Literary Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LITERARY SCHOLARS, CRITICS, AND WRITERS

Aut nuntiare aut delectare

From the Editor

The most exciting and enjoyable part of my job snaps into action in what may seem the most counterintuitive of circumstances: when I don't know the answer to something. I imagine that in some fields, not knowing the answer to something likely leads to stress levels tantamount to my enjoyment of this very same situation. The reason behind the difference, the reason why I'm able to greet indecision, doubt, and uncertainty with nothing short of fanfare, has a lot to do with the nature of grammar itself—there are a lot of rules, there isn't always a lot of agreement on what they are and how to apply them, and they can change at any time. What this means for those who are interested in grammar, punctuation, and the like is that there's always an opportunity to turn uncertainty into an *Indiana Jones*-esque search for how to take a grammatical, syntactical, or stylistic misstep and correct it (or, rather, get it as close to "correct" as one can). And these chances to venture into the varied realms of different style guides, linguistic manuals, and grammar books are why I proudly proclaim that I like my job best on days when I'm not entirely sure how to do it.

But there must be unanimous agreement about simple topics, right? All grammarians and editors must agree on mundane subjects such as the appropriate usage of a period and the rule that a singular possessive is formed with -*'s*—

Wait! Stop right there! So seemingly obvious a matter as how to form the possessive of a singular word is not so simple a topic after all. What about singular names ending in -*s*? Some manuals prescribe that only the apostrophe be added, a recommendation I feel is based more on aesthetics than grammaticality or "correctness." Others call for the -*'s* not only for consistency with respect to the treatment of singular non-*s*-terminal words, but also for its logical relationship with the way words are pronounced. The coexistence of these conflicting approaches suggested by various sources is but one aspect that undermines the facile reputation this construction has. Take *The Chicago Manual of Style*, for instance, which is the guidebook I go to first. There are four separate sections on this particular issue—a total that doesn't include the sections on other matters relating to possessives—which are titled as follows:[1]

1. Possessives of words and names ending in unpronounced "s";
2. Possessive of names like "Euripides";
3. Possessive of nouns plural in form, singular in meaning; and
4. An alternative practice for words ending in "s."

1 University of Chicago Press, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 7.17; 7.18; 7.19; 7.21.

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Inside This Issue

The sheer fact that one single manual can distinguish four separate ways of dealing with this particular issue should do more than enough to elucidate how much room for uncertainty could exist when doing even simple, on-the-surface corrections.

And the debate isn't limited to occurring across manuals—it rages on within different editions of the *same* manual. Without going into the exact contents of each section, let me share some phrases within a few of them that further highlight how many competing approaches exist: "In a return to Chicago's earlier practice" (7.17); "In a departure from earlier practice" (7.18); "Some writers and publishers prefer the system, formerly more common though…not recommended by Chicago" (7.21).

Again, the exact rules need not be reproduced for the larger point to stand out. Chicago's sixteenth edition doesn't agree with other contemporary teachings, and doesn't even agree with its ancestral editions. And, in some cases, this change of technique is not a first-generation evolution. The phrasing of the quoted material from 7.17 presupposes that, until recently, Chicago encouraged a technique different from the present method, which

was *itself* a departure from a previous method. So the rules stipulated in 7.17, though in agreement with the rules of a *CMOS* of yore, are disparate from whatever had been deemed appropriate until recently, and those now-overturned procedures were themselves revolutionaries against some earlier edition. That's a whole lot of room for doubt over one little morpheme.

This particular matter is not what sends me searching for answers, but it illustrates why there's plenty of uncertainty when it comes to editing and writing. While I may know these sections of *CMOS* well enough that I need access them only when using their existence for demonstration purposes, my guess is that most people would run away screaming if asked to commit those rules to memory. (Some people might've already run away screaming from reading the preceding paragraphs.)

The conundrum of how to form the possessive with s-terminal words is but a mild example of the prospective confusion facing one while revising a text. Let's consider another point of doubt, an issue that inspires nervous perspiration even among many of the skilled editors and writers I speak with. It's what I like to call "The Hierarchy of Nonessential Information," or what others may colorfully refer to as "what the heck is an em dash, and when do I use it instead of a comma?"

How we recognize nonessential information in a sentence, aside from when it's glaringly obvious from the meaning or context, is through punctuation. Paired commas are often a signal to the reader, an asterisk to a footnote reading, "you are allowed to pay less attention for the time being." But em dashes can serve the same purpose. As can parentheses. The average reader is most familiar with commas and parentheses in this role. Sadly for the em dash, it's oft-hailed as scary or confusing because its functions have usually gone untaught or under-taught; a lot of people avoid these shadowy punctuation marks the way one might a stranger in an alleyway or an unrecognizable food item at a potluck dinner. Because all of these marks can perform the same function, the decision of which to pick can be vexing. The concerns raised initially factor in (i.e., the rules aren't universal and they change and there are a lot of them), and there's a new twist to top it all off: editorial discretion, or subjectivity.

I think of commas as the most lenient of these tools. Rarely is it wrong to pick commas over em dashes and parentheses when cordoning off nonessential information. The overuse of either em dashes or parentheses will call out to readers that something is not quite right with the composition in question. This is in part because em dashes and parentheses imply an even greater state of being nonessential. Em dashes are the written equivalent of a friendly nudge mid-conversation when the speaker offers an aside that could be dispensed with but isn't. And what of parentheses? Well, I think of them as the written equivalent of that part during a conversation when the speaker may lower her voice or may obscure her mouth with her hand while imparting this bit of information. Parentheses say, "you don't need to know this, but I'm telling you anyway." They're punctuation's way of gossiping.

This explanation of the different subtexts provided by the type of punctuation used to distinguish nonessential information is my own take on the matter. But the mere fact that I can have my own individual take on when to select one type of punctuation mark over another exemplifies what is actually a lukewarm case of editorial agency. That is to say, an editor is faced with much more difficult decisions. Yet I select this innocuous example for good reason. Okay, well, it's partly for a frivolous reason, namely that the subject is of great interest to me. The other reasons are more sound. For one thing, the question arises with considerable frequency—nearly every time I exchange proofs with writers, there's at least one instance where the author and I go back and forth on whether to use commas, em dashes, or parentheses; when I've been in the writer's seat and have received proofs from an editor, the very same indecision rears up at some point. For another thing, that something so small carries great weight should demonstrate by extension how significant the editor's task can be.

So often, there are situations with no clear choice, no right way or wrong way prescribed in a manual. If something so small demands that the editor exercise care and consideration when making changes, imagine how the editor must approach larger decisions like how to reorganize an entire essay to clarify the message, or when to exclude materials from a particular source upon deeming it unreliable or inaccurate. Every choice changes the message that the reader receives, and it takes an external perspective to catch errors that the writer overlooks, if for no reason other than being "too close."

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LITERARY MATTERS

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Literary Matters is provided to all ALSCW members. Membership dues start at $45 for the first year and are charged on a graduated scale thereafter. Premium Memberships are also available.

The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers (ALSCW) promotes excellence in literary criticism and scholarship, and works to ensure that literature thrives in both scholarly and creative environments. We encourage the reading and writing of literature, criticism, and scholarship, as well as wide-ranging discussions among those committed to the reading and study of literary works.

News & Announcements

Volunteers needed for PENCIL's Partnership Program

Calling all professionals looking to make a difference in NYC Public Schools!

The PENCIL Partnership Program pairs professionals from all fields with public school principals to develop long-term capacity-building projects to improve student achievement.

Architects are designing school playgrounds, lawyers are coaching mock-trial teams, composers are teaching songwriting to students, investment bankers are enhancing math curricula, and HR directors are working on staff-retention plans. There are so many ways to use your skills and expertise to help improve our schools.

We're looking for NYC volunteers to engage in year-long, customized partnerships that match the skills of the professional with the specific needs of a public school. PENCIL's dedicated team makes the match, helps in the project planning, and provides partnership support every step of the way. We have found that the partnerships that have the greatest impact take a minimum commitment of forty hours over the course of the year.

Check out some of PENCIL's great partnerships at *http://www.pencil.org/partnership-program*! For more information, visit *www.pencil.org* or contact *eloubaton@pencil.org*.

Review-Copy Database Goes Live

In response to the enthusiasm among authors and contributors alike generated by the initiation of the Book Review section in *Literary Matters*, a new program has been established. A database of books that have been made available for review by the authors can be accessed online, and anyone wishing to write a review can browse said list to determine whether any of the options are of interest. To view the listings, please visit **https://app.box.com/reviewcopydatabase**. The PDF can be opened directly in your web browser, though you also have the option to download it.

For reviewers: If, upon surveying the list, you discover a publication you wish to review, you can contact the editor of *Literary Matters*, Samantha Madway, at literarymatters@alscw.org, and she will facilitate having the work sent out to you.

For authors: If you have recently published a book, wish to have it reviewed in an issue of *Literary Matters*, and are willing to provide a copy of your work to a potential contributor who volunteers to read it and write a review, please contact the editor of *Literary Matters* at the email address noted above. All genres, subjects, styles, and so forth are welcome. Please note: choosing to include your book in the list does not guarantee that it will be selected for review. This will be contingent on the predilections of those who visit the database.

This system is being set up to address the many inquiries that have been sent in by both recently published authors and parties interested in writing reviews. It is, however, important to emphasize that the intention of this service is not to provide assured positive reviews to all who make their works available. Honest, insightful evaluation is the ultimate goal.

Please do not hesitate to contact the editor if you have questions or need clarification about any of the procedures detailed in this announcement.

People often view editing as being simply about correcting, a job focused on pointing out flaws. But in my view, to edit with that sort of mindset, to believe that the whole of your duties is to identify problems, is to be a bad editor. Implicit in having to edit a piece in the first place is the fact that you at some point found its merits to be sufficient to warrant selecting it for publication. To acknowledge only its faults is a false enterprise. But of greater importance is the fact that an editor's work should comprise far more than spotting grammatical misfires and ill-placed punctuation. In order to do any meaningful editing, you must first identify what works. If you skip this critical step, you do a great disservice to the author and fail to perform your duties. Editing is not about ruthless cutting and rearranging; it is not about erasing all traces of the author and leaving shiny, anonymous sentences in your wake. Skillful editing is about improving clarity, making things more cohesive so that the message is received, while preserving the author's style and keeping his or her voice alive.

This issue of *Literary Matters* seemed to invite discussion about the role of the editor owing to the subject and substance of several of the pieces published herein. (Don't worry—none of them are about punctuation.)

What first incited my examination of the editor's role were the book reviews I selected for this issue. This was not because of questions that arose while making revisions, but because the content of the reviews and the ways in which the writers approached their discussions of the texts struck me as reminiscent of the processes I go through while editing a piece. Book reviewers consider both the merits and weaknesses of whatever work they are evaluating, and they aren't the same as the processes that one who is analyzing a text goes through. The endeavors are kindred, and I'm in no sense making a comment on the value of either. They are simply different, and I wish to go so far as to say that the task of reviewing a book is more closely related to substantive editing than it is to analytical writing. (The obvious caveat being that the reviewer's comments will not be acted upon.)

Though the outcomes are different, the mindset one adopts while reviewing a book is linked with that of an editor. A review points out what is successful, what could use improvement. It hones in on style and structure, picks out instances of well crafted language or weak constructions, as the case may be. The reviews contributed by Dan Sofaer, Alex Shakespeare, Margaret Ducharme, and Scott Crider are stunning examples of what it means to be a fair and sincere reviewer. Their pieces are insightful, and each reviewer, in his or her own way, has done the greater service of appraising the books they chose with integrity, rather than with a strong affinity for criticism or adulation.

Another piece in this issue invites discussion of the editor's role more overtly. Ben Mazer's "A Note on the Poetry of John Crowe Ransom" is literally a letter from an editor about the work he recently produced, *The Collected Poems of John Crowe Ransom* (Un-Gyve Press, 2015). Those who may ever be tempted to question why an editor would choose to produce such a text when many of the pieces it contains have homes elsewhere will never succumb to the impulse again. Rather, Mazer's authoritative and spirited essay will make many wonder why no one took on this project before now. Yet they'll be glad that Mazer championed the job, as

his "A Note on the Poetry of John Crowe Ransom" is proof enough that no more fitting an editor for this volume could be found.

The issue's final feature piece, an essay by John Wallen entitled " 'Tangled Up in Blue': Mystical Allegory of the Soul in Flight," compelled me to reflect on other important aspects of editing: self-editing and selectivity. Wallen has offered up a personal take on Dylan's classic song "Tangled Up in Blue." He opens by explaining why he picked this particular song as his subject and why he took the approach he did as opposed to any number of alternatives. To some, this practice may seem self-evident, but I'm not suggesting that it is a singular moment when one chooses a subject and a methodology before writing an essay. Rather, I'm pointing out the importance of this step, what it means to the writer himself, as well as what it means for the reader to be informed about what went into those decisions. People select annotated editions and read forwards, afterwards, and editor's notes for the sort of insights Wallen provides right at the start.

