

THE MALAHAT REVIEW *at* FIFTY

CANADA'S ICONIC LITERARY JOURNAL

Edited by **John Barton**



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Fraser Sutherland

10 poems

The Wind in ...

Company

Disclosure

A Man ...

The Homecoming

Was the ...

Love Affairs

Hatched and

L'Esclavage

Close

A or R

R 5

To

From

R 7 Nov 69

17 October 1969

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Photographs

✓

R 23 Oct 69

Sam Etkin

story

All For The Best

✓

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Norman Silverstein

Report on the Second James Joyce Symposium in Dublin

✓

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To Two Negroes in Wood

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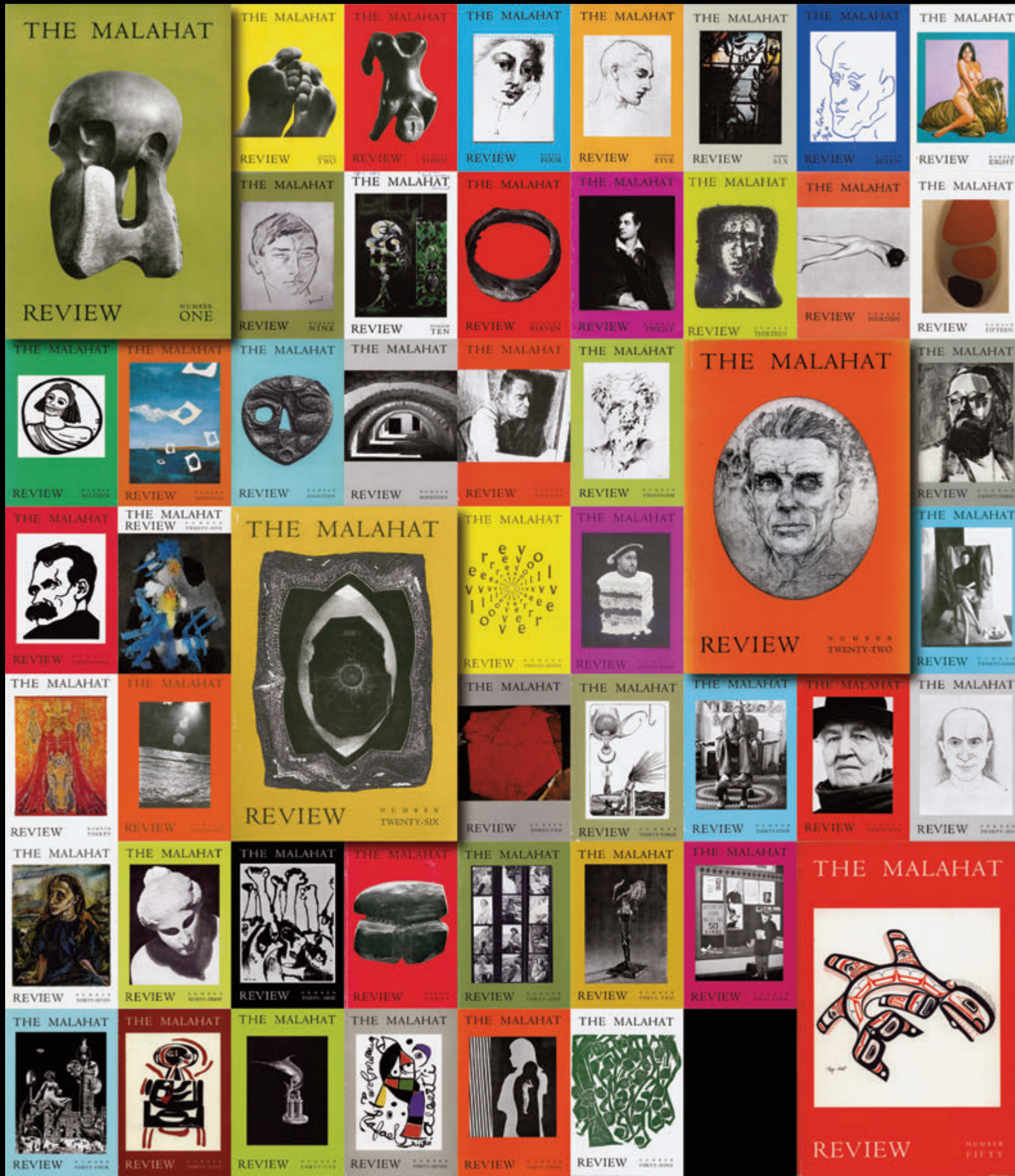
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THE MALAHAT



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THE MALAHAT



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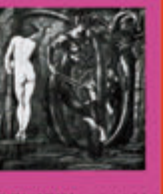
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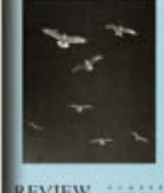
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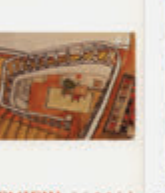
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THE MALAHAT REVIEW

CANADA'S ICONIC LITERARY JOURNAL

Edited by **John Barton**

General Editor, University of Victoria Libraries
Publication Series **Christine Walde**

at FIFTY



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A Brief History of the Malahat's Early Internationalism has been adapted from an original essay which first appeared on *The Malahat Review* website.

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Elza Mayhew, *Maiden of Knossos*, 1962.

[University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries]

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Frontispiece: Ledger recording submission acceptances and rejections. The eighth entry on this page shows that Michael Ondaatje's poems "Spider Blues" and "King Kong Meets Wallace Stevens," submitted in November 1969, were rejected by Robin Skelton in December 1969.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]



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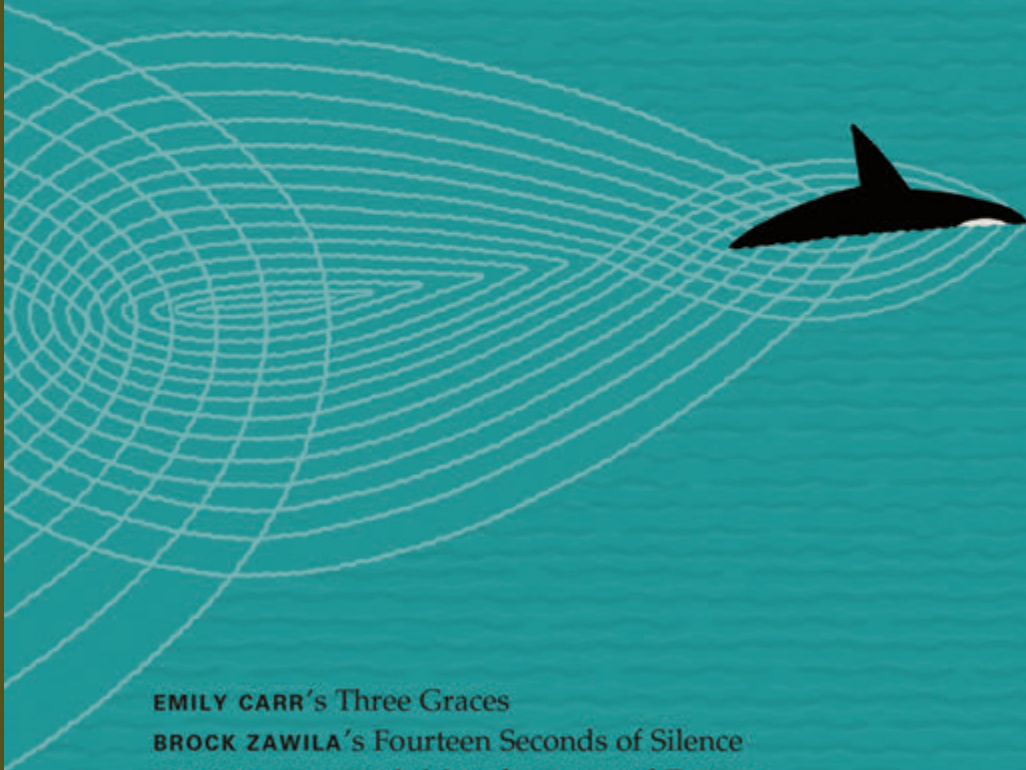
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FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The Malahat Review

ESSENTIAL POETRY • FICTION • CREATIVE NONFICTION



EMILY CARR's Three Graces

BROCK ZAWILA's Fourteen Seconds of Silence

ANNABEL HOWARD's Marathon toward Ecstasy

PATRICK LANE's Travels with Bashō

SHELAGH ROGERS

CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

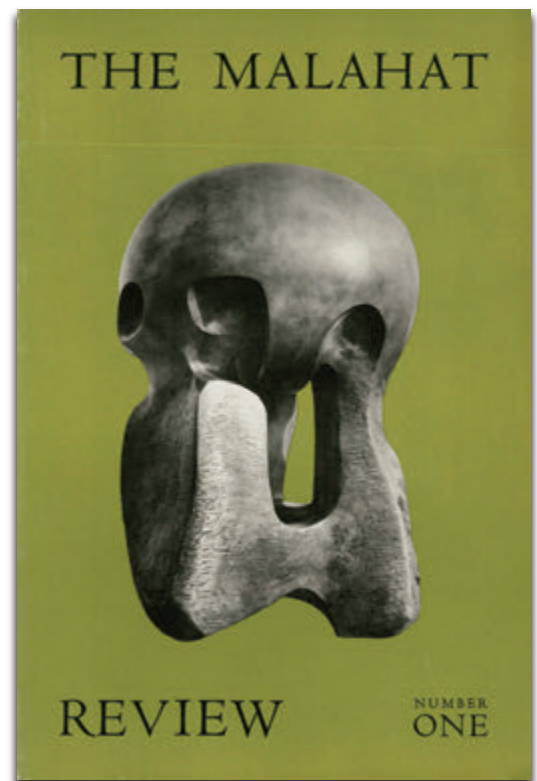
A Long Future

TWO HUNDRED ISSUES sent out into the world. Fifty years of life. For the forty years I have been fortunate enough to interview writers in this country, *The Malahat Review* has, so often, been there first. Many of the authors who appear on CBC Radio's *The Next Chapter*, the program I host and co-produce, got their start in the *Malahat*, only "got their start" is such a thin way to put it.

Writers must have guts to submit unpublished poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction to literary journals like this one. Most likely, their writing has been a solitary act but, once sent, more hearts and minds and eyeballs are engaged. The submissions are read, discussed and deeply considered. After this rigorous process, a successful piece receives publication, amplification, an audience.

I turn to the *Malahat* for direction, for guidance, for surprise, and for the pure pleasure of discovery. I respect how it honours writers and writing, how it settles for nothing less than excellence. I appreciate its animation of the literary landscape through thoughtful, muscular, and frequently provocative reviews. When writing is published in its pages, I know it's worth reading.

I trust *The Malahat Review*. It has given voice, it gives voice, it will continue to give voice to some of the finest writers in this country. When I read it, I feel I am holding community in my hands and I am grateful. I am also thrilled that the University of Victoria is its home. The *Malahat* makes me very proud of our university. Congratulations on fifty and on two hundred, with best wishes for a long future.



Issue 1, 1967.

Cover art: Henry Moore, *Atom Piece*, 1964.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections
and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Facing page:

Issue 200, 2017: Fiftieth-Anniversary Issue:

"Victoria Past, Victoria Present, Victoria Future."

Cover art: Luke Ramsey, *Ripples*, 2013.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections
and University Archives, AP5 M27]



McPherson Library, 1964.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives' Historical Photograph Collection, PB 021.0911]

Facing page: *Coast Spirit* in front of McPherson Library, 1968. The sculpture, created by Elza Mayhew in 1967, was presented to the University of Victoria by Dr. Walter C. Koerner in 1968.

[University of Victoria Special Collections and University Archives' Historical Photograph Collection, PB 021.0912]

JONATHAN BENGTON

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

An Arc Across the Landscape

THE IDEA OF *The Malahat Review* was a bold one. Like the University of Victoria itself, the *Malahat* emerged from the intellectual milieu of early to mid-1960s Victoria, and, from the beginning, formed an arc across the Canadian literary landscape that continues to reverberate to this day.

Establish a leading Canadian literary journal at a university founded mere months ago, on the far west coast of the country? One wonders if those discussing the concept, presumably over drinks, at the Empress in 1965—Skelton, Taylor, Bishop, Halliwell, and their colleagues—were quite so serious in their intent. It is not so difficult to imagine enthusiasm mixed with a healthy dose of scepticism in those early conceptual deliberations, as the shape and scope of the journal were debated. Perhaps to the naysayers, if there were any left in the wake of enthusiasm for the idea, Skelton or Halliwell quoted Lucius Annaeus Seneca in rebuttal? *It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.* In any case, if there was resistance, those who dared won the day and ultimately the challenge was undertaken.

From inception, *The Malahat Review* has been a “key enabler,” as Yann Martel calls it, representing some of the best of contemporary Canadian literature. Its reputation is laid on the principles of quality, excellence, and internationalism for which it continues to be known and celebrated. The University of Victoria Libraries is honoured to help celebrate the first fifty years of this remarkable publication. May the next fifty be just as rich.

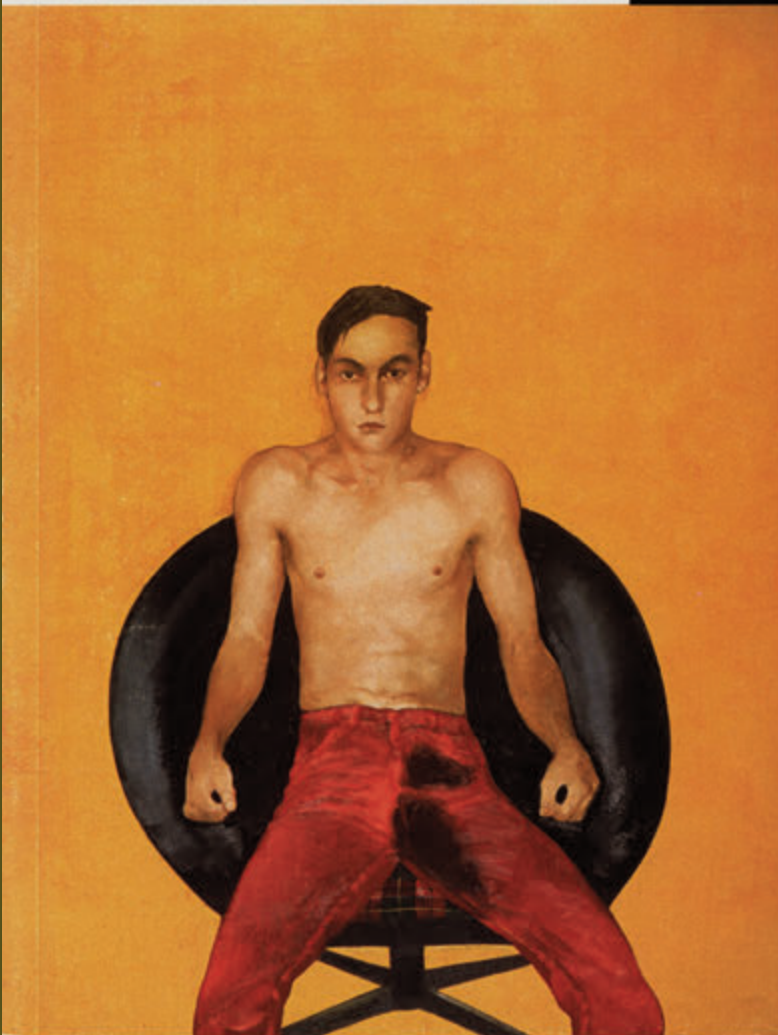


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The Malahat Review

SUMMER 2004



JOHN BARTON

EDITOR, *THE MALAHAT REVIEW*

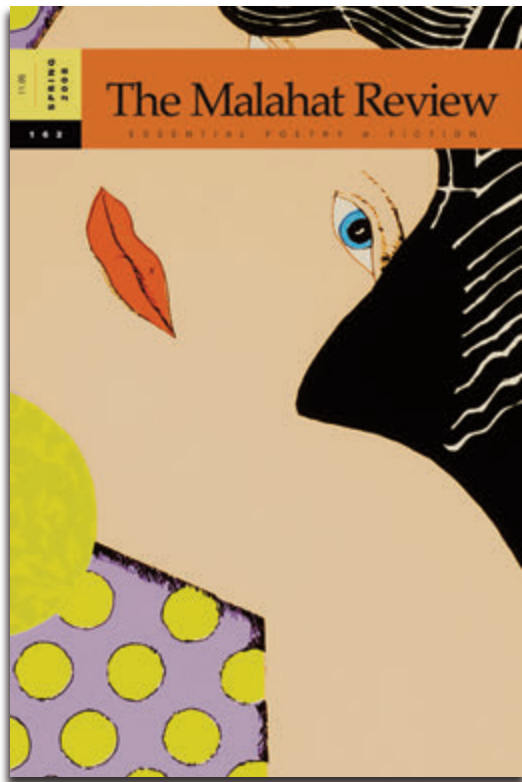
Cultivating a Taste for Honey

EARLY ON IN MY TENURE as the editor of *The Malahat Review*, I realized my job description was two words long: icon management. Having studied with both its founders—two year-long poetry workshops and a directed study with Robin Skelton and a half-year course on D. H. Lawrence with John Peter—I was very aware of what I can only call the *Malahat* mystique. By 1978, the year I enrolled as an aspiring writer in the then Department of Creative Writing, publishing in the *Malahat* for the first time had become a watershed moment in a writer's career, no matter where you lived in the country, no matter how long you had been writing. To have your work appear in the magazine regularly, as some authors had done almost from the beginning, was in no way guaranteed, but nonetheless a measure of your pedigree. You were cooking with gas, as Robin would say in class, and that gas was as explosive as it was pure.

