Literary Matters

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

Aut nuntiare aut delectare

From the Editor

Reading has the capacity to be as active, demanding, and creative an endeavor as writing itself is. What initially got me thinking about how challenging it can be to stand at the receiving end of a piece of writing was an article I read about an incredible course offered in the MFA writing program at Columbia University School of the Arts, the Laboratory of Literary Architecture. In the class, writing students pair up with those in the architecture program, and together they build models with the goal of conveying, through physical space and structure, the plot, emotions, and personally meaningful aspects of a piece of literature. Matteo Pericoli, the professor who conceived of the course, prizes the exercise because it challenges those who wish to become authors to consider the reading process in a novel way: "For writing students, being able to think wordlessly about literature, at least once, can be revealing, liberating and even empowering."[1]

Physically rendering one's impressions of a piece of writing is but one approach to readership, one not easily undertaken for the majority of us—though I have a strong affinity for my hot glue gun, I haven't the faintest idea how I'd construct a model of a building—but the larger point is that reading can go beyond, far beyond, gut instinct. The careers of many in the Association are centered on this very fact. Scholars and academics analyze texts from all imaginable stances, as do students. Writers, too, must consider their work from the point of view of the reader lest they alienate their audience by presupposing greater familiarity with the material than actually exists.

That said, I assume that many of us, perhaps all of us, are casual readers at times, consumers of written language simply because we enjoy it, and that is important also—not all undertakings must be coupled with gravitas. And there is much to be gleaned from considering the act of readership when the pursuit is spurred by preference, pleasure, or pastime, and not a profession or project. How we form opinions about a book is contingent upon what we go into it looking for, if we are seeking entertainment as compared to, say, attempting to uncover evidence to support a groundbreaking hypothesis. Combine that with individual predilections and the prehistory the reader brings along with him or her when opening up the initial pages, and you have a pretty complex equation on your hands if you're looking to predict a response to the written work being embarked upon.

1 Matteo Pericoli, "Writers as Architects," *Opinionator* (blog), Draft, *New York Times*, August 3, 2013, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/03/writers-as-architects/?_r=0.

VOLUME 6.3 FALL 2013

Inside This Issue

Clearly, works that resonate with us at an exceptional decibel level are those we are most likely to share our opinions of beyond the confines of our headspace. Our feelings toward the work may register as positive or negative, because it isn't necessarily satisfaction that gets us talking, but passion. This issue of *Literary Matters* hinges on that very passion, what inspires it, and why.

The first feature piece is an essay by George Drew entitled "Lodging a Poem." He explores the question of why certain written works stick out to us through the lens of his dealings with a poem that he cannot help but be drawn to repeatedly. Not only is "Lodging a Poem" a spirited and impressive composition in its own right, but it also serves as a strong foundation for the pieces that follow: a rousing bunch of reviews that are ultimately provoked by the very same sentiments Drew shares in his essay—that is to say, by reading something and finding it so irrepressible that the only resolution is to express what about it makes it linger.

Why each contributor chose the work he or she wrote about is evident in how the author presents the strengths—or shortcomings, as the case may be—of the book being reviewed. The titles selected span so many genres and subjects, and the reviewers all approached the task in such idiosyncratic manners, that reading their pieces got me thinking about the relationship between the two types of reading—for the love of labor, for the love of leisure—I described when I opened this letter, and

how they are more intertwined than I'd envisioned. Suddenly it struck me that review writing is, to an extent, an act resulting from the collusion of those two readers running around inside us. In a sense, it is the scholarly equivalent of hybrid genres of literature such as the "Autobiographical Novel" or the "Fictionalized Memoir" wherein the goal is to show a bit of yourself and your world while illuminating something else in the process. A review, whether laudatory or critical, reveals something about the reviewer as he or she undertakes the pursuit of evaluating someone else's work.

This may be done by way of drawing a personal parallel between one's own life and the book, as Jodie Noel Vinson's review of Claire Messud's recent novel does with tenderness and warmth. And this method is not limited to those responding to pure fiction, as you will discover on reading Matthew DeForrest's clever account of his exposure to a new book of J. R. R. Tolkien's work with commentary contributed by Tolkien's son. This sense of self-disclosure may also become apparent when the reviewer details his or her familiarity with a specific author's bibliography; such a tack establishes a context in which to understand the appraisal, creates a self-portrait and historiography in one. George Held's incisive assessment of James Salter's new novel is made especially compelling by his ability to draw connections that could not be generated without having read a great many of Salter's prior publications. The same is evident in John Wallen's review of Dane Kennedy's latest. Wallen demonstrates deep, penetrating interest in the subject matter and in Kennedy's other work, which adds considerable force to his piece.

Great investment in a field or line of research and strong convictions about a particular point of view also make for robust reviews: read David Mikics's piece on *Why Teach?* (Bloomsbury, 2013), Sharon Warner's examination of *Still Writing* (Grove Press, 2013), and Kelly Cherry's thoughts on a biography about Oppenheimer (and her reactions to other reviews of the book) to see just how much creativity and workmanship go into considering and writing about another's compositions. And there is also the type of review that brings us along as an act of discovery occurs. Both Jesse Russell's review of Pastoreau's chronicle of humanity's relationship with bears and Joshua Cohen's response to Gary Wills's study of the complex dynamics behind the productions of Verdi and Shakespeare invite us to join in the adventures reading these books turned out to be.

The reviewers' reflections on their exploits in the world of leadership may inspire you to investigate these works for yourselves, or perhaps they will simply encourage you to see your own experience as a reading audience in a new way. And if I'm fortunate, they will influence you to share encounters of your own—whether as an academic, an author, an analyst, or a combination thereof.

In the pages that follow, you will find a great deal of other noteworthy material: a column from Professor John Briggs, incoming ALSCW President; announcements about the 2013 Meringoff Awards and upcoming events from local meetings to the Twentieth Annual Conference; articles remembering Seamus Heaney and John Hollander, major figures in the literary world and dedicated ALSCW members who are deeply missed by the scores of people whose lives they touched; and reports on gatherings that took place earlier this fall. "Titular Diversion," an enjoyable and challenging puzzle devised by Debra San, will bring a welcome bit of levity to your day when you set your sights on completing it. And this issue's Poets' Corner abounds with wonderful poems that survey diverse themes and showcase a great deal of linguistic talent.

It is my hope that this issue proves interesting and informative, that it illustrates all the pleasures and possibilities that come with being part of the literary world. I want to thank those who contributed their time and efforts to this issue. I look forward to having an opportunity to read the work of all who are eager to send it my way.

Wishing you a happy and healthy fall,

Samantha Madway
Editor, *Literary Matters*

LITERARY MATTERS

Editor
Samantha R. Madway

Design and Layout
Samantha R. Madway

Literary Matters is published and distributed quarterly by the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers (ALSCW), 650 Beacon Street, Suite 510, Boston, MA 02215. Tel: 617-358-1990; fax: 617-358-1995; office@alscw.org; *www.*alscw.org.

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.

President's Column
By John C. Briggs

The birth of the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers was neither a revolution nor a restoration. It was an act of rededication. An 1863 speech on emancipation was written on a strangely similar subject. In our case, an academic profession and its leading professional organization dedicated to the study and teaching of literature had somehow lost its bearings. A number of members sought to claim their freedom and renew the promise of literary studies. In response, the ALSCW was founded as a venue for conferences, readings, and publications that would inspire and facilitate the study, appreciation, and writing of literature.

In its first two decades of life, the Association has been devoted to reinvigorating, not dogmatizing, the literary arts. The desire to see, analyze, judge, admire, and make literature has been stronger than the impulse to see through it or the temptation to rest satisfied with a doctrine of "art for art's sake."

The making of literature and the work of literary interpretation and scholarship are consequential arts. They illuminate, test, and recreate the shape and substance of the world, and thus are accountable to criticism as they exercise—or fail to exercise—their powers over us. And yet these activities cannot be sustained without an appreciation or love of literature for its own sake. Without such things, they sooner or later turn literature into an exploitative technology, or a meal of ashes.

Is it possible to read literature or aspire to compose it without eventually developing and depending upon an art of reading? Without the persistence that comes from interest and a habit of reading—without the waiting, gazing, listening, and anticipation that intimate the shape of things unknown—literature stays from us. Hence our interest in the book, public literary readings, and the teaching of literature in primary and secondary schools and in higher education.

From these founts of study and composition come questions the Association takes up: questions about the nature of literature and the literary imagination, the character of the book in an electronic age, the process of

(continued on page 5)

To contribute to **Literary Matters**, please send articles to *literarymatters@alscw.org*. Content ranges from columns on neglected authors, to interviews with those working in the literary field, to scholarly analyses of a text, and beyond. Please do not hesitate to contact the editor with any questions you may have.

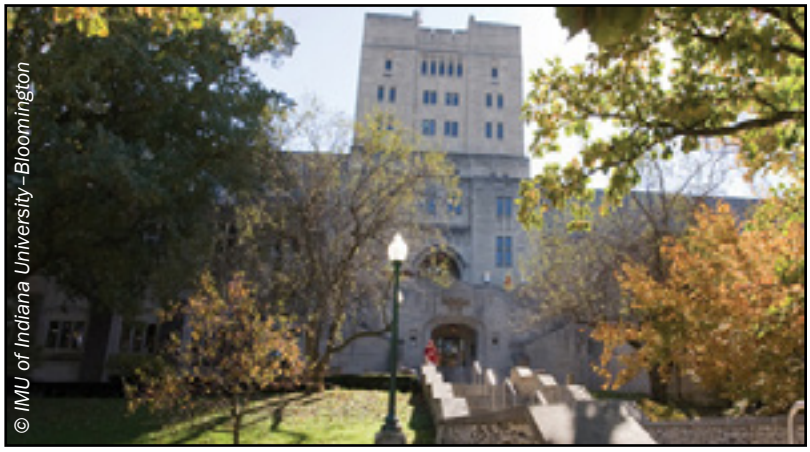
Submissions for **Issue 7.1** must be received by **January 15, 2014**.

News & Announcements

Save the Date: The ALSCW Annual Conference

We are pleased to announce that the 2014 ALSCW Conference will take place **Friday, April 4 and Saturday, April 5 at the Indiana Memorial Union of Indiana University**. Please pass the word to your colleagues, and greet the spring with us in beautiful Bloomington. Plans include a preliminary evening of readings on Thursday night, April 3, and an ALSCW board meeting on the morning of Sunday, April 6.

The IU Union sponsors **express bus service between Indianapolis Airport and the conference site**. Rooms will be available for conference-goers at the Union, as well as in several hotels adjacent to campus. Be on the lookout for follow-up announcements with more information. We are looking forward to seeing you this coming April.



© IMU of Indiana University–Bloomington

Meringoff Matching Grant Met

Thank you and congratulations to all the donors whose contributions have helped us to meet Stephen J. Meringoff's generous $13,500 Matching Challenge to the Association. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and hope you will join us in immense thanks to Stephen J. Meringoff for his outstanding support of the ALSCW.

Literary Matters now features a section for book reviews of recent publications. Reviews may range from 500 to 1,500 words, and should be critical in the full sense (not only laudatory). The review need not provide an overview of the entire work, but can instead focus on characteristics you feel set the piece apart. Book reviews should be sent to *literarymatters@alscw.org.*

Those received by **January 15, 2014** will be considered for publication in **Issue 7.1.**

2014 Annual Conference: Call For Papers

The call for papers for the ALSCW's Twentieth Annual Conference in Bloomington, Indiana, April 4–6, 2014 can now be found on the Association's website, both on the home page and under the "Conferences" tab. It is also available as a PDF, which can be downloaded at *http://alscw.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ALSCW-2014-CALL-FOR-PAPERS-11-5-13-FINAL.pdf*.

close reading, the passing glories of literary ephemera, and the memory's homely and labyrinthine library of those works we discover, keep, and reread. So arise questions of judgment and value, of consequences. A love of literature that dares to name itself will make for important discussions that draw us back to the texts, to performative readings, and to the making of new works. It will animate, test, and temper our imaginations.

In that spirit, the April 2014 ALSCW conference will feature panels and seminars about such things as the risks and rewards of translating works of German and Russian literature, the surprising interplay of rhetoric and Asian American literature, the problematic place of literature in the K–12 Common Core, the unlikely yet formative power of literary wonder, the sources and resources of the essay, the legacy of the chorus in classical drama, the Bible as it is illuminated by the study of literature, and the remarkably influential power of Romance literature.

We have our Association with its publications, conferences, readings, board meetings, and banquets (all too rare) because these things embody a spirit not merely contrary to unfavorable academic trends but dedicated to the rebirth and renewal of literary studies and literary composition. Will you join us in that effort at Indiana University this April 4–5, 2014 for the Twentieth Annual Conference?

John C. Briggs
President, ALSCW

A FRIENDLY REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

Our members are essential to the growth and success of our organization—the papers you present at the Annual Conferences, the articles you contribute to our publications, and the local meetings you host and attend all embody the very mission we seek to achieve. We rely on your membership to further our aims as an association, and to continue providing arenas in which you all may gather to further your own. Please take a moment to renew your membership for the 2013 calendar year.

Please note the new membership rates, effective as of December 1, 2012: The categories have been reduced to four: Premium memberships at $125 annually; Regular memberships at $85 annually; Senior memberships (for those 70 and above) at $60; Reduced-price memberships at $45 annually (those eligible for reduced-price memberships are members in their first year, students, and those earning less than $50,000 a year). We have eliminated the category of joint domestic memberships and will simply offer two-member households the regular $85 rate, in return for which they will receive all the benefits provided by a current joint domestic membership—a single copy of our publications and full member privileges for both persons in the household. The Executive Council voted for this change at its October 2012 meeting in an effort to meet our ever-increasing financial demands. Since this is the first time in a very long time that our rates have increased, we trust you will understand the necessity. Membership rates in our Association are still one of the best bargains in the business.

To renew your membership with the Association for 2013, please visit *http://alscw.org/membership/join/index.html*. To pay by check, please mail your completed membership form—available on page 50 of this issue of *Literary Matters*—along with a check made out to ALSCW to the Boston office: 650 Beacon Street, Suite 510, Boston, MA 02215. Whatever level of membership you choose, you will be doing a great service to literature and the humanities by supporting the ALSCW. A complete explanation of membership benefits, rights, and privileges is available at the web address noted above, should you wish to read more about the terms of membership in the Association. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office at o*ffice@alscw.org* or by calling 617-358-1990. Thank you for your support!

2013 Stephen J. Meringoff Awards

The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers announces three awards of $2,000 each in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Only one entry will be accepted from each person. The entry must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2013.

The winners will be announced early in 2014. There is no entry fee for current members of the Association. All others will be required to join the ALSCW in order to be considered for the awards. New members will receive the annual three issues of our literary journal, *Literary Imagination*, and our quarterly newsletter, *Literary Matters*, in addition to being able to attend our conferences and local gatherings. See the ALSCW's website (http://alscw.org/membership/join/index.html) for details about how to join.

- For the Meringoff Poetry Award, each entry can be one poem or a group of poems totaling no more than 150 lines. Greg Delanty will serve as judge.
- For the Meringoff Fiction Award, each entry should be one story or a chapter of a longer work comprising no more than 25 double-spaced pages.
- For the Meringoff Nonfiction Award, each entry should be one nonfiction piece or a chapter of a longer work of no more than 25 double-spaced pages.

All entries will be judged anonymously. Please include one copy of your entry with your name, email address, postal address, and phone number, and a second copy without your name or contact information. Please send your entries to Stephen J. Meringoff Literary Contests, Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers, 650 Beacon St., Suite 510, Boston, MA 02215.

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.

Need some specific examples? 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*.

Local Meeting:
Peter Carey at the Center for the Humanities, CUNY Graduate Center
New York City, November 21, 2013

Reading by novelist Peter Carey, introduced by novelist Sigrid Nunez with a conversation moderated by Aoibheann Sweeney to follow

The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers cordially invites you to a reading and conversation with novelist Peter Carey. This New York City local meeting is cosponsored by the Center for the Humanities and the PhD program in English at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center. Mr. Carey will be introduced by novelist Sigrid Nunez. A conversation moderated by Aoibheann Sweeney will follow the reading.

The event will take place at the Martin Segal Theatre in the CUNY Graduate Center on Thursday, November 21, 2013 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Martin Segal Theatre is located at 365 Fifth Avenue at West 34th Street in New York City.


Photograph by Ashley Gilbertson

Peter Carey is one of only three writers in history to have won the Booker Prize twice, first for *Oscar and Lucinda* (Harper & Row, 1988) and again for *True History of the Kelly Gang* (Knopf, 2001). With *Parrot and Olivier in America* (Hamish Hamilton, 2009), he became the first author to be a finalist for the National Book Award and the Booker Prize simultaneously.

