



Elizabeth Bishop

February 8, 1911 - October 6, 1979

Boston, Massachusetts

Elizabeth Bishop, the poet who looked at a fish, a map or a gas station until it gave up its secrets, died on October 6, 1979, at her apartment on Lewis Wharf in Boston. A cerebral aneurysm took her at sixty-eight, two years after her last book, *Geography III*, which contains the villanelle *One Art* that strangers still copy into notebooks after a loss.

She was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, on February 8, 1911. Her father, a builder, died when she was eight months old. Her mother suffered a breakdown and was committed to an institution in 1916, and the child never saw her again. Elizabeth spent the happiest part of her childhood with her maternal grandparents in the village of Great Village, Nova Scotia, then was moved back to her father's family in Worcester, where she was lonely and developed the asthma that followed her for life.

At Vassar a librarian introduced her in 1934 to Marianne Moore, who became mentor, friend and, for four careful years, Dear Miss Moore before she was ever Dear Marianne. Moore talked her out of medical school. Her first book, *North and South*, came out in 1946, and in 1949 she went to Washington as the Library of Congress's Consultant in Poetry, living in a Georgetown boardinghouse.

In 1951 a small travel fellowship sent her around South America. She stepped off the ship in Santos, Brazil, planning a two-week stay and remained about fifteen years, much of it with the architect Lota de Macedo Soares near Petr polis. She translated Brazilian poets and wrote some of her finest work there, and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1956.

She published sparingly, sometimes holding a poem for years until every word was true. Her *Complete Poems* won the National Book Award in 1970, and in 1976 she became the first American and first woman to receive the Neustadt International Prize. Late in life she taught at Harvard. She was buried in Worcester, and the house in Great Village became a retreat for artists in her name.

Services

Died of a cerebral aneurysm at her apartment at Lewis Wharf, Boston, Massachusetts, October 6, 1979. Poet; Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, 1949-1950; Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1956. Buried in her native Worcester, Massachusetts. Portrait: Library of Congress Office of Communications photograph, c. 1949-1950 (public domain), hosted by Notice Nearby.

NN-OBIT-2026-H238

<https://noticenearby.com/obituaries/elizabeth-bishop-obituary-boston-ma>

Base stores the content hash, publication number, memorial id, and timestamp - not the full obituary text. The complete memorial remains on Notice Nearby. This is not a legal affidavit.

This page is a memorial, not a legal affidavit.