As an editor—whether the work you're revising is your own or someone else's—it is essential to consider not only correctness and clarity, but also content, which is overlooked on an alarming basis. Questions such as *does the reader need to know this?* or *what effect will imparting this bit of information have?*, among others, need to be at the forefront of one's mind while composing, certainly, and especially while editing. An editor's job is about far more than assessing, critiquing, or renovating. It is about being a curator, knowing the writer, the writing, and the reader well enough to put a text on display in a way that satisfies on all sides.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Dear Friends of the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers:

I joined the ALSCW twenty years ago when I was looking for a professional organization dedicated to literature and the literary imagination. I discovered what I was looking for among the scholars, critics, and writers dedicated to the goals of the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers:

- To promote excellence in literary criticism and scholarship;
- To work to ensure that literature thrives in both scholarly and creative environments;
- To encourage the reading and writing of literature, criticism, and scholarship;
- To foster wide-ranging discussions among those committed to the reading and study of literary works.

I write to you now as president of the ALSCW with an urgent message: **The Association must expand its membership in the following months if it is to prosper in future years**. I urge you to join or rejoin the Association. Help us maintain and strengthen its rejuvenating annual conferences, its local readings, its excellent online newsletter, *Literary Matters*, its *Forum* publications, and its premiere journal, *Literary Imagination*, published by Oxford University Press. Begin receiving your copies of the journal and the newsletter, preferential registration rates at the annual conferences, and news of local ALSCW events. Join our collegial pursuit of the Association's founding goals.

Your decision to become a member of the ALSCW this year will be crucial to the future of the Association. In the coming weeks and months, members will be contacting graduate students, former ALSCW members, friends of the Association outside the academy, and other colleagues to tell them about the work of the Association and the urgency of increasing our membership. I hope that one of them will be able to reach you. Please look over the membership materials, visit our website (www.alscw.org), and join us in our pursuit of the Association's goals. If the spirit of the ALSCW moves you, please sign up for a self-renewing membership and forward this message to others along with your endorsement. Help us preserve and strengthen this worthy organization.

Sincerely,

John C. Briggs, Immediate Past President of the ALSCW
Professor of English, University of California, Riverside

The ALSCW membership year is based on the calendar year (January–December). When you join as a new member, Oxford University Press will begin to send *Literary Imagination* right away. You will also have access to the online archives of past issues of our journal and our newsletter, *Literary Matters*.

Please use the online form available at http://alscw.org/membership/join/index.html to renew your membership or to join. We accept all major credit cards. To pay by check, you can download the form as a PDF at http://www.alscw.org/PDFs/MembershipForm2014.pdf or use the copy included on page 39 of this issue of *Literary Matters* and mail the completed form along with your check to our postal address: 650 Beacon Street, Suite 510, Boston, MA 02215.

Premium memberships are $125 annually; Regular memberships are $85 annually; Senior memberships (for those 70 and above) are $60; Reduced-price memberships are $45 annually. (Those eligible for reduced-price memberships are members in their first year, students, and those earning less than $50,000 a year.)

Internet users please note: It is not necessary to fill out the ALSCW ID field to purchase or renew a membership. (If you are a new member, our database will assign you an ALSCW ID automatically.) When you have successfully submitted your membership request, you will receive an email confirmation within twelve hours. Fields for payment information will appear as you fill out the preceding field for membership type.

**If you have any difficulties submitting your form, please verify that you have filled out all the required fields (those marked with an asterisk). Should the trouble persist, please email us at office@alscw.org or call our office at (617) 358-1990, and we will do whatever we can to assist you.*

The Collected Poems of John Crowe Ransom, Edited by Ben Mazer

Robert Graves: "The sort of poetry which, because it is too good, has to be brushed aside as a literary novelty."

Howard Nemerov: "His verse is in the best sense 'private,' the judgment upon the world of one man who could not, properly speaking, be imitated."

Robert Lowell: "so many lyrics that one wants to read over and over."

So many? But there exists a greater yield than was preserved by Ransom himself. For the poet, in a fierce act of purgation, force-slimmed his poems to sixty-eight pages. Selected with a vengeance. Presented here now is the first-ever complete edition of the poems of John Crowe Ransom, restoring to the world—in the name not of mercy but of justice—a great many poems that Ransom himself had once (and quite rightly) judged perfectly worthy of publication, poems that, joining now his select poems, will enjoy a renaissance.

John Crowe Ransom (1888–1974), poet, critic, and teacher, was born in Pulaski, Tennessee. He entered Vanderbilt University at the age of fifteen, received his undergraduate degree in 1909, won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, and crowned his academic career at Kenyon College, where he founded and edited the *Kenyon Review*. His criticism—the New Criticism—was revered and feared. His poems are at once ancient and modern while never modernist (T. S. Eliot: "I have probably a higher opinion of your verse than you have of mine"). They won high esteem and deep delight for their fineness, their humor, their individuality of manner and movement, and their unforced poignancy.

Poems About God (Henry Holt and Company, 1919), *Chills and Fever* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1924), and *Two Gentlemen in Bonds* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1927) led in due course to Ransom's *Selected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), the revised reissue of which won the National Book Award in Poetry in 1964.

Ben Mazer was born in New York City in 1964; he now lives in Boston, Massachusetts. His poems have been widely published in international literary periodicals, including *Verse*, *Stand*, *Leviathan Quarterly*, *Harvard Magazine*, *Jacket Magazine*, *Fulcrum*, *Pequod*, the *Boston Phoenix*, *Thumbscrew*, and *Agenda*. He is a contributing editor to *Fulcrum: an annual of poetry and aesthetics*. His first collection of poems, *White Cities*, was published by Barbara Matteau Editions in 1995. His most recent collections of poems are *Poems* (The Pen & Anvil Press) and *January 2008* (Dark Sky Books), both published in April 2010. His edition of Ransom's poems was effected at the Editorial Institute of Boston University.

Pulitzer Prize–winning poet John Ashbery has said of Mazer's work: "Like fragments of old photographs happened on in a drawer, these poems tap enigmatic bits of the past that suddenly come to life again. To read him is to follow him along a dreamlike corridor where everything is beautiful and nothing is as it seems."

The Collected Poems of John Crowe Ransom, edited by Ben Mazer, is now available for purchase for $75.00 This first edition is a cloth-covered, sewn hardbound book.

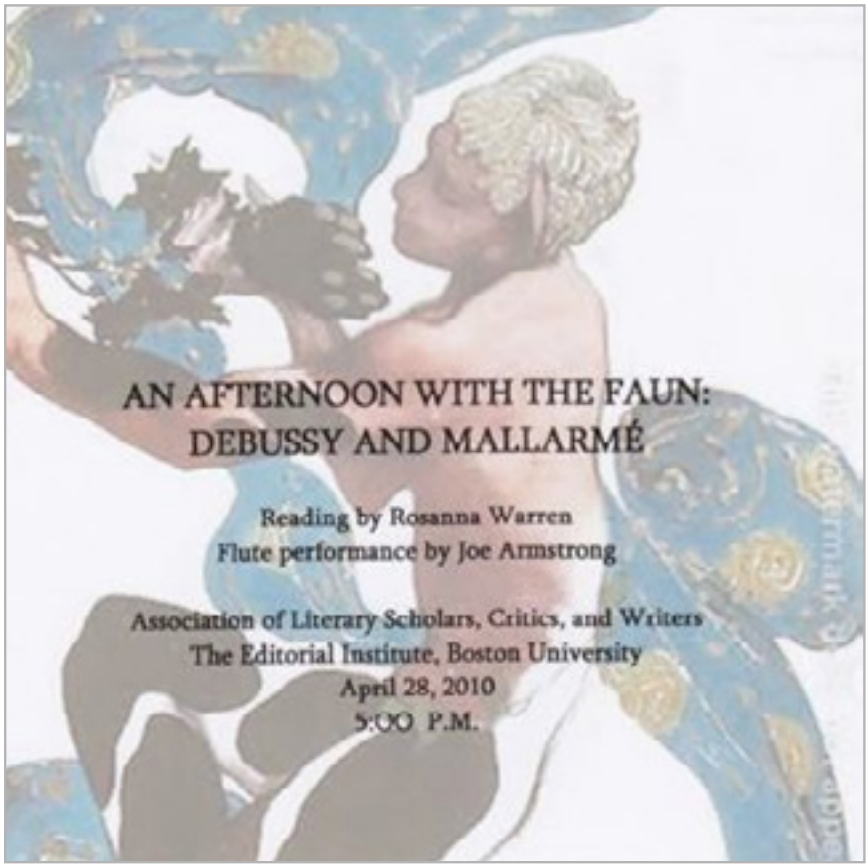
Orders can be placed by visiting http://www.un-gyvelimitedgroup.com/literature/r2thrw7yjrqbfdxl7t0isle8fuceqs.

Orders can also be placed by mail (please make checks payable to Un-Gyve Limited, 139A Charles Street No. 393, Boston, Massachusetts 02114, USA), or payment details can by provided to the Un-Gyve Press by telephone (617-350-7884), by fax (617-482-2339), or by email (info@un-gyve.com).

***The Collected Poems of John Crowe Ransom* will be published in cooperation with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. / Knopf Doubleday Publishing and by CO-OPPRODUCTION.**

"L'après-midi d'un faune": Recording and ALSCW Discussion

A few years ago, the flutist and Alexander technique teacher Joe Armstrong presented a performance of "L'après-midi d'un faune" (Mallarmé and Debussy)[1] with Rosanna Warren as a local meeting of the ALSCW in Boston. Mr. Armstrong has prepared a recording of the event, which is available online and includes a transcription of the discussion that followed with Christopher Ricks, Rosanna Warren, and others. The recording and transcription may be found at the following link: http://www.joearmstrong.info/AnAfternoonWithTheFaun.html.



Christopher Ricks is a British literary critic and scholar. He is also the William M. and Sara B. Warren Professor of the Humanities at Boston University, where he is codirector of the Editorial Institute. He was Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford from 2004 to 2009. At the time of the meeting transcribed by Armstrong, Ricks was president of the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers [then named the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics]. He has written and edited many works, including *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (Penguin Group, 2003) and *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

Rosanna Warren is an American poet and scholar. She was Emma MacLachlan Metcalf Professor of the Humanities and a University Professor at Boston University until July 2012. Currently, Warren is the Hannah Holborn Gray Distinguished Service Professor in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. She has published numerous works of poetry and literary criticism, including *Fables of the Self: Studies in Lyric Poetry* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2008).

Joe Armstrong is a flutist and teacher of the Alexander technique. He has specialized in teaching professional musicians in the greater Boston area since 1972. He has also published several books and numerous articles on the Alexander technique and music-related subjects, including a translation of French musicologist André Pirro's *L'Esthethique de Jean-Sebastien Bach* (*The Aesthetic of Johann Sebastian Bach* [Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014]).

1 "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune," Claude Debussy, first conducted by Gustave Doret, Paris, December 22, 1894; based on the poem "L'après-midi d'un faune" by Stéphane Mallarmé, first published in 1876.

Sophie Starck and Sylvie Thode Win the Meringoff High School Essay Award

This year the judges came to a split decision and have given the ALSCW Stephen J. Meringoff High School Essay Award to two students: Sylvie Thode of New York City, for her essay "Seeking Out Solace," and Sophie Starck of New York City, for her essay "Questions of Home." The $1,500 prize that goes with the award will be split between the two winners, and both winning essays will appear in a future issue of *Literary Matters*.

Sophie Starck is a senior at the Brearley School in New York City. She is an avid reader. There is nothing she enjoys more than combining her lifelong passion for English with passions for seemingly unrelated subjects. She cofounded the Computer Science Club at her high school. Outside the classroom, she competes on the varsity soccer, basketball, and track and field teams; in addition, she leads her high school's a cappella group. She also serves as an executive board member for her synagogue's youth group and as an intern for both Girls Inc. and Collective[i]. Sophie would like to thank her incomparable English teacher Mrs. Smith for her guidance and support, as well as congratulate Sylvie Thode, someone she's very proud to call a friend.

Sylvie Thode is a senior at the Brearley School in New York City. Her favorite subjects are English and Latin; she is fascinated by and passionate about all topics related to classics and literature. Thus, some of her favorite works include *Beowulf*, *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This year, she was chosen to be the cohead of her school's Classics Club. Sylvie also loves reading and analyzing Shakespeare, and she is looking forward to taking a class devoted solely to studying his plays in her senior year at Brearley. Sylvie is an accomplished athlete: a tri-sport varsity captain, she excels in field hockey, basketball, and softball, having received a total of four MVPs and five All-Star awards across all of her sports. Additionally, she plays on a softball travel team; she was excited to attend the National Championships this summer with her team. Most importantly, she is very grateful to all her teachers this year for pushing her to be her very best and inspiring her daily.

