I recently spent the Thanksgiving holiday and extended weekend enjoying time with my family as we carried on the traditions we have enjoyed for generations. There were many highlights, but perhaps the most memorable was sitting around the “banquet table” at my parents’ home in Connecticut with 24 family members representing four generations and talking about what we were each thankful for. As always, we reminisced and laughed and told stories about the family members we have lost but not forgotten.

One of the many wonderful things about Mount Auburn Cemetery is that the memories and stories of thousands of families are preserved here in stone. Some of these stories – those of our most notable residents – are well known to all, but most are only known to the families themselves. In this issue of Sweet Auburn, several of these family stories are told. A recurring theme is that Mount Auburn was and is a very special place in the hearts and lives of these families. The feature article, beginning on the next page, provides a sampling of literary works that portray the ever-changing evolution of Mount Auburn’s inspirational qualities and its meaning to the public.

Since our founding in 1831, Mount Auburn has been a place of beauty and inspiration. Our dedicated staff and Trustees take great pride in maintaining the beauty of the Cemetery and in serving all of our families and visitors with enthusiasm and compassion so that everyone will continue to be inspired by their visit to Mount Auburn.

We are excited about the publication of Richard Cheek’s new book (see page 8), and we hope that Mount Auburn will continue to inspire photographers, artists, poets, and authors as it has for the past 181 years. We also hope that families will continue to choose Mount Auburn as their final resting place to preserve their own stories and the memories of their loved ones.

Please visit the Cemetery in-person or via our website frequently to stay in touch with all that is happening as we continue to carry out our mission of preservation and service.

Happy New Year!

David P. Barnett, President
I believe that Mount Auburn, if not a poem, is a book, a book we can never tire of reading. Its themes are those of all great literature—time, love, loss, war, and nature.

— Celia Gilbert, poet, speaking at the 175th Anniversary of Mount Auburn’s Consecration, September 24, 2006

Edited by Bree D. Harvey, Vice President of Cemetery & Visitor Services and Lauren Marsh, Communications, Grants & Events Coordinator

The unique relationship between Mount Auburn and the public it serves has long been reflected in poetry, prose, and lore. The natural beauties of its forested acres were praised in poetic verse by Harvard students and other local residents even before the Cemetery’s founding. In its earliest years, as a young America began to formulate new traditions and beliefs surrounding death, those who grieved here transferred their feelings of love and loss to paper. And through the decades since, writers have continued to draw upon Mount Auburn’s most timeless and universal themes. For this issue, we celebrate a small selection of works Mount Auburn has helped to inspire, reflecting 181 years of evolving ideas about life, death, and the Cemetery itself.
In 1842 a life-sized marble memorial for 4-year old Emily Binney was placed in the Binney family lot at Mount Auburn on Yarrow Path. Sculpted by Henry Dexter, “Little Emily” was significant for several reasons: it was the first life-sized marble statue carved in the U.S. by an American born artist; its depiction of the young girl, as though she were asleep, presented a more romantic view of death; and, as a sentimental work, it encouraged visitors to contemplate the tragedy of a life cut short. The monument was an immediate success and scores of visitors came to the Cemetery to view this fine example of commemorative art. One of those moved by “Little Emily” was author Nathaniel Hawthorne, who staged the closing scene of his short story “The New Adam and Eve” at the monument. After exploring an uninhabited Boston and trying to understand the city through visits to its venerable institutions, Hawthorne’s characters arrive at Mount Auburn. It is in the presence of Dexter’s celebrated work that Adam and Eve come to understand death and their own mortality. (The monument for Emily Binney was removed, by request of the family, in the 1930s and was replaced with a simple granite marker.)

The day is near its close when these pilgrims, who derive their being from no dead progenitors, reach the cemetery of Mount Auburn. With light hearts – for earth and sky now gladden each other with beauty – they tread along the winding paths, among marble pillars, mimic temples, urns, obelisks, and sarcophagi, sometimes pausing to contemplate these fantasies of human growth, and sometimes to admire the flowers wherewith Nature converts decay to loveliness.

Can death, in the midst of his old triumphs, make them sensible that they have taken up the heavy burden of mortality which a whole species had thrown down? Dust kindred to their own has never lain in the grave. Will they then recognize, and so soon, that Time and the elements have an indefeasible claim upon their bodies? Not improbably they may. There have been shadows enough, even amid the primal sunshine of their existence, to suggest the thought of the soul’s incongruity with its circumstances. They have already learned that something is to be thrown aside. The idea of Death is in them, or not far off. But, were they to choose a symbol for him, it would be the butterfly soaring upward, or the bright angel beckoning them aloft, or the child asleep, with soft dreams visible through her transparent purity. Such a Child, in whitest marble, they have found among the monuments of Mount Auburn.

“Sweetest Eve,” observes Adam, while hand in hand they contemplate this beautiful object, “yonder sun has left us, and the whole world is fading from our sight. Let us sleep as this lovely little figure is sleeping. Our Father only knows whether what outward things we have possessed to-day are to be snatched from us forever. But should our earthly life be leaving us with the departing light, we need not doubt that another morn will find us somewhere beneath the smile of God. I feel that he has imparted the boon of existence never to be resumed.”

“And no matter where we exist,” replies Eve, “for we shall always be together.”

