

Note from the Editor . . .



Well, How Did We Get Here?

Already our tenth anniversary is upon us, and what a sleek, limber decade it has been. We've had a most excellent ride, sometimes a little bumpy production-wise, but still rolling, still dreaming. In this special edition you will find origin stories from several writers (more of which below).

But first, please allow me to tell you my own small origin story. In September 2005 I presented a paper at a conference called Mapping the Magazine 2, in Cardiff, Wales on metaphor in literary journalism, using for case studies books by John Vaillant and William Langewiesche. It went fine and I met scholars like David Abrahamson of Northwestern University and Jenny McKay, then of Stirling University in Scotland. Jenny was fun to talk to because the considerations of our field are so different in the U.K., and I was pleased to find out that her husband was Simon Frith, the rock critic who once filed a monthly column for *Creem* magazine, which I had read religiously as a teenager.

The next winter, Jenny emailed about a conference in May. She did not say the organizer was desperate and would take just about anybody; she said it looked like something I might like. I said, sure. Would there be anyone else I knew, she wondered? I remembered chatting with David in Cardiff, so I emailed him. What's your phone number, he emailed back. David's style is to pick up a telephone. Pretty soon we were talking about this May 2006 conference in Nancy, France, and David expressed curiosity. So, between Jenny, David, and myself, the organizer seemed to have three more prospects. I did not realize till later how such few willing souls it took to get the conference off the ground. I also didn't realize how disparate participants' interests could be at a conference dedicated to the centenary of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. My abstract barely qualified for inclusion—differences in methodology and style between Vancouver and Toronto literary journalists—yet it was accepted all the same.

That was one of the happy paradoxes at the first literary journalism conference. It was successful precisely because it was tiny and intimate. Everyone listened to what everyone else had to say and participated in discussions. Another was, everyone's topics varied wildly, which on the surface suggests

disfunction, yet it created multiple avenues for conversation about what this thing we were agreeing to call literary journalism was and could be. We could not know it then, but we were defining, with the help of more experienced scholars, such as David and John Hartsock, what the borders might look like.

Yet another paradox: the organization that now sets its sights on formalizing literary journalism into a discipline began as a celebration of a novel. I'll leave it to our fine contributors to elaborate. Tom Connery recalls what it was like being a literary journalism scholar in the era before there was such a thing. John S. Bak, host of that first conference, divulges the true origin story. David Abrahamson encapsulates the struggle to launch this journal. Xiaohui (Sophie) Wu and Brian Gabriel analyze the first decade of content. Nancy Roberts explores literary journalism scholarship's prospects over the next decade. Beate Josephi, Sue Joseph, and Willa McDonald tell us the view from Australia. Isabel Soares gives us the view from Portugal. Sue Greenberg reports the view from the U.K., as does Richard Lance Keeble, who also recommends in his essay that we blow up literary journalism's boundaries.

I want to thank all for their fine contributions as well as Anthony deRado for his lovely thematic design.

The anniversary content threatened to overwhelm our regular research section, but we managed to squeeze in two papers. Solveig Brandal's work fuses theories about harem literature with a study of *The Bookseller of Kabul* to produce a different take on Åsne Seierstad's literary journalism. Brandal locates Seierstad's work in the tradition we know but also within a strain of travel writing, common especially in the nineteenth century, where Western female travel writers commented on the personal details of women's lives in harems. Brandal's fascinating study also draws upon Said's New Orientalism concept.

Our second essay, by Matthew Ricketson, is based on the author's first dive into the Tom Wolfe papers that were recently archived at the New York Public Library. Ricketson decided to focus on Wolfe's famous, tidy origin story of his style—that he overcame writer's block in 1963 by writing all night as he listened to rock 'n' roll radio—using the archives get beyond it. Ricketson discovered several items including high school compositions, a college sports column, and the controversy surrounding his PhD dissertation, that in effect were early versions of his New Journalism style.

Also in this issue we have Ted Conover's fascinating keynote address to IALJS-13 in Vienna, May 2018, a Digital LJ column in which Christopher P. Wilson discusses his new and important literary journalism website, Kate McQueen's interview with science journalist Ed Jong, and Roberto Herrscher's study of Gabriel García Márquez's nonfiction books.

Hemingway, Paris, and a Distressing Email

This past July my wife and I stayed in Paris for ten days. We were lucky enough to find an apartment in a courtyard off Rue Saint Honoré. Our location was about a ten-minute walk east of the Louvre and slightly north of Place de la Concorde and the Obélisque de Louxor. Fairly central. I have walked by those large, forbidding doors on downtown Paris streets but never been inside one. Once the heavy green door closes, effectively, so does Paris. The courtyard was quiet—not a word one associates with Paris and Rue Saint Honoré's taxis, motorcycles, trucks, cars, and impatient humans. There were dozens of apartments behind the reserved pale concrete façades, Haussmann-style without balconies. The courtyard was spotless. We were given a talking-to about locking bicycles to the wrought-iron railing attached to the steps leading up to our apartment. There was a shed for bikes. This was where the bicycles went. No bicycles in the courtyard proper. Doing so destroyed the clean, austere lines.

