

Editorial

THIS ISSUE OF *The Dalhousie Review* begins with an article by Robert Finley, a graduate of the honours English program at Dalhousie, and it closes with a review by my colleague J.A. Wainwright, who earned both his MA and his PhD at Dalhousie. It is a happy symbolic coincidence that the contents of this issue should be bracketed in this way by the work of two Dalhousie Alumni because, during the next nine months or so, we are hoping to increase our subscriptions from the large and diversified population of Dalhousie graduates scattered across Canada and indeed the entire world. The *Alumni Magazine* will be running a brief article about us in the near future, as well as a series of advertisements designed to encourage new subscriptions. I am sure that most Dalhousie graduates feel connected in some way to their university, even if only by memory and nostalgia. A subscription to *The Dalhousie Review* might help to nurture such connections by providing access to some of the real work that goes on in the university community.

The current issue is a showcase for literary work of many different kinds. Robert Finley's article, "The Riddle's Charm," is a subtle and engaging enquiry into the qualities and strategies that make poetry enigmatic. Victor Li, in "T.S. Eliot and the Language of Hysteria," uses some of the techniques of biographical research and psychoanalytic theory in order to arrive at a cultural critique of the strain of misogyny in Eliot's poetry. Christopher Elson does the literary work of translation, and gives us access, for the first time in English, to Michel Deguy's meditation on metaphor occasioned by Mallarmé's meditation on the figure of the dancer. Camille R. La Bossière, in "The World Revolves Upon an I," is engaged in solving an intricate intertextual puzzle which brings Melville into proximity with Montaigne, and which places both of these sceptics into the presence of the infinite. Aside from these discursive pieces, the

current issue includes works of literary creation. Sometimes these works are quite obviously based on 'real-life experience' as recorded in historical documents, as preserved in memory, or as played out in society. Matthew Tree's "The Lowry File" is clearly a work of this kind; the artist's imagination here is the instrument by means of which letters that no longer exist can be called back to life. Sometimes creative works are just as clearly based on fantasy: they run by a set of rules that don't apply in real life, and part of the fun of reading is the challenge of learning the new rules and how to interpret them. "Pets" by Brooke Biaz is a story of this kind. Notice that the father in this text is able to "read" the "real desires" of his clients "as if they were projected vividly onto a cinema screen, thirty feet high in front of him." Most of the short stories in this issue, and the poems too for that matter, are negotiating the space between the two paradigms I've just outlined. Several of the poems printed here do offer to represent real life, but they choose a scene or a character or a moment from real life so unfamiliar to us (and presumably to the poet, too) that the act of interpreting it seems like the operation of fantasy. James Norcliffe's "Hororata" and Glen Sorestad's "Television Afternoon" are good examples of such strong collaboration between close observation and fantastic semblance. But perhaps I've said enough about the texts which follow in these pages: "enough," in this case, being the dosage required to stimulate but not satisfy the urge to read on.

The next issue of *The Dalhousie Review* (78.1) will be devoted entirely to discussions of the current political culture of Québec. The Guest Editor for this issue will be Nelson Michaud, a widely published scholar on questions relating to Québec nationalism. Contributions will include articles by Louis Massicotte, professor of political science at Université de Montréal, and Michel Vastel, political columnist for *Le Droit*, *Le Soleil*, and other magazines. There will also be reviews of recent French-language books on various aspects of Québec politics and culture. Our objective in publishing the Québec issue is to offer anglophone readers access to serious and informed writing on questions that need to be addressed as Canadians on both sides of the language divide contemplate their future. The special issue on Québec will include no creative writing. For this reason, and because the volume and quality of submissions by creative writers remains gratifyingly high, the

following issue (78.2) will be set aside entirely for fiction, poetry, and other creative work. The details of this project have not yet been mapped out, but I hope it will be in some real sense a celebration of contemporary writing and an opportunity to take stock of the writer's situation at the end of the millennium.

By the time you read this, you should be able to visit *The Dalhousie Review* on our newly created website, at the address given below. On our home page you will find links leading to information about our current issue, about subscription costs, about submission guidelines, about the history of the journal, and so on. We are not publishing the contents of each issue electronically, though we will provide samples of what's in our current issue. The purpose of our website is to make it easy for members of the reading public to find out what we have to offer them. I've said before that my goal as Editor is to reanimate the relationship between *The Dalhousie Review* and its readers. I hope the new website will be one small step in the direction of achieving this goal.

R.H.

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