There is more online! We could only pick a few of the literary works featuring Mount Auburn to appear in the printed magazine. Visit us online to read additional poems and short stories celebrating Mount Auburn and its many facets. www.mountauburn.org/sweet-auburn-winter-2013/
The memorials for young children scattered throughout Mount Auburn’s historic landscape are a physical reminder of the high child mortality rate during the 19th century. Roughly one third of all burials at Mount Auburn during the 1840s were for children five years or younger. James Russell Lowell, poet, critic, and editor, understood the grief that comes from losing a child all too well: only one of his four children survived to adulthood. In May of 1847 Lowell and his wife buried their first-born, a 15-month old daughter named Blanche, in their lot on Fountain Avenue. Later that same year while observing the season’s first snow from the window of his family’s home, he penned “The First Snow-Fall.” Echoing the same sentiments as Mount Auburn’s founders, Lowell’s iconic poem sees promise in the power of nature to comfort and console during a time of immense sorrow.

The First Snow-Fall  
by James Russell Lowell (1847)

The snow had begun in the gloaming,  
And busily all the night  
Had been heaping field and highway  
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock  
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,  
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree  
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara  
Came Chanticleer’s muffled crow,  
The stiff rails softened to swan’s-down,  
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window  
The noiseless work of the sky,  
And the sudden flurries of snowbirds,  
Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn  
Where a little headstone stood;  
How the flakes were folding it gently,  
As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,  
Saying, “Father, who makes it snow?”  
And I told of the good All-Father  
Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,  
And thought of the leaden sky  
That arched o’er our first great sorrow,  
When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience  
That fell from that cloud like snow;  
Flake by flake, healing and hiding  
The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,  
“The snow that husheth all,  
Darling, the merciful Father  
Alone can make it fall!”

Then, with eyes that saw not,  
I kissed her:  
And she, kissing back, could not know  
That my kiss was given to her sister,  
Folded close under deepening snow.

There is more online! James Russell Lowell was part of a group of New England poets known as the Fireside Poets, so known because their poems were written for a popular audience and often read aloud for entertainment as families gathered around the fireplace. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, another of the Fireside Poets, never specifically mentioned Mount Auburn in any of his printed poems. He did, however, use verse to celebrate the lives of several friends and family members now buried at the Cemetery. Visit us online to view a few examples. www.mountauburn.org/ sweet-auburn-winter-2013/
Among the revolutionary ideas presented by the Cemetery’s founders was the promise that within the confines of a lot, generations of family could be buried together in perpetuity. Bostonians quickly seized upon the opportunity to create an appropriate final resting spot for themselves and their families and through the years, many of these old family lots have continued to welcome new arrivals. Author John Marquand, who counted Margaret and Bucky Fuller amongst his relatives, certainly understood the power of the family cemetery lot and drew inspiration from Mount Auburn for his satire *The Late George Apley*. Apley, a stereotypical Boston Brahmin, is revealed to readers largely through his correspondence. In one exchange of letters, Apley makes his feelings about the family lot at Mount Auburn quite clear, reflecting the strong associations many have felt for the place where their ancestors have been laid to rest. For his humorous look at the world of the Boston Brahmins, Marquand won the 1938 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

DEAR ROGER:

Yesterday, happening to be motoring with Catharine toward Concord, we stopped at Mt. Auburn Cemetery as is our habit whenever we pass by it. I was particularly anxious to see how the young arborvitae, which we decided after so much debate to plant on the southern border, were surviving the early summer heat. I was pleased to see that they were doing very well indeed, and, in fact, was about to leave when I noticed that Cousin Hattie had been placed in that part of the lot which I had always understood, and which I believe everyone in the family has understood, was reserved for my particular branch. I refer to the part of the ground around the oak tree which my father had ordered planted. This was a favorite place of his and has a peculiarly sentimental significance to me and to my children. As you know, these matters grow more important with the growing years. I cannot conceive what prompted you to allow Cousin Hattie to occupy this spot. Not only do I think she should not be there but also her pink granite headstone with the recumbent figure on top of it, which I suppose represents an angel, makes garish contrast to our own plain white marble stones.

I admit that the Henry Apleys are connections of the family, though so distant that they might almost be considered as such. I might also call to your attention that the Henry Apleys, due to their straitened circumstances, did not and have never contributed to the purchase and maintenance fund of our ground. Under these circumstances it seems to me somewhat pushing and presumptuous, although I like neither of the words, of the Henry Apleys to preempt the place they did without at least consulting with me.
Mount Auburn was founded as New Englanders were replacing long-held views about the horrors of death with more gentle ideas about mortality. The drastic shift to an acceptance of death as part of the natural cycle of life was best illustrated in Mount Auburn’s early history by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who wrote the following to a friend after burying his first wife at the Cemetery in 1837: “Yesterday I was at Mount Auburn, and saw my own grave dug; that is, my own tomb. I assure you, I looked quietly down into it, without one feeling of dread.” Poet Robert Creeley has more recently in time echoed Longfellow’s same sentiments, celebrating his family’s lot at Mount Auburn with the poem “Stairway to Heaven.” In 2005 Creeley was buried on that small rise along Tulip Path he so lovingly described. His wife, Penelope, shared her husband’s strong connections to the family lot, making Creeley’s poem about Mount Auburn all the more resonant.

