



IN MEMORIAM: Charley Shively, 1937-2017

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ISSN 0737-0679 (Print)
ISSN 2153-3695 (Online)

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Recommended Citation

Folsom, Ed. "IN MEMORIAM: Charley Shively, 1937-2017." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (2017), 218-218. <https://doi.org/10.13008/0737-0679.2281>

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IN MEMORIAM: CHARLEY SHIVELY, 1937-2017

Charley Shively, known in Whitman Studies for his pioneering work on Whitman's relationships with young men, died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on October 6, 2017. Shively's two books on Whitman—*Calamus Lovers: Walt Whitman's Working Class Camerados* (1987) and *Drum Beats: Walt Whitman's Civil War Boy Lovers* (1989)—were both published by Gay Sunshine Press, and he always considered the books equal parts political action and academic discovery. Both books published, for the first time, large selections of the letters that young men had written to Whitman, and they were revelatory. *Calamus Lovers* examined Whitman's relationship to Fred Vaughan, Tom Sawyer, Lewis Brown, Alonzo Bush, Elijah Fox, Nicholas Palmer, Peter Doyle, Jack Rogers, Jo Baldwin, Harry Stafford, and Bill Duckett. *Drum Beats* carried on the work he began in the first book, printing over a hundred pages of letters written to Whitman by nearly fifty Civil War soldiers, and introducing these letters with a smart and provocative analysis of gay sex in the Civil War and in Civil War hospitals. The books were controversial and tremendously influential. They pointed to the gaping silence of the voices of males who loved Whitman, voices that had been muted for over a century of Whitman scholarship. It was Shively's demonstration of the vital importance of attending to those voices that was one reason the *Walt Whitman Archive* dedicated itself to publishing the entirety of the two-way correspondence of Whitman—printing not only Whitman's letters, but all the known letters written to him.

Born in Gobbler's Knob, Ohio, Shively attended Harvard College, where he earned a B.A., then went to the University of Wisconsin for his M.A. in history, then back to Harvard University for his Ph.D., again in history. Shively taught at Boston State College and then at the University of Massachusetts-Boston until his retirement in 2001. He was a Fulbright professor in Kenya, Ecuador, and Vietnam.

Shively was a major figure in the Gay Liberation movement from the Stonewall Riots forward and was instrumental in forming Gay Men's Liberation in Boston and the Fag Rag collective, which published the first national post-Stonewall gay political journal; he also was involved in founding and sustaining Fag Rag Books, the Good Gay Poets collective and press, *Boston Gay Review*, and Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders. One of his essays in *Fag Rag*, "Cocksucking as an Act of Revolution," became a classic document of the Gay Liberation movement. Many attendees of the 1992 Walt Whitman Centennial Conference at The University of Iowa vividly remember Shively standing up, during a question-and-answer period at a crowded plenary session, reading aloud Section 5 of "Song of Myself," and then asking, "Now isn't that cocksucking, pure and simple?"

A poet, an activist, an editor, a scholar, a teacher, and a proud provocateur: Charley Shively was one of a kind in Whitman Studies.