A *New York Times* front-page review described *True History of the Kelly Gang* as "Triumphantly eclectic, as if Huck Finn and Shakespeare had joined forces to prettify the legend of Jesse James." Paul Auster describes *Parrot and Olivier in America* as "possibly the most charming and engaging novel this demon of a story-teller has yet written." His most recent novel, *The Chemistry of Tears*, was published by Knopf in 2012.

He is a Distinguished Professor at Hunter College in New York where he is Executive Director of the MFA program in Creative Writing.

Sigrid Nunez has published six novels, including *A Feather on the Breath of God* (Harpercollins, 1995), *The Last of Her Kind* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), and, most recently, *Salvation City* (Riverhead Hardcover, 2010). She is also the author of *Sempre Susan: A Memoir of Susan Sontag* (Atlas, 2011). She teaches in the graduate writing programs at both Columbia and Boston University.

Aoibheann Sweeney is author of the novel *Among Other Things, I've Taken Up Smoking* (The Penguin Press, 2007). She serves as the Executive Director of the Center for the Humanities at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Local Meeting Report:
Harry Thomas at the Editorial Institute
Boston, September 17, 2013

By Allison Vanouse

On September 17, Harry Thomas visited the Editorial Institute at Boston University to read from *Some Complicity*, his new collection of poems and translations from the Un-Gyve Press.

"Mr. Blackmur, what are the holy cities of America?" John Berryman retells this anecdote, the critic questioned by a precocious English child, to open "Dream Song 210."[1] Harry Thomas remembered the line to us as late sun poured through the library windows, graciously thanked his hosts and his publishers, and began to read.

Members and friends listened raptly to a selection that required no commentary: the poet provided almost none, but spoke the poems with their own grace. He began with his own. "Of Country I Know" is dedicated to David Ferry:

> Above the lower tree-line in the desert
> northeast of San Diego, where I'm from,
> in land mapped out abruptly by the sun,
> you'll find a spreading growth of piñon pine,
> juniper, branching nearly to the ground,
> lilac and sage, and scattering white pines.

These first lines give, better than description could, a sense of the atmosphere descended, California shaded to Italian light as Thomas continued with translations of poems by Giacomo Leopardi, Umberto Saba, Montale, and Primo Levi. Thomas closed with his translation of Levi's "The Thaw":

> We're tired of winter now.
> Frost has done all that it could
> To flesh, mind, mud, and wood.
> May the thaw come and melt the memory
> Of last year's snow.

The group broke into smaller parties for wine and conversation. In mid-September Boston, the sky still glowed until late in the evening.

We look forward to the upcoming meetings and readings at the Editorial Institute, where the series continues. Please look out for notices from the office, and feel welcome to join us.

Harry Thomas is the translator of Joseph Brodsky's masterpiece "Gorbunov and Gorchakov" from his collection *To Urania: Selected Poems 1965–1985* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988). Thomas's selected translations were published under the title *May This Be* (Jackdaw Press, 2001). He is the editor of *Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (Penguin Books, 1993) and *Montale in English* (Handsel Books, 2002). His poems, translations, essays, and reviews have appeared in dozens of magazines. He is Editor in Chief of Handsel Books, an imprint of Other Press and an affiliate of W. W. Norton.

1 *The Dream Songs* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1959; 2007), p. 229.

Allison Vanouse assists at the ALSCW office in Boston. She is presently at work on an edition of R. P. Blackmur's poems as an MA candidate at the Editorial Institute.

Mogadishu and Verse:

By J. Chester Johnson

On Tuesday, October 1, the ALSCW cosponsored a local meeting in New York City with the Center for the Humanities and the PhD Program in English at the CUNY (City University of New York) Graduate Center. The event, which consisted mainly of a reading by and conversation with poet Tom Sleigh, was moderated by the poet Phillis Levin, who currently serves on the ALSCW's Council.

The evening started with remarks by the critic and writer Morris Dickstein, who discussed the interdisciplinary alliance that must be fostered between the worlds of poetry and scholarship, which are inextricably linked; he referenced the CUNY Graduate Center as a place that exemplifies and empowers this important alliance.

After an introduction by Levin—which evoked Sleigh's "double life" as both poet and essayist and the special qualities found in Sleigh's verse, including the demonstrable reverence in his poems for the work and techniques of previous poets—Sleigh read for about forty minutes from both his older and recent poems. This afforded me the opportunity of hearing once again some verse he had read a few months ago at a poetry festival in New York City where Sleigh was the featured poet and I a guest poet.

As Sleigh read this time, I was once more reminded of the poetry of James Dickey by some of Sleigh's "home-choice," muscular poetry of analogous subject matter and texture—in particular, doubtless personal struggles frequently given vent by both poets through physicality. For example, in "Self Portrait With Shoulder Pads," which Sleigh recited at both readings, the métier is a high school football scrimmage in which Sleigh has been set apart in non-verbal interrogation, testosterone-centric combat, nose-to-nose on all fours, crashing away over the turf against his twin brother—Timmy and Tommy, identical gladiators—while attendant coaches and gridiron teammates encircle the two warriors and vociferously incite, encourage the physical eruption of doppelganger battle. Now that's an artistic, poetic scene James Dickey would have envied and glorified.

The second part of the program began with a series of questions posed by Levin that dealt with the confluence of the two parts of Sleigh's "double life" and the impact of non-fiction writing and related experiences on his verse, especially the evolution of lyricism in his poetry. Following those exchanges, Sleigh described the provocative events and intense dangers involved in getting to and being in Mogadishu, Somalia and those surrounding his time at Kenyan refugee camps—parts of writing a real-time nonfiction article. During the interface between audience and poet, much dialogue centered on the dynamics and fusion of forces driving the composition of verse and nonfiction. The expositive journey into eastern Africa was often hypnotic and benefitted from the curiosity of members of the audience and Sleigh's obvious regard for individual Africans and fascination with the challenges associated with the front line.

On my way to the subway after the ALSCW event that night, I pondered the seeming absurdity of connecting the art of poetry—or any art, for that matter—to survival in Somalia and concluded that a line I wrote some time ago was, unfortunately, still valid: "the god of art is no match for the god of survival."

J. Chester Johnson is a poet, essayist, and translator. W. H. Auden and Johnson were the two poets on the drafting committee for the retranslation of the Psalms, which version is contained in the current edition *The Book of Common Prayer* (The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979) of The Episcopal Church (USA). Johnson has published numerous volumes of poetry, the most recent being the second edition of *St. Paul's Chapel & Selected Shorter Poems* (Saint Johann Press, 2010); the collection's signature poem remains the memento card for the 30,000 weekly visitors to the chapel at Ground Zero that survived the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He has also composed several works on the American Civil Rights Movement, six of which are included in the Civil Rights Archives at Queens College (New York City).

ALSCW/VSC Literature in Translation Forum Report:

Peter Cole and Adina Hoffman at the Vermont Studio Center

Johnson, October 4, 2013

Dear friends and supporters,

We want to report on the success of the Fourth Annual ALSCW/VSC LiT Forum and thank those of you who helped make this event possible through your generous support.

The 2013 LiT Forum took place October 4 and featured poet and translator Peter Cole and non-fiction writer Adina Hoffman. In addition to the joint presentation on contemporary Middle Eastern literature through the lenses of Hebrew and Arabic poetry, the pair's week-long visit included a craft talk by Peter Cole for the VSC writing residents, a public reading of his original poems and translations, and lively participation by both Cole and Hoffman in VSC's diverse creative community.

In this fourth year of the program, Cole and Hoffman focused on what they called "deep translation," or translation as an essential component of the artistic process. This was a recurring concept throughout the week, touched on in Cole's reading and craft talk, in the joint presentation, and in individual conferences with resident writers and translators. You can listen to the LiT Forum presentation on VSC's SoundCloud page: *https://soundcloud.com/vermont-studio-center/vsc-lit-forum-2013-peter-cole*.

Peter Cole and Adina Hoffman give a joint presentation at the 2013 LiT Forum

Following opening remarks by VSC President Gary Clark, Cole and Hoffman's presentation showcased the work of Middle Eastern poets Aharon Shabtai and Taha Muhammad Ali and their "against-the-grain" views on Israel and Palestine. Cole and Hoffman shared some of the questions raised in their translations and biographical work, as well as those sparked by their relationships as translators and academics to these two Middle Eastern poets. Peter Cole's poetry reading (available to the public at *https://soundcloud.com/vermont-studio-center/vsc-reading-series-peter-cole*) included fresh translations of ancient Arabic and Hebrew poems in addition to his own original poetry and insights into the collaborative and creative nature of translation.

The VSC community during this year's LiT Forum was abuzz with inspired, ongoing conversation between residents such as poet Lu De'an and poet/translator Mindy Zhang (both at VSC for a joint Chinese poetry and translation residency supported by the Henry Luce Foundation) and Israeli fiction writer and translator Evan Fallenberg (the recipient of a Literature in Translation Fellowship sponsored by the NEA). During their stay, Cole and Hoffman got to know resident writers and visual artists over meals, evening lectures, and visits to galleries and studios. They were struck by the combination of creative intensity and inspiring calm they found at the Studio Center.

The Literature in Translation Program at VSC was established in 2009 to foster a more diverse, international creative writing program, a vision that has truly come to fruition in the past year. Newly established fellowship programs have brought more than twenty writers and literary translators to VSC since 2012 from countries such as Botswana, China, Egypt, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Spain, and the United States.

With sincere gratitude for your interest and support,

All of us at Vermont Studio Center

At 5:30 p.m. on October 30, a local meeting of the ALSCW took place at Boston University's Editorial Institute, immediately preceding Game 6 of the World Series, which was scheduled for 8:07 p.m. that evening. Thomas Austenfeld of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, author of *American Women Writers and the Nazis: Ethics and Politics in Boyle, Porter, Stafford, and Hellman* (The University Press of Virginia, 2001), presented a paper entitled "Memoir, not Autobiography: Robert Lowell's Self-Articulation Reexamined." He expressed his gratitude for the chance to speak about Lowell in Boston, and his relief that the room was well filled despite the police-imposed parking ban in the vicinity and the expected tumult later that evening. He began his paper by making a distinction between autobiography, which commits itself to an exploration of the external events of a life over an uninterrupted chronology, and memoir, which may focus on internal epiphanies and is not required to provide such a chronology.

He further emphasized the opportunities for reimagining open to a writer who engages in remembering in a memoir rather than in an autobiography, and cited Robert Giroux's account of Lowell's asking for a contract for an autobiography, which, though left unfinished, led to the poems of *Life Studies* (Faber and Faber; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1959) and Lowell's later treatment of events from his early life. Citing "Epilogue," in which Lowell states that he is trying "to make / something imagined, not recalled," and yet goes on to "Pray for the grace of accuracy," Austenfeld touted the inclusion of the prose passage "91 Revere Street" in the second edition of *Life Studies* as an important turning point in Lowell's use of material from his own past in his later work.

Among the points raised in the lively discussion that followed were an articulation of the varied uses of the word "memoir" in recent popular and literary contexts, Lowell's tendency to invent whole anecdotes and present them and their characters as real, the necessary element of reimagining that attends any act of remembering, and the role Lowell's highly personal sense of humor plays in his work.

Local Meeting Report:
Thomas Austenfeld at the Editorial Institute
Boston, October 30, 2013

By Al Basile

It is possible that the quality of engagement modeled on Bay State Road that late afternoon influenced the outcome of the more numerously (though not necessarily better) attended event in Fenway later that evening.

Thomas Austenfeld holds MA and PhD degrees in English and American Literature from the University of Virginia. He taught at American universities for twenty years before returning to Europe. Austenfeld is the editor of *Kay Boyle for the Twenty-First Century* (Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2008) and *Critical Insights: Barbara Kingsolver* (Salem Press, 2010), as well as coeditor of *Writing American Women*, SPELL 23 (Gunter Narr, Tübingen, 2009) and *Terrorism and Narrative Practice* (LIT Verlag Münster, 2011). He has published scholarly articles on authors as diverse as Lord Byron, Wallace Stevens, Katherine Anne Porter, Peter Taylor, Thomas Wolfe, Josef Pieper, Derek Walcott, Louise Erdich, Philip Roth, Frank Norris, and Robert Lowell, in addition to autobiographical essays in *American Literary Scholarship*. He is currently at work on a book about American poets' memoirs.

Al Basile is a poet, singer/songwriter, and cornetist. He began his career as a cornet player with Roomful of Blues in 1973, and has worked with the Duke Robillard Band since 1990. He has nine solo CDs out; the last five reached the Top 15 on the *Living Blues* airplay charts. He was nominated in 2010, 2012, and 2013 for a Blues Music Award as Best Horn Player. His poetry and fiction have been published in recent years. He taught at the Providence Country Day School from 1980 to 2005, and has since concentrated on his writing performing, and recording. He gives readings around New England, many videos of which can be found on his YouTube Channel: *albasile9*.

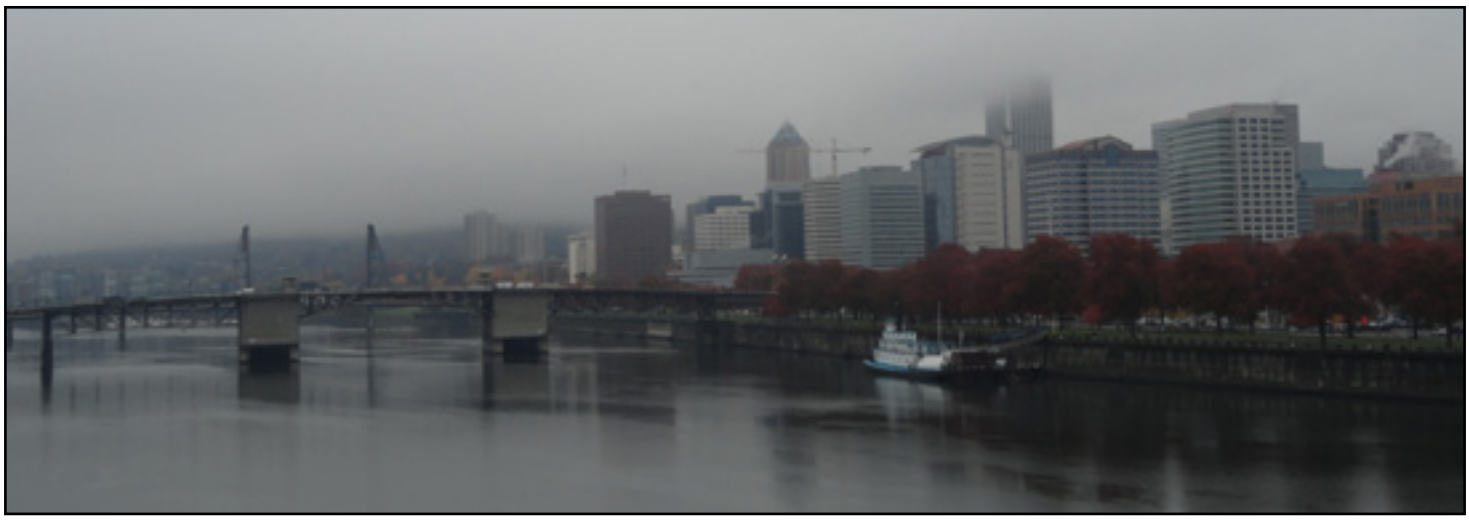
To see news of recent honors or awards you have received, notices for upcoming events of interest to ALSCW members, or information about Local Meetings you have hosted/are hosting included in **Literary Matters**, please send materials (photographs, text detailing all relevant information, and so forth) to *literarymatters@alscw.org* by the submission deadline for **Issue 7.1: January 15, 2014.**

Grey Gowrie at the Editorial Institute: A Review

By Ben Mazer

One of the most extraordinary local meetings of the ALSCW we have seen was the Grey Gowrie reading at the Editorial Institute on Nov. 5. The atmosphere was deliciously macabre as Grey Gowrie read an imaginary dialogue between his younger self and his dear older friend Francis Bacon (with delightfully garish references to Lucian Freud—Bacon didn't want to paint Robert Lowell's third wife Caroline Blackwood because Freud had already "done her"), poems about being a stone's throw away from Eugene Montale at the age of 8, Gowrie's domino heart transplant, and poems (reminiscent of the late Lowell in their precision and detailed, musical attention and sensitivity to nature) about the vicissitudes of the modern social life of man alone in his relations with those who are close to him, vividly resurrecting the world of the sixties and seventies in which Gowrie lived the most active, ripe and typical-exemplary of twentieth-century adult lives. In his conversation Gowrie recounted astonishing stories of stalking TSE-in-a-homburg in his youth, merely to know that he existed, living with Charles Olson (and around Robert Creeley, and John Wieners—whose poetry he particularly "could get with") at Buffalo as a young husband and first-time father in the early '60s (Olson "had a principle—that no two enlightened sentences could be strung together"), his close friendship with his teacher and mentor Robert Lowell from the time that he went to study with Lowell at Harvard in 1963 (Gowrie was briefly Lowell's amanuensis, going through all of Lowell's revisions for *Near the Ocean*), the hubbub and scandal over Lowell's decision to print Elizabeth Hardwick's letters as poems, Lowell's madness (" 'Now you know I'm crazy,' as he spooned thick institutional gravy over his ice cream and wolfed it down"), Gowrie's thirty years' abstinence from poetry (only beaten by Landis Everson's 43 years' silence?), his time in the art world, and his insistence that poetry is ultimately music. He humourously noted that Americans were often surprised that a conservative British Lord should be a poet. The atmosphere was congenial and high spirited as old friends of Robert Lowell—Gowrie and host Christopher Ricks—enjoyed informal banter at being together again for an evening that was, to put it plainly, utterly fantastic. We who were there are rushing out to purchase the recent replete collection of Gowrie's wonderful, even masterful poems from the Sheep Meadow Press. There is hope afoot that we can get Grey Gowrie back for further such events.