I left Victoria two years after I graduated with a BA in 1981 to seek out a wider world. I'd had enough of shelving books in the McPherson Library, even though I did eventually join the holy order of library science. As a twenty-six year-old, I felt that I had exhausted a then much smaller city's pint-sized possibilities. Robin had just stepped down as editor, and the *Malahat* took on new directions with editors who over the next twenty years would each leave their stamp on its pages. They all enriched it with their perspectives, editorial attitudes, and beliefs in what good writing is and can be. Though the magazine had published some of my poems before I left for points east, I had the joy of publishing under the eye of two of the three subsequent editors. I remember Derk Wynand thankfully pointing out a dangling modifier in one of the poems he'd accepted almost as clearly as I recall Marlene Cookshaw's light but careful pencil edit of another while readying it for publication, catching spelling mistakes and other infelicities that, to my glee today, shamefaced me. I had also been an avid, occasionally petulant reader of the magazine, taking umbrage with some of the writing they and

Facing page: Issue 147, 2004.
Cover art: Attila Richard Lukacs, *Yellow*, 1994
(University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and
University Archives, AP5 M27]



Issue 162, 2008. Cover art: Eric Metcalfe, *Held Over*, 1969 (University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries).

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

Connie Rooke had chosen to publish, but for the most part I was awed by the mind-shattering poems and stories the majority of contributors had managed to pull out of their hats with enviable nonchalance. *It can't be that easy to be so good*, I would think. *Or is it?* When I returned to Victoria in January 2004 to become the *Malahat's* editor, I felt like a black hat riding back into town. Who was I to make this lion of Canadian literary-magazine publishing jump through my particular set of hoops? I told myself: *respect the past, tread wisely, and further polish your skills.*

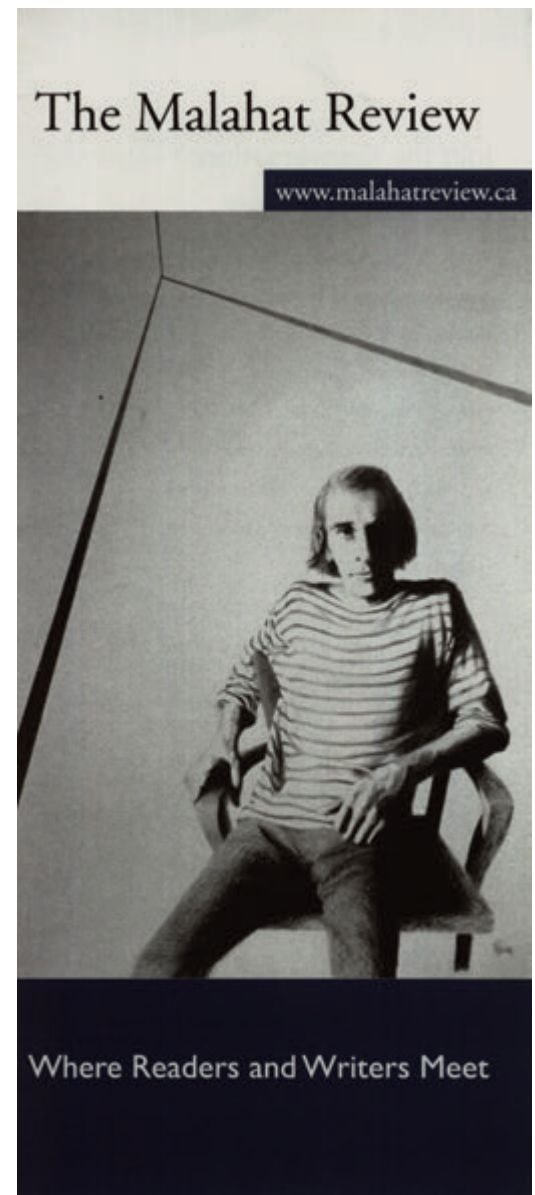
It's been an exciting, turbulent fourteen years watching the sometimes battered pots boil on the stove, while simultaneously monitoring circulation, newsstand sales, production costs, and a growing workload. But the greatest pleasure has always been working closely with the contributors as a mentor. It continues to affirm my belief that literary magazines are intrinsically contributor-driven environments, unlike rank-and-file newsstand magazines whose goal is to recruit bankable editorial content in order to generate a circulation prodigious enough to attract cash-rich advertisers who'd view the roped-in readership as ideally placed within their target markets. Nor are literary magazines exactly like their scholarly or academic peers, which publish the fruits of important research in frequently very discreet subject areas, where the authors of a handful of peer-reviewed articles hope to persuade like- or unlike-minded readers within their own disciplines of the validity of their nuanced points of view. Unlike contributors to literary magazines, who are typically paid an honorarium however token for their *bons mots*, those contributing to humanities or scientific publications often do so without remuneration—or they pay for the pleasure, albeit with funds earmarked for this purpose in their research grants. It's one of the unspoken truths of literary-magazine publishing that a potential contributor, in comparison to an academic seeking to publish in the journals of their own fields, faces stiffer competition. In 2016, of the 3937 hopefuls who sent the *Malahat* a regular submission or entered one of its contests, only 89 had their work accepted for publication—in other words, only 2.2% of the magazine's total aspirants.

Literary magazines are incubators of creativity because their primary focus—although played against the aspirations of granting agencies and their elected masters, who see arts groups as agents for important social change or as fodder to be restructured into Potemkin villages of commercial “viability”—is to nurture promise and talent. It's as if the *Malahat* were a beehive, with the staff and editorial boards deputized as worker bees, briskly supporting writers in their attainment of high aesthetic values and distinctive voices. This is the honey all writers hunger for. If all goes well, some will mature into bees of a different and distinctive stripe who know intuitively how to flap their wings, with the buzz about their achievements shortly to blow Canadian literature and the academy off their respective foundations. Sometimes you read the work of highly successful writers who now enjoy international acclaim, having won prizes involving ever-larger sums (increasingly the single criterion,

I am sad to say, of literary success in Canada and beyond), which in turn causes their books to sell in vast numbers. It's easy to forget that they may have gotten their modest start in literary magazines like *The Malahat Review*, where some editor might have said, *I hear what you're saying, it's thought-provoking, let's do it better.*

In many countries (and most particularly in the callow behometh a mere twenty-seven kilometres south of Victoria), literary magazines are based precariously at institutions of higher learning. Save for the major literary journals in British Columbia, this is not as common in Canada—*The Fiddlehead* being another significant exception. Even in B.C., *The Capilano Review* was three years ago shown the door by Capilano University. It is therefore an especial pleasure to acknowledge with gratitude the commitment that the University of Victoria has made to *The Malahat Review* since 1967, a level of support that has grown by 100% during my tenure as editor and represents almost 50% of the magazine's annual budget. Without this backing, there would be little or no honey to lavish, and there may not have been a Yann Martel, an Eliza Robertson, a Patricia Young, or an Eve Joseph—or any of the countless other writers the *Malahat* has had the honour to support in their creative endeavours and, with brio, publish. Perhaps I exaggerate the magazine's, my own, and my predecessors' importance since it is equally true that many writers on their own find the self-discipline and necessary inner solitude to develop flap-pable wings before embarking on the flightpath they were destined to take. It's another course followed by many a lonely voice. As the editor of more than one magazine in my career, I have always endeavoured to make the journey taken less uncertain and the toil required more imaginable. For, as you will see while reading this celebration of *The Malahat Review's* first fifty years, the honey that all literary magazines have on tap is confidence.

JOHN BARTON, born and raised in Alberta, has published eleven books of poems, seven chapbooks, and two anthologies, including *West of Darkness: Emily Carr, a Self-Portrait* (1987), *Sweet Ellipsis* (1998), *Seminal: The Anthology of Canada's Gay Male Poets* (2007), *For the Boy with the Eyes of the Virgin: Selected Poems* (2012), and *Reframing Paul Cadmus* (2016). He has edited arts and literary magazines since 1987, including *Arc Poetry Magazine* from 1990 to 2003, *Vernissage: The Magazine of the National Gallery of Canada* from 2001 to 2003, and *The Malahat Review* since 2004.



Fundraising brochure.
Cover art: Myfanwy Pavelic, *Alone (Boy)*, 1974
(University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries).

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

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INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

The Malahat Review

ESSENTIAL POETRY • FICTION • CREATIVE NONFICTION



JORDAN ABEL Works Out Deep Hollows
LOUISE BERNICE HALFE Nestles Into Your Shoulder
JOSHUA WHITEHEAD's Two-Spirited High Jinx
SIKU ALLOOLOO Champions Her Caribou People

PHILIP KEVIN PAUL

From Here in Saanich

MÁLEXEŁ. Anglicization: Malahat

ALL MY LIFE, I've looked across "Brentwood Bay" to yos, to see what weather was on its way to Saanich. yos is what Saanich people call the peak of "the Malahat," or MÁLEXEŁ. MÁLEXEŁ translates into English as "Caterpillar" and refers to a bad caterpillar infestation that happened there centuries ago. This was perhaps a time when many of those who are then and now considered MÁLEXEŁ people moved across the bay to live here in Saanich. This is also likely the reason HELKEMINEM, the Cowichan language, rather than SENĆOŦEN, the Saanich language, has long been the more prominent language on the reservation called Pauquachin. It's also the main reason I consider the MÁLEXEŁ people to be part of my family, as I'm sure their ancestors and many living here today consider Saanich people as part of their family. In fact, by Saanich, MÁLEXEŁ, and colonial practices, many here and many there are actually our relatives.

To be clear, I'm not a MÁLEXEŁ person as defined under the Indian Act, nor am I considered such by our or their practices across the bay. On the other hand, when there was some tension between HELKEMINEM and SENĆOŦEN speakers here in Saanich, what I heard most from my elders was that it really wasn't that big of a deal as, in the "old days," everyone spoke both languages. In fact, my grandpa on my dad's side spoke five dialects and English and worked as a translator in the early pushback against the Indian Act and the maltreatment of southern Vancouver Island "First Nations" people. My point? When I engage in a discussion about the MÁLEXEŁ and Saanich peoples, I mean to do so with courtesy and respect, in keeping with the older days when history was treated as the liquid that it is and has always been and not as the solid it is regarded to be now.

Those who consider it at all tend to think of the reservation at the Mill Bay ferry dock as the main home of the MÁLEXEŁ people. In fact, it's more likely that their main village site was EWOEK, a place farther north. To make a leap, my grandfather on my mom's side had once suggested that, when the MÁLEXEŁ people introduced a canoe into

Facing page: Issue 197, 2016: "Indigenous Perspectives," edited by Philip Kevin Paul, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Richard Van Camp. Cover art: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *Christy Clark and the Kinder Morgan Go-Go Girls*, 2015 (Private collection). The work in its entirety follows on pages 2 and 3.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

the “war” canoe races, they might have been considered “golden arrow.” In one of the stories, two men out hunting either got lost or decided to explore and ended up in what is now called Leechtown. There they found gold, which they eventually used to make arrowheads. This became a prominent feature in their society.

Culture is a being that is always with us, always paying attention to us and between us in a negotiated, mutual courtesy. There are many stories I’ve heard and many versions of these stories that I’ve heard many times. Stories about marriages, disputes, comradery, and more that are more than noteworthy. In my relationship with these two cultures, these two beings, this is neither the time nor the place to delve deeper or express more.

I was asked to write about what “Malahat” means. I spoke with John Barton, the journal’s editor, and asked how *The Malahat Review* got its name. Experiencing some trouble finding a way *into* this piece, I finally reached the understanding that it was no more my “business” to talk about his place than it was his to talk about “*my family’s*” view on the place called MÁLEXEL.

PHILIP KEVIN PAUL, a member of the WSÁNEĆ Nation from Vancouver Island’s Saanich Peninsula, works with the University of Victoria to preserve SENĆOŦEN. He has published two books of poetry, *Taking the Names Down from the Hill* and *Little Hungers*, the former the recipient of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize, the latter a nominee for the Governor General’s Literary Award for Poetry.





THE MALAHAT REVIEW

Editorial Dinner

FRIDAY, ~~DECEMBER~~ ^{NOVEMBER 12} 1965 in the Princess Louise
Room of the Empress Hotel

Menu

Seafood Cocktail

Gourmet

*

Consommé

*

Roast Prime Ribs of Beef,
Yorkshire, Potatoes Chateaux,
Green Beans.

*

Strawberry Parfait

*

Coffee.

6x9

NICHOLAS BRADLEY

Islands and Empires: Beginnings

That a review which can compete with any other in the English language should appear in Canada is now not merely thinkable. It happens — and in Victoria.

—George Woodcock¹

Where are the gods?

—Robin Skelton²

ON THE COOL TWELFTH of November 1965, ten men dined in the Princess Louise Room at the Empress Hotel on Government Street in Victoria, British Columbia.³ They were served seafood cocktail, consommé, roast beef, and Yorkshire pudding. For dessert, strawberry parfait. The grand hotel's colonial splendour was faded. When the Empress opened in 1908, its guests would still have remembered Queen Victoria's death at the start of the new century. The Empress of India, for whom the hotel was named, was succeeded by Edward VII, George V, the disastrous Edward VIII, and George VI. Finally, in 1952, Elizabeth II ascended the throne. Two years later, the Coronet Room opened in the Empress: the Empire had its ruler, Everest had been scaled, and the city of Victoria had a cocktail lounge at last. But a decade on, as Canada's centennial anniversary loomed, to say nothing of the Summer of Love, the Empress seemed a little dingy, a little out of date.

Across Belleville Street from the hotel, on the grounds of the Provincial British Columbia Museum, as it was known then, was another world. The public space of Thunderbird Park was established in 1941 with the aim of preserving what in the language of the time was called Indian art, but it came to be regarded as an ersatz representation of the Indigenous cultures of the Pacific Northwest.

1 [George Woodcock], "Sparrows and Eagles," unsigned editorial, *Canadian Literature* 40 (Spring 1969): 3.

2 Robin Skelton, *Landmarks* (Victoria, B.C.: Sono Nis, 1979; Lantzville, B.C.: Oolichan, 1979), 16.

3 *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Victoria Libraries.

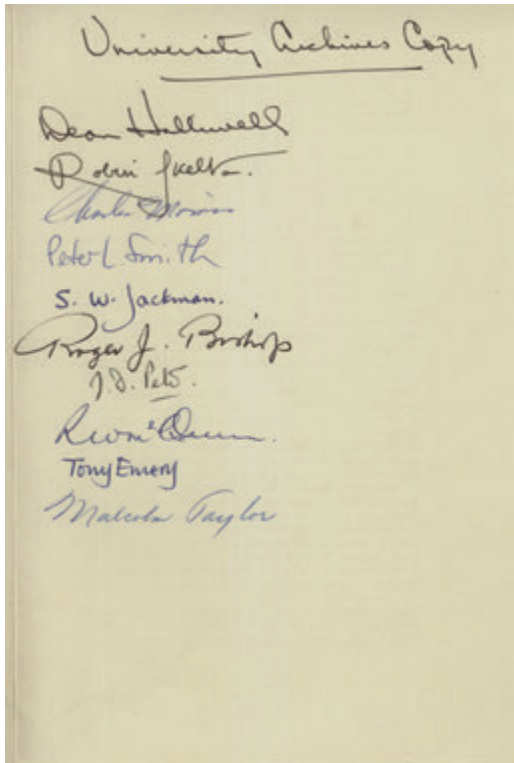


Issue 23, 1972. Cover art: Myfanwy Pavelic, portrait of Robin Skelton (not credited inside the issue cover but mentioned in Skelton's "Comment" on page 7).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Facing page: Holograph draft of menu for *Malahat Review* editorial board dinner at the Empress Hotel in 1965. The *Malahat Review* fonds also contains printer's copies of the menu.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]



Copy of menu for the *Malahat Review* editorial board dinner with signatures of attendees on the back. There are two signed copies of the menu in the *Malahat Review* fonds; this one, designated the “University Archives Copy” at the top, demonstrates the board members’ self-conscious historicization of the occasion.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

Facing page: Letter from Robin Skelton to Gerhart B. Friedmann, professor in the Department of Physics at the University of Victoria and *Malahat Review* advisory board member. The letter, dated 22 January 1975, requests Friedmann’s support for the magazine during the “Financial Crisis” of 1975–1978. Skelton’s handwritten note reads “Do help if you feel able, please. We face extinction.”