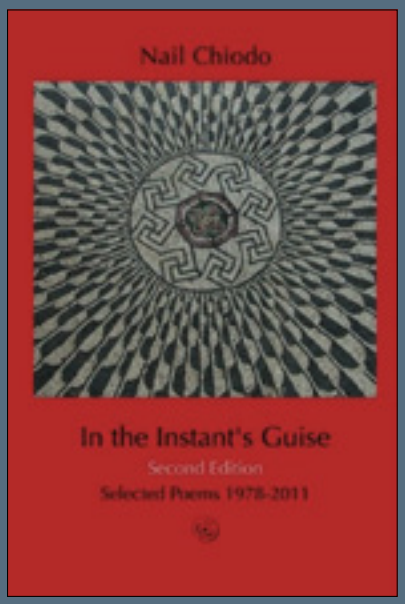
The ALSCW congratulates both winners and thanks Mr. Stephen J. Meringoff for his generous funding of the ALSCW Meringoff Writing Awards. The next award competition will be in the fall for the categories of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. The deadline for submissions will be December 1, 2015. More details will be announced in the near future.

In Memoriam: Luigi Attardi (1952–2014)

Luigi Attardi (pen name Nail Chiodo), of Rome, Italy, was a longtime member and supporter of the ALSCW. He frequently contributed his poems to the Poets' Corner of *Literary Matters*. Attardi was born in Padua, Italy, in 1952. The son of Italian biologists who immigrated to the United States, he lived in America for more than twenty years—a period of time that spanned from when he was of kindergarten age until he was thirty-six years old. He also spent some years in Paris, first while at elementary school and then as a university student. In 1974, he graduated with a degree in philosophy from Yale University.

In 1977, he began working on a feature-length film, *The Insignificant Other*, which was completed—after surviving every sort of vicissitude—in 2000. From 1978 onwards, however, his primary creative activity was the writing of verse in English. Much of his work is contained in his collection *In the Instant's Guise: Selected Poems 1978–2011*, second edition (Createspace, 2011).

More recently, he founded and directed the professional international poetry translation initiative Lyrical Translations (http://www.lyrical-translations.com/html/english/english.html). Through this initiative, he translated a collection of poems by Erik Frisch into English from Norwegian (*The Literary Cat & Other Poems* [Createspace, 2013]). He also helped to found the Association for Poetry, an apolitical "phil-artistic" nonprofit organization (www.cappellagandini.org).



Attardi fell terminally ill in the spring of 2014. He died serenely in Zurich, Switzerland, on October 31, 2014 at the age of sixty-two. A tireless defender of poetry, he will live on in his work and in the hearts of those who loved him. A memorial service was held on November 22, 2014 at the Church of Santa Maria in Portico in Campitelli in Rome, Italy.

In Memoriam: Elise Partridge
1958–2015

Elise Partridge died peacefully on January 31, 2015 in the Palliative Care Unit at Vancouver General Hospital. She was 56. Her husband Stephen; mother Marjorie; brothers Tim, Fenton, and Kirby; extended family; and many dear friends will always hold Elise close to their hearts. Elise was the author of three books of poetry, including *The Exiles' Gallery*, which was completed as she fought her second cancer. The collection will be published in April by House of Anansi Press. A memorial gathering for Elise took place in Vancouver on February 28, 2015.

Poet and editor Elise Partridge was educated at Harvard University, Boston University, Cambridge University, and the University of British Columbia. She is the author of the poetry collections *Fielder's Choice* (Véhicule Press, 2002) and *Chameleon Hours* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), the latter of which won the Canadian Authors Association Award for Poetry.

Her work has been anthologized in Canada, the US, Ireland, and the UK. Her poems have been featured on Garrison Keillor's NPR program *The Writer's Almanac*, and have appeared in *Arc*, *Poetry*, the *Walrus*, the *New Yorker*, the *Fiddlehead*, *Slate*, *PN Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Yale Review*, and the *New Republic*. Partridge served as poet-in-residence for *Arc Poetry Magazine* in 2009. She was a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Her husband, Stephen Partridge, is a professor of medieval literature at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Partridge's poems, in the words of critic Stephen Burt, "pursue a careful thinker's yearning for abandon." In an interview with the Canadian literary journal the *Walrus*, Partridge spoke of her experience with cancer and the ways it shaped her second collection, *Chameleon Hours*: "Many of the poems I suppose ask implicit questions about fullness of life or lives somehow thwarted, diminished, ended too early—about how we spend our time, treat our fellow human beings or our environment." As Burt observed, "Attentive to fact, to what she sees and knows, Partridge nonetheless makes space for what is wild, outside and within us—for the fears and the blanks of chemotherapy, for sharp variations within (and without) frames of [meter] and rhyme, and for the welcome consistencies of married love."

The ALSCW's Activities in 2014

In 2014, the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers engaged in a major membership drive, raising Association membership to its highest level in several years, and doubling the membership we had had in 2013.

A series of well attended local meetings at Boston University—made possible by the support of the Katzenberg Center and the Editorial Institute—continued throughout the year with visiting guest speakers including Katherine A. Powers on her new edition of letters by her father, novelist J. F. Powers; Owen Boynton on Christina Rossetti; Chris Walsh on *The Execution of Private Slovik*; Bob Scanlan on Samuel Beckett; and Marjorie Perloff on Ezra Pound. Poetry readings were given by Alice Oswald, Grey Gowrie, Rosanna Warren, and David Ferry.

Other ALSCW meetings were held across the country in 2014: Jee Leong Koh's successful Singapore Literature Festival brought dozens of Singaporean writers to a vivid meeting in New York; Phillis Levin's NYC salons continued to provide a valuable point of contact; meetings in Baton Rouge, LA, included an event with guest speaker Barbara Barnes Sims, who continues to engage popular music and literature, most recently with her memoir on the golden age of Sun Records, and a regional forum on the short story tailored to lend experience to young scholars, which featured David Huddle of the University of Vermont and Bread Loaf as the keynote speaker. At the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, Lee Oser organized an ALSCW local meeting with Jonathan Mulrooney, who gave a lecture on his paper "Keats, Interrupted." Rosanna Warren spearheaded the successful launch of a new Chicago series with a poetry reading by Robert Polito in December.

In April, the Twentieth Annual Conference of the ALSCW was held at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN; the event was organized by then President John Briggs. The conference included discussions on topics ranging from classical and medieval to modern literature and several well attended sessions on the state of high school literary education under the new standards of the Common Core. George Kalogeris, winner of the 2013 Meringoff Poetry Award, was able to attend the conference thanks to the generous support of the Meringoff Foundation and read his winning poems to the conference participants; fiction winner Anneliese Schultz gave a reading of her winning short story via a video call from Canada; and Archie Burnett (coeditor of *Literary Imagination*) read a selection from the essay by Alex Brink Effgen that received the Meringoff Nonfiction Award. The conference was highly successful and an important meeting for the ALSCW.

In October, Christopher Ricks presented a series of three talks at the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York City titled Literature & All the Other Activities. Part of an outreach and development initiative, the talks were widely advertised and drew a large audience. They afforded the opportunity to promote the ALSCW's mission through both conversation and the distribution of informative literature about the Association.

Staff Report

"Activities Report"
Continued from previous page

New council members were elected in October: Adelaide Russo of Louisiana State University assumed the presidency; Marjorie Perloff of Stanford University took over as Vice President; and David Bromwich of Yale, Vincent Kling of La Salle University, and Diana Senechal of New York City's secondary schools were ushered in as councilors.

Our flagship journal, *Literary Imagination*, continued to flourish in partnership with Oxford University Press under the editorship of Archie Burnett and Saskia Hamilton, as did *Literary Matters* under the editorship of Samantha Madway.

The Stephen J. Meringoff Secondary School Essay Award was publicized to schools around the country, and the winner, Alexis Manos, was announced in the spring of 2014. The fall Meringoff Writing Awards in Poetry, Fiction, and Nonfiction received the highest number of submissions to date. Prizes were claimed by James Najarian (Poetry), Marlene Veloso (Fiction), and Michelle Chikaonda (Nonfiction). The winners of the fall awards were recognized in many media outlets, and the works of the winners of all four awards were published either in *Literary Imagination* or in our newsletter, *Literary Matters*. Much effort was spent over the course of the year seeking funding for the Association.

Dispatch from the Gihon River: Kristin Fogdall, 2014 ALSCW/VSC Fellow, reports in from the Vermont Studio Center

I am writing this from my desk overlooking the Gihon River. The river is waking up: half frozen, half mercury, moving quickly downstream. Beyond the river is a long two-story green barn full of painters and installation artists in their studios, each following his or her own brash or intricate process. When we meet in the dining hall for meals, I listen to these artists talk about their struggles, the rhythms of their days—and their adventures feel to me both mysterious and illuminating.

This is the Vermont Studio Center, and I am grateful to the people who made it possible for me to be here in residence this month: my husband, my friends, my colleagues, and the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers, which awarded me this fellowship. Each morning, when I open the door to studio #5, I quietly bless these people. And I feel like the river—once buried in ice, now beginning to arrange its hoard of shiny stones.

In the world beyond VSC, I'm largely isolated from the creative community. I run my own consulting business far from the world of publishing or academia. In fact, I live in rural Vermont, just one town away from Johnson, which is home to VSC. In the past several years, VSC has become my primary link to literary and creative conversation.

In his beautiful book, *How to Read a Poem: And Fall in Love with Poetry*, Edward Hirsch writes, "poetry has a strong relation to music on one side and to painting on the other. It has a musical dimension, a pictorial element....It's as if the eye and the ear were related through poetry, as if they had become siblings, or lovers."[1] For me, this feels intensely true; as a poet, I am striving to see—into the vast world outside and also down into the fiber and sinew of the poetic line. I am also trying to sing. Here at VSC, surrounded by sculptors, printmakers, and painters, as well as my fellow writers, those perpetual goals feel closer, more attainable, although we will always be reaching towards them. The eye inspires the hand, and the hand inspires the eye. Outside, the river is waking up.

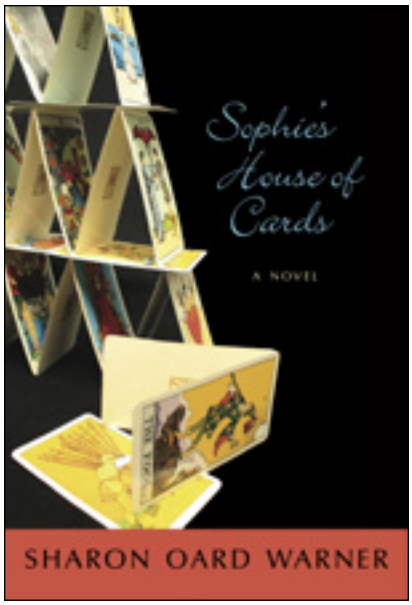
1 Edward Hirscb, *How to Read a Poem: And Fall in Love with Poetry* (Durham, NC: DoubleTakeBooks, 1999), pp. 16–17.

Kristin Fogdall's poems have appeared in *Poetry*, Slate.com, the *New Republic*, *New England Review*, and other periodicals. She holds an MA in creative writing from Boston University. Thanks to the ALSCW, she spent the month of March 2015 at the Vermont Studio Center, where she came close to finishing her first collection of poems. She hopes there will be more news to report on that project soon.

New Publications by Members

Sharon Oard Warner, *Sophie's House of Cards* (University of New Mexico Press, 2014)

Sophie's House of Cards is a new novel by Sharon Oard Warner. Warner is a professor of English at the University of New Mexico and founding director of the Taos Summer Writers' Conference



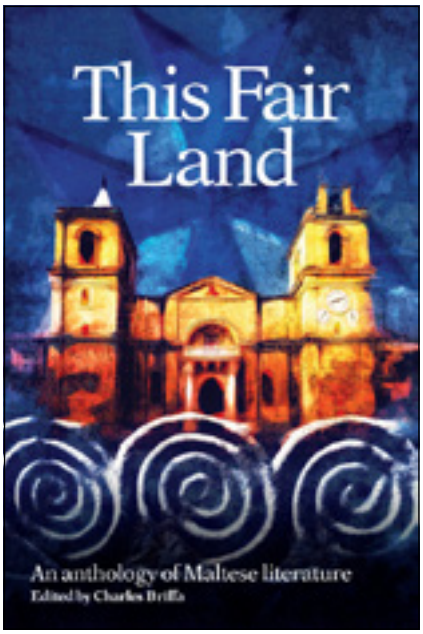
When sixteen-year-old Sophie Granger suspects that she is pregnant, she digs out her mother Peggy's tarot cards. Peggy hasn't read fortunes since her hippie days in Taos, but as soon as she flips the cards, Peggy sees both her daughter's predicament and the family crisis that will ensue. A panicked Peggy scatters the layout and rushes from the room, leaving Sophie to construct a literal house of cards. Set in New Mexico, this engrossing family novel raises questions about the role that fortune plays in our lives.

