

VIII
 I know noble accents
 And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
 But I know, too,
 That the blackbird is involved
 In what I know.

IX
 When the blackbird flew out of sight,
 It marked the edge
 Of one of many circles.

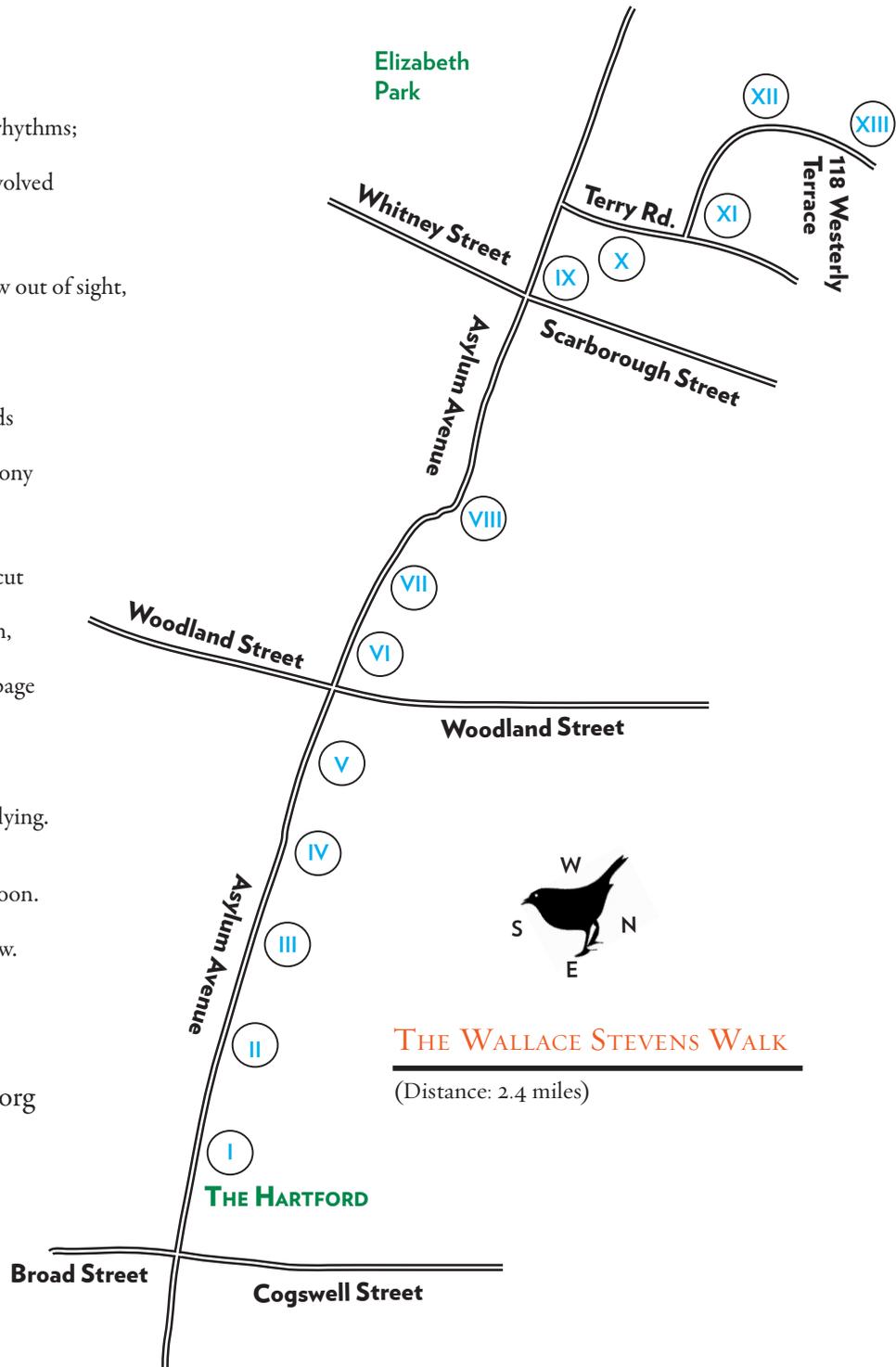
X
 At the sight of blackbirds
 Flying in a green light,
 Even the bawds of euphony
 Would cry out sharply.

XI
 He rode over Connecticut
 In a glass coach.
 Once, a fear pierced him,
 In that he mistook
 The shadow of his equipage
 For blackbirds.

XII
 The river is moving.
 The blackbird must be flying.

XIII
 It was evening all afternoon.
 It was snowing
 And it was going to snow.
 The blackbird sat
 In the cedar-limbs.

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the Wallace
 Stevens
 Walk



Follow the footsteps of a major American poet.

BROCHURE BY JAMES BAKER DESIGN





The Wallace Stevens Walk includes thirteen Connecticut granite sculptural markers which trace the poet's route to and from work each day. Each marker is etched with a verse of Stevens' poem

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird.

Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) lived and worked in Hartford, Connecticut, where he became one of America's foremost poets of the 20th century. He was a vice president of the Hartford Accident & Indemnity Co., and remained happy in that executive position until his death.

Stevens, who never learned to drive, walked each day the two miles from his home on Westerly Terrace in the West End of Hartford to his office on Asylum Avenue. As he walked, he composed poetry in his head, stopping occasionally to jot down lines on scraps of paper.

Stevens was a winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Bollingen and The National Book Award, and ranks with Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams and Sylvia Plath as one of America's foremost poets of the 20th century.

The Wallace Stevens Walk was conceived and created by a volunteer group called the Friends and Enemies of Wallace Stevens, which takes its name from an informal group Stevens belonged to called the Friends and Enemies of Modern Music. The Walk was funded by 200 individuals and local institutions, The Hartford Financial Services Group, and received institutional support from the Hartford Public Library.

The Friends and Enemies of Wallace Stevens is a non-profit organization dedicated to deepening the public's understanding of the poet's legacy. We encourage the reading of all poetry and the cultivation of cultural literacy throughout Hartford. Each spring, the Friends and Enemies co-sponsors, with the University of Connecticut's English Department, a reading for high school students which brings internationally renowned poets to Hartford. Past readers have included Adrienne Rich, Mark Doty and Robert Hass, among others. In addition, the annual Wallace Stevens Birthday Bash, held in October, brings to Hartford such luminaries as poets Mark Strand and Galway Kinnell, and critic Helen Vendler. An annual Rose Garden Reading features accomplished Connecticut poets who read in the park Stevens loved so well.

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Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

I
Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II
I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

III
The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

IV
A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

V
I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

VI
Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

VII
O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?