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

By 1965, however, Thunderbird Park had been reconceived as a celebration of living artistic and architectural traditions, and it had been physically transformed. Over a decade before, Wilson Duff, the museum curator of anthropology, had commissioned Mungo Martin, the great Kwakwaka’wakw artist from Tsaxis (Fort Rupert), to build a new ceremonial big house and to restore and replicate existing totem poles. In 1953, the big house, named Wawaditla, was inaugurated by the first legal potlatch in recent memory; the Indian Act had been amended only two years earlier, ending the hateful ban on such ceremonies. Work continued apace at Thunderbird Park even after Martin died in 1962, and it was but a short stroll from the Empress to the carving shed where figures were coaxed to emerge from western red cedar.

The contradictions of provincial life could not have been more apparent. The names of the hotel, the streets, the city, and the province proclaimed a colonial legacy—and indeed a colonial reality—yet within sight of the Empress was an artists’ workshop devoted to the vastly older history of the Northwest Coast, a studio sanctioned, oddly enough, by a museum with an eminently colonial appellation. British Columbia was scarcely more than a century old in 1965—the centenary of the creation of the crown colony had been observed in 1958—and in some quarters a mood of youthful optimism prevailed. The University of Victoria had been chartered two years before, and the opening of the Gordon Head campus signalled a major change in the capital city’s cultural life. The diners in the Empress, members of the new university, were gathered to discuss the creation of a literary journal. Among them was Robin Skelton, a Yorkshireman who had come to Victoria to assume an associate professorship in the Department of English. He had arrived in what he perceived to be an outpost of Empire, the world’s literary centres thousands of miles away, but his job in this proverbial small pond seemed full of promise. Whether he knew it or not, Skelton found himself on land that had been obtained for the Crown by the Douglas Treaties of 1850–1854. In 1969, Duff would publish a study of Songhees (Lkwungen) place names that identified the site of the Empress as “Whosaykum (x^wse’•qəm),” meaning “‘clay’ or ‘muddy place.’”⁴ Duff was canny as well as curious: he understood that a treaty was often merely “a parody” of “a political transaction,” and that the old hotel, like the entire colonial infrastructure, was built on unstable, contested land:

What “aboriginal title” might consist of in 1969 does not seem to be very clear to anyone. But whatever else it might be, it is a concept deeply rooted in British custom and law, referring to the rights which the Crown has recognized as vested in the aboriginal inhabitants of the land. The Crown, in North America at

4 Wilson Duff, “The Fort Victoria Treaties,” *BC Studies* 3 (1969): 44–45.

THE MALAHAT REVIEW

AN INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY OF LIFE AND LETTERS

Editor: Robin Skelton

THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA / VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

January 22, 1975

Dear Gerhardt

Rising costs are endangering the continued existence of the MALAHAT REVIEW. I have been asked to discuss the Review's application for additional funds with the President of the University and his Executive Committee on February 4, 1975 and to provide them with whatever evidence I can adduce to show that the MALAHAT REVIEW is recognized locally, nationally and internationally as a publication of outstanding quality that deserves increased University backing.

The President has suggested that some part of this evidence should take the form of letters of commendation and support from those who feel strongly that the Review should not be discontinued. I am therefore asking you to help the Review by writing in support of it. Letters, cards and cables should be sent directly to me at the MALAHAT REVIEW, they will then be Xeroxed and submitted to the Executive Committee.

Obviously yours urgently,

Robin

Robin Skelton, B.A., M.A., F.R.S.L.
Editor

*To help if you feel able, please. We face
extinction. R*



Issue 45, 1978. First in the “West Coast Renaissance” series. Cover art: Margaret Peterson, *Christmas Card for 1962* (Robin and Sylvia Skelton Collection).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

least, has always recognized an obligation to extinguish this native title, and the method of doing so has been by treaty.⁵

“Colonialism came late and gradually to the Pacific Northwest,” the esteemed historian Jean Barman has observed, but its effects were cataclysmic, and obvious to anyone who cared to look.⁶ Labouring to revivify traditions that the colonial project sought to eradicate, Duff, Martin, and their colleagues at Thunderbird Park were taking part in a cultural renaissance, to use a term that Skelton would then have associated with the Celtic Twilight of the late nineteenth century. Only later did he grasp its local relevance.

Such matters of history and nomenclature may not have been discussed by the academics in the Princess Louise Room. The journal that they envisioned, with its distinctive and distinctly non-English name, has over the decades since the first issue appeared in 1967 made an inestimable contribution to the literary culture of the city, the province, the country, and beyond. In a strict sense, the history of *The Malahat Review* is composed of the minutiae of publishing: submissions and rejections, deadlines and grant applications. But in a broader sense, the beginnings of the *Malahat* are tied to ideas about the nature of place and the location of culture on the West Coast. The founding editors, Skelton (1925–1997) and John Peter (1921–1983), hoped to join the high-cultural conversation carried on by London and New York, Cambridge and Cambridge, Mass. Yet the *Malahat* also came to serve the local and regional literary and artistic communities—to discover, as it were, a sense of place. The gulf between the Empress and Thunderbird Park has not been closed, but *The Malahat Review* has played a part in imagining a regional culture in the Pacific Northwest that would be marked not by division but instead by reciprocity and respect.

Skelton spent the summer of 1962 as a visitor at the University of Victoria. He then taught briefly at the University of Massachusetts and at the University of Manchester, his home institution, before emigrating in 1963. He travelled to Victoria by plane; his wife, Sylvia, and their children sailed from England on the suitably named *Empress of Canada*.⁷ As he recalled in *The Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead* (1988), he was struck by a sense of opportunity: “Victoria was exciting in the sixties. There was so much to be done, so much to build. I was a happy man.”⁸ Already an accomplished author, Skelton had several volumes of poetry to his name. His first, *Patmos and Other Poems* (1955), was followed by three collections published by the prestigious Oxford University Press: *Third Day Lucky* (1958), *Beg-*

5 Duff, 54.

6 Jean Barman, *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 4.

7 Robin Skelton, *The Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1988), 187.

8 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 201.

ging the *Dialect* (1960), and *The Dark Window* (1962). An uncommonly prolific editor and critic, he had also written a handful of scholarly books. But in Victoria, Skelton entered a period of transition in which he sought to understand his new city and the surrounding region, to render the place legible to himself, to answer the question he later posed in a poem called “The Guardians”: “Where are the gods?”⁹ Robert Frost wrote: “The land was ours before we were the land’s,” in “The Gift Outright,” a poem from *A Witness Tree* (1942) that he read at President Kennedy’s inauguration in 1961.¹⁰ “[W]e were England’s, still colonials, / Possessing what we still were unpossessed by, / Possessed by what we now no more possessed”: Frost meant the settlers of Jamestown and Plymouth Rock, but the sentiment might have resonated with someone who, like Skelton, had ventured from one island to another, from Old World to New.¹¹ But how wrong Frost was, or anyone else, to think that “the land vaguely realizing westward” — the American continent — was “still unstoried, artless, unenhanced.”¹² Skelton’s self-education did not occur instantly, but over time he came to comprehend the storied nature of his newfound home.

In 1968, the year of Trudeaumania, McClelland and Stewart issued Skelton’s *Selected Poems*, which shared the Canadian publisher’s list with Al Purdy’s *Wild Grape Wine*. The collection included poems with local references — “Night Poem, Vancouver Island,” “Remembering Esquimalt,” “Undergrowth” — and in his preface Skelton noted that his emigration “fundamentally altered [his] way of life and [his] poetry.”¹³ The creative sway of his acquired home was confirmed by another major volume, *Landmarks* (1979), the resonant title suggesting a desire for orientation and familiarity. He remained sensitive, however, to what he saw as his ambivalent reception in his adopted country, writing in his *Memoirs* that “[a]fter a quarter of a century in Canada I am still, it seems, regarded by some as no true Canadian”:

The British justifiably consider me no longer one of them, and as I am not an American, and am only Irish by virtue of the vote of a small group of poets, there are occasional brief moments when

9 Skelton, *Landmarks*, 16.

10 Robert Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays*, ed. Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson (New York: Library of America, 1995), 316.

11 Frost, 316.

12 Frost, 316.

13 Robin Skelton, *Selected Poems 1947–1967* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 8.



Robin Skelton with material for *The Malahat Review*, 1975.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives’ Historical Photograph Collection, PB 075.0301]

ROBIN SKELTON

The Malahat Review owes a great debt to Robin Skelton (1925–1997). Without his initial vision, dogged determination, and almost superhuman energies, the *Malahat* would not only have never been conceived, but it would have quite likely met the fate of other countless flash-in-the-pan literary magazines. Canadian literature would have been all the poorer had this upstart Yorkshireman not persevered in his quest to establish — and sustain — a University of Victoria-based “International Quarterly of Life and Letters” (the magazine’s original subtitle) to stand with the best “little magazines” in the world. It was a formidable task; but then Skelton was a formidable man.

Of course, Skelton had help along the way, and those who assisted in the myriad tasks of running the magazine were acknowledged and sincerely thanked in the final issue under his purview (Issue 64, 1983). They included administrative staff and those who edited certain theme issues or acted as assistant editors. He also thanked Charles and Richard Morriss, of Morriss Printing, whose distinctive design and craftsmanship contributed to the

Malahat's success. Even with this support, it is astounding to consider the amount of work, in the days before computers and email, that went into the editing and production of issues often well over 200 pages, with illustrations, meticulous notes, and contributions from distant authors. Add to this Skelton's regular teaching duties, committee obligations, bureaucratic manoeuvrings, his own prolific literary, scholarly, and artistic pursuits, and of course his family life... one can only feel humbled by his legacy.

A distinguishing feature of Skelton's editorship was his firm belief that by featuring previously unpublished work by luminaries such as D. H. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats, Jorge Luis Borges, or art by David Jones, Henry Moore, and others, the magazine's reputation as one "not to be missed" would strengthen its international reputation and, by extension, introduce the world to Canadian writing. He also introduced a series of brief book reviews, writing many of them himself. Skelton never shied away from weighing in with a voice of reason when popular opinion struck him as ludicrous. His regular editorial comments reveal a man who recognized the power of the pen and who didn't hesitate to wield it. In Issue 40 (1976), for example, he criticized those overly zealous nationalists who felt that all university teachers who were not Canadian should be deprived of tenure and dismissed—he, of course, was an immigrant himself. Another extreme position he opposed in the same issue was that "Creative Writing students should not be required to read any books by non-Canadians." Skelton's response was passionately articulate: "Let us remember that in this global village we have [...] many neighbours. And let us incite our young writers to learn from all those neighbours, [...] and, in discovering differences come to a better understanding of what is, for them, uniquely Canadian. We cannot retreat to "cultural integrity"; we must advance towards it."

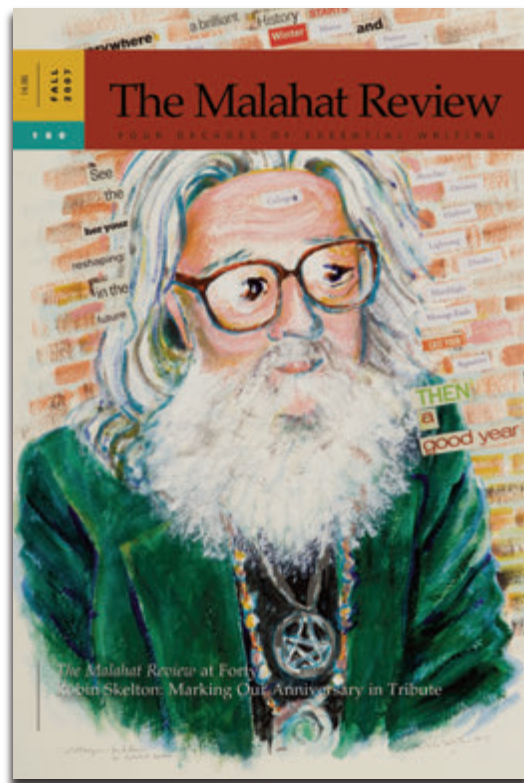
By 1983, after seventeen remarkable years, Skelton had wearied of the strain of ongoing financial and administrative battles. "There is no easy way to say good-bye," he wrote in his Valedictory Comment, but concluded, "I feel, as I put this issue to bed, that I have been given the time and opportunity to begin other projects and that the magazine itself is at a new beginning."

– RHONDA BATCHELOR

RHONDA BATCHELOR has worked as Assistant Editor of *The Malahat Review* since 2004. A graduate of the University of Victoria (BFA, 1975), she has published books of poetry and fiction. She and her late husband, Charles Lillard, were close friends of the Skeltons, co-founding The Hawthorne Society of Arts and Letters, and publishing (as Reference West) the accompanying chapbooks for a monthly reading series that ran from 1990 to 2000.

Issue 160, 2007: "A Celebration of Robin Skelton."
Cover art: Carole Sabiston, *Call Signs by Robin*
for *Malahat Review*, 2007 (University of Victoria
Legacy Art Galleries).

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]



I wonder if I will ever be accepted as a member of any tribe. The moments pass, however. I myself know that Canada is my country, the home I found, perhaps even the home that found me.¹⁴

A prophet is not without honour but in his own country: in the copy of *Landmarks* in the stacks of the McPherson Library at the University of Victoria, one reader returned a severe verdict: "Vanity compounded with inanity."¹⁵ A more charitable description of Skelton's writing is supplied by the poet Robert Bringhurst: "Extensive and various though it is, Robin's poetry is very often that of a man in mind of a woman. Even his books on the craft and theory of poetry steer by this light; they are all about ecstasy and technique. He is a poet of sexual love [...]."¹⁶

¹⁴ Skelton, *Memoirs*, 296–97.

¹⁵ Marginalia in Skelton, *Landmarks*, 7. University of Victoria Libraries, PR6037 K38L36.

¹⁶ Robert Bringhurst, "Of Gladness as a Moral Force in Time," *Skelton at 60*, ed. Barbara E. Turner (Erin,

Despite his considerable distinction as an author and his extraordinary number of books, Skelton's greatest talent may have been his sociability. In Victoria he belonged to a society of artists called the Limmers (founded in 1971), and he and Sylvia made of their various homes a salon of long standing. His cultural network also extended south of the border. Shortly after arriving on Vancouver Island, Skelton developed connections to a group of American writers across the water in Washington, including Carolyn Kizer ("a wonderfully statuesque blonde with perfect features," he claimed), Richard Hugo ("obese and gloomy"), and David Wagoner ("inexpressibly handsome and elegant").¹⁷ He also met their mentor, the lauded but "monumentally sombre" poet Theodore Roethke, who like Skelton had once been a newcomer to the West Coast—he arrived in Seattle in 1947—and whose influence as a teacher of creative writing at the University of Washington was echoed in Skelton's equivalent role at the University of Victoria. Kizer became an advisory editor of the *Malahat*, serving from January 1967 until October 1968. She also taught Skelton to use chopsticks—an apparent social necessity in the Northwest—and her ebullient letters to her friend in Canada number among the more entertaining elements of Skelton's archives at the University of Victoria Libraries.¹⁸ A slightly more distant colleague, the poet William Stafford,¹⁹ who taught at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, became the subject of a poem published in Skelton's posthumous *Facing the Light* (2006):

We met rarely
and were never close,
but how close, ever,
are those friends who share,
without thinking or telling,
a quiet conviction
and wear it in different weathers
by different hills?²⁰

ON: The Porcupine's Quill, 1986), 88.

¹⁷ Skelton, *Memoirs*, 167, 168.

¹⁸ Skelton, *Memoirs*, 169.

¹⁹ Skelton, *Memoirs*, 223.