"Ten cards, laid out in the form of a Celtic cross, provide the titles and openings of each chapter, a clever narrative structure that links the past, present, and future of this family whose stability is as fragile as a house of cards." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Sharon Oard Warner's *Sophie's House of Cards* is infused with everything I look for in fiction: sympathetic characters whose imperfections are recognizably human, a strong sense of place, and a story that lingers long after you've closed the book and moved on to others, wishing they were as captivating and masterfully told as Warner's novel." —Wally Lamb, author of *We Are Water*

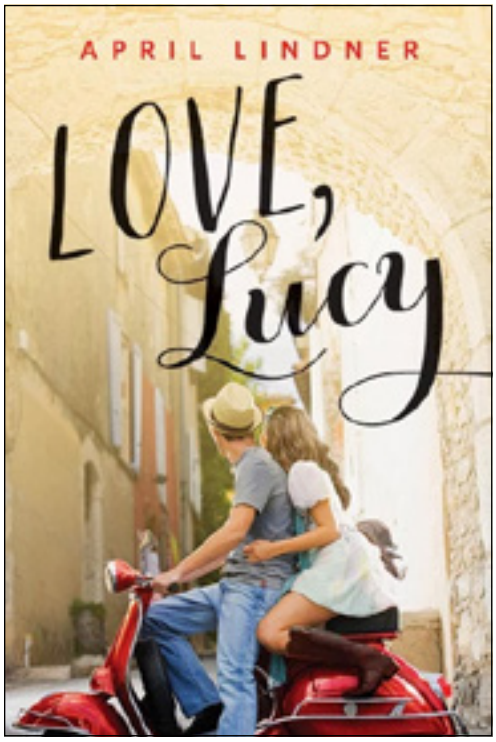
Charles Briffa, *This Fair Land*, Lesser Used Languages of Europe, vol. 6, ed. Alan M. Kent (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2014)

This Fair Land presents a comprehensive overview of the development of the Maltese language and its literature from the early periods of the second millennium to the first decades of the twenty-first century. It is concise, but at the same time imparts a sense of unity, as it displays a taste of the efforts of individual writers and offers a clear account of the wider historical atmosphere that shaped their written expression. This anthology of Maltese source texts (and their English target texts) exposes the Maltese mind throughout the centuries. It balances chronological and thematic organization to present a framework of the evolution and expansion of a language that was neglected for centuries except for the determination of the simple uneducated folk that kept it alive despite all ideological and political barriers.



A broad definition of literature is adopted to include a variety of old and contemporary usage, along with the customary implications of the term. Verse, fictional prose, drama, religious writings, historical extracts, scientific passages, cultural expositions, journalistic excerpts, and much more are the constituent elements of this manageable anthology. It begins with the orally transmitted sayings of past centuries and the few scanty surviving remnants of written attempts (the first poem in Maltese was composed in the mid-fifteenth century). The volume continues with the written experiments and stylistic struggles for survival of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it ends with the admirable efforts of the twentieth century and the accomplishments of the first decades of the twenty-first century.

Professor Charles Briffa is an author, literary critic, translator, and researcher on linguistic matters. He lectures at the University of Malta on Maltese literature and on the theory and practice of translation.



April Lindner, *Love, Lucy* (New York: Poppy, 2015)

While backpacking through Florence, Italy, during the summer before she heads off to college, Lucy Sommersworth finds herself falling in love with the culture, the architecture, the food…and Jesse Palladino, a handsome street musician. After a whirlwind romance, Lucy returns home, determined to move on from her "vacation flirtation." But just because summer is over doesn't mean Lucy and Jesse are over too.

In this coming-of-age romance, April Lindner perfectly captures the highs and lows of a summer love that might just be meant to last beyond the season.

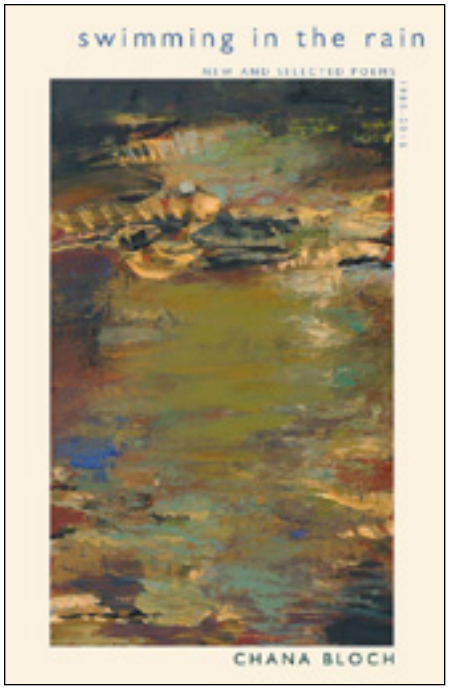
"*Love, Lucy* hits all the right notes….This is a great coming-of-age story." —*VOYA* (starred review)

"A contemporary romance with surprising depth…this modern update of E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* will appeal to fans of Sarah Dessen, Stephanie Perkins, and Lindner's reimagined classics." —*SLJ*

"This intelligent love story will resonate with readers who are themselves balancing the thin line between making lives of their own and seeking parents' approval." —*Booklist*

"April Lindner brings on the feels with her usual charm. *Love, Lucy* is another romantic winner from this amazingly talented writer." —Meg Cabot, author of *The Princess Diaries* and the Heather Wells mystery series

Chana Bloch, *Swimming in the Rain: New & Selected Poems, 1980–2015* (Pittsburgh, PA: Autumn House Press, 2015)



Swimming in the Rain presents the range of Chana Bloch's work—poems about family and children, intimate relationships, sex, language, art, memory, aging, and death—exploring them from a different perspective in each book. It features selections from Chana Bloch's four earlier collections—*The Secrets of the Tribe* (Sheep Meadow, 1980), which was a finalist for the Yale Younger Poets Award; *The Past Keeps Changing* (Sheep Meadow, 1992); *Mrs. Dumpty* (University of Wisconsin, 1998), which was selected by Donald Hall to receive the Felix Pollak Prize; and *Blood Honey* (Autumn House Press, 2009), which was awarded the PSA's Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award by Jane Hirshfield—as well as new work, including the pieces selected by Greg Delanty and David Curzon for the ALSCW's Stephen J. Meringoff Poetry Award.

"Chana Bloch is writing the best poems of her life. Death is the Great Master hovering in the distance, but this pleasure-loving poet will not be deterred. Chana Bloch is like a Japanese potter mending the cracked and dinged pottery of experience with gold powder sprinkled from her fingers." —Henri Cole

"Chana Bloch has spent her life writing the poems of a grown woman, loving the world as she interrogates it mercilessly, speaking a truth that hurts as it heals. 'Half the stories / I used to believe are false,' she confesses. 'Thank God / I've got the good sense at last / not to come in out of the rain.' A thrilling collection." —Dorianne Laux

A Note on the Poetry of John Crowe Ransom

By Ben Mazer, editor of the recently published volume *The Collected Poems of John Crowe Ransom*

Friends, I am eager to spread the gospel of John Crowe Ransom, and to offer some explanation of the critical edition of *The Collected Poems of John Crowe Ransom* (in fact, a complete edition of Ransom's poetry) that I have just published. In 1924 and 1927, Ransom published two of the most significant and superlative books of poetry of the modern period: *Chills and Fever* and *Two Gentlemen in Bonds*, both with Alfred Knopf. Both books drew mainly upon Ransom's many contributions to the little magazine the *Fugitive*, which Ransom edited with Allen Tate and others from 1922 to 1925. It was also during this period that Robert Graves took a great interest in Ransom's poetry and showed it to T. S. Eliot, who was impressed; Graves persuaded Virginia and Leonard Woolf to publish a British selection of Ransom's poems in a limited edition with the Hogarth Press under the title *Grace After Meat*, which was edited and introduced by Robert Graves. (Ransom had already published a volume of not yet entirely mature—but not entirely unsatisfactory—poetry titled *Poems About God* with Henry Holt in 1919, and with the assistance of Holt author Robert Frost.)

Ransom wrote only a handful of poems after 1927, instead turning to the exceptional, pioneering, influential criticism that he became so famous for and to the editing of the *Kenyon Review*, which he founded in 1939 and edited for twenty years, about the same length of time that Eliot edited the *Criterion*. In 1945, Ransom, in a strict mood of critical self-assessment, decided to publish a selected edition of his poems, drawing upon his two major collections of the 1920s, and refining with light and shrewd revisions those early poems to produce what by general critical consensus became the very focused and successful first *Selected Poems* of 1945 (Knopf; London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1947). To this collection, he also added the five poems that he wrote in the period between 1927 and 1945, the last poems he was to write. (Though late in life, he would turn to obsessively and somewhat perversely rewriting and altering his most famous poems in a series of unsettling selected editions of his poems, which were disturbing to those who had most loved his work in its earlier, plausibly more perfect forms.) The rest of his poems from those seminal early volumes—more than half of his total oeuvre—were never again reprinted.

Then, in the 1960s, Ransom got into his head some sort of mania for playful and extravagant and thorough-going revisions of his *Selected Poems*, bringing out a series of revised versions of the book and its poems until they were perplexingly unrecognizable to his many colleagues and admirers. The famous and perfect version of 1945 then also went out of print, leaving virtually nothing of Ransom's seminal poetry of the period from 1922 to 1945 in print to this day.

Continued on following page

The edition of Ransom's poems which I have conceived of and executed, and which is now available from the Un-Gyve Press of Boston, set out as its mission to restore all of Ransom's poetry to print, and to return the earlier and best (most influential, famous, and critically acclaimed) versions of his many brilliant poems to their original forms, or to the perfect forms of them which Ransom settled upon in 1945. In addition, my edition provides the entirety of *Poems About God* (1919), all of the variants in *Grace After Meat* (1924), all of the variants present in the poems as they appeared in the *Fugitive* (1922–1925), and, in their entirety, all of the peculiarly distinct revised versions of his poems which appeared from 1963 on (thus honoring Ransom's own last intentions).

The key thing to understand is that Ransom—though often referred to as a minor poet because of the strange and subtle and UNIQUE method and style associated with his poems—was in all fairness perhaps the best American poet of his time (1922–1945). He had an immense influence upon the whole of American poetry, and upon British poetry as well. A great poet, a great critic, and a great editor—so long lost to us in the forms for which he was most influential and best known and best loved, we now have him back, for the first time in a collected edition, and at a key time in our own contemporary struggle with the art of poetry and its understanding: an exceptionally good time to infuse our own sensibilities with the excellence of his first-rate and highly individual work in poetry, and to reassess the modernist background of our own inheritance. We have Ransom back again, for the first time in decades, and we can see now more than ever, I think, what a true master he was.

I have high hopes for a renaissance of interest in his poetry, and his work in general, and for a critical reassessment of his work in our own time. I thank everyone who has read this far, and who considers these matters important (bunch of poets and critics and scholars as you probably are). And I thank you ahead of time for your interest in exploring our rich modernist heritage, and one of the too-much-forgotten but most-exceptional practitioners of poetry in the modern period. I hope that everyone who encounters this edition will come away from it with very different and new impressions of Ransom's poetry, and indeed of the possibilities of poetry itself. Thank you for listening. It is, by the way, also a damned beautiful volume, and about the largest damned book of poems I have ever seen. Thanks to the Un-Gyve Press; to my advisors at the Editorial Institute, Christopher Ricks and Archie Burnett, who guided me through the difficulties and issues involved in creating an imaginative critical edition; and to my colleagues at the Editorial Institute such as poet and critic and scholar Stephen Sturgeon, and my ever-loyal compatriot in poetry and in the editorial arts, Philip Nikolayev. Buy this book—you will be profoundly changed by the poetry you will encounter!

Un-Gyve Press page: http://www.un-gyvelimitedgroup.com/literature/r2thrw7yjrqbfdxl7t0isle8fuceqs

Shakespeare's Biblical Allusiveness: On Hannibal Hamlin's *The Bible in Shakespeare*

There are no more important books in the Anglophone literary tradition than the English Bible and the works of Shakespeare. Take them away, and pretty much everything else since disappears. Although they both arose during the same early modern period, the English Bible (especially in its Geneva translation and commentary) came first and was, to use an old-fashioned term, one of Shakespeare's most important *sources*. Later, of course, the King James Version conquered the world. As Robert Alter (among others) has taught us, if we are to be literary, we had better be biblical (even if we're not too religious).

