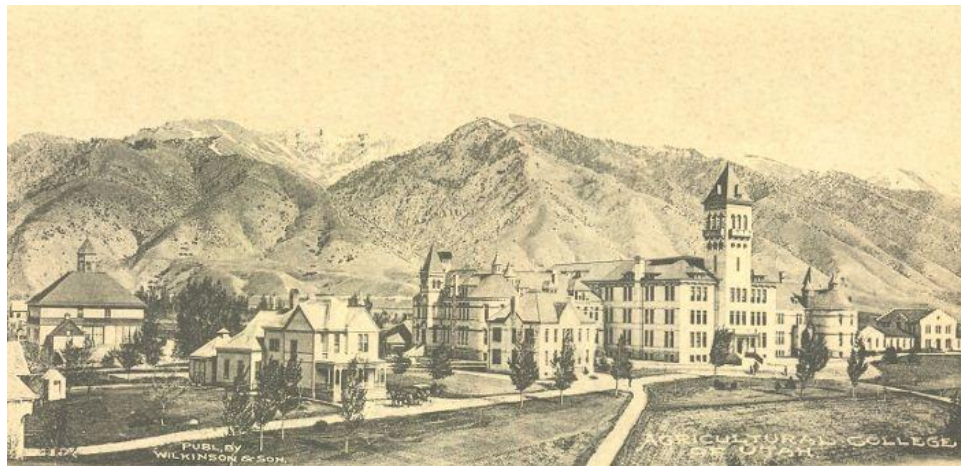
Presenter: Isabelle Quigley // Utah State University
Mentor: Paul Crumbley // Utah State University

HOW DID MAY SWENSON USE POETRY
IN HER OWN SELF-DISCOVERY?





MAY SWENSON IN NEW YORK



UTAH AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE



LOGAN TEMPLE

"THE TRUTH IS FORCED" - STANZA 1

“All your eyes would swarm me.
I'd be forever after hotly dressed
in your cloying, itching, greedy bees.
Whether you are one or two or many
it is the same. Really, I feel as if
one pair of eyes were a whole hive.”
(15-20)



MAY SWENSON AND OTHER ANIMALS: HER POETICS OF NATURAL SELECTION

BY PAUL CRUMBLEY

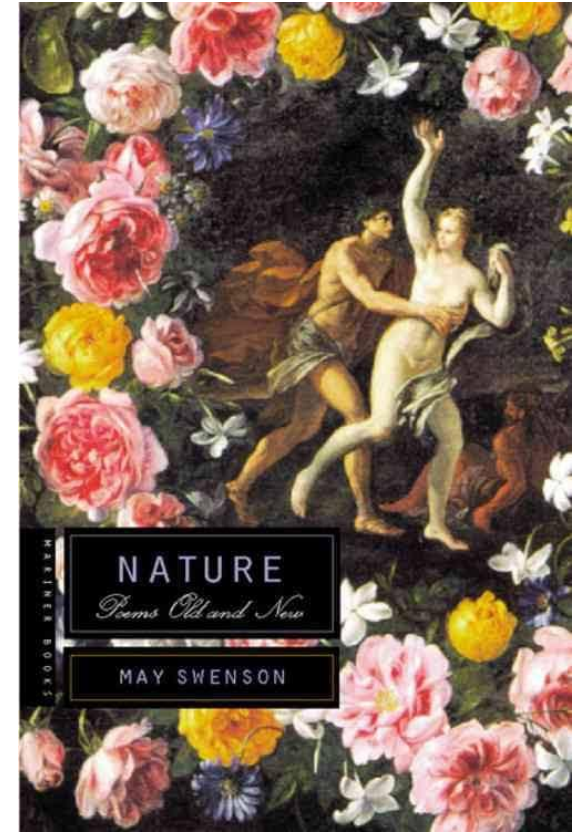
“her father made her a writing Desk, and when she turned twelve he made her twelve little books with blank pages that would become her first diaries. May’s parents and her siblings recognized and supported May’s life as a writer from its earliest emergence until her death.”



"THE TRUTH IS FORCED" - STANZA 1

“So I lie (eye to eye)
by leaving the core of things unvoiced
or else by offering a dummy
in place of myself.”

(21-24)



"THE TRUTH IS FORCED" - STANZA 2

"One must be honest somewhere. I wish
to be honest in poetry."
(25-26)

"I am glad, indeed I dearly crave
to become naked in poetry,
to force the truth
through a poem,"
(36-39)



"THE VAIN DUST"

**I am one
among a million dust grains
abandoned by the wind
in a corner**

But does not the single ray
of sun upon me
achieve an elegance
that is mine alone?

**I am dust
but I am an arrogant dust**

My thought
in its uniqueness
booms in the heavens
My dream
is a bronze bell
tolling in the sky

**My vanity is a crutch
for the lameness
of my own self-assurance**

My vanity is the palate
with which I savor
the wines of life

Strips me of this cloth of gold
and **I must put out my eyes
not to behold
the startled nakedness
of my soul**



"FABLE FOR WHEN THERE'S NO WAY OUT"

He pecks at the top
but his beak's too soft;

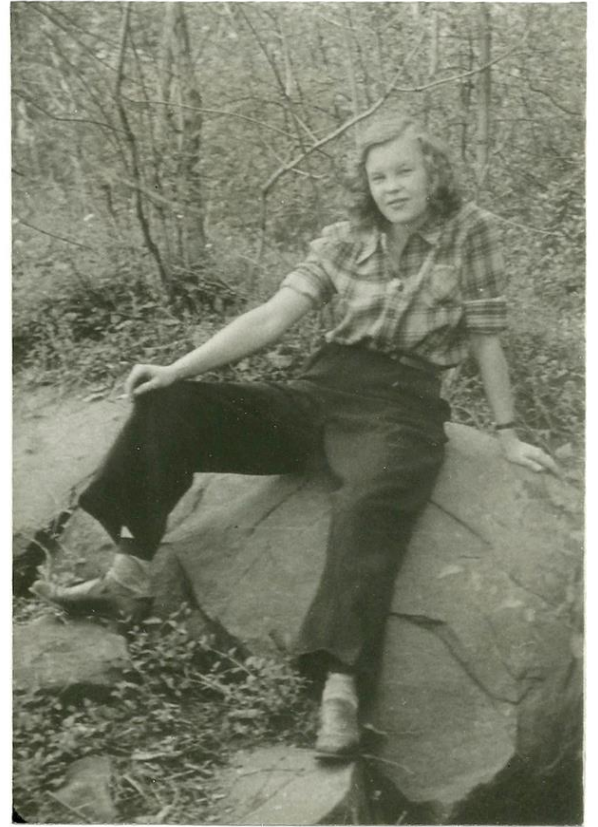
though instinct and ambition shoves,
he can't get through.

(7-10)



MAY SWENSON: WHITMAN'S DAUGHTER
BY ALICIA OSTRIKER

“for the poet twists and turns all through the poem;
the poem does not state something known, but
discovers its truth in its process.”



"FABLE FOR WHEN THERE'S NO WAY OUT"

What a thrill

and shock to feel
his little gaff poke

through the floor!
(30-33)



CONCLUSION

May Swenson wrote all throughout her life and she changed as her life went on. We can see that throughout her poetry when she became more comfortable with herself. We can also see as her life went on and she became more open to the world.



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