



Floating Worlds: The Letters of Edward Gorey & Peter F. Neumeyer

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Edward Gorey and Peter Neumeyer met in the summer of 1968. Gorey had been contracted by Addison-Wesley to illustrate "Donald and the...", a childrens story written by Neumeyer. On their first encounter, Neumeyer managed to dislocate Goreys shoulder when he grabbed his arm to keep him from falling into the ocean. In a hospital waiting room, they pored over Goreys drawings for the first time together, and Gorey infused the situation with much hilarity. This was the beginning of an invigorating friendship, fueled by a wealth of letters and postcards that sped between the two men through the fall of 1969. Those letters, published here for the first time, are remarkable in their quantity and their content. While the creative collaborations of Gorey and Neumeyer centered on illustrated books, they held wide-ranging interests; both were erudite, voracious readers, and they sent each other many volumes. Reading their discussions of these books, one marvels at the beauty of thoughtful (and merry) discourse driven by intellectual curiosity.

The letters also paint an intimate portrait of Edward Gorey, a man often mischaracterized as macabre or even ghoulish. His gentleness, humility, and brilliance--interwoven with his distinctive humor--shine in these letters; his deft artistic hand is evident on the decorated envelopes addressed to Neumeyer, 38 of which are reproduced here.

During the time of their correspondence, Peter Neumeyer was teaching at Harvard University and at SUNY Stony Brook, on Long Island. His acumen and compassion, expressed in his discerning, often provocative missives, reveal him to be an ideal creative and intellectual ally for Gorey.

More than anything else, "Floating Worlds" is the moving memoir of an extraordinary friendship. Gorey wrote that he felt they were part of the same family, and I dont mean just metaphorically. I guess that even more than I think of you as a friend,

Floating Worlds: The Letters of Edward Gorey & Peter F. Neumeyer Details

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Neumeyer Edward Gorey , Peter F. Neumeyer**

From Reader Review Floating Worlds: The Letters of Edward Gorey & Peter F. Neumeyer for online ebook

Mike says

Impressive, how much of a bookworm Gorey was.
And a smart, classy, intimate, humorous letter writer and envelope artist.
After reading this from the library, I bought my own copy to be able to dip back into it.

notes:

the Donald books

13..2-deep-shelved books....efficient utilization of space, but a nuisance

"essays in idleness" Kendo 14th c, section 131 to send to friends I deem in need

37..I find any direct expression of my feelings not difficult, but impossible, so you will have to know w/o
one what they are about our having met and our working together now and in the future. I guess you do
anyway. What a revolting way to begin a letter, but I had to say something, however strangulated.

43.. "The world is disgracefully managed, and one hardly knows to whom to complain." from R. Firbank's
"Vainglory"

49..answer your letter perfunctorily...I having bad bouts with my neck

67..footnote: EG feels he is more himself in the envelope art than in the written letters

75..I don't think libraries ever buy my books, the CLOTS, he added acidly.

81..sym/empathy

138..Buster Keaton's face

172..Ruthven

207..La Prisonnaiere, Clouzot, 211, 212, 213

242..blue eels on red ladders envelope...

I don't mind eels

except at meals

and the way they feels.

O. Nash

Ursulawt Willaredt says

Amazing friendship between author and illustrator, and great insights into literature, art, movies and ideas.

Kim says

Such a wonderful, intimate look into the artist who was Edward Gorey.... I was entranced, enchanted. Thank
you, Peter Neumeyer, for allowing this glimpse into a special friendship.

Tracey says

adult nonfiction; correspondence and illustrations. Notes to self: (1)write more, *wittier* letters (though not

necessarily as rambling as EG's--unless you qualify as an eccentric-artist type, which I don't) and (2) get myself some acrylic paints and inks so I can make lovely water-resistant (postal service-proof) drawings like these.

Nick Duretta says

Edward Gorey, the illustrator famous for his finely detailed, macabre drawings (and poem-.tales) of pampered, pompous adults and fragile, oppressed children, formed a relationship in the late 1960s with Peter Neumeier, an academic and author. The two were paired by a publisher for a series of childrens' books: Neumeier would write the text and Gorey pen the illustrations. They worked separately and corresponded primarily via letters, although they occasionally visited one another's home. This three-year series of those letters reveals two erudite, smart and witty men, trading book recommendations, movie reviews, and the many travails of getting their books completed and approved by their troublesome, erratic publisher. There's a lot of borderline tedium in these letters, as well, as you might expect, but they still make an entertaining read.

Of most interest is the physical nature of this book--very lavish with heavy coated page stock--and the entertaining, whimsical illustrations Gorey draws on the envelopes that accompany his missives to Neumeier.

Eleanore says

A rather elliptical and in some ways obscure correspondence that nonetheless provides enlightening and enjoyable glimpses into Gorey's character. It is also a rather interesting and even inspiring example of intellectual friendship and the diverse forms of exchange that were possible in the days before email and Facebook...

