



## Made with Words (Poets on Poetry)

*May Swenson*

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*Made With Words* collects prose by May Swenson (1919-89), whom critic and poet John Hollander has called "one of our few unquestionably major poets." Born in Logan, Utah, she spent most of her adult life living and writing in New York City. She was an editor for New Directions Paperbacks, and a writer-in-residence at numerous universities during the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout her long and illustrious career, Swenson produced nine volumes of verse, including *New and Selected Things Taking Place* and *In Other Words: New Poems*. She was a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters and a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and received a multitude of grants and awards during her lifetime.

*Made with Words* includes a rich assortment of Swenson's prose, including several short stories, by turns amusing, provocative, and poetic, and inextricably bound with her poetic oeuvre; a one-act play entitled *The Floor*, produced in New York in the mid-sixties; interviews and book reviews that shed light on Swenson's poetic development as well as her literary and artistic tastes; and finally, a collection of Swenson's letters to the poet Elizabeth Bishop that reveal the intricacies of three decades of their personal and professional relationship. The critical and biographical introduction provides an engaging glimpse into the creative life and prose work of an important contemporary American poet.

Gardner McFall is Assistant Professor of Literature, Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. She is the author of *The Pilot's Daughter*; *Naming the Animals*; and *Jonathan's Cloud*.

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