Roger Skillings died on the night of January 15, 2020, in a hospice on Cape Cod. He had been suffering from dementia and in failing health for years. His wife, Heidi Jon Schmidt, and daughter, Marisa Rose Skillings, took care of him to the end and were with him when he died. He was 82.

He was the author of scathing, fleet, beautiful stories—all descriptors he would have scrutinized, revised, and finally cut. He was a tireless rewriter, a singular stylist, and a collector of the poetry of what people say and the stories we all live out. The deep, surprising currents that drive stories were his great fascination, and if you told him a story he would question you until unknown worlds had been revealed. He was the author of eight books, mostly story collections, from *Alternative Lives* (1974) to *The Washashores* (2018).

His other life’s work was the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, where he was in the first group of writing Fellows in 1969 and served on the Writing Staff and Writing Committee for almost the entire history of the institution. He cared as much about literature as about the younger people who were trying to make it and leaves behind generations of writers inspired by his example and his friendship.

He thought on his feet—somehow with his feet—and walked every block in Provincetown thousands of times over the more than fifty years he lived here. Even when he had forgotten the name of the town he knew Commercial Street by heart and walked its length every day. As he withdrew into death he was heard to ask “Where might one walk?” as if he had landed on a new shore.

He was our beloved friend.

**Salvatore Scibona**  
Fine Arts Work Center Writing Committee Member – Writing Fellow 2002-2003 and 2001-2002  
Sue Ann and John Weinberg Director,  
Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers,  
The New York Public Library