²⁰ Robin Skelton, "For William Stafford," *Facing the Light* (Victoria, B.C.: Ekstasis, 2006), 27. Cf. Robin Skelton, *In This Poem I Am: Selected Poetry of Robin Skelton*, ed. Harold Rhenisch (Toronto: Dundurn, 2007), 167–69.



John Peter (left) and Robin Skelton (right) on a break from working on *The Malahat Review*, 1967.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives' Historical Photograph Collection, PB 049.0916]

JOHN PETER

Without John Peter (1921–1983), *The Malahat Review* would never have existed. It was he who gave the magazine its name and it was his academic standing and reputation for clarity of mind and shrewdness of judgement that carried most weight in persuading the President and Board of Governors that this would be a magazine of real quality, edited knowledgeably and responsibly managed. As an editor he was clear-sighted and painstaking. He had strong views as to the kind of review we should create. It should be international in scope, should contain art as well as fiction, poetry, and drama, and should print only a small number of truly excellent critical essays. He brought many important contributions to our pages. His love of music led to our having essays by Wilfrid Mellers and Edmund Bubbra; his appreciation of art led him to acquire work from Graham Sutherland and John Piper; his concern for high standards of criticism provided important essays by Christopher Ricks and Frank Kermode.

He was an easy man to work with. On those very few occasions when we disagreed, he



John Peter, 1983.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives' Historical Photograph Collection, PB 138.0712]

thoroughfare. For all that, our early editorial conferences, when Tony Emery was Art Editor, were filled with zest and hilarity, and John was an admirable and entertaining host to many visiting writers.

John was a man of principle. When we began work on the magazine he stated firmly that no editor should keep his position for more than five years; a longer tenure was likely to lead to sameness in the magazine and loss of acuity in the editor. It was three-quarters of the way through our fifth year of publication that he resigned, and provided me with the opportunity to publish two of his finest short stories, "Make a Joyful Noise" and "Vallor." Another of his principles had been that we should not publish our own fiction and poetry.

John Peter was a fine writer, a sensitive and judicious editor, a generous and courteous colleague, and, if not the onlie begetter, certainly the man without whom *The Malahat Review* could not have existed, and could not have achieved the position in the world of letters which it now holds.

– ROBIN SKELTON

Originally published in Issue 66 (1983).

had the right to overrule me on fiction, and I the right to include poems that he disliked. These rights were exercised perhaps half a dozen times in the years of our shared editorship. He was enormously and generously tolerant of my enthusiasms, and chose to allow me to do most of the necessary travelling in search of material from Europe and the United States, only rarely expressing doubt over some of the strange contributions with which I returned. He did not himself enjoy that kind of excitement and preferred the decent reticence of the back room to the hurly burly of the

Roethke had been the presiding literary spirit of the Northwest for more than a decade when he died suddenly in August 1963. His widow, Beatrice, gave Skelton "half a dozen of Ted's heavy rayon shirts" — an apt evocation of literary inheritance, of the similar roles played by the poets in their respective literary spheres, and of Robin's affinity for Ted.²¹ Skelton edited *Five Poets of the Pacific Northwest* (1964), an anthology that memorably attested to Roethke's legacy, and that affirmed Hugo, Kizer, Stafford, and Wagoner as notable regionalists. (The fifth poet in the book was Kenneth O. Hanson, who taught at Reed College in Portland. His translations of poems by Han Yu appeared in the sixth issue of the *Malahat* [1968].) And in the first issue of the *Malahat*, Skelton reviewed Roethke's *Collected Poems* (1966): "if there is a pure poet in the twentieth century," he proposed, "it is Roethke."²²

Skelton's companions at the Empress in 1965 included Malcolm Taylor, the President of the University of Victoria; Roger Bishop, Head of the Department of English; Dean Halliwell, who despite his decanal name was the University Librarian; and other supportive academics. The sole civilian was Charles Morriss, who with his son Richard operated Morriss Printing of Victoria.²³ Apart from Skelton, the leading figure was John Peter, a literary critic (*Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature* [1956]), novelist (*Along That Coast* [1964]), and professor of English. Skelton later remembered Peter soberly but approvingly: "He was a most affectionate, indeed passionate man, but not a tolerant one, and he saw his colleagues in black and white. A good many he regarded as boring and useless, and though his manners were always impeccable, his views did not always endear him to his colleagues, who quickly sensed or heard of his opinions."²⁴ Peter was South African, and the two expats were com-

²¹ Skelton, *Memoirs*, 191.

²² Robin Skelton, "The Poetry of Theodore Roethke," *The Malahat Review* 1 (1967): 144.

²³ *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089.

²⁴ Skelton, *Memoirs*, 193.

parably immune to Canadian delusions of grandeur:²⁵ “Peter and I ran our heads into Canadian nationalism quite unintentionally in 1967 [...]. We did it by talking to each other first about the state of Canadian letters, and mourning that there was no Canadian literary magazine of international standing.”²⁶ A solution to that problem soon presented itself, and, once the matter of the name was settled, *The Malahat Review* was born:

We puzzled over the title of our magazine for some time as we talked to Malcolm Taylor about it. He was as enthusiastic as we could have dared to hope. This, we all felt, would put Victoria on the map. But we couldn’t, could we, use the word Victoria in the title? It would suggest everything we did not wish. At last John [Peter] came up with a title. It was meaningless, and carried no implications of the magazine’s contents or attitudes. It was a local name which satisfied our regional pride. And it was a good shape typographically. In 1966 [...] we started work on the *Malahat Review*.²⁷

Skelton consistently credited Peter with seizing upon the name. It may have had “a good shape” and a good sound, but surely it also held a personal significance for Skelton, who on his first Victorian sojourn in 1962 had been taken up the Malahat on a sightseeing drive.²⁸ He was also enamoured of the views from Brentwood Bay: “The surroundings [...] enchanted me—the great trees, the peak of the Malahat mountain across the Saanich Inlet.”²⁹ As every resident of Victoria knows, the Malahat—a twisting, treacherous stretch of Highway 1—separates the city from the rest of Vancouver Island. It is, as Skelton himself wrote, “the main road to the interior and the north.”³⁰ To go over the Malahat is to enter the hinterland, and perhaps the journal’s name suggests an imaginative voyage into the unknown—a “long journey out of the self,” to borrow a phrase from Roethke’s “North American Sequence.”³¹ If the name *Malahat* was

25 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 10, 192, 204, 222.

26 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 204–05.

27 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 205. Cf. Robin Skelton, “John Peter 1921–1983,” *The Malahat Review* 66 (1983), 5; and Robin Skelton, “*The Malahat Review*: A Brief History,” *The Malahat Review Index 1967–1977, Nos. 1–42*, comp. Patricia José (Victoria, B.C.: Malahat Review, 1977), 5.

28 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 163.

29 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 165.

30 Skelton, “*Malahat*”: 5.

31 Theodore Roethke, “Journey to the Interior,” *The Collected Poems of Theodore*



Constance Rooke with copies of *The Malahat Review*, 1985.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives’ Historical Photograph Collection, PB 042.6613]

CONSTANCE ROOKE

Years ago, introducing Constance Rooke at a literary event, I said she was like the sun: “When she enters a room it immediately becomes brighter, warmer, and full of energy.” Like the sun, Connie was a force to be reckoned with. Beautiful and brilliant, she had a sharp mind, a keen wit, and never could suffer fools gladly.

A high school photograph of her when she was the teenage host of a radio show catches the vision, courage, and determination that characterized her throughout her life. Assigned a program about baseball, about which she knew nothing, she was undaunted and went ahead to conduct a successful interview.

Born in New York City in 1942, Connie attended Smith College, Tulane University and the University of North Carolina where she earned a PhD in English and met her husband, fiction writer, playwright, and artist Leon Rooke. Together they moved to Victoria in 1968 where Connie taught English, was chair of Women’s Studies, became editor of the *Malahat*, and began her distinguished career as a literary critic and champion of Canadian literature. Connie announced in her first issue



Women's Studies committee, 1979, with (left to right) Theresa Iverson, Dr. Paddy Tsurumi, Dr. Constance Rooke, and Dr. Jenny Waelti-Walters.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives' Historical Photograph Collection, PB 079.0403]

(Issue 65, 1983) that the *Malahat* would henceforth "become more distinctly a Canadian magazine," soliciting Canadian poetry and fiction and reviewing mostly Canadian books. During this period, she edited several anthologies, including a collection of her own essays on Canadian writing, *Fear of the Open Heart* (1989), a book that testified to her whole-hearted embrace of our national literature and her capacity to engage with people on the page and in person. An unwavering curiosity about each person and every subject served her well in the slew of interviews she conducted over the next few decades with writers such as P. K. Page, Thomas King, and Michael Ondaatje, many of whom were published in the *Malahat*.

Connie accepted a position as professor of English at the University of Guelph in 1988, eventually becoming Vice-President Academic. With Leon, she founded and ran the celebrated Eden Mills Writers' Festival for a decade until leaving to become President of the University of Winnipeg in 1999. In 2002, the Rookes moved to Toronto. There she became President of PEN Canada and founded the University of Guelph's Humber College-based Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

Connie remained the *Malahat*'s editor until 1992 and her connection to the *Malahat* was lifelong, continuing to inform her sense of students' aspirations as writers. She even purchased advertising in the magazine to attract applicants to her new MFA program.

A remarkable individual, a devoted teacher, and a discerning editor, Connie was also a generous, open-hearted and energetic friend. "If a friend asks for something, you simply do it," she told me, "Always!" She willingly did whatever was asked of her in all aspects of her life. Her early death at 65 in 2009 was an enormous loss to her friends, family, students, colleagues, and to the field of Canadian literature, which she worked so energetically to nurture and celebrate.

– CAROL MATTHEWS

CAROL MATTHEWS has worked as a social worker and instructor at Vancouver Island University. She has published a collection of short stories and four works of memoir. *Minerva's Owl*, her book on bereavement, recently appeared with Oolichan Books.

chosen arbitrarily, moreover, it was not truly "meaningless."³² Peter and Skelton may not have known its origins (although conceivably they could have consulted a gazetteer), or that what Skelton called "the peak of the Malahat mountain" is in SENĆOŦEN called YOS, or that the name MÁLEXEĒ refers to a site of infestation by caterpillars; but the name nonetheless tied the journal to the world centred on the Salish Sea, and to its history both ancient and recent.³³ The editors selected a manifestly local name, in short, but they did not reckon with their right to claim it, nor with its claim upon them.

The first issue of the *Malahat* rang in the new year of 1967; its impressive list of contributors included John Betjeman, D. J. Enright, Frank Kermode, and Zulfikar Ghose. Across the Strait of Georgia at the University of British Columbia, the corresponding issue of *Canadian Literature*—a scholarly journal edited by George Woodcock—celebrated the poet F. R. Scott and looked ahead to the impending national anniversary. "The centennial celebration is an historical festival commemorating a political event," the issue's editorial began sceptically, "and it might well be asked what interest it can have for a literary magazine. After all, if one discounts mere polemics, the literature that emerged from the event itself was negligible."³⁴ Since its first issue in 1959, *Canadian Literature* had faced the continual burden of asserting the existence of the very literature that it purported to examine. Yet by 1967, it seemed, a quiet confidence was in order, and the importance of the Centennial could be assumed, albeit modestly: "if, as we believe, a distinguishable literature which can be called Canadian has appeared by the 1960's, it has inevitably been shaped and conditioned by the circumstances which fol-

Roethke (New York: Anchor–Random House, 1991), 187. Cf. Skelton, "Malahat": 5.

³² Skelton, *Memoirs*, 205.

³³ Philip Kevin Paul, *The Care-Takers: The Re-Emergence of the Saanich Indian Map* (Sidney, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 1995), 8.

³⁴ Woodcock, "Canadian": 3.

lowed from Confederation."³⁵ The issue in question contained an essay by Skelton, who assessed Scott's *Selected Poems* of 1966.³⁶ He was typically bombastic in his judgement, giving his metaphor free rein: "At a time when frenetic symbolism and rhetorical gesticulation are running neck and neck with pseudo-imagist reportage and structureless colloquialism in the race towards a Canadian Parnassus, it is enormously rewarding to turn one's glasses on a poet of a different colour, and one whose measured steady progress has been unattended by ballyhoo and self-dramatization."³⁷

The pages of *Canadian Literature* suggested that the field was full of life. Among the books reviewed in the Scott issue were Robert Kroetsch's *The Words of My Roaring*, Margaret Laurence's *A Jest of God*, and Rudy Wiebe's *First and Vital Candle*. One A. W. Purdy contributed a short essay on Earle Birney, and a poem by Purdy, "Arctic Rhododendrons," appeared in an advertisement for the Hudson's Bay Company. (The Bay's poetry sponsorship campaign ran in the *Malahat* too. Between 1967 and 1971, the magazine's back covers featured poems by such luminaries as Birney, Margaret Atwood, Irving Layton, Dorothy Livesay, Gwendolyn MacEwen, and John Newlove.) But in his essay, Skelton revealed himself to be an outsider still, keen to deflate parochial pretensions. If Scott was "a splendid versifier, an intensely intelligent writer, a wit, and a man of deep feeling," and even "one of our four or five finest living poets," he nevertheless fell short of sheer genius:

His work may not place him alongside the greatest of the twentieth-century poets of England and America, but poets should be judged by their excellences not by their limitations, and Scott has made a number of poems that ensure his survival down the years. He may not have reached the highest peak of Parnassus, but he is assured of a place upon the middle slopes. Only a very few can ever hope to climb farther.³⁸

Supremely confident in his critical opinions, Skelton expressed his Olympian views with gusto. A few years later, when in the *Malahat* he reviewed Philip Larkin's scandalous *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* (1973), he listed the many poets passed over by the editor: "The roll call of good poets omitted is almost as long as that of good serious poets represented by their most lightweight work."³⁹ In a draft of his review, he included "among such an impressive throng" of absent figures one author in particular: "Robin Skelton."⁴⁰ Modesty compelled him to strike out his name, but the typescript suggests

35 Woodcock, "Canadian": 3.

36 Robin Skelton, "A Poet of the Middle Slopes," *Canadian Literature* 31 (1967): 40.

37 Skelton, "Poet": 40.

38 Skelton, "Poet": 43-44.

39 Robin Skelton, "Comment," *The Malahat Review* 27 (1973): 6.

40 *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089.



Author photo taken by Marcie Engleman for Derk Wynand's *Snowscapes* (Sono Nis, 1974).

DERK WYNAND AND MARLENE COOKSHAW

In 1968, Robin Skelton accepted Derk Wynand's translation of Jean Chatard's "Jarnacueira" for his "Atlas of Poetry." Soon after, Derk began teaching a writing course in the Department of English at the University of Victoria, and in 1973, when Creative Writing broke away as a distinct entity, Skelton invited him to be his assistant editor. It was no doubt a good fit because, by Wynand's own admission, he shared "Robin's internationalist view of poetry." On the strengths of his translations of H. C. Artmann, Skelton asked him to edit "Austrian Writing Today" (Issue 37, 1976). Artmann's Salzburg publisher provided him with the names of and introductions to prominent Austrian writers, and he contributed many of his own translations of their work. The issue marked the end of his first "stage" as a *Malahat* board member. He enjoyed a second brief stint as Constance Rooke's associate editor in the mid-1980s and, with her encouragement, he applied to replace her as editor in 1992.

The *Malahat* enjoyed considerable success under Derk, earning a Journey Prize for a story by Elyse Gasco and a National Magazine Award for poems by Jan Zwicky. The Western Magazine Awards named the journal the 1994

Magazine of the Year (circulation under 20,000 category). Bolstered by extra provincial funding to mark the Victoria-hosted XV Commonwealth Games, he edited Issue 107 (1994), a remarkable gazetteer of writers from Commonwealth member states around the globe. Derk articulates his editorial approach as inspired by I. A. Richard's *New Criticism*, "relying on a close reading of the work without any linkage to larger literary or historical contexts." The work—and the high standard of his accomplishment as editor—speaks for itself.

When Derk stepped down in 1998, Marlene stepped forward. She had been one of his most promising students, whom he describes "as a wonderfully bright, talented writer already when she took her first course with me. During the time we worked together, I thought her eagerness to edit submissions that she liked was an aggressive mirror-image of mine in workshops. She helped attract or identify many of the authors who went on to win magazine awards." Marlene's connection with the *Malahat* began in 1985 as Rooke's editorial assistant, and she became assistant editor in 1986, then under Derk, associate editor. Whether it involved filing grants, copy editing, or driving production, she maintained the journal's infrastructure for over a decade. She served as acting editor after Derk's departure in 2000, and was officially named editor later that year.

