

The Garden Of Eden at Twenty-Five

by Tom Jenks, 2010.

IN THE quarter century since its publication, *The Garden Of Eden* has been a worldwide bestseller and the subject of innumerable articles, reviews, and essays both praising and critical. Hemingway started the novel in 1946 and never completed it, and the trade edition, which I edited and Scribner's published in 1986, was formed from manuscripts that only approximately indicated what the author had in mind. It's not clear that Hemingway completely knew what he was doing in *The Garden Of Eden*, or that he had a vision he could fully achieve, or that if achieved, it would have been, by his own measure, good. The published edition can best be termed, to use John Updike's smart phrase, a rounded fragment; and though I doubt that Updike ever saw *The Garden Of Eden* manuscripts, I'm certain that his instinct and experience told him exactly what he was looking at – a semi-polished portion of a rough and indeterminate work in progress. Observers have pointed out that the book could have been edited in many ways, and it's enticing to speculate about what Hemingway might have done had he finished the work. There are, in effect, as many imaginable versions of *The Garden Of Eden* as there are individuals with points of view on it, but the most definitive version exists only in the entirety of the voluminous drafts themselves. One imagines an eventual scholarly edition, with annotations and essays appended. A step in that direction has been made by Frederic Svoboda and Suzanne del Gizzo in drawing together a collection of contemporary reviews and criticism for Kent State University Press to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the trade publication.

At the Modern Language Association convention in New York City, shortly after the book's publication, I gave a brief address in which I said I wouldn't talk about the book. Today I continue to hold that the work – any writer's work – should speak for itself. Editing is a mediumistic occupation, and an editor's place is offstage. It's unseemly and maladroit for an editor to step in front of an author, but *The Garden Of Eden* is exceptional in its genesis and in its representation of its author, and enough time has passed since its publication to allow for some useful reflections on its nature and the circumstances of its publication.

I hadn't known the novel existed until the summer afternoon Charles Scribner IV, also known as Charles Scribner Jr., invited me into his office and casually pointed out the manuscripts on the shelves of a cheap credenza. I hadn't been at Scribner's long and didn't know Mr. Scribner at all. I don't remember having a conversation with him before that afternoon. It was 1985. Scribner's had recently been sold to Macmillan, and Scribner's offices had been relocated from the legendary Beaux Arts building on Fifth Avenue in Midtown to a modest building at Nineteenth Street, not far from the Flatiron Building to the north and Union Square to the south. The new offices were furnished in a utilitarian and temporary mode, pending an undetermined corporate fate within

Macmillan, which wanted Scribner's reference works and its backlist of famous titles from the time of Maxwell Perkins. Soon the offices would move again – this time to small quarters in Macmillan, after substantial reductions in staff. Charlie Scribner and a colleague, the cultural critic Jacques Barzun, as well as poetry editor Harry Ford and a host of others at all levels would be gone, and Macmillan's paperback division would have Scribner's backlist on its balance sheet, leaving a remnant of the venerable house to find its way with little clout. Macmillan would later be absorbed into other corporations, and Scribner, as it is now called, would survive and flourish as an imprint at Simon & Schuster. Charlie Scribner could not have foreseen it all, but in retrospect it's easy to see that on the afternoon I first met him the company needed a success to keep up its spirits and finances. He may also have viewed publishing *The Garden Of Eden* as a legacy and a literary responsibility to complete before he retired from the business his family started in 1846.

During the time I knew Scribner he portrayed himself as less of a trade publisher than a reference publisher. It seemed that the old Scribner icon, a lamp of knowledge, beckoned him to be a keeper of the flame. If he was pained over the decline of his business, he concealed it, and I was naively unaware of the company's narrowing fate.

We chatted, and he casually suggested that I might be interested in editing the Hemingway manuscripts. The offer was made so lightly that declining it seemed of no moment, though it must have surprised him. A couple of weeks passed, and he called me to his office again and repeated his suggestion, and I declined again.

It never occurred to me to accept. Scribner's had lately published *The Dangerous Summer*, Hemingway's non-fiction account of bullfighting, which *Life* magazine had serialized in shorter form in 1960. The book version didn't seem particularly good, and what with other Hemingway posthumous works and Hemingway imitations, it seemed there was already enough bad Hemingway in the world. I said something to that effect and indicated that my interest was in working with living writers, especially new and emerging ones. I had in hand the manuscript of a first book, a remarkable story collection by an unknown writer, E. A. Proulx, as well as other books to edit.

