

## Amy Clampitt

Amy Clampitt, one of the nation's most revered contemporary poets and an alumna of Grinnell College, died Saturday, Sept. 10, at her home in Lenox, Mass. She was

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She was born in New Providence, Iowa, and grew up on a 125-acre farm. After graduating with honors in English from Grinnell College in 1941, she moved to New York. She continued her studies at Columbia University and the New School for Social Research.

Clampitt worked as a secretary and a writer at the Oxford University Press from 1943 to 1951 and as reference librarian at the National Audubon Society from 1952 to 1959. Through the 1960s and '70s, she worked as a freelance writer. In 1974, after publishing a small collection of poems, her work began to appear regularly in *The New Yorker*.

At 63, Clampitt earned acclaim in 1983 when her first full-length book of poetry, "The Kingfisher," was published by Alfred A. Knopf. The book was hailed by critics for its profusion of literary allusions and challenging language.

Her second book of poems, "What the Light Was Like" (1985), solidified Clampitt's reputation as one of the nation's most distinguished poets. The book included several poems about the New England coast, notably the title poem, an elegy for a drowned lobsterman.

In 1986, Clampitt returned to Grinnell College to participate in a writers' conference and to read her poetry. Throughout the 1980s and '90s, her stature grew as she received several awards. In 1982, she received a fellowship award for distinguished poetic achievement for the Academy of American Poets. In 1992, she received a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship for lifelong accomplishments.

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