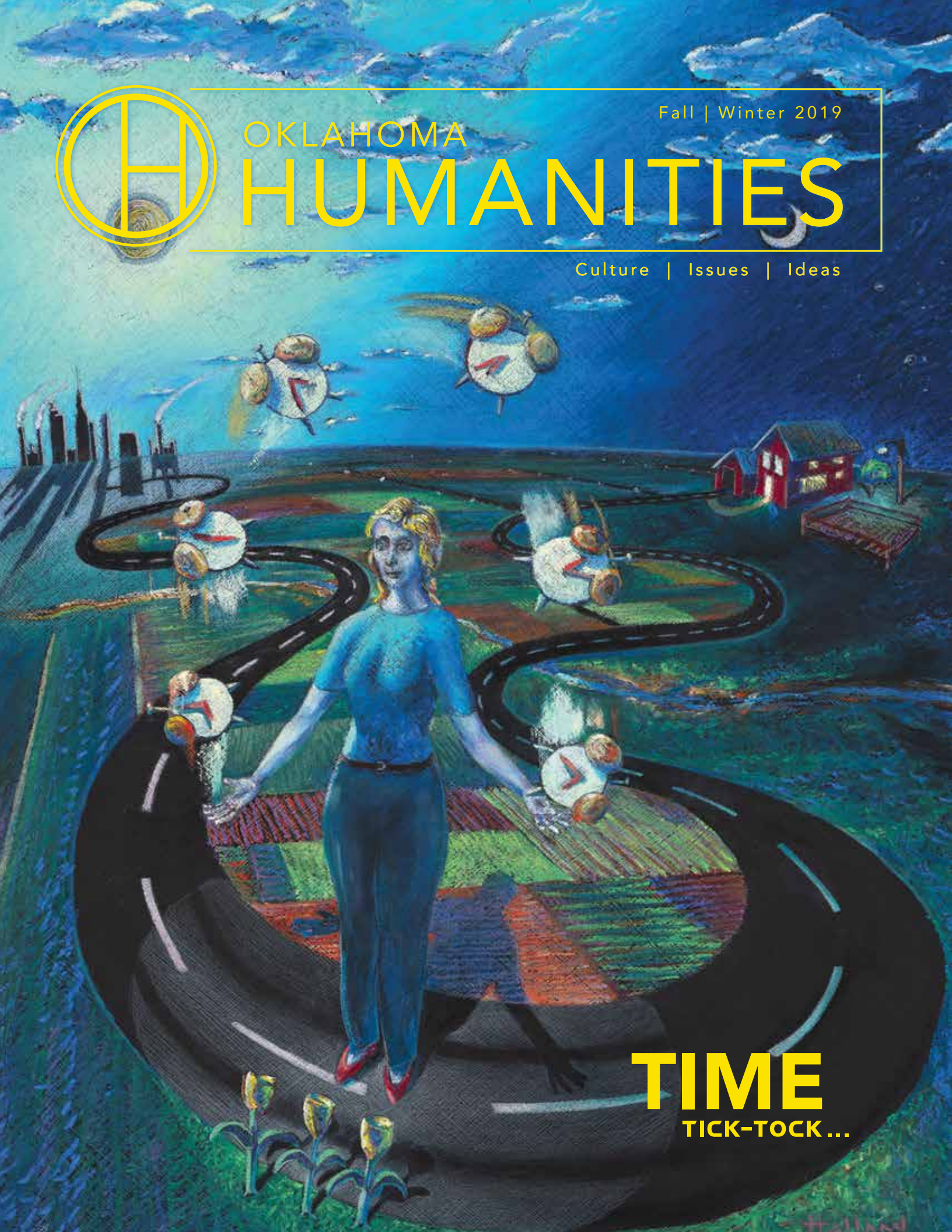
Fall | Winter 2019

OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES

Culture | Issues | Ideas



TIME

TICK-TOCK...

CAROLINE LOWERY
Executive Director
caroline@okhumanities.org

PERSPECTIVE
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with enthusiasm and passion that I begin the role of Executive Director of Oklahoma Humanities. As we begin a new chapter in the organization's history, it seems appropriate that this magazine issue focuses on the theme of TIME.

As history and time demonstrate, the future can bring innovation and evolution, progress and purpose. Whatever the outcomes, our successes will be anchored in those of our past. For almost fifty years this organization has been Oklahoma's sole provider of statewide financial support specifically for humanities-based public programming. With a firm grasp on that successful history and organizational distinctiveness, we will move forward with our unwavering mission to help Oklahomans learn about the human experience, understand new perspectives, and participate knowledgeably in civic life.

As I take on the direction of Oklahoma Humanities, I do so with unyielding optimism. I look forward to fostering existing partnerships while cultivating new and diverse collaborations. I look to you, our readers and constituents, to engage with us as we plan our next steps. Thank you for your dedicated support of this incredible organization. We achieve our mission because of *you*!

ON THE COVER: David Holland is a fine art oil painter and has created several series such as "Modern Life" which includes our cover image, *Time Juggler*. David's current work encompasses dramatic cloudscapes in a realistic style emphasizing heightened color and contrast. Recent exhibits include "The Skies Have It" at Mainsite Contemporary Art in Norman and "Capturing Clouds" at Myriad Gardens, Oklahoma City. His work is represented by Howell Gallery. davidhollandartist.com

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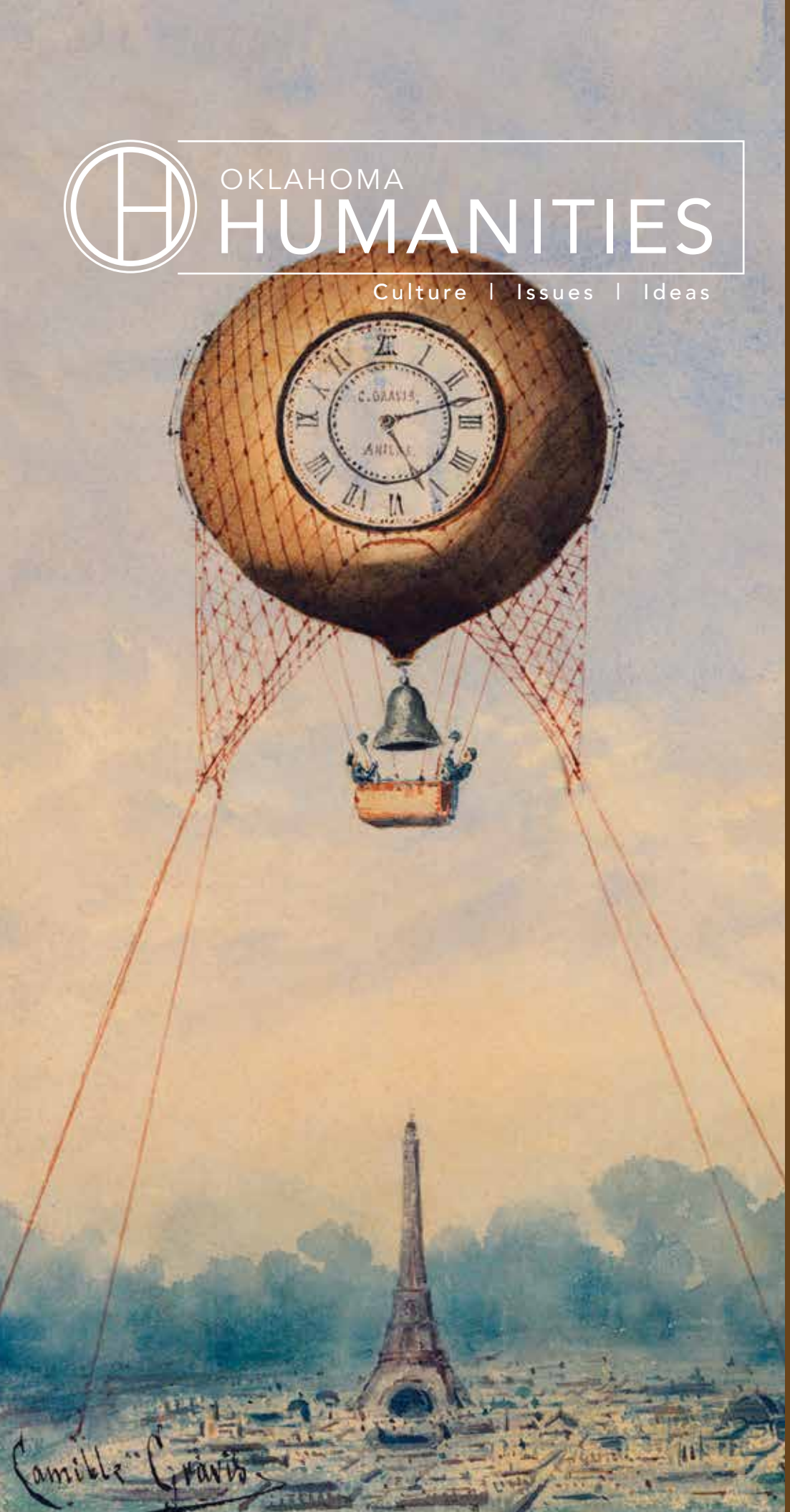

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TIME

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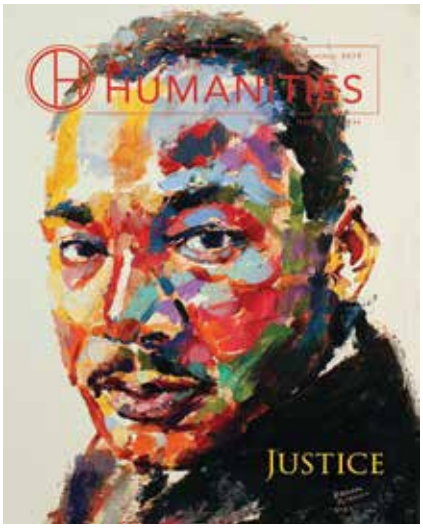
LEFT: *Captive balloon with clock face and bell, floating above the Eiffel Tower, Paris*, Camille Grávis, c. 1880-1900. Library of Congress via Rawpixel.com

POST Mail | Social Media | Messages

Reader Feedback



My family has lived in Oklahoma since the Cherokee Strip Land Run, September 16, 1893. We white Europeans got 160 acres of free land—free to us thanks to the unethical treatment of Native North Americans.

Growing up in Oklahoma, I graduated in 1965 in a class of 550 that had no blacks nor Asians and only a few Hispanics and Native Americans. The first black person whose name I knew and had a conversation with was the cook for my college fraternity. Being a baby boomer and pledging allegiance to the flag for 12 years, I thought "liberty and justice for all" was a fact. Living in the Bible belt, every person I knew was a Christian, so I thought all people usually did what was right. As I aged and was exposed to others not like me and environments that were different than those I was raised in, I could see the inequities and false assumptions that I held.

The [Spring/Summer 2019] JUSTICE issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine removed the veil of what was happening around me as I grew up and continues in various ways today. I am mortified by my self-absorption and self-preservation, but I am grateful for those who, in the pages of the magazine, press for "liberty and justice for all." Thank you, Oklahoma Humanities, for this bold publication and the challenge that has been presented to all who call Oklahoma ("Red People") home.

— G. Leon Detrich, Cushing

After reading the JUSTICE issue, I realized my mom, Sara Orwig, taught at John Marshall High School at the same time Clara Luper did. I asked her about it. Here's her quick Luper story:

"I taught English and everyone had to take it—including the kids who didn't want to be in school. Clara Luper taught in an annex, so I didn't see her much, but I knew her. She helped me out once with a student. I handed out assignments and the girl refused to do anything, saying "You can't make me."

After class, I went and talked to Luper because I knew she brought the girl to school. The girl's dad had left them and the mom would also disappear. The girl took care of several younger siblings. Luper would drive her to school every day.

The next morning after our talk, here comes Luper with the girl. Luper said, "She has something she wants to say to you." The girl apologized, while crying and crying, with promises to do her work. Luper was looking out for her. She really cared about her students."

—Anne Richardson, Edmond

I just wanted you to know what a hit the JUSTICE issue was at the recent Oklahoma Symposium. The majority of our topics this year covered criminal justice. The magazine was really timely in that it helped provide background on some of our topics. To me, the highlight was when someone read a poem from the magazine. Thank you for your good work and addressing topics that affect our everyday lives.

—Ken Fergeson, Altus

Be sure to read—and re-read—the Spring/Summer 2019 JUSTICE issue of this wonderful magazine. The magazine never ceases to impress me with its acuteness of perspective and the quality of its content. It's also visually beautiful and moving. The Fall/Winter 2017 issue on VIETNAM is an excellent example of the high level of journalism, literature, [and] history to be found in *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. And it's FREE—yes, FREE! okhumanities.org/subscribe

—Frantzie Couch, Lawton,
via Facebook

Wow [the JUSTICE issue] is powerful. Your editor's piece was inspiring. This will speak volumes to so many.

—Derek Russell, New Hampton, NH

The JUSTICE issue is truly remarkable. It is inspiring and heartbreaking, and it challenges us all to be better people. Thank you.

—Paul Bowers, Ringwood

SEND YOUR IDEAS, opinions, and suggestions. Email the editor, carla@okhumanities.org, or comment via Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

2019 Magazine Awards

SPJ oklahoma SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS PRO CHAPTER

Society of Professional Journalists Awards
Oklahoma Pro Chapter

First Place | General Writing
"Democracy and the Informed Citizen"
Interview with Carl Bernstein
By Dick Pryor

Second Place | General Writing
"Fake News: How Did We Get Here?"
By Shad Satterthwaite

Third Place | General Writing
"Tasting the World:
In Praise of Culinary Curiosity"
By Pamela Chew

First Place | Best PR Publication Cover
CURIOSITY | Fall/Winter 2018

Third Place | Best PR Publication Cover
TRUTH | Spring/Summer 2018

Second Place | Best PR Publication
TRUTH | Spring/Summer 2018

Third Place | Best PR Publication
CURIOSITY | Fall/Winter 2018

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Culture | Issues | Ideas

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Caroline Lowery
caroline@okhumanities.org

EDITOR
Carla Walker
carla@okhumanities.org

PROGRAM OFFICER
Kelly Burns
kelly@okhumanities.org

PROGRAM OFFICER
Christopher Carroll
chris@okhumanities.org

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
& COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Chelsi Dennis
chelsi@okhumanities.org

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
MANAGER
Khylee Forgety
khylee@okhumanities.org

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Oklahoma Humanities magazine is an award-winning collection of culture, issues, and ideas—a rich mix of humanities scholarship, insightful narratives, informed opinions, and beautiful images, for a read that is smart, balanced, educational, and entertaining. Subscribe online: okhumanities.org or call (405) 235-0280.

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Oklahoma Humanities awards include thirty-one Oklahoma Society of Professional Journalists awards, including multiple first place honors for Best Writing, Best Cover, and Best PR Publication; eight Great Plains Journalism awards, including firsts for Best Magazine Feature Writing and Best Magazine Page Design, and as a finalist for the 2017 Great Plains Magazine of the Year; three Central Oklahoma IABC Bronze Quill Awards; the State Historic Preservation Officer's Citation of Merit; and an Oklahoma Heritage Distinguished Editorial Award.

The Editor's Desk

CARLA WALKER
carla@okhumanities.org

There once was an intrepid editor
who could not find words for her letter.
Each tick of the clock
further froze writer's block
and by deadline the draft was no better.

That's me, staring at the blinking cursor of my computer, waiting for inspiration to strike. I might as well be waiting for Big Ben, as if listening at this distance across oceans would bring me revelation with the sound of its knell. In this task, as all others, I alternately feel the minutes mired in a slow sludge—or find time has slipped so elegantly from my grasp that I am unaware of its passing.

Precision is what's needed. It is a gift or a skill or a—*something*—that truly great poets wield. Like these words from a master, T.S. Eliot: "I have measured out my life in coffee spoons." The story of a life—and time—in nine words.

We appreciate precision in timekeeping, too, especially when marking the slow-go of bad dates and bus stops, in cab rides and coffee shops. Life happens in the space between tick and tock: three minutes for golden brown toast; one hour to binge-watch another episode; half a day to hike the "experienced" trail; day after tomorrow 'til the houseguests leave and the fish starts to smell; six weeks between haircuts; ninety-nine shopping days until Christmas; one year to plan that dream vacation; a decade to wage revolution; two hundred and forty-three years to deliberate a nation.

Time can drag or fly, make or break. In time we can learn to read and learn to hate; master the game and master the slave; compound interest and compound trouble with lies, with silence, or simply looking the other way. We can heed the lessons of history or dream a future that will save mankind—if only we had a little more tick-tock time.

Time frames every human experience. With the passing of time we persuade love, celebrate the New Year, learn patience, predict the future, all as we interpret what has transpired, anticipate what is to come. It is an elemental part of human nature to compare the present to the past. As we age it is almost inescapable to relive and reexamine the best and worst of all that we have lived, all that we have hoped. Historians do this from a larger, more expansive view, looking for insights from accumulated knowledge and information.