Another week passed before Scribner summoned me a third time. Now he didn't ask if I would edit the novel but gave me two paper grocery sacks filled with manuscripts and enjoined me to read them. That night I schlepped *The Garden Of Eden* home on the subway. Later I got into bed and started reading, determined to put the task behind me. But by morning I was convinced that the mass of material held a story worth publishing. The work was wildly uneven, and much of it was embarrassingly weak, though portions had sustained strength and suggested a new sort of Hemingway, one whom E. L. Doctorow would characterize in his review of the book as reaching for a fuller, more thoughtful, emotional range with a hint of feminine understanding. In both the draft and edited versions of the novel, it's easy to see the author's self-destructiveness, autoeroticism, and fantasies of redemption. But if he was lost in his own complexity, and if reading the novel is a bit like eavesdropping on a semi-conscious conversation that Hemingway was having with himself,

then the sympathetic reading is that he was, in part, trying to convert the bravado of his iconic persona into courage of the heart.

His failure to finish the novel may simply have been that other work, and life, intervened, or it may have been that he couldn't go further without relinquishing much of who he'd been and how he'd always written. In the manuscripts he seems to have been working to have it both ways – a creative tension that might have yielded what he had in mind, though the evidence in the manuscripts wasn't promising. Not only was the old Hemingway in force, but also his powers of concentration and revision were not sufficiently present to make me believe in the likely success of a transcendent vision. And though there's evidence he worked on the novel across fifteen years, the manuscripts read as if most of the work occurred during several relatively short periods, intermittently, and probably more near the time he started the book than later on. An image, easily evoked, of Hemingway steadily struggling across long years over *The Garden Of Eden* is inaccurate. His engagement with the book seems to have been intense at points, but the impression given at length in the manuscripts is one of casual effort, waning strength, and self-indulgence.

My task in editing a trade edition was to show the writer at his best, on his own terms, with the material that most closely approached a finished form of art. Hemingway had brought the story line involving David, Catherine, Marita, and David's writing to a reasonably high pitch. The core of the story existed in approximately four hundred triple-spaced manuscript pages from among the stacks of manuscripts Scribner had given me, and the 247-page published book came, for the most part, directly out of those four hundred triple-spaced pages, which is to say that the most presentable pages from *The Garden Of Eden* manuscripts made their way into the book.

I edited *The Garden Of Eden* as I would edit the work of a living author, the only difference being that Hemingway wasn't available to respond to queries or to make revisions. Thus the editorial intention to present the work in the best possible form required an added level of conscientiousness. Every decision was weighed and weighed again, many times, word by word, line by line, page by page. A decision to make any alteration was considered in relation to the integrity of the work being edited, the effect created by the alteration, the style and substance of the author's well-known works, and an awareness and appreciation of the gallery of observers who would eventually bear in on the result – Hemingway's family, his lawyer, Charles Scribner, the Scribner's staff, other editors and publishers, Hemingway scholars, critics, and reviewers – all those with a professional interest in or special attachment to Hemingway, including, finally, all his fans and detractors.

But in the editing, the gallery had to be pushed back, out of range of having an influence. Editorial decisions could not be made on the basis of what anyone might eventually think or say about the method or the result. Rather than representing any special or particular view, an editor stands in for the collective view, as a universal, albeit imperfect, reader. Moment to moment in the lines of a story, an editor must have a sense of the effect that each touch has on an average reader. A filament connects the writer and reader, and the editor must accurately know the nature and strength of the connection from beginning to end. If a viable story exists in a manuscript, the story

line evinces itself and guides the editing. The edit proceeds organically from the inside out rather than by embossing a shape from the outside onto the story. Such work is intimate and, in the depth of doing it, hallowed.

Late at night, day after day, the degree of minute concentration in the edit brought on the presence of Hemingway's ghost. He attended the edit, neither blessing nor cursing it but drawing, as he had always drawn, life from the attention and bearing in with the brooding weight of his feeling and the strength of his sensation. If the edited version of *The Garden Of Eden* represents an interpretation of the novel, it's an interpretation made without social, psychological, political, or any other theory involved but based simply on Hemingway's lyric expressiveness and the relative success of his words on the page as storytelling art.