“To say that Robert loved Mount Auburn is to risk making his deep, complex feeling for the place sound trite. His sense of connection to Mount Auburn was as intricate as his connection to his family, and to New England. He was born in Arlington, brought home as a baby to Mt. Auburn St. in Watertown, spent his boyhood in West Acton, went to boarding school in New Hampshire, to college in Cambridge. His first child was born in Truro, on Cape Cod. Life took him far afield, but he was always glad to take any chance to come back. On several occasions when we were in the Boston area, Robert brought Will, Hannah and me to Mount Auburn. He wanted us to see this beautiful place, to know it through his eyes. He would tell us the family stories he remembered: stories of his father’s father, who had a farm on what is now Belmont Hill, stories of why his parents are buried in another nearby Mount Auburn plot, not in the main family plot. Robert felt a kinship here, with the people, with the trees, with the roll of the land, the changes of light and weather. They were as intrinsically familiar, as deeply known as only recollection of childhood can make a place. In life he loved ‘the company,’ as he called his friends, fellow poets and beloveds, and liked the idea of sharing some of the same company in death, too.”

Late one beautiful fall afternoon, soon after we had moved to Providence, Robert and I made a visit to Mount Auburn. We did not know then that the end of his life was approaching so fast. We found Tulip Path quite easily this time. We strolled along in the unexpected late October warmth, in shafting golden sunlight and blazing leaves, the air blue-purple. Robert stood looking out over his family plot, out to what I have always imagined was Watertown, where he was born. He was quiet, thoughtful. I asked him if he felt sad, or spooked. ‘Oh no’, he said, ‘not at all. I feel comforted. It’s very reassuring. I’m home’.”

“...upon the borders of two worlds...”

There is more online! After visiting Robert Creeley’s grave on Tulip Path, poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti penned two poems about his experience at Mount Auburn. Visit us online to read these works, which are shared with Ferlinghetti’s permission. www.mountauburn.org/sweet-auburn-winter-2013/
Within this garden of graves, it is difficult to avoid confronting one's own mortality, even if trying to do so. The monuments for those commemorated at Mount Auburn are a reminder to all that life is short and time is fleeting. In her debut novel, Lisa Genova, a Harvard-trained neuroscientist and best-selling author, tells the story of Alice Howland, a 50-year old Harvard professor dealing with early-onset Alzheimer's. Those familiar with Cambridge will recognize many of the locations used in the book, including a few scenes that take place at Mount Auburn. “I grew up in Waltham and lived in Belmont while writing Still Alice. I passed Mount Auburn Cemetery every time I drove into Cambridge or Boston, and I always thought it looked beautiful from my car,” says Genova. “Still Alice gave me the perfect excuse to actually park my car and look around. I spent a lovely morning there in 2005, walking the grounds, sitting in the shade of the trees, taking notes.”

Just after learning of her diagnosis, an emotional visit to her family’s lot at Mount Auburn forces Alice to face the reality of her own future.

They continued in silence to her family’s plot. Their gravestones were simple, like granite Brobdingnagian shoe boxes, and stood in a discrete row under the branches of a purple-leaf beech tree. Anne Lydia Daly, 1955-1972; Sarah Louise Daly, 1931-1972; Peter Lucas Daly, 1932-2003. The low-branched beech tree towered at least one hundred feet above them and wore beautiful, glossy deep purplish green leaves in spring, summer, and fall. But now, in January, its leafless, black branches cast long, distorted shadows on her family's graves, and it looked perfectly creepy. Any horror movie director would love that tree in January.

John held her gloved hand as they stood under the tree. Neither of them spoke. In the warmer months, they’d hear the sounds of birds, sprinklers, grounds crew vehicles, and music from car radios. Today, the cemetery was silent but for the distant tide of traffic beyond the gates.

Her crying, explosive and anguished, would have seemed appropriate to any stranger observing the scene—her dead parents and sister buried in the ground, the darkening graveyard, the eerie beech tree. To John, it must’ve come completely unexpected. She hadn’t shed a single tear over her father’s death last February, and the sorrow and loss she felt for her mother and sister had long been tempered by time.

She pictured her own name on the matching headstone next to Anne’s. She’d rather die than lose her mind. She looked up at John, his eyes patient, waiting for an answer. How could she tell him she had Alzheimer's disease? He loved her mind. How could he love her with this? She looked back at Anne’s name carved in stone.

She’d rather die than tell him.
Mount Auburn is well beloved in the birding community for its significance as a Massachusetts Important Bird Area. In 2010, author Jane Kurtz drew upon this aspect of Mount Auburn’s story for *Lanie*, a book in the popular “American Girl” series written for young readers. Lanie lives in Boston and though a “city girl” by circumstance, knows that she was born with “outside genes.” Her experience bird watching at Mount Auburn celebrates a long-standing tradition of children learning to bird watch at the Cemetery and also serves as a reminder that Mount Auburn is as much a place to inspire the living as it is a place to bury the dead and console the bereaved. “American Girl wanted a story about a girl who loves science and cares about the earth—and they gave me a choice of two cities for the setting, one of which was Boston,” says Kurtz. “I chose Boston because I have a friend who’s an avid birder. At the time, I was a total beginner—and he said, ‘The show begins and ends at Mount Auburn Cemetery.’ So I flew to Boston, and off we went to Mount Auburn Cemetery to learn about birds!”