What she liked most was working with all the other people connected to the magazine, especially during the editorial board meetings for poetry and fiction, where there was always lively discussion. She decided to feature contemporary Canadian artists in the *Malahat* and asked a friend at the Vancouver Art Gallery how best to find them. He suggested Wanda Koop in Winnipeg, who recruited the artists whose work appeared on the covers during Marlene's tenure. In the fall of 2003, with Lorna Jackson she co-edited what would be her second-last issue on the theme of reviewing (Issue 144) because, as explained in her introduction, she "wanted to understand a little better the reviewer's mind." The essays contributed by writers and critics like Hilary Mantel and Jan Zwicky have since elicited as much controversy as, if not more than, voluble reviews. Lucy Bashford, who worked as assistant editor under Marlene, captures her best: "She was a very fine editor. Because she's a poet, she made sure each word counted—whether it was poetry or prose."

– JOHN BARTON

Facing page: Letter from University of Victoria President and Vice-Chancellor David H. Turpin, dated 10 September 2001, congratulating Marlene Cookshaw on the prestige of *The Malahat Review*.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

how closely his critical judgements were bound to his own literary ambitions. Whether he was writing about Canadian literature or English, Skelton was guided by a specific and somewhat narrow vision of literary brilliance and international appeal. Unlike *Canadian Literature*, *The Malahat Review* was expressly international in outlook. The original subtitle stated the editorial direction plainly: "An International Quarterly of Life and Letters." (Incidentally, both *Canadian Literature* and the *Malahat* were printed in Victoria by Morriss Printing.)

From the outset, Skelton and Peter were preoccupied with circulation and their desire to attract a readership abroad. "The problem" with the *Malahat*, Peter stated in an editorial meeting, "is how to get it out of Victoria and into people's houses."⁴¹ But promotion and postage were expensive, and the striving editors soon ran up against the financial constraints of a relatively small public institution. Skelton almost always perceived the University of Victoria's support of the *Malahat* to be inadequate. His relations with senior administrators were alternately frosty and heated, his communiqués to the President's office often intemperate. By the early 1970s, the *Malahat* was in a more or less permanent state of financial emergency. In 1975, Skelton sent President H. E. Petch a long list of the *Malahat's* distinguished supporters; Petch had demanded evidence of the journal's stature.⁴² (The list of supporters, beginning with Chinua Achebe and Margaret Atwood, appeared in Issue 36 [1975].) In his covering letter, Skelton wrote that the *Malahat* was fulfilling "its function of suggesting to the world of Arts, Letters and Scholarship that the University of Victoria ranks high as a centre of international culture"—a bold claim, and probably one that reflected aspiration rather than consensus of opinion.⁴³

41 Editorial board meeting minutes, Oct. [1967], *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089.

42 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 228.

43 Robin Skelton, letter to H. E. Petch, 7 February 1975, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089.



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**Office of the
President &
Vice-Chancellor**

*challenge minds
change worlds*

September 10, 2001

Ms Marlene Cookshaw
Editor
The Malahat Review
University of Victoria

SEP 12 2001

Dear Marlene:

Thanks for the Quill & Quire story on literary magazines in Canada. I enjoyed reading it but I was particularly pleased to see the comments from Joanne Lerocque-Poirier from the Canada Council "The jury commented that The Malahat Review is one of the best literary magazines in the country. It is solid and accomplished and has a clean and classic look."

As flattering as this may be, over the last year I have had two occasions where colleagues from Creative Writing and English Departments in this country have taken me aside and told me that "The Malahat Review is the best literary magazine in the country". I congratulate you for your hard work and accomplishments and we are all very proud of what you have accomplished.

Yours sincerely,

David H. Turpin,
President and Vice-Chancellor

DHT:vc



Issue 60, 1981. Third in the "West Coast Renaissance" series. Cover art: Mary Henrikson, #17 *Raven with Sun and Moon* (Jay Snodderly Collection).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]



Charles Lillard, 1976.

[University of Victoria Libraries Archives' Historical Photo Collection, PB 076. 1202]

The cosmopolitan leanings of the early *Malahat* can be discerned in the topics of special issues: Herbert Read (Issue 9, 1969), Friedrich Nietzsche (Issue 24, 1972, edited by David S. Thatcher), Robert Graves (Issue 35, 1975), Austrian writing (Issue 37, 1976, edited by Derk Wynand). Under the editors who succeeded Skelton, special issues addressed topics closer to home: John Metcalf (Issue 70, 1985, edited by Constance Rooke), George Johnston (Issue 78, 1987, edited by Rooke), P. K. Page (Issue 117, 1996, edited by Jay Ruzesky). But the divide between international inclinations and national concerns was not absolute, and Skelton also oversaw special issues on writing in Canada (Issue 26, 1973)—“Canadian literature is exciting to contemplate,” he offered, “for so much is still to be done that the mind boggles”⁴⁴—and on Margaret Atwood (Issue 41, 1977, edited by Linda Sandler). The Commonwealth Games were held in Victoria in 1994, and a sizeable issue of the *Malahat* was devoted to writers from Commonwealth countries and to “the diversity and commonality of cultures”—a gesture of which Skelton would have approved (Issue 107, 1994, edited by Derk Wynand).

Although Skelton was zealous about his journal’s global reach, he also dedicated many pages of the *Malahat* to local and regional writing. A portfolio titled “Twelve Poets of the Pacific Northwest” appeared in the eleventh issue (1969); the authors included Richard Hugo, Charles Lillard, and Susan Musgrave. Several years later, Marilyn Bowering and David Day selected poems for another special section, “Many Voices: Twelve Indian Poets of Canada” (Issue 26, 1973)—the best known of the poets is Jeannette Armstrong. The most significant of the *Malahat*’s contributions to the regional literary culture were three substantial special issues, each helmed by the visionary Charles Lillard, a writer with a profound commitment to the Pacific Northwest: “The West Coast Renaissance” (Issue 45, 1978, edited by Skelton and Lillard), “The West Coast Renaissance II” (Issue 50, 1979, edited by Skelton and Lillard), and “The West Coast Renaissance III” (Issue 60, 1981, edited by Lillard). Taken together, their eight hundred pages constitute a regional anthology of remarkable variety. In some ways the special issues were preliminary efforts rather than definitive statements, but they were guided by a desire for a genuine meeting, and indeed intermingling, of cultural traditions, and students of the literatures of the Northwest will recognize them as benchmarks or beacons. Despite his determination to look far afield for literary greatness, Skelton was not unwilling to attend to his immediate surroundings. The continuing existence of the *Malahat*, and Skelton’s contributions to the instruction of creative writing at the university, helped to foster literary communities in Victoria and elsewhere in the province; the artistic culture of the Pacific Slope that Lillard so prized was enriched, even if the border between Canada and the United States sometimes remained a gulf to be bridged.

44 Robin Skelton, “Comment,” *The Malahat Review* 26 (1973): 8.

Skelton was the most influential figure in the first fifteen years of the *Malahat*: “all the most effective magazines have been run by individuals, not by committees,” he maintained.⁴⁵ In April 1972, when the *Victoria Daily Colonist* ran a flattering profile of “UVic’s mighty-mite literary quarterly,” the *Malahat* was cast as Skelton’s pet project.⁴⁶ He had become the sole editor, in fact, when Peter relinquished his position after the first few years:

When John Peter and I founded the *Malahat Review* in 1967 he stated that in his opinion no quarterly review should run for longer than five years without some change of editorship, and stated that, at the end of five years it was his intention to resign. He has, accordingly, resigned his position as co-editor of the review with effect from the beginning of the 1971–72 academic session. I cannot pay sufficient tribute to the way in which he has worked with me to mould the character of the magazine and to make it one of the most respected quarterlies in North America.⁴⁷

Skelton’s first solo issue was the *Malahat*’s twentieth in October 1971; Peter’s departure was announced in the following issue of January 1972. Skelton and Peter later quarrelled bitterly when Skelton published the wrong draft of a story written by Peter, and they remained estranged when Peter died in 1983, although according to Skelton, Peter phoned him a final time from the grave, two days after his death.⁴⁸ Despite Skelton’s unmistakable influence, however, he never worked wholly by himself: Peter and many others—such as Lillard, Derk Wynand, and Joe Rosenblatt—played significant roles in the journal’s early history. Nor could Skelton hold his office forever. After a long tenure, he resigned the editorship as a result of his ceaseless squabbling with President Petch. His valedictory issue was published in February 1983 (Issue 64). Skelton was succeeded by Constance Rooke (1942–2008), who had been a faculty member of the Department of English since 1969; she served as editor from 1983 to 1992 (Issues 65–100), having already been the fiction editor in 1982 (Issues 61–64). “I could easily have let the *Malahat* die,” Skelton later wrote, “but I thought it would be wanton egotism to simply abandon it so that it would always be remembered as my own magazine.”⁴⁹ Nonetheless he was dissatisfied with its new direction: “the word international was dropped from the title, and the magazine changed. It now only occasionally contains contributions from outside Canada.”⁵⁰

45 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 231.

46 *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 9 April 1972, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089.

47 “The *Malahat Review*: Report for Summer 1971,” *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089.

48 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 226.

49 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 231.

50 Skelton, *Memoirs*, 231.



John Barton, 1981.

[Image courtesy of John Barton]

JOHN BARTON

I first met John Barton in 1978 in Robin Skelton’s third-year poetry workshop. John was wild-haired and wildly talented, already exploring themes of family, identity, and the body in his poetry and writing the early poems for his first books. A prairie boy, born in Edmonton and raised in Calgary, John had worked with some of the luminaries of Canadian literature (Eli Mandel and Gary Geddes), and he thrived in the lively writing scene in Victoria at that time, with readings at UVic and Thursday parties at Robin’s house.

By the time a suite of eleven of his Emily Carr poems marked his first appearance in *The Malahat Review* (Issue 63, 1982), John’s work was regularly appearing in literary journals across Canada, and his first book was out. He would go on to spend a semester at Columbia University working with Joseph Brodsky and Daniel Halpern before a Canada Council grant to complete *West of Darkness: Emily Carr, a Self-Portrait* lured him back to the West Coast. John continued writing and publishing, moving east again to go to library school, then residing in Ottawa for many years where he worked at five national museums, initially as the first librarian at the National Aviation

Museum, then as a publications coordinator for The National Gallery of Canada, where he also edited its quarterly, *Vernissage*.

In 1990, John and Rita Donovan took over editing Ottawa's *Arc Poetry Magazine*. Thus began John's career as a literary editor, a thirteen-year tenure that brought *Arc* to greater national attention. John also ran reading series and launched national writing contests, all while his personal writing flourished. When in 2003 I saw that the *Malahat* was looking for a successor to Marlene Cookshaw, I immediately emailed John to tell him he should apply—I could think of no one more suitable, given the work he had done with *Arc* and in the Ottawa writing scene. Maybe I bullied him a little, but time has shown that I was right. John's vision for the magazine, while continuing the Canadian focus established by Connie Rooke and continued by Derk Wynand and Marlene Cookshaw, also reintroduced some of the breadth of Robin's original international vision for the magazine. The journal has thrived under John's guidance, as evident in the depth of the "regular" issues; the results of the Open Season, Far Horizon, Novella, Creative Nonfiction, and Long Poem contests; and the multiple awards the magazine and its writers have received. The bright focus of themed issues, including tributes to authors such as Robin Skelton, Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane, and issues focusing on green writing, East Coast writing, creative nonfiction in Canada, translation, and especially the recent "Indigenous Perspectives" and fiftieth-anniversary issues, has illuminated the landscape of Canadian literature.

John is a remarkable editor at the magazine level, the book level (he has edited many poetry collections for writers and publishers across Canada), and at the level of individual poems. I've personally benefitted from John's precise and generous eye on my own work since those early days in class. Just a few years ago I experienced this again as John patiently worked with me to untangle and re-weave the threads of my "Transformation Song," which appeared in Issue 189. I am grateful, extremely lucky, and wise in my choice of editorially gifted friends. As is everyone who has read *The Malahat Review* for the last fourteen years.

— NEILE GRAHAM

NEILE GRAHAM, a Canadian living in Seattle, is workshop director of Clarion West Writers Workshop. Her poetry collections include *Spells for Clear Vision*, *Blood Memory*, and *She Says: Poems Selected and New* (a spoken-word CD). Two new books of poetry, *The Walk She Takes* and *Cedar and Stone*, will appear in 2019.

Skelton was not wrong to notice a shift. Between 1967 and 1983, the Canadian literary world changed, and the *Malahat* was obliged to respond. Whereas Skelton's attitudes were essentially modernist and his usual mode was polemical, Rooke oversaw the reshaping of the *Malahat* into the acclaimed journal familiar to readers today. She understood well how formative Skelton's presence had been: she observed in her first issue that "for the most part *The Malahat Review* has borne the stamp of one man,"⁵¹ and announced that it would henceforth "become more distinctly a Canadian literary magazine."⁵² It also became less academic as literary criticism, archival materials, and commentary on the visual arts ceased to be prominent features. Rooke was clear about her aims: "Above all, I want *The Malahat Review* to be recognized as a first-class magazine; I believe such things exist, and that we are in trouble if they do not or if their existence is denied."⁵³ Skelton's eclecticism and esoteric interests gave way to a more focused understanding of contemporary literary accomplishment. The journal was never quite Rooke's as it was Skelton's, but under her watch it achieved maturity. Yet some things never change. Not long after she became editor, Rooke had to announce another consequence of the budgetary restrictions and financial crises that bedevilled the Skelton era: "A substantial reduction in the University of Victoria's contribution to the budget of *The Malahat Review* has made it necessary to abolish the secretarial position held so ably in recent years by Helen Harris. [...] For the duration of these hard times, secretarial tasks will be carried out (with whatever efficiency we can muster) by the editors."⁵⁴

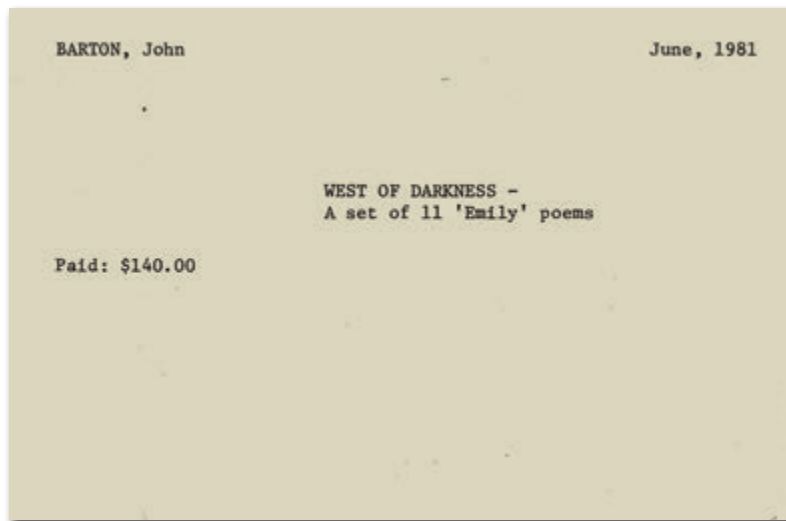
Rooke in turn was followed by Derk Wynand, who edited the *Malahat* from 1992 to 1998 (Issues 101–123). Marlene Cookshaw

51 Constance Rooke, "Comment," *The Malahat Review* 65 (1983): 5.

52 Rooke, "Comment [1983]": 6.

53 Constance Rooke, "Comment," *The Malahat Review* 71 (1985): 7.

54 Constance Rooke, "Comment," *The Malahat Review* 68 (1984): 5.



Index card recording payment for John Barton's "West of Darkness - A set of 11 'Emily' poems," June 1981. The poems appeared in Issue 63 (1982).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