I worked on the book alone, and in secrecy except for Mr. Scribner and two or three other Scribner's chiefs who knew what I was doing. No one, including me, knew how the edit would turn out, and there was no point in telling anyone about it until we did know. Of course I thought the edit would succeed, or I wouldn't have undertaken it, but between envisioning the result and completing it lay an almost infinite number of decisions, and when I was done other readers, including the Hemingway family, would weigh in on its publishability.

During the time I worked on the book, I gave Scribner my work to review in two or three installments. He had said that Hemingway's heirs would allow only cuts and necessary, minor alterations. He added that he knew I would have to make 'battlefield decisions'. When he read the edited pages, he was pleased by what he saw, though it was never clear to me that he grasped what was involved in editing fiction, much less a book like *The Garden Of Eden*. It may be that he didn't need to grasp it but needed only the evidence of the result, or it may be that his experience with other posthumously published Hemingway works provided all the insight he needed.

Why had he selected me to edit the book? He didn't know me, and I doubt he knew much, if anything, about my prior work. It was true that I was confident, knowledgeable, bold, and just naive enough too, and I suppose I'd been well recommended to him, but I suspect that he might have asked almost any editor working for him. Among *The Garden Of Eden* manuscripts that Scribner handed me was a short, partial attempt at an edit, done sometime in the past by a copy editor. I would describe the edit as an accordion job. Cuts had been made to compress the book, but there was no sense of narrative coherence, pacing, emotional integrity, or other elements that would be key to success. Scribner may have been generous in his willingness to give his employees opportunities, or he may have been practical in wanting to see if he could get the job done inexpensively, with staff on hand. He may have been indiscriminate, or he may have had a bit of genius. I can't say, but for a time we formed a team with a single project.

When I finished the edit, Scribner explained his strategy for gaining approval from Hemingway's heirs. Scribner thought he had the greatest rapport and chance for success with Hemingway's son Patrick. If Patrick approved of the book, he would talk with his older brother, Jack, and open a discussion about the estate granting permission for publication. Scribner phoned

Patrick and told him that an edit had been done, and soon Scribner and I were on a plane heading to Bozeman, Montana, to show Patrick the book.

I didn't know much about Patrick, other than what I'd read in biographies of his father. Patrick had been a white hunter in Africa. His father had started him drinking at twelve, and as a teenager he'd been subjected to electro-shock. I didn't know what to expect. We landed in Bozeman, and there waiting to meet us was Patrick, immediately recognizable by his broad Hemingway jaw. He greeted us warmly and took us to his home. On the way we passed open, green hillsides where antelope grazed. Patrick's house was small, comfortable, and relatively modest. We gave him the manuscript and visited for a while. Now and again, Patrick gave an abrupt burst of laughter, disconcertingly unconnected to anything in the conversation but genial nonetheless. He and his wife had made dinner – *Spätzle* and fillets of antelope that Patrick had shot.

I asked Patrick about his life with his father, and he mentioned boyhood visits to Finca Vigía and laughingly recalled inadvertently walking in on Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn one afternoon in their bedroom making love in a position that Patrick suggested they must have learned from a marriage manual. He made the observation with glee and a flick of irony about his father and stepmother. The dinner seemed a little surreal, perhaps because I was so bone-weary from working on the book that it was all I could do to stay awake, though it was early still.

Scribner and I retired to a nearby motel, named, I think, the Top Hat, with cheaply wood-paneled rooms and paper sanitation strips across the toilet seats. We'd wait there until Patrick phoned to let us know his verdict. I don't recall much about the wait other than it was interminably tedious, the idea of the journey to Bozeman growing more preposterous the longer I waited in the stark motel room – who could say how long it might take Patrick to read the book or what his reaction might be?

Before giving Scribner the completed edit, I'd given it to Raymond Carver and to Tobias Wolff to read, because I wanted their reactions as a litmus test to guard against any chance that I'd succumbed to commercialism. But I didn't tell Ray or Toby that I was prepared to bury the edit if they thought the book wasn't worthwhile. I simply asked them to read it and tell me what they thought.

I heard back first from Toby. He spoke with hushed admiration and made a helpful suggestion regarding an adjustment in wording related to point of view near the end of the book. Ray responded exuberantly, and laughed ruefully, noting that there sure was a lot of drinking in the book. Ray was a recovered alcoholic, and Hemingway got to him viscerally.

Both Ray and Toby wrote in a vein related to Hemingway's use of common everyday language; both knew his work and were deeply read in the works of other modern masters. No matter what happened in Bozeman, I trusted Ray and Toby's sense of aesthetic value in *The Garden Of Eden*.

