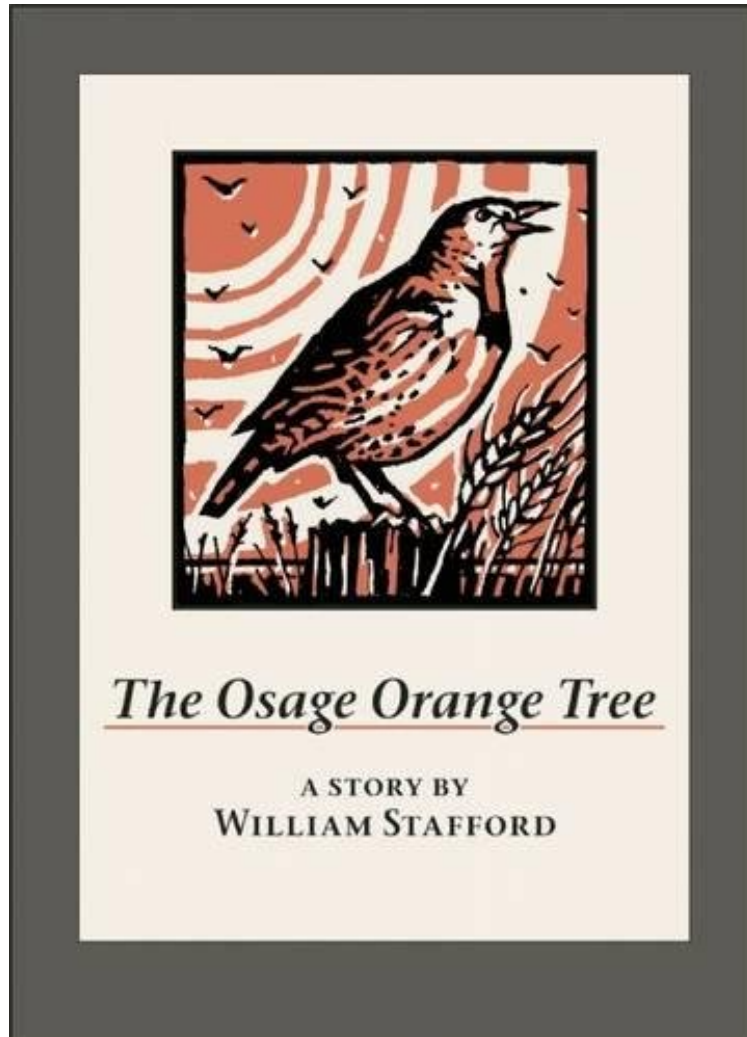


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The Osage Orange Tree: A Story by William Stafford

William Stafford

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The Osage Orange Tree, a never-before-published story by beloved poet William Stafford, is about young love complicated by misunderstanding and the insecurity of adolescence, set against the backdrop of poverty brought on by the Great Depression. The narrator recalls a girl he once knew. He and Evangeline, both shy, never find the courage to speak to each other in high school. Every evening, however, Evangeline meets him at the Osage orange tree on the edge of her property. He delivers a newspaper to her, and they talk and as the year progresses a secret friendship blossoms. This magical coming-of-age tale is brought to life through linocut illustrations by Oregon artist Dennis Cunningham, with an afterword by poet Naomi Shihab Nye, a personal friend of Staffords. In the tradition of the work of great fiction writers like Steinbeck, OConnor, and Welty, The Osage Orange Tree stands the test of time, not just as an ode to a place and a generation but as a testament to the resilience of a nation and the strength of the human heart.

About the Author William Stafford was born in Hutchinson, Kansas, in 1914, and is known as a pacifist and prolific poet and writer. During his lifetime, he published more than 65 volumes of poetry, including *Traveling Through the Dark*, which was the winner of the National Book Award for Poetry in 1963. He has received many distinguished honors including the Shelley Memorial Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a western States Lifetime Achievement Award in Poetry. He also served as the twentieth Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1970 (this position is now known as the Poet Laureate). In 1940, Stafford was drafted and served as a conscientious objector, and later wrote a memoir about conscientious objectors, *Down in my Heart*. At the time of his death (August 1993), he lived in Portland, OR.