Ben Mazer is the author of *New Poems* (Pen & Anvil Press, 2013) and *Poems* (Pen & Anvil Press, 2010). His critical edition of the *Complete Poems of John Crowe Ransom* is forthcoming from the Un-Gyve Press of Boston. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is the editor of the *Battersea Review*.



In Memoriam: Seamus Heaney

April 13, 1939–August 30, 2013

"A Sunlit Absence"

By Meg Tyler

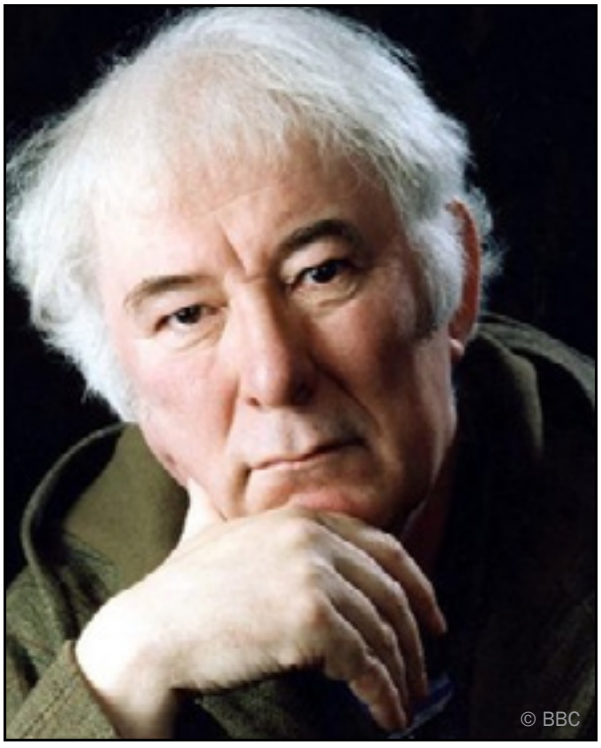
From the early 1960s to the second decade of the twenty-first century, Seamus Heaney gave us an impressive number of well-crafted poems and translations. What marked the early poems was a furtive glee about writing, and the monuments under construction were as remarkable as the farm he grew up on was unremarkable, plain, and unadorned. His work is a testament to the need for reliance on imaginative memory. Heaney's revisiting and reappraising of childhood's sacred places, the weightlessness of the child's imagination—or, if not weightlessness, then the unfiltered experiences—give us access to what we have all lost, a long way from home. When reading in the *Irish Times* Michael Longley's reflection on Heaney, his fallen brother, I had a sense of déjà vu when I discovered that the lines he had learned by heart the first time he read them were the same as mine. From "Mossbawn: Sunlight":[1]

> And here is love
> like a tinsmith's scoop
> sunk past its gleam
> in the meal-bin.
> (lines 25–28)

The inevitability of surrender to the poem is like the scoop's surrender to the meal. If the second line hadn't been five syllables (the extension of "scoop") to the four syllables of the other lines in the stanza, the poem wouldn't have its extraordinary freight. It is, after all, only one of a million other similes that have been written to describe love. Think about the way the vowels consort and contrast with each other: the quicksilver vowels in "tinsmith" speak to "bin," and "gleam" (inverts) to "meal." What I have since grown to know as the "squat sturdiness" of Heaney's Anglo-Saxon monosyllables works to make these lines broader than they seem.

1 *North* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975).

As craftsman, Heaney, whose range is broad and deep, has had few contemporary rivals. This is the case with his impulse for collaboration as well. Through his translations of works such as *Antigone*, *Beowulf*, and Old Irish lyrics, Heaney revealed his tendency to engage not only in conversation with the past, but also with lands and languages that carry in their vocables and etymologies the histories of violence. He has also paired his energies with musicians from the folk singer David Hammond—with whom he and Michael Longley toured a turbulent Northern Ireland in 1968, performing "Room to Rhyme" at churches, schools and libraries—to Liam O'Flynn with his Uilleann pipes and tin whistle in the 2003 recording of *The Poet and the Piper* (Claddagh Records).



So it might come as no surprise that more recently Heaney collaborated with Mohammed Fairouz, a young Arab American composer, to create a musical composition called "Anything Can Happen" based on three poems ("In Iowa," "Höfn," and "Anything Can Happen") from Heaney's 2006 volume, *District and Circle* (Faber and Faber), a volume that was penned

in what Heaney called "a new age of anxiety." Heaney rationalized the choice of poems to Fairouz by saying, "I thought a triptych could be made as follows—the first two being ominous, the third catastrophic—the omen fulfilled, as it were."

These three poems attend to global unpredictability and consequence. The first, "In Iowa," finds us in a tempest-tossed landscape, the warmth of humanity displaced by feet of snow. The language is resonant with biblical overtones. The closing image is of "rising waters," as if Noah's flood had returned to cleanse the earth of its pollution. The second poem, "Höfn," the name of a small Icelandic fishing village seen from above by the poet passing over in an airplane, offers us a glimpse of a melting glacier, a consequence of abusing the planet. And the third in the triptych, "Anything Can Happen," a translation of a Horatian ode, describes a cataclysm that can come out of nowhere—a clear blue sky, the finest of September days—and rain terror down upon us.

I heard the piece performed not long ago at Marsh Chapel at Boston University. A baritone interrupts the groundswell of the choir to sing the biblical-sounding section of "In Iowa":

> Verily I came forth from that wilderness
> As one unbaptized who had known
> darkness.

A viola's mournful tune shuddered at the poem's end and introduced the next piece, a section sung by the baritone, a "Sura" in the Arabic Injeel. In each poem, Heaney fuses together on the line conflicting elements: parting or rising waters, the sun's warmth and a glacier's demise, a pristine blue sky that delivers death. It has been his tendency to bring together disparate elements on the page, to create at least a momentary harmony, as he does with words from Anglo-Saxon and Latin, or, in this case, English and Arabic. These unexpected congregations defuse the conflict or launch music into the air. As did his trip through a troubled Northern Ireland some forty-five years ago, Heaney's collaboration with Fairouz represents another such harmonizing measure. How sad for us that it was one of his last.

Meg Tyler is an associate professor of humanities and chair of the Institute for the Study of Irish Culture at Boston University. She is now working on a collection of essays on the poetry of Michael Longley.

A Memorial Reading for Seamus Heaney

New York City, November 11, 2013

On Monday, November 11 at 7:00 p.m., a memorial reading is being held to honor the memory of Seamus Heaney, the beloved and world-renowned poet, who passed away on August 30, 2013 at the age of 74. Poets Frank Bidart, Sven Birkerts, Eavan Boland, Lucie Brock-Broido, Greg Delanty, Jonathan Galassi, Eamon Grennan, Matthea Harvey, Edward Hirsch, Jane Hirshfield, Yusef Komunyakaa, Paul Muldoon, Atsuro Riley, Tom Sleigh, Tracy K. Smith, Jean Valentine, Anne Waldman, and Kevin Young, and novelist Colm Tóibín will gather at Cooper Union for the public tribute. Each will read a favorite Heaney poem and Irish pipes will be played. Singer Paul Simon will make a special guest appearance.

The event, which is being held at the Great Hall of Cooper Union, is free and open to the public. The doors will open at 6:15 p.m.

The Great Hall
The Foundation Building
30 Cooper Square
New York, NY 10003

For directions, please visit *http://cooper.edu/about/galleries-auditoriums/the-great-hall.*

Greg Delanty remembers Seamus Heaney in the *Atlantic*

Former ALSCW President, poet Greg Delanty, was asked to write a brief memoir of Seamus Heaney for the *Atlantic* online.

To read Delanty's piece, "Seamus Heaney's Extraordinary Generosity," visit *http://alscw.org/news/?p=571*.

In Memoriam: John Hollander

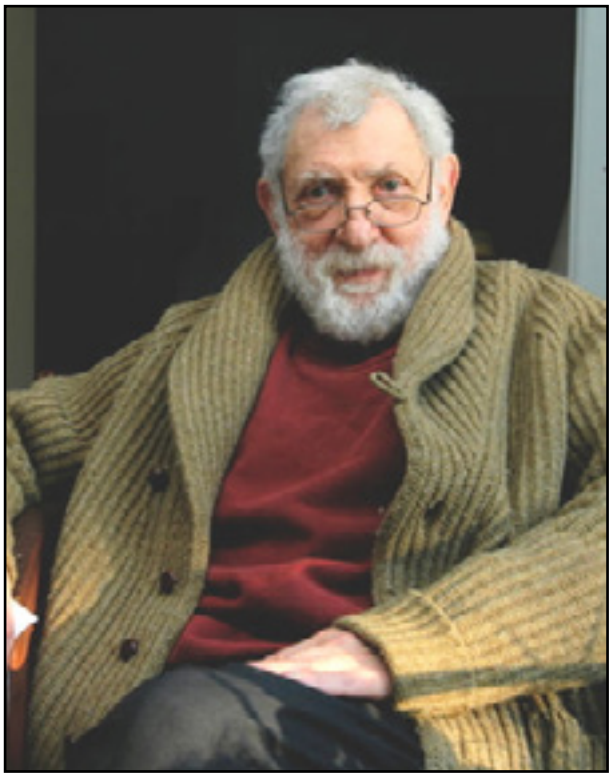
October 28, 1929–August 17, 2013

By Jenn Lewin

John Hollander, poet and literary critic, Sterling Professor Emeritus at Yale, was a devoted early supporter of the ALSCW. In the years of its founding and inaugural conference, 1994 and 1995, he joined the organization and participated as a member of the first Conference Steering Committee (and read his poetry at that event). In those early days, John was also an enthusiastic member of the Association's Council and the Nominating and Curriculum Committees. Many of his friends and former students have gone on to hold leadership positions in the organization and read their work at various gatherings and local meetings; some, like Rosanna Warren, have been involved since the beginning.

During that time, the mid- to late nineties, I was a graduate student at Yale, where John directed my dissertation. I remember hearing him speak about the ALSCW (then the ALSC) as an organization that impressed him tremendously: its commitment to fostering meaningful conversations and exchanges about literature through conferences and publications heartened him. It gave him hope that anti-intellectual and narrowly specialized aspects of scholarly movements of the 80s and 90s hadn't taken over the academy completely because hundreds, and eventually thousands, of like-minded members responded to the organization's mission and dedication. If larger forums like the annual MLA Convention had ceased to provide a space for intellectual and creative endeavors that both appealed to a wide audience and engaged that audience deeply, here was an opportunity to reenvision the practice of disciplinary discourse with an international group of individuals motivated by similar goals and interests.

Other tributes to John at the sites of literary reviews, institutions, and the like, as well as the obituary that appeared in the *New York Times*, have discussed his contributions to American letters and scholarship, so I don't intend to rehearse those here. What I want to stress in writing this is something a bit more personal, a bit more specific. I bet that he so highly valued the ALSCW for a reason his habitual modesty would have



prevented him from recognizing directly: it embodies the capacious combination of identities so important to his own multifaceted career as a poet, a scholar, a teacher, and a critic.

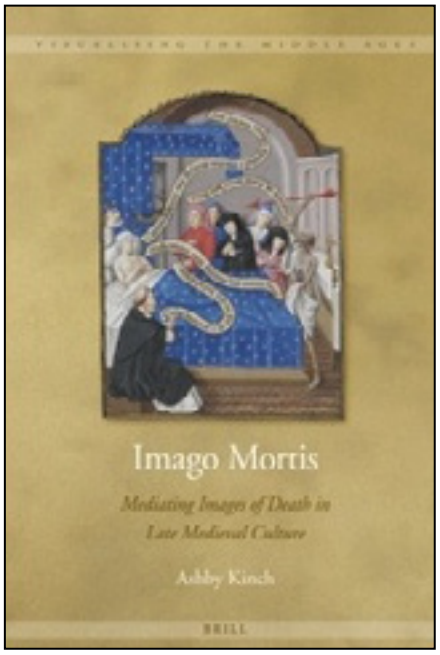
Jenn Lewin is a visiting assistant professor of English at Sewanee, where she has taught a range of courses in both the college and the School of Letters (MA/MFA program) including, most recently, Modern American Fiction and the Victorian Novel. Her articles, essays, and reviews have appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Renaissance Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies*, *International Shakespeare Yearbook*, and *Approaches to Teaching Milton's Shorter Poems and Prose*. In 2002 she edited and contributed to *Never Again Would Birds' Song Be the Same: Essays on Early Modern and Modern Poetry in Honor of John Hollander* (Beinecke Library, Yale University Press).

Richard Gerst, *Make Film History: Rewrite, Reshoot, and Recut the World's Greatest Films* (Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, November 2012)

Make Film History: Rewrite, Reshoot, and Recut the World's Greatest Films by Robert Gerst is the world's first interactive history of the movies. The book and integrated website distill film history into twenty-five moments when movies changed because gifted filmmakers from the Lumière Brothers to YouTube contributors discovered practical solutions to artistic problems. Readers undertake film-making exercises on the website (*makefilmhistory.com*), often working with the film clips the original filmmaker used so they are able to emulate masters of the past and present. The goal is to unleash the filmmaker in everyone. Visit http://www.blogtalkradio.com/moviegeeksunited/2013/06/23/make-film-history to hear Gerst discuss his book on *Movie Geeks United*. Robert Gerst is a professor and chair of the Liberal Arts Department at Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

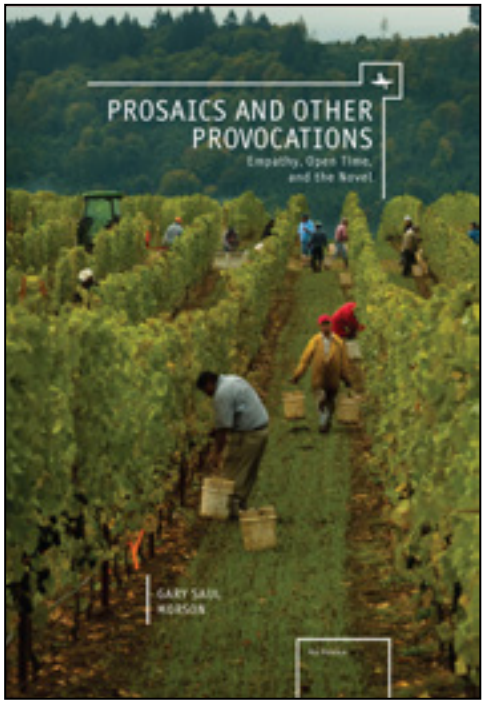
Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2013)

In *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture*, Ashby Kinch argues for the affirmative quality of late medieval death art and literature, providing a new, interdisciplinary approach to a well-known body of material. He demonstrates the surprising and effective ways that late medieval artists appropriated images of death and dying to affirm their artistic, social, and political identities. The book dedicates each of its three sections to a pairing of a visual convention (deathbed scenes, "the Three Living and the Three Dead," and the Dance of Death) and a Middle English literary text (Hoccleve's *Lerne for to die*, Audelay's *Three Dead Kings*, and Lydgate's *Dance of Death*).



Ashby Kinch is a professor of English literature at the University of Montana. He specializes in literature of the medieval period and also works in translation studies, focusing on Middle English translations of Latin and French writing. In addition, he studies the history of lyric poetry. Kinch has been published in *Contemporary Literature*, *Chaucer Review*, *postmedieval*, and elsewhere.

