

Flashbacks to 20 years ago – and to just last year

Margaret D. Bauer, Editor

Twenty years ago, founding Editor Alex Albright had what he characterizes as the audacity to invite A.R. Ammons to be *NCLR*'s Staff Poet, and original Ammons poems can be found in each of the five issues Alex edited (which are still available for purchase to complete your *NCLR* set). Appropriately, we include in this twentieth issue's Flashbacks section a review of two recent Ammons poetry collections edited by Alex Albright. We won't repeat here what reviewer Robert West points out regarding what's "new" about the edition of Ammons's North Carolina poems, in contrast to the collection's earlier 1994 incarnation. We will point out, however, what the reviewer didn't know about the other small Ammons/Albright collection, a chapbook of Ammons's mule poems: it was designed by Eva Roberts, *NCLR*'s first Art Director, who is responsible for the original design style of this unique amalgam of literary magazine and scholarly journal. The beautiful line art featured in the chapbook (and here in the review) is by this issue's cover artist, Joan Mansfield, a regular *NCLR* illustrator.

The other reviews and the awards announced in this section also "flash back" to previous issues. In 2008, Lorraine Robinson reviewed Georgann Eubanks's first volume in the North Carolina Humanities Council's Literary Trails series, and Lorraine includes the Piedmont volume in her review for this issue. As the author of the entries for *NCLR*'s serialized "Dictionary of North Carolina Writers" from 1998 to 2007, Lorraine is an ideal reviewer for this reference work and the two anthologies she also reviews. When Richard Krawiec's *The Sound of Poets Cooking* arrived at the *NCLR* office, I immediately thought of Lorraine to review it – for, as many of the Eastern North Carolina Literary Homecoming's featured guests know, Lorraine is a chef extraordinaire! She has for years now fed our guest writers, homecoming volunteers, and supporters at the kick-off dinner that *NCLR* hosts. Nancy Simpson's Appalachian anthology was in-press at the same time as *NCLR*'s 2010 issue's special feature section on Appalachian

literature – so we missed the chance to promote it then, but Lorraine includes it in her review for this issue.

Also hearkening back to the 2010 Appalachian special feature section, after a short story by Charles Dodd White was selected for inclusion in the 2010 issue, we are pleased to publish a review of the author's first novel, *Lambs of Men*. Upon completing the review of the book last fall, Ed Piacentino reported that he enjoyed the book so much he was going to include it on his spring syllabus for the Literature of the American South class he teaches at High Point University.

We are pleased, too, that Brett Cox has helped us to continue *NCLR*'s inclusion of recent speculative fiction in our pages, reviewing Warren Rochelle's sequel to an earlier novel Brett also talks about. Both author and reviewer contributed significantly to our 2001 issue on North Carolina science fiction and fantasy writers. We invite other North Carolina writers in these genres to keep us apprised of speculative fiction writers who should be covered in *NCLR*. The same goes for writers of children's and young adult literature, the focus of our 2006 issue. Note in this section's pages here the news of recent awards recognizing writers for young readers.

A very determined "young reader" was accidentally omitted from our 2003 issue, which commemorated the Wright brothers' first flight. We included a sidebar on North Carolina native Michael Smith, who died in the 1986 space shuttle *Challenger* explosion, but I only learned this year that another of the *Challenger* crew had a North Carolina connection: South Carolina native Ron McNair received a BS in Physics from North Carolina A&T State University. In early 2011, a building in Lake City, SC, was named the Dr. Ronald McNair Life History Center. This building once housed the library that tried to deny the nine-year-old McNair the right to check out books because he was black. The young McNair courageously refused to leave until he was allowed to take books with him.



Finally, as noted in the introduction to this issue, starting in 2012, book reviews will be published in the online supplement. Therefore, we remind writers and scholars that we are seeking articles and interviews that hearken back to previous issues' special feature sections. We invite you to look through the back issues pages of our website and propose your ideas for future content of the Flashbacks section. ■

A Look Back at a Literary Giant

by Lorraine Hale Robinson, Senior Associate Editor

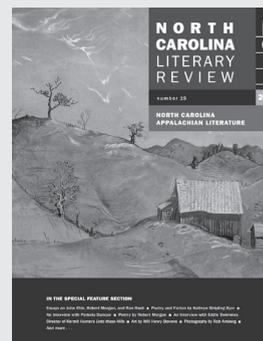
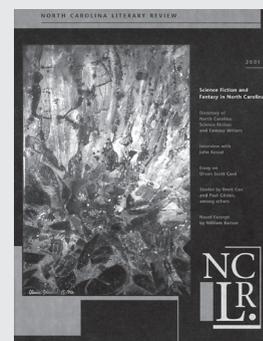
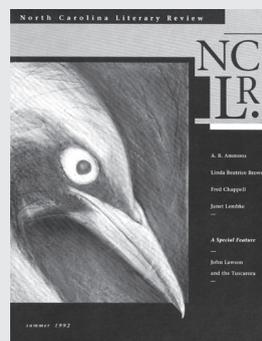
We close this space of looking back with the sad news of the passing of a beloved writer, Reynolds Price. A towering figure in North Carolina, and, indeed, American letters, Price wrote to critical acclaim and wide public popularity for fifty years. In spite of his health challenges, Price's profound own sense of inspiration by his world is captured in a short passage from his poem "Socrates and Alcibiades":

Who thinks deepest loves the liveliest,
Who looks farthest ascertains the heights –
Sages often bend
At last to beauty.*

Poetry, plays, essays, Biblical translation, and memoirs are the anchors of Price's oeuvre. But Price was more than literary talent – he was deeply humane and generous, encouraging other now-established writers such as Anne Tyler and Josephine Humphreys. With his own physical challenges (radiation therapy left him paralyzed and in a wheelchair), he knew limitations firsthand. Price's description of his books' overarching themes captures and conveys the man who understood "human freedom – the limits thereof, the possibilities thereof, the impossibilities thereof."* Certainly NCLR staff grapple with the impossibility of expressing fully our appreciation and our sense of loss. ■

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Echoes of Past Issues

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* Quoted from, respectively, *Reynolds Price: The Collected Poems* (New York: Scribner, 1997) and Constance Rooke, "On Women and His Own Work: An Interview with Reynolds Price," *Southern Review* 14 (1978): 708.

ABOVE RIGHT, CLOCKWISE **NCLR's** premiere, **1992** issue, cover illustration by Stanton Blakeslee; **NCLR 2001**, featuring NC science fiction and fantasy literature, cover art by Olivia Gatewood; **NCLR 2010**, featuring NC Appalachian Literature, cover art by Will Henry Stevens; **NCLR 2006**, featuring NC Children's and Young Adult Literature, cover illustration by Karen Lee

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