So what a delight it is to report from the front of Shakespeare studies that Hannibal Hamlin has written a superb book on Shakespeare's biblical artistry: *The Bible in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). His earlier book on psalm culture in early modern England is quite good, but it did not prepare me for the achievement of the new book. If one leaves out studies of Shakespeare and religion (a booming industry with no bust in sight), one realizes that there are not too many book-length studies of Shakespeare's artistic relation to the English Bible. I recommend two to students regularly: Naseeb Shaheen's *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Plays* (University of Delaware Press, 1999) for the best encyclopedia of biblical allusion and Steven Marx's *Shakespeare and the Bible* (Oxford University Press, 2000) for the best literary criticism of Shakespeare's artistic engagement with scripture. Shaheen is more scholar than critic, and Marx more critic than scholar.

Review by Scott F. Crider

I don't want to sound like Goldilocks, but Hamlin is both scholar and critic, and *The Bible in Shakespeare* is simply the best book on the subject: thoroughly informed, carefully and perceptively conceived, and extremely well written. So make that literary scholar, critic, *and* writer. The book's argument is clear and, by its end, completely persuasive: "The Bible needs to be included alongside—though actually ahead of—Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Holinshed's *Chronicle*, and Plutarch's *Lives* as one of the works essential to understanding Shakespeare's plays."[1] The book falls into two large sections: Part 1 explains the Bible culture of early modern England, and Part 2 explores Shakespeare's artistic allusions to the Bible. Let me look at each part.

Part 1 has three chapters. Chapter 1 examines the Bible culture of Reformation England, wherein Shakespeare read the Geneva translation of the Bible and its Protestant commentary and heard the Bishop's Bible at Church. Hamlin is quite strong on the texture of biblical culture, including as it did not only scripture, but also liturgy, sacraments, and art (both visual and musical). "In this thick biblical culture Shakespeare could communicate, complicate, and enrich the meanings of his plays by manipulating allusions to biblical texts, characters, narratives, and images" (42). Chapter 2

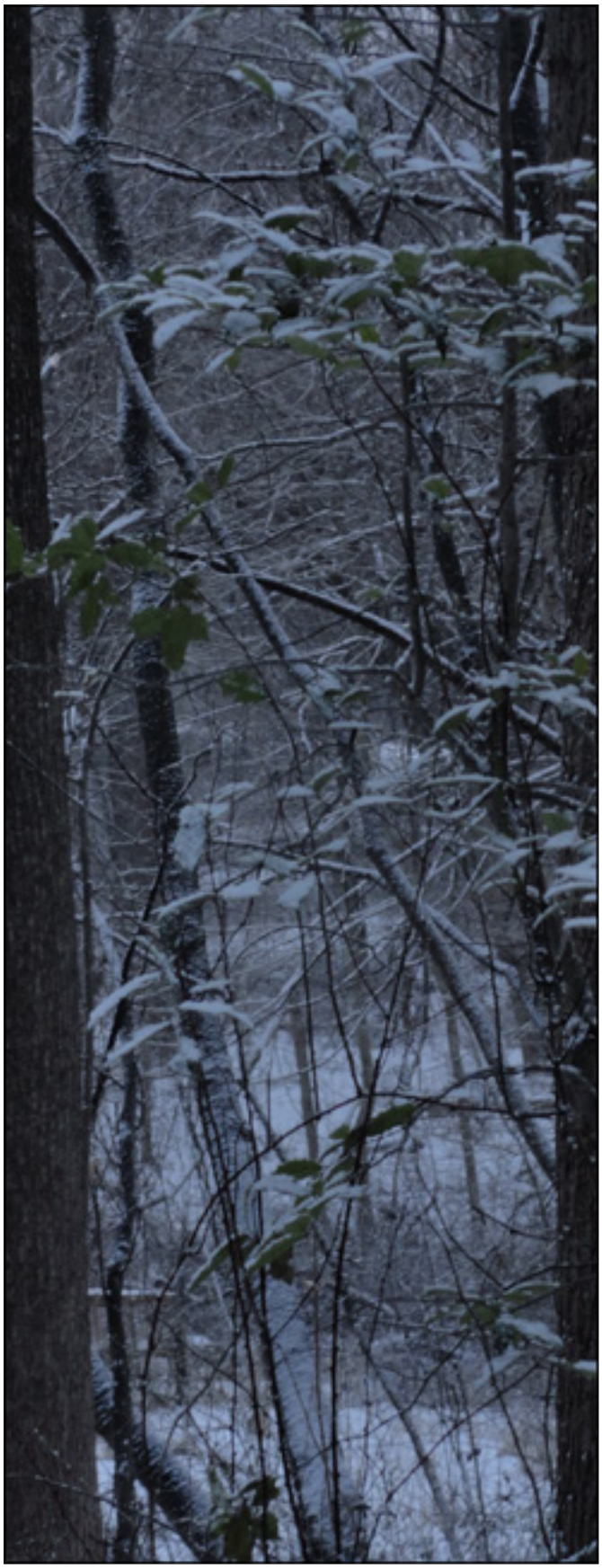
1 Hannibal Hamlin, *The Bible in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 5. All subsequent citations to this book are provided parenthetically in the text.

provides a history (often amusing) of Shakespeareans discussing the Bible in Shakespeare, during which bardolaters rather quickly turned him into a prophet of the newer testament. Hamlin points out that it is far too seldom noticed in this critical tradition that "Shakespeare's biblical allusions are often ironic, setting up parallels in order to emphasize their differences" (71). Richard II does often think of himself as a Christ, but the play is pretty clear that that is not true, or at least not true in the way Richard thinks. Chapter 3 is a rich discussion of the critical concept of allusion itself, which Hamlin applies "broadly, as including any instance of a work that refers to, quotes, points to, echoes, evokes, or parallels an earlier work" (77). I hope his robust understanding of allusion influences us all. He is clear that Shakespearean allusion is not serving partisan doctrinal purposes; its functions are literary: the Bible was "a vast, readily available storehouse of powerful stories, characters, and language that everyone knew," a storehouse he ransacked rhetorically "for engaging his audience and enriching the significance of his plays" (123).

It turns out that the mythos of Shakespeare…keeps reminding us of the pages of a book of a supremely divine character engaged in supremely divine action.

Part 2 has five chapters, each of which narrows the focus more and more. Chapter 4 discusses Shakespeare's allusions to Genesis 1–3 throughout his texts and in all of the genres he worked with: "Shakespeare's allusions to the Genesis story both reflect and manipulate these traditional interpretations, adapting his emphases according to dramatic genre" (133). Chapter 5 sharpens the focus more, dealing with anachronistic allusions to the Bible in the Roman plays, anachronism which Hamlin argues is "creative": "Shakespeare's apparent historical slips [giving Roman pagans Christian, biblical language] are…deliberate rhetorical strategies" to argue that "the best use of history is in comparison to the present" (179). Chapter 6 hones in even further, investigating a single character in more than one play: the great man himself, Falstaff, as Bible parodist. "Biblical allusion is…one of his most characteristic features, along with other forms of verbal inventiveness, a universal irreverence for authority, massive girth, and insatiable appetite" (234).

Chapters 7 and 8 concentrate on two plays and their allusions to specific biblical books—*Macbeth* and Revelation and *King Lear* and Job—and both chapters are models of literary criticism informed by scholarship and communicated in fine prose. There are some superb moments therein: When Hamlin reads Macbeth's "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" lament in terms of Ecclesiastes to discuss time, temporal and eternal, and the character of Macbeth's despair; and when, examining *King Lear*'s understanding of theodicy in terms of not only Job but also Calvin's commentary on it, Hamlin points out that the play is "like Job without God's voice from the whirlwind" (330), demanding we recognize that the play's perhaps central question—"How does one distinguish between an absent God and one who simply does not exist?" (332)—cannot be answered.



According to Hamlin, without biblical allusion, "the plays [of Shakespeare] mean less" (335). What more meaning do the plays acquire with biblical allusion noted? There is one in particular which Hamlin might have spent more time on: It turns out that the mythos of Shakespeare—the full stage of supremely human characters engaged in supremely human actions—keeps reminding us of the pages of a book of a supremely divine character engaged in supremely divine action. Whether that reminder expands the Shakespearean stage or reduces the biblical page, whether those reminders might indicate something new about the human and the divine—Hamlin is reticent to go too far in that direction. As he acknowledges, there is more work to do. But as he also acknowledges, there is some work that cannot be done, given just how negative Shakespeare's capability was. Hamlin is absolutely right though: without the English Bible, Shakespeare's plays mean less.

They would also mean less without Hamlin's book since he has given us the rich context of Shakespeare's biblical culture, the precise tools to examine the biblically allusive textuality of those plays, and the example of what it looks like to be a biblically informed reader of Shakespeare. What does it look like to be such a reader? At its best, it looks like this.

An award-winning teacher, Scott F. Crider is an associate professor of English at the University of Dallas, where he teaches widely in its Core Curriculum and writes in the fields of both Shakespearean and rhetorical studies. He has written *With What Persuasion: An Essay on the Ethics of Rhetoric in Shakespeare* (Studies in Shakespeare 18 [New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2009]) and *The Office of Assertion: An Art of Rhetoric for the Academic Essay* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2005); he is now working on a book on Shakespeare's sonnets and the art of poetry.

On David Mikics's *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age*

Review by Margaret Ducharme

All college writing and literature instructors compete with texting devices in the classroom. Even the best students, who keep up with the readings and contribute to class discussion, manage to rap out a few texts in between note taking and pithy commentary. Are they effective multitaskers or benighted victims of constant partial attention syndrome? In *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age*, David Mikics subscribes to the latter view. He laments, "The average teenager sends about three thousand texts a month—an astonishing, and dismaying, figure."[1] There is no consideration here for the possibly unifying effects of McLuhan's global village. Instead, Mikics is "sounding the alarm about the hazards of the digital age because it's important to realize what we are up against as readers" (8). Mikics's answer to the carelessness of distracted reading in the hurried Internet age is the mindfulness of close reading for thoughtful insight.

Much as the self-help book *The Secret* (Atria Books, 2006) dramatically revealed the "steps" in positive thinking necessary for the achievement of success in life, *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* outlines the fourteen "rules" one must follow in order to become a penetrating reader. Mikics's rules, while reminiscent of the techniques expounded by William Empson and the New Critics, are more helpful because of their utmost practicality. In the section on Rule Two, "Ask the Right Questions," Mikics offers some examples of the sorts of topics readers should consider further: "What does the beginning have to do with the ending? How do the characters balance or argue against one another? What does a particularly striking passage sum up about the book as a whole?" (62). Mikics also specifically demonstrates how to use each rule to analyze texts.

The reward of mastering the art of Slow Reading is no less than comprehension of our inner selves. As Mikics explains, "With time, you will come closer and closer to a sense of the living core of an author's project, the basic thought behind it" (127). When, through attention to these "rules" of reading, we allow a book to "take possession" of ourselves, we derive insights that naturally lead toward self-understanding. Slow, close reading additionally grants the reader a significant social connection: "we always converse, by implication, with the book's author" (41). So, even though we may read to escape our lives and ourselves, a good book, read well, inevitably leads to finding ourselves and connecting with others.

While it is not necessary for us to share completely in Mikics's "alarm about the hazards of the digital age," we can readily embrace the value of slowing down in all parts of our lives. Mikics's fourteen rules and his perceptive application of these rules to short stories, novels, poetry, drama, and essays are rich pedagogical tools for both students and teachers, useful to unlock the meaning of literature and essays.

1 David Mikics, *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 20.

Dr. Ducharme has a PhD in English from the University of Toronto, Canada. Her dissertation was on revolution and social change in Henry James. She is currently an assistant professor at Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology in NYC.

"Impatient for the Core": On Harry Thomas's *Some Complicity: Poems & Translations*

The title of Harry Thomas's new collection, *Some Complicity: Poems & Translations*, is liable to start us on several trains of thought: Complicity in a crime, in the treasonous crime of translation? The complicity of the dreamer, who participates in his dreams? Or the complicity of everyone, eventually, in human history and its crimes? Yet it is only *some* complicity. There is also the effort to stay wakeful, to make one's translation true to the original, to resist easy solutions—in essence, to avoid being overly complicit.

Review by Dan Sofaer

In the end, these finely wrought poems stand witness to both complicity and the resistance to it: "I was sixteen. My first time with the dead."[1] There's a trace of Robert Lowell ("I was five and a half. / My formal pearl gray shorts"[2]), but something bolder, too, the profession of a teenaged morbidity in the midst of dawning responsibility. "You weighed so little when I picked you up / from off the kitchen floor" (lines 1–2). Complicity is complicated. To pick up a body means embracing it (the word derives from the Latin *complico*, "to fold," but shares a root with *complecto*, "to embrace").