Gary Saul Morson, *Prosaics and Other Provocations: Empathy, Open Time, and the Novel* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2013)



Gary Saul Morson coined the term "prosaics" to express his focus on the importance of ordinary events and the realist novel's unique ability to portray them. *Prosaics and Other Provocations* combines a variety of Morson's essays into a single coherent statement, drawing on already-published ideas while making connections between them and tracing new implications. Arguing that time is open and contingency real, Morson develops a "prosaics of process," showing how some masterpieces have found an alternative to structure. His well-known pseudonym, Alicia Chudo, the inventor of misanthropology," explores the disturbing philosophical content of laughter, disgust, and even empathy. Northwestern University's most popular professor, Morson attributes declining student interest in literature to current teaching methods. He argues in favor of showing how literature fosters empathy with people unlike ourselves. Ever playful, Morson explores the relation of games to wit, which expresses the power of the mind to triumph over contingency in the social world.

Gary Saul Morson is Frances Hooper Professor at Northwestern University. The author of *Narrative and Freedom* (Yale University Press, 1994) and *The Words of Others: From Quotations to Culture* (Yale University Press, 2011), he introduced Mikhail Bakhtin to American readers. Morson's past work has won best book awards from AATSEEL and ACLA, and he has written for a wide range of publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New Criterion*, and the *American Scholar*.

John Wallen, ed., *Victorian* 1, no. 1 (2013), http://journals.sfu.ca/vict/index.php/vict/index

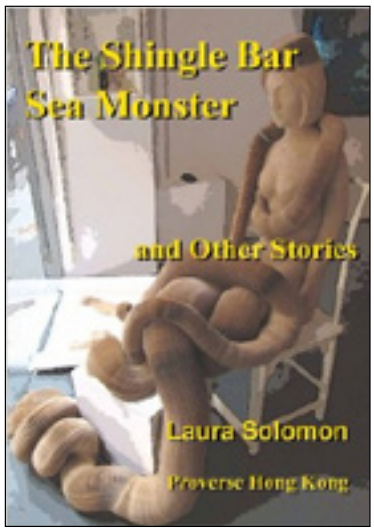
This journal is a new contribution to Victorian studies that emphasizes the eclectic nature of this period. The *Victorian* neglects neither theory nor practical criticism, neither the popular nor the arcane. It is a response, in part, to the present dearth of journals that deal with this important period in a generalist manner instead of in particularist ways. The aim of the *Victorian* is to publish articles relating to all aspects of the Victorian period, be they literary, historical, theoretical, anthropological, philosophical, or textual. Each submission is judged on its individual merit, and there are no specific requirements in terms of length. There will also be a section for unpublished conference papers, an area that has not been addressed by the present literature. The editors seek to publish well-written, thoughtful articles with a bias towards inclusion rather than exclusion and will collaborate with writers and academics who have produced original work containing certain blemishes in order to bring it up to a level necessary for publication. Above all, the goal of the editorial board is to produce a regular, well-read journal that reflects the tumultuous diversity of this crucial period.

The Victorian

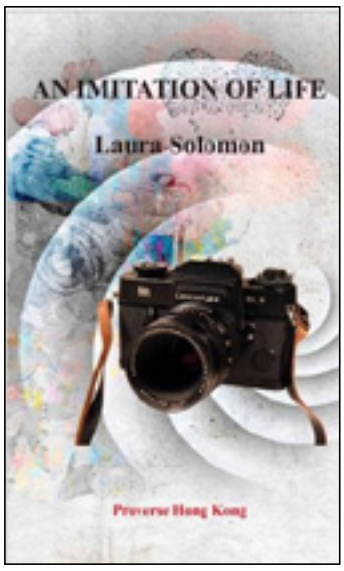
This literary journal is dedicated to a wide-ranging examination of the Victorian period. Although its orientation is literary, there is an emphasis on the essential overlapping of all the disciplines belonging to the humanities; the journal and its editors value cross-fertilization from other intellectual traditions and unusual and diverse approaches to literary matters.

Laura Solomon, *The Shingle Bar Sea Monster and Other Stories* (Hong Kong: Proverse Publishing, 2012)

The Shingle Bar Sea Monster and Other Stories uses surrealism and black humor to explore human predicaments, emotions, and aspirations, and to suggest solutions to life's challenges. The situations are extraordinary, whereas the aspirations and emotions are common, and the solutions debatable. A young woman is taken to a sea monster's underwater palace and helps the mermaids preserve seaweed. A girl finds that her right hand can no longer feel. Two men of different tastes and habits struggle to coexist after the head of one is grafted to the body of the other. An executive experiences uncontrollable anger after undergoing open-brain surgery. A male scientist is forced to give up the child that he himself gave birth to. A modern-day Lady Bluebeard lures men to grisly deaths, but adores her seventh husband and cannot bring herself to kill him. A blind man in love carries a magical cane that makes flowers bloom on the pavement. An amnesiac builds a new life for himself. A wife suspects her husband of having an affair with a group of mannequins. A schoolboy learns to levitate and is stoned and drowned by jealous classmates. A man finds the button for rewinding his life. Conjoined twins learn to survive and even thrive in the world. Always interesting, these stories, with their often-bizarre realities, prompt us to see our own lives from the perspective of others. Do we also live in a somewhat off-center world?



Laura Solomon, *An Imitation of Life* (Hong Kong: Proverse Publishing, 2013)



Celia Doom is a grotesque—a giantess with progeria, a syndrome that makes her body age at three times the normal rate. Her horrified mother left her, newly-born, on the nearest doorstep. Let's not feel sorry for Celia though. She is in part responsible for the devastation of her home town, Provencia (although the earthquake was not her fault). And she has been saved from a pitiable life by the gift of a camera. With this she documents the everyday lives of the townspeople as they pick their way through the wreckage that she has, to some extent, caused.

Celia's singular story is told as she prepares a narrative for her final retrospective photographic exhibition, which will be shown at last in the capital. In addition to cockroach-eating Celia, there's Uncle Ed, who can "disappear" himself (and objects too) in his magic show. Her adoptive parents, Barry and Lettie, together run the Butchette, a building created from the remains of Barry's Butchery and Lettie's Laundrette, after the earthquake. Her two strong-minded grandmothers—Grandma Lolly (who ran a sweet shop) and Grandma Stuff, the widow of a taxidermist—give Celia moral support. *An Imitation of Life* takes the reader into a bizarre world where the extraordinary characters are lively distortions of people we may know.

If you wish to have news of your recent publications featured in the list of new publications by members, please send the relevant bibliographic information to *literarymatters@alscw.org*. Those interested in doing so may also submit a blurb about the work (no more than 250 words) and a photo of the book's cover. Submissions about articles published, journals edited, and so forth are also welcome.

Titular Diversion

By Debra San

Sgt. Pepper and Dr. Strangelove are fictional characters whose names are preceded by titles. In the diversion below, match each title with the appropriate name without repeating any entry and without leaving any entry unmatched. The answers are on page 33 .

Titles

Auntie _____
Captain _____
Chief _____
Citizen _____
Colonel _____
Constable _____
Count of _____
Daddy _____
Dame _____
Deputy _____
Doctor _____
Don _____
Duke of _____
Emperor _____
Farmer _____
Father _____
Fra _____
Frau _____
Frère _____
Friar _____
General _____
Grand Duchess _____
Inspector _____
Judge _____
King _____
Lady _____
Lieutenant _____
Little Lord _____
Madame _____
Magister _____
Maid _____
Major _____
Marquis de _____
Marshal _____
Mayor of _____
Merchant of _____
Miss _____
Mistress _____
Monsieur _____
Mother _____
Mr. _____
Mrs. _____
Nurse _____
Officer _____
Parson _____
Prince _____
Princess _____
Professor _____
Queen _____
Reverend _____
Sergeant _____
Sheik of _____
Sheriff _____
Sir _____
Sister _____
Special Envoy _____
Squire _____
Uncle _____
Vicar _____
Wife of _____

Names

Al Falfa
Allworthy
Araby
Barbara
Bath
Bilko
Blücher
Bovary
Bracknell
Buford T. Justice
Bullmoose
Carrie
Casamassima
Casterbridge
Chingachgook
Columbo
Courage
Dalloway
Dawg
Dillon
Dimmesdale
Dogberry
Earl
Farebrother
Fauntleroy
Fortune
Genji
Gloriana
Hyde
Jacques
Javert
Jones
Jourdain
Kane
Kong
Krupke
La Mole
Lippo Lippi
Ludi
Mab
Mame
Marian
Marple
Monte Cristo
Ninotchka
Quickly
Quixote
Ratched
Saito
Thatcher
Toby Belch
Tuck
Vanya
Venice
Wagstaff
Warbucks
Wentworth
Yorick
Zhivago
Zossima

Debra San is a professor of English in the Liberal Arts Department at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston.

Emily Dickinson famously said that she knows a poem is a poem when it makes her hair stand on end. Fair enough, but then again, can't a poem that isn't a poem produce the same effect? Alas, like Prufrock's hair, mine is growing thin (at least on my crown). So much for Dickinson.

Lodging a Poem

George Drew

Seriously, though, as a writer, where exactly a poem comes from was, is, and always will be a mystery, at least to me. But that's beside the point for this little exercise in which I'm engaged. The mystery I'm interested in pertains to the reading of poetry, not its writing: Why, I've always wondered, does a specific poem in a collection of generally fabulous poems stick to one's memory like a barnacle to timber, never to be dislodged? In other words, why that one poem and not another?

Take the poem "Imagination and the Man" by Jared Smith,[1] a Colorado poet who probably isn't known widely but ought to be:

> A falcon landed in the apple tree outside my window yesterday:
> a bird of the sky and high telephone poles, that would not act like this.
> Yet he sat there, focusing the small leaves and twigs around him,
> drawing the whole vast structure of the tree into his intensity.
> Until in the end there was nothing but his eye that I was looking at;
> all else moved around it as fog moves across a meadow.
> I sat on the sofa facing him, not six feet and one pane away.
>
> It would be foolish to say I think that we were matched
> or that we were bound together, but it is true that time binds and we were there.
> Had either of us moved, the surface would have broken, mirrors shattered.
> It was a touch of magic in my home, empty of people and filled with life.
> And then it spread its wings, tangled briefly in the tightly wound limbs,
> and was gone. I will not sleep tonight, nor for many more.

There you have it: thirteen lines split between two stanzas—one of seven lines, the other six—this brief lyric from a book that contains many other longer and more-major poems to choose from. Yet this small gem has lodged itself in my memory where, as Frost so wittily said, it is hard to get rid of.

But why?

There are, as anyone might expect, many reasons, and at some risk I am going to elaborate—risk, because I want to write an essay, not a review or a critique. Like the poem, then, I will force be brief.

1 Jared Smith, "Imagination and the Man," *The Collected Poems: 1971–2011* (New York: NYQ Books, 2012). Poem reprinted wih permission from the author, whose thirteenth volume of poetry, titled *To The Dark Angels*, has just been accepted for publication by NYQ Books and will be released next year.

So, briefly, there is its brevity: Falcon lands on apple tree; man sits on his sofa "not six feet and one pane of glass away" watching the falcon watching him; man muses on time and the place in time both he and the falcon occupy; man decides the moment is a "touch of magic" in his home; falcon spreads its wings and, after tangling them in the limbs, is gone; man loses sleep.

Not very difficult to remember, this plot, such as it is. But, of course, this is a poem, and what matters is what the poet makes of such a miniscule moment. Smith makes much. For one thing, there is the sheer lyricism inherent in the situation: the falcon itself, the natural world of an apple tree with its leaves and twigs, the conjured image of fog moving across a meadow. For another, there is the identity-splintering metaphor of mirrors shattering. And for another, the symbol of the falcon and its transforming, nearly transcendental eye.

All of these features contribute to the pull this poem has on me. So does the simple grace of language, that felicity of expression only a seasoned poet like Smith can achieve, what is, in effect, a linguistic maturity: "It was a touch of magic in my home, empty of people and filled with life." Indeed there is magic, and not just in his home. Magic is in his poem, too, as both the pattern of stress—the iambics of the first part of the sentence giving way to mostly dactyls in the second—and the syntax—the definitive statement that is the main part of the independent clause, the modifying material that is its appendage—reveal, not to mention the paradox of an empty home that's filled with life.

So there's all of that, too. And then there's the mastery and elegance of those long lines spreading out across the page, much like the falcon spreading its wings, readying itself for flight, this final observed action in perfect concert with the poem readying itself for closure. The arc, the trajectory of the lines, mirrors perfectly that of the man's imagination.

But this is an essay, not a review, remember? So, before anyone emulates the falcon and takes flight, hang on a moment; as with any smartly structured essay, the major point I wish to make I've saved for last.

Smith makes much of this encounter, as I've said. But I'm not talking just technique and language and structure. Again, Smith *makes* much, and what he makes is exactly that which we are privy to—*the making*.

The poem doesn't present itself as a fait accompli. We get to see, literally, the imagination at work, beautifully so. It shapes the experience into a poem shaped by the experience. For me, this is the real allure of the poem: in a very intimate way, we are allowed in. We are in that room, experiencing the man's imagination making of a falcon something more than just a falcon.

What I find so irresistible is the intimacy that allows us as readers to share the man's experience. The man is open to the world and therefore naked before it, and so are we. The man is enraptured by a raptor, and so are we. This shared intimacy—this binding of the man and the bird in time and space, and, through the poem, our binding to them, our imaginations to the man's—transforms us, connects us to both kinds of nature, human and natural. To Beauty and Truth? Oh yes, those too, but even more so to Art—in this case, to the poem.

So there it is. What attracts me to this particular poem, what leaves its poetic imprint on my memory, is its mystery, its magic—the mystery and magic of the imagination. Like those tightly wound limbs entangling the falcon's wings, the poem binds me to itself and won't let go. Ever the paradox of art, ever the sine qua non of memorable poems, flight in this case is that very binding.

For Emily, what marked an inescapably profound poem was her hair standing on end, and I assure you, when I read Jared Smith's "Imagination and the Man," whatever hair I have remaining *is* on end. But for me, what marks a poem as special, what separates it immediately and forever from any number of other amazing poems, is expressed by Smith in the final line of his poem, when he concludes: "I will not sleep tonight, nor for many more." Neither will I. And that's how I know.

George Drew was born in Mississippi; he was raised both there and in New York State, where he currently lives. He is the author of five collections of poetry, the most recent of which is *The View from Jackass Hill* (Texas Review Press, 2011), the 2010 winner of the X. J. Kennedy Poetry Prize. His reviews and essays have appeared in *Louisiana Literature*, *FutureCycle*, *Off the Coast*, *BigCityLit*, and the *Texas Review*. Several of his poems appeared in *Birchsong: Poetry Centered in Vermont* (The Blue Line Press, 2012), and he has poetry currently in or upcoming in *I-70 Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Naugatuck River Review*, the *Nassau Review*, *Atticus Review*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, and *Solstice*.

On Ray Monk's *Robert Oppenheimer: A Life inside the Center*

Review by Kelly Cherry

Ray Monk's very fine biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer was not well treated by reviews in the *New York Times*. I can't account for the animus of that publication against this book, but perhaps it has to do with a feeling that American biographers are better equipped than a British biographer to understand an American subject. Certainly there are a number of American Oppenheimer biographies that excel in various ways. *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (Simon & Schuster) by Richard Rhodes, first published in 1986, superbly details its pronounced domain. Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin's *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Knopf, 2005) is elegant, thorough, and sympathetic. David C. Cassidy's *J. Robert Oppenheimer and the American Century* (Pi Press, 2004) places Oppenheimer in historical context. Peter Goodchild gives us a vivid view of the person of the physicist in *J. Robert Oppenheimer: Shatterer of Worlds* (British Broadcasting Corp., 1980). In *The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Viking Penguin, 2005), Priscilla McMillan presents a blow-by-blow account of the hearings that stripped Oppenheimer of his security clearance and exposes the idiotic, wicked shenanigans of the Air Force and Lewis Strauss.

There are many more biographies or related narratives, and the majority are informative in one way or another, but Ray Monk's is the most readable. There are no hiccups between sentences or paragraphs in his book; the life moves fluently through the narrative—or the narrative through the life—and connections from point to point are ever clear, largely because Monk spells out Oppenheimer's reasons for his actions (or offers his interpretations of Oppenheimer's reasons). That is to say, gaps are filled.

Though I must admit I was shocked when Monk referred to a list Oppenheimer was asked to come up with of his ten favorite books as "an exercise in polymathic showing off."[1] This list includes books Oppenheimer read and reread. And it is a great list.[2]

It is Monk's theory that Oppenheimer, a Jew and the son of a hugely successful immigrant, strove always to be at the center of things: the center of contemporary, cutting-edge physics, the center of the war effort, the center of Washington, DC.

1 Ray Monk, *Robert Oppenheimer: A Life inside the Center* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), p. 674. All further citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

2 Author's note: Oppenheimer read several languages, including Dutch and Sanskrit; most of us don't. But even in translation, this is a reasonable list for an educated person.