If only we spent as much time *applying* the lessons learned, *acting* as informed citizens, *planning* for the impact of change, *starting* the draft earlier, when time is a more forgiving span. For now, in this moment, let us take heart in the assurance of Eliot, that time will give us space and opportunity:

From "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
There will be time to . . . create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

Someone pass the butter and jam—and give me five minutes while the green jasmine steeps.

IMAGE: *Scenographia Systematis Copernicani* appeared in the 1708 edition of *Harmonia Macrocosmica* by Andreas Cellarius. Cellarius' chart illustrates the heliocentric model of the universe described by Copernicus, which put the Sun, rather than Earth, at the center of the universe. Copernicus' work spurred further scientific investigations, becoming a landmark in the history of science often referred to as the Compernican Revolution. Source: Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection, courtesy Stanford University Libraries.

Miller Time

WHEN The End WASN'T

MATT McCOOK

TIME is our most precious resource. Scarce and nonrenewable, it is often spent and wasted rather than cherished and savored. Though time is easily taken for granted, the more precisely a person knows when it will run out, the more purposeful they become about using it. This clarity that comes with contemplating the end of time is the most universally enduring lesson of William Miller and the early Adventist movement. For over a decade Miller lectured, preached, and wrote, warning that the Second Coming of Christ and God's judgment—the end of time—was imminent. His message attracted thousands of disciples and invited ridicule and scorn from skeptics.

Believers and critics alike acknowledged that if Miller was right and the end was near, people would rethink their priorities. That was certainly the reaction of Rev. Joshua V. Himes when he heard Miller lecture. Himes was a religious force in his own right, a powerful evangelist for the Christian Connection movement in New England. He revitalized Boston's Chardon Street Chapel and turned it into a hub of social reformation, promoting education, temperance, and abolition. As a prototypical nineteenth-century Christian reformer, he worked toward the establishment of God's millennial (thousand-year) kingdom on earth. Like other postmillennialists, Himes thought Christ would return only *after* Christians made human institutions and society more Godlike.

All that changed when he encountered William Miller and became convinced that

Painting of William Miller,
courtesy Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

time for reforming the world was running out. Himes was anxious to learn what Miller was doing to spread his all-important message. When he realized Miller was simply lecturing where he had the opportunity, Himes devoted all his energies into making the Miller message a movement.

William Miller was a most unlikely prophet; he neither disdained the world nor embraced religion. Miller was born in rural Massachusetts in 1782, the son of a Revolutionary War veteran. His mother's religious devotion had little visible imprint on young William. He identified with his skeptical, rational father and his father's friends who supplied him with books. Young William was often reading until late in the evening, as there was not enough time in the day to absorb Voltaire, Montesquieu, and America's Enlightenment writers like Thomas Paine and local favorite Ethan Allen. *Robinson Crusoe* was his favorite fictional work, the story of a castaway with nothing but time.

In young adulthood, Miller called himself a deist and continued to follow his father's intellectual and civic path. He wrote a patriotic hymn for an Independence Day celebration in Poultney, Vermont which marked him for political, not ministerial, success. He won elections as Deputy Sheriff and Justice of the Peace, then served Vermont as an Infantry Captain in the War of 1812. His most serious military engagement was in the Battle of Plattsburgh in which outnumbered Americans stopped a British invasion on Lake Champlain. Miller sensed providential aid, recalling in his memoirs, "So surprising a result, against such odds, did seem to me like the work of a mightier power than man."

The evangelical seeds Miller's mother had carefully sown in his youth finally flowered in his thirties and he started attending a local Baptist church. His deist friends could hardly believe it; but if they had observed his newfound devotion more closely, they might have recognized their rationalist friend now approaching Christian scriptures with the same scientific certainty of Enlightenment thinkers. To Miller, the Bible was a feast of reason. He focused most of his studies in the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelations wherein he believed the end of the world could be calculated. Miller came to this conclusion using the 2300 days referenced in Daniel 8:14:

> Unto two thousand and three hundred days;
> then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. (KJV)

Miller interpreted that "days" meant years and the "cleansing" to be Judgement Day. Thus, 2300 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (issued by Artaxerxes I of Persia in 457 B.C. and referenced in the Book of Ezra) came to about 1843.

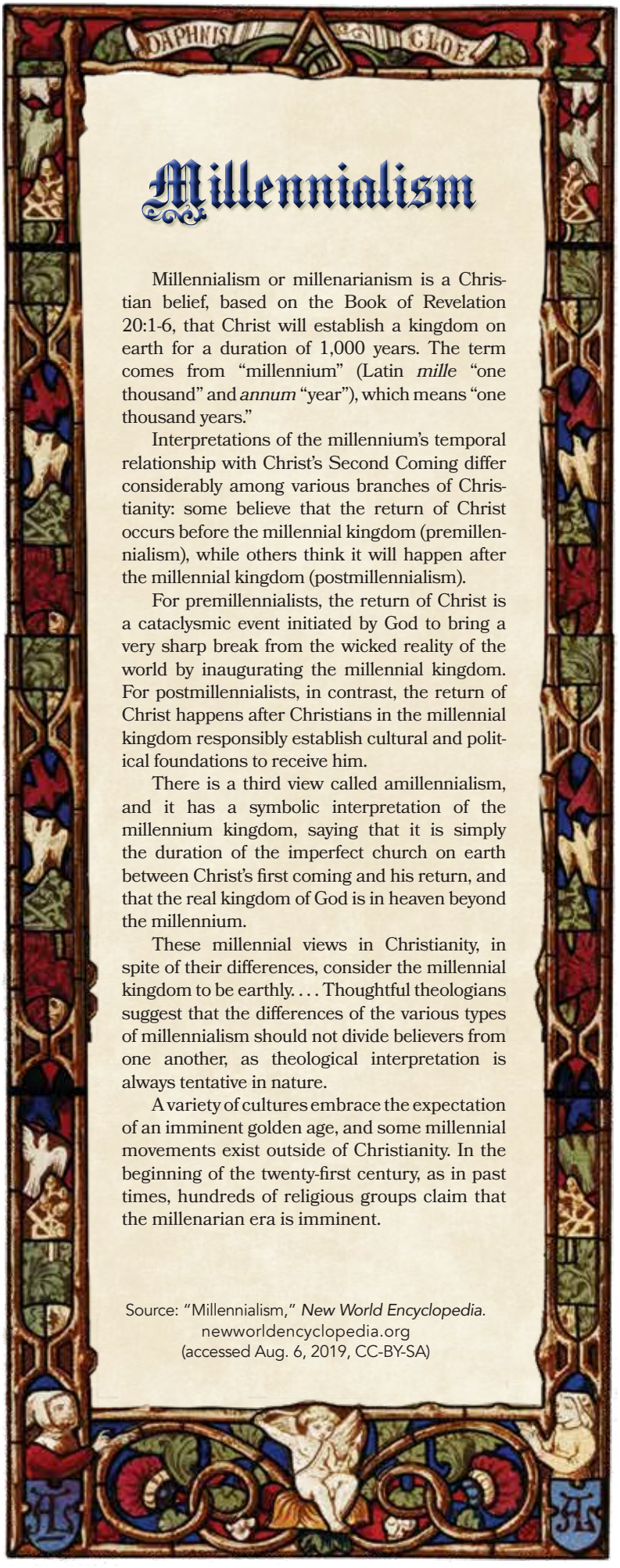
According to Miller, other historical events corresponding with biblical prophecies had been fulfilled to the year. For example, Jesus' crucifixion in A.D. 33 was exactly 490 years (noted as "seventy weeks" in Daniel 9) from Artaxerxes' decree. Likewise, the fall of Rome, the rise of the Catholic Church, the emergence of Islam in the seventh century, the Turks' capture of Constantinople in the mid-fifteenth century, and even Napoleon's capture of Rome in 1798 fit neatly into Miller's cosmic chronology.

Although Miller's study had convinced him by 1818 that the world would end soon, he did not immediately sound the alarm. He spoke to friends and neighbors as he had occasion, but he was not a minister and did not know how to reach a wider audience. In 1831, while wrestling with his sense of inadequacy, he recalled, "I entered into a solemn covenant with God, that, if he would open the way, I would go and perform my duty to the world." He received his first speaking invitation "about half an hour" after this divine pledge.

As word spread of Miller's convictions and prediction, time was no longer his own. He dedicated the rest of his life to arousing audiences to the realization that Jesus—and the end of time—was coming. Throughout the 1830s, he was busy lecturing that all signs suggested that the end of the world was at hand. Ministers of various denominations found his message useful for drawing enormous crowds—both the faithful and the inquisitive.

Miller's message was a tough sell, though, in the optimistic evangelical culture, where the so-called "Second Great Awakening" permeated early nineteenth-century America. These evangelists were confident that their efforts were making human society more Godlike: thus, God's millennial kingdom was already being established through moral reforms, like those Joshua Himes championed. One had only to observe changes over time to realize the progress of humankind in technology, communications, travel, and even morals. Religious and moral reforms were creating a Christian America, not through legislation or state coercion, but voluntarism.

Miller's message was unique not merely because he dared to predict when Jesus would return, but because he insisted Jesus' return would be literal, dramatic, and immediate. The prevailing notion was that as Christian society continued to progress, earthly time would blend seamlessly into heavenly time as Christ came to reign in people's hearts. Postmillennialists believed their reform efforts were hastening the establishment of



Millennialism

Millennialism or millenarianism is a Christian belief, based on the Book of Revelation 20:1-6, that Christ will establish a kingdom on earth for a duration of 1,000 years. The term comes from "millennium" (Latin *mille* "one thousand" and *annum* "year"), which means "one thousand years."

Interpretations of the millennium's temporal relationship with Christ's Second Coming differ considerably among various branches of Christianity: some believe that the return of Christ occurs before the millennial kingdom (premillennialism), while others think it will happen after the millennial kingdom (postmillennialism).

For premillennialists, the return of Christ is a cataclysmic event initiated by God to bring a very sharp break from the wicked reality of the world by inaugurating the millennial kingdom. For postmillennialists, in contrast, the return of Christ happens after Christians in the millennial kingdom responsibly establish cultural and political foundations to receive him.

There is a third view called amillennialism, and it has a symbolic interpretation of the millennium kingdom, saying that it is simply the duration of the imperfect church on earth between Christ's first coming and his return, and that the real kingdom of God is in heaven beyond the millennium.

These millennial views in Christianity, in spite of their differences, consider the millennial kingdom to be earthly. . . . Thoughtful theologians suggest that the differences of the various types of millennialism should not divide believers from one another, as theological interpretation is always tentative in nature.

A variety of cultures embrace the expectation of an imminent golden age, and some millennial movements exist outside of Christianity. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, as in past times, hundreds of religious groups claim that the millenarian era is imminent.

Source: "Millennialism," *New World Encyclopedia*.
newworldencyclopedia.org
(accessed Aug. 6, 2019, CC-BY-SA)

Christ's reign. Miller's premillennial view was quite different. Time, he thought, had lulled Christians into an earthly lethargy and now it was running out. It was this countercultural view of Christ's return that struck Joshua Himes and compelled him to reprioritize. The urgency of saving souls rendered temperance, abolitionism, and all other moral reform efforts moot.

Thanks to Himes' promotional and organization skills, Miller's message became a movement in 1840. Himes organized General Conferences for those anticipating Christ's imminent return. Many other preachers joined Miller and, like Himes, turned their attention away from social and religious reform to prepare people for the end. Several were associates of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Although they abandoned the anti-slavery crusade, they utilized print media much as abolitionists did. While reporting on an Adventist camp meeting, evangelist Walter Scott said, "Joshua Himes . . . is no ordinary personage in practical matters. In the press he is a Napoleon." As a media conqueror, Himes published *Signs of the Times,* which likely reached far more than its 5,000 subscribers as the journals were shared, and *Midnight Cry* which accompanied over 100 Millerite revivals and camp meetings, which drew enormous crowds estimated at 500,000 in two years.

A Chronological Chart of the Visions of Daniel and John, illustration by Charles Fitch and Apollos Hale, published by Joshua V. Himes. Large-scale depiction of Miller's interpretation of biblical symbolism and prophecy in the Books of Daniel and Revelation, which he used to calculate the second advent or second coming of Christ to occur "about the year 1843." [PD] Wikimedia Commons

The novelty of a commissioned tent (50 feet tall and 120 feet in diameter—the largest in the country at that time) attracted adherents, opponents, and the curious to Millerite revivals. Although seating capacity was estimated at up to 4,000, a Newark journalist reported more than 6,000 gathered on a Monday evening. The tent was not only an excellent promotional device but also a symbol of Millerite separatism. Like the Israelites' wilderness tabernacle, the great tent housed the faithful in worship in a land that was not their own as they prepared to enter the Promised Land.

Participants could visualize Miller's message more plainly thanks to a great illustrated chart developed by Charles Fitch and Apollos Hale. The chart included the figure described in Daniel 2 ("This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." Daniel 2: 32-33, KJV), and beasts of Daniel 7 and 8 representing the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires, and Rome's successor states. It also paired illustrated visions from the Book of Revelations with dates and calculations supporting Miller's predictions.

Remarkably, Millerites did not separate themselves as a denomination; they were simply the Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others awakened to Miller's conclusions. Still, separation resulted from denominational opposition and the emphasis on the timing of Christ's return. Miller always framed his prediction that Jesus would return as "*about* 1843." It was more important to him that listeners resist worldliness and prepare for Christ's return than to make precise predictions. But his audience insisted, so, allowing for differences in the Jewish calendar,

The Camp Meeting, Worthington Whittredge, 1874. Metropolitan Museum of Art

Miller suggested the advent would take place between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. This precision galvanized believers and wrought scorn from skeptics who attributed hysteria, mental illness, and material motivation to Millerism.

Revivals drew more people and zeal than ever before as the end approached. Many sold their possessions to fund one last evangelical push. Their disappointment was piercing when March 21, 1844, passed. Yet, the movement did not die. For some, the imprecision of Miller's predictions kept their faith alive: Their tarrying time was seen as a testing of faith, just as Noah and Lot faced before their neighbors' destruction. To the faithful Millerites, the passage of time confirmed God's mercy, not their error.

Samuel Snow, a relatively minor spokesman, renewed Millerites' confidence by specifying a revised date. He reasoned that Jesus' return would correspond with the Jewish Day of Atonement, which was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar: October 22, 1844. Although William Miller was skeptical of this precise date initially, he was swept up in the euphoria of what Snow called the "true Midnight Cry." On that fateful day, October 22, 1844, Millerites abandoned their work, neglected or sold their possessions, and gathered on hilltops, looking skyward awaiting the Second Coming and the end of time.

But the Bridegroom did not come as expected. The rising sun darkened the Millerites' hopes. Some returned to their denominations and faced ridicule for having been taken in by Miller. Others stayed in the Adventist fold, but divided over how they interpreted "The Great Disappointment."

Miller and Himes believed the precise dating had been a mistake. Subsequent leaders theorized that something significant had happened in the spiritual realm on that day and that God was still making preparations for Judgement Day. Seventh Day Adventists became the largest remnant of these believers. Although distinguished by their chosen day of worship and assembly, the most universally enduring principle of the movement from which they came was the conviction that time was running out.

