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CML News

This issue marks the first time new editor [David Graham Page](#) took part in creating the table of contents. It was a full two-day affair, resulting in an issue that contains 39 distinct pieces of literary delight (if we do say so ourselves). You may ask, "How do CML's editors create a table of contents? How do they choose what to put in an issue?"

We thought you'd never ask!

Between issues, CML's editors are constantly reading—during work at their desks, of course, but not just then. We read on the train, between appointments, at dinner, during commercials, after dinner, out loud, before bed, in bed, and even in the car (hurray, audiobooks!).

The result of all that reading is a stack of pieces that might make it into the final table of contents. A crucial part of the process of deciding what makes it is a reading by one of our volunteer readers (in the next issue, you'll hear about them). After listening to the volunteers' recordings, we decide whether to keep pieces for further consideration. The pieces we keep are stacked in a pile until it's time for the big sit-down.

Creating a good table of contents is like putting together a puzzle—so many things need to be kept in mind. We consider: which piece goes first; author POV (male or female?); length of piece; tone; how one piece segues to the next; overall flow; which professional studio voice goes with which piece; and our fellow editors' opinions! (We keep the fisticuffs to a minimum.) All of this work goes into making CML unique and exciting. It's a process that is fresh every time and one that never ceases to energize and amaze us. And now you have it: 12 hours of the human experience, for your enjoyment.

Highlights

Did we plan on starting and ending this issue with obituaries? We never plan a thing. It just so happens that two of the world's most memorable men died since the last issue, and we felt you needed to know if you didn't already. In ways both intimate and heartfelt, **Richard Stengel's** piece about Nelson Mandela ("The Long Walk: Nelson Mandela, 1918-2013") captures his essence. Stengel spent countless hours with Mandela working on the great man's autobiography.

And to end the issue, we have a real treat. **Pete Seeger**, venerable folk singer and spirited truth-teller, died in late January at age 94. The issue ends with him singing "To My Old Brown Earth," a song from the documentary film [Pete Seeger: The Power of Song](#). We thank the Weinstein Company for letting us use it, and we thank Pete for devoting his life to songs and singalongs and for carrying this great human tradition forward. Long may it last.

Top Picks

Associate Editor [Annie Schlegel-Kyrkostas](#) is going to admit that for almost two years she has been advocating (in the very same table-of-contents meetings mentioned above) our inclusion of the essay "Ug's Zoo" by **Paul Zimmer**. It is, at long last, in the latest issue, and we invite your comments. Thank you, David Graham Page, for the extra "yes" vote! We have also included a story, "The Hare's Mask" by **Mark Slouka**, that we've likewise been holding on to for a while. This quiet and powerful story bears close listening.

And Special Thanks To ...

Ted B. of San Francisco, CA. He says:

"I have been listening to Choice Magazine Listening for many years—it's a delightful service. Like National Geographic, it never goes out of style. CML is my primary source."

And this thoughtful message from the family of recently deceased and longtime listener **Robert H.** of South Hamilton, MA: "I swear, when my children were small

and sitting in their playpens, they listened to the selections from CML. It has produced a lifelong love of learning. And for my blind husband, CML made the difference between just living or existing and being wholly alive. Thank you for all you do."

Enjoy!