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CML News

For a while now, the editors at CML have dreamed of having a proper in-house recording booth where our volunteer narrators—those intrepid friends who return, week after week, to **LuEsther T. Mertz's** former office with its classic wooden table desk, swivel bucket chair, digital recorder, and basket of articles—could provide us with consistent, professional-grade readings. We also dared to imagine recording an audio newsletter, or favorite poems, and maybe, *maybe* joining the exploding field of podcasting.

Recently, gradually, that dream began to take the shape of wood framing, sound-proof panels, acoustic foam tiles, and a very proper "On Air" LED light for the door. Over several months, in between regular work duties, CML Publisher **Mike Tedeschi** and CML friend, **Robert Ferrando**, completed construction just in time to include the inaugural recording session from The LuEsther T. Mertz Reading Room in this issue. Our very own Associate Editor, **Alfredo Franco** (making his own recording debut!) shares a joyous reading of **Jorie Graham's** poem "Whereas I had not yet in this life seen." Hooray for dreams held fast, and many thanks to Mike, Robert, and Alfredo for their fine work. We trust this is the beginning of something very good.

Highlights

This past summer marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 spaceflight and the first landing on the Moon. CML celebrates what John F. Kennedy called “the greatest adventure on which mankind has ever embarked” with a number of pieces that explore the behind-the-scenes story of the Apollo space program as well as the turbulent era in which it operated.

Charles Fishman's “Inside America’s Greatest Adventure” is chock-full of little-known details about the mission (did you know that Moon dust has a unique

odor, or that the Apollo 11 space suits were hand-sewn by employees of the Playtex Corporation?) while **John Schwartz's** "The Story Behind the Story" shows us the extraordinary efforts of New York Times reporter John Wilford as he covered the event of a lifetime, dictating his thrilling dispatches from Cape Canaveral and Houston by telephone in an era before email.

The Apollo program was inaugurated and carried out during the long years of the civil rights movement: while the Moon landing was held up as an example of America at its best, the country was embroiled in the struggle for equal opportunity and justice under the law. In **Emily Ludolph's** profile, "Lost from Space," the space race and racial injustice collide in the heartbreaking tale of Ed Dwight, America's first fully-trained and qualified African-American astronaut, denied his chance to journey to the stars.

Our fiction offering in this issue includes "Motherless Child," a short story by **Elizabeth Strout**, in which Olive Kitteridge, on the verge of re-marrying, endures a tense visit by her alienated son, his grieving wife, and a host of grandkids. **Colin Barrett's** story, "The Alps," takes us inside a village pub in Ireland for a family night that proves absurd, comedic, and ultimately touching. We also bring you outstanding stories by **Chuck Klosterman** and **Anthony Doerr**. Poetry of course is always strong at CML: in this issue we feature new poems by **Jorie Graham**, **Margaret Gibson**, **Kevin Honold**, and **Rosanna Warren**.

TOP PICKS

To honor the passing of the great Nobel Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison (1931-2019), we offer **Jesmyn Ward's** moving account of her life-changing encounters with Morrison's writings, which inspired her to become a writer herself. We also recommend **Ta-Nehisi Coates's** extraordinary story, "Conduction," in which a fugitive slave with an uncanny power becomes part of a highly effective underground organization in Philadelphia.

"Can't You Tell the Difference?" by **Dounia Choukri** recounts a girl's crossing from West Germany into the communist German Democratic Republic during the Cold War, a journey that in the girl's mind becomes a veritable galactic voyage.

Karen Russell's haunting and beautiful tale, "The Gondoliers," takes us to the diluvian post-climate change world of "New Florida," where a young woman named Blister and her sisters navigate the murky lagoons with a bat-like ability to echolocate.

And Special Thanks To...

Elaine H., from Nephi, UT, whose husband told us, "We really enjoy CML. It's something we *always* look forward to."

Happy Fall from Annie, Mike, Jay, Alfredo and Raquel!

Did you Know? On October 1, 2019, the NLS is changing its name to *The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled*. They also have an updated, accessible, and information-packed website. Check it out [here](#).