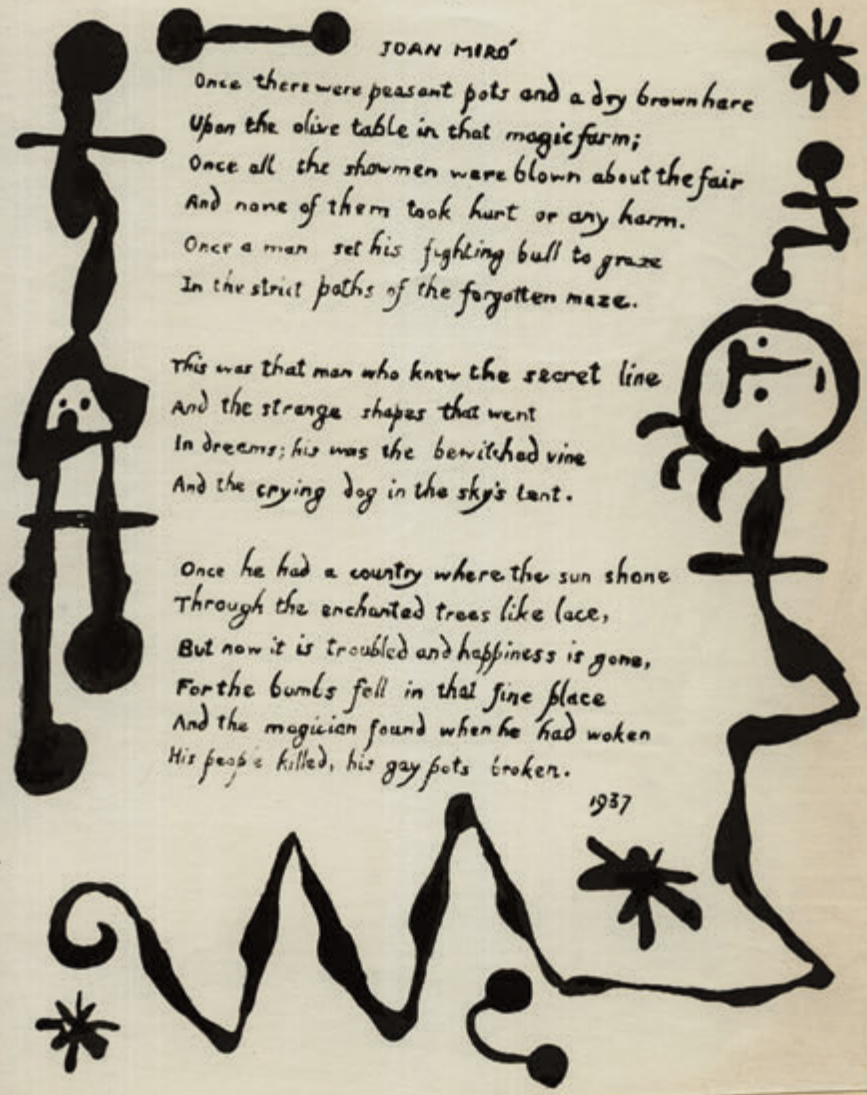
served as editor from 1998 to 2003 (Issues 124–145). Her successor was John Barton, who edited the *Malahat* until early 2018 (Issues 146–201), making his term as editor the second longest in the magazine's history. As the journal advanced in years, its history became less markedly interesting in certain respects: histrionics and amusing anecdotes gave way to the routine of publishing, the excitement residing less in forceful personalities than in the contents of the pages. At some point, *The Malahat Review* became venerable, a part of the literary establishment. In Skelton's era, and to a lesser extent in Rooke's, the academy, including its literary branch, was less constrained than it is today, and for better or for worse much of the rambunctiousness and idiosyncrasy of the time would not be tolerated in the contemporary university. Skelton's particular design for the *Malahat* could not be achieved in his absence and in an increasingly professionalized literary domain. Yet Skelton, Rooke, Wynand, Cookshaw, and all those who devoted immense energies to the *Malahat* were engaged in a shared task—the fundamental artistic endeavour of imagining a more humane world.

After fifty years, the journal that they produced has an unquestionable place in Canadian literature, and publication in the *Malahat* is a rite of passage for aspiring authors. The distinguished figures whose works have appeared in its pages represent several generations of Canadian writers and varying phases and conceptions of creative writing in Canada: Margaret Atwood, Roo Borson, George Bowering, Dionne Brand, George Elliott Clarke, Anne Compton, Lorna Crozier, Timothy Findley, Bill Gaston, Louise Bernice Halfe, Steven Heighton, Daryl Hine, Hugh Hood, Thomas King, Robert Kroetsch, M. Travis Lane, Patrick Lane, Sylvia Legris, Annabel Lyon, Daphne Marlatt, Yann Martel, Don McKay, Anne Michaels, Rohinton Mistry, John Newlove, bpNichol, Michael Ondaatje, Philip Kevin

Paul, Sina Queyras, Carol Shields, Karen Solie, Rosemary Sullivan, Audrey Thomas, Priscila Uppal, Phyllis Webb, Rudy Wiebe and Jan Zwicky. Susan Musgrave's first poem in the *Malahat* (Issue 5, 1968) was published when she was still in high school. Their poems, stories, and essays, and those of less celebrated writers too, constitute the true history of *The Malahat Review*; everything else is simply business. Skelton would have admired the stability and prominence that the *Malahat* has attained, as well as the liveliness of its issues. As it maintains and embellishes its reputation in years to come, *The Malahat Review* may well derive its distinct identity from a commitment to the Skeltonian ideas that the local and the foreign can speak intelligibly to each other, and that at heart the world of literature is expansive, inclusive, multifarious, and utterly alive.

NICHOLAS BRADLEY is Associate Professor of English at the University of Victoria, where he teaches Canadian and American literature. The editor of *We Go Far Back in Time: The Letters of Earle Birney and Al Purdy, 1947–1987* (2014), he will publish *Rain Shadow*, a collection of poems, in 2018.

①



JOAN MIRÓ

Once there were peasant pots and a dry brown hare
 Upon the olive table in that magic farm;
 Once all the showmen were blown about the fair
 And none of them took hurt or any harm.
 Once a man set his fighting bull to graze
 In the strict paths of the forgotten maze.

This was that man who knew the secret line
 And the strange shapes that went
 In dreams; his was the bewitched vine
 And the crying dog in the sky's lantern.

Once he had a country where the sun shone
 Through the enchanted trees like lace,
 But now it is troubled and happiness is gone,
 For the bombs fell in that fine place
 And the magician found when he had woken
 His people killed, his gay pots broken.

1937

②

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95%

Personal proof of
 Scottish writer and
 artist Ruthven
 Todd's poem
 "Joan Miró,"
 illustrated by Miró.

The poem was
 published in
 Issue 1 as part
 of Todd's essay,
 "Miró in
 New York: A
 Reminiscence."

[University of
 Victoria Libraries
 Special Collections
 and University
 Archives, Malahat
 Review fonds, AR089]

KARYN WISSELINK

A Brief History of the Malahat's Early Internationalism

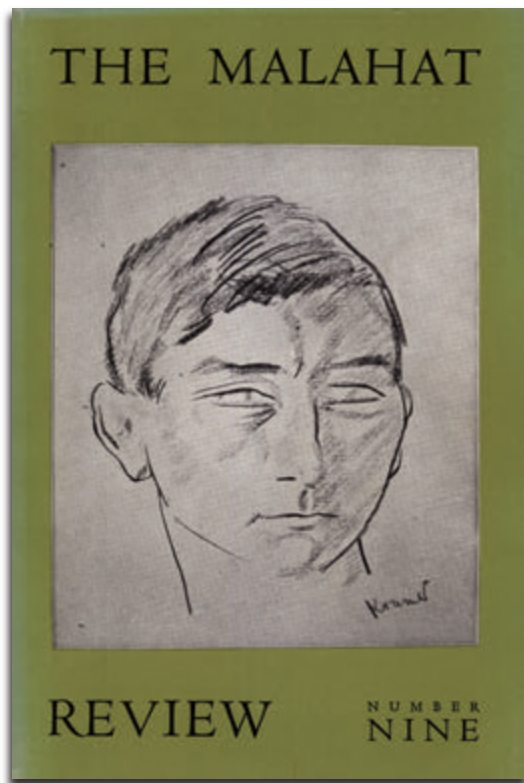
LITERARY JOURNALS PROVIDE some of the best reflections of a literary landscape at certain points in time; they capture the wide range of literature available by publishing various genres written by emerging and well-established writers. In Canada, literary journals were highly regarded and received praise in *The Massey Report*, which in 1951 concluded that “in our periodical press we have our closest approximation to a national literature.” These early journals documented the trends and the writers who were influencing Canadian culture. However, circulation was mostly contained within Canada and there were few journals in Canada that supported writers on an international level. In 1965, Robin Skelton and his colleague John Peter began planning *The Malahat Review* after a conversation about “the state of Canadian letters, and mourning that there was no Canadian literary journal of international standing.” Although Skelton and Peter would be criticized for their global perspective, the *Malahat* promoted a cosmopolitan view of literature and language. By highlighting the variety in international literature, *The Malahat Review* provided an awareness of other cultures, which was intended to help define what it meant to be a Canadian writer.

The title of any magazine is crucial, acting not only as an introduction but also as something that will fix itself in a reader’s memory. *The Malahat Review* was originally entitled the “Camosun Quarterly, A Magazine of the Humanities” but it was changed to *The Malahat Review* with the subtitle “An International Magazine of Life and Letters.” Skelton’s cosmopolitan philosophy required that the title should not limit what could be published. In a letter to Jonathan Williams in Florida, he suggested the broad scope of the journal by asking for “translations from almost every language, and for literary



Issue 47, 1978: “A Gathering in Honour of Rafael Alberti.” Cover art: Joan Miró.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]



Issue 9, 1969: "Sir Herbert Read: A Memorial Symposium." Cover art: Jacob Kramer, *Herbert Read*, 1918 (Collection of Lady Read).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Facing page: Photo of sketch by Alberti, Madrid, 1921. Featured in Issue 47, 1978: "A Gathering in Honour of Rafael Alberti."

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

memoirs, collections of letters, and autobiographical excursions." However, Skelton did try to highlight certain areas of the globe, such as South and Central America because "currently much attention is being paid to Africa" and "the Far East has also received much attention recently." This focus was more of a marketing technique, allowing the journal to fill a niche market.

In order to create the first issue, Skelton himself sought out writers who would set the precedent for what could be expected in the following issues. He took an active editorial position, believing that "the only way is to go out and find material, because the best material always has to be found." Much of Skelton's correspondence prior to publication of the first issue was to foreign ambassadors and writers from a wide range of countries including Chile, Brazil, and New Zealand. These letters solicited submissions and requested contact information for writers in these countries. In a document entitled "Proposed Scope and Character of the Magazine," Skelton argued that "no adult quarterly can nowadays afford to neglect the international scene," implying that Skelton's internationalism was not only a philosophy, but also a necessity in the increasingly globalized scope of literature. Earle Birney, the editor of *Prism International*, agreed with the necessity of a world literature and stated in an editorial comment that "we do not believe, in the world of 1964, that explanations need to be made for thinking that internationalism is a paramount consideration."

After a year of planning, *The Malahat Review's* first issue appeared on January 1, 1967, coinciding with the beginning of Canada's centennial year. The year may have been coincidental but Skelton reported to *The Martlet*, the University of Victoria's student newspaper, that "Canada can make a worthwhile contribution in life and letters during its hundredth year." Despite this statement, the first issue of the *Malahat* contained more writers from England than from Canada—there were only two Canadian writers.

In this first issue, Skelton collected writers from around the world to contribute to a group of poems entitled "An Atlas of Poetry," a feature that would reappear in subsequent issues. The themes of the poems are as various as the countries they come from. The atlas begins in the same country where Skelton's life began: England. The atlas then traipses through Ireland, the U.S.A., back to England, to the Philippines, Germany and finally ends in Pakistan. The rest of the issue is filled with essays, dramas, short stories, previously unpublished letters from D. H. Lawrence, and worksheets, which visually follow a poem through drafts to its final form. Although the first issue feels rather European, Skelton would continue to strive toward "a general widening of the imaginative range of literature." Later issues contain Canadian writers of note such as Irving Layton and George Woodcock and also reach beyond European contributors to writers in every corner of the world.

George Woodcock, the founder of the national literary journal *Canadian Literature*, found Skelton's internationalism appealing. Looking back at the *Malahat's* beginnings, Woodcock felt that "by



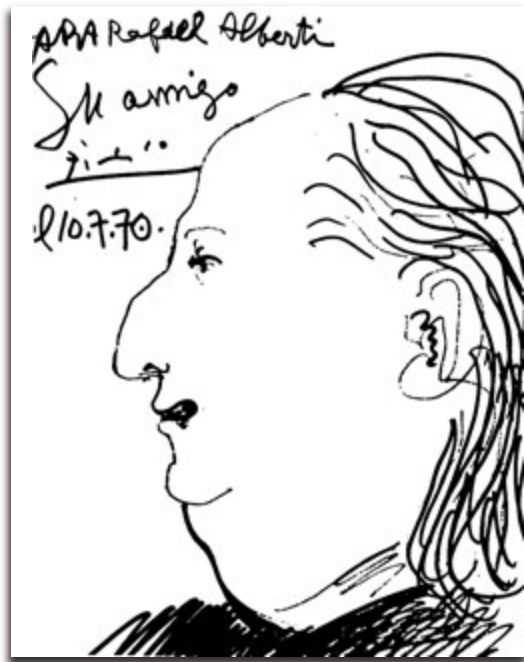
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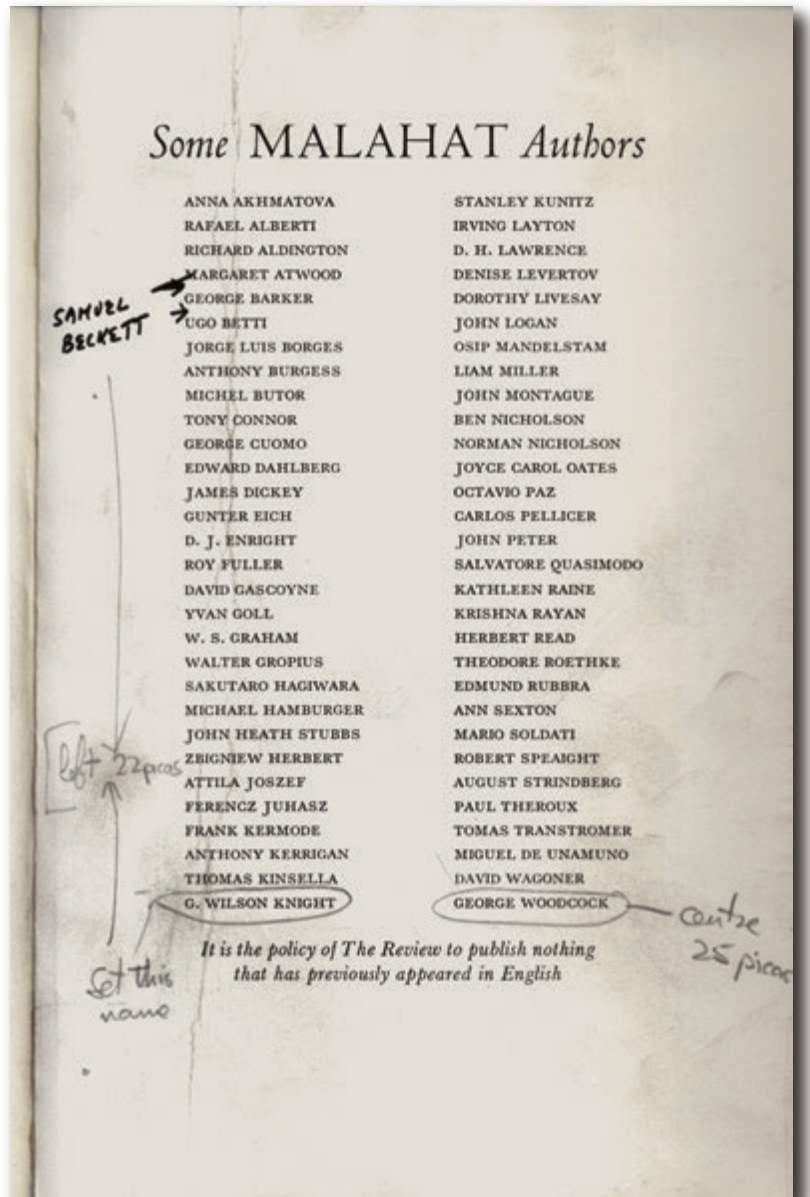


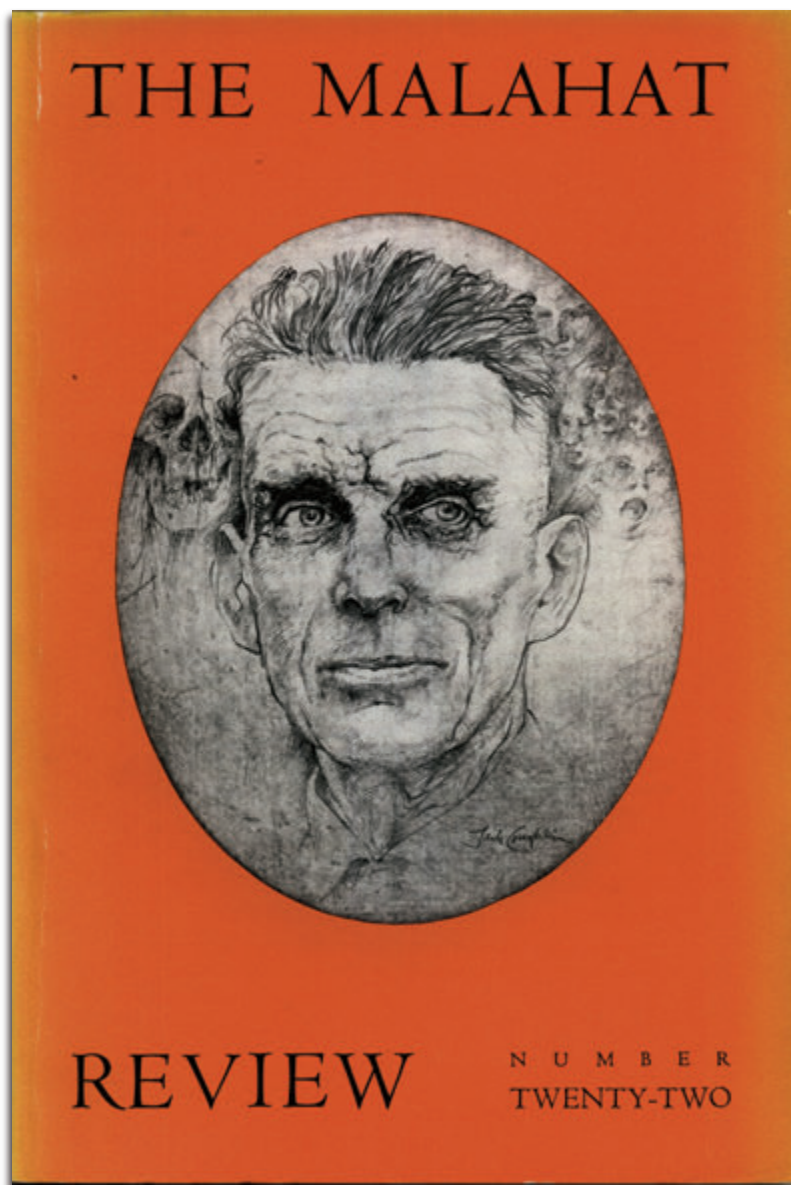
Facing page and above: Photos of dedications to Alberti from Picasso, 1966 (facing) and 1970 (above). Featured in Issue 47, 1978: "A Gathering in Honour of Rafael Alberti."