“Where are we going?” she asked me after we’d walked a little ways. “Bird-watching,” I said, handing her a muffin as we turned the corner. At the end of the next block we crossed the street and entered Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Even though it was only about seven in the morning, we weren’t alone. In fact, we were practically part of a parade. All along the path, little groups of people were staring into branches, peering through binoculars, and pointing. Emily and I looked into the branches as we passed a few groups, but we couldn’t see anything. Finally the path was blocked by a crowd of people gazing up into a tree, and we had to stop.

“What is it?” I whispered to a teenage girl who was staring through a small pair of binoculars.

Her binoculars didn’t budge. “A scarlet tanager.” I got my binoculars up and looked where the girl was looking. Suddenly, a blazing red bird with shiny black wings was right there in my lenses. “Ooh-la-la,” I breathed.

Part of me wanted to stay at Mount Auburn all day and keep discovering new birds. But another part of me couldn’t wait to get back home and start on my new journal from Aunt Hannah, making field notes and drawings on everything we’d seen. And now I had a whole bunch of birds to add to my Life List.

When it came to watching wildlife, maybe Boston wasn’t so boring after all.

Conclusion

Throughout its history, Mount Auburn has evoked literary reflections on life, death, the mourning of lives lost, and the celebration of lives well lived. The experience of the physical space provides inspiration for an examination of what it is to be human, in its most shining as well as its darker moments. From the discovery of a natural oasis to musings on those who we have lost to illustrations on the complexities of family relations, these writings about Mount Auburn provide a mirror for our own lives. At Mount Auburn, as Joseph Story said in his 1831 Consecration Address, “We stand, as it were, upon the borders of two worlds; and as the mood of our minds may be, we may gather lessons of profound wisdom by contrasting the one with the other, or indulge in the dreams of hope and ambition, or solace our hearts by melancholy meditations.” His words are no less true today than they were in 1831, as writers, poets, and literary artists continue to explore the beauty, wonder, and emotion of Mount Auburn.

The poems and passages featured in this article, which have been used with permission from the author/publisher when appropriate, are from the following sources:


George P. Marquand’s *The Late George Apley* (Franklin Center, PA: The Franklin Library, 1977), pg. 203-204, abridged.


Lisa Genova’s *Still Alice* (New York: Pocket Books, 2007), pg. 76-78, abridged.

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Special Price, through December 31, 2012: $30 (plus s/h). The price will increase to $35 on January 1st.

MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

Beauty on the Edge of Eternity

photographs by Richard Cheek

The Friends of Mount Auburn is excited to announce the publication of its long anticipated photographic portrait of the Cemetery. During the past two decades, Richard Cheek has painstakingly explored Mount Auburn's landscape, capturing its most iconic and celebrated views as well as its more intimate corners and hidden details.

Mount Auburn Cemetery: Beauty on the Edge of Eternity celebrates the mood and spirit of this extraordinary place, as seen through Cheek's stunning photographs. In addition to the vivid imagery showing the Cemetery in all four seasons, this 164-page hardcover book includes a foreword written by Dave Barnett, President & CEO of Mount Auburn, an introduction by Bill Clendaniel, President Emeritus, and short chapter introductions by historian Janet Heywood, former Vice President of Interpretive Programs.

A limited supply of books will arrive just in time for the holiday season. Order today to reserve your copy by calling 617-607-1980 or visiting us online at www.mountauburn.org/BeautyOnTheEdge

Richard Cheek will also be signing books at the Reception following our Candle Lighting Service on Tuesday, December 18th. Copies of the book will be available for sale during the event.
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O weep not for me, for my spirit has fled to mansions of rest in the sky; the friend you have loved is not sleeping and dead, but gone to his father on high.

Farewell, father; farewell, mother; God will heal your deepest pain; farewell, too, dear weeping brother; soon in heaven we’ll meet again.

not mortals now but cherubs bright. they’ve left this world for realms of light.

he sleeps beneath the blue lone sea, he lies where pearls lie deep; he was the loved of all, yet none o’er his low bed may weep.

the star that tells the mariner far over trackless deeps to steer, now wanes!

it is the duty of the living thus to provide for the dead. ascend but a few steps, and what a change of scenery to surprise and delight us.
weep not for me, for my spirit has fled
to mansions of rest in the sky;
the friend you have loved is not sleeping and dead,
but gone to his father on high.

farewell, father; farewell, mother;
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scenery to surprise and delight us.
In a pretty little nook on Ailanthus Path sits the Howard and Fox family lot. Many of the epitaphs, which are familiar lines from Shakespearean plays, may seem odd if one is not aware that there were several actors in these two prominent thespian families.

Charles Kemble Fox (1833-1875) began his career when he was six years old at the Tremont Theatre where his father was the property-man, though most of his stage training was received in Providence, R.I., with his other siblings. He acted for one hundred nights in Uncle Tom’s Cabin, produced by his cousin, George Aiken. On his monument are a few famous lines from Shakespeare’s Macbeth: “A walking shadow/A poor player/That struts and frets/His hour upon the stage.”

Charles’ more famous older brother, George Washington Lafayette Fox (1825-1877), was a renowned comic actor, most known for playing Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Hamlet in a farce version of the play that was much enjoyed by fellow actor Edwin Booth (see page 16), famous for his “straight” rendition of that coveted role. After playing Humpty Dumpty an alleged 1,268 times in New York alone, George became celebrated as the leading American pantomimist. Appropriate for the headstone of such a comedian, his monument reads a verse from Hamlet: “Alas poor Yorick/I knew him, Horatio,/A fellow of infinite jest/Of most excellent fancy.”

