

Edna St. Vincent Millay, Austerlitz poet, remembered



Edna St. Vincent Millay Photo contributed

By RUSS IMMARIGEON

In the library at Steepletop, the home of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay for 25 years, a well-worn copy of Floyd Dell's "Love in Greenwich Village" lies atop a table next to her reading chair.

Dell's collection of short stories, published in 1926, featured, in fictional form, his intimate relationship with Millay while both were writing or performing for the Provincetown Players, a groundbreaking theater group founded in 1916.

Millay's library is preserved much as it was when she died in 1950, so it seems that Dell may have been on her mind, or in her heart. In a new book, "Blood Too Bright: Floyd Dell Remembers Edna St. Vincent Millay" (Glenmere Press), Dell suggests that he, too, was long preoccupied, or even haunted, by his memories of Millay.

Dell died in 1969, at the age of 82. Years later, his granddaughter, Jerri Dell, his literary executor and archivist of the Dell Collection, began searching family archives at Chicago's Newberry Library for information about the lives of her grandparents. After Dell had read through many boxes of letters written to her grandfather from distinguished American writers such as Edmund Wilson, H.L. Mencken, Upton Sinclair, and Margaret Sanger, a librarian asked her if she wanted to look at five more boxes.

She did.

And what she found were more than one thousand hand-written pages of letters from Floyd Dell to Miriam Gurko, an early Millay biographer, about his relationship with the poet.

Floyd Dell and Millay were lovers for a brief time in the late 1910s, a relationship that quickly simmered down into a lifelong friendship. Beyond this "turbulent love affair," as Dell called it, he greatly admired Millay's poetry—and her acting abilities—and he wrote about Millay's poetry, their relationship, and her life regularly from the 1920s until shortly before his death.

"Blood Too Bright" reprints some of Floyd Dell's earlier published pieces, including a 1931 New York Herald Tribune article and a chapter from his 1933 autobiography, "Homecoming." More important, however, are the previously unpublished pieces at the core of this intriguing collection.

Gurko begins the volume with an introductory essay, written in 1971, that describes her letter-writing relationship with Floyd Dell. Briefly put, she was writing a biography of Millay and she sent Dell questions about the poet. Back then, Gurko and Dell had hoped to publish these letters in a book of their own. For this just-

released volume, Gurko's inquiries were apparently not available for publication, but Dell's responsive letters comprise roughly two-thirds of the book.

Also included in this collection is a short unpublished memoir, "Not Roses, Roses All the Way," that Floyd Dell wrote in the 1960s about his relationship with Millay.

Jerri Dell describes "Blood Too Bright" as "a long love letter to Edna St. Vincent Millay, the 'girl-poet' my grandfather could never forget."

Photos contributed

Jerri Dell, granddaughter of Floyd Dell, editor of "Blood Too Bright," Floyd Dell's remembrances of Edna St. Vincent Millay. She will speak about the book Saturday, March 25, at 3:30 p.m. at the Chatham Public Library, 11 Woodbridge Avenue in the village.



Floyd Dell Photo Courtesy Wikipedia

EVENTS Calendar

Continued from Page 15

March 25, April 1

PARENT CHILD ACADEMY, Hudson Area Library, 51 N 5th St, 10:30 am-1 pm, free. For parents with a child birth to 5. Kids activities while parents in workshop to develop child's early literacy skills. Free books, prizes, cash incentive for exceptional attendance. Register at library, 518 828-1792 x 101 or brenda.shufelt@hudsonarealibrary.org.

March 26

SCUTTLEBUTT & Scandals in the Livingston Family, Clermont State Historic Site, 1 Clermont Ave, Germantown, 1 pm, \$8. Three scandals in the Livingston family. Reserve tickets at 518 537-4240.

MONUMENTS of the Classical Age in Music: JC Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Kinderhook Memorial Library, 18 Hudson St, 4 pm, free. David Smith, artistic director of Concerts in the Village, discusses 3 composers. CITY concert follows, April 2.