One way of making sense of our complicity is by writing down dates. Sometimes we attach a date to something without knowing why. Imagine the most basic diary: "Today is August the 13th, 2014." Let's say that was all we managed to get down that day on paper—absurdly slight, but still something. Perhaps even a poem in its own right:

> something from a day
> about to be given over
> to work I had to do-
> some token to set down
> beside my glasses and watch
> on the night table, dated
> Thursday, July the 12th.
>
> ("Poem," p. 28, lines 6–12)

Why did Primo Levi attach a date to all eight of the marvelous poems translated in this collection? An effort of the concentration camp survivor to keep track of "days…merely days" ("Singing," p. 76, line 5), or are these simply the publication dates in the Turin newspaper *La Stampa*?

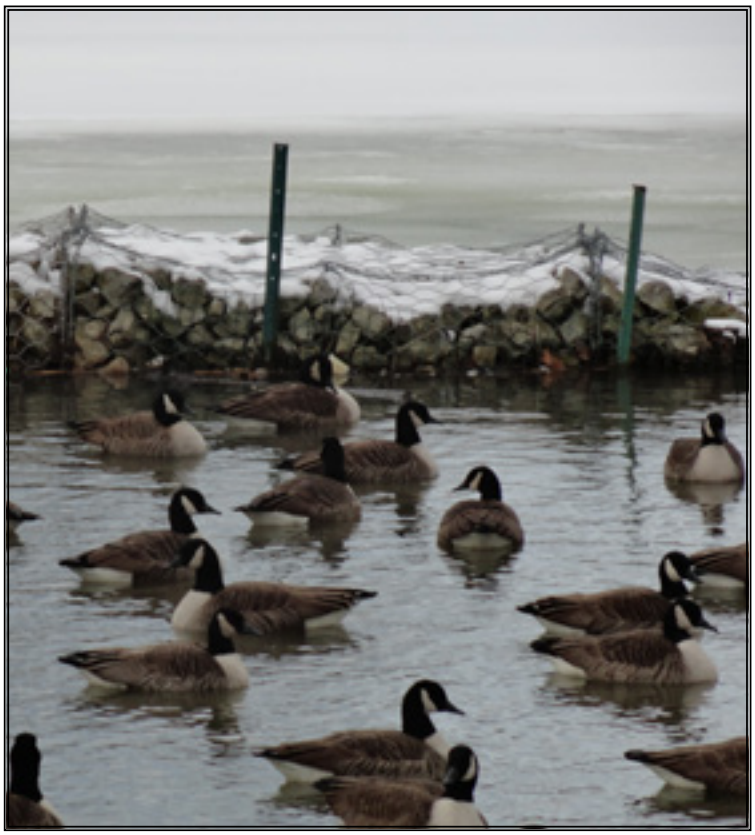
1 Harry Thomas, "Grandfather," *Some Complicity: Poems & Translations* (Cambridge, MA: Un-Gyve Press, 2014), p. 39, line 8. All further references to this collection are provided parenthetically in the text. References are to page and line numbers.

2 Robert Lowell, "My Last Afternoon with Uncle Devereux Winslow," *Selected Poems* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1976), section 2, lines 1–2.

Much of Thomas's effort is invested in keeping track of time and lifetimes, celebrating inventions for measuring time and space. Knowing his part of California means knowing

> like as not, three feet below the surface
> there's water left from last year's winter rains.
> ("Of Country I Know," p. 13, lines 20–23)

Sometimes he is puzzled by such inventions, especially when their rhetoric grows violent and we lose the human scale. Still, he is no antitechnological romantic. Refused admission to a dream turnstile, he "thought of Harrison and his H-clocks" ("Admission," p. 23, line 5), as though invoking such inventions might be open sesame to a deeper layer of self. Even the impersonal John Harrison (1693–1776), inventor of the marine chronometer, lent his name's first letter to his H1 through H5. Pride in his children? Is it fanciful to hear in "Harrison" the elements "Harry" and "son"? The poet's own name and admission ticket to the world.

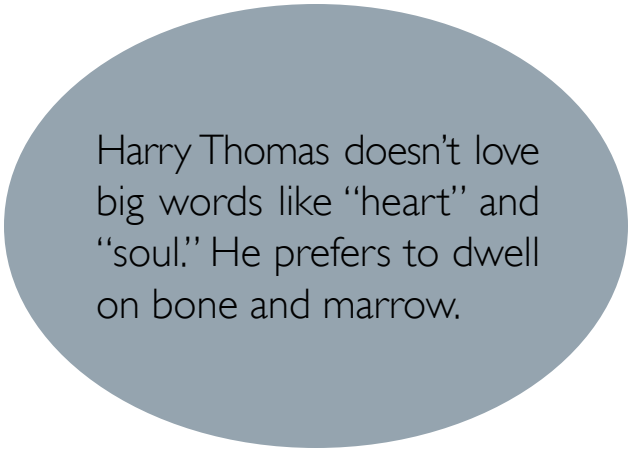


Harry Thomas doesn't love big words like "heart" and "soul." He prefers to dwell on bone and marrow. He prefers to say, "it takes a thick hidden thing to sustain us" ("The Text," p. 22, line 16). Not for him are the Yeatsian "deep heart's core" and "foul rag and bone shop."[3] The only heart we get is Brodsky's weak one ("Many are Called"), which doesn't prevent that mighty self-translator from planning the conquest of Leningrad and singing vaudeville to proclaim his conquest. Conquer America by translation and then reconquer Russia!

Indeed, some might prefer Harry Thomas the naked translator of *Some Complicity* to Harry Thomas the editor of *Montale in Translation* (Penguin, 2002) because here is less the voice of the conqueror. In the latter, though much was excellent, Thomas subjected readers to a multi-page discussion of how to translate the preposition *verso* in "Verso Vienna," a discussion which proved his point (how much can be taken into consideration in translating even a single word), but which only persuaded me that Arrowsmith had been right all along with his *towards*! While

3 "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), line 12; "The Circus Animals' Desertion," *The Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1933), section 3, line 8.

that may be, Harry Thomas is nonetheless an excellent poet and translator, and the two acts are complicit, or somewhat complicit. My ignorance of Italian prevents me from judging these translations as translations. Suffice it to say that in his version of Montale's "Xenia," Thomas seems to have found a via media between the breeziness of Arrowsmith (e.g., "ditto" for *e cosi pure*) and the austerity of Galassi, who can lack Montale's amplitude.[4]



This centaur of a book, half poetry, half translation, invites non-experts to wonder what Harry Thomas has learned from his Italians. The best Italian poets are known for their aggressive lack of complicity, Leopardi doubting the twin nineteenth-century goddesses of nature and progress, Montale doubting language and history under fascism. But resistance against the ordinary uses and abuses of language can be compatible with "trying to restore new life to [every term] and to squeeze from it a significance going beyond its dictionary meaning."[5] Thomas often manifests this mixed resistance and expansion. In "At the Old Los Angeles Zoo," Thomas makes us feel as if we are still sitting among the animals who "Roared…because of where they were" (p. 16, lines 7–8), and he suddenly has eyes for the manifold imprisonments still at work even in a liberated zoo: tattoos, tours, propositions, rations, and a hanging bag of toxic drip called "Yellow Jacket Trap."

But there is another characteristic—less-often commented upon—which Thomas shares with his Italians, something I can only call a "winning form of address": Montale's gentle *tu*. Here I am not referring to anything quite as portentous as an I-thou relationship, and certainly not to haunted buttonholing by ancient mariners, but to a form of address that is at once intimate and public. Dante's dialogue with Vergil invites third-party interruption and never loses its sense of *misura* and *cortesia*.

In a series of poems about individual members of his family, Thomas manages this type of courteous interrogation of the shades of his own past and present. It is a kind of carefully assembled photo album, not denying absence and frustration, but still making the most of life's occasions. The disappointment of receiving a postcard instead of a letter from one's father is not allowed to get out of hand—a postcard is still a presence ("Today, the Spanish Steps" p. 40, line 1) and speaks in the present ("the booty / you're worn out taking" ["On a Postcard from My Father," p. 40, lines 3–4]) more than Kafka's "senseless" letter (p. 40, line 6) never sent.[6] On the

"Impatient for the Core"
Continued on page 28

4 For a good intro to Montale in English, see Jonathan Galassi, "The Great Montale in English," review of *The Collected Poems of Eugenio Montale, 1925–1977* by Eugenio Montale, ed. Rosanna Warren, trans. William Arrowsmith, *New York Review of Books*, November 8, 2012, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/nov/08/great-montale-english/.

5 Ruggiero Orlando, "On Contemporary Italian Poetry," in *New Road 4: Directions in European Arts and Letters*, ed. Fred Marnau (London: Grey Walls Press Ltd., 1946).

6 For some reason, Thomas refers to Kafka's letter as "senseless," a strange adjective for a work of evident importance to him. It is my speculation that it could be called senseless because it was never sent, never read by his father, whereas Thomas's father's postcard was at least received by his son. Alternatively, "senseless" could be seen as a transferred epithet. It is not the letter that is senseless so much as it is the effort to fix a relationship that is hopeless. For additional information regarding Kafka's letter to his father, see "Writing the Unwritable—Exploring the Differend in Kafka's Letter to His Father," Christian Fischer, The Kafka Project, Mauro Nervi, last modified January 8, 2011, http://www.kafka.org/index.php?arch_father.

It's difficult to imagine a poet, living or dead, whose words are so widely loved and well remembered as Dylan's lyrics—almost as difficult as it is to imagine a poet's collected works receiving the sumptuous treatment that Dylan's have received in this outsized, though by no means *over*sized, edition. The book's price is prohibitive, it's true. I could have eaten well for a week on the money I shelled out. But what the book offers, beyond its cardboard reproductions of record sleeves and its smooth, luxurious paper, is a compendious record of more than fifty years of songwriting.[1]

On Bob Dylan's *The Lyrics: Since 1962*

Review by Alex Shakespeare

The Lyrics does not set out to be a Dylan variorum. Ricks and the Nemrows concentrate instead on compiling the variants that occur in Dylan's officially released recordings, though they also include a few selected variants that occur we know not exactly where. (Well, sometimes we do know, but the word "bootlegs" makes us blush.) Most of these previously unrecorded variants, consigned to footnotes, are fascinating for the longtime listener to read. An early variant of the final verse of "Jokerman" (1983), for example, is transcribed as follows:

> [It's a shadowy world, skies are slippery gray][2]
> A woman just gave birth to a prince today
> And she's dressed in scarlet
> He'll turn priests into pimps and make old men bark
> Take a woman who could've been Joan of Arc
> And turn her into a harlot
> (655)

In the version released on *Infidels* (Columbia Records, 1983), the verse is markedly different:

> It's a shadowy world, skies are slippery gray
> A woman just gave birth to a prince today
> And dressed him in scarlet
> He'll put the priest in his pocket, put the blade to the heat
> Take the motherless children off the street
> And place them at the feet of a harlot
> (654)

These variants are particularly fascinating for the Dylan listener because he can *hear* the lyrics of the first version whether he has actually heard a bootlegged recording or not. The rhythm of the words as printed is more or less the same as the rhythm of the words as sung

1 Bob Dylan, *The Lyrics: Since 1962*, ed. Christopher Ricks, Lisa Nemrow, and Julie Nemrow (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014). All citations are provided parenthetically in text. References are to page numbers of this edition.

2 This line isn't actually included in the variant, but it *is* part of the verse as sung on the bootlegged recording. (And, in general, the footnotes don't always supply variants for all the lines they appear to be glossing.)

(though the rhythm becomes sharper, more cussedly consonant, on *Infidels*). When we cannot hear the lyrics set down on these pages, however, the contents become little more than curiosities, no matter how masterful the typographical layout may be.

Lyrics that Dylan has never recorded (or the recordings of which have never reached our ears) may tantalize or entertain, but they can never quite come alive. The words of "Ain't No Man Righteous, No Not One," which was written around the time of *Slow Train Coming* (Columbia Records, 1979), are tantalizing indeed:

> When a man he serves the Lord, it
> makes his life worthwhile
> It don't matter 'bout his position, it don't
> matter 'bout his lifestyle
> Talk about perfection, I ain't never
> seen none
> And there ain't no man righteous,
> no not one
> (591)

This song might well be a good one (I would very much enjoy hearing how Dylan sings *worthwhile* and *lifestyle*), but who can really tell from what is set down here? The words of another unreleased composition, "Sign Language," which was written around the time of *Desire* (Columbia Records, 1976), seem to me less likely to make for a good song—even if the rhymes are entertaining to read:

> You speak to me
> In sign language
> As I'm eating a sandwich
> In a small café at a quarter to three
> But I can't respond to your sign language
> You're taking advantage
> Bringing me down
> Can't you make any sound?
> (542)

The most revelatory pages of the book are those that show us something of Dylan's songwriting process

It's a privilege for a Dylan listener, as Ricks suggests in his introduction, to peer into Dylan's rejected material. But without knowing how these mute words would be voiced by Dylan, the reader is, finally, left at a loss. When Dan Chiasson writes of this volume, "If you can find it…afford it…lift it…and banish the tunes from your head, you'll see what Ricks sees," I'm fairly sure he's wrong.[3] *The Lyrics* is a companion volume—as Ricks and the Sisters Nemrow know. The lyrics, without the songs, are but dry bones.

