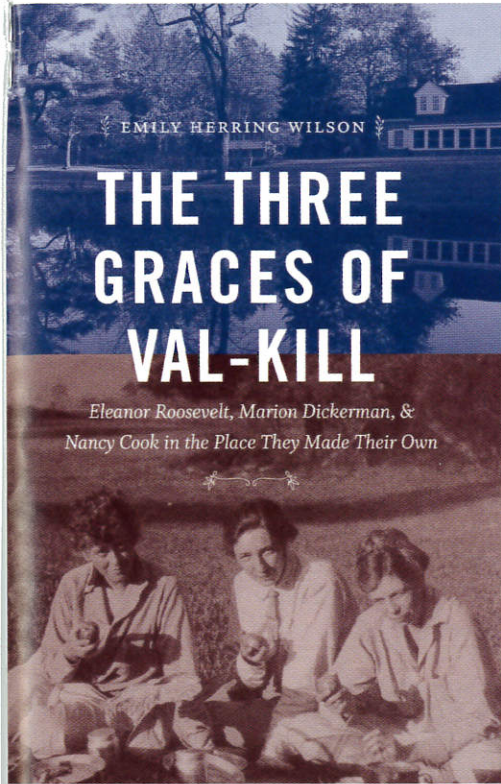


A New Book FROM AN OLD FRIEND

the buena vista reading room

By **Charlie Lovett**,
Buena Vista neighbor



I grew up in Buena Vista in the 1960s and 1970s surrounded by friendly families. We socialized with neighbors and with friends from church, but I especially remember many dinner parties, visits, and conversations with my father's colleagues from the English Department at Wake Forest. Among these were Ed Wilson and his wife, Emily. As a child I had no idea that Emily, who met me as a toddler, was a poet, a teacher, and a historian. I knew her only as a kind and delightful adult — something our neighborhood and our home provided a lot of.

I've kept up with Ed and Emily over the years, and they were among the first, and most vocal, supporters of Bookmarks' successful effort to open a community gathering space and independent bookstore in downtown Winston-Salem. That project has given us a chance for more visits and conversations. A few weeks ago I went to visit the Wilsons and Emily met me at the door, informing me she had just gotten off the phone with a grandchild of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Of course she had.

Emily Wilson is a recipient of North Carolina's Caldwell Award for the Humanities, among other honors. Not only a much-lauded poet and historian and author of numerous books, she has also been a figure who has provided a vibrant center to Winston-Salem's literary scene, and who continues to do so. So, of course, I was not too surprised that she had been chatting with FDR's grandchild.

The subject of that conversation was Emily's new book, *The Three Graces of Val-Kill*, published by the University Press of North Carolina.

Bookmarks will host Emily for her book launch on Wednesday, Oct. 11 (Eleanor's birthday), at 6 p.m.

According to her publisher, The University of North Carolina Press, in her new book, Emily "examines what she calls the most formative period in Eleanor Roosevelt's life, from 1922 to 1936, when she cultivated an intimate friendship with Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook, who helped her build a cottage on the Val-Kill Creek in Hyde Park on the Roosevelt family land. In the early years, the three women — the 'three graces,' as Franklin Delano Roosevelt called them — were nearly inseparable, and forged a female-centered community for each other, for family, and for New York's progressive women."

My wife, Janice, and I were sitting in our Buena Vista home one summer's day many years ago talking about the Roosevelts, and we commented that neither of us had ever been to Hyde Park. School was out, so the next day we got in the car and headed to the Hudson River Valley. It was a lovely spontaneous trip, but our favorite part of it was not touring the Roosevelt mansion but seeing Val-Kill, the simple home Eleanor built on a remote part of the family estate. The house reminded me of a North Carolina mountain cottage, yet one had the sense that history had been made there.

Now Emily is about to give us all a new insight into that history, turning her consummate scholarship and elegant prose to a subject that is sure to fascinate. I know I'll be there for the book launch at Bookmarks, and when it's time to ask Emily questions, I'll have mine ready: "What's next?"

Emily Wilson, author of *The Three Graces of Val-Kill*

Oct. 11 at 6 p.m.

Bookmarks, 634 W. Fourth St. #110, Winston-Salem, NC

Free event!

www.bookmarksnc.org



Emily Herring Wilson