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

Right: List of contributors on the inside back cover of the marked copy of Issue 33 (1975). Samuel Beckett's story "Still" appears in this issue, and Robin Skelton (most likely) has written Beckett's name in the left margin, presumably as a note to add it to the list should it be republished in a future issue.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]





Issue 22, 1972. Cover art: Jack Coughlin, *Samuel Becket* [sic], 1971.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

'international' Skelton and Peter meant something even more cosmopolitan." Skelton's editorial comment in Issue 40 reminds his readers that "in this global village, we have not one but many neighbours." Woodcock argued that Skelton's philosophy was that "whatever our language, so long as we use it with skill and respect, we belong to one another." This cosmopolitan view is echoed in the numerous translations found in the *Malahat*. The sharing of literature across language barriers was an important part of Skelton's borderless philosophy.

Skelton believed that imposing the label of Canadian literature was not only limiting, but also arrogant: "We therefore, reject chauvinistic notions of supporting only the literature of our own country," indicating the impossibility of a national focus in the periodical world. However, Skelton's strong opinions against giving special treatment to Canadian writers did not preclude him from supporting them. Skelton claimed that he "believed in Canada's cultural and literary strength more firmly than a good many Canadian Nationalists." The fact that Skelton's nationalism was implicit in his cosmopolitan approach was lost on many critics.

Despite the criticism of Skelton's agenda for *The Malahat Review*, Skelton became increasingly concerned with Canadian literature. Woodcock argued that although the *Malahat's* success stemmed from an international outlook, the true triumph was that the journal was also "national and strongly regional." In the planning stages, Skelton argued that, "while the Editorial Policy should be rather international than nationalistic, there is a great need for work in the field of Canadian Bibliography." Rather than base editorial decisions on nationality, Skelton's idea was to publish "authoritative checklists" of prominent Canadian writers, and also to "commission survey-articles on some aspect of Canadian Arts and Letters." Beyond this, Skelton would give no special treatment to Canadian writers. However, Skelton's global philosophy was also inherently national as the *Malahat* "introduced the work of Canadian writers to a world-wide

A POET'S THOUGHTS

In my lifetime and, coincidentally, in the lifetime of the magazine, *The Malahat Review* has had six editors: Robin Skelton, John Peter, Constance Rooke, Marlene Cookshaw, Derk Wynand, and the current editor, John Barton. All editors infuse a journal with a particular flavour and stamp it with his or her individual taste. However, the six editors of *The Malahat Review* have also applied a certain metric of quality that has served to solidify the magazine's reputation. Very early in the years after its inception, *The Malahat Review* became known and admired throughout the English-speaking literary world, and, despite the flood of digital magazines in the past decade, it is still equally esteemed today. The editors, board members, and writers may have changed, but the standard of excellence has been consistent.

If I was aware of the *Malahat* at all as a first-year English student in the early 1970s, it was only to recognize it as a periodical where important and accomplished writers published. A few years later, however, my friend and fellow writing student Gail Harris and I became very attuned to the journal. When we knew, even remotely, anything about a writer published in a new issue, we'd head up to the magazine's office to buy a single copy and pore through it together. In my undergraduate days, I would occasionally submit poems to the journal on the chance (and hope) that they were good enough to be published. They weren't. Rejection, I was learning, was part of the process of becoming a writer. Because Robin Skelton, the editor at that time, was publishing young, local poets such as Susan Musgrave, Marilyn Bowering and Theresa Kishkan, along

with international writers, I did have faith that one day I, too, might be published in the *Malahat's* pages.

Over the years since that time, I have often submitted poetry to *The Malahat Review*, and it has always been a source of pleasure and pride to receive a letter of acceptance, a confirmation that discerning eyes have looked at my submission and decided that at least some of the poems warrant publication in the journal's limited and increasingly precious pages. To their credit, the editors and editorial boards have always been open to new writing. Their tastes are eclectic and wide-ranging, and they are as interested in "discovering" a new voice as they are in publishing an established one.

Has publication in the *Malahat* influenced my writing? I'm not sure I can answer that question, but I do know that I cannot imagine poetry in Canada without it. I also cannot imagine my life as a poet without it. The *Malahat* has been a measure, a place to test new work and also a kind of home. It has been a mainstay for me, both as a reader and writer. It is one of the journals I have always counted on for sustenance, even nourishment. Though I am slowly acclimatizing to reading poetry online, I still look forward to receiving the latest issue of the *Malahat* in the mail. For me, there is something deeply satisfying about publishing in, as well as reading from, this well-bound, meticulously edited, and beautifully produced journal.

– PATRICIA YOUNG

PATRICIA YOUNG has published twelve collections of poetry and one of short fiction. Goose Lane Press will publish her new poetry collection in 2018.

Issue 66, 1983. Patricia Young published for the first time in this issue. Cover photograph: Michael Ondaatje.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Gail Harris and Patricia Young, c. 1980s.

[Image courtesy of Patricia Young]





Notebook drawings by Scottish poet W. S. Graham, whose work appeared in several issues of *The Malahat Review*. Skelton, who co-edited a volume of Graham's poetry after his death, was instrumental in securing Graham's archives for the University of Victoria Libraries.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, W. S. Graham fonds, SC135]

THE MALAHAT



REVIEW

N U M B E R
F O R T Y - O N E

JAMIE DOPP

A Bush Garden by the Sea

MY APPRECIATION OF *The Malahat Review* has evolved over the years. When I was a graduate student in Toronto in the 1980s, I thought of it only in the most general terms, as one of the hoary old journals that had helped Canadian literature “come of age” in the 1960s and 1970s. I submitted poems and stories to it, which were duly rejected. Then, in 1990, I was hired as a Canadian literature specialist at the University of Victoria. This challenged me to think again about the complexities of defining a national literature, particularly about the relationship between region and nation. This rethinking also led to a change in my view of the journal.

My understanding of the *Malahat* has paralleled changes in my understanding of Canadian literature itself. During the 1960s—the decade in which it was founded—there was a frenzy of nationalistic self-definition in Canada. This is how I viewed the *Malahat* during my graduate studies. The fundamental irony of the “coming of age” period for Canadian literature, though, as Sam Solecki has pointed out, is that “[at] the very moment that Canadian cultural nationalism had, if not triumphed, then at least gained general acceptance [...] a crucial shift occurred in how we define the Canadian nation (and state) and how we view literature’s relationship to it.”¹ The grand generalizations about Canadian literature of the period—most notoriously Northrop Frye’s idea of a “garrison mentality” and Margaret Atwood’s idea of “survival”—were subjected to a barrage of criticisms throughout the 1970s, for their reductiveness, their regional bias, and their failure to acknowledge cultural diversity.^{2 3} The criticisms took additional energy from the generalized scepticism toward “metanarratives” that defined postmodernism—which, by the 1980s, had become the new intellectual fashion. Postmodern redefinitions probably reached their

1 Sam Solecki, *The Last Canadian Poet: An Essay on Al Purdy* (Toronto, ON: U of Toronto Press, 1999), xi–xii.

2 Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto, ON: Anansi, 1971), 225–26.

3 Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto, ON: Anansi, 1972).

“MARGARET’S MALAHAT”

In January of 1977, *The Malahat Review* devoted its forty-first issue to an up-and-coming Canadian superstar. What Linda Hutcheon would later deem “Margaret’s *Malahat*” emerged on the heels of Margaret Atwood’s third novel, *Lady Oracle* (1976)—ten years after she received the Governor General’s Award for her first book of poems, *The Circle Game*, but still several years prior to such huge successes as *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), *Cat’s Eye* (1989), and *Alias Grace* (1996). Written in the spirit of what guest editor Linda Sandler called a “tenth anniversary tribute,” this issue-long homage is a fascinating portrait of Atwood at the beginning of the upswing that would see her rise to international renown. Thanks, in large part, to Sandler, who “coerced, cajoled, and bribed” to get it made and get it made *well*, the volume’s table of contents reads like a “who’s-who” of Canadian authors and critics. Among them are the three Georges (Woodcock, Bowering, and Jonas), Susan Musgrave, Gwendolyn MacEwan, and Al Purdy. The breadth of their contributions is also notable, ranging from scholarly analyses to poems and anecdotal reflections, to a strangely out-of-place “pictographic sextain” of collages from Robin Skelton. This first issue of 1977 is, as Sandler anticipated in a letter to Skelton, a “radical” one that is nonetheless “startlingly intelligent” for its whimsy, a balanced and fascinating portrait of an icon in the making.

– NATALIE BOLDT

NATALIE BOLDT holds a MA in Interdisciplinary Humanities from Trinity Western University. Her work as a PhD candidate at the University of Victoria is focussed on Canadian literature as well as speculative and science fiction, which stems from her fascination with Margaret Atwood’s speculative works.

Facing page: “Margaret Atwood: A Symposium,” the tribute issue to Atwood sometimes referred to as “Margaret’s *Malahat*.” Cover design a compilation of photos from the “Album of Photographs” included in the issue.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]



Clearihue Building, University of Victoria.
The Malahat Review's office looks out from the three
windows on the left.

most influential form in the work of Robert Kroetsch, who argued in 1985 that not only did Canada not have a unifying national story but the lack of such a unifying story was in fact what unified us.⁴

This was the intellectual environment within which I began my career at the University of Victoria. My teaching and writing were both affected by it. In my teaching, I began to include a greater concentration of B.C. writers. I did this from an instinct that the students, most of whom came from B.C., would take a special pleasure from reading literature set in their own part of the world. This proved to be true. At the same time, I understood the limitations of this gesture—and tried to build a discussion about these limitations into my courses. The obvious issue is that B.C. is as diverse within its borders as Canada is within its own, so all the criticisms leveled at the grand generalizations about Canadian literature apply also to definitions of B.C. literature. Eden Robinson, Joy Kogawa, George Bowering and Jack Hodgins are all British Columbia writers, but their imaginations are shaped by quite different landscapes and traditions.

A similar complexity affected my re-examination of the *Malahat*. When I looked more closely at it, I recognized that, in addition to being a well-known national journal, it had something of a regional character. Over the years, I've noticed a weighting towards the work of B.C. writers, and the journal has published a number of special issues—like a recent one on Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane or the fiftieth-anniversary one on Victoria writers—that have stressed its combined regional and national identity. Its combination of regional and national elements is clearly part of the *Malahat's* significance in Canadian literature. However, as my sketch of definitions of Canadian literature above suggests, this formulation hides a number of further complexities.

To get at some of these complexities, and to convey something of the deeper significance of the *Malahat*, let me end by noting that I now see it as my “home” journal. I began to think this way, of course, because of the accident of my getting hired in 1990. The journal, it turned out, was founded by members of my own English department. Its offices were on campus. From the beginning of my time here, then, I felt a vague sense of ownership for the *Malahat* that was also, really, quite flimsy—not unlike the structure of feeling often associated with “home.”

There is, I believe, a particular value in reading literature from your own place. Part of what literature does is to help us to understand better what “here” is—including the “here” that is ourselves (the self being that place most familiar and most strange at the same time)—and thus to help us feel more at home. Journals like the *Malahat* have a role to play in this process. And yet, as J. Edward Chamberlin points out, “home” is an incredibly fraught term, whose complexity is captured by the double meaning of the phrase “There’s no place like home.” As Chamberlin puts it: “[One interpretation] is ‘Home is no place.’ Nowhere. And yet, of course, what we also mean is home is right here, a good place, the ideal place. Utopia. Then it

4 See “Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy” in Robert Kroetsch, *The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989).

really *is* nowhere, for that's what 'u-topia' means: no place."⁵

A rather whimsical illustration of this doubleness occurred for me when the *Malahat* offices were moved a while back into the strange annex at the southeast corner of the Clearihue building, where the English department is also located. This annex is below the building's clock tower, which, over the course of three years, was rebuilt after it had partially fallen down during an earthquake in 1995. Its floors are a half-floor out of alignment with the rest of Clearihue, so it is always somewhat disorienting to try to find a room there. The *Malahat* offices are in my home building, then, but they are on a second floor that is actually halfway between second and third, and to leave my third-floor office to go looking for them is to go looking for something like our own version of Platform 9 3/4.

In the same way that it's hard to find the *Malahat* offices, it's difficult to say how the poems and stories published in the journal help to define a specific "home." Yet the value of a "home" literature goes beyond content. Stories and poems—and the journals that support them—participate in the feedback loop of value that goes back to the evolutionary roots of imaginative activity in humans. The short version of this loop goes like this: for our ancient ancestors, artistic activity was very costly relative to the resources available, and so the subjects chosen for art had to be worth it. By a process of association, then, to create art about a subject has become—amongst other things—a way of conferring value upon it, and vice versa. Millions of love poems later, this feedback loop is still going strong.

There is also a way in which "home" literature connects you with ancient rituals of literary expression. In a practical way, because the *Malahat* is nearby, I've had a chance to attend numerous launch events over the years and to see the community of writers that has formed around the journal. In some sense, the actual publication of the journal is only an extension of the ritual of creation and sharing evident in these public ceremonies.

In the end, to have a "home" journal is to say "here literature happens" and also "what happens here is worthy of literature" (even if where "here" is remains as hard to find as the journal's offices). Therein, I think, lies the ultimate significance of the *Malahat* for me in this place I have come to call home, as well as its significance in the larger construction of Canadian literature. Bronwen Wallace rightly describes the best literary tradition as "the building of a space in which there is room, safety, *permission*, if you will, to say what you need to say."⁶ The *Malahat*, I think, has played a significant part in the building of such a tradition.

JAMIE DOPP is Associate Professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Victoria. His most recent scholarly book, *Writing the Body in Motion*, a collection of essays on Canadian sports literature co-edited with Angie Abdou, is forthcoming from Athabaska University Press in 2018.

