

# Editorial

He knew everything about literature except how to enjoy it.

—Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*

ACADEMICS AND OTHER OVER-EDUCATED people tend to write and read what's contorted, problematic, difficult. That's why so many of them have headaches. Unintelligible poetry! Pointless fiction! High-theory obscure essays! Well, take a deep breath and relax those knotted-up shoulder muscles: *The Dalbousie Review* is here for your enjoyment, and what's in here has been chosen with that aim forefront.

That does not mean that we are dumbing things down, printing literary chewing-gum. The contents of this volume will, as usual, provide some surprises, some insights, some cognitive and aesthetic workouts. But, it's hoped, you'll be smiling rather than frowning while reading.

The two essays in here make a nice pair. The first was written originally as a memorial for the author's parents—the sort of thing unlikely to appear in a journal such as this one. But the stories Tom Vinci tells are interesting in themselves, and interestingly connected with important historical events. So we felt that this essay would have an appeal wider than just to those who attended the author's mother's funeral. Also noteworthy in this essay is what it reveals about Vinci's relation with his own past: how disconnected from it he was, and in what ways he became connected. Connection with the past is also the concern of our second essay. This one is largely theoretical analysis, but it includes the personal as well. Taking off from the Canadian Governor General's dedication speech at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Jennifer Delisle gives us an insightful evaluation of the various functions of public and private reactions to our military past.

This issue includes a larger-than-usual number of short fiction pieces, and they're widely varied. Some fit the classical short-story mould, with character development and problem-solving. Others don't appear to go anywhere, but we found them appealing because they paint a vivid and convincing picture of a slice of life. The most unconventional item among our fiction is "History Lessons," which alternates fragments from ancient history, snippets from literature, and bits of a contemporary story. Like

history itself, this appears, at first glance, to be just one damned thing after another; but perhaps you'll see how these things connect.

The number of poems in here is also unusually large. We found very many poetry submissions that we liked; so we've squeezed in as many as we could. Our editorial staff admit to a taste for the old, pre-post-modern, pre-modern even, poetic virtues of metre, rhyme, sound, form. You'll even find something like a sonnet in here. But we've also included much that's not so antediluvian. Strangest and funniest among our poems is one called "Contributor's Notes." Why is this a poem? Because its author says it is.

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The masthead page of this issue shows several changes from previous ones. Our Editorial Advisory Board includes several newcomers, and we look forward to receiving valuable input from them and from the continuing members. Renée Hartleib is serving as Production Manager while Jennifer Lambert takes maternity leave. Thanks, Renée, for standing in so splendidly; congratulations, Jennifer, on your second beautiful child! We welcome Judith Thompson as Associate Editor, concentrating on poetry in this issue, and we're sure to benefit from her good taste and judgement. Ronald Huebert is no longer Editor. He decided not to seek another term in that position, as he put it, because he wanted to leave while he still thoroughly enjoyed the work. His beneficial influence on the *Review* has been enormous. One of his first acts as Editor was to instigate and oversee a thorough redesign of the look of the journal, into its present pleasing form. More importantly, however, he is responsible for our current flourishing state. His outstanding organizational intelligence, energy, imagination, his broad and deep background, and his unfailingly excellent critical judgement have kept *The Dalhousie Review* at the forefront of its field. We say goodbye with affection and gratitude.

R.M.M.