Late the next day Patrick called, and we went back to his house, wondering what he'd say. He was smiling and off-hand. He'd heard about the book but never read it. He liked it. He would talk with his brother. Details and motifs in the book reminded him favorably of other Hemingway

works. We enthused with him, and I talked about the gustatory appeal of the book and Ray Carver's thirsty reaction to all the drinking. Patrick grinned and bragged a little about his father's stamina, comparing him to Churchill as an indestructible 'bottle-a-day man'.

During a lull in the conversation, I mentioned that I wasn't sure what the cover art might be. In part I was testing Patrick's commitment – was he already envisioning a published book? He got up and went off into a den. After a while he returned with an art book open to Juan Gris's painting *Woman With A Basket*. Without a word, Patrick offered the art. Gris had been his father's favorite painter, and the mood of somber hedonism in the painting was perfect for the front cover. Later I arranged permission for the use of the image and oversaw the jacket design, suggesting a leaf from the woman's basket for a pattern on the back cover.

In retrospect, and in light of the posthumous Hemingway publications after *The Garden Of Eden*, I think Patrick would have said only yes to publishing *The Garden Of Eden*. It's hard to know what criteria he applied. He found the book 'sunny'. I think he relied mainly on his faith in Scribner's and in his father's success. The trip to Bozeman was a pro-forma diplomatic mission, in which Scribner's sense of occasion communicated more risk in the outcome than was actually the case.

A literary executor has the duty of preserving and extending the life of an author's works in accordance with the author's wishes. History provides notable examples of executors acting in spite of an author's wishes, sometimes beneficially so for the sake of literature, as in the case of Kafka, who asked his executor to burn manuscripts that were instead posthumously published and survived as important works – *The Trial*, *Amerika*, and *The Castle*. The executor, Max Brod, believed that Kafka told him to burn the manuscripts only because he knew Brod wouldn't do it. The impulses and issues in posthumous publication tend to be as complex or as simple as the writer in question. That's to say, a writer's life determines much of his afterlife. In Henry James's tale *The Aspern Papers*, a 'publishing scoundrel' in pursuit of a dead, famed Romantic poet's letters offers an image of misplaced passion, though the publisher turns out to be no worse than the woman who finally possesses the letters and tries to barter them for an offer of marriage from the publisher. The dead author is at the mercy of the living, his immortal fame tied to mortal uncertainties.

Hemingway left his family a remarkable inheritance based in copyrights, and though literary fame encourages a sense of collective ownership, Hemingway's works belong to his heirs until the works pass into the public domain on expiration of copyrights, which will soon begin to occur for his bestselling works published in his lifetime. The copyright on his early story collection, *In Our Time*, expires in 2018, that of *The Sun Also Rises* in 2021, and of *A Farewell to Arms* in 2024. By comparison, *The Garden Of Eden* copyright extends to 2047. In the first twenty years following Hemingway's death, two posthumously published works appeared; in the thirty years since then, eight or nine more posthumously published works have appeared. Further copyrights will likely be created via publication of new editions, possibly some scholarly ones, of Hemingway works, including, for instance, material excised from *Islands In The Stream* and from *The Garden Of Eden*. There are also, if I remember correctly, a few story drafts – one titled 'Black-Ass At The

Crossroads' – that, because weak or incomplete, have not seen light of day but may see it yet. And several thousand pages of documents from Hemingway's house in Cuba will no doubt yield additional publications. So long as the market for Hemingway holds and unpublished material remains, it makes business sense for Hemingway's heirs and publishers to strike what balance they can between commerce and art. And in light of Hemingway's gift for self-promotion and his penchant for living large, his posthumous publications seem inevitable and natural enough.

Back in New York, I was given the task of contacting Alfred Rice, the attorney who had handled Hemingway's contracts since 1944. Rice was said to be a curmudgeon and a tough negotiator, and he'd been around so long it was hard to believe he was still alive and working. I was put through to him on the first call – he sounded ancient and matter of fact. He said to send the contract over, and he'd take a look. Essentially, the contract repeated earlier Hemingway agreements, in which the author waived taking an advance in lieu of receiving a remarkably high royalty – 25 percent. Few, if any, other authors could command such a fee. But Hemingway's sales were so certain and so substantial that there had long been no risk in publishing him, and there would be none now.