Probably the most revelatory pages of the book are those that show us something of Dylan's songwriting process: the two versions of the "Jokerman" verse, for example, or the three full—and wonderful—versions of "Caribbean Wind" (1981). Dylan has said that he began writing this song in a disoriented moment of indecision while visiting the island of Saint Vincent (not far from Saint Lucia). "I started it in St. Vincent when I woke up from a strange dream in the hot sun," he told Cameron Crowe in 1985. "There was a bunch of women working in a tobacco field on a high rolling hill….I was thinking about living with somebody for all the wrong reasons."[4]

3 Dan Chiasson, "Nine Great Poetry Books of 2014," *Page-Turner* (blog), *New Yorker*, December 26, 2014, http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/nine-great-poetry-books-2014.

4 Cameron Crowe, liner notes to Bob Dylan, *Biograph*, produced by Jeff Rosen (New York: Columbia Records, 1985).

We seem to see traces of this experience in what I take to be the earliest version of the song included in *The Lyrics*. (There are no indications in this volume of which of these unrecorded versions came first, so when it comes to chronology, all most of us can do is guess.)

She was well rehearsed, fair brown and blonde
She had friends who was busboys and friends in the Pentagon
    I was playing a show in Miami in the theater of divine comedy
We talked in the shadows, we talked in the rain
I could tell she was still feeling the pain
    The pain of rejection, the pain of infidelity
        (641)

In what I take to be a later version, the lyrical "I" is made to play second fiddle to the woman, who is converted from a well rehearsed romantic figure to a mythical one.

She was the rose of Sharon from paradise lost
From the city of seven hills near the place of the cross
    I was playing a show in Miami in the theater of divine comedy
Told about Jesus, told about the rain
She told me about the jungle where her brothers were slain
    By a man who danced on the roof of the embassy
        (640)

"Impatient for the Core"
Continued from page 24

maternal side, the failure that is divorce still leaves room for fierce loyalties. The mother taking on scorpions, spiders, and snakes with a rake to protect her children is herself a force who "Out of the canyons came." (p. 26, line 1). (The juxtaposition of the title, "Mother," and the opening line just quoted makes this reading inevitable.) Evidently, the son has reciprocated this fierce loyalty:

> It was just thirteen years ago
> We spent a year in hospitals
> To beat the cancer in your brain.
> ("Night," p. 34, lines 12–14)

All of it goes into the album—the absence and the presence, the failures and the endurance—but all with the light touch of public utterance rather than with the heavy hand of private groanings. That light touch is indeed something to learn from Montale, who tells us he learned it from a myopic fly named *Mosca* ("myopic," from the Greek μυοψ, "fly"). Further readings will no doubt reveal verbal echoes between poems and translations, making *Some Complicity* its own sounding board.

Dan Sofaer recently owned and ran a used bookstore in upstate New York called The Reader's Quarry.

The mythology coming into being in this second version, as well as in the version released on *Biograph* (Columbia Records, 1985), is a religious mythology. But as is so often the case in Dylan's lyrics, it is religious in a way that eludes any orthodox interpretation. "The rose of Sharon" we can understand well enough, but "paradise lost" in this instance is not, as the printed words bring home to us, Milton's Paradise Lost. "The city of seven hills near the place of the cross" might be Rome, or it might be Jerusalem, but neither of these cities is anywhere near a jungle. "The theater of divine comedy" conjures Dante, but it may also refer to Dylan's gospel performances in 1981 at the Sunrise Musical Theater—a theater with a grandiose, semicircular, semi-infernal design. This tangle of allusion is of the kind that Ricks, in *Dylan's Vision of Sin* (Penguin Group, 2003), delights in; but, alas, there is no mention of "Caribbean Wind" there.

The Lyrics also serves to remind us that Dylan's genius lives as much in his music as in his words.

In presenting us with these various versions (which we might imperfectly call Dylan's drafts), *The Lyrics* reveals to us the nuance and consequence of Dylan's wordplay. It reveals to us why we can go on listening to Dylan's songs interminably. A mystery is built into the best of his lyrics. In the version of "Caribbean Wind" released on *Biograph*, for instance, only one line has changed from the version quoted above. "She told

me about the jungle where her brothers were slain / By *a* man who danced on the roof of the embassy" has become "She told me about the jungle where her brothers were slain / By the man who invented iron and disappeared so mysteriously" (640, 639). Both images are evocative. But the second is evocative in the uncanny manner of Gabriel García Márquez. There is something a little devilish about "a man" who kills and then dances on the roof of the embassy; but there is something still more deeply chilling about "the man" who invents iron and then disappears. This man is a sort of murderous Melquíades: an infinitely interpretable character who has entered into the magic circle of Dylan's song.

The Lyrics is a magnificent and generous book. Those who can afford it will be thankful to Dylan, to Christopher Ricks, to Lisa and Julie Nemrow, and to the designers and typesetters at Un-Gyve Press. (One can only hope that, somewhere down the road, there will be another similar edition that is friendlier to the pocket.) The book's layout gives priority to the lyrics themselves, and the editors have been sparing in their commentary. Nevertheless, several of Ricks's footnotes may strike some readers as gratuitous, such as the one that glosses a verse in Dylan's "Spirit on the Water":

> I wanna be with you in Paradise
> And it seems so unfair
> I can't go to Paradise no more
> I killed a man back there
> (845)

Ricks meets this drollery with a tongue-in-cheek set of definitions:

> Paradise: *n*. 1. the abode of Adam and Eve before the Fall Genesis; the Garden of Eden. 2. Heaven (*poetic*) the abode of God and his angels and the final abode of the righteous. 3. Paradise, Nevada (south of Las Vegas), pop. est. 211,509 in 2005 and 189,958 as of July 1, 2007. (845n)

But such eye-rollers are few and far between. This "reduction that is an edition," as Ricks humbly puts it in his introduction, is "in the service of Bob Dylan's genius" (xii, xiii). Its pages serve to remind us of how many worlds Dylan has created with words. We can see—and hear the apocalyptic tetrameter of "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (76) and the carnival quatrains of "Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum" (812), the driving dactyls of "Like a Rolling Stone" (206, 346) and the bluesy rhymed tercets of "The Groom's Still Waiting at the Altar" (628) and "Summer Days" (816). But *The Lyrics* also serves to remind us that Dylan's genius lives as much in his music as in his words. He has echoed the language of T. S. Eliot, Byron, and Keats, often in the same breath that he has echoed the rhythms of Robert Johnson, Hank Williams, and Stephen Foster. In doing so, he has made song of literature, and literature of song.

Alex Shakespeare is currently a visiting assistant professor of English at Skidmore College. His translation of part 1 of François-René de Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* will be published next year by New York Review Books.

"Tangled Up in Blue": Mystical Allegory of the Soul in Flight

By John Wallen

For a long time, I've been intending to write a piece on Dylan that would reflect a passion for his words and music that has now lasted for nearly forty years. The problem is, where to start? Dylan has produced so much material of the highest quality that it would be easy to write something that quickly degenerated into a meaningless survey of high points that would demonstrate a very worldly view of his subtly evocative gifts at work. Wanting to avoid such an approach, and in the hope of producing something with more substance, I have decided to write a detailed analysis of the one Dylan song that haunts my mind wherever I go: "Tangled Up in Blue."[1]

This wonderful song is the opening track on Dylan's 1974 album, *Blood on the Tracks*, which comprises a series of songs about emotional loss that Dylan wrote as his marriage to Sarah Lowndes was breaking up. Another influence, they say, was the art class of Norman Reuben that Dylan was attending in New York around the time when he wrote the song. Specifically, Dylan says that Reuben's work suggested to him how he might go about writing a nonlinear narrative. In fact, all of the lyrics of the song—as we shall see—seem to come from one point of view (which is not the case with some of Dylan's later re-workings of the piece), though there are certainly a number of nonlinear and oblique shifts in emphasis. Perhaps most tellingly, Dylan has said that with *Blood on the Tracks* he began to do consciously what he had previously only been able to do unconsciously. This sounds like the experience of a unique artist coming into his emotional and technical maturity—and there is certainly a lot of that about *Blood on the Tracks* in general and "Tangled Up in Blue" in particular.

With this short preamble now finished, let's get quickly into the situational context of the song. As we would expect from a great Dylan song, the initial mood is ambiguous and, in this case, just a little wistful:

> Early one mornin' the sun was shinin'
> I was layin' in bed
> Wond'rin' if she'd changed at all
> If her hair was still red
> Her folks they said our lives together
> Sure was gonna be rough

1 Originally appeared on *Blood on the Tracks*, track 1, produced by Bob Dylan (New York: Ram's Horn Music; New York: Columbia Records, 1974). All lines quoted from the song refer to this version unless otherwise noted. Lyrics were cross-checked against those published on Bob Dylan's official website at http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/tangled-blue.

They never did like Mama's homemade dress
Papa's bankbook wasn't big enough
And I was standin' on the side of the road
Rain fallin' on my shoes
Heading out for the East Coast
Lord knows I've paid some dues gettin' through
Tangled up in blue.

Here then, the artist appears alone and regretful in his bed thinking about whether someone unknown to listeners, but obviously very close to him, "has changed at all." This is followed by some flashbacks to the difficult life the artist and the absent woman shared together, after which there is a rather abrupt jump to a new scene where the writer or narrator is "standin' on the side of the road." This is where the nonlinear narrative idea comes in. The images are jumping around everywhere, yet the main idea of looking back with regret on a relationship that is now over seems clear enough.

It is necessary to emphasize that Dylan is a hybrid artist and that his art brings together words, music, and performance. He is not a "poet," and he is certainly more than a songwriter. Do categories matter so much? He is a modern troubadour, and his spell is cast over us at its intense best when all three strands of his art are working seamlessly together, as is the case here. Would the words alone be enough? Are they poetry in themselves? Perhaps, but they are not *great* poetry. It is when the hybrid threesome comes movingly together—as in this great song—that we might swear Dylan to be the artistic equal of Eliot or Stravinsky. The striking last line brings us face to face with the central image of loss that sums up all the rest: "Tangled up in Blue."

The song continues with flashbacks about how the pair broke up. After parting ways with his lover, the poet/artist/songwriter is seen drifting around aimlessly, consumed by his loss. He perceives images of the lost lover wherever he goes; even a probable hooker in a "topless

For Dylan, the world of the heart and of the mind is the real world; what we usually call "reality" is a mere fabrication.

place" can bring back visions of his beloved. There is an idea of the "eternal feminine"—and also of the expectant and gullible male (*and* female)—here, always ready to repeat the inevitable and destructive cycle of the past (which is, nevertheless, necessary for spiritual growth).

Dylan, or the protagonist, seems to have lost more than just a relationship. It appears that this special rapport is somehow representative of everything worthwhile in his life, and, with its crumbling, all things have disappeared into a black hole of meaninglessness. Now all the artist can do is drift around from place to place taking menial jobs that mean nothing to him. We are told in a later reworking of the song that he "nearly drowned in Delacroix,"[2] but learn nothing of the circumstances that lead to this crisis. Perhaps they are unimportant. The essential point is that everything has lost its meaning for him so that, even if he had drowned, it wouldn't really have made any difference.

One way a poem or text can take on new power is by making use of subtle emotional archetypes that everyone in a particular culture (in a Jungian sense) might share. In this song, Dylan brings in a number of Christian images that would undoubtedly reverberate with his listeners even if they did not consciously recognize them. The artist/lover in the song is poor and drifting, yet people—such as the enigmatic hooker—are struck by the power of his silence and his infinite capacity to suffer. When they are able to see beyond the simple man to the pain and inner strength that lie beneath, they are shocked. The protagonist himself is a little surprised at his own inner power when the hooker bends down "to tie the laces" of his shoes. Through the intensity of his suffering, the artist becomes a Christ-like figure that commands respect and even love from those who, through emotional awareness rather than innate virtue, are able to see beyond the depths of his pain into the secret heart of the artist's infinite compassion.

The image of the "eternal feminine" is important, as the hooker seems to change, chameleon-like, into someone with a greater depth of intellectual understanding. What hooker would be likely to have a book of poems "from the thirteenth century," especially one by an Italian poet? When the book of poems is passed silently to the protagonist, an epiphany takes place: both the eternal woman and the artist realize the profundity of their own emotional power and how this power/insight can only reach its full potential in combination with each other. Could the poet be Dante, who, through the portrayal of his beloved Beatrice, made a guardian angel out of a simple Florentine girl? Dante would be a poet from the fourteenth century, but probably Dylan was not much interested in such a trivial detail.