Perhaps the most somber monument in the lot belongs to George’s daughter, Emily Caroline, who died at 13 years, in 1861. On her monument, a line from Macbeth: “Out! Out! Brief candle!” followed by a lovely passage paraphrased from Cymbeline:

Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter’s rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done;
Home art gone, and ta’en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.
Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finish’d joy and moan:
The scepter, learning, physic must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Stories Behind the Stones:
A Fox By Any Other Name
by Lauren Marsh and Katie Robinson

Howard and Fox family lot on Ailanthus Path
**A Sustainable Cemetery**

by Candace Currie, Director of Planning & Sustainability

It’s often said that the personality of an organization reflects its President. Dave Barnett’s reflections can certainly be seen in Mount Auburn’s sustainable landscape management, from the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices in the greenhouses to its recently reconfigured recycling yard. Everything that is removed from the grounds is transformed into a useful landscape product that goes back on the grounds. Trees that had to be removed because of Hurricane Sandy are cut and split into firewood, or combined with composted leaves and screened interment fill to create mulch or top soil. About 80% of the leaves are mulched in situ rejuvenating the structure of the soil, which in turn, reduces soil compaction, increases the pH, and improves the habitat for beneficial insects. Due to these methods, fertilizers are no longer purchased and applied. Mulch is no longer purchased, but taken directly from the recycling yard. The grounds at Mount Auburn are sustainably managed.

Barnett, Mount Auburn’s 12th president, holds degrees in environmental horticulture and a doctorate in ecology. Two of Mount Auburn’s founders, Jacob Bigelow and Henry A. S. Dearborn, were also no strangers to the world of horticulture; and as with Barnett, their imprint may be seen throughout Mount Auburn. Bigelow, a medical doctor, botanist and author of *Florula bostoniensis A Collection of the Plants of Boston* thought crowded church graveyards and cellars unhealthy. Dearborn, the first president of the Massachusetts Horticulture Society and later the founder of Forest Hill Cemetery, was dedicated to laying out roads, paths, and transplanting a large selection of young trees from his own nursery. Ah, there it is: Mount Auburn is both a cemetery and a botanic garden.

Lots and graves sold today are typically much less than 300 square feet, which was practically a requirement in 1831, but attention to the look and feel of the surrounding area continues to guide the decisions about new burials—including ‘green’ or ‘natural’ burials. In the right place, an eight foot by three foot grave into which a simple casket without any type of grave liner may be the final resting place for thousands yet to come.

What if Mount Auburn never runs out of grave space? Is that possible? If the idea of sustainability is truly embraced by all of us—not just those governing Mount Auburn, but also future residents—then yes, Mount Auburn may never run out of grave space. What if we lived and died according to this stanza of Reverend John Pierpont’s “Consecration Hymn,” written for Mount Auburn’s founding:

*Decay! Decay! ’tis stamped on all! All bloom, in flower and flesh, shall fade; Ye whispering trees, when we shall fall, Be our long sleep beneath your shade!*
Since its consecration, Mount Auburn has been a sacred resting place for those loved ones we have lost, but just as important, it is a natural sanctuary for the living world where people can come to reflect and find peace surrounded by a beautiful and evolving landscape. This idea of a beautiful space for remembering the dead was, indeed, the intention of the Cemetery’s founders. Today’s Cemetery Services Team upholds this value by providing memorial services and receptions to comfort those who have lost. And the language used to express this profound sentiment, whether a prayer read by clergy or an epitaph on a monument, ancient or contemporary, often has its own roots in poetry or other literary works. During the Service of Commemoration on Memorial Day weekend of this past year, Hindu Chaplain Swami Tyagananda recited this ancient Hindu prayer for peace that is at least 4,000 years old and is taken from the Vēdas, the scripture of the Hindus:

“May there be peace on earth and in the sky. May there be peace in the water and in all directions. May there be peace in the plants, in the trees, and in animals. May there be peace in the hearts of all beings. May there be peace in everyone and everything.”

The all-inclusiveness of such a prayer can be widely found while walking amidst the peaceful Mount Auburn landscape. The way in which those interred have chosen to be commemorated also sets each monument apart and remarks on the thousands of unique lives here, each one story added to the many, keeping the continuum of memory going. And many an epitaph found at Mount Auburn hails from some other familiar work: from Rudyard Kipling’s The Palace (1902), “After me cometh a builder, tell him, I too have known;” a bit of Voltaire, “As flame ascends, the vital principle aspires to God;” even some Tennyson, “Thy voice is on the rolling air; I hear thee where the waters run; thou standest in the rising sun; and in the setting sun thou art fair;” and most fittingly, on the stone of one of Mount Auburn’s founders, Jacob Bigelow, a bit of Virgil’s Eclogue, “The very pines, Tityrus the very springs, these very orchards called to you.”
In the preface to the 1860 Guide through Mount Auburn: A Handbook for Passengers over the Cambridge Railroad, Levi Merriam Stevens writes that his goal is: “to lead the visitor through the most interesting portions of the Cemetery, to call attention to every thing on the route worthy of observation, and thus enable him to view Mount Auburn as it is—as Nature, Art, and Affection have made it.” In the early years of Mount Auburn, sightseers, both familiar and unfamiliar with the Cemetery, were introduced to the pastoral landscape through a series of guidebooks. The volumes proved immensely popular, with numerous re-printings and revised editions; some were reissued annually. The guides took visitors of the time on delightfully detailed tours of Mount Auburn. Today they provide historians, book collectors, and those curious about Mount Auburn with a wealth of information about the 19th-century rural cemetery landscape.

