

It's Time to [DOWNLOAD](#) Our Winter Issue!

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CML News

In the waning days and light of 2023, the members of CML's board met on Zoom to go over and vote on the proposed budget for 2024. From Ireland, a hospital bed, and their respective homes, all nine board members listened intently as Publisher Mike Tedeschi and editor in chief Annie Kyrkostas described the incredible teamwork executed, and invaluable contacts made, at the Andrew Heiskell Accessible Community, Culture, and Technology Fair the CML team attended in late October (in matching and highly visible polo shirts!) Not only had the board enthusiastically encouraged us to gather when they met in April 2023, but they again showed support for another gathering in 2024. Shortly thereafter, the proposed budget for 2024 was unanimously voted in. We can't wait to find our next outreach and teamwork-building location!

Highlights

CML wishes you a safe and fulfilling 2024, even as tens of thousands perish in Gaza, a brutal deadlock continues in Ukraine, over six million are displaced by war in Congo, and one of the most fraught and uncertain elections in US history looms on November 5th. And what about AI, evolving at a lightning pace? The answer is not to run and hide, nor to surrender to "future shock" (a term coined by **Alvin Toffler**, whose work appears in this issue's 1970 time capsule), but to remain resilient, open-minded, and informed. We hope that CML can aid in this, offering you insightful and revealing pieces from all branches of human experience, including politics, technology, history, and literature. And we'll throw in a little delight as well!

And what could be more delightful than a meal prepared by the legendary chef, Jacques Pépin? In "Coq au Pépin," **Daniel M. Lavery** celebrates Pépin's life and career, which has included stints at some of the world's greatest restaurants as well as at plain old loveable Howard Johnson's. It is particularly fun to read of Pépin's friendly sparring with none other than Julia Child, with whom he co-hosted a beloved cooking show on television. No less delightful to the senses and spirit are two great American pastimes: baseball and monster trucks. In

“American Dirt,” **Zach Helfand** reveals not just the madness but the actual science involved in this blood sport, especially when it comes to the dirt on which the mammoth vehicles ride, leap, collide: “Every dirt is different,” Helfand writes. “The U.S.D.A. has identified and named about twenty thousand types of American soil.” Similarly, we delighted in the rich detail of **Dave Eggers’** short story, “The Comeback,” about a sports writer’s encounter with a minor leaguer called up to pitch for the Giants who finds himself able to express every subtlety, rational and irrational, of the baseball experience, and of life itself.

Further delight—and wisdom of the heart—is to be found in our literary selections in this issue. Our poets are **P. Scott Cunningham, A.E. Stallings, Matt Donovan,** and **Fleda Brown,** whose tour-de-force poem, “Ever Fixed Mark,” honors the life and thought of French mathematician Alexander Grothendieck. Among our other short fiction offerings are “Wales,” by **Thomas Morris,** a touching tale of a lonely boy attending a soccer game with his father; and the riveting “Bridling,” by **Nadia Davids,** in which a male director’s feminist play unravels as his actors, all women, seek release from the oppressive constraints of their roles.

Butterflies, anyone? One of the 20th century’s most notable lepidopterists was none other than **Vladimir Nabokov,** more widely known for his novels. Though self-taught, Nabokov spent several years at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, helping to classify the museum’s vast butterfly collections. In the beautifully written “Butterflies,” first published in 1946, Nabokov vividly recalls the birth of his lepidopteral obsession as a child in Russia. “From the age of five,” he writes, “everything I felt in connection with a rectangle of framed sunlight was dominated by a single passion. If my first glance of the morning was for the sun, my first thought was for the butterflies it would engender.”

Misremembering the color of the funnel of a French ocean-liner, Nabokov makes a cameo appearance in one of our strongest offerings this issue, **Sallie Tisdale’s** essay, “Mere Belief.” It is precisely this error-prone human faculty of memory that Tisdale, herself a writer of memoir, seeks to explore. “Memory is wet sand,” she writes. “This is what I want to interrogate: the slipperiness, the uncertainty.”

A different kind of uncertainty plagues us in the United States. Gun violence has sadly become one of the common characteristics of American life. In “Rapid Fire,” a review of the book *American Gun: The True Story of the AR-15*, by

Cameron McWhirter and Zusha Elinson, **Mark Spies** summarizes the evolution of the AR-15 rifle, from a weapon designed for professional military use in the 1950's to a cheap, easily obtainable and ubiquitous killing machine responsible for countless mass shootings of civilians, including children. "By the end of 2021," Spies writes, "Americans owned more than 20 million AR-15-style weapons..." Our selection includes a New York Times Book Review interview with McWhirter and Elinson.

TOP PICKS

The short story "Last Train to Siena," by **Salvatore Pane**, is a powerful account of the long afterlife of fascism in World War II Italy and one man's rebirth through love and fatherhood. Though Pane is an American author, he captures the mood and textures of post-war Italy vividly, as well as the nuances of Italian itself (rendered sensitively in English).

William T. Vollman's unforgettable "Four Men," part exposé and part pitiless confession, takes us to the winter streets of Reno, Nevada, where the author explores the conditions of the city's homeless population via interviews with three men who endure the harsh weather with scant aid from charities or the state. Vollman unsparingly conveys their dazed, sometimes hallucinatory, mindsets, their exhaustion, as well as the manipulative strategies some have developed to survive. But the fourth man is Vollman himself, for whom the other three serve as an uncomfortable reflection of his own life as a writer of nonfiction, leading him to question whether his motives in writing the piece at all are, at bottom, merely selfish and exploitative.

The "D-B Beat"

In the course of our day-to-day work, we editors are exposed to every kind of writing under the sun. If there's a book about it, no matter the subject, we'll usually see a book review providing a window into the subject, and the author's world. Often, this presents an opportunity to check and see whether a recently released title is available to subscribers on the NLS's BARD program—time and time again, we're wowed by their collection. For this issue, we discovered BARD's delightful collection of works by Jacques Pépin, culinary evangelist and Julia Child collaborator. Not to be limited to mere recipes, Pépin's writings also include autobiography, memoir, anecdotes, and deeper discussions of kitchen technique and culture, including his latest, 2023's *Art of the Chicken*. Whether you're hosting

in the new year or looking for new ways to use your holiday leftovers, ask your local reader adviser about the following titles:

- *Art of the Chicken: A Master Chef's Paintings, Stories, and Recipes of the Humble Bird* (DB112702)
- *The Apprentice: My Life in the Kitchen* (DB58509)
- *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home* by Julia Child, David Nussbaum, and Jacques Pépin (DB51460)
- *Jacques Pépin's Simple and Healthy Cooking* (DB41529)
- *Everyday Cooking with Jacques Pépin* (DB19619)

And Special thanks to... O. Bryant McK., from Spokane, WA, who persisted over the past months in trying to reach us to find out “where his issues of CML have gone?” He missed us and wanted to make sure he could resubscribe or “whatever it takes” to start CML coming again. Welcome back, Bryant. We missed you, too.

Happy Winter Reading from Raquel, Mike, Alfredo, Jay, & Annie!