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the books come forth, not the actual craft of making poems,” Kim said.

Though William Stafford wrote many thousands of poems, Kim only ever saw his father writing once, “when Portland’s mayor Bud Clark asked him for a poem on the Great Blue Heron,” he said.

“When he got the call, we were in a motel in Washington, D.C., and my father sat down and wrote his poem, which I later read to the City Council,” Kim recalled.

It was only after his father died, and Kim “inherited the care of his 22,000 pages of daily writing,” that he could “watch him work,” he said. Those pages now live at [williamstaffordarchives.org](http://williamstaffordarchives.org).

Asked how his father’s poetry influenced his own, Stafford said it wasn’t so much his style that helped him, but “his commitment to the process of daily writing, and his consistent idea that poetry is not about success or fame, but about honesty and service to the human story.

“A poem is a kind of coin that can be minted by one writer, but then travel to sustain exchange among many others down the line,” he continued. “As my father wrote at one point, ‘Let me be a plain, unmarked envelope passing through the world.’”

### ‘Where miracles happen’

Joseph Bernt, who pens a Cannon Beach Gazette column about happenings at the library, took a class from Kim’s father on Dante’s “Divine Comedy” at Lewis & Clark in the 1960s.

Bernt said Kim Stafford, at heart, is “a Romantic poet in terms of looking to the past for explanations and commentary about the present,” he said.

He also enjoys Kim’s use



PHOTOS COURTESY KIM STAFFORD

Oregon Poet Laureate Kim Stafford at Eagle Creek.

**‘THE VOTE IS VERY IMPORTANT IN A DEMOCRACY, BUT IT IS FINITE, NUMERICAL. BUT THE VOICE IS INFINITELY EXPANSIVE, AS EACH OF US BECOMES MORE SKILLED AND READY TO TELL OUR VISIONS, OUR STRUGGLES, OUR HOPES, OUR PROPOSALS FOR ADVANCING THE HUMAN PROJECT ON EARTH.’**


of “the language of ordinary, hardworking, common people in his writing,” he said. “He hides his craft, his art, quite well. He speaks directly to his readers as he channels his subjects.”

Stafford said a friend recently pointed out: “we have two things in this life: a vote and a voice.”

“The vote is very important in a democracy, but it is finite, numerical. But the voice is infinitely expansive, as each of us becomes more skilled and ready to tell our visions, (our

struggles, our hopes, our proposals for advancing the human project on earth,” Stafford said. “I want to support that community of expansive voices.”

His father once wrote: “I must be willingly fallible in order to deserve my place in the realm where miracles happen.”

“That is,” Kim explained, “one must begin by surrendering to the process of writing, in order to be ready to find what only that process can bring forward.” 

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