Engravings by well-known artists, such as James Smillie and William H. Bartlett, fill the volumes, illustrating monuments, tombs, and scenic vistas. The guidebooks often contain maps, lists of lots and proprietors, and instructions for the purchase and care of lots. The little volumes, easily held in one’s hand, include descriptions of well-known sites around the Cemetery as well as sentimental language in the form of poetry, moral essays, funerary verse, and selected epitaphs. Opening to the title page of The Picturesque Pocket Companion through Mount Auburn (1839) readers could draw inspiration from an illustration of the Egyptian Revival Gateway and accompanying verse: “Yes, lightly, softly move! There is a power, a presence, in the woods; A viewless being, that, with life and love, Informs these reverential solitudes.” Together images and text served as a practical roadmap as well as a philosophical and spiritual guide to the garden of graves.
Volunteer Profile:

Susan Zawalich

“Booth and the Bard”

By Lauren Marsh

It is no secret that Volunteer Susan Zawalich has a flair for all things literary. She made her debut at Mount Auburn as part of our second group of docent trainees, but she had been giving tours here on her own for ten years prior to that. In her “real” life, she is the administrator of the student center at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard and one of the outings that she deems essential for students to experience is a two-hour autumn walk through Mount Auburn to visit some of her favorite notables.

As a docent, Susan has given a variety of different tours. Among her favorites is one called “Notable Visitors” and another aptly named “A to Z” that she (“Z”) creates with her friend and fellow docent, Helen Abrams (“A”). Her literary tour, “The Undiscovered Country: Shakespeare & Mount Auburn,” explores the gravesites of Shakespearian actors like Edwin Booth and Charlotte Cushman in addition to monuments bearing the inscriptions of the Bard’s memorable works.

Her favorite stone, designed by Stanford White, is Edwin Booth’s. The front of the monument boasts a bust of the actor’s face while on the backside, under carved comedy and tragedy masks, is a paraphrased inscription from Much Ado About Nothing:

The idea of thy life shall 
Sweetly creep 
Into my study of imagination 
And every lovely organ of 
Thy life 
Shall come apparelled in 
More precious habit 
More moving delicate and 
Full of life 
Into the eye and prospect 
Of my soul 
Than when thou liv’st indeed.

Ever instructive, Susan explains that thousands of mourners attended his funeral in New York City and that his burial service at the Cemetery included friends and fellow Mount Auburn residents Julia Ward Howe and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Aldrich later penned,

In narrow space, with Booth, lie housed in death 
Iago, Hamlet, Shylock, Lear, Macbeth 
If still they seem to walk the painted scene, 
’Tis but the ghosts of those that once have been.

“Shakespeare is everywhere,” says Susan, “and poetry is everywhere and it all ties in with the beauty of the setting, and it ties in with the birds, and with the trees, and with the weather. It ties in with the art and melancholy. It ties in with everything in the Cemetery.”

We thank Susan for her time as a Mount Auburn volunteer docent and for the energy she has spent dreaming up creative tours that touch on the literary aspects of this natural world. Make sure to sign up for one of her future tours — thou shan’t be disappointed!
Mount Auburn Book Club

By Lauren Marsh

Since 2008, the Mount Auburn Book Club has met to discuss books written by or about individuals buried at Mount Auburn, include scenes that take place in Mount Auburn, or discuss any of the variety of topics that relate to Mount Auburn such as regional history, the natural world, or death and dying.

The club meets the second Thursday of every month in Story Chapel at 10 AM and new members are most welcome! For more information email friends@mountauburn.org

“The Mount Auburn Cemetery book club fosters my life-long passion with books supported by like-minded people satisfying their curiosity: some regular members and some irregular appearances by others, depending on the book being read. The Book Club adds a unique perspective by providing the frequent opportunity to visit the graves of some who are mentioned in the books, creating a tangible connection with the past and the present, which has been another personal life-long fascination.”

— John Pippa

2nd Annual Coffeehouse

Our 2nd annual Coffeehouse was held on Thursday, April 26, 2012, in celebration of National Poetry Month. Area poets, writers, and musicians gathered once more to perform pieces inspired by Mount Auburn and related subjects. Among our performers this year was Cambridge’s very own Poet Populist, Toni Bee. We were also entertained by several published poets and popular musicians from the local folk circuit.

“Mount Auburn Cemetery is not only one of the most beautiful places around Boston, but is also a great supporter of the arts. None of this is clearer than when they put on their wonderful coffeehouses. These nights brings together some of the region’s best musicians and poets. It is always one of my favorite shows of the year,” said folk artist Dan Cloutier of Birch Beer Records.

A Glimpse Beyond

On September 22nd, one hundred and fifty people attended “A Glimpse Beyond,” a unique multicultural celebration of life and death as told through music, dance and poetry.

There is more online!
To see photos and videos of the Coffeehouse and a Glimpse Beyond visit: http://www.mountauburn.org/sweet-auburn-winter-2013/
Robert Keller, Director of Cemetery Sales, Retires

Robert (Bob) G. Keller, Mount Auburn’s Director of Cemetery Sales retired in November after 41 years of service. He rose through a number of positions and saw the Cemetery undergo many changes.