Miller died in 1845, just a year after the Great Disappointment. For him, time had come to an end near the date he predicted. Not so for Joshua Himes. He lived another half century, preaching the imminent return of Christ until his death in 1895. Himes and Miller were disappointed that the end had not come as expected, but neither expressed regret for reordering their lives, for the scriptures admonish:

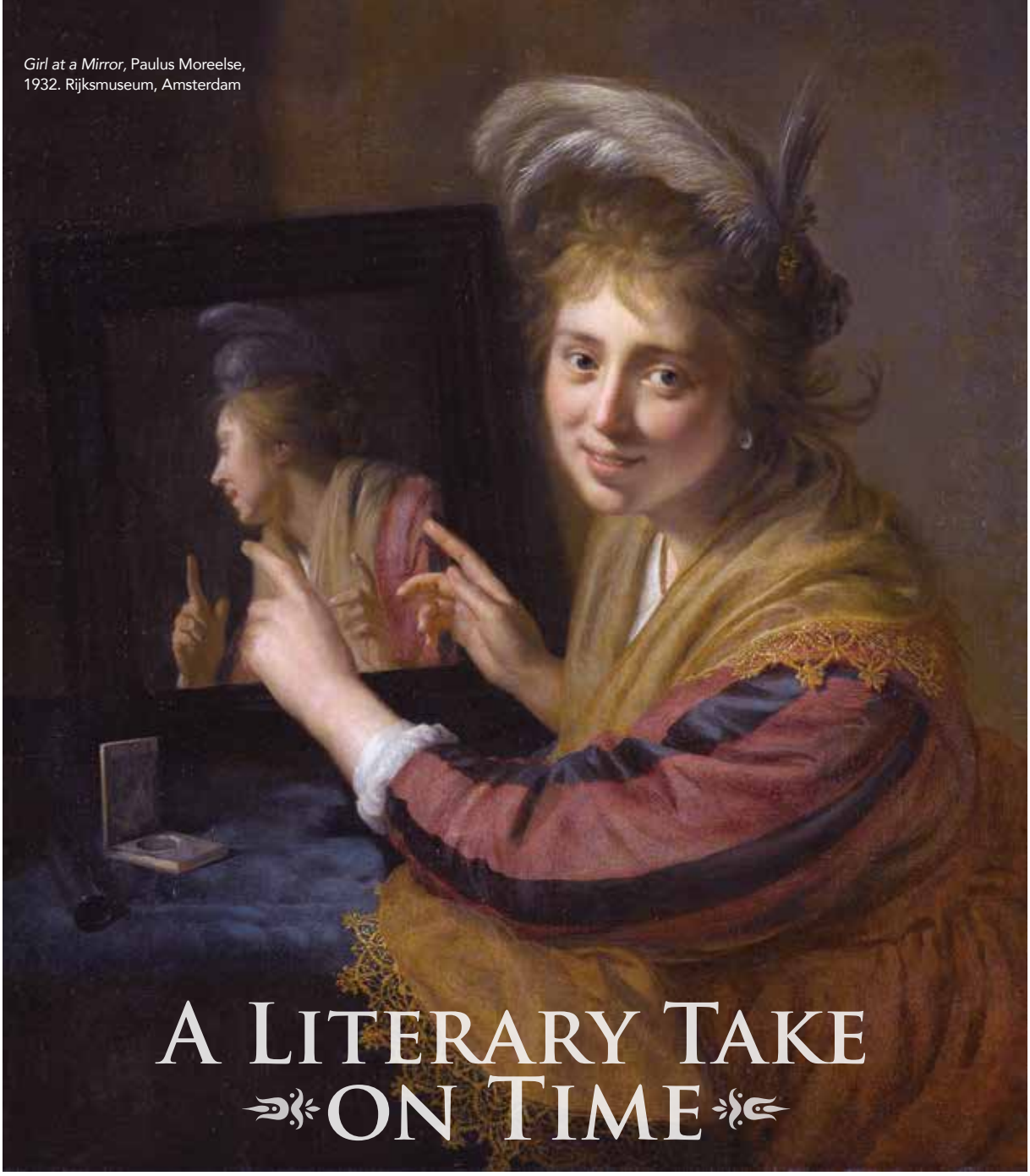
> Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (NASV)

Whether in their lifetimes or beyond, Miller and Himes and their followers believed, time was coming to an end.

MATT McCOOK is Professor of History at Oklahoma Christian University. He teaches American religious and intellectual history with special affinity for religious movements that emerged during the early nineteenth century.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "The End of the World," Gary E. Wait, Nov. 1993, Vol. 34, No. 1, *Dartmouth College Library Bulletin*. Miller's life and Adventist movement. dartmouth.edu/~library/Library_Bulletin
- *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology Selected from Manuscripts of William Miller, with a Memoir of His Life*, Joshua V. Himes, 1842. Lectures and memoir constructed from Miller's letters to Himes. hathitrust.org (search: Views of the Prophecies)
- "The End of the World Was Almost Today in 1843 and 1844: The Failed Prophesies of the Millerites," March 21, 2015, K. Norwood, Vermont Digital Newspaper Project Blog Post. Period newspaper accounts on the Millerite Movement. (Archives search: March 2015) library.uvm.edu/vtnp



Girl at a Mirror, Paulus Moreelse, 1932. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

A Literary Take on Time

Stories and poems reveal our obsession with time.

CHRISTOPHER MALONE

There is never enough time. Losing track of time is a luxury we seldom indulge. Commitments and deadlines keep us feeling hard-pressed for it, and the short supply seems a sign of the times. Perhaps our obsession conceals a more basic (even timeless) need: to escape time altogether.

The reflection of our own face in the mirror is a reminder that human consciousness is bound to time. Being self-aware is to know that we are alive and that we will die. Time is the medium through which we perceive *everything*. Even the imagined worlds of literature reveal our search for eternal truths and help us explore the complexities of time and how we think about it.

Love Among the Ruins, Edward Burne-Jones, c. 1873. [PD] Wikimedia Commons

THE RENAISSANCE—TIME AS PERSUASION

All of us hear at our backs "time's wingèd chariot," to quote Andrew Marvell's memorable phrase. For English poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the prospect of escaping time mattered less than confronting its limitations. Doing so might even afford some consolation if one could learn to live in the moment. *Carpe diem* was a preoccupation among Elizabethan poets like Christopher Marlowe and Sir Walter Raleigh, those associated with the Cavalier school such as Robert Herrick, and the Metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell. Seizing the day still seems like sound advice—to appreciate life's ephemera, to stop and smell the roses.

In love poetry of the period, like Herrick's "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," the carpe diem philosophy promotes an approach to life, love, and time—to take advantage of youth:

> Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,
> Old time is still a-flying;
> And this same flower that smiles today
> Tomorrow will be dying.

In more violent imagery associated with the Metaphysical poets, Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" makes the point more forcefully, reminding his beloved of our race against the clock, perhaps even turning the tables on time:

> Now let us sport us while we may,
> And now, like amorous birds of prey,
> Rather at once our time devour
> Than languish in his slow-chapped power.

The case for instant gratification served the poets well to persuade an obstinate lover or recalcitrant virgin. But their poetry also reminds us of how time can be pressed into a rhetorical device out of self-interest. To force an issue because time is running out is persuasive in part because it obscures how we perceive time differently. Marvell's appeal, in other words, neglects the possibility that his coy mistress may have set her romantic clock according to *her own* schedule.

This rhetorical dimension of carpe diem comes into focus in a pair of Elizabethan poems, the second a reply to the first: Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd." Marlowe's shepherd is full of promises, all hinging on the here and now, to prove with his beloved all the pleasures that nature may yield. It is a vision of earthly paradise worth seizing, or so it would seem:

> And I will make thee beds of Roses
> And a thousand fragrant posies;
> A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
> Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle.



But Sir Walter Raleigh's nymph has heard it all before:

> If all the world and love were young,
> And truth in every Shepherd's tongue,
> These pretty pleasures might me move
> To live with thee and be thy love.

The nymph sees through the shepherd's impassioned rhetoric. She knows something about the power of words to conjure a false Eden, and how beds of roses fade along with other transitory pleasures. Time brings a reckoning—as we have all had occasion to experience.

Renaissance English poets taking up the theme of carpe diem would have us manage carefully how little time we have. But the greatest poet of the age—in a play about the limits of ambition, the uncertainty of desire, reversals of fortune, and the suffering that accompanies them—recasts the problem, asking us to consider that there may be *too much* time rather than too little:

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death.

In these words, Shakespeare's Macbeth registers the purposelessness of his tragic movement through time. Might it be, Macbeth wonders, that we are only actors on time's stage, searching fruitlessly for meaning but "signifying nothing"? Recasting the problem of time in this way anticipates how later writers would think about it.

Macbeth's fatalism is something most of us can relate to, at least on our bad days. That we are born in a certain place and time—in whatever conditions fortune brings or withholds—this happens without our consent. Time brings unwanted changes, circumstances that we cannot foresee or control, as Macbeth laments, despite the "sound and fury" of our protests.

THE ROMANTICS—TIME EVER CHANGING

For the Romantic poets (Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, and William Blake among them), our finite world belongs to time, but there is also hope that our temporal being might be redeemed. The human imagination affords glimpses of the Eternal, which can restore and rejuvenate the human spirit, however bound in time it may be.

In a mechanistic world marching to the beat of clock time, William Wordsworth managed to preserve faith in what he called "spots of time"—experiences of exceeding peace and joy that possess a "renovating virtue" when remembered, which transport us from the temporal "round of ordinary discourse." In "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth revisits the ruins of an abbey on the banks of the River Wye in southeast Wales. His memory of that earlier visit, five years before, becomes the subject of the poem:

> These beauteous forms,
> Through a long absence, have not been to me
> As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
> Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart . . .

As he looks forward in the poem to how life will surely bring changes, such spots of time offer consolation in a world too much with us. They make it possible to see past the temporal world:

IMAGES, FROM FAR LEFT: *The Hireling Shepherd*, William Holman Hunt, 1851; Manchester Art Gallery, UK [PD] Wikimedia Commons. *Sarah Siddons and John Phillip Kemble in "Macbeth,"* Thomas Beach, 1786; Garrick Club, London [PD] Wikimedia Commons. *Moonlight*, Elin Danielson-Gambogi, 1890; Pori Art Museum [PD] Wikimedia Commons. *The Past*, Anastasiya Markovich, Dec. 2006; (CC BY 3.0) Wikimedia Commons.

While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

For the Romantic imagination, the natural world affords this consolation at the same time that it reminds us that change is the inevitable. Shelley referred to the latter as "mutability," a source of anxiety for the Romantics about our finite being and how it might be reconciled to the infinite power of human imagination. In "A Defence of Poetry," Shelley writes with confidence about the "indestructible order" expressed by poets. Their imaginative power (which for Shelley resides in everyone), captures the "unapprehended relations of things" and makes poets the "unacknowledged legislators of the World."

Shelley's argument about the power of the imagination is nevertheless tempered in his poetry, subject to moods and doubts about imperfect humanity. We see this anxiety in lines from his poem "Mutability":

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed and gleam and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly! yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:—

In Shelley's estimation, "Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow." Our moments of imaginative radiance are ephemeral and nothing may endure, he seems to suggest, except *change*.

We live in a world where nothing stays the same, but one thing that is perennial is our worry about mutability, inevitable change. We confront it in daily newsfeeds with stark warnings and portents of doom. In a world increasingly rationalized and driven by commerce, William Blake experienced the dehumanizing effects of rapid industrial change, the encroachment of what he called the "dark Satanic Mills" on English life. Given the uncertainty of our tomorrows, Blake's solution was to nurture imagination and creativity which, he believed, were inspired by the Eternal. We have only to open our minds, says Blake in "Auguries of Innocence":

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour . . .

The tyranny of time subjects us to uncertainty, with only a finite perspective to make sense of it all. The Romantic theme of mutability translates, perhaps, as an admonition: that we act on what we have the power to change and, at the same time, confront our own propensity to ignore or collude against that power.

THE MODERNISTS—TIME AS EXPERIENCE

The great twentieth-century Modernists deviated from the novel's traditional structures, in part by pursuing a *spatial* rather than *temporal* orientation to narrative. Clocks and calendars no longer measure the passage of time in the way we expect them to. Memories are fallible and subjective. Layers of consciousness, more than the accepted style of plot and characters bound to historical time, take precedence in their work. This begins to explain why James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* requires 700 pages to relate the events of just *one day* in Dublin, 1904. Literary modernism in the first half of the twentieth century anticipates our own experience of time, the endless media sources and data points that engage our attention, seemingly all at once.

William Faulkner's experiments—multiple points of view, shifts in voice and perspective—are attempts to realize how past, present, and future intersect and encroach on one another. Faulkner asks us to think about what it would mean to free ourselves from clock time. In his novel *The Sound and the Fury*, the character Quentin muses: "Father said clocks slay time. He said time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life." The passage gives voice to something of our shared desire to rise above the weight of the past.

Rather than the spatial metaphor of time moving in a straight line (the past recedes behind as the future opens before us), writer D.H. Lawrence suggested that human consciousness would benefit from a realignment to the cyclical order of nature. In the natural world, seasons come and go. The sun rises and sets. In *Apocalypse*, his reflection on the Book of Revelation, Lawrence observes: "Our idea of time as a continuity in an eternal straight line has crippled our consciousness cruelly. The pagan conception of time as moving in cycles is much freer." To think of time as cyclical, he notes, accommodates our changing states of mind and passions.

For Lawrence and other Modernists, the power of myth is an orientation to past, present, and future that frees us from the strictures of here and now. Mythic time is realized on one level in the stories we tell and retell and through which, on another level, we come to understand our experience, realize some purpose beyond what seems possible in the moment.

The monotony of daily routine, the sense in which the tedium of today leads to a meaningless succession of tomorrows—this is how time is depicted by playwright Samuel Beckett. In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo) have only routine to sustain them. Their hope that Godot will make an appearance is endlessly deferred. Gogo bemoans that "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" Killing time with words, they repeat patterns of interaction. At one point Didi observes, "Habit is the great deadener." In the absurd temporal logic of Beckett's drama, it is not so much that time is deadening—it is that mindless routine closes us off to time's surprises, both good and bad.

IMAGINING THE END OF TIME TODAY

To imagine the end of time is a form of apocalyptic thinking. Theology uses the term *eschatology,* having to do with our ultimate destiny: Judgement Day. In his study *The Sense of an Ending*, literary critic Frank Kermode considers the intersection of time, apocalyptic thought, and literature. His term *fiction* expresses our human need to shape experience by telling stories. The plots underlying our fictions, Kermode theorizes, are like the *tick-tock* of the clock: "Tick is a humble genesis, tock a feeble apocalypse." As tick-tock is to clock, so is plot to fiction, "an organization which humanizes time by giving it a form." Thus, reasons Kermode, the stories we tell make the burden of time bearable.

The popularity of post-apocalyptic narratives—the zombie apocalypse, for example, and sub-subgenres like *rom-zom-com* (romantic zombie comedies)—is one measure of our contemporary cultural fascination with escaping time. Dystopian forecasts about the future abound in young adult literature and pop culture. These future-oriented narratives afford some critical distance from which to re-imagine *the present*—and what might happen next if our worst instincts take over. We can indulge our desire to do something, fantasizing forms of activism that our own uncertain times often frustrate.

These stories, however grim, allow us to explore what remains as essentially human when all is said and done—and help us fill that unknown, fearful space between tick and tock.

CHRISTOPHER MALONE is Professor of English at Northeastern State University, where he has taught for 19 years. He has published essays on Joyce, Beckett, and Yeats, and offers courses dealing with Irish modernism, dystopian literature, and Romantic poetry.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

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- "On This Day in 1815: The Shelleys and 'Mutability,'" Anna Mercer, *BARS Blog*, Dec. 2, 2015. Inclusion of Percy B. Shelley's "Mutability" in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. bars.ac.uk
- "Literary Modernism (In Our Time)," BBC Radio Podcasts, Aug. 12, 2018. Social and historical influences on the Modernist movement. youtube.com
- "Top 10 Books About the Apocalypse," Michelle Tea, *The Guardian*, Feb. 8, 2017. Tea's favorite titles and synopses. theguardian.com

The New Year

A Touchstone for Time

ALEXIS McCROSSEN

The ritual and revelry of marking the New Year

New Year's Eve is the night you are most likely to die in a traffic accident. If it is a single-car accident, you're probably under the influence. If you are not yourself drunk, chances are the other driver is. If you're sloshed but don't get in a car, you could still die from blood alcohol poisoning, in a drunken brawl, or in a fire. Sober or tipsy, you could get hit with a stray bullet from a gun joyously fired after the clock strikes midnight. You could be stabbed, beaten, or shot to death. Or fall off a balcony during your engagement party. Or get blown up while hugging a giant firecracker.

These examples are not hypothetical; all happened at the dawn of a recent New Year. Reminiscence about the passing year inevitably includes mourning those who died—*and* celebrating life, whether it be babies, new relationships, or second chances. When the old year dies, the new one comes to life. At no moment do the extremes of beginnings and endings intertwine more provocatively than New Year's.

That the holiday happens to be when more people than usual are born or die is incidental, but it highlights New Year's status as time's touchstone. Although many occasions—particularly birthdays, reunions, and anniversaries—give rise to thoughts about the passage of time, none do so more consistently than New Year's.

Advertisement for E. Tosetti Brewing Company, Chicago, 1894. Library of Congress

Observing the New Year

The history of New Year's festivities is inextricable from the history of the calendar. New Year's ruminations and revelries are as ancient as calendars themselves, found in nearly every community in world history. In centuries past, an astronomical event such as the winter solstice typically marked the start of a new year. The ancient Romans slightly deviated from the astronomical calendar when they introduced the month of January, named in honor of Janus, the god of time, whose two faces allowed him to gaze on the past and the future. The first day of January (which came shortly after the winter solstice) gave symbolic form to two archetypal temporal conditions: the end of one year and the beginning of another.

After the fall of Rome, many Western European calendars abandoned January 1 as the start of the New Year. Instead, they recognized December 25 (the winter solstice), March 25 (the spring equinox), or September 20 (the fall equinox) as the first day of the year. Widespread calendar reform between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries restored January 1 as the first day of the year. Britain and its colonies were latecomers to this revolution in time; it was not until 1752 that they adopted the Gregorian calendar, which Pope Gregory XIII had introduced to Catholic dominions in 1582.

Over the centuries, New Year's festivities included lighting bonfires, exchanging gifts, stealing kisses, drinking wine and punch, consuming special holidays foods like Dutch New Year's cookies, and renewing relationships. After the Revolution, Americans developed political rituals that accompanied the New Year, recognizing it as a historical touchstone almost as important as the Fourth of July. Journalists used the New Year to reflect on the state of the nation, particularly its future. The president and other public leaders used the date to host ceremonial receptions, appropriate funds for public celebrations, deliver important speeches, and sign landmark decrees. Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day 1863. The president's "State of the Union" address, though not delivered on New Year's, is a consequence of national traditions associated with the annual change of the calendar.