March 27

TIPS ON CAREGIVING, N Chatham Free Library, 4287 Rt 203, 10 am, free. Practical ideas from expert in the field. Registration requested, 518 766-3211 or nclibrary@fairpoint.net.

CAPTAIN STAN WILCOX, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 1010 Kinderhook Street (Route 9), Valatie, 1 pm. Captain tells Hudson River tales to Tri-Village Seniors.

March 28-30

NY SAFE BOATING Class, Philmont Community Center, 14 Lake Dr, Philmont, 6-9 pm, \$10. Class open to 10+, must be 18 to obtain the NYS Boating Safety Certificate. Materials provided. Register by March 23, cropalt@verizon.net or 518 672-4531.

March 29-April 2

CREATING COMMUNITY with Play, Free Columbia, 84 Main St, Philmont, \$525, scholarship available. Workshop explores building community through play, performance and clowning. Beginners welcome. freecolumbia.org or nose-tonose.info or 518 672-7302.

March 30

TECH TUTORS, Chatham Library, 11 Woodbridge Ave, 3:15-4:30 pm, free. High school students help adults one on one with basic computer skills. Register at library or 518 392-3666

UP-CLOSE LOOK at Wildlife, New Lebanon Library, 550 Rt. 20, 6:30 pm, free. Photos and videos of local wildlife by Richard Greene. 518 794-8844. newlebanonlibrary.org.

HISTORY COLLOQUIUM: Preserving Our Heritage, Shaping Our Future, C-GCC Arts Center Theater, 4400 Rt 23, Greenport, 7 pm, free. Panel discussion. christine.perry@sunycgcc.edu.

April 1

POETRY READING, Roe Jan Community Library, 9091 Rt 22, Copake, 5 pm, free. Howard Kogan followed by open mic, read own poetry or a favorite poet. 518 325-4101. Roejanlibrary.org.

ON STAGE

March 24-26

OLIVER!, Germantown Central School Cafetorium, 123 Main St, Fri & Sat 7:30; Sun 2 pm, \$10 or \$5 students & seniors. GCS Drama Club in classic musical.

March 24-26, 30-April 2

MOTHERS AND SONS, Ghent Playhouse, 6 Town Hall Place, Fri & Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm, \$20, students \$10. Mother visits late son's former partner. Tickets, 800 838-3006 or ghentplayhouse.org.

March 30

DEBORAH HANLON, Club Helsinki Hudson, 405 Columbia St, 6 pm, admission. Intuitive medium. 518 828-4800. HelsinkiHudson.com.

ON VIEW

ARCHITECTURE FOR ART Gallery, 184 Overlook Dr, Hillsdale. Clearing, outdoor installation by Kathleen Jacobs. Sat & Sun 12-5 pm & by appt. 518 325-1114. Architectureforart.com.

BLUE HILL GALLERY, C-GCC, 4400 Rt 23, Greenport. The Earth from Above, works by Joy Wolf, & How It Happened, works by Molly Stinchfield, through March 30. Mon-Thurs 8 am-8 pm, Fri 8 am- 5 pm; Sat 1-5 pm. 518 828-4181.

CARRIE HADDAD GALLERY, 622 Warren St, Hudson. Interlock: Color & Contrast in Abstraction; artists' reception March 25, 5-7 pm; up through April 30. Group show of contemporary painting. Daily 11 am-5 pm. 518 828-1915. carriehaddadgallery.com

CGH Caldwell Gallery Hudson, 355 Warren St, Hudson. Works by Nell Blaine, Leroy Lamis, George Ault. Thurs-Sat 11 am-6 pm, Sun 12-5 pm. 800-331-1278.

COLUMBIA COUNTY MUSEUM & LIBRARY, 5 Albany Ave, Kinderhook. 100 Years of Collecting, early history and collecting trends; through April. Thurs, Fri 10 am-4 pm. cchsny.org. 518 758-9265.

510 WARREN STREET Gallery, Hudson. Ubbe & Sacco, drawings & sculpture by Sean Sullivan, through March 26. Fri & Sat, 12-6 pm, Sun 12-5 pm. 518 822-0510. 510warrenstreetgallery.com.