

# The Midcoast Inquirer

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William Hayes Brown

October 28, 1916 ~ November 14, 2010

*The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers,  
gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness.  
If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but  
rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.*

Kahlil Gibran

The Midcoast Inquirer has asked Paul Kalkstein to write a remembrance of his old and very dear friend, our beloved friend and teacher Bill Brown. Years ago Bill invited Paul to join his English faculty at Phillips Andover Academy in Massachusetts, thus commencing a long and enriching companionship. This past autumn Paul Kalkstein joined our Senior College faculty to once again teach in the company of Bill Brown.

Bill was widely known among our students who have experienced his grace and wisdom in twenty semesters of teaching for us. Among his courses have been God and The American Writer (based on Alfred Kazin's book), The Canterbury Tales, Hamlet, John Keats: Life, Letters, and Poetry, Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Hearing Shakespeare ("Shakespeare wrote to be heard"), Shakespeare's Sonnets, Ulysses for Amateurs, Don Quixote, Ernest Hemingway - The Place of the Short Story in American Fiction, John Dos Passos - USA, Henry Adams, The Modern American Short Story, The Yin and Yang of American Poetry, Seekers and Believers (based on Pagel's *Beyond Belief*, offered twice because of the popularity of The Da Vinci Code), Sound and Sense (student readings of poetry from Chaucer to Lowell), and more.

Paul Kaltstein remembers:

*To enter Bill Brown's living room in the days before the first session of one his Senior College courses was to traverse a bibliographic minefield. The tables, chairs, floor were deep in books, and at the center was Bill. He would rise to greet a visitor with a broad smile and a burst of excitement about the literary discoveries he had made. Bill loved to learn; that's why his Senior College courses were so fresh and compelling. He richly enjoyed, and often quoted, comments from the students in his classes. This delight was a constant, from his long career teaching youth at Andover to every course he taught at Senior College. The man was a born teacher. No matter the politics, no matter the personalities, the world was always fresh, and there were always wonders to share. Bill taught in 21 straight semesters of Senior College, and each course was original, whether the subject was Joyce, Dos Passos, or a writer wholly new to Bill, his latest passion. Bill's last course, typically idiosyncratic, was called "Can Poetry Save the Earth?" A week before he died, I asked him how that course had gone. "It was terrific," Bill enthused, "the best ever!"*

