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## Charles Williams: A Short Reading List

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## Online Summer Seminar 2023

August 5-6, 2023: Fantasy Goes to Hell: Depictions of Hell in Modern Fantasy Texts

<https://mythsoc.org/oms/oms-2023.htm>



## Charles Williams: A Short Reading List

for Creative Anachronism, it contains material on constructing authentic medieval costumery, chain-mail, weapons for use on the field of honor (the SCA holds several tourneys throughout the year at which the fighting men go into combat for their respective causes and reputations); also instructions for basic swordsmanship, a lesson on how to address lords and ladies of various levels in the medieval social and political hierarchy, child care, loom construction, the art of falconry, chess, and heraldry. Other regular features include reviews of books pertaining to the subject of medieval living, articles on ancient poetry, and letters from the readers. TI is in a sense a Whole Earth Catalog of the medieval era — it's one of the most functional fanzines around; its purpose is quickly defined and carried out with skill, wit, and distinctive flair.

Tournaments Illuminated doesn't carry articles on fantasy literature; it contains material examining the subject of many of those fantasy works. It brings the whole world of knights and damsels and kings and queens into the present, it presents it all as a still-viable way of life, and on first glance appears to be much more exciting and rewarding an experience than the reading of a book: I mean, instead of leafing wistfully through Morte d'Arthur we can live that universe, we can make it all a reality. However, eventually one learns that one life is really much the same as any other; that one of the main attractions of the period before 1650 (the time covered by the SCA) is in its contrast with 20th Century U.S.A. Had we lived in the Middle Ages, very probably we would be the people to revive an even older culture. I imagine a majority of Anachronists do still consume vast amounts of fantasy literature — it's all just a part of the general fantasist 'mentality,' and really there is much more to the fantasy genre than escape on a simple level.

The artwork in TI is in general quite good, augmented by occasional use of color mimeography, be it in aesthetic quality (Diana Paxson DeCles is art editrix and does most of the work) or graphic clarity in illustrations for articles on sewing, weaponry or the fighting arts.

BEST OF ENTMOOT (Greg Shaw, 64 Taylor Dr., Fairfax CA 94930)

Colour mimeo, 43pp. Inquire of price.

WOOTTON MAJOR JOURNAL (Steve Armstrong, Rt. 5, Box 1424, Phoenix AZ 85009) Lithograph, #3/29pp. Inquire of price.

TOURNAMENTS ILLUMINATED (c/o The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., 2815 Forest Ave., Berkeley CA 94705) Mimeo, #15/63pp. \$3.00 per year, 50¢ per copy.



TO MICHAL: SONNETS AFTER MARRIAGE

I

This you shall owe me — that your soul shall keep  
Its bravery of childishness unmarred;  
Awake, in love's protection; and asleep,  
By not so much as dreams of treachery scarred.

Falls, or a thistle-spike or a bee's sting,  
Quarrels, and such afflictions of our dust  
Shall pierce you; but no too-quick withering  
Shall age you in this heart that holds your trust.

Here shall your young eyes weep away their woe,  
Your childish angers here shall have their way,  
Here your intent simplicity shall show  
The labours it rejoices to display,

And here shall beat unharmed, in storms of glee,  
Your joyous and impetuous infancy.

II

And so it shall be, when you come to die,  
And that strange guest, for whom no watchdogs bark,  
Talks downstairs with our elders, though you cry  
At going out from me into the dark, —

When you must leave the attic where we play, —  
This wide clear room that on the garden looks, —  
Where we have loved each other all the day  
And had our games, our picnics, and our books, —

When some old voice — which long ago was known,  
Telling our names, some pleasant voice and mild,  
And bidding us be friends -- shall call you down,  
Then most of all shall you be found a child,

Shrink, cry, yet bravely (by what longings sped)  
Climb slowly down those last dark stairs to bed.

—Charles Williams

((from Windows of Night (1942). Published seven years after Williams' marriage to Florence Conway, renamed by her husband, Michal, after the Biblical wife of David. —G. E. Sadler))



# CHARLES WILLIAMS

## a short reading list

### HIS FICTION:

All Hallows' Eve. Avon Books, New York.  
Descent into Hell. Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich.  
The Greater Trumps. Avon.  
Many Dimensions. Eerdmans.  
The Place of the Lion. Eerdmans.  
Shadows of Ecstasy. Eerdmans.  
War in Heaven. Eerdmans.

### HIS POETRY:

Arthurian Torso (containing "The Figure of Arthur" by Williams, and "Williams and the Arthuriad" by C. S. Lewis). Oxford University Press, London.  
The Region of the Summer Stars. Oxford.  
Taliessin through Logres. Oxford.

### HIS DRAMA:

Collected Plays. Oxford.

### HIS ESSAYS:

The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Eerdmans.  
The English Poetic Mind. Russell and Russell, New York.  
The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante. Noonday, New York.  
He Came Down from Heaven and The Forgiveness of Sins. Faber and Faber, London.  
Witchcraft. Meridian Books, New York.

### ANTHOLOGY:

Selected Writings, ed. Anne Ridler. Oxford.

### ABOUT HIM:

Fuller, Edmund. Books with Men behind Them. Random House, New York.  
Hadfield, Alice Mary. An Introduction to Charles Williams. Robert Hale Limited, London.  
Shideler, Mary McDermott. Charles Williams. Eerdmans.  
Shideler, Mary McDermott. The Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams. Eerdmans.