1. *Les Fleurs du mal*
2. Bhagavad Gita
3. Riemann's *Gesammelte mathematische Werke*
4. *Theaetetus*
5. *L'Éducation sentimentale*
6. *Divina Commedia*
7. Bhartrihari's Three Hundred Poems
8. "The Waste Land"
9. Faraday's notebooks
10. *Hamlet*

(List also taken from p. 674).

What motivated him, he seems to imply, was the need to compensate for his father's lowly beginnings. Robert Oppenheimer wanted to be the most American of Jews. Indeed, he loved being American as he loved being adored, loved the shine of things. Charismatic and brilliantly articulate, he loved thinking, driving fast cars, sailing, riding horseback, and being in the know. These things served to show his American-ness and made him *feel* American.

They did not, however, rescue him from his sense of loneliness, which he'd had as a child and was never able to shake off, even with colleagues who were close friends and with whom he shared work. In the cultural climate of today, one might suspect a touch of Asperger's Syndrome, but if so, one then has to note that he was remarkably able to control, if not defeat, its symptoms. And that, of course, lessens the likelihood that he had it.

In the meantime, Monk's book, though formidably long, reads smoothly and accurately conveys Oppenheimer's attraction to limelight and the halls of power, at least until the later years arrived. At that point, Oppenheimer was exhausted, sick with throat cancer and the treatment for throat cancer, but still shackled to a sense of duty to his country that his country could never, and inexcusably would never, try to repay. " 'Damn it,' " he said, " 'I happen to love this country' " (692).

Freeman Dyson has just reviewed the Monk biography in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*.[3] His review is by leagues more astute than the reviews in the *New York Times*. He concludes that Oppenheimer failed to become a great physicist because he was too "restless" to stay in one place and focus. This, and Monk's understanding of Oppenheimer's urgent need to be "inside the center," come close to the mystery of his "failure." (I say "failure," as does Dyson, but this was a man who changed the world and "failure" is a relative concept.) I do not think they nail it.

Oppenheimer was a fan of Niels Bohr's concept of complementarity, which asserts that the opposite or shadow of a thing, anything, is to be considered a part of the whole. This was not a common idea when Bohr was alive; it has become more familiar via Oppenheimer, yes, but also as a result of the popularity of the yin-yang sign. Oppenheimer tried to look at his own life in terms of complementarity. He could see his life's ups and downs, its hits and fouls, its importance and its insignificance. Such is, of course, maturity, to which, alas, we all come late. But he achieved it, and before that, he served his country far better than most of us have. Monk's book brings us to this lovely point. I recommend it highly.

3 Freeman Dyson, "Oppenheimer: The Shape of Genius," review of *Robert Oppenheimer: A Life Inside the Center*, by Ray Monk, *New York Review of Books*, August 15, 2013, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/aug/15/oppenheimer-shape-genius/?pagination=false.

Kelly Cherry published her twenty-first full-length book, *The Life and Death of Poetry* (Louisiana State University Press), this year. She is working on a long poem about J. Robert Oppenheimer and has so far read sixty-six books by, about, or more or less connected with him.

On Gary Wills's *Verdi's Shakespeare: Men of the Theater*

Review by Joshua Cohen

The subtitle "Men of the Theater" tells you what you most need to know about this book. In his examination of the special affinity that connected Verdi to Shakespeare, Gary Wills focuses on their common experience as professional "men of the theater, active at each stage of the production of the plays and operas that filled their lives, Shakespeare as an actor in his own and other men's plays, Verdi as a vocal coach and director of his works. Theirs was a hands-on life of the stage, not a remote life of study."[1]

Wills's emphasis on "hands-on" experience is central to his analysis of the dramatic art of both creators, and of the relationship between the three plays adapted by Verdi—*Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Merry Wives of Windsor*—and their operatic recreations. There is a widespread notion in our time that the authors of plays are the driving force behind theater. The typical "modern playwright [is] a full-time literary fellow who writes a drama and then tries to find people to put it on—an agent to shop it around, a producer to put up the money, a theater as its venue, a director, actors, designers of sets and costumes, musicians and dancers if the play calls for them, and so on" (4). In Shakespeare's time, however, the playwright was an employee of the company that produced his plays and owned the publication rights to them. To get a play performed, the playwright had first to bring his idea to the actors "with a plot accommodated to the number and talents of the particular troupe" (5). If the idea was accepted and a sponsor found to underwrite the production, the playwright would then draft a script, read it to the actors, and, with their approval, submit it to the Master of Revels for censorship. Only after these hurdles were cleared did rehearsals begin. "Thus, in the modern theater, performers are fitted to the play, but in Shakespeare's time, the plays were fitted to the performers" (6). Similar conditions applied to the operas of Verdi's time, especially during his early career. The culture of nineteenth-century Italian opera—the culture of *bel canto*—revolved around a corps of extraordinary singers whose unique talents determined the form and content of the major operas and operatic roles.

Wills divides his book into three parts, one for each play/opera pairing. Each part is subdivided into smaller chapters, including one devoted specifically to "the performers the author/composer had in mind" (16). In Shakespeare's case, this involves a good deal of educated guesswork, since the theaters did not print cast lists. Like other Shakespearean scholars, Wills assumes (plausibly) that roles were allocated by typecasting. Hence it follows that the great tragic actor Richard Burbage would almost certainly have played Macbeth and Othello, that the brilliant boy actor John Rice might have played Lady Macbeth, that the "intellectual jester," Robert Armin, was probably Iago and the Porter in *Macbeth* and Iago, and that the "famous clown," Will Kemp, likely played Falstaff.

These chapters on Shakespeare's actors demonstrate how precisely plays were tailored to the performers. And not only in the casting—the very *structures* of the plays were, to a considerable extent, determined by the pool of actors available. Companies were generally small, made up of nine to twelve adult actors and perhaps two or three boys. Thus most of the actors had to play two or

1 Gary Wills, *Verdi's Shakespeare: Men of the Theater* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), p. 4. All further citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

more parts in any given performance, so the playwright had to make sure any characters played by the same actor never encountered each other in any scene, and that actors were given enough time between entrances to change costumes and wigs. So, for example, large public scenes—like the opening of *King Lear*—would usually be followed by two or three smaller scenes because supporting players were constantly reappearing in different guises. Every exit and entrance had to be precisely timed.

The many challenges faced by Elizabethan-Jacobean playwrights (not least the problem of finding boys to play the major female roles) were such as could scarcely be conceived, let alone surmounted, by anyone who was not a full-time man of the theater. This fact offers an interesting perspective on the perennial controversy over the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. As Wills points out, "nothing could be more absurd than the idea of the Earl of Oxford writing a long woman's part without knowing whether the troupe had a boy capable of performing it" (7). But that is a tangential point, because Wills's primary aim is to make us rethink our assumptions about the inspirational sources of great dramatic writing. We like to imagine that a dramatic masterpiece attains its ideal, Platonic form in the mind of its creator before descending into the baser medium of commercial theater. Wills proposes an alternative scenario in which Shakespeare's dramatic ideas are called into being by the specific demands of professional companies intending to use them for their own practical purposes, only later achieving moments of inspired innovation called forth by the creator's struggle to realize the possibilities, and transcend the limitations, of his theatrical medium.

Yet any productive relationship between author and performer involves a subtle symbiosis—a truth that becomes evident whenever Wills turns from Shakespeare to Verdi. In Verdi's case, the simple formula of drama being fitted to the performer only works up to a point. It is true that Verdi, like Shakespeare, participated in every stage of production, from the music to the libretto to the casting and coaching of the performers. It is also true that there were notable singers with whom Verdi often worked, and he modeled some of his roles to their talents. Victor Maurel, a singing actor, was one of them. Verdi's original Iago and Falstaff, Maurel's intelligence and theatrical craft shined a penetrating light into the minds and souls of the two characters.

Viewed in hindsight, however, the trajectory of Verdi's career suggests a gradual but progressive shift from composer as professional craftsman, producing plays or operas more or less to order, to composer as sovereign artist, setting new standards of craftsmanship and professionalism that his performers were expected to meet. Verdi was, after all, the Old Master who had to be coaxed out of retirement by two visionary admirers—composer-librettist Arrigo Boito and music publisher Giulio Ricordi—who believed he could still create something worthy of his highest aspirations and were

ready to dedicate their lives to helping him achieve them. One important advantage Verdi had over Shakespeare was that he legally owned his scores, and he had no compunctions about threatening to jettison a premiere or even withdraw his score from publication if things were not going his way.

Wills posits that "Verdi tailored his opera to specific voices, just as Shakespeare had shaped his heroes and heroines to Burbage and Rice" (30), but the process was actually more complicated than that. Instead of selecting and designing roles specifically for his performers as Shakespeare did, Verdi appears to have started with a precise idea of what his characters looked and sounded like, and then sought singers who could do justice to his conception. On several occasions, he felt obliged to reject eminent singers proposed for his premieres, as in the famous letter in which he turned down the gifted soprano nominated for Lady Macbeth:

> You know how highly I regard Tadolini, and she herself knows it; but I believe it's necessary…to make a few observations to you….Tadolini has a beautiful and attractive appearance, and I would like Lady to be ugly and evil. Tadolini sings to perfection, and I would like Lady not to sing. Tadolini has a stupendous voice, clear, limpid, powerful, and I would like Lady to have a harsh, stifled, and hollow (*cupa*) voice. Tadolini's voice has an angelic quality. I would like Lady's voice to have a diabolical quality. (31)

In this instance, Verdi was fortunate to obtain two singers, Felice Varesi and Marianna Barbieri-Nini, who embodied the ugly, diabolical qualities he wanted in Macbeth and his Lady. Other times, however, Verdi had to make do with singers who couldn't meet all his standards: we know he was not entirely satisfied with his first Othello and Desdemona. But the bottom line, in any case, is that the singers were there to serve his operas, not the other way around.

Indeed, if we reversed the comparison and used Verdi's struggles as a lens through which to view Shakespeare, we might well conclude that Shakespeare's own collaboration with his performers must have been more subtle and reciprocal than Wills's formulation allows. Even if it were true that the great roles were built on a foundation of typecasting, that would not be sufficient to account for the enormous diversity we find in Shakespeare's characters. The genius that Shakespeare possessed in greater degree than other dramatists of his day was his ability to plumb the inner lives of his greatest characters—those deep-seated, manifold, irreducible forces of motivation that exist outside or beneath the roles these characters are required to play. This building of character from the inside out epitomizes the quality we call "Shakespearean," and it is also a quality that Verdi, at his best, brought to his operatic creations. By probing beneath the stereotypes that confine and conceal the most essential parts of his characters' inner lives, Shakespeare transformed the nature of theater at its deepest level, while also enriching the art of acting immeasurably.

But whether Shakespeare and Verdi found their dramas by following the possibilities of their performers, or created new possibilities for performers in their dramas (or both), there is no way their genius could have developed outside the crucible of the theater. This is a point Wills drives home incontrovertibly, and it is enough by itself to make his book worth reading.

Joshua Cohen is an associate professor of literature at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where he teaches classes on Shakespeare, opera, *The Legends of King Arthur*, graphic novels, and literary traditions. He has written on a variety of literary and musical topics, and has an article on *The Tempest* slated for publication in *Raritan* (Summer 2013).

On the Tolkiens' *The Fall of Arthur*

Review by Matthew DeForrest

One of my life's "yellow wood" moments came toward the end of my master's program at University College, Dublin. My interest in W. B. Yeats had in no way diminished, and I knew I still had a good bit of unfinished business with his philosophical work, *A Vision* (1926; Macmillan, 1937). Nevertheless, as I considered PhD programs, I looked long and hard at a program in Wales that focused on Arthurian literature. Literally. Living the life of genteel poverty associated with graduate students, I was using its advertising poster, which prominently featured Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott*, for eye-level decoration above the desk where I was typing my thesis on a rented computer.

In the end, the list of required languages associated with the program was the deciding factor. My poor performance in French, as one of my professors indicated, was somehow appropriate for one studying Yeats. The thought of having to pick up some combination of Latin, Old English, and Welsh seemed, at the time, monumental.

Although I eventually stayed with the Victorian and Edwardian era, I still indulge myself occasionally with the Matter of Britain. And like so many, I also enjoy Tolkien and have grown to appreciate his subtlety and artistry as I have read his work with increasing closeness. (I know that you, dear reader, may have to take my word for it. If it is of any comfort to you, my wife—a noted scholar—remains skeptical.) As such, I was excited to purchase the Tolkiens' rendition of *The Fall of Arthur*[1] as soon as it was available.

The plural possessive is quite intentional here. While the rendition of the poem is J. R. R. Tolkien's work, roughly two thirds of the printed text is supplementary material provided by Christopher Tolkien.

It is this scholarly material that made me want to begin with an allusion to Frost. One of the most striking things about this work is how it attempts to satisfy the needs of its audience. Despite what the title may indicate, this work was not designed primarily for those who have taken an interest in the Arthur legend. It is chiefly for those who are interested in reading something—anything—new from the author of *The Hobbit* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968) rather than a work of translation by a noted Oxford professor. As such, most of what is found in the critical material focuses on understanding what J. R. R. Tolkien was doing and how the poem is situated relative to the history of the Matter of Britain and the Matter of Middle Earth. There is also a brief appendix detailing how alliterative verse works and Tolkien's engagement with it. Christopher Tolkien accomplishes this quite ably and that primary audience will come away from their reading richer for it.

I would be lying if I claimed that this content did not interest me. Although much of what I found there was review rather than new, it was readable and compelling enough for me not to put it down. What made me want to read these sections, however, was not Christopher Tolkien's insight. I wanted to read them because of the fragment that precedes them.

Garth and Shippey have both commented on some of the problematic elements in the

1 J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fall of Arthur*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013). All further citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

tradition and in the verse that may have led to its abandonment, so I will not go into it here.[2] Also, the material is somewhat uneven in quality, as one would reasonably expect in an abandoned fragment. Nevertheless, I want to commend the poem for its raw power. These are not academic verses, translated to be demurely read by the eye in some eighteenth-century closet or comfortable library. They are, like the best translations of *Beowulf*, meant to be read aloud in cadenced speech rather than looked at so the alliterative

richness can be felt in the mouth and gathered in the ear. Approached this way, the fragment offers moments of real delight.

The delight also serves as a reminder to those of us who drift back to the Matter of Britain from time to time. Much of what we think of when we consider the Arthur story is highly literary and literate, whether we are considering the Romances of Chretien de Troyes or Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. It is easy to forget that the Arthur story begins with those in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany telling themselves about the one leader—their leader—who held back the Saxon tide and would return someday to finish the job. As Shippey mentions in his review, we have few records of such tales. Yet, undoubtedly, it is in such tales and songs and poems that the story started to be told. Tolkien manages to capture the feel of the tale told in the hall in this fragment, even if it is, ironically enough, written in the conqueror's language and poetic form.

2 John Garth, "Tolkien's Unfinished Epic: '*The Fall of Arthur*'," review of *The Fall of Arthur*, by J. R. R. Tolkien, ed. Christopher Tolkien, *Daily Beast*, May 23, 2013, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/05/23/tolkien-s-unfinished-epic-the-fall-of-arthur.html; Tom Shippey, "Tolkien's King Arthur," review of *The Fall of Arthur*, by J. R. R. Tolkien, ed. Christopher Tolkien, *Times Literary Supplement*, June 26, 2013, http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article1278838.ece.

Dr. Matthew M. DeForrest is an associate professor of English and interim chair of the Department of Languages and Literature at Johnson C. Smith University. His scholarship has primarily focused on William Butler Yeats, and his published works include *Yeats and the Stylistic Arrangements of Experience* (International Scholars Publications, 1999), "W. B. Yeats's *A Vision*: 'Dove or Swan'" in *W. B. Yeats's* A Vision*: Explications and Contexts* (Clemson University Digital, 2012), and "Yeats as Father in the Last Four Poems in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*" in the *Yeats Journal of Korea: An International Journal of Yeats and Modern Literature* (Yeats Society of Korea, 2013). He has also published on the intersection of politics and education in *Inside Higher Ed*.

"The Recollector"

All That Is starts out like the sort World War Two novel that Alan Furst produces annually, except Salter's book is set not in Europe but in New York City at the end of America's war in the Pacific.[1] The first hundred pages dutifully introduce the story and the main characters, with Salter occasionally writing vividly, but the shortcomings outnumber the virtues. Salter's largest failure here is, unhappily, with the protagonist, Philip Bowman, a kind of pasteboard WASP who amounts to little but a name on the page. Ambitious to become an editor in New York during the "Golden Age of Publishing" after the war, Bowman falls in love with Vivian Amussen, a pretty young woman from the Virginia horse country, and they marry without her father's permission (or much evidence of compatibility). They soon divorce, on Vivian's initiative, leaving Bowman bitter and alone in their Manhattan flat. At this point readers might ponder whether Bowman is interesting enough to justify their reading further. Maybe even Salter sensed that he might not be, though perhaps he might have been if he, like Salter, had had a Jewish surname that he changed for personal or professional reasons.

