



Star Black

Louise Glück

## A Poet Among Us

**O**n Oct. 21, Louise Glück, the Margaret Bundy Scott Senior Lecturer in English, began her appointment as U.S. Poet Laureate, succeeding Billy Collins, who held the post for two one-year terms.

Glück, author of nine books of poetry, and whose chapbook *October* was to be published in November, is the 12th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to be appointed by the Library of Congress and the third woman to hold the post

since the program's inception in 1986.

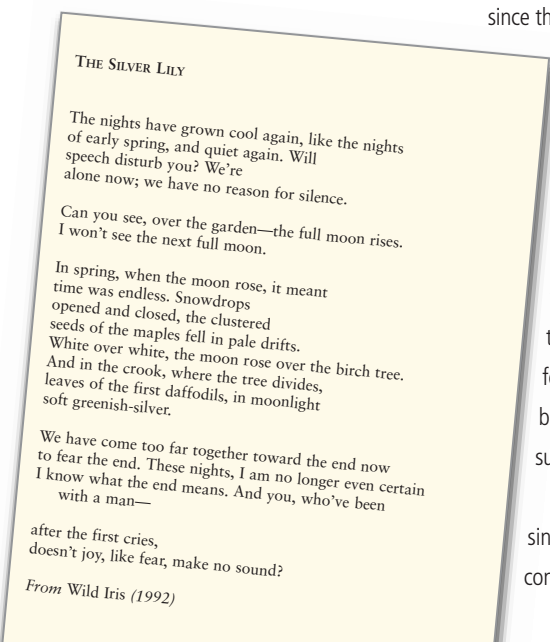
Glück was surprised to learn of the appointment, as she does not seek publicity. But she accepted the post without hesitation, saying that she felt her life needed to be "disturbed and surprised."

As she has done since 1983, Glück will continue to travel from

Cambridge to Williamstown one day per week to teach courses such as "The Writing of Poetry" and "Contemporary American Poetry." She says she enjoys working with Williams students, whom she considers to be "gifted, eccentric and ardent." "I have some amazing minds to work with; they force me to think," she said of her students in 2001, the year she won Yale University's Bollingen Prize in Poetry for her 1999 book *Vita Nova*.

Glück also won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and was a finalist for the National Book Award for her 1992 collection *Wild Iris*. Her other awards include the National Book Critics Circle Award for *The Triumph of Achilles* (1985), The American Academy of Arts and Letters in Literature for *Descending Figure* (1980), and a Lannan Literary Award for excellence in poetry. She has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, and she was the Vermont state poet. In 1997 she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 1999 she became a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She currently is a judge for the Yale Series of Younger Poets.

"Her work is inward-looking, rigorous in its relation to language, fine-tuned and often searing," says Chris Pye, Williams' Class of 1924 Professor of English and chairman of the English department. "She has gotten as far as she has because of her unwavering attention to her craft and her own sense of where it's going."



## Curtains Up

**A**s a theater major at Williams, Robert Baker-White '80 says he "began to understand what the theater was really about in an intellectual and cultural sense."

These days, he's working to impart that knowledge to undergraduates as the new chair of Williams' theater department. He spoke with news director Jo Procter about his role and the intersections between theater and the life of the College.

### What is your job? Teacher? Writer? Theorist? Administrator? Manager?

Those are all things that I will do. I'm definitely going to teach a range of courses from acting to directing to dramatic literature to drama theory.



Robert Baker-White

I've written about the theater and dramatic literature for the last 15 years, and I definitely want to continue that.

I'm in the middle of trying to formulate a book about American drama.

There is significant work to do in terms of helping to coordinate a unified approach to the opportunities provided by the new '62 Center for Theatre and Dance. It's going to have performance, rehearsal, and, indeed, classroom facilities, on a scale much grander than we had before. We need to explore how the theater department and the dance program, which also is getting a tremendous boost from new performance space,

can work best together. And the theater department needs to figure out how to work with all parts of the campus community, to look for crossovers in terms of programming. The challenge is to formulate a strategy and a program for the best use of the space that will involve collaboration with people all across the campus.

