

## To Our Readers

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T. S. Eliot probably said, somewhere, “The future lies both ahead of us and behind us.” If he didn’t he should have, because he would have believed this statement to be true.

In our previous issue we announced that Laura Sewell Matter’s essay “Pursuing the Great Bad Novelist” (Fall 2007) has been selected for reprinting in the second annual volume of *The Best Creative Nonfiction*, and we’ve since learned that two other works from the same issue, Jeremy Collins’ essay “Shadow Boxing” and Jack Driscoll’s story “Prowlers,” will appear in the *Pushcart Prize XXXIII: Best of the Small Presses*—and that Albert Goldbarth’s essay “Everybody’s Nickname” (Spring 2007) is destined for reemergence in *The Best American Essays*. We at *The Georgia Review* are always pleased and proud when any work from our pages is acknowledged by other editors, because that second life for the writing benefits and honors our authors by giving them even more readers. However, we take an extra high step or two when thinking of Collins and Matter, because their essays in the *Review* were the first things they had ever published anywhere. Ditto Michael Donohue’s “Russell and Mary” (Fall/Winter 2006), which won the 2007 National Magazine Award in Essays and then was reprinted in the *Best American Magazine Writing 2007*.

Writers such as these represent the best of what is being created right now, have a decent chance to be voices worth attending to in the future, and—gulp—are now already a part, however small, of the literary past. Fortunately—for them and for us—the past is always bidding fair to become both present and future.

Thus, this issue’s multifaceted feature on the work and life of Richard Hugo (1923–82), a profoundly *American* poet who has been, in my estimation, too much set aside—or, among a newer generation of readers, not yet discovered. Through Hugo’s own voice and those of several other writers who share my sense of the tremendous importance of his accomplishment, we invite you to visit or revisit his unique style and world.

Also thus, we offer up Mark Halliday’s “Shelf Life,” one of the strangest and most satisfying works of “historical” critique I have encountered. After pulling from his car’s trunk a forgotten forty-five-year-old issue of a literary journal (not *The Georgia Review*), Halliday decided to read and write about it—at length and at leisure—to try to determine what such a tiny, out-of-the-

way creature from 1963 might tell us now about itself, about 1963, and about 2008 and beyond.

The past observed creates new futures, or at least a potential for them. This statement is so true that it would seem barely worth verbalizing—if we weren't so seldom mindful of it. Along with Frances McCue dreaming of Richard Hugo, we have here Anne Goldman listening to George Gershwin, Robert Cording walking with John Ruskin, Nora Sturges re-envisioning Marco Polo as a contemporary traveler—and the previously unpublished storyteller Alexandre Mas imagining his way, and ours, into the life of a blind young painter from a century ago. Each of these efforts, augmented by all the other works in this issue, proposes a vibrant, complex presence where we can—and must—be what we were, what we are to become, and the wrenching yet natural mix that we are right now. As Eliot *did* say, in *Four Quartets*, “Time past and time future / What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present.”

S.C.

P.S. We welcome two new members of our staff: Douglas Carlson, who had ably served us as a temporary “editorial assistant” from January 2006 through June 2007, is now a regular with the title of assistant editor; Janine Faucher joined us in February as circulation manager. (Scott LaClaire, previously much overburdened by the dual title of circulation and production manager, is now focused in as production manager only.)