

## Editorial

HOW YOU WRITE DOES MATTER, and in some circumstances it matters a great deal. It may not matter much to the chair of your department or to the members of your promotion committee. It may not matter much to the editorial board at the *Journal of Professional Discourse*. But it matters at *The Dalbousie Review*. And above all it matters to potential readers of your work; for most of them the words you write will determine whether following your argument is a duty or a pleasure.

I'm not suggesting that *The Dalbousie Review* has a house style to which all contributors should conform. Indeed, I would claim that the opposite is true, and in support of this claim I direct your attention to the first two articles printed here. Robert M. Martin writes in a style that combines provocation with seduction. He'll make a brash, in-your-face remark to get your attention, and he gets away with it because he's taking you through an ingenious argument with great skill, assisted at times with a self-deprecating wit that's hard to resist. Eric Miller's prose is a different kind of adventure altogether. Miller has a love of the textures and tonalities of language that comes out in virtually every sentence he writes. Because one texture reminds him of another, and because the two of these together suggest a third, Miller's sentences are often digressive. But his digressions are always meaningful: they are signs that he's looking at his problem simultaneously from several points of view, and inviting us to do the same. And he can surprise you with a short sentence too, just to keep you guessing. Martin is a philosopher who loves poetry; Miller a poet who loves philosophy. Both combinations work, though the results are not at all the same.

The two writerly voices I've mentioned do stand out as distinctive, but neither could be taken as normative in an issue that offers a great many other styles, both creative and discursive. I will resist trying to describe these other voices, and will simply recommend them to you. "Language most shews a man," Ben Jonson

writes in *Discoveries*: "speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech." After an interval of almost four hundred years, these words still hold true in principle. I would correct Jonson, if I could, so that his assertion would apply equally to both genders. And I am interpreting his remarks as referring not only to oral speech but to written language as well. But the big point here is the implicit connection between the way we think and the way we use language. And that is what continues to matter.

R.H.