

IRENE ROUSE



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Antiquarian bookseller, artist and poet, Irene Munson Rouse died at home in Alexandria on December 6, 2017 at the age of 89. Raised in Arlington, Rouse graduated from James Madison College in 1950. In her 2009 poetry collection, *Petty Street*, ("We lived on South Petty Street / those years with all our kin/ and their quarrels"), Rouse evoked the Depression years of her childhood: "Beggars with bleeding feet/ and broken shoes", and, "the hobo jungle/ far below Columbia Pike, where campfires/ flickered by the Potomac River."

Briefly an English teacher and later a children's librarian, Rouse married, and raised a family in an eighteenth-century farmhouse in Burke. To cover college expenses for her five children, she took up a new career in the book business.

A succession of bookshops---in Fairfax, Falls Church, Alexandria, and the Eastern Shore---brought her friendships with other artists and writers. "Positively Prince Street", her poetry reading series in Alexandria, launched a stream of Washington area authors in the 1980's, and a Chincoteague shop became a popular destination for visitors to the town.

In later life, now retired, Rouse turned to painting. Her expressive, often mythical landscapes were essentially visual poems: "vivid blossoms in the garden/ alive and red and swaying."

She is survived by her husband of 64 years, William Dashiell Rouse; her daughters, Anne Rouse, Mary Root, Katherine Rouse, and Elizabeth Brokamp; and two sisters, Marylou Woodruff and Grace Nichols. She is predeceased by a son, William Dashiell Rouse, Jr, and her sisters, Winnie Preusser and Betty Jeavons.

A private family service will be held at a later date.

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