It had been over three decades since Salter (born Horowitz, 1925) finished his previous novel; in the interim, he had written memoirs, a cookbook with a new, younger wife, and some of the best American short stories of the past thirty-five years. He won the 1989 PEN/Faulkner Award for his collection *Dusk and Other Stories* (North Point Press, 1988), the 2010 Rea Award for the Short Story for *Last Night* (Knopf, 2005), and the PEN/Malamud award in 2012. Had he now taken the wrong path in starting a novel in his eighties? Could he salvage it, perhaps by turning chapters into not necessarily further links in the Bowman narrative, but short stories that might also stand alone? Given that Salter had interrupted Bowman's story early on with chapters about subsidiary characters like Neil Eddins, a former shipmate, with no mention of Bowman at all, this alternative seems plausible.

On James Salter's *All That Is*

Review by George Held

And so, at the halfway point of the book, Salter writes a fine (autobiographical) chapter called "Summit"—named for the suburb more prosperous than nearby Passaic, NJ, where Salter grew up—which might easily be a short story and is arguably the summit of the book. The first word of "Summit" is "Beatrice," not "Bowman's mother," which serves to separate the chapter from the protagonist. In her seventies, Beatrice is starting to fail mentally and physically, and Salter treats her aging with heartbreaking detachment: "Age doesn't arrive slowly, it comes in a rush. One day nothing has changed, a week later, everything has" (160). These brief sentences show Salter at his aphoristic best, placing his habitual comma where a period or semicolon would be traditional. Midway through the chapter, "Bowman" arrives at the head of a paragraph, though he might easily be called "her son" instead. There follows an interlude of remembrance, the life of a suburban boy in the Thirties: "He had been a schoolboy. His mother was in her thirties" (163). In the final third of this story, Beatrice falls, breaking her hip, and seems headed for a nursing home; in her convalescent bed, she and her son engage in a tender dialogue about what happens after death.

1 James Salter, *All That Is* (New York: Knopf, 2013). All citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

A reader of Salter's *Burning the Days* (Vintage Books, 1997) might be disconcerted to find elements from that memoir in *All That Is*. One significant recycling concerns a famous poem by Federico García Lorca, and another involves a notable London publisher named George Weidenfeld. In *Burning the Days*, Salter recalls the execution of Lorca and quotes some lines from his powerful "Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías," whereas in *All That Is*, Salter quotes little more than the refrain and then paraphrases some of the poem to lesser effect. This dilution also suffers from some writing that would never mar his earlier work: of Lorca's death he writes, "His offense was everything he had written and stood for. The destruction of the finest is natural, it confirms them. And for death, as Lorca said, there is no consolation, which is one of the beauties of life" (125). In the last sentence here, another Salter would have ended on "consolation" and omitted the bathetic dependent clause at the end. Maybe such flaws result from lax editing at Knopf, for the book also contains some misplaced modifiers that tarnish Salter's reputation as a master of the sentence. The many mainstream reviewers who tout *All That Is* as "a masterpiece" must have skipped over this sort of sentence: "He had small, even teeth that made him seem friendly and worked in the government" (54).

In *All That Is*, George Weidenfeld, famous as a publisher and the host of wild parties in London, is called Bernard Wiberg. At one of these parties, where both appear dressed "as a pasha" in their respective books, there's an "upper-class harlot who'd been dropped from the guest list but had come despite that and as an act of insolence had fellated five of the male guests, one after another, in a bedroom" (99). Yet in *Burning the Days*, she was "an upper-class wanton who though dropped from the guest list came anyway. As an act of disdain she pleasured nine of the guests, one after another, in a bedroom."[2] Again, the original version, more concise, outré, and gender neutral ("pleasured," "guests"), carries more punch.

2 James Salter, *Burning the Days* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 361.

In the last half of *All That Is*, the colorless Bowman becomes a cocksman to rival the best of those in Norman Mailer, though his affairs achieve only temporary triumph and end through inanition or betrayal, his or his lover's. At least the sexual thread sews together the narrative, although it includes an act of carnal vengeance that will delight misogynists and enrage moralists. Both, however, must admit that this episode is tautly written.

Salter's writing has long been an act of recollection, a characterization illustrated overtly by the subtitle of *Burning the Days*, *Recollection*. *All That Is*, subtitled *A Novel*, is also full of recollections including the Delage automobile mentioned in *Burning the Days*, which shows up again, like a Ducati motorcycle in the poems of Frederick Seidel, who, a decade younger than Salter, most closely resembles him as a raconteur and collector of the fragments of our declining literary civilization.

George Held's reviews appear frequently in such periodicals as *American Book Review*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *Rain Taxi*. His poetry has received seven Pushcart Prize nominations. His latest collection is *Neighbors Too* (Filsinger & Co., 2013), animal poems for children, with drawings by Joung Un Kim.

On Mark Edmundson's *Why Teach?: In Defense of a Real Education*

Review by David Mikics

Mark Edmundson's *Why Teach?* may sound like old news, but it's not. It's the soundest, most spirited depiction of good teaching in many years, and a book that anyone who cares about what happens in the classroom will want to own. Edmundson is both inspiring and practical when he talks about teaching, and every teacher will come away from his book newly invigorated.

Some aspects of Edmundson's volume are familiar. He criticizes the overuse of technology in the classroom: for him, good old Socratic conversation is the way to go. He laments the fact that students have become consumers, and that teachers too often apply fashionable theories instead of letting the books speak for themselves. As Edmundson sees it, there is a war on teaching in today's colleges and universities, which value science and technology and neglect humanistic inquiry. And in the humanities themselves, the work produced by scholars—who are preoccupied with rising trends and small professional in-groups—has "almost no practical relevance for students, the public, or even, frequently, other scholars."[1] Unless we can learn to speak in a meaningful way, a potentially life-changing way, to other people, we teachers are doomed to irrelevance. No one will take us, or our often-unreadable work, seriously—nor should they.

What's different about Edmundson's book is how his own life plays a role in his defense of a humanistic education. Autobiography isn't here just for its own sake: it lets Edmundson make an argument for putting your own life on the line when you teach. (And your students' lives too—he sometimes asks them on the first day of class, "How do you imagine God?") In one of his most memorable chapters, he gives us a polemic on behalf of "uncoolness" in teaching. All too often, we want to appear to be the masters of knowledge, and able to "connect" with our students to boot, sharing their references and their worldview.

But really teaching well, Edmundson explains, means giving up the wish to be seen as cool, and instead taking some risks. In a merciless satire on "the new humanities professor," Edmundson battles effectively against the current belief, shared by teacher and student, that "embarrassment is the worst thing that can befall one" and that "it must be avoided at whatever cost" (146). Instead, Edmundson proposes that we must "[fight] against knowingness" (182), and be willing to be shown up; this is our only hope if we want to surprise ourselves and our students, and thus truly teach them.

Edmundson recounts his high school memory of meeting his first intellectual—a Harvard-spawned interloper who came to teach at his working-class high school. Here again, he values the awkwardness that inevitably goes along with a hot pursuit of the truths to be

1 Mark Edmundson, *Why Teach?: In Defense of a Real Education* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 55. All further citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

found in the classroom, and at the same time gives us a convincing portrait of a remarkable teacher, a man who was not simply a hero equally open to all students, but a real, idiosyncratic personality. Edmundson also depicts his time as a high school football player in the chapter "Do Sports Build Character?," which addresses that very question. His answer is yes and no. Edmundson, though he praises athletic training, finely attends to a signal difference between sports and education, what he calls the "world of omnipresent hierarchy" (81) that in sports stands in the way of the thoughtfulness, and the compassion, that true education can bring out.

Edmundson argues that "a major step in educating oneself comes with the conviction that all of one's most dearly held beliefs should be open to change" (193) and that "the proper business of teaching is change—for the teacher (who is herself a work in progress) and (preeminently) for the student" (165). He is true to Socrates' observation, which he quotes, that education means arguing "not about any chance question, but about the way that one ought to lead one's life" (191). In his chapter "Teaching the Truths," Edmundson makes the case that if a book "cannot help some of us to imagine a life, or unfold one already latent in us, then it is not a major work, and probably not worth the time of students" (205). "Can you live it?" Edmundson says, is the question to be asked of any major work of art, and at college age, when students confront the choices of career and future life, they need books that will provoke them to think about the biggest questions (129).

Is it too late to be optimistic about the humanities? Edmundson tells us it isn't, as long as teachers ask whether what they're teaching is true or not. They need to take things personally. Many of them won't, but a few will—and that just might be enough.

David Mikics is the author of *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* (Harvard University Press/Belknap, 2013) and a number of other books. He lives in Brooklyn and Houston, where he is John and Rebecca Moores Professor of English at the University of Houston.

Answers to "Titular Diversion"

Aunt Mame
Captain Wentworth
Chief Chingachgook
Citizen Kane
Colonel Saito
Constable Dogberry
Count of Monte Cristo
Daddy Warbucks
Dame Fortune
Deputy Dawg
Doctor Zhivago
Don Quixote
Duke of Earl
Emperor Jones
Farmer Al Falfa

Father Zossima
Fra Lippo Lippi
Frau Blücher
Frère Jacques
Friar Tuck
General Bullmoose
Grand Duchess Gloriana
Inspector Javert
Judge Thatcher
King Kong
Lady Bracknell
Lieutenant Columbo
Little Lord Fauntleroy
Madame Bovary
Magister Ludi

Maid Marian
Major Barbara
Marquis de La Mole
Marshal Dillon
Mayor of Casterbridge
Merchant of Venice
Miss Marple
Mistress Quickly
Monsieur Jourdain
Mother Courage
Mr. Hyde
Mrs. Dalloway
Nurse Ratched
Officer Krupke
Parson Yorick

Prince Genji
Princess Casamassima
Professor Wagstaff
Queen Mab
Reverend Dimmesdale
Sargeant Bilko
Sheik of Araby
Sheriff Buford T. Justice
Sir Toby Belch
Sister Carrie
Special Envoy Ninotchka
Squire Allworthy
Uncle Vanya
Vicar Farebrother
Wife of Bath

On Michel Pastoreau's *The Bear: History of a Fallen King*

Review by Jesse Russell

Michel Pastoreau, the well-known cultural anthropologist, is perhaps most famous in the Anglophone world for his works on the history of colors, including *Blue: The History of a Color* (Princeton University Press, 2001), *Black: The History of a Color* (Princeton University Press, 2008), and his most recent, *The Colours of Our Memories* (Polity, 2012). However, Pastoureau's background is in medieval heraldry. His recent work *The Bear: History of a Fallen King* reflects Pastoreau's medievalism and his preoccupation with the history of cultural artifacts. As he explains in the introduction, Pastoreau has been fascinated with the idea of the king of the animals for a long time, and, even early in his career, as he unearthed material, he began to notice the prevalence of images of bears before the domination of lions and eagles. These few clues led Pastoreau on a hunt across millennia to find out how important the bear has been for humans.[1]

Pastoreau's book is a treasure trove of cultural information. The French historian has quite clearly become obsessed with bears, and whatever stretches he might make in seeing a bear where there isn't truly one to be found can be forgiven. Despite its occasional repetitiveness and polemical swash buckling, the book is a delight. At his best, Pastoreau is as entertaining and elucidative as his Italian counterpart, Umberto Eco. His prose is often cheerful and grandfatherly, and he demonstrates deep erudition that broaches subjects from the prehistoric to the postmodern.

There are many layers to *The Bear*. On one level, Pastoreau attempts to show the deep affinity humans—especially Europeans—have had for bears, admiring them as possible ancestors, seeing them as sexual threats to their women, worshipping them as gods, desiring them as companions, and often imitating their behavior in festivals and rituals. Pastoreau also attempts to present the great conflict between the bear and the Church. Finally, Pastoreau sees the bear as surviving the supposed persecution of the Church and taking its revenge in the form of teddy bears and the drive of environmentalists to save the bear from what is, in Pastoreau's view, its inevitable demise. In the end, *The Bear* is a rich, encyclopedic treat that tempts the reader to join into Pastoreau's ursine obsession.

Pastoreau lays out his methodology in his introduction, explaining that through this study he intends to combat biologists who seek to monopolize all discussion of zoology (or any sort of study for that matter). Pastoreau dismisses the idea prevalent among many contemporary empirical scientists that they are the supreme authority over all of human knowledge. In his view, it is foolish to attempt to use the practices of empirical science in historical and social research, and he is especially irked by the dismissal and ridicule of medieval science by contemporary scientists. Pastoreau also deflects the anticipated charge of Eurocentricism (his work is almost exclusively devoted to Europe) by noting that it would be virtually impossible to write an honest comparative mythology that reached a truly global scale, and, further, that the animal fetishes of the people of the world are

1 Michel Pastoreau, *The Bear: History of a Fallen King*, trans. George Holoch (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2011). All further discussion refers to this text unless otherwise noted.

ultimately very different, even if there are some parallels. Pastoreau then dips into the debate over whether humans worshiped bears, coming down on the side of those who believe they did. In fact, this is the driving engine of his book: he sees a deep affinity between humans and bears—which is manifested in artwork, mythology, and beyond—that has survived since the beginning of human existence.

He begins his narration by describing an eighty-thousand-year-old Neanderthal grave that is attached to a bear grave, which he feels demonstrates a deep connection between the two creatures. He then travels across fifty thousand years of time to the Upper Paleolithic period, an age during which humans and bears inhabited the same areas and, according to Pastoreau, lived very similar lives. There are many European caves that feature likenesses of bears; the most famous of these is the Chauvet cave in southern France where a number of bear skulls were also found. Pastoreau makes note of a number of important qualities of early human depictions of bears: they are the only animals whose full faces are sculpted and the only creatures, other than humans, that are pictured upright. Finally, one of the oldest statues in the world is a clay depiction of a bear, fifteen to twenty thousand years old, which was found in the Montespan cave, also in France.

Bears, for Pastoreau, are an essential archetype of European myths, and he seeks to link the early etymology of many European gods, goddesses, and heroes with the bear. Although he focuses on Germanic myths, he sees bears in many classical stories. He sees a bear behind the story of Artemis. There is also the story of Callisto, Zeus, and Arcas from which we get Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Pastoreau considers Arcadia to be a land of bears and notes that the Trojan Paris was raised and nursed by bears. Numerous examples from Celtic and Germanic mythology are presented as well. King Arthur may be a medieval version of an early bear story. Moreover, the great Germanic hero Beowulf is the "wolf of the bees," that is, a bear-like man. Roman writers such as Ammianus Marcellinus, as well as Icelandic sagas, indicate a deep relationship between Germanic peoples and bears in antiquity and the pre-Christian medieval period. Early Germanic warriors attempted to mimic the bear and ate its flesh and drank its blood in order to gain its power. Bear worship was so integral to the paganism of Germanic peoples that many Christians attempted to eradicate the bear.

Pastoreau's discussion of the Roman Catholic Church's "war" on the bear is perhaps one of the book's weak points. Pastoreau frequently refers to "the Church" throughout the book as a monolithic institution. Even a cursory reading of the history of Christianity would reveal that while individual popes attempted—sometimes successfully, sometimes not—to assert total control over individual issues, the Church in the Middle Ages did not act as one large composite unit. Rather, there were tensions over authority throughout the Church.

However, Pastoreau does document in his thesis that there was a general tendency among many individual Christians, both lay and clerical, to attempt to distance newly converted Germanic and Slavic peoples from their pagan past. For example, the Church imposed the stag hunt to distract nobles from hunting and then worshipping bears. The medieval mystic Hildegard of Bingen also warned that eating bear flesh could inflame the senses and lead to sin. Additionally, many

Catholic feasts, including that of Saint Martin in France, were championed by the Church as replacements for bear festivals. While there are numerous stories of the bear tempting saints in the form of the devil, there are also tales of the bear serving as companions for saints, as evinced in the case of Saint Vincentian, who died in 730. He was led to his tomb by a bear that had eaten one of the oxen in a funeral procession.

The fear of bears impregnating women was also prominent in the Middle Ages; William of Auvergne wrote that bear sperm is extremely similar to human sperm, making bears capable of impregnating women. Pastoreau offers the Alsatian version of the *Roman de Renaut*—which, according to Pastoreau, was commissioned under the influence of the Church—as additional evidence of the turn towards a negative view of bears. In this work, Brun the bear is an imbecilic character that lands in a wide variety of obscene and ridiculous situations, often due to his love of honey. In spite of these unfavorable portrayals, bears, especially polar bears from countries such as Norway, were still popular kingly gifts in the Middle Ages. However, despite its continued popularity, the bear eventually became a symbol for five of the seven cardinal sins—lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth—and the Church, according to Pastoreau, was victorious in dethroning the bear and replacing it with the lion and eagle.