In the winter before the spring publication of *The Garden Of Eden*, Scribner's held its sales conference at a resort hotel in Puerto Rico. Random House held its conference at a neighboring hotel, and the confident affluence of the Random House sales force seemed to shame the anxious jocularity of the Scribner's team. Our salesmen needed some good news, and they got it in the surprise announcement of *The Garden Of Eden*. Hemingway's years writing the book, the editing of the manuscripts, the gender-bending story of David and Catherine Bourne all made for a great sales pitch. The salesmen listened and fired questions that were all about not wanting a good story to end, because here, at last, was a book that would sell.

It had been fifteen years since the release of a new Hemingway novel, and not only was *The Garden Of Eden* unexpected, but the GAP-like style and androgyny of the central characters seemed presciently in sync with the opening out of mid-1980s urban culture. The novel had an elephant hunt and all the expected, masculine Hemingway elements and, at the same time, turned the expected inside out. The salesmen were excited, and as I finished up, another editor seated on the dais leaned over and whispered to me, 'You're a star'. But, no, it wasn't me, it was Papa.

To announce the book publicly I spoke with Edwin McDowell, who covered publishing news for the *New York Times*. His article was picked up everywhere. Well-orchestrated publicity won't necessarily sell a book, but the ghost who nebulously attended the edit grew in substance, acquiring the weight of anyone and everyone who heard about the book and reached for a renewed acquaintance with its author.

Meanwhile, Jack Hemingway had read the edited manuscript and sent in his corrections of his father's French. Those corrections were the only editorial input I received from the estate, and I had the corrections made, though making them was somewhat inconsistent with the overall copy-editing of the book, which was done with restraint to allow as much as was possible of Hemingway's idiosyncrasies of diction, spelling, grammar, and punctuation to stand.

As *The Garden Of Eden* moved into production, Scribner once again called me to his office and this time gave me a typed note that was to appear in the front of the book. The note has been much remarked, and it reads as follows:

*As was the case with Hemingway's earlier posthumous work *Islands In The Stream*, this novel was not in finished form at the time of the author's death. In preparing the book for publication we have made some cuts in the manuscript and some routine copy-editing corrections. Beyond a very small number of minor interpolations for clarity and consistency, nothing has been added. In every significant respect the work is all the author's.*

Scribner did not offer the note as an option that was up for discussion or for alteration but as a requirement made by the Hemingway estate. I don't know who wrote the note, though I assume that Scribner did. Its precedent can be found in the note at the front of *Islands In The Stream*:

Charles Scribner, Jr. and I worked together preparing this book for publication from Ernest's original manuscript. Beyond routine chores of correcting spelling and punctuation, we made some cuts in the manuscript, I feeling that Ernest would surely have made them himself. The book is all Ernest's. We have added nothing to it. MARY HEMINGWAY

It's doubtful that Mary Hemingway wrote the note on her own, and it's odd that, in its personal nature, it leaves out Hemingway biographer Carlos Baker, who took part in editing the book. The intention in both notes is to make a gesture at acknowledging editorial work while affirming the books' authenticity.

Criticism of *The Garden Of Eden* note is understandable, though in fact nothing was, or is, hidden about the editing. During publication, the story of the many pages of manuscript having been edited into a compact book was broadcast far and wide. The story achieved total media saturation – in newspapers and magazines and on radio and TV everywhere. And on the day the book was published, the entirety of the manuscripts, which until then had been shuttered in the Kennedy Library in Boston, were for the first time opened to view, and on that day scholars, reviewers, and general readers began to study and make comparisons between the published book and Hemingway's efforts. The editing of *The Garden Of Eden* has all been in plain sight. That said, the publisher's note is open to question on three points.

The phrase 'some cuts' may be variously interpreted and does not quantify how much material was left out. Likewise, the phrases about copy-editing and 'interpolations' may be criticized for vagueness and for seeming to minimize the amount of editing that was done; and, finally, some observers – those whose certainty about what Hemingway intended in the novel may be greater than my own – tend to disagree with the statement that 'in every significant respect the work is all the author's'.