Broadcasting Times Square

New Year's gained new salience in the late-nineteenth century with the advent of precision timepieces and electric lights. The stroke of midnight became especially important, placing New Year's observances in thrall to clock time. Cities glittered with parties and entertainments that expanded New Year's observances from daytime into the evening of the night before (New Year's Eve). The modern era's most distinctive New Year's rite seems quaint: On the roof of One Times Square, an illuminated time ball drops as the midnight hour approaches. Since 1907, this spectacle has drawn millions of people to the streets of midtown New York. With each year's countdown, participants enact both the end of time in the last seconds of the old year and its new beginning with the great shout of "Happy New Year!"

FROM TOP: "Happy new year" illustration, pxhere.com. Calendar for 1890, Baker & Randolph Lithography Co., Indianapolis. Poster calendar for 1897, January, February March; Edward Penfield, artist. Poster calendar for 1897, January, February March; Louis Rhead, artist. Calendar images, Library of Congress

At no moment do the extremes of beginnings and endings intertwine more provocatively than New Year's.

Over the course of the twentieth century, innovations in instantaneous, long-distance communications relayed New Year's events beyond Times Square and captured the attention of the world. Technological innovations stimulated demand for synchronous and simultaneous experiences. In the 1920s, aspirations to experience the New Year with people in distant places emerged in tandem with the development of radio communications. For example, to greet 1926, the Radio Corporation of America's station WJZ held a "worldwide New Year's celebration"—though it included only the United States, Britain, and Germany. The quest for worldwide synchronicity seemed to culminate the following year. At the exact moment when 1927 arrived, passengers on the Cunard liner *Carinthia*, cruising in Cook Strait, New Zealand, sent a greeting to the New York offices of the Associated Press, where it was seven in the morning and, thus, still 1926. As the head of RCA exclaimed, this marvelous feat "made the exchange of greetings between the two years and two sides of the Earth possible."

Broadcasting the Times Square ball drop began modestly on the radio on December 31, 1928, at one minute before midnight. During the 1930s, New Year's radio programming came to include parties, church services, the recitation of famous poems, greetings from public figures like Albert Einstein, and the tolling of famous bells. It was an "occasion" to contemplate the passage of time, and millions of Americans tuned in, marking the end of one year and the beginning of another in homes and automobiles across the nation.

Ultimately television transformed New Year's Eve in Times Square from a local custom to a national (and eventually global) rite. The first televised New Year's Eve was broadcast to a few thousand homes in New York City and New Jersey during the last moments of 1941. As midnight approached, the feed cut away to the chimes of Big Ben and the Liberty Bell and what was described as "Times Square Noise." At the end of 1945, New Year's Eve viewers could choose between an ice hockey game, a variety show, and a film feature, with a pickup from Times Square at midnight.

Packaging the Countdown

After the Second World War, New Year's observances prompted thoughts about the meaning of time. Now, more than ever before, Americans were anxious: Atomic and hydrogen bombs could end time, and the accelerated flow of goods, information, capital, and people seemed to accelerate time, too. Countdowns suffused American culture, particularly of bombs being dropped, but also of less momentous things like hit parades. The ball drop in Times Square ritualized the countdown, offering joyous release with the arrival of a new year. The focus on the countdown, the emphasis on simultaneity, and the satisfaction of synchronicity elevated the moment of midnight—the instant—above other contemplations of the passage of time.

During the 1950s and 1960s, television producers perfected two formats to fill airtime before and after the ball drop in Times Square. One was the dance party, where live audiences danced to the music of famous orchestras in renowned settings like New York's Rainbow Room. The other was the talk show, featuring skits and celebrity guests. Sponsors underwrote and therefore shaped the message of New Year's shows, often pitching products, like Clairol Hair Color, promising transformation. Retrospectives gave programs the feel of a countdown as orchestras played songs of yesteryear and announcers reviewed the year's events. Comics made predictions for the future. Live feeds from Times Square interrupted the entertainment, culminating at midnight when the ball made its descent.

New Year's broadcasting from Times Square had a wide reach and a deep impact. By the 1980s, television producers so effectively packaged "the magic moment of midnight" as it unfolded in Times Square (with shows like Dick Clark's *New Year's Rockin' Eve*, which debuted in 1973), that they were able to export it around the world. During the 1980s, Japanese broadcasters requested permission from Artkraft-Strauss Sign Company to film the ball drop; in 1987 the Kremlin inquired about commissioning a time ball for Red Square. Improvements in satellite communications and global fascination with America, especially the Big Apple, extended the reach of Times Square on New Year's Eve. Today, 100 million people in the United States annually tune in to one of the many shows featuring Times Square on New Year's Eve—just ten percent of the one billion worldwide viewers.

The Meaning in the Ritual

The global New Year's experience reached its zenith with the arrival of the year 2000. Nicknamed Y2K,

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: New Year celebration, 1940. Blowing horns on New Year's Day 1943, New York, NY; Marjory Collins, photographer. Library of Congress

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: A trio of musicians from Duke Ellington's orchestra during the early morning broadcast, 1943, New York, NY; Gordon Parks, photographer. Louis Armstrong playing trumpet, 1953. "The Great White Way," Broadway south from 42nd St., where crowds gathered to see films projected outdoors, 1908. Library of Congress

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Duke Ellington, orchestra leader, 1943, New York, NY; Gordon Parks, photographer. Thousands of citizens waiting to be received at the New Year reception at the White House, Jan. 1927. Library of Congress

the year was anticipated with fear and trepidation about possible worldwide computer networks crashing. The sense of imminent disaster, of apocalypse, was so heady that the handful of television broadcasters who did not devote December 31 to millennium-themed programming instead offered disaster and horror movie marathons. Live broadcasts from the world's 24 time zones revealed time unfolding, hour by hour, until all people in all places were bound together by a simultaneous experience.

At least two million Americans were drawn to Times Square to cheer on time's passage. Hundreds of millions around the world watched on television as the instant of midnight swallowed up the previous century. Y2K turned out to be an affirming media event featuring time unfolding in a synchronized manner, rather than the discordant chaos so many predicted.

New Year's status as a media event ironically undercuts New Year's historical significance as time's touchstone in American life. As the anthropologist Margaret Mead put it, the holiday "once focused men's deep emotions about the past and the future and the continuity of time." Two centuries' worth of American diaries, letters, poems, songs, toasts, speeches, editorials, and sermons reveal a startling breadth and depth of thought about the New Year.

In contrast, today we have resolutions and revelry, but very little organized thought about the meaning of time itself. The televised roar of the crowd, the countdown to midnight, the slow descent of the illuminated ball, the passionate kisses, the confetti—all these timeless elements of a modern ritual celebrating an ancient holiday may be momentarily thrilling, but they are also ephemeral. And yet, each New Year provides the opportunity to think about the temporal dimensions of our individual lives, as well as that of our communities.

ALEXIS McCROSSEN, Professor of History at Southern Methodist University, teaches about the history of American culture and life. Her publications include *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday* (Cornell University Press, 2000) and *Marking Modern Times: A History of Clocks, Watches, and Other Timekeepers in American Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2013). McCrossen is writing a book about the history of New Year's observances in the United States.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "New Year's Eve," *Shaping Opinion with Tim O'Brien*, Episode 44, Dec. 23, 2018. Interview with Alexis McCrossen about New Year's Eve traditions. shapingopinion.com
- "Why Do We Dress Up For New Year's Eve? From Cow Hides to Expensive Baubles, We've Been At It for a While," Marlen Komar, *Bustle*, Dec. 9, 2016. bustle.com
- "A Ball of a Time: A History of the New Year's Eve Ball Drop," Latif Nasser, Dec. 23, 2013, The New Yorker. newyorker.com
- "NYE History & Times Square Ball," Times Square Alliance. timessquarenyc.org/times-square-new-years-eve

ABOVE: New Year's 2019 in Times Square, NYC; Countdown Entertainment, LLC
BELOW: Shipwrecked, Polish American String Band Division, at Mummers Parade on New Year's Day, Philadelphia, PA, 2011; Carol Highsmith, photographer; Library of Congress

OKLAHOMA POETS

On Time

OUIJA

On an elementary playground
I was informed that 55 years
would mark my end, a fate
spelled out by ghostly hands
that moved mine around the board,
and those of my best friend, Johnny,
our fourth-grade fingers bunched lightly
on the planchette near its clear, glass eye.

Johnny was going to be the heroic Marine,
the spirits revealed over lunchtime recesses,
then a running back for the Rams,
then President of the United States.

I, on the other hand, would likely croak mid-life
holding down a meaningless job,
an aging bachelor, childless, bankrupt.

I suspect Johnny had learned to cheat at Ouija.

Yet I still check our hometown newspaper's
    obituary page
more than four decades on
to see if his name appears before mine
while I count the nervous hours to my 56th
shadowed by two boys hunched over a
    Hasbro game,

knowing nothing, then or now,
of the slow way we spell out answers
with an arc of letters, bold Noes and Yeses,
a series of numbers, one to zero,
and a final, bottom-of-the-board, Good Bye.

—Paul Bowers

LEAVING LOCUST GROVE

I left home, barely eighteen, the youngest
of three sisters. They stayed. Married.
Had lives near our parents, near the place
that made us and that sent me
to the unknown, which was not
any great distance. I never roamed
more than a few hundred miles
one way or the other.
Yet.

I was always far away.
Building bug cemeteries as a child.
Dating a different guy every week.
Picking teenage fights with other mouthy girls.
And always, always enchanted by
a man who smelled of woodsmoke,
eyes brown as oak, voice a deep promise.

All myths end in the subject's prime.
Even at 56, I dream of playing basketball,
my high school coach prodding me,
Move it! Move it!
Or I sail over Locust Grove, my toes
tapping the tops of trees.

When I left this town,
I was at the wheel of a '73 Buick Century,
backseat full of jeans and stereo equipment.
In my heart I carried nothing but
pure, blank longing.

—Shaun Perkins

VINTAGE YEAR

I have wasted my life.
What was I thinking?
I have squandered my virtues
on unworthy persons.
Now all of life's seminal events,
except for the last, are in the past.
Nothing else awaits me—no new career,
no final love affair. It's the glass
more than half empty, almost drained
to the last drop. On the other hand,
it's a goblet that once brimmed
with an expectant bouquet that promised
this excellent vintage, the color of yet
a few more sunsets. Let me sip
the dregs and slowly savor every taste.

—Jennifer Kidney

GROWING PAIN

Those first moments
living alone
in your treehouse
we built, grandpa
and I and you
hammered a place
for you and your thoughts.

I see you standing
on the platform
high above it all
leaning safe
on supporting limbs
watching clouds,
thinking as children think.

Soon enough, we will live
in separate dwellings.
I enjoy watching you
grow, celebrate
your freedom, but
I can't help but feel
something else.

—Ken Hada
from *Spare Parts*
(Mongrel Empire Press, 2010)

CLOSET

The closet is musty with cold mildew.
Her careless sons glued the sheets of plywood
right to the concrete block foundation with
no thought of insulation.

Glue hardens quickly in the forceful wind,
and then the gaps appear, moisture drips in,
the carpet breeds green pastures, her dresses
fill with the thick damp odor of acorns.

Mice leave black dots speckling the green.
White crickets find shelter under her shoes.
Streaks of black fungus shoot up the brown wall,
a picket fence of spongy residue.

No one but she knows. No one shares
the secret biology of her closet.

—Shaun Perkins

TRAIN

For LeAnne Howe
After Miko Kings

At 12:26 am, a train softly rumbles
a few blocks from my bed,
where I would be sleeping, were it not
for a baseball story keeping me up

thinking about Ada, circa 1900, a town
maneuvering toward statehood.
For more than a century, Iron Horses
have trotted that same path blowing horns

of progress, sometimes too loud to hear
Choctaw ghosts telling of Miko Kings
and our counter-clockwise rotations.

But tonight, they are soft enough to imagine
old days when baseball meant everything
that money could not buy.

—Ken Hada
From *Bring an Extry Mule*
(Purple Flag Press, 2017)

NONSENSE HOUR

Who would cut my beard
while I slept in the afternoon
just as the sunlight moves
past the cat in the corner?

Who would take my shoes
and re-lace them with vines
from the dying Clematis
and place them upside down
just out of reach
beyond the bed's edge?

Who would turn back the clock
two hours on the day when
only one hour is required?

No matter. It is time to wake up
short-bearded and pull on my
newly thatched shoes and
walk the extra mile
down the gravel road
because you, out of kindness,
have given me the time
to do so, without fear
of being sixty minutes late
for anything.

—Paul Bowers

RING SONG

For Johnnie

Dear uncle-in-law, I am sorry,
means more in German, *es tut*
mir leid: it does me sorrow,
the way you lost.

I know loss, but not losing;
the shakes, but not the tremors
that come from immune
system failure.

I know the non-reciprocal kiss,
the prom date *I do's*, but not the
this is our house, carry across
the threshold someone you don't

love kind of lie that digs
its own river of roots.
I know the etymology of *sorry*.
I know I'll never know you

as more than a grave in
Claremore, hand-me-down
denim backpack on my husband's
coat rack, two crates

of records. I promise it got better,
not with your leaving, but existence,
not with your death, but decision
to call yourself by your name.

I wear your ring, not as family
heirloom, but testament to
the slow bittersweet work
you knew love was.

—John Robert Andrews

REFLECTION AT CLOSE OF DAY

I pause while looking east at close of day,
Reflecting on that span of time just spent,
And wish to have it back with no delay
So I can undo things I now repent.
The coming darkness brings the dreaded night
When blackness must consume both you and me,
And in the dying day with regal right
It takes the light and will not let us see.
Oh, *why* does nature give so little time
For tasks important I know must be done?
And just when I begin to make my rhyme,
Why does darkness dim the angry sun?
I turn from east and find there in the west
Enough light left to finish all the rest.

—Stephen Boyd Cates

METAPHYSICAL POEM

The dictionary calls time a continuum
without spatial dimensions, but I know
time is round like a weather balloon
or the face of a school-room clock.
And time is long, a tedious stretch between us
like long-distance cables lying along
the ocean's floor. Time circles the globe.

Your dime-thin platinum watch lies on my bureau,
round as the moon, needling the time:
the hands converge on midnight
as the date changes, but here in this room
it is 5 p.m. on the day before.
We imagine we have stopped time.

In the context of these tangled sheets
we say words like "forever," "always,"
"don't ever stop." But we cannot live long
outside of time. It is our place
on the globe. Our time together
is always and forever too short;
we do not fit completely inside it--
your wife and child, my other lovers
keep falling off the bed, distracting us
from this spot in time we share.

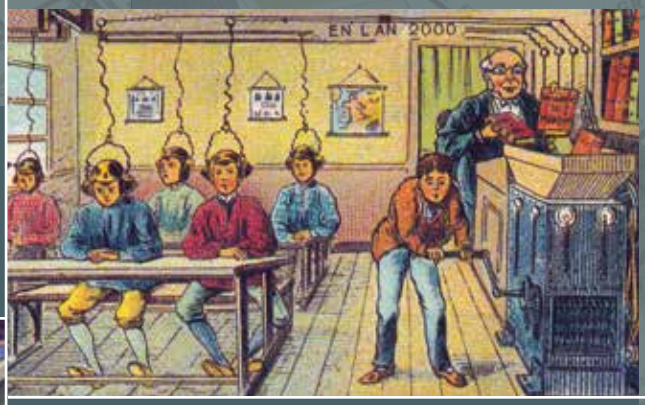
Sometime in the night we knock the clock's
plug from the socket. There is no alarm to wake us
once we finally fall, out of each other's arms,
into sleep. At 9 a.m. I see the pale face
of your watch watching me. You have changed the time
to match the continent, the longitude.

A week from now, you'll call me.
It will be your afternoon, my morning;
we'll talk about the weather—the lingering
London winter, my full-blown early spring.
Time has come between us, turning our love mundane.

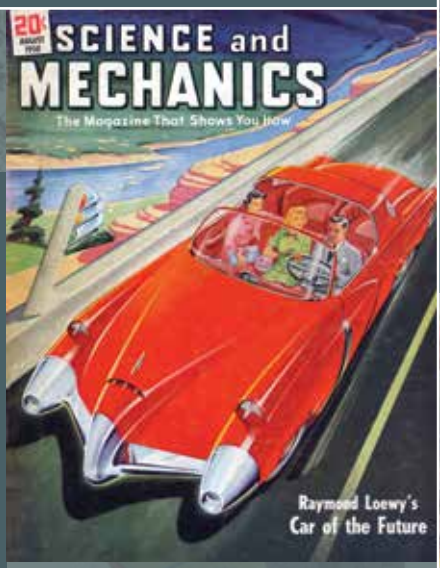
The dictionary definition continues:
"time is a continuum . . . in which events
succeed one another from past through present
to future." These words do not connect us.
Out of this world when we come together,
we forget time until its clicking dentures
and blinking eyes startle us back.
We have things to do, time to do them in.
Hypocrite, dirty old man,
time spoils all our fun.

