

## CML News

We are thrilled to announce that this Winter 2022 issue marks the beginning of Choice Magazine Listening's 60th year of production. Over the last two years, in preparation for that milestone, through generous grants from The New York Community Trust, and with the superb skills of our studio partners at Talking Book Publishers in Denver, Colorado, our publisher, Mike Tedeschi, has been working tirelessly with Robert Ferrando, to take 60 years of back issues—literally hundreds and hundreds of hours of recordings on four distinct media formats—and make them digitally available to our subscribers.

Throughout this year and subsequent years, we will gradually release the digitally archived material to our website for downloading.

We invite you to come, take a journey back and hear what was interesting, compelling, surprising, funny, and alive in the decades when CML began. You might be surprised by how much, or how little, things have changed.

Welcome to the CML Digital Archives.

## Highlights

In our last newsletter, we lamented, among other things, the emergence of the Delta variant. Now, at year's end, we face the Omicron variant, as the pandemic stretches on. Meanwhile, we urge you to continue your precautions—and keep listening to our latest CML offerings! The times may be uncertain, but CML pledges to continue at your side with the finest in recorded literature, essays, articles, and, yes, most needful of all, humor.

Living in an age of crisis, we might all be tempted to dream of salvation by some cosmic force greater than ourselves, perhaps a superior species of aliens with solutions to all of our seemingly intractable problems. Recent sightings by Navy pilots and radar operators in the Pacific seemed the most credible to date and raised the hopes of ufologists around the world. Not so fast, **James B. Meigs** reminds us in “The UFO Report and What It Didn't Find.” These data,” he writes, “reveal that, rather than being a fast-moving, low-flying aircraft, the white object is actually drifting slowly at a fairly high altitude—yes, it's probably another balloon.” What a wet blanket! We'll just have to keep waiting...

In the short story “Yente” by **Olga Tokarczuk**, we experience the memories that pass through the mind of an old woman on her death-bed in a house where a

wedding is being celebrated. **Tessa Hadley's** "Coda" explores the repressed feelings of a middle-aged daughter caring for her elderly mother during the Covid lockdown. In "The Tine of the Hay Rake" by **Víctor Català** (the pseudonym of legendary Catalan writer **Caterina Albert**) a young woman's journey through the forest after visiting her aunt turns into a brutal nightmare—and a manifestation of her strength. Another master of short fiction, **Mark Jacobs**, brings us "Montefalco," about a struggling 60-year-old Virginia roofer (he's as old as CML!) who learns of his aristocratic European heritage—that is, if his mother is telling him the truth. As for poetry: **Yanyi** touches us with a short but intense lyric, "Detail," while **Rick Hilles** discovers the miraculous in the everyday during lockdown in "All the Love in the World." And the great **Jorie Graham** continues to express the inexpressible in her long, astonishing, poem "Translation Rain."

We offer you several strong memoirs in this issue: **Kathy Flann** explores the loss of her step-brother and other sorrows in "Leave It," while **Sierra Crane Murdoch**, in "Good Mother," seeks a fuller understanding of motherhood through her friendship with a Native American woman who, despite drug addiction, physical abuse, and the carceral and foster-home systems, emerges as a strong, loving, mother. In his short but searing "On Childhood," **Richard Ford** remembers the orphan children who used to attend his middle school, and how he both differentiated himself from them but also experienced through them his first glimpses of life's hardships, alienations, and injustices. In "The Ceremony," **David Treuer** finds healing in the Ojibwe Big Drum ritual. "In the summer of 2020," Treuer writes, "I was — and there's no fancy way to put this — falling apart." But Big Drum, he discovers, can "wash away our sadness." And Beatle **Paul McCartney** recalls how he composed one of his most famous songs in "Writing 'Eleanor Rigby.'"

## TOP PICKS

In our continuing exploration—and celebration!—of the life and work of nature writer **Barry Lopez**, we offer his widow **Debra Gwartney's** "Fire and Ice," a memoir of their last days together in the wake of a ravaging Oregon wildfire and the final devastating stages of Lopez's terminal cancer. A gifted writer herself, Gwartney presents a moving but unflinching portrait of marriage, love, and loss.

Renowned Italian botanist **Stefano Mancuso**'s beautifully written "Life Always Wins. Follow Me," recounts a day spent in Hiroshima with a retired Japanese diplomat. The ex-diplomat, who speaks fluent Italian, not only introduces Mancuso to the *hibakujumoku* (trees that survived the atomic bomb) but reveals his own moving story of survival.

In her thought-provoking essay "Babel," **Meghan O'Gieblyn** considers advances in Artificial Intelligence that bring computers closer to the ability to imitate human language, even to the point of generating poems and other literary products. O'Gieblyn poses the uncomfortable question: will human culture itself be replaced by AI?

And finally, we recommend the short but amazing obituary of Ed Lucas who, though blind from a childhood baseball accident, enjoyed a successful career as a writer about baseball for several New Jersey newspapers as well as radio broadcaster. Lucas interviewed some of the legendary players, including Mickey Mantle and Barry Bonds.

### **The D-B Beat**

Over the years, we at CML have considered many pieces by and about indigenous Americans. This year in particular, with its revelations of mass graves at residential schools in Canada, we are compelled to confront their history of dispossession and resilience throughout the Americas. In this issue, we are humbled to share a trio of outstanding pieces centering their voices and lives. David Treuer, the author of "The Ceremony," provides a magisterial history of the aftermath of the United States' Indian Wars, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, available via BARD as **DB 93988**. Wyatt Williams' "Eating the Whale" visits Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow, Alaska) to partake in Inupiat culinary practices. He owes a debt to the works of an earlier author, Farley Mowat, whose *High Latitudes* can be found by looking up **DB 58353**. In "Good Mother," Sierra Crane Murdoch examines the continuing aftershocks of the residential school system in the United States. The subject for her piece, Lissa Yellow Bird, is also at the center of her 2020 work of true crime, *Yellow Bird: Oil, Murder, and a Woman's Search for Justice in Indian Country*: ask for **DB 98873**.

**And Special Thanks to...**

**James K.** from Miami, FL who said, "I'm an original subscriber since 1962. You do great stuff! Your magazine is amazing!"

Happy Winter! And Happy New Year from Annie, Mike, Jay, Raquel, and Alfredo.