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CML News

At the beginning of this year, to commemorate our 60th year of service, we announced the launch of the CML Archives project. Since then, we have continued to release a year's worth of archival issues alongside each new quarterly issue we publish. For this issue, we welcome you back to 1964!

A quick look at the [tables of contents](#) for that year offers a hint of the selections and topics covered: John F. Kennedy's inaugural address (he had been assassinated in November 1963), Russian poetry and politics, the national debt, Yiddish theater, falcons and Gooney Birds, air pollution, Civil Rights, Vatican II, and the economy of post-war Japan, to name a few. Add select poetry by John Updike, Robert Frost, and others, along with a lively bunch of short stories—even one about prisoners building an “ice car” at Dannemora—and you have a bountiful year of free listening.

Today, in tandem with the publication of the summer 2022 issue, CML will release all five issues from 1964. We invite and encourage you to reexamine this rich past with us by visiting the download page at choicemagazinelisting.org. The CML Archives await!

Highlights

Summer of 2022 has arrived and is somewhat of a mixed bag, but we are grateful to be alive. War rages in Ukraine, and inflation is making itself felt at the gas pump and grocery store. Fortunately, literature and poetry still flourish, and grant us courage and perspective in our darkest hours. At CML, we continue to celebrate life and the written word, as we have for the last sixty years, bringing you the finest writing in all genres.

This issue is particularly rich in poetry, with work by **Rick Barot**, **Fiona Benson**, **Xiao Yue Shan**, **Stephen Kuusisto**, **William Fargason**, and the illustrious Russian poet, **Osip Mandelstam**, who died a prisoner of the Stalinist Gulag in 1938. We offer Mandelstam's poem, “Verses on the Unknown Soldier,” which poses a question that we ask even now, in a new time of war: “Is it for this that a

skull must evolve/Temple to temple, to the forehead's top/So that armies can do nothing but course/Into the cherished orbits of its eyes?"

In addition to our selection of powerful poems, our issue includes two pieces that explore the role of language and experience in poetry. In "Arabic Was No Longer My Arabic," Palestinian American poet **Ahmad Almallah** recounts his anguished transition from writing poetry in his native and beloved Arabic to writing in English: "I've decided to quit what's most dear to me[...] to focus on writing as a day-to-day practice in the language of exile." Veteran author **Phil Klay**, in a thought-provoking essay, "False Witness," deconstructs the notion of "poetry of witness," particularly in the work of World War I English poet Wilfred Owen. "Who...is Wilfred Owen speaking *for*?" he asks—that is, what is the aim of poetry, or indeed of literature more broadly, when facing down the grim realities of war?

The Muses of Music and Dance visit us in two beautiful selections. In "Audience," former New York City Ballet dancer **Toni Bentley** remembers her last meeting with her mentor, the legendary choreographer George Balanchine, as he lay on his deathbed in a New York hospital, and ponders his enormous influence on her life. **Leslie Pintchik's** contribution from "A Symposium on Jazz, Blues, and Soul" conjures the magical moments before a jazz musician begins to play, living wholly subsumed by the group's flow, liberated from the petty distractions of daily life.

While we bring you "only" three short stories in this issue, they are three heavy-hitters. In "Only Be Good Things," **Jackson Saul** follows a young man and his decision, not without cost and pain, to self-exile from Orthodoxy and forge a new way of life. "Cromer," by **Paul Yoon**, movingly depicts a childless couple, both first-generation Britons, as they enter middle age and ponder their stable, diligent, but lonely lives. In **Haruki Murakami's** "Drive My Car," a widowed actor shares his story of irredeemable loss with his new female chauffeur, who offers him insights into his late wife's infidelities, which continue to torment and mystify him. This story is the basis for Ryusuke Hamaguchi's film, *Drive My Car*, which won the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film earlier this year.

Several pieces of personal history in this issue bring us contemporary perspectives on youth, young adulthood, and aging. In "Pioneer Days," **Erika Veurink** vividly recalls her first summer job as a corn pollinator for a midwestern agricultural company, learning lessons that shake her adolescent complacency. "On the backs of farmers, ministers, town drunks," she writes, "we grew the thing

that ruined us.” **Hadara Bar-Nadav**’s brief but harrowing “Paragraph or Paraphernalia: A Story of Breath” is an account of her brother’s bout with long Covid-19, a reminder of the pain inflicted by the continuing pandemic. Canadian writer **Miriam Toews**’ “The Way She Closed the Door” squarely confronts midlife breakdown and self-doubt as she cares for her burgeoning family in close quarters. Spending time with her own inimitable mother, she comes to fear her lifelong passion for writing has taken her away from life itself: “I had typed away the day with the fingers in my mind, as though that were the only way of proving to myself that I was alive, that what I was experiencing was real.”

TOP PICKS

Margaret Danner was the first African American to work as an assistant editor of the distinguished journal *Poetry*. Her 1960 poem “The Convert” captures the life-changing, revelatory moment when she perceives the true beauty of African Art. “I became a hurricane/of elation, a convert undaunted...” The poem is notable for its use of ekphrasis, the detailed and vivid description of a work of art.

In “Women Sweeping” by **Ishion Hutchinson**, we again find a compelling use of ekphrasis, this time of a painting by Édouard Vuillard, *Woman Sweeping*, one of countless portraits the French artist made of his mother. The air of dignity in the painting of the woman at work triggers Hutchinson’s memories of his grandmother, a self-made Jamaican woman who “did not succumb to resignation.” Hutchinson remembers her house, her broom, her sense of order and cleanliness, and her belief that “work is worship.”

Basque writer **Amaia Gabantxo**’s “Of Bats and People” is a memoir of her childhood encounters with the free-roaming patients of an experimental psychiatric hospital that was opened in her village after the Spanish Civil War. Gabantxo fondly remembers her encounters with the patients, their remarkable lives, and their immersion in the community at large. She also explores the work of Basque poet Alaine Agirre, herself a former patient at the hospital.

“Manolete and Me” by **Jon Mooallem** is the uncanny story of the author’s discovery of his doppelganger, the legendary Spanish bullfighter, Manolete. Manolete’s face, “as dreary as a third-class funeral on a rainy day,” and Mooallem’s, “Like a smirking Camembert melting in the sun,” both mask an abiding preoccupation with appearances, poise, and predestination. Mooallem

dives into the life story of the bullfighter, who resisted many of the vain trappings of fame, and comes to a greater sense of self-acceptance, “to make peace with who we really are.”

The D-B Beat

At CML, we’re always on the hunt for the best writing of every stripe, but often, our best days as editors are the days we’re able to discover and discuss outstanding short fiction. If you’re looking for a short story supplement this summer, several of the authors in this issue have published collections of their recent work, which are available for download from BARD:

- Haruki Murakami’s *Men Without Women* (**DB 88179**), published 2017; and from last year, *The First Person Singular* (**DB 102982**), among many, many others by the author, some available in both English and Spanish translations.
- Phil Klay’s *Redeployment* (**DB 78988**), published in 2014.
- Colm Tóibín’s 2007 *Mothers and Sons* (**DB 66814**), and from 2011, *The Empty Family* (**DBC 15640**).

And Special Thanks to... Robert S., from Pennsylvania, for reaching out with your question about downloading CML to your Victor Stream Reader. We appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the different technologies people use to access CML. It was great talking, and we appreciate the music recommendations. Thanks for listening!