—Jennifer Kidney
From *Life List* (Village Books Press, 2007)

RIGHT: *Future School in the Year 2000*, from "A 19th-Century Vision of the Year 2000," a series of futuristic pictures by Jean-Marc Côté and other French artists, issued in 1899-1901 and 1910. First produced for the 1900 World Exhibition in Paris. Due to financial difficulties, cards by Jean-Marc Côté were never distributed. Science-fiction author Isaac Asimov chanced upon a set and published them in 1986 as *Futuredays: A Nineteenth Century Vision of the Year 2000*. Image: [PD] Wikimedia Commons. Text: publicdomainreview.org



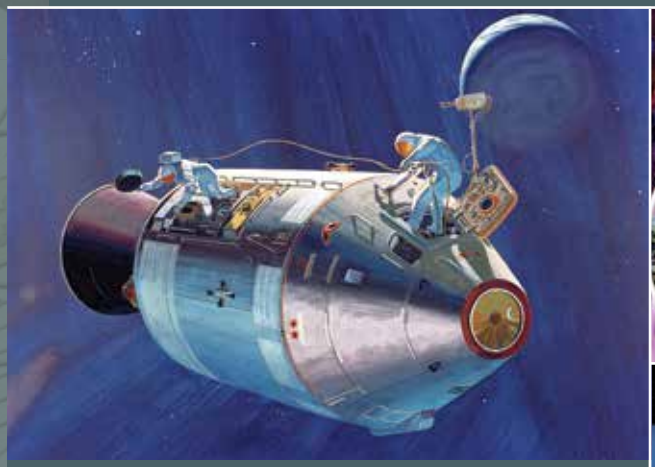
BELOW: *Leaving the Opera in the Year 2000*, Albert Robida, c. 1902. A futuristic view of air travel over Paris by French illustrator, etcher, lithographer, caricaturist, novelist, and futurologist Albert Robida. Editor and publisher of *La Caricature* magazine, Robida also wrote an acclaimed trilogy of futuristic novels imagining life in the twentieth century. Of note: the depiction of women driving their own aircraft. Image: LOC.gov. Text: publicdomainreview.org



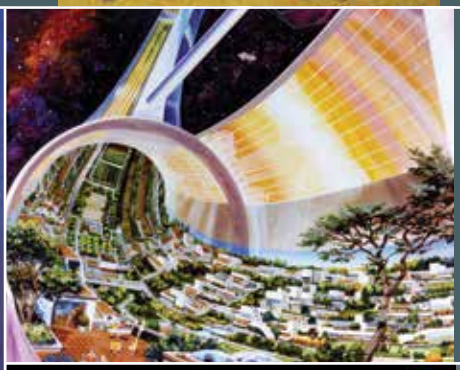
RIGHT: *Car of the Future*, conceived by Raymond Loewy (Studebaker Director of Styling) for the August 1950 issue of *Science and Mechanics*. Loewy wrote about new car designs for "tomorrow's rocket age population." The three-point front end of this concept model was a design feature on the 1951 Studebaker; other elements influenced the 1953 Studebaker Starliner. Cover art by Arthur C. Bade, staff illustrator for *Science and Mechanics*, 1944 to 1955. Image and text: [PD] Wikimedia Commons

VISIONS OF TIME IN THE FUTURE

LEFT: *Grissom and Young*, Norman Rockwell, 1965. Astronauts John Young and Gus Grissom are suited for the first flight of the Gemini program, March 1965. NASA loaned Rockwell a Gemini spacesuit to make the painting as accurate as possible. Image and text: airandspace.si.edu



ABOVE: Artist's conception, *Apollo 15 Command and Service Modules*, July 1971, showing two crewmembers performing a new-to-Apollo extravehicular activity (EVA). Astronaut figures represent (at left) command module pilot Alfred M. Worden and (right) lunar module pilot James B. Irwin. Worden and Irwin successfully conducted the EVA on August 5, 1971. Artwork by North American Rockwell. Image and text: NASA.gov



LEFT: With the help of NASA Ames Research Center and Stanford University, Princeton physicist Gerard O'Neill held a series of space colony studies in the 1970s, which explored the possibilities of humans living in giant orbiting spaceships housing about 10,000 people. Artist's rendering by Rick Guidice: *Toroidal Colonies, cutaway view, exposing the interior*. Image and text: NASA.gov

LEFT: *Same Crew, New Ride*, NASA, 2012. Artist's conception of NASA's Commercial Crew Program (CCP), which is investing in the aerospace industry to help companies develop crew transportation systems capable of flying to the International Space Station and other low Earth orbit destinations. CCP is expected to drive down the cost of space travel and open space to more people by balancing industry innovation with NASA's 50 years of human spaceflight experience. Image and text: NASA.gov

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Students at Oklahoma Christian University explore the inequities of justice while discussing poetry from the Spring/Summer 2019 issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. Photo: Nathan Shank

SEARCHING FOR JUSTICE

with *Oklahoma Humanities* Magazine

Editor's Note: Thanks to Dr. Nathan Shank for the following note on sharing content from our JUSTICE issue—and the powerful impact of reflecting on different perspectives.

Weekly Beam Chapel at Oklahoma Christian University usually spends time searching for God among the sub-cultures: science fiction, purgatory, ghosts, pilgrimage. A hundred students gather among the stacks to explore a holy theme. But on the last chapel of this spring, we drew on the rich source of poems on justice—and injustice—from the recent issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. We had spent most of the semester finding spirituality in the notion of kitsch, the tasteless parts of life, the clichés that in themselves house meaning.

A crash hit us when head librarian Tamie Willis tearfully read "Inmate," the poem from incarcerated writer AC. It struck theory down and brought reality in:

> I am an inmate.
> My name is "Useless" and "Addict."
> My number is seven,
> The mandatory minimum amount of years
> Due to me for my drug crime.

Our rehabilitation of clichés over the semester paled; the weight and pain of injustice illumed.

We heard poem after poem from the JUSTICE issue, voicing incarcerated women from Oklahoma. Between each, theology librarian Chris Rosser spoke truth to students, saying, "To *use* people, to *consume* people, to *ignore* people, to *silence* or *oppress* people, to *harm* people—these acts tend to indicate eyes that have not yet learned."

I looked around at the students and, even though they were taxed with finishing papers and preparing for finals, truth got through. Some might have called it a moment of *transformative learning*, but it was much less abstract than that. It was a moment of being in pain because someone else was. We left that day with our souls a little more just, or at least a little less oblivious to pervasive injustice. Thank you, OH, for giving voice to the margins.

—Nathan Shank, Ph.D., Oklahoma Christian University

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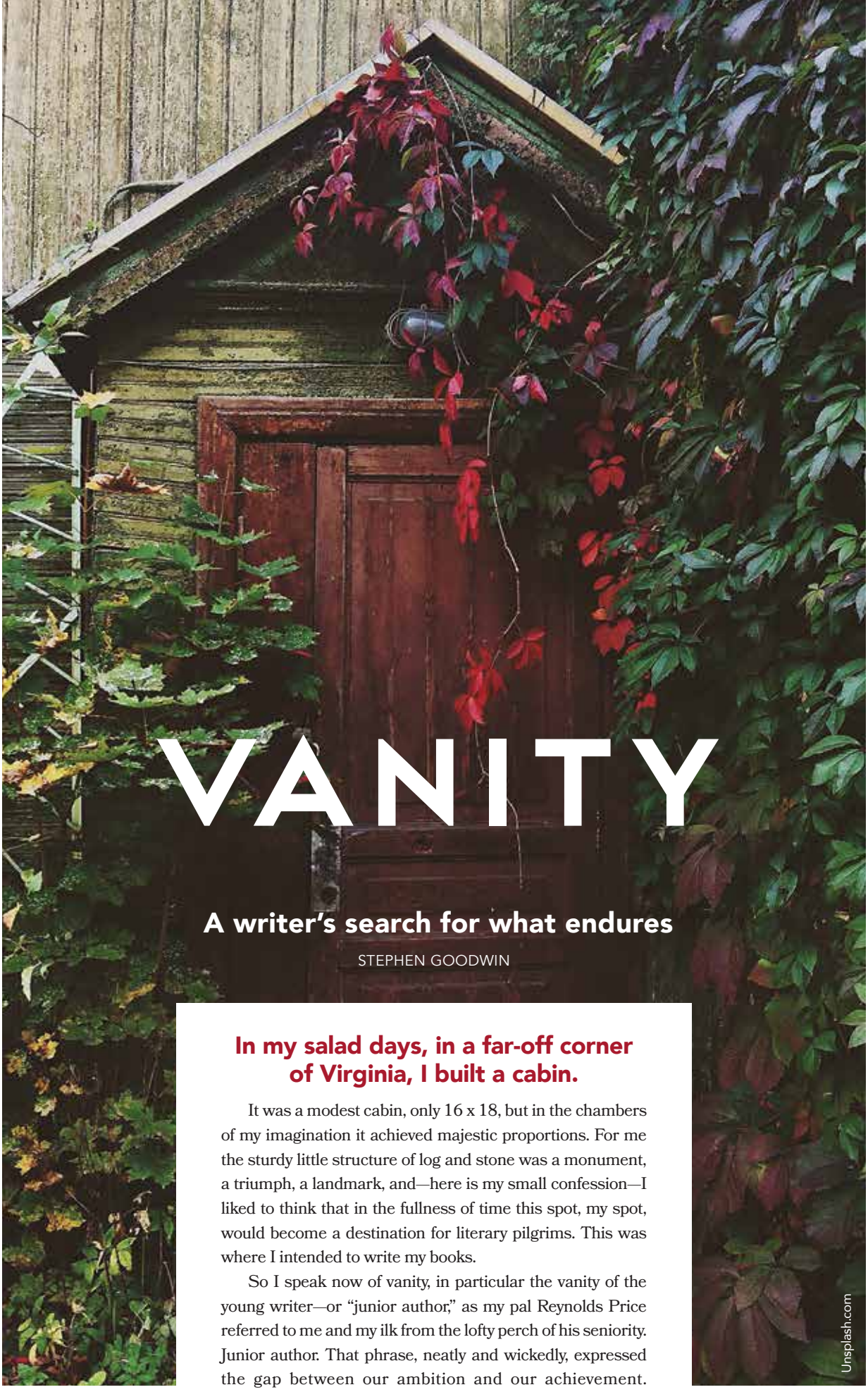

VANITY

A writer's search for what endures

STEPHEN GOODWIN

In my salad days, in a far-off corner of Virginia, I built a cabin.

It was a modest cabin, only 16 x 18, but in the chambers of my imagination it achieved majestic proportions. For me the sturdy little structure of log and stone was a monument, a triumph, a landmark, and—here is my small confession—I liked to think that in the fullness of time this spot, my spot, would become a destination for literary pilgrims. This was where I intended to write my books.

So I speak now of vanity, in particular the vanity of the young writer—or "junior author," as my pal Reynolds Price referred to me and my ilk from the lofty perch of his seniority. Junior author. That phrase, neatly and wickedly, expressed the gap between our ambition and our achievement.

Unsplash.com

We were full of ourselves, I suppose, and set great store by our as yet unwritten works. This is the vanity of the junior author, this faith in the work that lies ahead, the belief that it matters more than anything else. Of course, it had better matter more than anything else, or it will never get done. Vanity is the seductive voice that whispers in your ear, *Write! Write! Write! That is what you were born to do.*

First, though, I had to build the cabin. I expected that the building and writing would be more or less simultaneous, as they seemed to have been for Thoreau. As you have by now surely guessed, my true mentor was Thoreau, and my holy book was Walden. The first essay I wrote about the cabin was called "Where We Live," and it gave homage to Thoreau. It was not lost on me that Thoreau's famous chapter is in the first person singular, "Where I Lived . . ." He was an isolato, a poet, a naturalist, and a transcendentalist, while I was a married man, the father of a fine girl, and an aspiring novelist—in short, a familiar kind of young writer who liked nothing better than to sit up half the night carousing and telling tales in the company of friends. Nevertheless, I thought my writing would flourish if I settled myself in a remote and virtuous place. I was going to like simply and write like a god. All I wanted was love, honor, riches, happiness, and immortality.

Like Thoreau, I also wanted and claimed for myself the joy of building. My first task was to gather stones for my foundation, and in no time I was stone-smitten, ever on the lookout for stones of the right shape, hue, and texture—for stones of striking beauty and character. The trunk of my old Peugeot was usually full of stones I found along the country roads. It was slow work but I was feeling patient since I was building for the ages. I came to prefer the soft, tawny, golden sandstone that my mountain neighbors called "fossil stone," and it was indeed stuccoed with the fossils of shellfish and mollusks. My foundation rose up from the earth, course by course, and it felt not merely solid, you understand, but ancient and prehistoric.

As for the logs, they went up in a twinkling. Most of them were already notched and hewn, for I took down and moved an old cabin. The logs were white pine and they were heartwood, but they did need some trimming, and a few of the topmost logs—the cabin was two stories high—had rotted altogether. Tucked away somewhere I have photos of the junior author hard at work with his broadax. This old cabin also came with a large stone chimney, with fireplaces upstairs and down, and I have photos of the reconstructed chimney rising up like a rocket, with two proud young bucks standing, arms folded, on its pinnacle—the junior author and his brother.

We look mighty pleased with ourselves, which leads me to mention another sort of vanity—builder's vanity. Anyone who has ever built even the humblest structure has felt it. The mason who laid up the original chimney had left his initials and the date in one of the big blocks of sandstone: MFK 1877. And why shouldn't he sign it? An artist signs his work, and so does the builder who knows that his work will outlast him. My brother's initials and mine are now scratched in the same stone.

Inside the cabin, my daughter's infant handprint is pressed into the mortar that chinks a space between the logs. Someday someone will trace that handprint with her own fingertips and dream a little dream about the child who used to play out by the hand pump and gaze up at her parents as they scuttled about in the scaffolding, building what must have looked to the child like a castle in the air.

This someone will not really imagine my daughter, but never mind. A child's handprint is a powerful statement, a reminder of the single, specific, sweet, ceremonious, hopeful moment when a young couple held a child aloft and applied her hand firmly to the fresh mortar. We were just making a mark, leaving a sign of our passage, celebrating the fact that we had finally completed the chinking and closed the cabin against the weather and the critters.

We were entitled to stamp our identity on the cabin, I felt, since it was finished. That was builder's vanity, but as for my literary vanity—well, I hadn't finished much. The oeuvre was slender: a few short stories, a couple of essays. Now there could be no more delays, since my long writing table was installed along one wall of the cabin, and an engraving of Joseph Conrad watched sternly over this corner of the room. He looked wise, inscrutable, and dignified. He looked like an author.

As for the junior author, I will refrain from telling you how much time he spent wondering how he ought to look on his first book jacket. Yes, he did complete a novel, though little of it was actually written at the cabin, and kept all sorts of notes in his journals so that his biographer—so that posterity!—would know exactly how he had lived and worked. In his behalf, I should say that most of the writers I knew, junior and senior, were subject to these same reveries. We were all pursuing the white stag of fame, and we joked about elaborate measures to protect our manuscripts (in the freezer, they would be safe from theft and fire). We wrote each other the kind of letters that made sense only if you imagined someone reading them a hundred years later. We told stories about each other as if we were already famous, or at least dead. And we visited the houses of writers and saw what intimate and sometimes random details of the writer's life came to be woven into their legend. I saw the creaking door in the house at Chatsworth, the door that signaled to Jane Austen that someone was coming and she had better hide her writing from prying eyes. In Charlottesville I climbed the steps down which Faulkner drunkenly stumbled. At Key West I saw the kitchen where Hemingway had raised all the countertops because, the guide said with great relish, rolling his eyes theatrically, "Papa was a BIG man, and Papa had BIG appetites, and Papa caught BIG fish and cooked them right here!"

I never went so far as to imagine the kind of tour that would be given at my cabin, perhaps because I just couldn't figure out how the visitors were going to cross three mountain ranges and make their way down ten miles of twisting dirt road to find the place. But one winter I did settle in, and I wrote a second novel and, if I may, I would like to suggest this script for the tour:

> The winter of '77-'78 was bitter! During the day he cut wood and then he sat right here on those long winter nights, right here in this one armed-chair—look! The seat is like a death mask of his butt! He pulled the chair up as close as he could to the wood stove. He worked deep into the night, hearing nothing but the howling wind and the hiss of the burning logs. Then, to unwind, he'd take a nip or two of bourbon and go right out that door and stand on the porch, in the freezing cold, and sing fight songs . . .

That is more or less how I remember that winter, anyway. The work was bracing and the stars were brilliant when I stepped out onto the porch. Now, as then, I take a detached view of the junior author: He was a different self, another me, and he seemed more interesting and possibly more important. He was certainly more extravagant. And he wrote a book that I still think is pretty good. I doubt that anyone is ever going to take the tour (And I haven't even had a chance to mention the naked turkey hunt!), but I am grateful to have lived for a while in his element, where time

and space seemed to radiate endlessly outward from that little cabin at the foot of a mountain.

