

EDITORIAL

More than once in the last couple of years, I've turned my mind to the end of my career. Now, it must be said that I enjoy my job very much and consider myself fortunate and blessed with access to a level of privilege that I could not have imagined at an earlier stage in my life. Furthermore, I have more access to privilege than either of my parents has ever had. I also fully expect to do my job—in one form or another—for a long time yet. But, as George Orwell once wrote, when one is on a sinking ship, one's mind turns inevitably to thoughts of sinking ships.

Many of my friends have retired recently—Robert Martin (Department of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, and former editor of *The Dalhousie Review*), Leslie Monkman (Department of English, Queen's University), and Andrew Wainwright (Department of English, Dalhousie University), to name but three. These men have all served as examples and models of how to conduct myself in a line of work completely foreign to me, as someone neither of whose parents attended university.

One of my closest friends, Dr. Edward Lobb, a professor of English at Queen's University, recently ended his career after eight years at Wake Forest University, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and over 25 years at Queen's. He is also on the editorial advisory board of *The Dalhousie Review*. It was my great pleasure to have met Edward when he taught a modern poetry seminar I took as a graduate student in 1988–89. His course on the poetry of T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, and W.B. Yeats enabled me to think about how modernism expressed itself in different ways in the early part of the twentieth century. It also, however, gave me a first look at what being a professional in this business might look like. Edward was motivated by the beauty of the words on the page, and being able to convey the significance of this beauty to a group of Masters and Doctoral students being simultaneously inundated with the claims of poststructuralism—that literature as such was not about beauty, but uncertainty, that all text was unstable and that this instability was, in its myriad manifestations, where meaning (such as it was) lay.

Edward did not accept such claims, and resisted them at a time when to do so marked one as behind the times, needlessly intransigent, or as someone who just didn't "get" what was going on in the academy. And even to the extent that I did and still do accept some of these claims, our differences have only encouraged a friendship by times hilarious, moving, and, most of all, deeply important to me. Edward also introduced me to the book that changed my life. After my Masters year was finished, Edward gave me my first copy of Ralph Ellison's 1952 masterpiece, *Invisible Man*. I still have the copy, and it remains one of the most prized of the gifts anyone has ever given me. *Invisible Man* opened my world to the prospect that there were as many ways of being black in North America as there are individual black people in North America. It also showed me the intense effects possible when a true artist takes horror as his subject matter and creates beauty, a lesson that now governs much of my teaching of African American Literature and culture.

As I turn my own mind to thoughts of pension plans, how I have spent the first half of my career, and how I will spend the second, I think of one of the best examples this profession has provided me. Edward is healthy, happy, and looking forward to the occupations and preoccupations of retirement with an enthusiasm to be envied, so I do not intend this to be an elegy. It is not. However, it always seems to me a shame that we wait until our heroes are gone or almost gone before we praise them.

With wishes of many happy years of retirement, then, I dedicate this issue to Edward Lobb.

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Correction to Volume 91.2 (Summer 2011)

Catriona Wright's short story "FLAP" was published in our last issue (pages 201-212). We deeply regret having mistakenly printed her name as Catriona White.