Writing + Art + Music = Creative Synergy
by Margaret D. Bauer, Editor

The discovery that Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain* has been adapted into an opera inspired this year’s special feature section topic: North Carolina Literature and the Other Arts. Particularly since the opera was a theme instigator, I was thrilled when music professor Christina Reitz agreed to expand a conference paper on the opera that was brought to my attention into an article and submit it to *NCLR*. I appreciate the Santa Fe Opera and Opera Philadelphia for so generously sharing photographs from their productions of the opera, and I thank the opera’s composer, Jennifer Higdon, and Katherine Frazier for their help with obtaining these photographs. It turns out, the opera also inspired former North Carolina Poet Laureate Kathryn Stripling Byer to write a poem sequence she hopes to have put to music. You can read the sequence here, and perhaps one of the musicians among you can help Kay out with this project.

Because we especially enjoy introducing new writers in *NCLR*, we are pleased to publish Claudia Drieling’s interview with a writer you have likely not heard of before, Michael Götting, born and raised in Germany but with roots in North Carolina, whose writing is inspired by music and whose first novel, as described by his interviewer, “translates the musical concept of contrapunctal composition into narrative form.” And, we publish an interview with another new novelist, one you may have read about, as his tome *City on Fire* (with an artist/musician among its central characters) has been lauded by such internationally famous writers as Stephen King. Our thanks go out to author Garth Risk Hallberg and interviewer Brian Glover for sharing this interview with *NCLR*.

Looking back through past issues, you will find many photographs of writer musicians – Clyde Edgerton among them. He really is a Renaissance man; read about his writing, of course, his teaching of writing, his music, and his latest developing talent, painting, in George Hovis’s interview with him. Hearing some years ago that Clyde Edgerton had begun painting also played a role in inspiring this year’s special feature section theme. The symbiotic relationship between literature and the visual arts has been reflected in *NCLR* since our first issue. We are publishing all
of the creative writing in the special feature section of this issue to call
attention to the hard work of Art Editor Diane Rodman, who searches
website after website of North Carolina artists, galleries, and museums
to find just the right artist whose work – in a variety of art media – will
complement each piece of creative writing we publish. I am very grateful
for the essay submitted by Randall Wilhelm about this very subject – the
art and literature pairings in the pages of NCLR. Diane doesn’t share
(except with this very privileged editor, and she won’t let me share) her
explanations for her art choices, preferring that readers make their own
connections between word and image. It is gratifying to see the value of
her work given such serious examination by a discerning reader.

This is my twentieth print issue as editor. For my milestone, this
same Art Editor insisted I allow her to select from my mother’s art for the
cover, telling me that twenty years earns me the right to engage in a little
nepotism. She didn’t have to work too hard to convince me, as Mom’s
art and my editing also work in the literature and the other arts theme.
While I did not inherit my mother’s artistic talent, I do believe I get my
aesthetics from her. I know fine art when I see it, and thus have I been
able to appreciate art selections.

As always, Diane has put in far more than her share of time on this
issue, her tenth as Art Editor, which contains a wealth of creative writing,
including short fiction by Michael Parker and poetry by Betty Adcock, James
Applewhite, Kathryn Stripling Byer, Fred Chappell, and Robert Morgan. In
such impressive company, you can also read the 2016 James Applewhite
Poetry Prize poem by Russell Colver and several finalists; the 2016 Alex
Albright Creative Nonfiction Prize essay by Trace Ramsey; and the 2016
Doris Betts Fiction Prize story by Anita Collins, her first publication.

I have enjoyed twenty years of being the lucky person who gets to
share this kind of news with new writers; twenty years of the privilege of
publishing North Carolina’s literary stars, old and new; and twenty years
of working with the other editors, amazing graphic designers, and the
student staff members. Twenty years in, I still love my job.