That novel was the only book I wrote there. There have been other books of nonfiction, written elsewhere, for I felt the gravitational pull of the city. I held on to the cabin for many years, though I went there less and less often. When I did go, I didn't have time to write; I spent my days there as a caretaker. Finally, ten years ago, I sold the place to a man who uses it as a hunting camp. He has put his own trophies on the walls. He is not after the white stag of fame but the white-tailed deer. For all I know he stands on the porch on starlit nights and sings hunting songs, creating his own myth and his own memories. I certainly hope so. We all need to celebrate our deeds, to set a value on them and raise them up high enough for safekeeping.

That is not vanity, not exactly, not unless we crow too much. In any case, the new owner is welcome to the cabin, for I have my cabin preserved in photographs, in a table made of the cherry trees that grew on the mountainside, in thousands of words. "What thou lovest well remains," wrote Ezra Pound, "the rest is dross." I certainly loved that place and all that happened there, and I don't worry too much about the fierce old poet's warning: "Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down." Time will pull it down for us.

Time pulls down our vanity and makes preservationists of us all. Why else do we lug about our boxes of photographs, letters, clippings, and testimonials? And why do we treasure our grandfather's watch or our grandmother's garter, except that these objects somehow connect us to those we have loved? They live on in their belongings, and we who cherish them naturally wish for our own—let us not be afraid of the word—immortality.

Now that the cabin is someone else's, now that I am remarried and have a son as well as a daughter, now that I live in New York—in a house in an officially designated historic district—I sometimes wonder just what form my earthly immortality will take. I already know that the house will not bear my name; there is a plaque which calls it "The James Bates House." I hope to write a few more books here, in a study which is cluttered with various dear possessions—a soccer ball signed by the members of a team I coached, a fabulous Mayan figure left to me by a friend who died ten years ago, my son's drawing of our furry dog, an engraving of a romantic tower that my wife gave me as a keepsake of our Irish honeymoon. There are books everywhere, but the only image of a writer is a photograph of my great friend, Peter Taylor, who was the best man at our wedding and present when our son was born.

In fact, as I look around my room, I see that I have surrounded myself, as we all do, with books and pictures and objects that are clues to what has mattered most, to the times when I have been happiest and most full of life. These belongings have only private meanings, but that is all they need to have. Or so I say, though even as I write these words, I am attempting to enlarge those meanings and make them more enduring.

Writers! They just can't help wanting things to last forever.

STEPHEN GOODWIN is Professor, English/Literature/Creative Writing at George Mason University, and author of three novels: *Breaking Her Fall*, *The Blood of Paradise*, and *Kin*. His short fiction has appeared in *Gentleman's Quarterly*, *Shenandoah*, *Sewanee Review*, and the *Georgia Review*; his articles, reviews, and essays have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *American Scholar*, and *Virginia Quarterly Review*. The essay first appeared in *Preservation* magazine, used by permission of the author.

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Virginia Woolf, c. 1927. Harvard Theater Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard Univ. [PD] Wikimedia Commons

Against Tinsel & Trickery

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

JOHN BRUCE

Communicating the tenuous threads of connection

Reflections on the Thames, Westminster, John Atkinson Grimshaw, 1880. Leeds Art Gallery [PD] Wikimedia Commons

"What a lark! What a plunge!" This Clarissa Dalloway exclaims internally as she fluidly bounds out of her house and into the bustling streets of a brilliant June morning in London. Clarissa seizes the opportunity to buy flowers herself for her party that night rather than allow her servant Lucy to purchase them. Thus begins Virginia Woolf's 1925 novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, an experimental narrative masterpiece that relates a day in the life of her 52-year-old protagonist whose thoughts are continually streamed (by design) into the reader's consciousness.

As Woolf establishes her eponymous character's position in time and space, standing motionless at a crosswalk, Clarissa transports herself mentally to another time and place: thirty-three years earlier (at the age of 18) at the family estate in the countryside. The sudden shift backward—through years and to another place—happens conspicuously, at the very opening of the novel, and recurs throughout the work. Woolf's experimental text stands out as what was then a new approach to the challenges all authors face: imitating movements in time and place in linear language.

Not coincidentally, in 1922, the very year that Woolf was writing her short story "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street" (which would later be transformed into the novel), she was also reading James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The influence of Joyce on *Mrs. Dalloway* has been well documented. Woolf included many elements of Joyce's work in her own groundbreaking novel: peripatetic tours of a capital city (in Joyce's case, Dublin; for Woolf, London); chiming clocks (in Joyce's novel, church bells; in Woolf's, Big Ben); and episodic fragments of "psychological realism"—or, in the expression that most people associate with Woolf, "stream of consciousness." Although neither she nor Joyce invented the form, the two novel innovators (a consciously redundant description) use the concept to their great advantage, stylistically and philosophically.

Woolf's deep connections to the artistic, literary, and philosophical vanguard of London's intellectual community in the 1920s explains her powerful enthusiasm for experimentation, even apart from Joyce. Woolf was both fascinated by the concept of time and a product of it. We see in Woolf's writing the influences of her era, her reading, and her companions. In the same year Woolf drafted her groundbreaking novel, she was exposed to other avant-garde poetry and prose from fellow literary pioneers: T.S. Eliot published the modernist poetic tour de force *The Waste Land*; New Zealander Katherine Mansfield published the experimental modernist short story "The Garden Party"; and Marcel Proust published the fourth of seven volumes of the epic endeavor *In Search of Lost Time*, a novel ultimately earning distinction for its original treatment of time, memory, and narrative. Such was Woolf's literary environment in this critical year of writing her novel. Some of these influences are more overtly acknowledged or recognized than others in *Mrs. Dalloway*, but Woolf breaks new ground in her narrative representation of time through the thoughts, experiences, and shifting perspectives of her characters.

In a sense, two types of time exist in any narrative: objective measurable time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, and years) and subjective time (the thoughts and consciousness of a narrator or character, in which time is distorted, stretched, or compressed). Prior to twentieth-century modernist literature, authors treated time, space, and characters as separate entities.

Woolf helped break the mold, using the contrast and interaction of objective and subjective time to frame important episodes of the novel.

For example, just as Clarissa emerges from her home and joins the bustling throng of fellow citizens, she pauses on the curb for a van to pass, daydreaming about the city, the King and Queen in residence at the Palace, and her former suitor Peter Walsh. Clarissa enters a particular fusion of time and space defined by Russian literary scholar M.M. Bakhtin as a "chronotope" (literally translated, "time space"). Bakhtin could have had this opening passage of *Mrs. Dalloway* in mind as he articulated:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. ("Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," 1937)

Berlin Street in the Sunshine, Lesser Ury, c. 1920. [PD] Wikimedia Commons

Time slows or comes to a complete stop as characters simultaneously inhabit the same space or time, yet experience it differently as each muses on the past, present, or future. These temporal and spatial bubbles draw attention to themselves—by the author's design—to emphasize the importance of "this moment" and "this place."

Curiously enough, (and well before Bakhtin's observations), Woolf suggests in her 1919 essay "Modern Fiction" that the best modern novelists are aware that simply cobbling together chunks of time and space with rigorous regularity misses the mark: "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end."

In the same essay, Woolf singles out Joyce for praise because he has dared to break claustrophobic conventions. His work is "closer to life" because he responds to inspiration rather than tradition. In a call for a new aesthetic, to abandon the staid triviality of "tinsel and trickery" in then-current fiction, Woolf aspires to greater freedom in writing: "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness."

Mrs. Dalloway is Woolf's experiment in recording these random, fleeting thoughts of the mind. As Clarissa is wrapped in thought, the narrator shifts the focus to a neighbor observing Clarissa in that same suspended moment: "A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster)." During this frozen instant, Purvis reflects on Clarissa's appearance as "light, vivacious, though she was over fifty." Clarissa, in her own suspended state, observes that in Westminster, "One feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night . . . a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense . . . before Big Ben strikes."

Internal time for Clarissa and her neighbor stands still, leaving the two floating in their own, separate spheres until the inevitable intrusion of external, objective time, represented repeatedly through the novel by the tolling bells of Big Ben and St. Margaret's, the nearby parish church. Big Ben strikes 10 a.m. ("There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable."), connecting Clarissa and her neighbor in a fusion of time and space.

Woman at the Desk, Lesser Ury, 1898. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin [PD] Wikimedia Commons

At 11:30 a.m., Big Ben links Clarissa, Peter Walsh, who has just returned from India, and Elizabeth, Clarissa's 17-year-old daughter, all of whom converge at the Dalloway house. The bells of St. Margaret's ring, as always, two minutes later—a sort of delayed interdiction of objective, external time. A more subjective interdiction comes at 3 p.m., as Richard Dalloway, Clarissa's husband, arrives home with a spontaneous bouquet of roses for his wife: "Happiness is this he thought. It is this, he said, as he entered Dean's Yard. Big Ben was beginning to strike, first the warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable." Clarissa sits in angst over the guest list for her party. Big Ben begins to toll and at the third bell she hears her husband cross the threshold: "Three already! . . . [T]he door handle slipped round and in came Richard! What a surprise! In came Richard, holding out flowers." Time again bends out of its ordered progression as Woolf establishes tension between the mechanically precise rhythm of the throbbing bell and the internalized, solipsistic thoughts of husband and wife—as if they are constantly experiencing satellite delay.

Returning to the opening scene, something else drives the action: interconnectedness. Woolf underscores the idea that everyone and everything is connected, whether or not any particular character is aware of this. Woolf connects Clarissa to other characters, including her husband Richard Dalloway, her former suitor Peter, and the closest friend of her youth, Sally Seton. Most importantly, Woolf links Clarissa to Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked World War I veteran haunted by hallucinations, who is on the verge of being institutionalized for post-traumatic stress. Paradoxically, Clarissa and Septimus never meet, but they are in each other's close proximity twice in the novel.

One of the most important chronotopes—a fusion of time and space linking Clarissa and Septimus but without either's knowledge of their immediate vicinity—has a decidedly cinematic flavor. (Not surprising given the skyrocketing popularity of the movie theater in the 1920s. In the same year that Woolf was drafting *Mrs. Dalloway*, film technology took a significant leap forward, fusing sound with film.) This first oblique contact occurs when Clarissa is selecting flowers for her party inside Mulberry's flower shop and Septimus is crossing the street just outside. The engine of a passing car backfires, causing Clarissa to jump and Septimus to presumably suffer a flashback in response to the explosive sound: "The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames." The cinematic framing and shifting perspectives between the two characters explains the relatively easy adaptability of Woolf's novel to film, achieved masterfully in the 1997 film directed by Marleen Gorris and starring Vanessa Redgrave.

Clarissa and Septimus have another tangential "encounter" near the end of the novel, after Septimus ends his life rather than be committed for psychiatric care by his misguided doctor, Sir William Bradshaw. Hours later at Clarissa's party, Lady Bradshaw callously explains her and her husband's lateness by invoking Septimus's death: "Just as we were starting, my husband was called up on the telephone, a very sad case. A young man (that is what Sir William is telling Mr. Dalloway) had killed himself. He had been in the army." Clarissa's first reaction is dismay at Lady Bradshaw besmirching her gathering with the mention of mortality: "Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death." She makes Septimus's death about herself: "Somehow it was her disaster—her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress."

Lady in Black Evening Dress with Green Scarf, Lesser Ury, 1908. [PD] Wikimedia Commons

Clarissa walks to a window, opens the curtains, and observes an elderly woman in the room opposite preparing for bed. At length, Clarissa's thoughts return to Septimus and, for the first time, focus on him rather than how his death affects her party: "She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away." The clock begins to strike as time and space again conspire to slow the action. Woolf then delivers an important message—that we lose sight of our own humanity when we selfishly consider only ourselves rather than others. Clarissa has this epiphany as the clock sounds: "The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the sun." The threads of connection to Septimus might be thin and tenuous, but they are connected nonetheless.

Such was the message of one of Woolf's favorite poets, the seventeenth-century "metaphysical" divine and bard John Donne. Donne makes this argument for the inconspicuous interconnectedness of all of humanity in a prose reflection written in 1624 when he believed that he was on the verge of death. (*Mrs. Dalloway*, too, can be considered a musing on mortality). Centuries before Joyce and Woolf, Donne reflected on human connection through the bell of a clock tower sounding the death knell of some unknown fellow citizen:

> No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. (*Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, Meditation 17).

Evidence of Woolf's admiration for Donne is clear in her 1931 essay "Donne After Three Centuries," in which she has us traveling the distance of three hundred years to speculate on his enduring popularity:

> It is tempting to wonder what quality the words of Donne possess that we should still hear them distinctly today. Far be it from us to suggest even in this year of celebration and pardonable adulation (1931) that the poems of Donne are popular reading or that the typist, if we look over her shoulder in the Tube, is to be discovered reading Donne as she returns from her office. But he is read; he is audible—to that fact new editions and frequent articles testify.

Woolf herself—and potentially each of us—is that typist, suspended in a vacuum of time and space, whereby literature transcends the world in which we live.

At the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf leaves Peter, Clarissa, and the reader in yet another state of suspense. Peter has been lost in thoughts of Clarissa and her temporary absence from the party. Upon her return, he articulates her presence, freezing time as he fuses memory and experience: "What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement? It is Clarissa, he said. For there she was."

JOHN BRUCE is Professor of Language and Literature at University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasha, where he has been on the faculty since 1998. He is a painter and native of San Mateo, California.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

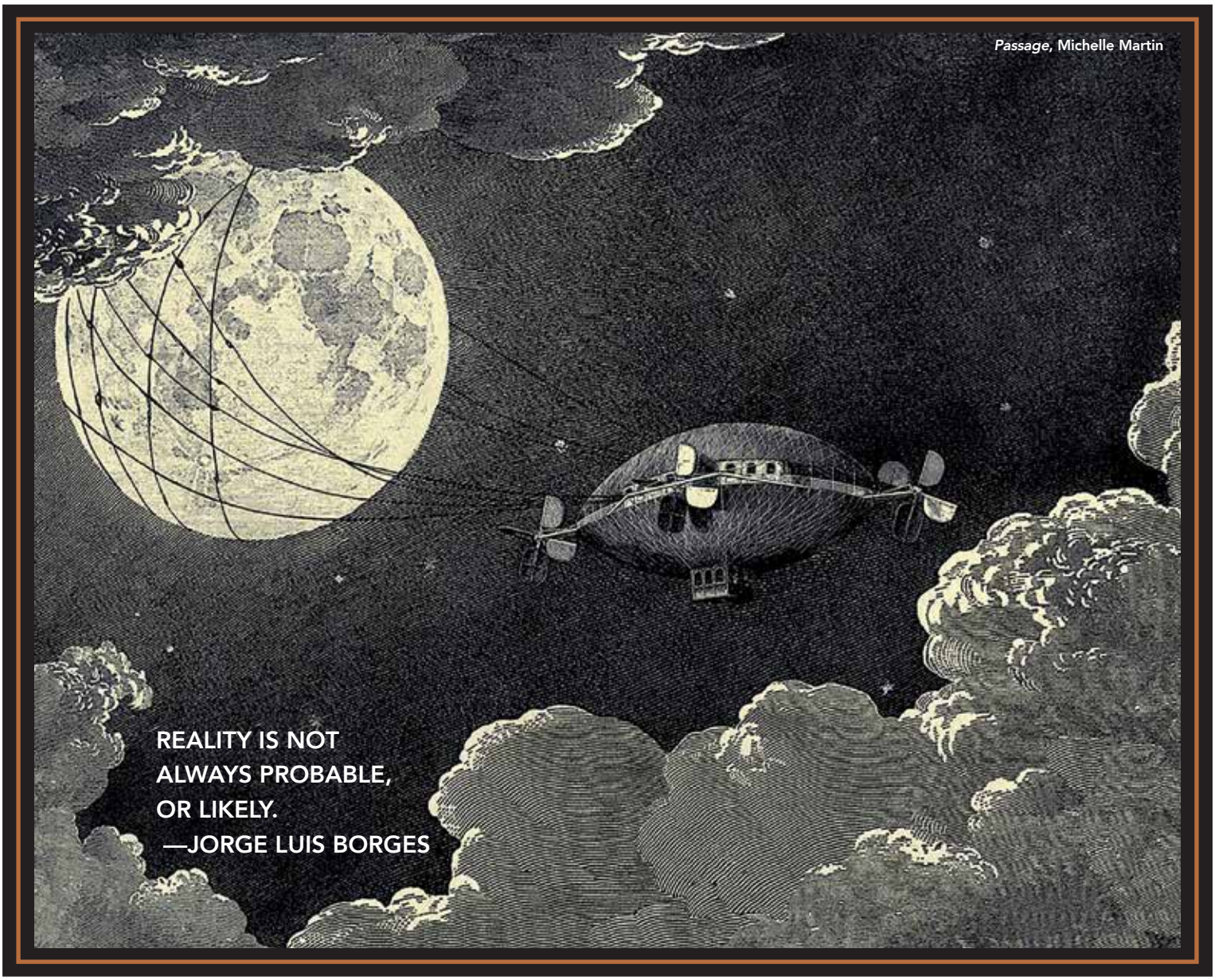
- "Virginia Woolf Was More Than Just a Women's Writer, She Was a Great Observer of Everyday Life," Danny Heitman, *HUMANITIES* magazine, May/June 2015. neh.gov/humanities
- "Woolf [née Stephen], (Adeline) Virginia," Lyndall Gordon, Sept. 23, 2004, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Woolf's life and feminist aesthetics. oxforddnb.com
- Texts by Virginia Woolf available at University of Adelaide website. ebooks.adelaide.edu.au

Helios,
Michelle Martin

TIME IS A TIGER

The Imaginative Worlds *of* Jorge Luis Borges

PEDRO BLAS GONZALEZ



Passage, Michelle Martin

Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) created a literary genre that left readers guessing whether his stories were fantasy fiction stories or encyclopedic non-fiction essays. As master of the metaphysical literary tale, Borges defied convention, insisting on the freedom to create worlds and characters that explore the vortex where appearance and reality meet. He persuades readers to follow him into literary labyrinths with works that are speculative and replete with paradoxes.