In his first years at Mount Auburn he was a backhoe operator on the interment crew. He found out about the position from an acquaintance with whom he had worked with at Gethsemane Cemetery in his hometown of West Roxbury, Mass. Starting in 1971, he dug the foundations for lots and also for the Auburn Court Crypts. After about ten years on the grounds operating heavy machinery, working on the tree crew, setting monuments, and as the Assistant Foreman of the interment crew, he was promoted by then Superintendent Duncan Munro to Engineer, a position that included working on mapping and sales plans, then to Assistant Director for Sales & Operations. Later he would become increasingly involved with sales and eventually manage the Cemetery Sales Department.

Although he has worked on projects varying from overseeing asbestos removal to the development of new and innovative interment spaces to the creation of Mount Auburn’s landmark 1993 Master Plan, change this sentence to: he is most proud of his work assisting families in their time of need. He explains, “I meet people at the very worst time of their lives and I am able to help them, which is one of the most important and rewarding things I do here.” One of his favorite monuments at the Cemetery depicts a passageway that is rough around the outside, like life can be, and smooth on the inside. Bob meets people at that symbolic doorway and helps them pass through it peacefully.

In addition to the many grieving people Bob has helped, he has also worked with numerous pre-need clients in search of the perfect location for themselves and their family. On an afternoon in late summer as Bob and I walked through the Cemetery, we happened upon another person who frequently walks at Mount Auburn on her lunch breaks. She warmly greeted him and told us that she was very happy with the grave space she and her friend had recently purchased. After touring many options with Bob she felt the place they selected had the best Feng Shui, or positive energy, and not too much direct sunlight, which was important to her. Bob has helped people of all cultures, religions, and preferences find a final resting place that suits their individual requirements and their personalities. For another client Bob found space near Mount Auburn Street, as she had always lived on busy roads and wanted to be interred in a similar environment. “People tend to select the same type of surroundings in death as in life,” Bob explains.

He notes that one of the most dramatic changes he has witnessed in his time at Mount Auburn is a change in burial trends from casket burial to cremation burial and from more traditional single or companion graves accompanied by flush or up-right monuments to an increasing interest and acceptance in shared memorials. Under his leadership and through the use of community focus groups, the Cemetery Sales Department found that clients wanted a range of options that included non-traditional shared memorials as long as they are perceived to be in beautiful settings, especially intimate garden spaces. He had a hand in developing such interment landscapes as Birch Gardens, Halcyon Garden, Spruce Knoll, Nyssa Path, Azalea Garden, Aronia Garden, and Begonia Garden. He also has been involved in creating inconspicuous new spaces tucked in historic areas by removing or narrowing roads, thereby maximizing the Cemetery’s use of space while minimizing any impact on the landscape. As a former member of the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Cemetery Association, Bob’s deep knowledge of cemetery operations benefited cemeteries throughout Massachusetts.

Bob attributes his love of the outdoors and nature to what originally drew him to Mount Auburn, and what has kept him here for over four decades. He enjoys escaping his home in Franklin to hike the White Mountains with his son, Kristopher. He also likes to kayak and to go on leisurely bike rides and out to dinner and to the movies with his wife of 27 years, Donna. Bob is looking forward to spending more time with his friends and all his adult children, Tim, Shannon, TJ, and Kris as well as two grandchildren. But when asked about what comes after retirement, he says with a smile, “that chapter has not been written yet…”

Jessica is the Education and Volunteer Coordinator. She has been a lunchtime walking partner to Bob for the past 4 years.
A Special Dedication

A special preservation highlight this fall included a celebration of the recently restored Robert Gould Shaw Monument. The Monument, designed by Hammatt Billings, was conserved in summer and fall of 2011, and the surrounding iron lot fence and plantings were restored this past spring. On September 27, 2012, Governor Deval Patrick visited the Cemetery to make remarks at a special dedication ceremony and reception.

Grants Awarded

The Friends received a total of $250,000 from two local foundations towards the new greenhouse complex. In addition, in June, grants of $5,000 each were awarded by Mass Humanities and the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program towards our African American Heritage Trail project.

Trustee News

Congratulations to Mount Auburn (Secretary) and Friends of Mount Auburn Trustee (Treasurer) Caroline Loughlin for being named a Preservation Hero by the Library of American Landscape History. Another congratulations to Vice Chair of the Mount Auburn Trustees Tom Cooper who edited the newly published The Roots of My Obsession: The Thirty Great Gardeners Reveal Why They Garden (Timber Press, 2012).

We are also thrilled to introduce three new Trustees: Paul Zofnass, Geri Denterlein, and Frank Reece. Paul joins the Mount Auburn Cemetery Board of Trustees and is the president of the New York-based Environmental Financial Consulting Group, a company that provides advisory services to environmental, engineering/consulting, and architecture firms. Joining the Friends of Mount Auburn Board of Trustees, Geri Denterlein brings years of consulting, commenting, and serving on several nonprofit and civic boards. Frank Reece, another new addition to our Friends’ Board, is a seasoned executive with over 40 years of management experience. We are so happy to add their experience and wisdom to our Boards.

Fond Farewell

Vice President of Cemetery Services Sean O’Regan recently became President & CEO of Woodland Cemetery in Dayton, Ohio. Communications & Events Coordinator Lauren Marsh accepted a position in Internal & External Communications with Sovereign Bank/Santander. Archives Consultant Sara Goldberg left to devote more time to her position as Curator of Manuscripts and Photographs at Historic Newton.

