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Booklover -- Poetry

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The **Piccolo Spoleto Festival** is an art festival held in Charleston, S.C. every May. It runs concurrently with **Spoleto Festival USA**, also held in Charleston during May. The City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs started the **Piccolo Spoleto Festival** in 1979 as a way to introduce the arts to everyone, but primarily children. The Sundown Poetry Series is one of my favorite events of the **Piccolo Spoleto Festival**. It is held in the courtyard adjacent to the Dock Street Theater, the first theater built for performances in the United States. It is an idyllic setting where one can sit peacefully, listen to the rhythms created by metered words of accomplished poets, and smell the history of this City. When the October announcement came that the Swedish poet, **Tomas Gösta Tranströmer**, had been awarded the 2011 Nobel Prize Laureate for Literature, I was transported to the courtyard and the fond memories of listening to verse. If you are a follower of this column, you know the difficulty I have with poetry in translation. Nevertheless, I began my Internet search for an English version of **Tranströmer's** poetry. I immediately found *The Great Enigma: New Collected Poems*, translation by **Robin Fulton**, but I wanted to do a little more research before purchasing this collection. I no sooner paused before purchasing when my phone signaled an incoming text message. A friend who writes poetry was texting me the Nobel Literature Prize news. When I called her later to discuss this, she had already ordered the very book I was contemplating. Sometimes it just falls in your lap.

On our next visit she loaned me the book. I carried it with me through the holiday travelings, opening the book randomly and taking in whatever poem the page shared with me. I finally settled on *Baltics* (1974) to share with you. I chose the poem for selfish reasons, my affinity for the sea and a past history in the commercial fishing business. **Tranströmer** uses his poetic sense to dissect the mysteries and complexities of life. For a lover of the ocean there is no other place more complex or mysterious and, at the same time, calming and steadfast. The tide comes in and out twice a day, creating a beautiful rhythm often used by creators of poetic verse. In the Foreword, **Mr. Fulton** discloses that one of the inspirations for *Baltics* was **Tranströmer's** discovery of his maternal grandfather's logbook rostering the various ships he piloted in the 1880s. The bookshelves in my home house old logbooks from my husband and my boating years. These logbooks

contain odd notations of weather, course, and destinations. These very type of notations from **Tranströmer's** grandfather's logbook introduce the *Baltics* to the reader. **Mr. Fulton** suggests that the poem's title is plural to connote the different influences the sea has on the individual. The captain who leaves the safe harbor to traverse the ever-changing waters respects the sea differently from the child waiting in the surf for a safe return.

From Baltic 1

"He took them out to the Baltic, through the marvelous labyrinth of islands and waters.

And those who met on board and were carried by the same hull for a few hours, or days, how much did they come to know one another?

Conversations in misspelled English, understanding and misunderstanding but very little conscious falsehood,

How much did they come to know each other?

From Baltic 2

"The wind is in the pine forest. Sighing heavily and lightly.

The Baltic is also sighing in the middle of the island, far within the forest you are out on the open sea.

The old woman hated the sighing in the trees. Her face stiffened in melancholy when the wind picked up:

"We must think about the men out in the boats."

This particular contemplation inspired by life on and around the sea continues through six parts and became **Tranströmer's** longest poem to date, fully reflecting not only his love for nature but also for music. Many of his poems are attempts to write music, with the *Baltics* being his "most consistent attempt to write music."

Tranströmer is Sweden's most famous poet, and the country rejoiced in the Nobel acknowledgment. However, overshadowing the celebration is the fact that **Tranströmer** faces challenges enforced on him more than two decades ago by a stroke. At 80 years old he has retired from writing, according to the press releases outlining the Nobel Prize announcement. 🌸

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to local book dealers or on the Web, donate to a program like **Books for Africa**, sell through vendors such as **Better World Books**, and/or offer to faculty and/or students.

Will you recycle materials for which you cannot find a good home? How transparent will this process be? To avoid eruptions of misguided concern, how will you make the community aware of what you are doing and why it is a responsible course of action?

9. Education, Outreach, and Communication — While transparency is advised, many libraries seem to fear the consequences of communication and discussion around these issues more than the potential consequences of not informing the community. As stewards of community resources, we have an obligation to inform, educate, and engage the larger community in major collection management decisions

and programs. It is advisable to start with the library staff. Next you need the support of the administration and an appropriate faculty governance group, e.g., library committee.

Once you have a collection management plan, develop a public relations plan specific to particular projects that will ensure effective communication. Even with a careful communication plan there will be at least occasional questions, complaints, and criticisms. It is important to know how to manage these so they don't flare into crises.

Conclusion

How likely is this scenario to have a happy ending on your campus? We have not been able to find very many written collection management plans that come close to what we believe is necessary to convince a library staff and its community that we know what we are doing.³ What's your plan?

The authors will be putting their ideas about writing collection management plans to the test

in our own work over the next few years. We invite you, Dear Reader, to do the same and let us know about your results. Collectively we can build a body of experience and develop templates to guide the writing of coherent and convincing plans for managing our legacy collections as system-wide resources. 🌸

Endnotes

1. **Johnson, Peggy**, "Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management," ALA, 2009, p. 72.
2. **Atkinson, Ross**, 1986. The language of the levels: Reflections on the communication of collection development policy. *College & Research Libraries* 47, no. 2: 140-49.
3. The best examples we could find were: University College London-Bloomsbury "Collection Management Policy," "WEST: Collections Model," and an internal report "Retention Committee Final Report" at the University of British Columbia.