



Nancy Jane Price

March 16, 1925 - November 20, 2023

Nancy Jane Price, (98), poet and novelist of Cedar Falls, Iowa, died November 20, 2023 in Waterloo, Iowa.

Nancy was born March 16, 1925 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the first child of Mary Emily Day and Malcolm Poyer Price. Her much younger brother, John, eventually completed their family. She spent her childhood in Detroit, Michigan, where she attended Edsel Ford's "Children's House," a center for young artists and writers. Her first poems were printed in the Detroit News when she was fourteen.

In 1940 the family moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa where Malcolm Price became president of Iowa State Teachers College. Nancy graduated from Cornell College and married Howard John Thompson of Cedar Falls, who received his doctorate from Harvard. Nancy and her husband taught at the University of Northern Iowa. As their three children, (Catherine, John and David), grew, Nancy studied with poets John Holmes and Philip Booth in Boston, and attended the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa. More than one hundred of her poems and stories appeared in hardback books, national magazines and journals.

Nancy received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and was given writer residencies at the Rockefeller Foundation Center in Italy, the Karolyi Foundation in France, and the Tyrone Guthrie Center in Ireland. She was a professor at the University of Northern Iowa until 1968, when she was given a leave to write her first novel, *A Natural Death*, a story of South

Carolina life before the Civil War, published by the Atlantic Monthly Press (Little, Brown) in 1973.

More than a dozen novels by Nancy Price have been published and some have been translated into eighteen languages. She has illustrated many of her books, as well as a volume of her poems. Her third novel, *Sleeping With the Enemy*, became a Twentieth Century Fox film, starring Julia Roberts. Nancy was able to travel for extended periods, going alone or with her family to England a dozen times, as well as to Scandinavia, Europe, Egypt and the Holy Land.

John Howard Thompson, Nancy's eldest son, died in 2005, ten years after his father. Nancy bought a home in Cedar Falls, close to her two remaining children, and wrote into her late nineties, surrounded and encouraged by family and friends. She recently finished her final novel, set in Cedar Falls, which will be published in about a year. Her gravestone bears words from one of her poems about Cedar Falls.

Nancy is survived by her two children, Catherine Rose Thompson and David Malcolm Thompson, who have homes in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Nancy's brother, John Day Price, his wife, Jan, and their son Kevin live in California. Kevin and his wife, Margaret, have three daughters, Katherine, Sarah and Lauren.

John Thompson's widow, Charlotte Thompson, lives in Florida near John's stepson, Derrick Gillikin, his wife Sugaree, and their children, Lauren Marie and Andrew John.

Nancy Price loved Iowa. Her novels are often set in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. A young city girl in one of Nancy's books, *No One Knows*, sees Iowa for the first time: "I had never dreamed of anything like Iowa. Chicago streets were dark canyons, and Chicago skies were only a glimpse of blue or gray. But Iowa buildings, houses and barns were almost lost under a sky I had hardly known was there. It made me feel small. It made me feel free. Iowa's green gave way to flowers, or the purple-black of shaded streets, or the lavenders of far-off farmland. Trains ran through town, trailing their long, lamenting voices

behind them like blue scarves.”

These colors of Iowa will always continue to live in Nancy Price’s novels, stories and poems.

Cemetery Details

Fairview Cemetery

12th and Division Streets
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 273-8628

Tribute Wall

JS

“ I just learned of Nancy Price's passing last November. She taught Composition II in 1968, the second semester of my freshman year at UNI. Her exacting attention to her students' writing assignments maximally taxed my meager talent and ability, although by the end of the demanding course, which I mercifully passed, I had gained skill and knowledge that helped me for decades thereafter. We kept in touch over the years following my graduation with honors in history. Her letters are treasures. I honor her achievements, commitment to teaching Iowa's youth, and devotion to her craft. She remains a bright star in UNI's firmament.

*Jim Sanders, UNI, History, 1971.
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.*

Jim Sanders - August 26, 2024 at 08:59 AM

VM

“ Nancy you will be forever missed we had great times together you taught me so much over the years. I Really miss our times together.
Your friend Vickie Mcdonald

Vickie Mcdonald - November 24, 2023 at 11:08 AM