We also learned that we were a skip and a hop from Stage 21, the final day of the Tour de France, which was to take place on July 29. We stumbled upon this fact because, the day before, we noticed barricades being erected on Rue de Rivoli while we were walking back to our flat. I felt embarrassed that I did not know this, as I am supposed to be conducting researching for a book about riding a bicycle—not about racing, mind you, but still.

Anyway, it was a happy coincidence and around 6:30 that Sunday evening the leaders of the day's race were being chased by the peloton from the Arch de Triomphe to Rue de Rivoli, around and around, eight times, before arriving at the nearby finish line. Exciting times. The Team Sky bus—Team Sky being Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas's outfit—was parked nearby and we found that, up close, the riders were not at all what we expected—instead of freak-like displays of massive thighs, we observed slighter men of jockey-like proportion.

Our neighborhood also happened to be the fashion district, where an improbable number of impossibly chic, lithe, handsome, beautiful humans demonstrated various sartorial sensibilities, and made stepping through oversized door onto the sidewalk a psychically intimidating, but amusing, adventure.

We were in Paris because I was presenting a paper that attempted to scrutinize Ernest Hemingway's *Toronto Star* newspaper feature journalism, 1920–1924, through the eyes of Tom Wolfe's New Journalism principles, circa 1973. That panel, which focused on Hemingway's nonfiction and featured presentations from William Dow from the American University of Paris and John Bak from Université de Lorraine, Nancy, went well. I'm happy to

report that I did not spend my entire first week in Paris as an agitated worrywart, poring over an incomplete presentation—for the first time in years of presenting all I needed to ask of myself was to read over and revise the presentation every morning for a half hour or so. With that professional obligation not casting a shadow, instead, we were free to rent a couple of bright orange bicycles and tour around. A Copenhagen-based company, Donkey Republic, makes available for rent free-standing city bikes, or should I say heavy, durable, two-wheeled objects, via the company's smart phone app. We used our phone to load the app, locate the nearest pair of Donkeys, unlock the bikes, and off we went. We were free to lock and unlock as we pleased, and scoped parts of Paris we had not bothered with before. For instance, one rather cutting Hemingway column I was citing, "American Bohemians in Paris a Weird Lot" (*Toronto Star Weekly*, March 25, 1922), situates the reader inside a club called Café de la Rotonde. The day before my presentation it occurred to me to Google the place. I mean, is la Rotonde still around? Yes, since 1911. I mapped the route, jumped on my bike, and headed for the intersection of Boulevard de Montparnasse and Boulevard Raspail. I enjoyed the free pistachios and cashews while working my way through a repulsive Parisian whiskey beer. The dark wood paneling, the red cushioned chairs, the formal wait staff in black and white, all suggested that not much had changed in a century.

All of which is to say, generally, other than the challenge of enduring thirty-three- to thirty-seven-degree heat—cold baths, anyone?—we were in downtown Paris, in July, having a ball.

Then I received a distressing email from Norman Sims. We knew that our friend and colleague John J. Pauly, an early scholar of literary journalism, who until recently had been provost of Marquette University, Milwaukee, and who delivered the IALJS-6 keynote address in Brussels, in May 2011, "Literary Journalism and the Drama of Civic Life," had been diagnosed with cancer. I personally knew about this because John had sent me an email to let me know he would not take part in the panel on which we were grouped, "Counterculture and Crisis," in March 2017, for the Joint Journalism and Communication History Conference, an annual one-day feast of ideas held at New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. At JJCHC John was set to talk about the New Journalism, as was I. John's approach with "How the New Journalism Got Its Name" was to assess the New Journalism in a new way, that is, in the context of the institutional and marketing forces of the day. For instance, it was no accident that the *New Yorker* and *Esquire* could afford to run pages and pages of one story—there was so much advertising for words to be wrapped around. My idea was less sweeping. "History

in the Present Tense" proposed to examine one major event, the Chicago Democratic Party Convention, August 1968, through the prism of New Journalist reportage in relation to standard news reporting with the goal to demarcate what made this rogue form so special and different.

It was disappointing news to find out that John's doctor had advised him not to fly in March while beginning a new drug regimen. And it was disappointing again, two months later, in May 2017, because John was expected at King's University in Halifax for IALJS-12. There were too many events in his life, between retirement celebrations and continued treatments, and he thought it best not to complicate his schedule. The point is, I did not get the feeling that anything especially untoward was happening in John's world. The world of cancer is different now, and the level of cancer management in our time can be impressive.

Fast forward to July 2018 and Norm's email shattered that illusion. Despite all of the progress, John's doctor had now advised him to stop treatments. They would no longer help. The subsequent unfolding of events was dizzying.

When I arrived in Bayfield, north Milwaukee, on August 7, ostensibly to hang out with John for a couple of hours to talk about his New Journalism research, I was informed that the aperture had shrunk even further. In fact, it was not possible to have a conversation. John died four days later. Those two weeks were difficult to comprehend in real time, and I found myself wondering how this acceleration could be possible.

I have asked John's good friend Thomas B. Connery if he would be kind enough to attempt to capture some of the essence of our colleague by interviewing his friends and associates in the literary journalism community. Tom's remembrance follows this editorial.

— *Bill Reynolds*