The biggest shift in the song takes place when the protagonist suddenly is living with "them" (though who "them" refers to is not made clear) in Montague Street. It seems

2 Bob Dylan, *Real Live*, track 6 (New York: Columbia Records, 1984).

yet another woman is present, but somehow, she is the same one as before, the eternal feminine. This time, it is as if Dylan is an observer of another relationship that is going wrong while the man starts "dealing with slaves" and the woman "froze up inside." The observer is implicated in the story of yet another failed relationship, and he has to "keep on keepin' on" so he can communicate his oblique and difficult truths to the world. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the protagonist continues his journey "like a bird that flew." In mystical Sufi writings, the wandering bird was seen as an image for the human soul in search of God—and the connection would seem to be an appropriate one here. Religious overtones are there in Dylan from the very beginning.

Dylan is a hybrid artist, and his art brings together words, music, and performance.

I believe the last stanza of the song should be viewed in metaphorical/allegorical terms. The artist is "goin' back again" because "[he has] to get to her somehow." Get to whom, we might ask. Is it the red-haired beauty of the first lines? Or, more improbably, could it be the hooker? Or is it possible that the artist is referring to the woman who "froze up inside"? In fact, like the traveling bird who in Sufi allegory continually searches for God, the artist must keep looking for those examples of perfect feminine beauty that take him beyond the mundane and workaday world of illusion and into the presence of God. For Dylan, the world of the heart and of the mind is the real world; what we usually call "reality" is a mere fabrication. Therefore, it is the primary job of the artist to inhabit this spirit world and communicate its arcane truths to the less perceptive among us. However, this can also be dangerous and emotionally draining. As the great man himself once said: "Being noticed can be a burden. Jesus got himself crucified because he got himself noticed. So I disappear a lot."

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Beside The Rain At Homer's

Framed in Homer's windowbooth,
we study each other and
raindrops bouncing up
from pavement and glass.
The errant leaf rides
a mad wadi towards Sixth.
The city slumps like
a coal miner in a hot shower.
A Christmas omelet.
Coffee and cream in heavy cups.
The scent of mint tea on your lips.
Garlic climbs the air like whitewash.

We speak of our leavings and home.
The sad ills carried
like last week's laundry.
Memory of joy and foolish youth.
We wonder at the past in chorus.
The future a spoonful of
sugarcubes and castor oil.
The rain in The Village spares no one.
Surely, this water which sustains us
could have waited until Monday.
But we sit warm, and willing and ponder,
How shall we make it home?

One old umbrella and
a day with no sympathy
which insists true love
lives well above the clouds.
Throw it over your shoulders and
be on your way.

—Daniel Thomas Moran

Sunday Morning

(*pantoum*)

We meet every Sunday morning,
Parishioners long apostate
From any established church,
To worship at the font of Venus.

Parishioners long apostate,
We thirst for vital ritual
To worship at the font of Venus
And slake our thirst through thrust.

We thirst for vital ritual
Through our bodies, not our souls,
And slake our thirst through thrust
And parry, passion and control

Of our bodies, not our souls.
We doff our Sunday garb and naked
We parry passion and control
Like sun worshiper or cannibal.

We doff our Sunday garb, get naked
And tear at life down to the bone,
As sun worshippers or cannibals
Feed a hunger deep in the gut

And tear at life down to the bone,
Leave no morsel on the altar,
Feeding hunger deep in the gut,
Sparing not self or the other.

Leaving no morsel on the altar
Of any established church,
Sparing not self or the other,
We meet every Sunday morning...

—George Held

Works published in the Poets' Corner are selected by Greg Delanty, former President of the ALSCW (2010–11), who reads the submissions without knowing the identities of the poets.

The Swarm

It was spring. There was competition.
The bees had been busy manufacturing new queens.
They sat in their special cells, waiting to hatch.
The first to hatch was mated and became the chosen one.

Two females cannot live in the same hive.
The old queen flew away, taking half the swarm with her—
Her dedicated followers.

She searched for a hollow tree or a hole in a wall
In which to make a new home.

Success—that old tree across the road—
The perfect place to build.

Her half of the swarm settled down with her—
The rest remained behind.

And so a new life was made—
A new existence forged.

The ousted set up her own hive
And never looked back.

—*Laura Solomon*

Laura Solomon has a 2.1 in English literature (Victoria University, 1997) and a master's degree in computer science (University of London, 2003). Her books include *Black Light* (Tandem Press, 1996), *Nothing Lasting* (Tandem Press, 1997), *Alternative Medicine* (Flame Books, 2008), *An Imitation of Life* (Solidus, 2009), and *In Vitro* (HeadworX Publishers, 2011), in addition to several published by Proverse Hong Kong: *Instant Messages* (2010), *Hilary and David* (2011), *The Shingle Bar Taniwha and Other Stories* (2012), *Vera Magpie* (2013), and *University Days* (2014). She has won prizes in Bridport, Edwin Morgan, Ware Poets, Willesden Herald, Mere Literary Festival, and Essex Poetry Festival competitions. She was short-listed for the 2009 Virginia Prize and the 2014 International Rubery Award, and she won the 2009 Proverse Prize. She has had work accepted in the *Edinburgh Review*, *Wasafiri*, *Takahe*, and *Landfall*. She has judged the *Sentinel Quarterly* Short Story Competition. Her newest poetry collection is available at https://www.chineseupress.com/index.php?route=product/search&advanced=true&search_title=In%20Vitro.

After the Surgery

Nobody warned me about the boredom.
So much time on my hands—
great Dali-style melting clocks worth of it.

And wanted nowhere, shunted from pillar to post
Within the health care system.

What am I meant to do with my days post-surgery?
Sit around staring at blank walls,
Hang out at the local drop-in centre,
Take respite in the country.
Fresh air and plenty of it—that's the ticket, so they say.

Quiet desperation is the Kiwi way—
Ten years left, take it day by day.

—*Laura Solomon*

End of Affair

They're for you, yes,
Each one of these mechanical waves goodbye—
All for you, a terse and detaching presence.
They're signed with the love of relief,
Now that I witness the departing ghost
That is you, aware of our nights and silken trysts
As scheduled all along for the gloom
Of this afternoon's train.

I do not return
That fixity in your smile, and mark
Only a receding carriage
On an agonising curve, occluded too soon
In a January tracery of trees.
What would I say to you, granted one more chance?
That the parks are scarcely populous,
Or barely ruffled by the breeze? That behind
These Georgian frontages is a quieter belle époque than mine?

Still may I dream
Of cold sunsets, or in an early dusk
Have faith in the spectral and repetitious,
Of you, of your surprise return into the countries
Of reunion.

—*Peter Cowlam*

Peter Cowlam is a poet and freelance editor, and one in a quartet of writers running a small independent press publishing fiction, memoirs, plays, and travel books.

Give Me Shelter (Yggdrasil's Legacy)

For Lars Espeland

Central to Norse mythology
Stands Yggdrasil, the giant ash tree,
In whose name are traces
Of "gallows"—Odin hanged himself
From it—and "terror": to the tune
Of "O Tannenbaum," sing we,
"O terror tree, O terror tree...."

As a kid I loved a tall white pine
Against whom I'd press my spine
When doom hung over me;
When I read of Yggdrasil
I dreamed of trying to hug him,
An impossibility, for no arms
Could encircle that huge trunk.

What better to dispel gloom
Than to embrace terror, to hug
An immense tree, even if its resin
Stained my tee and made Mom
Angry at me. The pine smelled
Forest fresh, but how would
Yggdrasil smell, like mountain ash?

O terror tree, O terror tree,
Please take pity on puny me.
Be my tree of life, root me
As you are rooted to three
Wellsprings while your limbs
Reach into the heavens and shelter
Dragon, eagle, and stag;

Leave me earthlocked like thee,
Heaven bound for eternity.

—*George Held*

Leonardo Flies Home

Leonardo Da Vinci, took
his place across the tiny isle
from me, and buckled
the belt of his seat.

I was certain it was him.
Too timid to speak,
I listened as he told
the attendant in the
blue-black skirt-suit,
he was returning
from a long overdue visit
with his kid sister in Phoenix.

The New Mexico sun
stayed red and settled upon
the bareness of his cheeks.
The layover at Kennedy had
granted him just enough time
to grab a Coke and a slice.

He studied the movements of
her calves carefully as she
trolled ahead in the cabin,
gauging all of the tender
architectures of her sway.
Sketching upon his napkin,
sipped his orange juice, and
leaned back into a reverie.

Beneath his hair, wiry and limp,
Against the raggedy blanket of his beard,
I could almost hear the notes
of machines assembling in his head.

The gears and wings, the
rockets and parachutes, the
motions that made the
birds lift skyward, and those
contraptions of battle
that would live to eclipse
horse and sword and shield.

Traipsing the heights of
the atmospheric perspective,
describe Earth's lights reflected
against the cold black of the Moon.
Devoted as I have been to the
celebration of life's soft edges.
I thought to touch his shoulder,
hoping we might speak.

I longed to understand the
miracles of chisel at stone, how the
oily applications of ground pigments,
became lambency and shadow,
The virgin he settled among the rocks.
The tenderness in the eyes of his angels.
The satin cheeks of the Italianate ladies.

The despair of Jerome in his wilderness.
Judas clutching his purse on the wall in Milan.
The mounts of his imagination in pitched battle.

Soon, my time had past, our dinners arrived,
and I was left to the contentments of flight
and a wandering, wondering mind.
Below us the ascending cloud mountains,
below them, the dappled cerulean sea.

—Daniel Thomas Moran

Amsterdam

April 2014

In Amsterdam,
we consult two maps.
Ambling the half-moons
of narrow lanes and
still water, we
step aside for the
trams and foot traffic, the
streaming of bicycles that
roll the city's veins.

We stare deeply into
canvas stalls of tulips
and buckets of bulbs,
Shops of warm drink
and pretty sweets.
At Rembrandt's house,
the colors are still ground
on a slab of stone,
linseed added by the drop.

In Amsterdam,
we are the elders, against
an old city decorated
with bloom and beauty.
Young girls talk, eating
sugar-dusted pancakes,
festooned with chocolate.
Black coffee clings to the
inclines of porcelain cups.

Two minutes after seven,
the darkness draws aside
the heavy drape of day.
The air becomes fragrant.
A canal's water becomes onyx.
The candied ladies, framed
in their tall windows,
emanate a ruby light.

In Amsterdam, under
the tender sheets of evening,
love comes installed, a
quartered hour at a time.
Anyone's dreams come true.

—Daniel Thomas Moran

To Weathermen

You forever
stay put, there
before your
many geographies.
A pig-tail of wire
dives from your ear
into your blazer collar.
How you must suffer,
imprisoned there
in that windowless space,
preaching well
beyond the wee hours
of fronts and gales,
raindrops on floodplains,
groundstrikes and hailstones,
dark followed by

day.

Santa Anna Nor'easter
Bermuda High Heatpump
Waterspouts Snowmakers
The Melting Polar Icecap.
Nine on a scale of ten.
Bonechill and frying eggs
on the sidewalk.
Taking a look from space.
If only
you could step
outside.
Live for
the moments.
Tell us when
it will
all end and

how.

—Daniel Thomas Moran

At The Louvre

I've been to see *The Mona Lisa*.
Traversed the angry *Atlantique*.
Dealt with Frenchmen;
their lunging taxis,
their coffee dense and bitter,
their sweet condescension.
I've stood for an hour
in a wind-driven rain.
Descended into the
great pyramid of I.M. Pei.
Paid the fare in francs
to wander that fortress
Past the winged *Victory*,
the armless *Venus*,
Vermeer's *Astronomer*.
Five hundred depictions
of the dying Jesus and
the elegant portraits of
many Frenchmen who
would sadly lose their heads.
I followed the signposts,
heard my heels
down the lengths of
those long hallowed halls.
Then, at once she was there.
Her face looking back at me
over a field of cameras
held high above the crowd.
the subtle *terra incognita* of her
spattered with awe
and battery light.
And I took my turn,
slithered and gaped and
uttered *excuse moi* and
then turned my back again,
and wandered off to
look for *Olympia*.

—Daniel Thomas Moran

Daniel Thomas Moran is a retired clinical assistant professor from Boston University's School of Dental Medicine. His seventh collection, *A Shed for Wood*, was published by Salmon Poetry in Ireland in 2014. A version of the collection in Spanish, translated by Mariela Dreyfus of NYU, was published by Diaz Grey Editores in New York City in 2014. An edition in Albanian, translated by Fahredin Shehu, is expected to be published by PEN Kosovo in 2015. Moran serves on the Board of the New Hampshire Humanities Council and the Humanist Society of Washington, DC. He is also a dedicated Windsor Chair maker.

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