New readers of Borges need not be intimidated, for he is never portentous. His work seeks an audience that will go along with the punches. The important thing for readers to remember is that Borges' ideas about time are present in all his work. At the core of human existence, Borges observes, man finds time, which enlightens—and tortures.

THE MAKING OF A WRITER

Borges was born in the Palermo district of Buenos Aires, where his father taught English. His father's library exposed the young Jorge Luis to American and English literature, in addition to Spanish works like Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Borges read with relish the works of H.G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. He was also taken with detective fiction and exotic stories of the Far East and the Arab world, like *One Thousand and One Nights*, that dazzled with elaborate settings and a magical rendering of human reality.

Borges traveled to Spain and France at an early age, and to Switzerland where he attended the Collège de Gèneva. Later, as a poet and essayist, he lectured and worked as a librarian. As his writing reputation grew, he became Professor of English Literature at the University of Buenos Aires and was appointed the director of the National Library of Argentina. Like his father, a progressive degenerative eye disease left him blind by age 55.

In Europe, Borges was influenced by writers whose experimental innovations came under the banner of Ultraism (*Ultraísmo*), a form of symbolist writing that rejected complicated poetic verse, opting instead for free verse. These writers' ideas inspired Borges to take freedoms with the short story and his imaginative essays.

Borges was an Anglophile, drawn to the sound of the English language and writing because he could say more in few words. He was inspired by the British writer Gilbert Keith Chesterton (whose prolific writing included the priest-detective character Father Brown) and Chesterton's command of literary paradox.

TIME: EXPERIENCE AND POSSIBILITY

For Borges, the nature of the self and time cannot be separated: Time is a continuum in which it is impossible to separate past, present, and future, and the demarcation of these points, if even possible, is dependent on how we interpret our experiences. For example, a college senior's last four months of school seem to slow down, given the heightened anticipation of graduation; the same period appears interminable for one who suffers from an illness that disrupts daily living. Borges thinks of time as an experience, felt with the same intensity as an individual's sense for life. In his poem "*Jactancia de quietud*" (Boast of Quietness), he writes, "Time is living me." In "*Adrogué*," a poem that describes the Borges family home in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, he ties time to vivid memories of his youth:

> The ancient aura of an elegy
> still haunts me when I think about that house –
> I do not understand how time can pass,
> I, who am time and blood and agony.

Perhaps the most essential of Borges' writing on time is "*Nueva refutación del tiempo*" (A New Refutation of Time), written in 1944 and later included in *Laberinto* (Labyrinth), a collection of his short stories and other writing. In this essay, Borges' explores stream of consciousness:

> Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river which sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me, but I am the fire. The world, unfortunately, is real; I, unfortunately, am Borges.

Many writers depict time as oppressive. Not so with Borges. To him, time is confounding, perplexing, and paradoxical—a concern that, not ironically, takes up a lifetime of reflection.

Other writers of the period were also experimenting with the idea of time. Virginia Woolf referred to the "elasticity of time." Her novel *Orlando* (1928), which Borges translated to Spanish in 1937, impressed him. In a 1936 journal article, he noted Woolf's intelligence and imagination and the novel's originality: "Magic, bitterness and happiness collaborate in this book" (*El Hogar*).

A GENRE-BENDING MIND

Borges is thought by many critics to be responsible for inspiring Magical Realism, a literary boom that began in the 1960s in Latin America. The important aspect of Magical Realism as a literary genre is that it treats magical aspects of reality as normal, everyday occurrences, mixing "the real world" with "the world of the beyond"—the supernatural.

Critics accused Borges of being cerebral. He defended himself, saying that he communicated emotions through symbols and that his best writing took place "in between the lines." Today, he is considered a master of fantastic, metaphysical tales. Creating illusion was Borges' great talent. His stories and essays are a belletristic romp of color and lyricism. Some of his most widely read stories are *"El Aleph"* (The Aleph), *"Martín Fierro,"* and "*Las ruinas circulare*s" (The Circular Ruins).

Borges intrigues us with provocative ideas. He tantalizes and jousts, allowing discerning readers to be responsible for the meaning they find in his work. Borges' stories are never what they appear to be, do not follow a linear narrative. Some readers are left with the impression that he is more interested in constructing complex themes than in writing that entertains. His stories often make readers doubt whether the author, like a circus clown, is joking or sparring with them. Again, it is often "in the spaces" that we find the essence of human reality. Borges understood this truism.

His stories are like small waterfalls that intensify as they seek the river below. His gravitas gives us pause to reflect. Displaying profound respect for imagination, Borges weaves elaborate "nonfiction references" through his storytelling. These imaginary references are footnotes to a world of make-believe. This is the cerebral, encyclopedic Borges. His love of encyclopedias infuses his work with an authoritative flair that makes readers want to check his sources. It is easy to see how passive readers find this tongue-in-cheek literary device frustrating. Borges asks his readers to be responsible, to work at the fruits of literature.

SHAPE-SHIFTING REALITY

The most interesting aspect of Borges' writing is the relationship between fiction and philosophy in his stories, which revolve around the question, *What is human reality?* When we read

Borges, we also encounter Plato, Leibniz, and Schopenhauer, three philosophers who influenced his understanding of metaphysics. This philosophical influence offers his work a unique quality and helps explain the twists and turns we encounter in other writers of a similar disposition: Modernist author Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, science fiction writer Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris* and *The Man from Mars*, and Nobel Prize-winning poet Czeslaw Milosz's *The Land of Ulro* come to mind.

The existential situations Borges creates resonate with thoughtful readers. He does not have to defend his ideas, that is not the purpose of literature. When Borges says that he has written only one book, and that all his other writing followed from the spaces between the lines—where his first book left off—we are witnesses to rare philosophical perspicuity.

In "*Borges y Yo*" (Borges and I), the writer tells us that he does not recognize himself because the public Borges—that is, the writer and public persona—is the one who receives the attention of other people. Again, more sparring, this time between "Borges, the Argentinian boy" and "Borges, the blind writer." "Borges y Yo" is a fine example of his preoccupation with human reality.

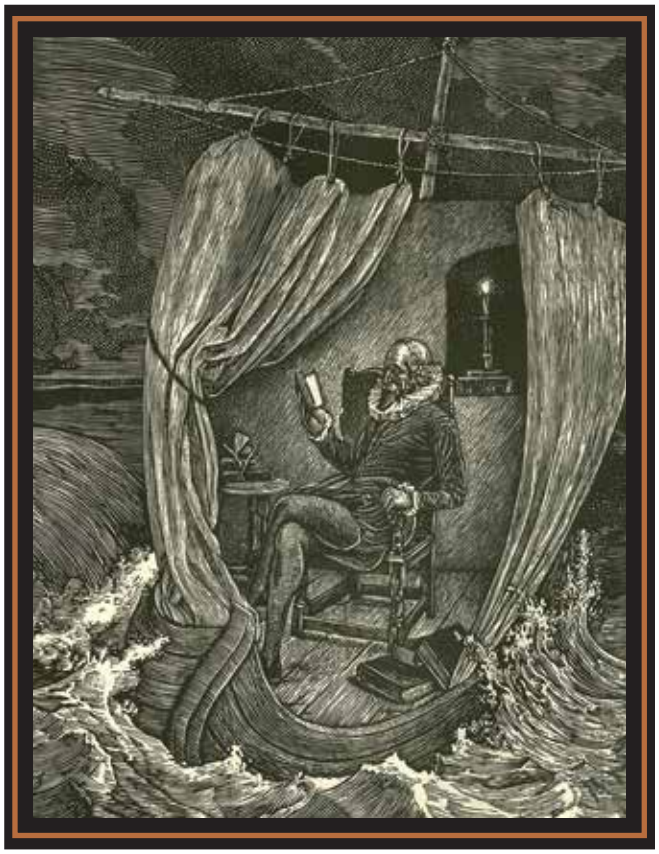
AN INTERNATIONAL IMAGINATION

Now, Borges is studied in English-speaking universities and schools, perhaps like no other Latin American writer. He achieved fame on the strength of the imagination displayed in his short stories, poems, and essays. His narrative voice and technique influenced post-WWII Latin American short fiction, but his work enjoys a truly international appeal. Like Hemingway's writing, Borges' stories are inimitable, though both writers have had many suitors who find their literary style irresistible to imitate.

Borges paved the way for admirers such as Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes; Colombian Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez; Peruvian Nobel Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa; and Adolfo Bioy Casares, his friend and collaborator on several writing projects. He never published a novel, but many novelists have admired Borges' style, including Umberto Eco, as seen in his novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980).

Borges won many literary prizes, including: the 1976 Special Edgars Award for distinguished contribution to the mystery genre; the 1979 Miguel de Cervantes Prize (the most prestigious award given for Spanish-language literature); the 1980 International Balzan Prize for Philology, Linguistics, and Criticism; and, posthumously, the 1999 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism. Though nominated several times for the Nobel Prize, Borges was rejected, many believe, for his staunch opposition to communism in Argentina.

Borges reminds us that mythology serves as a handmaiden to existential inquietude. Imagination, he suggests, is as essential to moral spiritual health as food and water are to the body. If a new reader of Borges does not find his writing enlightening upon first encounter, the curious reader returns, armed with the scars of time, equipped with the attitude, "So, Mr. Borges, this is how the game is played?"



Academic II, Michelle Martin. The narrator of Borges' story "Shakespeare's Memory" relates how he came to be in possession of and haunted by William Shakespeare's memory.

PEDRO BLAS GONZALEZ is Professor of Philosophy at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. He has published seven books, including *Human Existence as Radical Reality: Ortega y Gasset's Philosophy of Subjectivity*; *Fragments: Essays in Subjectivity, Individuality and Autonomy*; *Unamuno: A Lyrical Essay*; *Ortega's "The Revolt of the Masses" and the Triumph of the New Man*; and *Dreaming in the Cathedral*.

MICHELLE MARTIN is Professor of Printmaking at The University of Tulsa, where she teaches all printmaking media at undergraduate and graduate levels. Her work has been shown in over 220 national and international exhibitions and has won numerous awards. michellemartinprintmaker.com

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "Is Borges the 20th Century's Most Important Writer?" Jane Ciabattari, Sept. 2, 2017, BBC. bbc.com
- "A New Refutation of Time: Borges on the Most Paradoxical Dimension of Existence," Maria Popova, *Brain Pickings* website. brainpickings.org
- "Borges Beyond Words," Alastair Reid, Jan. 2, 2007, PEN America. pen.org
- Poems and lengthy Borges bio. poetryfoundation.org

Copy of the Head of St. Ursula from Vittore Carpaccio's The Dream of St. Ursula, John Ruskin, 1877. Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice [PD] Wikimedia Commons

PATIENCE
AND OTHER LESSONS OF TIME

PAMELA CHEW

After riding for an hour with the office secretary in the back of a mini pickup truck, I arrived in a remote Fijian town to wait three more hours on the roadside until she could find a trusted taxi driver to take us to her remote village. This was her daily jaunt after a typical workday in Suva. There was nothing I could do but wait.

On a flight across the Pacific from Tulsa to Brisbane, I left on Thursday, July 22nd and arrived on Saturday, the 24th. Two days of my life had disappeared. Vanished forever. Future flights would continually rob me of time.

When my youthful and brilliant professor father was unexpectedly diagnosed with colon cancer, the surgeon's pronouncement was brief and certain: "Three months to a year." Time lost. Again.

I learned to surrender my impulsive unpredictable nature to practice patience, possibly the finest quality I now possess. Essential when one's daughter is diagnosed with stage-three breast cancer.

These things have taught me lessons: Death cannot be slowed or hastened. Time heals all wounds. Acceptance is one of the keys to life. Patience is not closure—it is practice.

BATTLE

Stage 1
In preparation for surgery
Your sculpted profile points toward
The brightly lit ceiling of the operating room.
I bend at the waist to hear your steady breath,
Reminded of Jacopo della Quercia in Lucca,
His sculpture of *Ilaria del Carretto*.
She rests on a smooth stone couch
Facing muted frescoes painted in tondo.
I feel the cool serenity of your hands
Folded over your feminine abdomen.
Hers were posed identically, but in death,
Delicately chiseled in marble.

Stage 2
Flat in the darkness of chemo,
Your body is heavy.
You must shuffle to move.
You lean on me
As I will one day lean on you.
I remember the celebratory Cumbian swivel
Of your youthful hips
On your twenty-first birthday in Havana.
Now, I must help you grasp a mug.
Not at all the angled, bent fingers
Of my classical Cambodian dancer.
You call for me. I am not far.

Stage 3
With his precise tattoo
The radiologist becomes a daily marksman,
The skilled archer who
Aims a brutal blast at the tiny blue dot
Carefully injected to mark the spot of entry.
A deep bullseye.
I think of a tanner preparing hides.
Your alabaster skin which once sprang back
From an affectionate pinch or longed-for caress
Now feels nothing. In evolutionary terms,
You are closer to a tiny gecko or prehistoric gator
Proudly flaunting patterned skin
Seared by unforgiving heat.

You, my mental warrior, carry a cerebral shield.
There is no shine, no glare to ward off demons.
You fight off genetic enemies, my dear heroine,
That will never be represented by a familial crest.

PAMELA CHEW is Associate Professor at Tulsa Community College, where she has taught since 1985. She is the founding faculty member of both the Italian and ESL Programs and has taught at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, as well as in Honduras and Colombia.

Losing time – *and finding it*

KIMBERLY ROBLIN

We may measure days with hours, but we measure life with memories, the true timekeepers.

Mathematicians see numbers and formulas. Artists see colors and patterns. I see the past in the present—or, more accurately, the present *through* the past.

Glasses correct my astigmatism, but history is my true lens. Like objects in a rearview mirror, history is always closer than it appears. Most people look over their own shoulder; as a historian, I look over mankind's. I skip across decades and centuries, establishing context and connections between people, places, and events. I ask questions. I compare and analyze. *Why* and *how* have always interested me more than *what*.

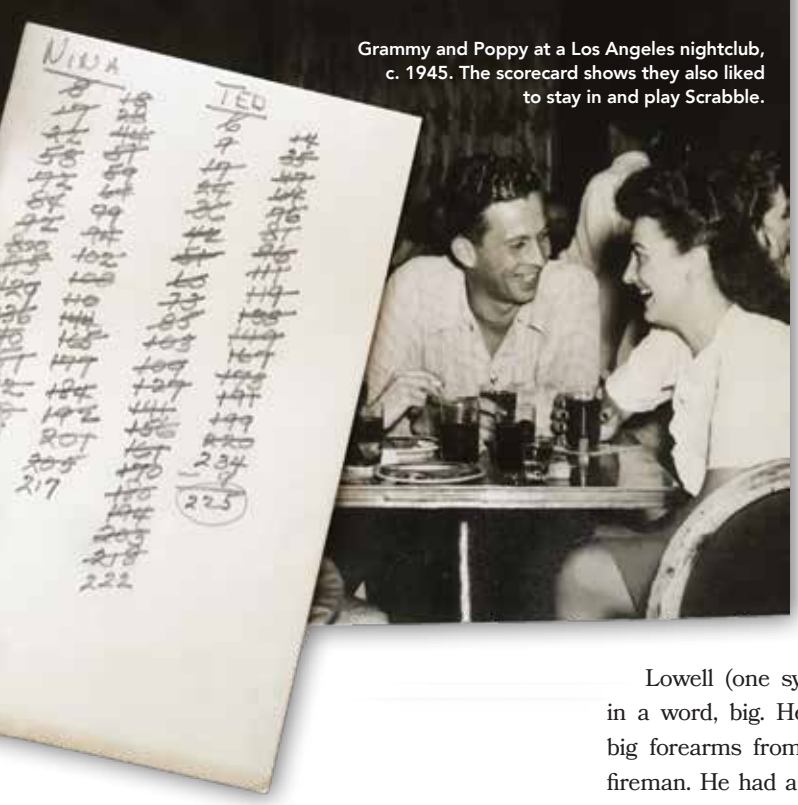
Something else traffics in time and memory, but with far different aims. It works against historians. It unravels connections. It dismantles and disorients. It is devastating and, for me, painfully personal. Dementia targets not only what I love, it targeted someone I love. My grandmother has been gone five years and would have turned 100 today (February 16, 2019. Happy birthday, Grammy.), and I'm still trying to make sense of what she endured.

