

## CML News

As we dip into summer's golden light and cooling breezes—while also navigating the many current events of weather, war, and politics—we at CML are happy to release (in downloadable digital files from our website) all six issues originally produced in 1972 [Numbers 59–64].

Considering this collection of writing about some of the beliefs, concepts, concerns, ideas and activities of writers 52 years ago—whether an article on the Pentagon Papers, space exploration to Mars, women's rights to reproductive freedom, foraging with Euell Gibbons, or joining Alex Haley in his ancestral search—just might give all of us a little bit of needed perspective on the events happening today.

We'd love to hear your thoughts.

## Highlights

Summer is here in all its glory. Time to bask in the sun and fortify ourselves with life-giving vitamin D. After all, we'll need to be strong for the coming fall, when the American election cycle goes into full drive. This time, the very survival of democracy will be at stake. Summer of course is also the perfect time to turn to CML and catch up on the latest literature, science, history, and contemporary concerns.

In this issue, our fiction offerings include work by **Wendell Berry** (a CML favorite), **Marianne Boruch**, **Nicolette Polek**, and Nigerian author **Iheoma Nwachukuwu**, among others. Berry's "The Stackpole Legend" is another touching installment in an ongoing exploration of the fictional town of Port William, Kentucky, and its quirky, sometimes backward, yet often wise denizens, while Nwachukuwu's "Hosanna Japa Town," takes us into the mind of a young Nigerian migrant hoping to reach Europe and a better life during a harrowing, and at times mystical, trek through the desert. Our poetry selections are equally strong, including work by **Ellen Bass**, **Jehaine Dubrow**, **Ben Okri**, and **Rosanna Warren**, whose poems are inspired by both Christian and Jewish conceptions of the sacred.

Eccentricity is often a characteristic of genius both in the arts and the sciences. Perhaps one of the strangest of all geniuses was Nikola Tesla, the Serbian-American inventor who first harnessed the power of the alternating

electric current, or AC, still in standard use today. In **Amanda Gefter's** "Tesla's Pigeon," we meet the great inventor toward the end of his life, when all of his most successful work was far behind him and his reputation had shriveled. Enduring isolation and poverty in New York City, he became obsessed with the telepathic powers of pigeons. In "Good Vibrations" by **Eric Wills**, we learn of another eccentric, George W. Van Tassel, a pioneer ufologist who, inspired both by Tesla and a supposed visitor from Venus, built what he called the "Integratron" in the Mojave Desert, a structure which, he hoped, could rejuvenate and extend human life. Though unfinished at Van Tassel's death in 1978, the Integratron has experienced a surprising contemporary revival.

And speaking of unusual, "Deep State" by **Adam Ciralsky** takes us inside a "boomer," or nuclear powered submarine armed with devastating ballistic missiles. From the gourmet meals served to the extraordinary, high-IQ crew, to the odd rituals—we might even call them choreographies!—reserved for nuclear armageddon, this is a fascinating and rare view of life aboard one of America's most secret military assets.

## TOP PICKS

Iranian-American author **Ehsaneh Sadr's** painful short story, "Mornings at the Ministry," gives us a glimpse into contemporary Iran, where, despite being female, Dr. Azadeh Musavi rises quickly in rank and in the professional estimation of her male colleagues at an important government institution, until her male namesake and rival, Amir Musavi, inadvertently, and to his eventual shame, discovers her Achilles heel.

Indian essayist and novelist **Pankaj Mishra** startles and provokes us with "The Shoah After Gaza," in which he employs his life-long study of the Holocaust and Zionism to reflect on the current war in Gaza. What are the implications for Israel, founded in the wake of the destruction left by the Holocaust, when it itself is accused of genocide? What will happen to the role of the Shoah as the defining event that shaped modern human rights? Exploring the words of several notable Holocaust survivors who were critical of the rise of militant, expansionist nationalism in Israel, including Primo Levi and Jean Améry, Mishra's deeply informed essay is at bottom an unwavering reaffirmation of the universal values established in the wake of the Holocaust, and their applicability to the present crisis.

In “I Chose Life: My Last Public Testimony of the Shoah,” **Liliana Segre** recounts her horrifying ordeal as an Italian Jew at Auschwitz, surviving the extermination of her father, unimaginable hunger, daily brutality and humiliation. Yet when revenge becomes possible, Segre makes a conscious decision to be unlike her Nazi tormentors: “I became the free woman and the woman of peace that I still am today.”

Human suffering and endurance are also at the heart of the piteous and haunting “Tales from an Attic” by **Sierra Bellows**. Founded in 1865 near Seneca Lake, New York, the Willard Asylum for the Insane was in operation until 1995. Just before the asylum’s closing and partial demolition, Craig Williams, a curator at the New York State Museum, recovered several suitcases from a hidden attic, some still containing personal items that had belonged to various patients. This discovery initiated a lengthy legal and even archeological process to reconstruct the identities and fates of the patients, many of whom had spent the greater part of their adult lives institutionalized for conditions that, by today’s standards, would hardly require it.

### **The “D-B Beat”**

When evaluating a given piece of writing, its presentation of the author or subject’s “human face” is one of the characteristics we look for. The human face elevates a piece above a dry recitation of facts or opinion and allows us as readers to connect to a living heart and the world it contains. Environmental historian and wildfire expert **Stephen Pyne**’s “Life in the Pyrocene” radically reframes our understanding of our planet’s ecological history while rooting it in his own practical experience of fighting fires in the mountainous American West. An alumnus of the University of Texas and a lifelong Southwesterner, Pyne authoritatively combines United States history, anthropology, and personal narrative into a holistic narrative of fire management practices, and how they’ve contributed to the environment we have today. Ask your local reader advisor about the following titles:

- *Fire on the Rim: A Firefighter's Season at the Grand Canyon* (DB30012)
- *How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History* (DB47948)
- *Year of the Fires: The Story of the Great Fires of 1910* (DB53954)
- *The Interior West: A Fire Survey* (DBC13366)

And Special Thanks to...**Mary from Nevada**, who called and said how her life has been enriched by CML and thanked us profusely for our service. Thank *you*, Mary, for listening!

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