

Ann Ellen Staley

June 1, 1946 – February 25, 2022

Ann Ellen Staley passed away peacefully at home on February 25, 2022.



Ann, the only daughter of Elizabeth Kane Devine and Edwin Lewis Staley, was born June 1, 1946. She grew up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in a suburb called Green Acres, with her older brother, Jed, and younger brother, Tom. Ann was referred to as "the rose between two thorns" by her mother, and as "Boo" by her grandmother. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1968 with a B.A. in English, and a teaching certificate in Language Arts. In 10th grade, she watched President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, in which he announced the beginning of the Peace Corps. She and her first husband, Ron E. Benoit, joined the Peace Corps the summer after college graduation, and were community organizers in Bahia, Brazil. She later earned three Masters degrees-Master of Arts in Teaching, Masters in Humanities, Master of Arts in Leadership and Policy Analysis, Stanford University.

After Peace Corps she separated from her husband and took a ten-thousand-mile journey across the United States, visiting everyone she'd ever known and picking up hitchhikers, taking them wherever they were going. Arriving in San Francisco she turned right and drove north on Highway 1 into Oregon. For a year, she had a 'back to the land' experience, living in a cabin nineteen miles east of Ashland, Oregon, before realizing that she missed, not town, but working with adolescents.

In 1971, Ann began teaching writing and literature at Hedrick Junior HS in Medford, Oregon, and later in high schools in Ashland, Josephine County, and Philomath during her forty-year career. Later, she worked with teachers-in-training at Western Oregon University, Oregon State University, and Willamette University. Ann's longest and most satisfying tenure was the two decades she spent teaching with the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College. There she taught classes such as "Visual Thinking," "William Stafford Studies," and "Still Life," often working with her colleague, Judy Teufel, a ceramicist and painter. Ann also spent nine consecutive summers teaching with Bard College's Institute for Writing and Thinking in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Ann met her second husband, Courtney Cloyd, at the Twin Plunges swimming pool in Ashland. It was love at first sight for the 28-year-olds. They purchased a canoe together, then a small house in Ashland, and after nine years, they were married on May 15, 1983.

In the summer of 1980 Ann attended the first summer of the Oregon Writing Project ("Teachers Teaching Teachers") She participated for many years as a teacher-educator at Southern Oregon University, Lewis and Clark, and Willamette University, always bringing back what she learned to whatever classroom opened for her in the Fall. She also helped to design the rubric for scoring the Writing Assessment for the State of Oregon.

Ann was published as an essayist and a poet, and edited both poetry and fiction. Her first two books of poems, *Primary Sources* (2011) and *Instructions For The Wishing Light* (2013), were published by Booktrope Editions, Seattle Washington, where she was also the Poetry Editor. She later independently published *Afternoon Sky, Harney Desert* (2017), and three small collections, *Nota Bene* (2017), *The Age Of Bronze* (2018), *Fire In The Desert* (2020), and *Small Beauties* (2021). Her last collection, *The Spirit That Moves In All Things*, will be published posthumously. Ann also was a writer-in-residence at The Island Institute, Sitka Alaska, where she partnered with artist and friend, Norman Campbell.

Ann is survived by her older brother, Jed Staley of San Diego, niece Liz Staley, cousin Betsy Devine Grempe, and by her husband, J. Courtney Cloyd of Corvallis. Ann considered two younger friends her daughters: Joan Flora and Jenny Fowler, whose parents generously shared their daughters with her. Ann will be missed by many colleagues, friends, neighbors, former students and correspondents. Her epitaph will be: Loved this world, pen-in-hand.

A Celebration of Life for Ann Staley will be held at 1 p.m. at Central Park in Corvallis, Oregon, on May 21, 2022, with a reception following. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Arts Center of Corvallis, or to The Friends of William Stafford.