

Personal notes from Wally

There arrives in every person's life a time to change, to turn to a new leaf and begin writing a new song. For some, that time is anticipated with joy and breathless waiting. For others the time is dread, kept at bay for as long as possible behind a door not willingly opened. I have reached one of those times and for me, it is a mix of bright future and dark sadness. Yet it is time to open the door and step through.

The nursery that bears my name has been my muse, my mistress, my way of life to wake each morning and pass through the gardens as I greet the day. Then in the evening, I stroll through again as the sun sets. Goodnight, sweet trillium. Goodnight, old oak. Sleep well, little huck. Such a glorious way to see the time pass.

'Tis to be no more. I have tarried far longer in this idyllic grove than I should have. It is time to break with my avocation and go at long last into the autumn of my life. My good wife has waited long enough and beckons me to join her as she sits in the garden swing. We will put up our feet and watch the clouds go by and remember our travels and travails as we enjoy our golden years together.

They call it "retirement." I will call it, sadly, "goodbye."

When you come again to the nursery in September, remember kindly the old man within whose dream you are walking and greet with kindness and anticipation the new master of this garden. For it is my fondest hope that another gardener will step forward and continue this odyssey, making it his or her own. Our Northwest native plants deserve a new champion!

I leave you with words from one of my favorite poets, Joyce Kilmer, a poet, journalist, editor, lecturer, soldier. He was born 6 December 1886, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, died 30 July 1918 near Seringes, France, at the Second Battle of Marne, at the age of 31.



Western Azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*)
My daughter, Heidi D. Hansen, painted this beautiful piece for me in 2003.

⇒ More ⇒

Personal notes from Wally, continued



Old Poets

by Joyce Kilmer

(For Robert Cortez Holliday)

If I should live in a forest
And sleep underneath a tree,
No grove of impudent saplings
Would make a home for me.

I'd go where the old oaks gather,
Serene and good and strong,
And they would not sigh and tremble
And vex me with a song.

The pleasantest sort of poet
Is the poet who's old and wise,
With an old white beard and wrinkles
About his kind old eyes.

For these young flippertigibbets
A-rhyming their hours away
They won't be still like honest men
And listen to what you say.

'Summer Memoirs'
Another of my favorite paintings. It was done for
me by my daughter, Heidi D. Hansen, in 2004

[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Personal notes from Wally, continued



Sgt. Joyce Kilmer, as a member of the 69th Volunteer Infantry Unit, circa 1918

The young poet screams forever
About his sex and his soul;
But the old man listens, and smokes his pipe,
And polishes its bowl.

There should be a club for poets
Who have come to seventy year.
They should sit in a great hall drinking
Red wine and golden beer.

They would shuffle in of an evening,
Each one to his cushioned seat,
And there would be mellow talking
And silence rich and sweet.

There is no peace to be taken
With poets who are young,
For they worry about the wars to be fought
And the songs that must be sung.

But the old man knows that he's in his chair
And that God's on His throne in the sky.
So he sits by the fire in comfort
And he lets the world spin by.

*Goodbye my friends,
and good luck!
Wally*



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Yellow Violet (*Viola glabella*)

Photo by JoAnn Onstott



A wonderland of northwest native plants created by renowned master gardener and native plant enthusiast Wallace Hansen.