

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, "translat[es] 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

RIGHT *NCLR* Editorial Assistant Cameron Green, reading his Bill Hallberg Prize story, ECU, Greenville, NC, 27 Sept. 2016 (The final judge for the 2016 competition was Garth Risk Hallberg.)

FAR RIGHT Michael Götting in Greensboro, NC

OPPOSITE LEFT *NCLR* Editor Margaret Bauer with featured writer Michael Parker at the 25th issue celebration, ECU, Greenville, NC, 22 Oct. 2016

OPPOSITE RIGHT Betty Adcock with James Applewhite after the *NCLR* Applewhite Prize reading at the new Quail Ridge Books, Raleigh, NC, 20 Nov. 2016

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARGARET BAUER; COURTESY OF NCLR



PHOTOGRAPH BY KARINA GRIFFITH



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. ■



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