Grammy knew before any of us. She called it "losing time." Seconds, minutes, here and there, misplaced like a set of car keys. Doctors call them transient ischemic attacks or mini-strokes, names that bely their permanent and catastrophic potential. Though manageable as isolated events, mini-strokes often come not as single spies, *but in battalions*. Their cumulative damage is catalytic. Grammy had seen them as both a nurse and as a daughter. Her own mother once lost time while they were talking, head dropping softly, mid-sentence, into the reflexive posture of a cradle Catholic. Before Grammy could cross the room, she had returned. Ironically, dementia needs time to progress, and her mother ultimately passed before vascular dementia took hold.

The same was not true for Grammy. Apart from losing time and a troublesome hip, she was healthier than most her age. She gardened, walked to the local grocery, knitted and purled blankets for preemies, solved crosswords and cryptoquips. But when dementia began, it was patient and methodical, sanding the hard edges between morning and night, hours, seasons, and ultimately years, as Grammy's grasp on time grew tenuous. She spoke increasingly of the past and showed little concern for the present. We all reminisce, use memories to retrace our steps, but her dementia was not a stroll down the proverbial lane; it was a forced march that sought out the people and places dear to her and swept them away like bread-crumbs until only a few remained.

Normally, memories fade over time, grow hazy with age. But dementia plays by different rules. Grammy forgot people and places relative to when they came into her life, starting with the most recent. As she followed the trail of progression, her short-term memory failed entirely and conversations became cyclical. Then she started losing people. Her neighbor down the hall who made birdhouses? Gone. Sweep-sweep. People she had met in the last five years? Sweep-sweep. The last ten? The same. The pattern became clear: she was not simply looking back in time, she was working her way back in time.

I wanted to believe I was safe, that someone who had known me my entire life could not forget me. Emotionally, I could not conceive of it; rationally, I knew it was inevitable. She would find me on that trail. It happened incrementally. Some days she knew me as soon as she saw me. Other days, uncertainty in her eyes would spark to recognition as she said my name. Sometimes my age surprised her. I never asked, but I think she still expected the younger



Grammy and Poppy at a Los Angeles nightclub, c. 1945. The scorecard shows they also liked to stay in and play Scrabble.

me, ponytailed and playing soccer. Until one day the spark never came. I hugged her goodbye after an afternoon of Animal Planet's *Too Cute* and wasn't ten feet from the door when I heard her tell the nurse, "That was a nice young girl."

Even on paper the words catch in my throat.

I don't remember stopping in the hall and dropping my gaze, but I can still see my sandals against the hospital-grade carpet. She found me. Sweep-sweep.

Grammy moved farther down and often narrated the trail, giving clues to where she was and when. She flitted between decades before leaving one entirely: Grand Lake in the 1970s. Columbus, Ohio, in the 1960s. She never mentioned dates or years. Places, people, and emotions defined her memories, not numbers or orbits around the sun.

It's the same for all of us. I can't recall the exact day of the Mumford and Sons *Gentleman of the Road* stopover in Guthrie, but I can recall the triple-digit heat and crippling humidity, the train whistling somewhere to the east during the opening song, the pulsing field of thousands, and the pure joy of music and family. Every time I hear a train I think of that night. I also think of Grammy's father, Lowell, an engineer for the Wabash Railroad.

Lowell (one syllable, not two) was, in a word, big. He had big hands and big forearms from shoveling coal as a fireman. He had a big personality, a big laugh, and a big heart. People Grammy had never met came to his funeral with stories of how he had helped them. I grew up hearing about him, Grammy's mother Mary, and her older sister Weisie. Even when I was little I could tell how close she was to them. As she moved down the trail, she spoke of them more than anyone else.

She talked about my grandfather and their walk-up apartment in post-war Los Angeles, how he surprised her with flowers (often gladiolas), how they "played the ponies" at Santa Anita, and spent days at the beach. She talked about my dad and his two older brothers. But she talked about her parents and her childhood most of all.

I learned her mother loved popcorn, bingo, and her Boston Terrier, Mitsy; that she wrapped her long hair around the bedpost at night to keep it from tangling; and that her last words were, "Open the gates, Lowell. I'm coming to join you." I learned that Grammy's father called her Bugs and encouraged her tomboyish tendencies. I learned that she despised shoes and the indoors, that she played the violin in elementary school, that her first job was at a soda fountain (finally solving the mystery of her perfectly scooped ice cream), and that she hit the books and the town while at nursing school in Kansas City.

And then one day I noticed a distinct shift. Grammy didn't tell me about her mother, she *asked* about her—in the present tense. There was no mention of year or month, I don't think she could have given me one, it was unimportant. I knew then where she was headed and where the trail led—to a farm in Missouri.

Now the sequence made absolute sense and I felt foolish for not seeing it sooner. She was in a time when her parents were alive. How could she ever forget those first relationships, the foundation for everything else? She wouldn't. The people and places she had known the longest—her parents and her sister—were not on the trail, *they were the destination*. They were with her in the beginning and would be with her in the end—her alpha and omega.

I knew Grammy was a daughter, but that was the first time I thought of her as someone's child. She was 95 years old and still remembered the way home. She was Nina (pronounced Nī-nə), child of Mary and Lowell, sister to Weisie. Dementia could never diminish that—it distilled it.

Man has always looked up at the stars, but we have also always looked back at the past. It is a primal instinct. The past pulls at us all.

But why do we look back? Why do we replay, revisit, and recollect? For the oldest of reasons: life and death. In the beginning, it was about survival. Memory is the keystone of problem solving, risk assessment, establishing cause and effect. I'm talking old school, prehistoric. Our ancestors had to remember which trails led to water, which plants were lethal, how to spark fire, and how to carve spear points. Without the ability to make memories, they would have died.

Whether a failed mammoth hunt or a grandmother's struggle with dementia, it's in our DNA to process experiences and events through memory. We build on earlier knowledge to better understand the present and determine the best path forward. Advancement—scientific, technological, and personal—is the result. But memory serves more than the practical. Although our instinct to look back was born of necessity, it expanded and evolved as lives stabilized and life expectancies increased. We had time to tap into our philosophical nature: retrospection begets introspection.

The less time that lies ahead, the more inclined we are to survey what lies behind. The biological clock ticks louder each year. We drive by old homes, flip through photo albums, reminisce, analyze decisions we've made, good and bad. We may hate daylight saving time, but sometimes we do wish we could turn back the clock. If death did not exist, would we spend so much time looking back? Perhaps, but I'm fairly certain nostalgia is a luxury our early ancestors did not enjoy.

But there's something else behind why we hold on to the past. Something at the core of why we create memories and revisit them—a common denominator among the variations. We make memories and look back to establish connections: between cause and effect, the past and the present, the living and dead, our older and younger selves, to simpler times, happier times, different times. Sometimes the memories remain personal and private; at other times, we share memories through stories. Long before stories could go viral, they went social. We've told them for millennia. We painted bulls in

FROM TOP LEFT: Grammy on a horse, c. 1928. Grammy and son (Roblin's father), c. 1951. Grammy with her mother, Mary (center front), her father, Lowell (in doorway), and other friends and family, c. 1942, Moberly, MO. Grammy with her mother and grandparents, George and Rozalia, c. 1926, East Bottoms, Kansas City, MO. Grammy on a California beach, c. 1948. Grammy and a friend, c. 1933, Moberly, MO

FROM TOP LEFT: Grammy with Weise and mother, c. 1919, East Bottoms, Kansas City, MO. Grammy and son (Roblin's father), c. 1952. Grammy, c. 1944, Kansas City, MO. Grammy with granddaughter Kimberly Roblin, c. 2012, Broken Arrow, OK.

Lascaux caves. We sang of Odysseus and Beowulf in epics and sagas. We celebrated origins and mythologies in oral histories. We embroidered the Norman Conquest on tapestry. We built monuments, museums, libraries. Wrote plays and made documentaries. We even sent stories into space aboard *Voyager*—golden records of our music, imagery, and language.

We are a species of storytellers. Stories help us find meaning in our time, and transmit customs, culture, knowledge, and morals. As we tell them or hear them, we laugh together, cry together, and learn together. Our connections grow stronger. I never hugged my great-grandfather, never attended Mass with my great-grandmother or scratched Mitsy's ears, but I feel like I have. Grammy's stories connected me to them. She helped me travel time and space, to see the past through the present. No DeLorean. No TARDIS. Just memory.

Memories record the past and ensure something of us will reach the future, as Grammy still lives in my mind today. I've told a small part of her story, just as she shared part of hers with me. I think about her all the time. Her warm hands holding mine. Her laugh. Her voice. I think about her as a young girl, her dark hair tangled, her bare feet dirty from climbing trees and walking creek beds.

Most of all, I remember the short drive between my parents' house and Grammy's apartment, when I would drop her off on the way home from dinner. She knew she was losing time, but was still in the early stages. I'd pull up in front of her building and put the car in park. She would ask me how work was going. Did I like my new place? Was I dating anyone? Did I need anything? And, most importantly, was I okay? Sometimes we sat there for only a few minutes. Sometimes it was closer to twenty. But each time ended the same. We'd meet across the console in a hug, she'd hoist herself out of the Tercel, and, right before shutting the door, she would look at me, smile, and say, "Remember. Grammy loves you."

KIMBERLY ROBLIN is a writer, curator, and fourth-generation Oklahoman. She received her BA and MA from the University of Oklahoma and has worked in major museums since 2005. Her work has been featured in *The Journal of Gilcrease Museum, True West, STATE, Oklahoma Humanities, History Scotland,* and several books, including *Thomas Gilcrease*, the 2009 Oklahoma Book of the Year for non-fiction.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "Telling My Story Before I Forget." English professor and South African immigrant Gerda Saunders chronicles the progression of her dementia through a blog, short films by VideoWest and Slate.com, and an excerpt from *Memory's Last Breath: Field Notes from My Dementia*. gerdasaunders.com
- "A Place Beyond Words: The Literature of Alzheimer's," Stefan Merrill Block, *The New Yorker*, Aug. 20, 2014. Author surveys fiction in an attempt to learn what Alzheimer's disease feels like. newyorker.com
- "What is Dementia," Alzheimer's Association. Information about symptoms, causes, and treatment of dementia-related diseases. alz.org

Our masthead makes a bold statement: *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine is an award-winning collection of culture, issues, and ideas—a rich mix of humanities scholarship, insightful narratives, informed opinions, and beautiful images, for a read that is smart, balanced, educational, and entertaining. How can we make such claims? Our readers (and the journalism awards we garner) tell us so! Following is a snapshot of what readers are saying about our grand endeavor to bring you trusted, thoughtful, illuminating humanities content. Want to add your voice? Our next annual survey opens October 1.

Readers' *Survey Says . . .*

99% Give top marks on topics and writing
98% Value the forum for differing viewpoints
94% Are better informed for civic life
92% Are more open-minded on diversity
86% Share and discuss content with others

- "Entertaining, provocative, and educational. Stunning photography and artist renderings. Creates a rich, well-developed story to pull you in."
- "Balanced mix of scholarly and layperson points of view and solid research. I enjoy re-reading and sharing my copies. Beautiful design."
- "The sheer scope of material is reminiscent of *Smithsonian Magazine* [and] many contributors have specific ties to Oklahoma."
- "The theme format provides for a variety of views and humanities-related analysis of current and ongoing issues."
- "Presentation of many ideas. Measured and thoughtful tone. The feeling of hope your magazine restores."
- "I value *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine—thoughtful, interesting writing on timely topics."
- "Always interesting and so very thought-provoking. A treasure. I save every issue."
- "Many issues facing the citizenry presented and examined in a scholarly manner."
- "Surprising variety of subjects, each thoroughly covered to open new insights."
- "Diversity of topics. Visually stunning."

Add Your Voice!

Take our readers' survey October 1-31, 2019
okhumanities.org

Smithsonian Institution

WATER | WAYS

DIVE INTO *WATER/WAYS*, a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street that reflects on the relationship between people and water. It explores the centrality of water in our lives, including its effect on the environment and climate, its practical role in agriculture and economic planning, and its impact on culture and spirituality.

EXHIBIT TOUR

ADA
Ada Public Library
124 S. Rennie
Through 10/12/2019

FORT TOWSON
Fort Towson Historic Site
US-70
14 miles west of Hugo
12/17/2019 – 2/8/2020

LOCUST GROVE
Locust Grove VFW
Post 3573
116 S. Broadway
10/21/2019 – 12/8/2019

ALTUS
Museum of the Western Prairie
1100 Memorial Drive
2/18/2020 – 4/11/2020

EXPLORE ONLINE: museumonmainstreet.org

Water/Ways has been made possible in Oklahoma by Oklahoma Humanities. *Water/Ways* is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress. Oklahoma programming is supported by Beaver Express Service and The Chickasaw Nation.

Smithsonian Institution

OKLAHOMA **HUMANITIES**

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Scott LaMascus, Chair

The Oklahoma Humanities Board extends a warm welcome to our new Executive Director, Caroline Lowery. Caroline was selected through a national search among many highly-qualified applicants. She brings to us experience as a past OH Program Officer, as well as an established reputation as a passionate advocate of the humanities, a knowledgeable and involved leader among state councils and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and an experienced fundraiser for nonprofits in Central Oklahoma.

Caroline's vision for us is a compelling and inspiring one: "To change lives through robust public programming; to create capacity-building opportunities for rural organizations through OH grants; to serve as the statewide convener for the humanities idea-making cohort; and to preserve our heritage while inspiring our future." She brings to this vision respect and enthusiasm for humanities scholarship and delight in the people and ideas of our state.

Caroline has a B.A. in Humanities from the University of Central Oklahoma and an M.A. in Arts Administration and Leadership from The University of Oklahoma. As a successful consultant fundraiser she has raised more than 2.5 million dollars through large-scale national grant awards, private donors, and events. She serves on the Board of Directors for The Oklahoma Women's Coalition and the Advocacy Board of the UCO College of Liberal Arts.

In this issue, you also will find our annual report and a long list of donors, for whom we are truly grateful. *Thank you!* This report reflects the work of our retiring Executive Director, Ann Thompson, who has encouraged partnerships among state and national humanities communities, carefully managed our resources, cultivated excellence in the flourishing humanities programming funded by OH grants, and expanded the signature programs you've come to expect from this organization. We thank Ann for thirteen years of exceptional leadership on behalf of our state's humanities council. We will miss her dedication and wish her well in all things.

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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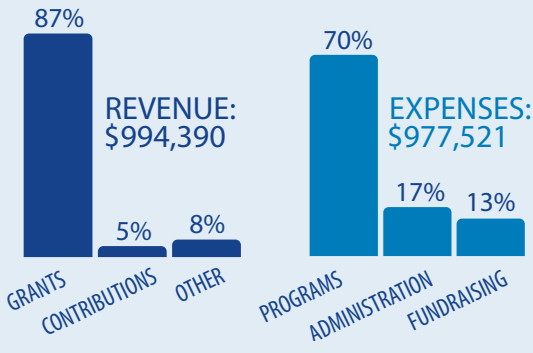
2018 ANNUAL REPORT

An annual funding allocation from the National Endowment for the Humanities, combined with the generous, continued support of individual donors, foundations, and corporations, provided $994,390 to fund Oklahoma Humanities programs and activities across our great state. Thank you to all of our generous donors and supporters!



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ABOUT OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES

Oklahoma Humanities (OH) strengthens communities by helping Oklahomans learn about the human experience, understand new perspectives, and participate knowledgeably in civic life. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, OH provides and supports programming for the general public that uses humanities disciplines (such as history, literature, ethics, and philosophy) to deeply explore what it means to be human.

OH accepts grant applications from nonprofits across the state for programs that may take the form of museum exhibits, film festivals, teacher institutes, oral history projects, or other formats that best serve local communities. OH also administers programs that provide free access to cultural humanities content, including: *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine; *Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma*, a reading and discussion series; the *BrainBox* podcast; and *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution to provide traveling exhibits in small rural communities.

Visit our website to find an event near you, read magazine archives, listen to the *BrainBox* podcast, or explore OH programs and grant opportunities. We look forward to hearing from you. (405) 235-0280 | okhumanities.org | ohc@okhumanities.org

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DEADLINES | okhumanities.org/grants
Major and Challenge Grant applications are considered twice per year
- SPRING: Mandatory Draft, Mar. 1 | Final, April 1
- FALL: Mandatory Draft, Aug. 1 | Final, Sept. 1
- Opportunity Grant applications accepted year-round
- Guidelines posted on our website

NEXT UP: HOME | Spring/Summer 2020

The word "home" is layered with meaning and infiltrates multiple aspects of our lives. Is it a place? Community? Security? Inclusion in a group? The search for home—and the protection of it—is at the heart of identity, coming-of-age, the exploration of new frontiers, as well as immigration, nationalism, and war. We'll explore the varied ways "home" defines our place in the world.