

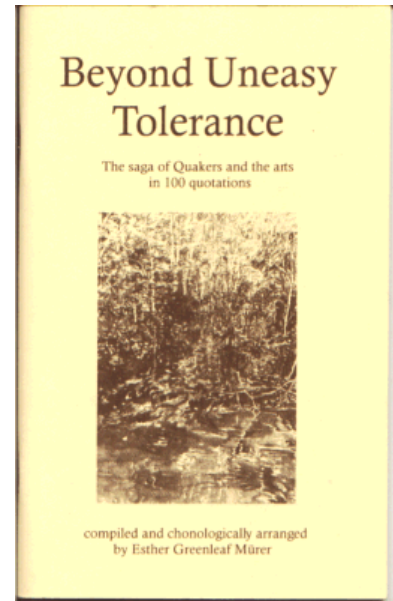
FQA Publications

Beyond Uneasy Tolerance

the saga of Quakers and the arts in 100 quotations

Compiled and chronologically arranged
by Esther Greenleaf Mürer
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This pamphlet tells the dramatic and little-known story of the evolution of Quaker attitudes toward the arts from antipathy to acceptance. The story is presented in the form of brief quotations from Quaker writings on the arts, arranged chronologically from the 1650s to 1995.



[Read a Sampling of Quotes](#) from *Beyond Uneasy Tolerance*

From the Introduction:

Elizabeth Gray Vining, in her 1939 Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Contributions of the Quakers*, begins her discussion of the arts with the words: "This section, unfortunately, might almost be entitled: What the Friends Have Not Given."

Positive Quaker contributions to the arts are indeed few compared to contributions in other areas. Friends of the past produced a wealth of Quaker journals, some of which have become classics of world literature. Quakers also evolved a distinctive style, marked by fine craftsmanship of an austere beauty, in practical arts such as architecture, carpentry, quilting and embroidery, and nature-related arts such as garden design and botanical drawing.

However, the Society of Friends has been hostile to music, the visual and performing arts, and most literary genres perhaps longer and more consistently than any other religious group. The first guarded hint of a corporate recognition that the arts might have a place in Quakerism came in London Yearly Meeting's discipline of 1925 (Quote #31).

In a recent Pendle Hill Pamphlet, *Tall Poppies*, Martha Paxson Grundy writes: "The more critical gifts of ministry . . . include such things as the ability to speak from the Witness-within-the-minister to the Witness-within-someone else. . . . Another gift is to raise a prophetic voice against the evils of the day, and to hold up a contrasting vision of God's realm, of Gospel Order, and its present possibility and even its present reality."

Clearly both gifts abound among Friends who are called to minister through the arts. The quotations from recent decades present heartening evidence that Quaker artists are moving beyond a need to justify their art, and are exploring the deeper synergy between the arts and Quaker spirituality and witness.

It is our hope that this collection will spur new interest in fostering arts ministry among Friends. We offer it as a resource for reflection and discussion, and — not least — for Faith and Practice revision committees wishing to expand their horizon to include the arts.

Beyond Uneasy Tolerance may be ordered in quantity (5 copies or more) directly from fqa@quaker.org. Single copies are available from:

[FGC Bookstore](#)

[Pendle Hill Bookstore](#)

[Quaker Bookshop](#) (London)