Remembering One of Our Own

Retired Greenhouse Assistant Eileen Janiak passed away on September 24, 2012, following a courageous battle with cancer. Eileen began work at the Cemetery in March 1992 and retired in July 2010 when she and her husband John moved to San Mateo, Florida.
Did you know...?

- in addition to its classification as a cemetery, arboretum, and wildlife sanctuary, Mount Auburn is also an archive and library, home to over 3,000 books, spanning over 1,500 authors.

...and

- by the end of 2012, the Mount Auburn Book Club will have met 60 times, and read and discussed 60 books!
- the Friends of Mount Auburn hosted ten literary-themed public programs in 2012.
- fifteen groups, spanning three continents, participated in guided tours of the Cemetery this year.

...and that

- there are over 40 esteemed poets buried at Mount Auburn, spanning many genres of poetry.

...and also

- dozens of monuments are sculpted to depict life-sized books, while hundreds include literary passages, quotations from notable authors, or selections from religious texts.
Mount Auburn Cemetery’s Board of Trustees gathered with officials from Watertown and Cambridge to break ground at the site of the Cemetery’s new greenhouse on Thursday, June 14, 2012. Replacing Mount Auburn’s existing 41-year old facility, the new greenhouse will greatly reduce energy demands while improving Mount Auburn’s ability to propagate historically and ecologically appropriate plantings for its nationally significant landscape. Among the features of the new facility are open-roof venting, computerized climate controls, and an underground 30,000 gallon cistern for collecting water off the greenhouse roof to be used to irrigate the plants being propagated inside.

The Cemetery’s existing greenhouses already reflect Mount Auburn’s commitment to the most ecologically sound maintenance practices. In the past several years, the Cemetery’s greenhouse staff has replaced the use of chemical pesticides with beneficial insects, increased its production of compost and compost teas for use in the greenhouse and on the grounds, and employed companion plants in its cut flower gardens to reduce insect and disease problems. The new greenhouse facility will allow Mount Auburn to expand its sustainable maintenance practices and allow these practices to then be shared with other botanic gardens, landscape professionals, and home gardeners.

The construction of Mount Auburn’s new greenhouse is the first phase in the Cemetery’s long-term vision for a new Horticulture Center. The project has been funded through a combination of fundraising and institutional support. The Center will include classroom and community meeting space, new offices for the Cemetery’s horticultural staff, and expanded facilities for the Cemetery’s growing volunteer program. Designed by the Boston architectural firm of William Rawn Associates, the Horticulture Center is planned to achieve the highest level of certification (Platinum) from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program of the U.S. Green Building Council.

The project, managed by Consigli Construction Co., Inc., began in June with the demolition of a small house, once occupied by the Cemetery’s gardener, and its existing greenhouse facility, both located along Grove Street in Watertown. The construction of the new greenhouse is now underway and will be completed in early 2013.
Upcoming Events

Join us for a program this winter. For a complete listing of our upcoming events, visit us online at www.mountauburn.org.

adamente Lighting Service
Thursday, December 18, 2012,
This annual event provides the opportunity to remember loved ones no longer with us. During the service, you will have the opportunity to light a candle in honor of someone you wish to remember. Weather permitting, we will place the lighted candles in nearby Asa Gray Garden at the conclusion of the event.

Speakers this year will include:
Reverend Stephen Kendrick, Senior Minister, First Church in Boston
Swami Tyagananda, Hindu Chaplain, MIT and Harvard University
We will host a reception, and book signing with Richard Cheek for Mount Auburn: Beauty on the Edge of Eternity, in Bigelow Chapel immediately following the service.

Longfellow Birthday Celebration
February 23, 2013, 10:30 AM
Join us for this annual event in Story Chapel. Co-sponsored by the Longfellow House – Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site and the Friends of Mount Auburn. Check our website for additional details as the event nears.

Volunteer Docent Training
Tuesday, March 26; Wednesday March 27; and Thursday, March 28
Would you like to be an ambassador of Mount Auburn Cemetery? Consider becoming a docent! This three-day training course will provide a solid overview of Mount Auburn’s many facets and prepare you for sharing these with the public. The course is free, but pre-registration is required and docents must attend all three sessions.

Announcing Mount Auburn’s African American Heritage Trail
Among those now buried at Mount Auburn are authors, journalists, jurists, lawyers, politicians, musicians, athletes, entrepreneurs, activists, and reformers that help to illustrate the African American experience in Boston and beyond during the 19th and 20th centuries. This February, the Friends of Mount Auburn will launch an interpretive trail to celebrate the lives and legacies of fourteen individuals significant in telling this story.

Included on the Heritage Trail are: Peter Byus (1801(? – 1867), whose monument and story are shared above. Kittie Knox (1875 – 1900), competitive cyclist and activist, known as the “Rosa Parks of cycling”; Benjamin Franklin Roberts (1814 – 1881), printer and activist whose 1840s suit against the Boston School System was the first court case to challenge the practice of segregation; and Harriet Jacobs (1813 – 1897) freedom-seeker, abolitionist, and author of the historically significant slave narrative Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, written by Herself (1860).

The Heritage Trail with its printed guide, website exhibit, and mobile tour will launch on February 11th, in honor of Harriet Jacobs on her 200th birthday.