

“These Things Are Ours: The Art and Words of Gwen Frostic”

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Bibliography List

Frostic, Gwen. *Abysmal Acumen*. 1st edition. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1991.

Perhaps my favorite book in the collection, the rare book, produced just ten years before Frostic’s death, is signed by the artist herself! A pair of swans graces the pale blue cover.

_____. *Beyond Time*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1971.

This book from 1971 reflects many of the environmental concerns of the period. “Love this Earth... Love its waters... Love clean air... And Earth will remain beyond time.”

_____. *Contemplate*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1973.

Contemplate is another of Frostic’s books subtly urging environmental awareness and action. At the beginning of the book, she poses the question, “Will there be a great tomorrow [set with an illustration of an island on Lake Michigan on a sunny day], or is This [capitalization original] the way it will be told [set with an montage of industrial images]?” A refrain of “Perhaps it’s not too late,” dominates the poetry. Red, a color seldom used by Frostic to a great degree, dominates this book, with the outside of each page colored a bold, blood red, adding to the sense of danger and caution that this book was meant to instill. This book represents a major change in Frostic’s (and America’s) thinking about industry and human impact; in 1957’s *My Michigan* (see below), Frostic treated the human-made environment much more kindly.

_____. *The Evolving Omnity*. 1st edition. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1981.

The Evolving Omnity celebrates Frostic’s belief in the omnipotent force behind all life, not as a stagnant force, but a power that is ever growing and changing, just as life itself.

_____. *The Infinite Destiny*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1978.

The Infinite Destiny depicts the inevitable and infinite cycle of the seasons in nature. The book’s cover depicts a northern Michigan landscape in autumn. Inside, illustrations include a stunning trillium, a common sight in northern Michigan in May, its petals printed on textured and raised paper, as well as a cherry tree with delicate pink blossoms which disappear when the transparent page upon which the blossoms were printed is turned, revealing a gnarled, barren cherry tree in winter. This cycle of life, death and rebirth was, for Frostic, the infinite destiny.

_____. *Interlochen...An Unfinished Symphony*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1977.

Interlochen, Michigan's legendary secondary arts academy, is located very near Frostic's home studio at Benzonia. Rather than illustrating music instruments or the like, Frostic again focuses on the symphony of nature. This is the only paper back in the collection, and is particularly special to me as my husband's aunt, Jayne Sleder, a retired opera singer, has frequently taught and performed at Interlochen.

_____. *Multiversality*. 1st edition. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1985.

Like *Abysmal Acumen*, this is one of my favorite Frostic books and is also one of her later works. I admire this book primarily for its visual artistry; its cover is a stunning lilac and silver, and inside is Frostic's finest sequence of overlapping landscapes printed on clear tissue-like paper.

_____. *My Michigan*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1957.

Gwen Frostic had a lifelong love affair with the State of Michigan; *My Michigan* is a celebration of both the nature and culture of this state. Her choice of subject matter for the illustrations in this book was quite unusual compared to the rest of her body of work—here, she has chosen to illustrate not only the natural world but also the built environment, including skyscrapers and the Mackinaw Bridge.

_____. *A Place on Earth*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1962.

A Place on Earth is another of Frostic's books illustrated primarily in blues; intricate leafless mid-winter trees are the highlights of this book.

_____. *These Things Are Ours*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1960.

This book is imbued with Frostic's belief that all of Creation is connected and belongs to all of us. Her color palette for this book was mostly greens and blues, recalling Heaven and Earth.

_____. *These Things Are Ours*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1960. Reprint.

This copy of *These Things Are Ours* is the first Gwen Frostic book I ever collected.

_____. *To Those Who See*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1965.

This is arguably Frostic's most subdued work, using a color palette of browns and grays to depict late autumn and winter in Michigan. The book ends, "hear multitudinous sounds and listen to the symphonies that silence brings," and is a beautiful meditation on the quiet and solitude of a Michigan winter.

_____. *A Walk with Me*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1958.

This is one of Frostic's earliest books and serves as a kind of poetic introduction to being out in nature in northern Michigan, and it is the book that I would recommend that those unfamiliar with Frostic read first. The book begins, "if a little toad winks as you pass by, or you wish he would, then this book is dedicated to you."

_____. *Wingborne*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1967.

Wingborne celebrates birds, their diversity and grace in flight, as well as other things in nature borne on the wind. The illustrations in this book are mostly done in browns and greens, though Frostic surprises the reader with a couple very colorful illustrations at the end—a windswept sand dune and a faint rainbow in the mist. This book doesn't make use of the translucent papers or images layered over multiple pages as some of the other books do, but her simple change of color palette does really cause the illustration to "pop."

_____. *Wisps of Mist*. Benzonia, MI: Presscraft Papers, 1969.

Much like *Wingborne*, *Wisps of Mist* is a celebration of the transience of nature, and of the delicacy of nature's tiny details. Frostic makes stunning use of silvers and blacks in this book.

Van Matre, Steve and Bill Weiler. (eds.) *The Earth Speaks*. Greenville, WV: The Institute for Earth Education, 1983.

This collection of nature poetry by authors such as John Muir, Rachel Carson, Walt Whitman, Wendell Berry and Annie Dillard was illustrated with blocks prints by Gwen Frostic. *The Earth Speaks* was a fascinating addition to the collection, because it sets Frostic's imagery to poetry other than her own.