

# Elizabeth Winifred Brewster



Elizabeth Brewster n.d. Credit *The Fiddlehead* no. 255.

b. Aug. 26, 1922, Chatham, NB; d. Dec. 26, 2012, Saskatoon, SK

## Education:

1946 BA University of New Brunswick;  
1947 Radcliffe College, Harvard University Cambridge, Mass.  
1949–1950 graduate study at King's College, London, UK  
1952 BLS, University of Toronto  
1962 PhD University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana

## Positions:

1947 Teacher, Cobourg, ON, private school (for a few months)  
1948–1970 Library catalogue and reference positions in universities: New Brunswick (1948), Carleton (1953–57), Indiana (1957–58), Mount Allison (1961–65), Alberta (1968–70) and the New Brunswick Legislature (1965–68)  
1960–1961 Teaching English at the University of Victoria  
1970–1971 Assistant Professor at the University of Alberta  
1972–1990 Professor at the University of Saskatchewan

## Publications:

Brewster, Elizabeth (1951). *East coast*. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (1982). *The way home: new poems*. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (1985). Selected poems of Elizabeth Brewster. Introduction by Tom Marshall. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (1991). The invention of truth. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (1995). Away from home. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (1998). Garden of sculpture. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (2000). Burning bush. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Brewster, Elizabeth (2009). Time & seasons. Ottawa: Oberon Press.

Five New Brunswick poets: :Elizabeth Brewster, Fred Cogswell, Robert Gibbs,

Alden Nowlan, Kay Smith, Fredericton NB: The Fiddlehead, 1962.

Telfer, Nancy (1983). The ballad of Princess Caraboo: a narrative of singular imposition: for mezzo-soprano and piano. Words by Elizabeth Brewster. Oakville, ON: F. Harris Music.

## Accomplishments:

Founding member of *The Fiddlehead*

## Honours:

1952 E.J. Pratt Award for her second poetry collection *Lilloet*

1980 President's Medal, University of Western Ontario

1982 Honorary DLitt ,University of New Brunswick

1995 Saskatchewan Lifetime Achievement Award

2001 Member of the Order of Canada

2002 Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee Medal

2012 Queen`s Diamond Jubilee Medal

Saskatchewan Book Award for poetry (won twice)

Twice short listed for the Governor General's Award

## Comments:

Dr. Brewster was one of the few Canadian women poets publishing during the 1940s and 50s. Along with her friends, poets P.K. Page and Dorothy Livesay, she helped pave the way for young women poets of following generations. Her first poem was published when she was aged 12. "Dr. Brewster struggled a great deal during the first half of her life and her personal anguish was so severe that once she tried to drown herself but she survived and eventually found her place in life." In 1968 she met a young writer named Margaret Atwood who gave her a transformative tarot card reading. Both Dr Brewster and Ms. Atwood were living in Edmonton at the time. Dr. Brewster was a librarian and Ms. Atwood a creative writing instructor at the University of Alberta. According to Dr. Brewster the reading of the tarot card indicated that "joy would replace sorrow in the second half of her life." The future

would spill over with great promise and a prolific out-pouring of verse. "I knew Elizabeth well when we were living in Edmonton and kept up with her after that" wrote Ms Atwood in an e-mail. "She was an honest poet, very open, very clear." Margaret Atwood`s influence stretched somewhat further - offering her a chance to take over the creative writing course and Influencing the choice and arrangement of the poems in her next book and suggested its title. "She finally settled down to a life rich in academia, as well as an auspicious writing career." — *Globe and Mail*.

## Sources:

Globe and Mail. "Obituaries" February 5, 2013.  
[University of New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia](#)

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