

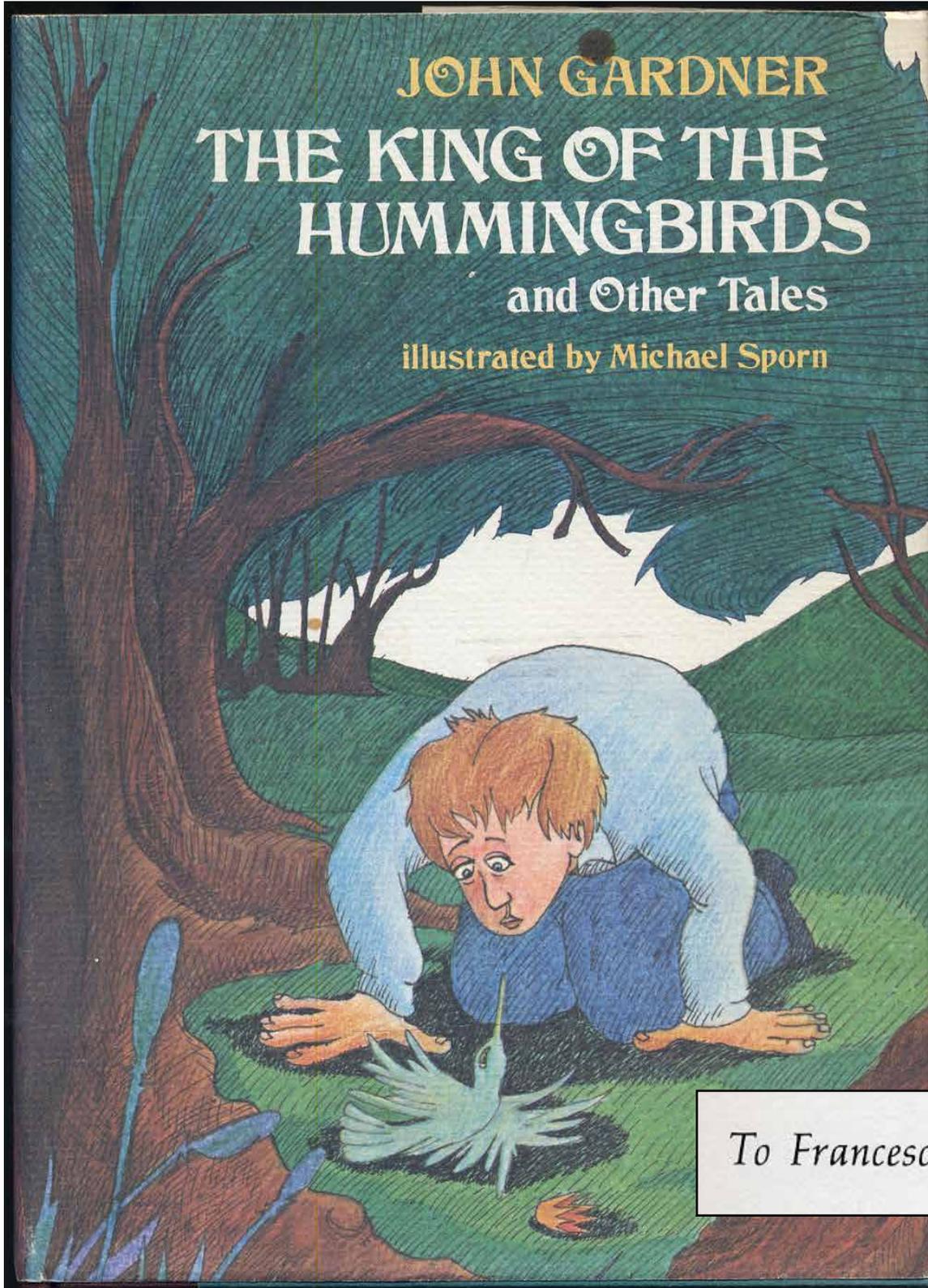
The Dedication Copy

John Gardner

The King of the Hummingbirds and Other Tales

New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1977)

\$7500



First edition, illustrated by Michael Sporn. Fine in otherwise fine dustwrapper with a small spot on the front panel. The dedication copy, inscribed to novelist Francesca Delbanco, daughter of Nicholas Delbanco: "To Francesca with love, John Gardner." The printed dedication reads "To Francesca and wee Fred."

To Francesca and wee Fred

Gardner and acclaimed novelist and critic Delbanco first forged a friendship when Delbanco hosted Gardner during a reading tour at Bennington College in 1974. Delbanco ended up hiring Gardner for the English Department at the College. They and their families began a close professional and personal relationship in which each of the authors strove to critique the other's works in private and promote them in public, Gardner touting Delbanco as "one of the country's best novelists." Each acknowledged the contribution of the other in developing both their theories of literature and for specific elements of their respective works, whether it be Delbanco using Gardner's title *Stillness* for one of his novels or Gardner using Delbanco's writing to help clarify the husband-wife relationship in one of his own works. Delbanco's home and family became a refuge for both Gardner and his first wife during their messy divorce. Following Gardner's death in a 1982 motorcycle accident, Delbanco became Gardner's literary executor; editing and contributing an introduction to Gardner's posthumously published *Stillness and Shadows*. Delbanco's daughter Francesca, who was an occasional babysitter of Gardner's children, and who has herself published two well-received novels, *Ask Me Anything* and *Midnight in Manhattan* was the Dedicatee of one of Gardner's acclaimed children's books, *The King of Hummingbirds*. A significant association copy. [BTC#108702]

The King of the Hummingbirds and Other Tales

To Francesca
with love
John Gardner