In Pastoreau's final section, he presents the "revenge of the bear" in the form of the teddy bear and the contemporary desire to "save the bear." The French scholar provides the famous story of Teddy Roosevelt's unsuccessful hunting expedition in which his hosts tied a bear cub to a post for him, and he refused to kill it. This event led to the creation of the teddy bear, the first of the plush animals that emerged in the twentieth century. The success of the teddy bear is, for Pastoreau, a sign that humans cannot escape their obsession with the bear, and his work comes full circle as he returns to the image of the Neanderthal who was buried with a bear, comparing it to the image of the contemporary child who constantly holds his or her teddy bear as a companion. Commenting on the decline of the bear population, Pastoreau sees the death of the bear, which is so close to humans, as a symbol for not just human destruction of the natural world, but human self-destruction as well.

A graduate of the Comparative Literature PhD Program at Louisiana State University, Jesse Russell is currently an assistant professor of English and philosophy at River Parishes Community College in Sorrento, LA. In addition, he teaches English composition at Baton Rouge Community College and Southeastern Louisiana University. His research interests include epic poetry and medieval political philosophy. When he is not teaching or researching, he enjoys spending time with his wife and four children.

On Claire Messud's *The Woman Upstairs*

Review by Jodie Noel Vinson

I had just survived introductions to my husband's extended family on his father's side. I married Marc in July, but we had invited only immediate family to the ceremony. Though it was already November, Thanksgiving, this was the first time I would meet his Lebanese relatives. I was relieved when the only reference to the wedding came from Aunt Layla, who stamped her foot and cried, "But we *must* celebrate! I want to dance!"

For a moment I thought the *dabke* was about to start. Then I felt something on my arm, which I had wrapped around my husband's waist. A small hand was pressing my own. I peered around Marc's back to see Aunt Odette, my father-in-law's eldest sibling, grinning a silent blessing up at us. I was grateful, but could not think, could only feel that warm pressure on my hand. I imagined I felt the wrinkles in her skin—and on top of all these sensations I could not tell what I was actually feeling and what I was simply recalling from the book I had set aside to attend the festivities: Claire Messud's *The Woman Upstairs*.

Hands—and, by extension, touch—play a significant role in Messud's novel. Her narrator, Nora, is touched by the Shahid family: father, son, and mother. First she is won over by eight-year-old Reza, the charm of the third grade class Nora teaches at Appleton Elementary, who, after a tough day at school, places a small hand "as delicate as a leaf"[1] upon Nora's forearm.

After Reza is bullied at school, Nora meets his mother Sirena, who will become her siren. She describes Sirena's hand as "smallish, but strong and warm and dry" (27) when they shake hands in greeting, and, when Sirena invites Nora to share an art studio with her, she places that hand on Nora's arm, just as Reza did.

When the two women grow closer, intimate as artists, and Sirena takes Nora's hand in hers and holds it, Nora feels "her hand upon my hand, all through my body. I felt her skin. I really felt it" and thinks, " 'I want to stay with you. Actually, forever. I do' " (134). And so Nora, desperate for touch, hungry for signs ("ravenous" [160] as she later confesses to Sirena's husband, Skandar, whose hands are "square and fleshy and hot and dry, like a furnace, but all these things excitingly so" [195]), is seduced by the smallest inclusive gesture.

Standing in an unfamiliar home, surrounded by thirty people I did not know but nevertheless was to call family, I felt in Odette's hand on mine a gesture that spoke volumes: the blessing of a matriarch, the welcome of a family that stretched back generations and into unknown lands, traditions, and tongues. In short, I was invited into a new world. After introductions were made and we moved to sit down on the nearby loveseat, Odette removed her hand from my own. But I noticed, once we were seated, that it had traveled and was now rested protectively, with a sense of rightful claim, on my husband's left thigh.

1 Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs* (New York: Knopf, April 2013), p. 12. All further citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

What claim do our blood relatives have upon us? is one question *The Woman Upstairs* asks. What claim can we have upon those who are not our blood relatives? is another. That is, Messud explores throughout this book the difference between the families we are born into and our elective families, the families we choose.

The narrator's family is scattered or gone. Nora nursed her mother for years before losing her to ALS two years before meeting the Shahids. Her brother has always been eight years ahead of her, and neither has made an effort to diminish the distance separating them. Her father is failing fast in a gaudy apartment. Nora's elective family, up until she met the Shahids, consists primarily of her friend Didi, who has a family of her own.

We don't choose our native families, but we do choose our elective siblings and parents and children—or perhaps there is something else at work, because it's not that they choose us exactly either. This mystery of what draws one to a friend, of how intimacy develops between a self and a stranger, is at the heart of *The Woman Upstairs*. What causes my husband's Aunt Layla to drop her forkful of turkey suddenly to lift her glass in a heartfelt toast—"We are so happy to have you. Isn't it beautiful, having the family here"—to a nephew she has met but three times is different than what causes our heart to skip when the phone rings and the potential of a new friend—and a new world—is on the line.

Messud describes it as a sort of magic: "You know those moments, at school or college," Nora confides, attempting to explain the thousands of serendipitous revelations that occurred during her acquaintance with the Shahids,

> when suddenly the cosmos seems like one vast plan after all, patterned in such a way that the novel you're reading at bedtime connects to your astronomy lecture, connects to what you heard on NPR, connects to what your friend discusses in the cafeteria at lunch—and then briefly it's as if the lid has come off the world, as if the world were a dollhouse, and you can glimpse what it would be like to see it whole, from above—a vertiginous magnificence. (123)

I recognize in Nora's description the same magic that can often lead me not only to a friend, but also to a book, Messud's book in particular, which is set in my neighborhood in Boston. The setting was not the only coincidence between the book and my life: Skandar Shahid is Lebanese, and by the time I finished listening at the Thanksgiving table to Uncle Saad explaining his transition from Lebanon to the United States in 1980, I could not separate his story from Skandar's.

"The academics, they hear my accent, and they want to know more," Saad told me. "Immediately they ask, 'Where are you from?' and 'What do you know?' But everyone else, they hear and they do not understand and they do not want to understand."

I nodded, recalling Skandar's words on the subject: " 'In America…there are places like Harvard, where I walk in the door and…I'm known, in a certain way. But mostly—' " he tells Nora, " 'Mostly, in America, I'm a cipher' " (114).

Literature is at its best when it seems to speak directly to our lives. We recognize ourselves, we read more, and, if the book passes the second test of literature (the first being its mirror-like function), then it will perhaps show us a little more of ourselves than we knew before peering into its reflecting pool. This was part of the tension that kept me reading Messud's book: I had recognized my life, but was there something more to learn here?

The question of art—what it can reveal to us, its function and place in today's society—is prevalent in *The Woman Upstairs*. Messud's narrator is an artist; Sirena is an artist. They rent a studio together and go to work. Sirena does installations, is already known in Paris,

and has an impending show in New York; she is building a grandiose "Wonderland" out of the stuff of the everyday. Our narrator works away at tiny replicas of artist's rooms, those of Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, Alice Neel, and Edie Sedgwick. The contrast between the two women's art is obvious. Sirena is "engaged with the life force…someone who opens the doors to possibility, to the barely imagined," while Nora's art, on the other hand, is "constrained to reality," to the past. "You could call each of my boxes a shrine," she says (127).

At one time or another, the questions of a failed artist haunt everyone who creates. "If nobody at all could or would read in me the signs of worthiness—of artistic worth—then how could I be said to possess them?" (214), Nora wonders as she watches Sirena leave their little studio with its meaningful processes for the "real" art world full of galleries and critics and reviews and fame. Nora has neglected this world, intuiting its falseness and opting to create in Dickinsonian solitude instead, and her concern reverberates in the heart of every artist who wonders if her work will ever escape into the wider world, and what meaning it has if it doesn't.

But the really compelling thing that propels the reader through *The Woman Upstairs* is, ultimately, the woman herself. Messud's narrator is angry; she starts the book mad. Not mad in the way that we have been taught the woman upstairs, locked away in Rochester's attic, is *crazy* mad, but *terribly angry* mad.

We know that Nora is angry at her position as a middle-aged woman who has set aside her dreams to teach third graders, but there is an edge to her anger we do not grasp, and this edge, we understand, has been sharpened on the lives of three essential characters: Reza, Sirena, and Skandar. The potential for incredible anguish and bitter disappointment builds with each step Nora takes closer to this family, and the narrative accelerates toward an inevitable breaking point as she begins to cross over the tenuous lines that stand between oneself and those who are not actually one's family.

What drives Nora to take such steps? Need? Yes. Serendipity? Yes. But ultimately, it is the most desperate and magical of all things, love—the love of a mother, the love that affirms intellectual worth, and the love that creates. Nora falls in love not with an individual and not with a family, but, owing to her complicated needs, with three individuals at once, and in very unique ways. Nora's love involves her sexuality, but it is more longing than desire, as Messud puts it: "It carries its quality of reaching but not attaining, of yearning, of a physical pull that is intense and yet melancholy" (223).

While anger fuels Nora's story, when all is burned away by a devastating betrayal, what remains with the reader is that calling, that tread on the stairs we always half hope to hear, that beckoning hand on our own which we must respond to or remain forever upstairs. " 'Oh it's *you*. Of course. I should have known,' " Nora thinks when Sirena first smiles at her, and then, " 'I recognize you' " (26–27). What calls the reader to *The Woman Upstairs* is more seductive than rage: it is a recognition of ourselves not only in Nora's need, but also in her readiness to trust a love that pries the lid off the world she inhabits, a love that, like art, allows her to peer a little deeper into herself. And love is something we can all recognize, a thing about which we will always have something more to learn.

Jodie Noel Vinson received her MFA in nonfiction creative writing from Emerson College, where she was awarded a Graduate Fellowship and an Ethics in Communication Scholarship. She received a St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award in 2013. During her program at Emerson, Jodie developed a travel memoir about her journeys to the backdrops of literature in North America and Europe.

On Dane Kennedy's *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia*

Review by John Wallen

There is no doubt a good reason why Dane Kennedy's insightful books on Britain and Empire only appear every five years or so. It must surely have everything to do with the huge amount of research and synthesis that goes into each of his published works. Reading his new book, *The Last Blank Spaces*, I feel—as I often do with Professor Kennedy's work—in awe of his vast knowledge and, more importantly, his ability to interpret that store of knowledge in fresh and thought-provoking ways. His last book, *The Highly Civilized Man* (Harvard University Press, 2006), made a profound contribution to the study of Richard Francis Burton and went a long way towards rehabilitating the reputation of that important Victorian explorer and writer in the wake of a series of sustained attacks by Edward Said and numerous postcolonial critics. Kennedy's central thesis in that work was that Burton needs to be judged in the context of his time and the Victorians' development of what we today call "the scientific method." Kennedy's conclusion was that while Burton was certainly racist, sexist, and an imperialist, his tendency to judge all religions and societies using the same ethnographical and anthropological criteria was finally subversive to Britain's project of propagating Christianity as the uniquely privileged religion in its colonial spaces. This new book continues Kennedy's notable fascination with the development of Victorian science and exploration, though it does not, I think, possess the same degree of symmetry as *The Highly Civilized Man*.

The essential argument of *The Last Blank Spaces* is that there was a certain parallel between the nineteenth-century explorations of the African and Australian continents.[1] Explorers used the same navigational equipment in both cases—such as sextants and chronometers—that had been used to map the world's oceans. Further, they tended to see the empty interiors in much the same way as the seas and oceans had previously been viewed, that is, as blank spaces to be mapped. Kennedy connects this with the development of the scientific method and notes that earlier, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, quite detailed maps had already existed in Europe of Africa but they were based on local knowledge and hearsay.

These old maps, representative of an earlier stage of epistemological method, suddenly became blank under the new requisites of quantifiable scientific measurement. Now it almost seemed as if a country or continent didn't truly exist unless it had been rigorously mapped by European explorers. The irony was that these pioneering men of European science (and it was almost always men) were, in practice, often dependent on local knowledge and conditions for their sometimes rather shaky conclusions. This is a point also made by Mary Louise Pratt in her important book on the colonization of the Americas, *Imperial Eyes* (Routledge, 2002).

In fact, *The Last Blank Spaces* seems to be the most "postcolonial" of Kennedy's books that I've read—at least in spirit. There are numerous references to the metropolis, the center, and colonial spaces, all regular tropes

1 Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). All further discussion refers to this text unless otherwise noted.

of postcolonial criticism. Even the central decision to yoke together the apparently diverse processes by which Africa and Australia were explored and mapped in the nineteenth century appears somewhat similar to a Foucauldian discourse with its emphasis on unknown histories, the centrality of technology, and important—though mostly unseen—connections between modern states and their structures of power. This provides the hook on which Professor Kennedy hangs his profound knowledge of the period.

One question the book inevitably raises is whether there really is a parallel status between the nineteenth-century opening up of Africa and that of Australia. As Kennedy himself informs us, there were many differences between the explorations of the two continents as well as similarities (but more of that later). These considerations aside, *The Last Blank Spaces* represents a hugely impressive synthesis of diverse material into a digestible whole, and Professor Kennedy should be warmly congratulated on the publishing of another fine piece of historical research.

The major problem for the book is the central fact that the Australian story of exploration is far flatter and more ordinary than its African equivalent. In the context of the African story, we have imperial nations and learned bodies within nations jostling for influence and using the often egotistical explorers as pawns in a great imperialist chess game. The story is full of colorful figures like Mungo Park, Burton, Speke, Stanley, and Livingstone quarreling with each other and everybody else around them (especially the "armchair experts"). There are romantic questions to be answered, such as those about the origins of the Nile, a river that nurtured one of the greatest and earliest of human civilizations. There are the Arab traders and their caravan routes, as well as the duplicitous and often powerful native peoples and states. And most of all there is the wild beauty of Africa with its unknown secrets, terrible diseases, and great rivers and lakes.

In contrast, Australia seems tame. The explorers' names hardly trip off the tongue and are mostly forgotten except by historians, geographers, and, no doubt, the people who now live in the local places that originally sponsored them. The Australian explorers

certainly faced grave dangers in their work of mapping a new continent. However, these dangers mostly revolved around a lack of food and water in a fairly barren and unchanging environment. The practical effect of this is to make the reader want to keep skipping to the African sections of the book, as they are considerably more interesting than the Australian side of the story.

A further problem occasionally grows out of what is typically one of Professor Kennedy's greatest skills: his impressive ability to crunch data in easily accessible ways. The issue is that this talent he has can lead to a doubtful conclusion. One example would be Kennedy's rapid review of the relationship between Burton and Speke, and the conclusion that Speke may well have committed suicide. I think careful analysis has satisfactorily put this old chestnut to bed. Speke's death was almost certainly an accident caused by his carelessness in not putting the safety catch on his gun while climbing over a stile. This negligence may have been the result of his thinking about a coming debate with Burton in which he likely would have proved to be the inferior of the two, not being Burton's equal as thinker or orator. That, however, is quite a different matter than suicide.

In spite of these reservations, I strongly recommend this book to everyone interested in continental exploration in the early and middle parts of the Victorian era. Particularly impressive is the chapter on "intermediaries"—those locals who worked with the explorers in ambiguous and dangerous contact zones—whose profound contribution to the great nineteenth-century journeys of discovery couldn't be acknowledged at the time due to European ideas of white superiority and dominance. It has now fallen to Professor Kennedy to tell their story and to make the original point that both explorers and local factotums were often caught in a kind of secret space that lay outside European—and sometimes tribal—ideas of what these journeys meant (mostly a cynical opportunity for mutual exploitation).

Finally, as Kennedy points out, the early exploration of Africa was a precursor to the later "scramble for Africa" and is, as such, a kind of barometer for the imperial struggle toward the end of the nineteenth century. That said, Kennedy's attempt to see a parallel between the European nations' scramble for Africa and the fledgling Australian states' scramble for new territory is not particularly convincing.

Flawed? Perhaps. But still an essential book for all serious students of exploration under Victoria written by one of the greatest living experts on the history of that era.

John Wallen has taught in the Middle East for more than fifteen years. He is currently an assistant professor at Nizwa University in Oman. Previously he worked at Bahrain University and Qatar University. He has published two books of criticism, a novel, and several books of short stories. He received his PhD from Royal Holloway, University of London in 2011.

On Dani Shapiro's *Still Writing: The Perils and Pleasures of a Creative Life*

Review by
Sharon Oard Warner

In 1983 John Gardner published *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers* (Knopf). At the time, I was a graduate student studying creative writing, and Gardner's book became something of a bible for me, underlined and annotated. Novelists of my generation speak in Gardner-ese of "psychic distance" and "disrupting the fictional dream."[1] And his book is still widely used in classrooms today.