Carol says

This was an interesting idea, but I got bogged down in the letters. The relationship and things going on behind the scenes meant that the story was patchy and unclear. LOVED the drawings and the discussions about the books. The philosophy, books, people started to leave me cold. It was like overhearing strangers talk. The author really didn't let you in on the plot.

Mills College Library says

700.92 G6669 2011

Carmen Eicken says

This book has a wonderful spirit about it. It's correspondence between a writer and illustrator, Peter

Neumeyer and Edward Gorey. I found it very interesting to research the artists and writers mentioned, and to think about their influence. I am so glad to know more about Edward Gorey and am so glad to see a little of how his mind worked. Very uplifting book!

Doskoi_panda says

Floating Worlds: The Letters of Edward Gorey and Peter F. Neumeyer edited by Peter F. Neumeyer is a collection of the correspondence of the two men during 1968-1969, when Gorey was illustrating three children's books that Neumeyer had written. These are not, however, dry correspondence between writer and illustrator, though that is frequently discussed. Instead, the letters are often brilliant discussions or illuminations on art, literature, philosophy, history, etc., between two highly intelligent men. I knew, of course, from his books that Edward Gorey was an intellectual and a lover of the arts. But until I read these letters, I had no idea of the depths of his intellect or the range of his interests. Neumeyer, I must confess, I expected to be extremely well read due to his being an academic, but again, their commentary on various subjects really left me astounded and delighted, and a little breathless from all the books I now would like to read because they mention them. Also included are Gorey's incredible illustrated envelopes and post cards; various drawings and handwritten comments from both men; and photographs from the times they visited each other.

The book itself is both wonderful and slightly frustrating; great care was taken in its creation - it's a very solid book, sewn binding, jacket cover art duplicated on the boards, heavy paper that allows for the depths of shadow and detail in the photographs and illustrations - this is clearly a book meant to last. However, the paper, though wonderful for illustrations/images, is not so wonderful for the reader where text is involved. The pages are very thick for a reading experience - I was constantly checking to see if I'd skipped a page (they feel like the thickness of two pages together.) That is, however, a minor quibble, especially when faced with the overall excellence of the edition (both content and construction.)

I highly recommend this to anyone with a love of Edward Gorey's work, discussions of literature and the arts, or an interest in the working relationship between a writer and an illustrator - the book covers these gloriously.

Overall rating: 4.5 or 5 stars

Review copy supplied by the publisher as part of LibraryThing's Early Reviewer Program.

Oriana says

oh! oh my! look how wonderful this will be! <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.ph...>

Erika says

I was a little leery at first about just reading letters between two people, I wasn't sure how interesting it would be as I've never read a book like this before but I really found myself engaged and enchanted by the collection here.

The topics varied from work and day to day life, books, movies and philosophy but I found that even

simplest letter could give a fascinating insights into these author 19s lives and their shared world. For me these letters and little drawings and doodles give much more insight into who the authors are than any deliberately written biography and I found myself going back and skimming and rereading some of them randomly when I have a few extra moments and want something to read but not get fully engaged in.

The physical quality of this book is amazing, the paper is thick and glossy, the cover and binding are top notch as well and I loved the layout between the letters, envelopes and drawings, it has an organic and whimsical feel to it. This is my first Pomegranate book and I doubt it will be my last if this is the level of overall quality I can expect from them.

Eric Orchard says

The best non fiction book on Gorey I've read.

Mimi says

A 3.5, at first it was hard to read since these are letters, and then I got into the character of Edward Gorey, a strange and wonderful artist. He and Peter Neumeyer's friendship last only a little over 2 years but during that time it was very intense. P. Neumeyer doesn't go into what happened, but at some point apparently Gorey just dropped out of the friendship. I met Neumeyer at the party he had for the publication of this book and saw 2 of his books illustrated by Gorey which are quite wonderful.

Lindsay says

As excited as I (always) am to receive free books through the LibraryThing Early Reviewers program, I am ecstatic when I am lucky enough to snag whatever is newest from Pomegranate Books (especially when those books are Edward Gorey written/illustrated). I was particularly happy to have won a copy of Floating Worlds: The Letters of Edward Gorey & Peter F. Neumeyer.

This book offers a privileged glimpse into both the writing and illustrating process, and the personal relationship between two extremely witty men who hold each other in the highest esteem. I enjoyed reading about their collaborative work in creating the Donald books and learning how much each influenced the other's parts in the projects.

The juxtaposition of their whimsical ideas, words, and drawings with the humdrum realities of their everyday lives is captivating and comforting. I was glad to have the inclusion of facsimiles of a few of the wonderfully rambling letters and postcards, especially the fabulous envelopes that Gorey illustrated before mailing off to his friend. And the stoej-gnpf, that hybrid creature on the front cover that Gorey decided was part himself and part his friend, and became a secret symbol between them of their like-mindedness and collaborative magic.

But how does one review the personal correspondence between two friends, who just happen to be writers and artists? One doesn't. I have been merely eavesdropping, but the things I overheard were fascinating. I only wonder why they ever stopped. Thank you so much, Mr. Neumeyer, for sharing these letters with the

rest of us.