If the composition of the publisher's note had been mine to do, I might well have done it differently. It would have been easy enough to write a more precise note. However, I didn't resist the note Scribner gave the book, and I don't think his intention was disingenuous, especially given the open broadcast of what went into making the book. Though great swaths of the full manuscript of the book were left out of the published edition, and though a good deal of line editing and some structural re-arrangement of passages occurred, the overall editorial approach was a scrupulous effort to change as little as possible while presenting a coherent drama that could stand as close as possible to Hemingway's estimable works. He did what he could with *The Garden Of Eden*, and I did what I could – not for myself or for Scribner and his publishing house or for Hemingway's heirs. In spite of my reluctance to perpetuate Hemingway, I did what I could for him, for the sake of the best in the work.

I hoped for the book's success with readers but didn't anticipate some of the side-effects. On the morning of publication, I received a phone call from a man from Tennessee who'd made a pilgrimage to Boston to be at the Kennedy Library when the doors opened and the manuscripts became available. The man from Tennessee wanted to visit *The Garden Of Eden*. Other than that, he didn't seem to know what to say. Apparently he'd called because he wanted to share his reverent feeling for Hemingway. In the time that followed, countless others expressed their feelings. A reviewer who'd settled into the Kennedy Library to read the unedited manuscripts into a tape recorder, because photocopying was prohibited, called and feverishly read me parts of the manuscript and ranted incoherently about the injustice I'd done the book. Other readers – strangers who'd seen me on TV or in magazines and newspapers – approached me on the street and in restaurants to express their wonder about Hemingway. One woman read the book and decided then and there to cut and bleach her hair like Catherine Bourne's. The woman has worn her hair that way ever since, and she looks great. At a TV station in Cleveland, a middle-aged news anchor, off camera, wearing a newsman's trench coat, waxed romantic about how he wished he'd lived like Hemingway – the women, the adventure, the high life. Each reader I've encountered has expressed a personal reaction to Hemingway and his work.

His influence – particularly as a stylist – is all but genetically coded into generations of readers and writers but is somewhat on the wane with the infusion of diverse cultures and patterns of being in America. The old Hemingway American mode of going out into the world – to France, Spain, Africa, Cuba – and finding what he needed and using and glorifying it all in his own image has shifted some but maybe not enough. In 2008 Horace Engdahl, the permanent secretary of the Nobel Prize jury, noted that American literature 'is too isolated, too insular. They don't translate enough and don't really participate in the big dialogue of literature. That ignorance is restraining.' Fairly or unfairly, Engdahl was touching on an assumptive arrogance inherent in a superpower. Hemingway's ascendancy coincided exactly with America's.

In schools he is not taught as pervasively and centrally as he used to be, though his enduring popular appeal has not depended on academia in the way, for instance, that Conrad's has. Hemingway saw to his own fame. Today, with the pluralism of the internet and with Warhol's

fifteen minutes of fame shrunken to the fifteen seconds of a tweet, I wonder about literary legacies of the future. Any author with the ability to create a universally accessible, digital archive of his or her body of published and unpublished works can potentially bypass libraries and academies as repositories, gatekeepers, and interpreters between writer and reader. Hemingway would have liked this idea of providing and promoting his own context, which anyone could enter, as compared to his being contained in and dependent on the context and opinions of others. Enterprising authors are already moving in the direction of creating digital immortality for themselves, and the future will likely see less academic influence on the course of literature than in the past, just as publishers and bookstores are being replaced by more direct, immediate connections between writers and readers.

The danger, of course, is in lowered standards of quality and appreciation. In the literary sphere, the internet tends to amplify the legitimacy of anyone's opinion about anyone else's work. Where all opinions count more or less the same, none counts greatly; and where popularity defines quality, the median, if not the lowest common denominator, becomes the standard. Yet I'm optimistic and have great faith in the human imagination and its creative reach toward meaning. A rewarding aspect of the publication of *The Garden Of Eden* are the veins of humanizing discussion it opened up.

So, would I do it again? Would I do it the same way? I'm grateful to have done it, grateful for an occasion to reflect on it, and grateful once again that it's behind me. My interest has always been in stories, in the words on the page, and in the work with an author. Twenty-five years ago, I was following that interest, and I am following it now. To some extent, it takes me where it will.

Currently I'm reading and editing works by young writers who have a better than fair chance of finding and rewarding a wide audience. And, with a group of others, I'm dedicated to a non-profit effort to encourage excellence in literary publishing for the digital era. I'm nearing the age at which Hemingway died, and with luck and persistence, I may do some worthwhile work for another couple of decades and know that it's been taken up by younger professionals. In this regard, a dictum of Hemingway's is useful: Always put in more than you take out.