

STEPHEN E. LECKIE

Wings Off the Ground

*The Poet is a kinsman in the clouds
Who scoffs at archers, loves a stormy day;
But on the ground, among the hooting crowds,
He cannot walk, his wings get in the way.*

—Charles Baudelaire, “The Albatross”

It has been my sincerest honour to facilitate *The Albatross*' production this year. Without the excellent service of the undergraduates we would never have seen this project come to fruition—especially with the newly expanded scope of the journal. The inclusion of poetry written by English-major undergraduates both challenged and bolstered the project. Of course, the critical essays—a staple of past years—will speak for themselves. From the Restoration period to postmodern cultural critiques, as well as two papers about children's literature, the students delve into some pertinent issues.

Ellen Spacey's “The Function of Metafiction in *The Book Thief*: Tension, Self-Reflexivity, and the Critical Reader” and Renee Gaudet's “‘You Eat the Red Cheek and I'll Eat the White Cheek’: Wholesome Nourishment and Chaotic Consumption in the Grimms' Fairy Tales”, two essays about children's literature, serve as fine undergraduate responses to a recent course addition to the department. Gaudet examines how food in the Grimms' fairy tales embodies both the monstrous and the righteous. Spacey pulls apart the layers of Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, revealing how metafiction and *mise-en-abyme* help the young-adult reader weather the traumas of history.

Tye Landels and Katherine Goertz return to volume 5.1 with essays that follow other aspects of their research

passions. Goertz explores a feminist hybrid identity in “The Mohawk Princess Recites and Writes: How Pauline Johnson Battled Negative ‘Indian’ Stereotypes through her Performances and Prose.” Landels takes on multicultural theory, diasporic identity, and misrecognition in his paper “Liberal Multiculturalism and the Limits of Recognition in Caryl Phillips’s *The Nature of Blood*.” These two writers represent the diversity of the critical discourse involved in the department’s English Honours program.¹

Another soon-to-be graduating Honours student, Reuben Copley, challenges the critical reader with denoting the sacredness of a text. In “The Good Book: Reading Ishmael Reed’s *Mumbo Jumbo* as Neo-Hoodoo’s Sacred Text,” Copley elucidates the novelist’s counter-narrative to the dominant story of Western civilization. *Mumbo Jumbo* is a book to put on your list.

Finally, Kristina Holm’s investigation of gender stereotypes in the Restoration period allows the reader of “The Libertine, the Gypsy, and the Lump: Gender Inversions in Wilmot’s ‘The Imperfect Enjoyment’ and Behn’s *The Rover*” to better understand the strength of a woman’s intelligence and use of language.

Without the modernist poetry assignment in Dr. Luke Carson’s course(s), we would not be reading the amazing poetry in this year’s edition. Zach McCann-Armitage and Brenden Speers both followed Gertrude Stein with their submissions. With more time and space, we could have published the complete projects. As it stands, the works are representative of thoughtful, unique poetics, and they utter with strange fluidity. Alexa Eldred, inspired by Kenneth Koch’s “The Boiling Water,” turns this issue on its side. “Rocks” solidifies a burgeoning poetic talent with its extended description of time and tide.

This year’s inaugural recipient of the English Students’ Association’s poetry scholarship, Krista Cotê,

¹ See *The Albatross*, volume 3 and 4.



takes flight through her derivation of Marianne Moore. Moore's absence is personified in "Prosopopoeia of M.M.," which showcases Coté's precision and rigor, as well as the ESA's discerning selection.

On a personal note, I am indebted to everyone who offered support for this project. At times I worried we would be trapped by the sheer density of responsibility, both of the journal and our course work, but the crowds dissipated and it happened. Thank you to all for helping this issue take flight.

One more year behind us and our wings are off the ground.