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CML News

With the release of this Fall 2022 issue, we also make available all six archival issues from 1965. In reviewing the tables of contents of that year (also available to view on our website) the January 1965 issue, in particular, sparked warm memories. In it is a piece called "Pike Fishing by Bell" by former CML Board member, **Robert Russell**. When Robert was six years old, he was blinded in an accident which led him to the New York Institute for the Blind where he graduated at 16. He furthered his education at Hamilton College, Yale, and Oxford University, and eventually chaired the English department at Franklin & Marshall College for many years. We remember Robert quite fondly for his funny stories, warmth, and irrepressible zest for life. It was a powerful inspiration during the years he served on CML's board. We invite you to listen, enjoy, and remember.

Highlights

There's a lot to be said for fall, Keats's season of "mellow fruitfulness": the summer heat cools down, the air feels fresher, and the sidewalks are delightfully crunchy with fallen leaves. It's sweater-weather-perfect for curling up and listening to CML's latest offerings of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction.

News flash: a major new monument will be installed in Washington, DC in 2024—the National World War I Memorial, commissioned from sculptor Sabin Howard. In "Flesh, Blood, and Bronze" by **Jeff MacGregor**, we are taken inside Howard's studio to experience the painstaking, detailed work by Howard, his assistants, and models as they recreate in clay the journey of an American family man through the horrors of trench warfare. Though aided by modern technology, Howard's work recalls and is informed by the practices of the great Renaissance Masters.

Speaking of war, even the most bitter enemies of the United States agree that nuclear conflict would be devastating and pointless. But perhaps the greatest danger lies not in hostile warheads but in the aging, poorly maintained nuclear reactors close to our own American towns and suburbs. In "The Bomb Next Door," **Thomas A. Bass** exposes the chronic neglect of our old or shuttered reactors, as

well as the irresponsible cost-cutting measures of a company hired by the government to dispose of nuclear waste.

Thank goodness we have poetry to maintain our faith in humanity! In this issue we feature deeply moving poems by **Terrence Hayes**, **Kimberly Kruge**, and Ukrainian poet **Yuliya Musakovska**, as well as powerful short stories by **Claire-Louise Bennett**, **William Weitzel**, and **Mahak Jain**.

Fiction and poetry may fill us with hope—but so do cowboys! At CML, we love cowboys (you might remember our piece on Badger Clark, the Cowboy Poet, in Issue #333). In **Christian Wallace's** "The Bronc-Busting, Cow-Punching, Death-Defying Legend of Boots O'Neal," we meet a true wrangler, still at his back-breaking vocation at the age of 89, with no thought of retiring. "When they give him the weekend off," O'Neal's daughter says, "he's kind of mad about it."

Another living legend who loves her craft and refuses to retire is 82-year-old gospel singer Mavis Staples, the sole surviving member of the beloved Staple Singers. In "Keeping Faith" by **David Remnick**, Staples recalls her family, the perilous struggles of the Civil Rights era, and the many vocalists and musicians with whom she has interacted throughout her long career, including Bob Dylan, who was not only influenced by the Staple Singers but was smitten with Mavis and wanted to marry her. "He was a cute little boy," Staples recalls fondly, "little blue eyes, curly hair." Dylan himself is the focus of "Mr. Dylan's Dream House" by **Douglas Brinkley**, a report on the new Bob Dylan Center in Tulsa, which opened in May of this year and which contains a vast archive of Dylan's recordings, writings, and even paintings, which are now prized as highly as Rauschenbergs or Basquiats.

And if you want to get a taste of how the ultra-rich and the oligarchs live, consider "The Haves and the Have-Yachts" by **Evan Osnos**, a jaw-dropping look at the world of super yachts, behemoths that rival naval cruisers in size and are equipped with every luxury imaginable. As one yachtsman put it: "If the rest of the world learns what it's like to live on a yacht like this, they're gonna bring back the guillotine."

At CML we have long followed the work of the late nature writer and explorer **Barry Lopez**, as well as of his widow, **Debra Gwartney**, a gifted author in her own right. In "Siri Tells a Joke," Gwartney describes her continuing, painful, struggle to live in the wake of her husband's death and the wildfire that

devastated their Oregon home, destroying many of Lopez's manuscripts. We also include a posthumous essay by Lopez himself, "The Boatman and the Bear," in which he considers the mysterious but seemingly lost power of a human sixth sense, "some part of the mind that we once depended on[...] but which we now ignore and treat as an impediment."

There's so much more we love in this issue, not least **Kent Russell's** "Sorcerer's Apprentice," with its vivid, unforgettable portrait of John R. King IV, an eloquent contemporary wizard who might, or might not, be able to conjure evil spirits.

TOP PICKS

Jack Kerouac published his novel, *On the Road*, in 1957. Written on a continuous roll of teletype paper, it became not only a bestseller but the seminal work of the Beat Generation, with its restless car trips back and forth across America, its rejection of postwar American values, and its celebration of spontaneity. Yet as we learn in "Kerouac's Archive Fever at One Hundred" by **Michael Millner**, Kerouac in actual life was far more conservative and obsessed with the past, meticulously keeping a vast archive of his correspondence and other autobiographical material. "Kerouac's creativity," writes Millner, "has often been equated with improvisation and spontaneity, but[...] I came to think of him more as a memory artist or an archive artist." As a bonus, we offer you an audio clip of Kerouac himself reading from *On the Road*.

In keeping with the theme of memory, "Guardians of Memory" by **Fred Bahnson** is a thrilling account of the author's participation in a mission to Mali to preserve centuries-old theological manuscripts, but it is also an emotional tale of his own struggles with childhood memories of being left at a Nigerian boarding school while his parents did missionary work elsewhere in the country. On this dangerous journey to the Malian city of Gao, Bahnson accompanies a remarkable Benedictine monk, Father Columba, whose courage and dynamism contrast with Bahnson's own fears, hesitations, and doubts.

How do you preserve the memory of a lost homeland for fifty years? Ask the people of Chagos, a group of islands in the British Indian Ocean Territory whose inhabitants were forcibly expelled in the midst of the Cold War to make way for an American naval base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the Chagos atolls. In "Back to Chagos" by **Cullen Murphy**, we learn of the Chagossian communities in

the U.K. and Mauritius and their long legal battle to gain recognition of a right of return to their homeland. “As a remembrance,” Murphy writes, “many kept sand from Chagos in small bowls in their homes.”

We also recommend the fascinating short story, “Peking Duck,” by **Ling Ma**, in which an author explores the sources of a troubling story she is writing about her immigrant Chinese mother. What is true, what has the author misremembered, and what is pure fiction in this story? It is a story within a story that lays bare the *process* of its own creation.

The D-B Beat

In “Kerouac’s Archive Fever at One Hundred,” Michael Millner references several volumes from the author’s semi-autobiographical “Duluoz Legend,” recounting his life and companions on the journey from childhood to national renown in more than a dozen installments. Ten of Kerouac’s books are available for download from the NLS BARD service, including *The Dharma Bums* and *On the Road*. For more Kerouac, ask your talking book librarian about the following titles:

- *Visions of Gerard* (DB 42382)
- *Maggie Cassidy* (DB 43932)
- *Lonesome Traveler* (DB 33838)
- *Big Sur* (DB 42404)

And Special Thanks to...Robert B., from Massachusetts, who always lifts our mood and makes us feel special with his enthusiastic and expectant phone calls asking, “*When is the next issue of CML coming?!*”

Happy fall reading from Jay, Alfredo, Annie, Raquel and Mike!