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"Up the Long, Long Street": The Poetry, Other Writings, and Life of Donald Junkins

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“UP THE LONG, LONG STREET”:
THE POETRY, OTHER WRITINGS, AND LIFE OF DONALD JUNKINS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Bradley Roy McDuffie

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: “Up the Long, Long Street”: The Poetry, Other Writings, and Life of Donald Junkins

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This life-and-works dissertation traces the poetry and other writings of Donald Junkins from his boyhood growing up in Saugus, Massachusetts to his Emeritus years in Deerfield. Because Junkins’s poetry has remained close to the events of his life and he has expressly stated that he wrote poems so that he could understand his life, a biographical approach was a natural fit for exploring his poetry. I situate my approach to Junkins’s life and work in the contexts of biography, Formalism, New Criticism, the Confessional and Black Mountain Schools, and New Formalism. In doing so, I explore Junkins’s strong roots in Formalism and New Criticism, and his willingness to break free of traditional models and explore various forms in his craft. I also discuss the importance of Junkins’s sense of place in his life and employ place studies to examine how Junkins’s relationship to space and place informs his writing.

I explore the importance of Junkins’s family in his life and how central his childhood years in Massachusetts and Maine became in his writing. Beyond his formative years, I follow Junkins to seminary and into Robert Lowell’s class. In Lowell’s class Junkins discovered an almost religious relationship with art that he was not able to find within the Church. While in Lowell’s class, Junkins married Martha (Mardie) Luppold and after graduating from Boston University he took his first teaching job at Chico University in California. He returned to Massachusetts in 1966 and enjoyed some of his most successful years as a writer and teacher at the University of Massachusetts.

Junkins spent the 1980s wandering back and forth between Europe and America after his divorce from Mardie. During this time, he helped to found the Hemingway Society and did groundbreaking work as a Hemingway scholar. Junkins's also incorporated his travels to Europe and his research into his poetry. He met his second wife, Kaimei Zheng in 1990 at UMass, and he found a peace in his relationship with her that had eluded him in his marriage to Mardie. Junkins continued to write and publish throughout his Emeritus years at UMass and became as prolific in his writing in his later years as any other time in his life.