Over the last thirty years, I have read dozens of other books on writing. If nothing else, these books remind me to practice what I preach in the creative writing workshop, but on occasion, books on writing are truly eye-opening. While struggling to draft my second novel, for instance, I discovered *The Weekend Novelist* by Robert Ray (Billboard Books, 2005). Another very useful hands-on guide is Priscilla Long's *The Writer's Portable Mentor* (Wallingford Press, 2010). The funniest writing manual is surely Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird* (Pantheon Books, 1994), which made the phrase "shitty first draft" acceptable in college classrooms. To this list I can now add Dani Shapiro's *Still Writing: The Perils and Pleasures of a Creative Life*, which offers not instruction but reassurance and confirmation.[2]

Why writing a second novel should be harder than writing a first, I don't know, but Shapiro points out that writing one novel doesn't necessarily teach you how to write the next one. Some things don't get easier over time, and evidently writing fiction is one of these. (Dieting is another.) It's no wonder then that we're always on the lookout for tricks, tools, and tactics. In a piece entitled "Bad Days," Shapiro recounts the tactic of Buddhist writer Sylvia Boorstein, whose hedge against despair is soothing self-talk: " '*Darling. Honey*,' she tells herself. '*That's all right. There, there. Go take a walk. Take a bath. Take a drive. Bake a cake. Nap a little. You'll try again tomorrow*' " (81).

Here's the skinny: Whether the goal is a published book or a shapely reflection in the mirror, success is in the daily struggle. Stay in the present. Close the refrigerator door. Sit down at your desk and don't get up. (A friend of mine resorted to wearing a daily reminder—a leather cord from which dangled a silver chair—in order to keep her fanny planted.) Dani Shapiro has her own methods for staying put, and they've worked for her.

Shapiro is the author of five novels—*Black & White* (Knopf, 2007), *Family History* (Knopf, 2003), *Picturing the Wreck* (Doubleday, 1995), *Fugitive Blue* (Nan A. Talese, 1992), and *Playing with Fire* (Doubleday, 1990)—as well as two memoirs, *Slow Motion: A Memoir of a Life Rescued by Tragedy* (Harcourt Brace

1 To read about psychic distance, see Chapter 5 of *The Art of Fiction*, "Common Errors." For more on the "vivid and continuous fictional dream," refer to Chapter 2.

2 Dani Shapiro, *Still Writing: The Perils and Pleasures of a Creative Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2013). All further citations refer to this text unless otherwise noted.

& Company, 1998) and *Devotion* (HarperCollins, 2010). Her new book, *Still Writing*, is constructed of eighty or so mini-essays on writing and the writing life. Each is titled—"Bad Days," "Uncertainty," "Mess," "Rhythm"—and each stands alone. These pieces can be read singly or in snatches, consecutively or piecemeal. Read alone, they provide bits of encouragement, inspiration, and insight that may help to keep you in the moment and at your desk. Together, they offer a portrait of a writer and her philosophy on writing and life.

The title essay, "Still Writing," comes at the very end of the book, but it might be more helpful at the beginning, where it would signal the book's intention. This is not a book of instruction, nor is it a book of advice. Rather, it's one writer's attempt to document her own experience: "Writing has been my window," Shapiro writes, "flung wide open to this magnificent, chaotic existence—my way of interpreting everything within my grasp" (227).

We read to learn from others, she notes, but we write to learn about ourselves, to find out what we think. From the struggle to find meaning, we derive a "valuable clarity" (227). In *Still Writing*, Shapiro reminds us that the daily struggle is all; that it "isn't about the project, it's about the practice" (224).

Sharon Oard Warner is a fiction writer and a professor of English at the University of New Mexico. She also serves as the founding director of the Taos Summer Writers' Conference.

The Nature of Hypothesis

Hypothesis—asserting that a statement
is the case and testing the truth of it after—
is how the scientists proceed; just so,
the poet, aiming for a poem, proceeds.
Experiment and draft are much alike,
trying out this idea and that.
But as we have to wait know the truth,
we have to wait as long to know a poem
or song is worthy. Thus Shakespeare and Bach,
their sonnets and sonatas, waited in
the wings, lost from history for a time,
a painful thought but one that's true. And yet
the hypothesis—*their art was true*
and beautiful—is seen at last to have
been valid all along, the words of Shakespeare
as measured as *armonia*, his casts
of characters contrapuntal, Bach's sonatas
a series of poetic interpretations
of sound and of the astounding world of the mind.
Or rather, Shakespeare's words are music sublime,
and Bach's sonatas monologues of light.

-Kelly Cherry

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.

To contribute poetry—both original pieces and translations are accepted—to the Poets' Corner, send your work to *literarymatters@alscw.org* by the submission deadline for **Issue 7.1: January 15, 2014**.

Psychotherapy

No one ever,
gets the parents
they deserve.

Born as
we are, with
empty bellies,
filled with insatiable
hankering.

Our childhoods,
become a bowl
of broth
with no meat.

All of it
seasoned with a
touch too much
pepper and brine.

Then, desperate,
we squander our
lives in search
of butter,

For all the
bread we never
had.

-Daniel Thomas Moran

Poets' Corner Submission Guidelines:

- You may send up to five poems during each submission period.
- Please submit poem(s) via email as an attachment. When submitting multiple poems, please include all pieces in one file.
- You are encouraged to provide a biographical note (100 words or fewer) with your submission, which will appear alongside your poetry if it is accepted for publication.
- In order to provide a balanced forum for emerging poets, we ask those featured in the Poets' Corner to refrain from sending in further submissions for six months following the publication of their poetry.

Aesthetics

Composition and perspective
Can make of almost anything
A work of art, except perhaps
The highway accident—charred

Chassis dismembered by the jaws
Of life, ambulance screaming
As if in pain. Horror is not
Beautiful nor sublime, nor does

It illumine or expand the world,
Yet artists have painted beautiful paintings
Of human decay and degradation
And as for jaws of death, some find

Beauty in a circling shark.
Can ugliness be beautiful?—
But this is not a new question,
And there are those who answered *yes*,

Like Francis Bacon and Damien Hirst.
I cannot say that I agree,
Although Bacon's figuration
Of ageing makes us grieve for our lack

Of compassion, and that is salutary,
I suppose. Yes, definitely
Salutary. But beauty, I think,
Is built on ambiguity,

Nuance, layers of meaning, levels
Of understanding, connections threaded
Through the whole to unify
The parts of what it adds up to.

Beauty is in search of wholeness,
A sense of life that brings together
The myriad tools of creation
In a single creation. Beauty reveals

Itself in actual completion.
It is not process. It is concretion.

-Kelly Cherry

Billionaires, Poets, and Vice Versa

There are a lot of things a billionaire
can say that a poet cannot, really.
Like "Live for the opinions of others
and you are dead," as Slim said.

Human contexts, of course, may differ
(poets tend to be zillion-aires or nothing);
their projects are like apples and pears;
you can live on a rope or a shoestring.

Poets tend to care more that you convene with them,
but are nonpareil at not giving a dang.
There's no doubt they'll have the last word.
A *dialogue* is unimaginable, not least in verse.

Spit into a billionaire's wide-open eye:
it is unlikely even to notice!
You'll never say the same of a poet's orbs
though they be almost closed to a slit.

There are a lot of things a poet
can buy that a billionaire cannot, really.
Like the little cottage by the stream
for all his books Peter got.

Human contexts, of course, may differ
(billionaires tend to own mansions and van Goghs);
their needs are like apples and pears;
you can hang on a shoestring or a rope.

Billionaires tend to care only for expensive things,
but are constantly on the lookout for a bargain.
There's no doubt they'll get what they want.
A *swapping* is unimaginable, not least of stocks.

Shit on a poet's rickety porch,
the image will wind up on paper!
Dump some on a billionaire's terrace,
it'll be on video and handled by waiters.

-Nail Chiodo

Nail Chiodo (b. 1952 in Padua, Italy) spent most of his formative years and early adulthood in the United States and majored in philosophy at Yale. He is the author of a yet-to-be-properly-unearthed underground movie, *The Insignificant Other* (2008), and a set of contentious philosophical poems, *In the Instant's Guise: Selected Poems 1978–2011* (CreateSpace, 2011).

Blizzard

I have lived ninety rough and wrinkled years.
Blizzards have made me a sculptured field of white,
A hard crusty surface, with footprints of winter birds,
Snowdrifts jagged and sharp, wavy and smooth.
Now I await the spectacle of the snow and ice sparkling in the sun,
After the winds have blown themselves out.

"Blow winds and crack your cheeks!" Blow it all out!
Bemoan the night you were born, cursing your wrinkled years,
Your woes and your worries, shadows under the sun.
Once you had powers to dispel a tempest with a wand, turn black to white,
Or shovel the snow from your driveway and carve out a snow serpent, wavy and smooth.
Now you hope that the blizzard spares you along with the frail birds.

From my ark, I have dispatched birds.
But no bird can find land in a whiteout.
The wind and snow have made the whole world wavy and smooth.
It may be scenic for you but blistery and maddening for me year after year,
Snow upon snow, wind after wind, white upon white.
I listen for the chant of the mystical choir in the rising sun.

Can you sell your soul for salvation? Only a blind man can stare at the sun.
Your pact was with pigeons. They were a flock of God's birds.
On the wing like a blizzard, on foot so light, thin tracks on the ground, turned white.
It was not to seek land but for your own pleasure that you sold them out.
But they, each and every one, returned after four score years,
As a flock, out of the sky, like a snowdrift, wavy and smooth.

Once I skied down a snowy mountain, fast and smooth,
And beheld my marks, already withering in the wind and sun,
Even as the rocky peaks erode with years.
The Lord is my rock, and the Holy Spirit is a bird,
But a blizzard wipes faith out.
The wind blows drifts from the peaks so hard and high, the sun turns white.

A crematory reduces the body to ashes white.
The steep granite cliffs along the canyon are smooth.
An old man, alone, throws the ashes out.
He sees them floating and drifting as specks in the sun,
Like distant, migrating, flocks of birds.
A gust, a puff, a whiff, and a wheeze make naught of ninety years.

She is a blizzard smoothing out the wrinkled thoughts of my ninety years,
As she gathers cockle shells and chases seabirds,
A little girl skipping along the beach and tossing sand to the summer sun.

-David Partenheimer

David Partenheimer is a professor of English and sometimes German at Truman State University. His publications include translations, literary studies, educational theory, poetry, fiction, and creative essays.

Re-Digging the Beats while Driving a Little below the Speed Limit in Search of the Dharmashala in a Quasi-Hipster Fellaheen Stream of Consciousness

"You'd be surprised how little I knew even up to yesterday"
-Jack Kerouac

How much more laudable
to
be a visionary,

Wandering the night
in
search of the self.

Composing the verses
of
the new beatitudes,

Than to just stay home
and
pay your fucking bills.

-Daniel Thomas Moran

In the Streets of Mumbai

for Ankur and Khushbu Oswal-January 2013

The dusts of India have
lain down upon everything,
Concealing the writing
on the walls, Weighing
down the sagging rooftops,
Choking the sun and the machines,
Veiling the fifty million
brown feet of Mumbai.

The dogs shake a dusty shake.
The cows low a dusty low.
Teak, sable-haired men
chase it with wispy brooms.

It is only the women
who seem immune to it all,
Draped in pastel silks,
their flowing hems
keeping it from them.

This morning, in the
streets of Mumbai,
spattered over the chaos,
they are the shed petals of
jasmine, rose and marigold,
fallen from the garlands
of a bride and her groom.

-Daniel Thomas Moran

The Inception of May

The benumbed
waters, born of
the Northland snows, now
receded into the spring,

These venerable rocks
of the Warner River, begin
to express themselves.

Stretching from beneath
the cloak of winter.
They order the river's course.

In the newborn light, my
own eyes comb the trees
for the familiar, the friends
who had left us here, alone,
to contend with the
long and lifeless winter.

Now returned, they
enjoin us to redress,
and to recommence.

Here, together once more,
we await the greening
which will define the
summer's shadows, soften
and festoon the stones,

Contented in the days, and
the budding and leafing
of our common, explicit
hereafter.

-Daniel Thomas Moran

Daniel Thomas Moran is a retired assistant professor from Boston University's School of Dental Medicine who is now a full-time poet and amateur raconteur. His seventh collection of poems, *A Shed for Wood*, is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry in Ireland. He lives in Webster, New Hampshire.

Occam's Razor

Imagine a point of unimaginable density.
This is where we begin, without dimension,
timeless and solitary. What causes the point
to break into countless pieces? We might as well
ask what breaks the human heart: every
thing and no one thing.
The pieces coalesce
or sail through space, perhaps creating it
in their wake. Gases become the many stars
and rocks crashing headlong into one another
become planets gravitationally mustered
into orbits around the boiling suns, solar
systems eloping with galaxies, perhaps
honeymooning along event horizons,
those seductive portals to black holes, points
of unimaginable density.
You've heard
of Occam's Razor. Well, one thinks it may
be smarter to believe the Christian myth
than tales of gravity so great that light
cannot escape, or strings that twist and loop
into other universes, and time itself
an old-timey flipbook of static scenes.

-Kelly Cherry

Kelly Cherry published her twenty-first full-length book, *The Life and Death of Poetry* (Louisiana State University Press), this year. She is working on a long poem about J. Robert Oppenheimer and has so far read sixty-six books by, about, or more or less connected with him.

Imagination

Imagination is the wildest wind,
blows us where we never guessed we'd go.
The Thessaly of long ago, perhaps,
its incense overpowering, so that we reel
as if drunk on wine or ouzo. As if sirens
sang us into a spell of longing so
intense it yanked us off a well-trod path.

Or Roman Britain, with its chunk-stone fences
and military outposts guarded by
guys who thought their country ruled the world
and always would. In this and many other
ways, America emulates the Rome
of former times but suppose you are there,
inhaling cooking smells pervading streets

and alleys. Or imagine China, the future
awaiting all of us, economists say,
though I imagine a future farther away—
another planet or galaxy, where
the water's clean, the atmosphere pure,
and all the forms of life live peaceably
and not one has to eat any other one.

Imagination is imagination,
alas, and not reality and yet
its force outstrips the force of a tornado.
That which we imagine may lead us to
improve our world or country or city
or maybe only the room we occupy,
but that, as people say, is a beginning.

-Kelly Cherry

Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers

2013 MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT FORM

(available online at http://www.alscw.org)

☐ Dr. ☐ Prof. ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ Other

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE/PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE COUNTRY

BILLING ADDRESS

CITY STATE/PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE COUNTRY

PHONE

E-MAIL

☐ I DO NOT wish to have my contact information released outside of the ALSCW.

Institutional Affiliation

Department

Areas of interest:

- ☐ American Literature
- ☐ British Literature
- ☐ Poetry
- ☐ Shakespeare
- ☐ Comparative Literature
- ☐ The Novel
- ☐ K–12 Education
- ☐ Classics
- ☐ Creative Writing
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Memoir
- ☐ Short Fiction
- ☐ Translation
- ☐ Canadian Literature
- ☐ World Literature in English
- ☐ Other

The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation under the laws of the State of California. Your gift is tax deductible in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations.Thank you for your support!

For more information, visit our website at www.alscw.org, or contact us directly at office@alscw.org or 617-358-1990.

This is a ☐ Renewal ☐ New Membership ☐ Gift Membership ☐ Annual Fund Gift

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership Options

- ☐ Regular Membership $85
- ☐ Reduced (new members, students, and members earning less than $50,000 a year) $45
- ☐ Senior Rate (70 and over) $60
- ☐ Premium Membership $125

Note: We have eliminated the category of joint domestic memberships and now offer two-member households the regular $85 rate, in return for which they will receive all the benefits provided by a current joint domestic membership–a single copy of our publications and full member privileges for both persons in the household.

☐ I wish to renew my dues AUTOMATICALLY until I choose to stop. (For details of the auto-renewal policy, see http://www.alscw.org/join.html)

ANNUAL FUND GIFTS

- ☐ Helper (Up to $49)
- ☐ Guardian ($50–$249)
- ☐ Hero ($250–$499)
- ☐ Titan ($500–$999)
- ☐ Literary Partner ($1,000 to $2,499)
- ☐ Literary Lion ($2,500 to $4,999)
- ☐ Literary Champion ($5,000 to $9,999)
- ☐ Benefactor ($10,000 to $24,999)
- ☐ Honored Benefactor ($25,000 and above)

☐ I DO NOT wish to have my name published on the ALSCW website, in the ALSCW newsletter, or in ALSCW fundraising reports to recognize my support.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION (dues + gift) $

I would like to pay by ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express ☐ Check*

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE _____ / _____ **CVV2 NUMBER** _____

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE

*Send checks to ALSCW / 650 Beacon St. Ste. 510 / Boston, MA 02215.

OFFICE USE: ☐ Check/CC ___ / ___ ☐ DB ___ / ___ ☐ Receipt ___ / ___ ☐ Gift Receipt ___ / ___ ☐ Council ___ / ___