

EDITORIAL—ON NEW BEGINNINGS AND INFLUENCES

IN AMONGST THE MANY MEMORABLE things that she said to me during the three undergraduate classes in American Literature that I took with her during my undergraduate years at the University of Guelph—an increasingly long time ago—Dr. Nancy Bailey said one particular thing that has stayed with me. Dr. Bailey had a profound influence on my decision to pursue graduate school. I suppose, as is so often the case with the young, I did not recognize at the time just how much support and encouragement she had given me. I only realize it now because of some of the great conversations I have had from time to time with former students who—out of the goodness of their hearts—have seen fit to thank me for whatever small part I may have played in their thinking about something they'd not previously considered, introducing them to a writer whose work they have found influential, or just simply being willing to talk to them about whatever was on their minds. I hope I told Dr. Bailey how much I appreciated her time, attention and support, but I fear I may not have.

What she said was that the great thing about working on the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald—as she did in graduate school—was that his writing style, almost as if by osmosis, tends to enliven one's own. As I prepared to begin work on my honours paper, under Dr. Bailey's supervision, on three novels by Theodore Dreiser, he of the, let's say, rather ponderous style, I could not help but worry that the obverse was probably also the case. I let others judge such things as pertains to my own writing. But Dr. Bailey's observation about influences on writing style also appears to hold true regarding the effect on one's temperament and probably one's view of the world of those whose company any of us keeps.

If this is the case, then I can only consider myself fortunate to have worked with Dr. Bailey at a formative point in my life, and with Robert Martin, my predecessor as editor of this journal. It was my good fortune to work as an Associate Editor with Bob over the last four years. During that time, he reminded me what it is about my chosen profession that I most like. His quick mind, genuine interest in ideas, as well as his belief in and commitment to this journal, all conveyed themselves to me on an almost daily basis, along with his good humour and discipline as an editor. It is,

I hope, in these ways that I have been influenced by Bob and in this spirit that I take on the editorship of *The Dalhousie Review*.

As we present the Fall 2007 issue, there are a few changes we have implemented, while leaving the overall work of the *Review* unchanged. Because of the large amount of very high-quality poetry and fiction that we receive, we will be weighting our overall focus more towards these genres and less towards articles. While we will continue to accept and publish scholarly articles of interest to a general, informed readership, we have found that there are often too many excellent stories and poems that simply cannot find room in our issues only because of limitations of space. Also, we have increased the acceptable length of book reviews from approximately 500 words to 1000–1250 words, in order to give our reviewers a little more room in which to work. We will also try to focus our book reviews on the work published by smaller Canadian presses, whose work is so central to what Canadians read, although not always attended to as they should be because of the presence of the large presses. While these changes are relatively minor in scope, we see them as enhancing what *The Dalhousie Review* has done best for many years, publishing intelligent and thoughtful reviews, stories, poems, and articles for a discerning general readership.

The present issue, as an introduction to the *Review's* altered focus, is a special fiction and poetry issue, the first since Spring 2004. Another minor change for this issue is that instead of providing sub-headings to the arrangement of the poetry and fiction, we have left it up to the reader to divine what incidental or explicit connections there may be within this collection. This issue, then, is all about influence, as the coincidence of placement or order of reading cannot help but affect what one might find in any given story or poem.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that the *Review* will continue to be influenced positively by the invaluable work of its Associate Editors—Sue Campbell, Ian Colford, Dean Irvine, Krista Kesselring, Meghan Nieman, and Judith Thompson—our new Editorial Assistant, Susanne Marshall, and especially our Production Manager, Jennifer Lambert. Working with a group of people like this cannot help but influence me for the better.

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