### What are the most important issues for the theater department?

That's a complicated question. Part of the opportunity that the '62 Center for Theatre and Dance gives us is a chance to think about expanding our program, giving it a little higher profile, finding ways to make the productions and artistic

## Symbols and Signs

More than 75 years ago, New Mexico lawmakers chose as the centerpiece of the state flag a “sun symbol,” composed of a red circle radiating four lines in each of the cardinal directions. Inspired by a 19th century piece of pottery created by a member of the Zia Pueblo, the symbol represented what state officials called the “perfect friendship among native cultures.”

Yet for the Zia, an Indian community about 35 miles north of Albuquerque, the friendship was not so perfect, according to Williams anthropologist Michael Brown. “Aside from their concern about the inappropriate use of a powerful religious symbol,” he writes in his latest book, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, the



Southwest Airlines’ New Mexico “logo” jet

Zia “were angry because no one had asked their permission before adopting the symbol for the state flag.”

In *Who Owns Native Culture?*, Brown uses case studies like that of the Zia to explore whether aspects of

indigenous people’s heritage and culture—such as art, religion or medicine—can and should be protected from use by outsiders. Any answer, he says, must respect the rights of native communities without blocking the open communication essential to the life of pluralist democracies.

output of the program even more central to the life of the College and integrated with other disciplines. Part of the challenge is related to thinking through how we want the department to grow.

### Why did you want this job?

After getting my doctorate, I taught at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, for 11 years. That was a wonderful experience, but a couple of years ago I had the opportunity to head the theater program at Georgetown University. Georgetown was building its own new performing arts center, and I was involved in the same type of work that is going on here now. When I got wind of this opportunity, my wife (Tracy ‘80) and I decided

there probably wasn’t anywhere else that we would rather be than at Williams and in Williamstown. I can’t imagine a better professional situation than directing this program and teaching at this college in terms of being part of a dynamic learning community and being able to contribute to its artistic life.

### Is the theater a way of thinking?

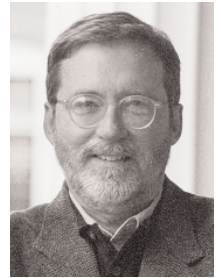
Absolutely. It is one of the most integrative ways of thinking that you can have. I would like every student on campus to take a beginning acting class. When we get students from other disciplines into acting classes, 99 percent of them say, “Wow! I had no idea what was involved. I had

To supplement the book, and as chairman of Williams’ Center for Technology in the Arts and Humanities, Brown created a Web site that allows readers to follow in his research footsteps. Visitors to [www.williams.edu/go/native](http://www.williams.edu/go/native) will find in the chapter on the Zia a photograph of the sun symbol; a press release from Southwest Airlines, which worked closely with the pueblo to reproduce the symbol on its New Mexico “logo” jet; and a link to the Canadian Intellectual Property Office database, which shows the “official mark” registration for a petroglyph created by the Snuneymuxw first nation.

Brown, the James N. Lambert ’39 Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies, came to Williams in 1980 after completing a doctorate in anthropology at University of Michigan. He began researching intellectual property rights of native populations a decade later, studying the New Age movement and designing a seminar on the cultural ownership of knowledge in the United States, Australia and other developed countries. He also teaches classes such as “North-American Indians” and “Native Peoples of Latin America.”

### Other books by Michael Brown:

*The Channeling Zone* (1997); *War of Shadows* (1991); *Tsewa’s Gift* (1986); *Una Paz Incierta* (1984)



Michael Brown

no idea of the ways in which you have to think, the ways in which you have to integrate your mental activity with your physical activity with your emotional life.”

Theater was interdisciplinary long before people talked about things being interdisciplinary. That is one of the great reasons for having theater on a college campus. When we do Brecht’s play *Galileo*, it’s a wonderful opportunity for us to talk to the astronomy and physics departments. With a Shakespeare play, we can go to the history and English departments. When we do a contemporary political drama, we can go to other places on campus where people have appropriate expertise.