



September 5, 2015

2015 marks the centenary of poet-sage **Robert Lax**, (1915-2000). In commemoration, **Templegate Publishers** presents a new book:

IN THE BEGINNING WAS LOVE: Contemplative Words of Robert Lax. Edited, With An Introduction, by S.T. Georgiou

140 pages, with drawings and B & W photos. \$15.95
ISBN: 978-0-87243-276-5

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ROBERT LAX, better known as the close friend of Thomas Merton, was a premier experimental poet whose writing takes on lyric, minimalist, and abstract dimensions. His early masterwork, *Circus of the Sun*, was hailed as a major innovative work, "perhaps the greatest English-language poem of the century" (*New York Times*). *The New York Times Book Review* said of Lax, "He is among America's greatest poets, a true minimalist who can weave awesome poems from remarkably few words." Nicholas Zurbrugg, the noted cultural studies theorist, termed him, "a saint of the avant-garde."

Also a gifted sage and mentor to numerous artists, Lax was described by Merton as having an "inborn direction to the living God; he was much wiser than I, had clearer vision, and was corresponding much more truly to the grace of God than I; he had seen what was the one important thing" (from Merton's autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*). Jack Kerouac thought of Lax as a "strange wonderful laughing Buddha." Mark Van Doren, the distinguished English professor at Columbia University, said of Lax, "He was so filled with love that he could not state his bliss—his love of the world and all things in it."

In the early 1960's Lax left his native New York for the Greek isles. After a lengthy stay on Kalymnos, he eventually took up a quasi-eremitic life on Patmos, the Biblical isle associated with the Revelation. There he quietly perfected his ascetic, mantra-like style of verse that

emphasized the purity of essentials, the holy in the ordinary, the sacred texture of every moment. He lived by the maxim, "less is more," all the while attracting a global circle of friends and admirers. The Italian poet Francesco Conz said of Lax, "He will be remembered as the last of the mystics who closed a former epoch."

STEVE THEODORE GEORGIU, M.A. Humanities, M.A. Theology, Ph.D. Religion and Art, Graduate Theological Union, (G.T.U.) Berkeley. Instructs courses in Religion & the Interdisciplinary Humanities at San Francisco City College and throughout the SF Bay Area. Teaches classes and conducts reflection evenings on Robert Lax at the G.T.U. and at the Santa Sabina Retreat Center in Marin County. Lax Lecturer at St. Bonaventure University, New York.

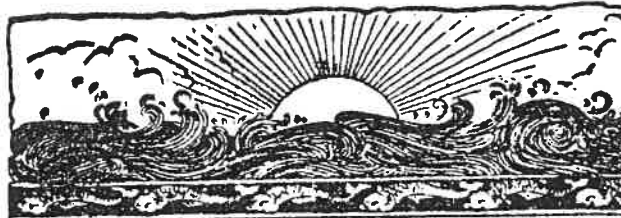
Author of a spiritual trilogy inspired by his mentorship with Lax: *The Way of the Dreamcatcher: Spirit-Lessons With Robert Lax*; *Mystic Street: Meditations On A Spiritual Path*; *The Isle of Monte Cristo: Finding the Inner Treasure* (winner of a 2011 National Catholic Press Association Award).

Since 2012, Georgiou, (together with concert pianist Jacqueline Chew), have performed Lax's poems—set to music—at colleges, institutes, & retreat centers. In June of 2015 they performed Lax's minimalist masterwork *Sea and Sky* at the 14th General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, held at Bellarmine University, Kentucky.

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Robert Lax

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Gary R. Bauer, 1990, Patmos

ROBERT LAX, (1915-2000), was a poet, sage, and peacemaker. Thomas Merton said of Lax, "He had a natural, instinctive spirituality, an inborn direction to the living God." Jack Kerouac called him "a Pilgrim in search of beautiful innocence."

A native of New York, Lax graduated from Columbia University in 1938 with a degree in English Literature. After much wandering he traveled to Greece where he made Patmos, Isle of the Revelation, his spiritual and creative workshop. There he resided for three decades, writing the "ascetic" and experimental verse that would rank him "Among America's greatest poets, a true minimalist who can weave awesome poems from remarkably few words" (*New York Times Book Review*).

IN THE BEGINNING WAS LOVE is a unique introduction to Lax as contemplative. These spiritual selections, mostly gathered from his poems and journals, portray Lax as a mystic filled with a deep love for both Creator and creation.

S.T. GEORGIU is the author of *The Way of the Dreamcatcher: Spirit Lessons With Robert Lax*, (Templegate), *Mystic Street*, and *The Isle of Monte Cristo*. He teaches religion and spirituality in the San Francisco Bay Area.

"A luminous offering of poetry and prayer; every page is a meditation."

Jonathan Montaldo, editor of *The Intimate Merton*

"This compact collection radiates transcendent love."

Jane Dillenberger, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley

PRAISE FOR *THE WAY OF THE DREAMCATCHER: SPIRIT LESSONS WITH ROBERT LAX* (S.T. GEORGIU, Templegate Publishers):

Georgiou has presented us with a very full and connected portrait of Lax as no one has before. I know of no one more qualified to talk about the spirituality of Lax. Paul Spaeth, Director, Lax Archives

This book captures the essence of one of the 20th century's "enlightened beings." Arthur Biddle, *Collected Letters of Merton & Lax*

A book that introduces us to a man numerous authors have affectionately termed, "a saint." Br. Patrick Hart, O.C.S.O., last secretary to Thomas Merton

This is a gem of a book. The book's true subject is holiness. Kathleen Norris, poet, essayist, author of *Dakota* and *Acedia and Me*

Lax emerges as a Gandalf-like figure who has found refuge on the shore of Middle Earth. Jim Forest, writer, lay theologian, peace activist

The love expressed in this book is what we are all here for. Jacob Needleman, author of *What Is God* and *Necessary Wisdom*

A gorgeous book about a man of compassion. Fr. John Dear, author, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Archbishop Desmond Tutu