5 Edward J. Chamberlin, *This is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* (Toronto: Vintage, 2004), 74.

6 Bronwen Wallace, *Arguments with the World* (Kingston: Quarry, 1992), 163.



Issue 170, 2010: "Lorna Crozier, Patrick Lane, and Aesthetic Kinship."
Cover photograph: Gary McKinstry, 2010.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]



Robin Skelton at the Maltwood Art Museum
and Gallery, University of Victoria, c. 1964–5.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

CAROLINE RIEDEL

Ever More Distinctly Canadian: The Malahat's Relationship with the Visual Arts

IN 1967, CANADA MARKED its 100th anniversary since Confederation, a landmark year in the nation's artistic and cultural landscapes. Hundreds of celebrations held across the country promoted national achievements, cultural heritage, and selected historical narratives. In addition, with an influx of federal funding, numerous cultural institutions were founded, including art galleries, museums, libraries, and performing arts centres that in future years would allow Canadians to more fully experience their own culture. Though *The Malahat Review's* centennial launch date was reportedly unintentional, its appearance during this watershed year only adds to its lustre.

One element that sets the *Malahat* apart from other literary journals is the considerable space devoted to the visual arts, particularly in its first two decades. Painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and photography had a strong presence both on the cover and in the interior pages of each issue; these images were often accompanied by critical essays by eminent scholars. British art historian Herbert Read, American performance artist Allan Kaprow, and German-American anthropologist Franz Boas were among the early contributors of art-related essays. Skelton himself wrote over thirty essays on international, national, and regional artistic subject matter. His prolific contributions in this respect were only a part of his greater influence in fostering a vibrant regional identity for the arts. In his autobiography, *Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead*, he noted that on his arrival in Victoria in 1963 the city's art scene was "at its beginnings."¹ The city had its own public art gallery but no commercial galleries. "There was much to be done [...]. And I thought that maybe I could start things."

1 Robin Skelton, *Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1988), 204.



Issue 18, 1971. Cover art: Elza Mayhew, *Aeolus*, 1962 (Collection of the artist).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]



Maxwell Bates, *Yellow Reception*, 1972.

[University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries]

Indeed, Skelton was remarkably active both professionally and socially. He was directly involved in many of Victoria's cultural initiatives of the time: he attended every art opening, assumed the role of art critic for the local newspaper, and opened his home to like-minded arts enthusiasts for regular and raucous Thursday night "happenings." At the University of Victoria, he also initiated the acquisition of prestigious literary material for the library's Special Collections and advised on acquisitions to develop the Maltwood Art Museum's collection. With only a modest budget, the university's art committee focused on purchasing prints by regional artists, mainly from recent American and European newcomers to the West Coast. These were contextualized by the occasional addition of works by international heavyweights such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jasper Johns. Many of the artists whose works were acquired by the committee also appeared in the early issues of the journal.

SEEING

Many writers have doubts about their work. It's not something they talk easily or in depth about; rather, it is an unsettling reality they live with whenever they sit down to write. When I found my way back to writing in my mid-forties, after a long hiatus, I had no "body of work" behind me to gauge where I'd come from or where I was heading. All bits of encouragement in those early days helped me believe in what I was doing and gave me a sense that someone had faith even when I didn't. Looking back, I am amazed and grateful for the support I received from the *Malahat* with my first poetry submissions. The poems, raw and unpublishable, were taken seriously and often returned to me with thoughtful comments in the margins. From those early, valuable editing suggestions, to an ongoing invitation to be part of a vibrant writing community, the *Malahat* has generously accompanied and encouraged me along the way. Derived from the Old French *encoragier*—"to make or put courage in the heart"—encouragement is not about ego or needing approval; rather, it is about seeing one's work with new eyes. For myself, and many others, the *Malahat* has been, and continues to be, that set of eyes. The support it has offered, and continues to offer, feels personal, and for that I am grateful.

It's not always easy to nail down when a book starts, to know what draws it out of the writer's imagination and places it on the pile of other books on our bedside tables. *In the Slender Margin*, my first book of nonfiction, grew out of an essay I submitted to the *Malahat's* creative nonfiction contest in 2010. I had no idea, when I wrote

the piece that was awarded the Constance Rooke Creative Nonfiction Prize, that I would end up going back into it, picking up threads of thought and expanding them until I eventually had a completed manuscript. While I had published two books of poetry by this time, the essay, "Intimate Strangers," was my first foray into prose. It was, in the truest sense of the word, an *essay* or attempt to understand what I had seen and who I had become following years of working as a counselor with the dying and their families at Victoria Hospice. I did not think about how it would be received, nor did I wonder if it would reach a wider audience. The only thing that mattered was to try and tell a story in a way that made sense to me. The surprise, and subsequent gratification, came from the way the *Malahat* received the piece and promoted it to the world "out there," where it had the good fortune to win a number of awards, including an honourable mention in the 2010 National Magazine Awards and Gold in the 2011 Western Magazine Awards. While awards do not create writers, they can, for a brief moment, ease the doubt and make the task at hand seem doable.

— EVE JOSEPH

EVE JOSEPH's two books of poetry, *The Startled Heart* (Oolichan, 2004) and *The Secret Signature of Things* (Brick, 2010) were both nominated for the Dorothy Livesay Award. Her nonfiction book, *In the Slender Margin*, was published by HarperCollins in 2014 and won the Hubert Evans award for nonfiction. The book was named one of the top 100 picks of the year by the *Globe and Mail*.



Issue 173, 2010, which features Eve Joseph's essay "Intimate Strangers." Cover art: Rachel Berman, *Ways of Escape*, 1983 (University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries).

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

Cover of Eve Joseph's book *In the Slender Margin: The Intimate Strangeness of Dying* (2014). Joseph expanded "Intimate Strangers" into a book-length memoir.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, PS8619 O84Z53]



Tony Hunt Sr.

Tony Hunt Sr., *Box Design*, 1969.
[University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries]

Artwork published in the *Malahat* provides clues about Skelton's social landscape.² He was a great social and creative catalyst, the "magus in the middle of it all" as former colleague Jennifer Waelti-Walters described him. In 1971, along with artists Herbert Siebner and Maxwell Bates, he co-founded the Limmers art group, whose members are often cited for their strong role in shaping Victoria's emerging modern art scene.³ For the next decade, cover art and essays brought attention to painters Siebner and Bates, sculptors Elza Mayhew and Robert de Castro, figural artist Myfanwy Pavelic, and printmakers Pat Martin Bates and Karl Spreitz, who were all part of this tight-knit group. The Limmers' 1981 catalogue, written by Skelton, asserted that their goal was to avoid a focus on pop culture, instead concerning themselves with the "depth [sic] exploration of the human creature."⁴

The *Malahat*'s prestigious "West Coast Renaissance" series featured Limner artists as well as a number of other newcomers to Victoria

2 *Memoirs*, 180.

3 *Memoirs*, 180.

4 Robin Skelton, *The Limmers* (Victoria, B.C.: Pharos Press, 1981), 1.



and Vancouver, including Alistair Bell, Donald Harvey, P. K. Irwin (the *nom de brousse* of poet P. K. Page), Margaret Peterson, Gordon Smith, and Jack Wise, among others. Indigenous artists were notably absent from the first “West Coast Renaissance” issue, though Skelton’s introduction acknowledges somewhat awkwardly that Indigenous culture represents the “first birth of culture on the west coast” and that this issue seeks to define the “second awakening period starting in the 1960s” — at least among settler artists, a term and surrounding discourse he likely would not have been familiar with at the time.

The second “West Coast Renaissance” issue featured paintings by Kwakwaka’wakw (Kwagiulth) artists Tony Hunt Sr., Calvin Hunt, and John Livingston, again offering important clues to what was happening in Victoria’s art scene. The Hunts and Livingston established Arts of the Raven, Victoria’s first Indigenous-run gallery, in 1970. They were also part of the carving program that the Royal British Columbia Museum’s Thunderbird Park established in 1940. In the 1960s and 1970s, two-dimensional Indigenous design work was beginning to be disseminated via serigraph prints as a popular and affordable choice for collectors. The third “West Coast Renaissance” issue contained a much-anticipated translation of selections from Franz Boas’ *West Coast Indian Folktales* “collected” in the 1860s. It also had a heavy focus on Haida art, the First Nation whose work was best known in the commercial art market at that time. The centre section included an origin story by master Haida carver Charles Edenshaw and a photo essay documenting the progress of Bill Reid’s celebrated, monumental carved sculpture, *Raven and the First Men*, which the artist unveiled at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology in 1980, the year before the issue was published.

Another undercurrent in the journal, informed by contemporary discourse on the politics of representation, was the gradual inclusion of women artists. British sculptor Barbara Hepworth was featured in the “Herbert Read Memorial Symposium” issue of



Issue 50, 1979. Second in the “West Coast Renaissance” series. Cover art: Tony Hunt Sr., *Mythical Killer Whale Design (Kwa-Gulth)*, 1979.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]



Myfanwy Pavelic in her studio, n.d.
 [University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and
 University Archives, Robin Skelton fonds, SC114]

Facing page: *Coast Spirit* (1967) by Elza Mayhew in
 front of the Mearns Centre for Learning-McPherson
 Library, 2011. Photo by Vince Klassen.

1969, along with Ben Nicholson and Henry Moore in the same issue. Skelton and Lillard also featured cover art by regional women artists, including Elza Mayhew (1971), Pat Martin Bates (1973), Myfanwy Pavelic (1974) and Margaret Peterson (1978). In an essay on Mayhew, Skelton discussed the mythic and archetypal elements of her practice but also its approachable and “human” scale, invoking the work of internationally renowned sculptor Henry Moore as well as references to formal elements “perhaps inspired” by Northwest Coast Indigenous art. He declared her “one of the major sculptors of our time.”⁵

The generous representation of international, Canadian, and West Coast artists set a precedent in the *Malahat*’s earliest decades, and the dynamic relationship between art and writing continues in the present, although there were notable shifts in thematic direction under

5 Robin Skelton, “Elza Mayhew: A Language for Humanity,” *The Malahat Review* 18 (1972): 91. At this time Mayhew’s sculptures became focal points on the university campus; her monumental *Coast Spirit* and two bronze *Priestess* pieces were installed in 1967 on two sides of the centre quadrangle.





Margaret Peterson, *Horos, The Welcome Figure*, 1962.
[University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries]

subsequent editors. Constance Rooke and Derk Wynand revealed a strong inclination toward Canadian content, breaking from Skelton's internationalism, though one of Wynand's signature issues, published in 1976 while Skelton was still editor, was on Austrian writers. Cover art became less dependent on representing West Coast artists, and the lavish interior art reproductions were eliminated due to budgetary constraints. At the same time, art by poets and writers—including photography by Michael Ondaatje and drawings by P.K. Irwin—points again to both the social and professional networks of the editors and their willingness to expand beyond some of the limitations in place during Skelton's tenure. Marlene Cookshaw turned over the cover art selection to Winnipeg interdisciplinary artist and painter Wanda Koop, whose selections moved the focus to central and eastern Canadian artists.

When John Barton arrived in 2004, he dedicated several years of cover art to selections from the University of Victoria's art collection, in particular works drawn from the largest donation of Pacific Northwest artwork received by the university, through a bequest made by local philanthropist, entrepreneur, and heritage developer Michael Williams. Barton's selections did much to reassert the roots of the journal and its home base at the University of Victoria with art by Governor General's Visual Arts Award-winner Eric Metcalfe in Issue 162 (2008); Vancouver-based Attila Richard Lukacs in Issue 147 (2004); and locally recognized artists Luis Merino and Glenn Howarth in later issues.

Recently, Lee Henderson, an associate professor in the Department of Writing, has taken over the art editorship. Notable among his selections are Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's *Christy Clark and the Kinder Morgan Go-Go Girls* (2015) for the *Malahat's* "Indigenous Perspectives" issue (2016) and Toronto-based Kahawake-born Walter Scott's comic-book-character-inspired figure in *Private Eyes* in Issue 198 (2017), an issue dedicated to the memory of celebrated Ojibway author and journalist Richard Wagamese. In keeping with national calls to action in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, both covers signify a greater and welcome representation of Indigenous art and culture in the journal. Through these and other selections, *The Malahat Review* continues to foster dialogues of complex and multi-faceted Canadian identities.

CAROLINE RIEDEL, Curator of Collections at the University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries since 2004, holds a graduate degree in art history from the University of Victoria (MA, 1997), and received professional training at Library and Archives Canada and the National Gallery of Canada. She has curated exhibitions and published catalogues on regional and internationally recognized artists and had the pleasure of meeting Robin and Sylvia Skelton when they attended the opening of her first curated exhibition at UVic, *Adaskins Collect Jorgensen*.

THE MALAHAT LOOK

When Robin Skelton and John Peter required a printer for their fledgling magazine, it is hardly surprising they turned to Morriss Printing. Charles (Charlie) Morris had established this English-tradition letterpress printing business in Victoria in 1960, with a full range of quality linotype and hand-set fonts, including Roger’s Centaur, which was used for the *Malahat*’s original masthead as well as for the initial letters of interior prose. These capitals, specially cut to fit closely with the following letters, added to the typographic good looks and readability of the publication. Linotype Baskerville was the font used for the main text in ten-point size with two points of leading. Baskerville, a traditional font with more evenness than older styles like Caslon or Garamond, though not as modern as Bodoni or Times Roman, was very suitable as a letterpress font as it gained strength and definition with the impression of ink into paper.

Charlie Morriss was a journeyman linotype typesetter with an excellent eye for design and the look of printing. He was passionate about the craft and producing quality editions. He wanted control over the entire process of printing books, from layout and typesetting to printing and binding. Since not many western Canadian-trained printers were available at the time, Morriss Printing’s experienced journeymen workforce came from all over the world. He expected hard work, accuracy, and craftsmanship, for which he paid well. Linotype operators often came from the same newspaper background as himself, and were quick and accurate. If they were smokers, the morning “rollies” were made before the work started and positioned above the operator’s workspace.

The linotype keyboard (which preceded the QWERTY typewriter keyboard) activated brass molds and assembled them as a line of type. The molten lead type cast from the molds became part of a galley of type. On the composing stone, galleys were broken into pages of type and handset titles added. Proofs came at the galley



stage and at the page stage. Once approved, pages were locked into a steel form—or chase—for a sixteen-page signature, eight pages per side. The *Malahat* had a column width of twenty-five picas, a comfortable reading width. The locked-up form went into the bed of the Heidelberg press and sheets of paper (specially milled and shipped by train-car load from Quebec) were rolled over the form, taking an impression of the page.

Richard (Dick) Morriss, who had worked alongside his father from the outset, added the photo darkroom, cameras, and plate-making technology that Charlie was not as interested in. The illustrative sections of the *Malahat*, which could be black and white or

four-colour process, had to be printed using offset lithographic techniques, on coated stock, and bound in with the letterpress pages. As photo-offset lithography replaced letterpress, Baskerville was not robust enough for the film and plate technology. To accommodate this, the Palantino font range was selected, and this elegant typeface was used for the masthead, title heading, and initial capitals.

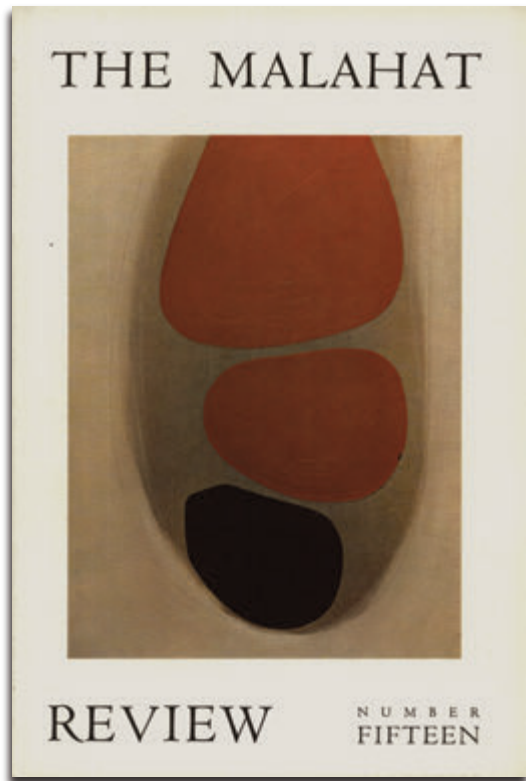
Over the decades, *The Malahat Review* has worked with three other printing firms: Printcrafters, Hignell, and Kromar. As well, it has seen several subtle and not-so-subtle design changes that have given the magazine a fresh look while maintaining the classic elements of the original. No doubt there will be more changes as the *Malahat* moves into its next fifty years, but the essential “good bones” of its early letterpress years will hold true.

– JIM BENNETT

JIM BENNETT was born in England and studied typography and graphic arts at the Brighton College of Art before coming to Canada at age twenty-two in 1969. He held an appointment as a graphic designer at the University of Victoria for ten years before joining Morriss Printing, where he worked as a graphic artist for the next twenty years. He also taught publishing for the Creative Writing Department during this time.

Cover of Morriss Printing’s book of type faces.

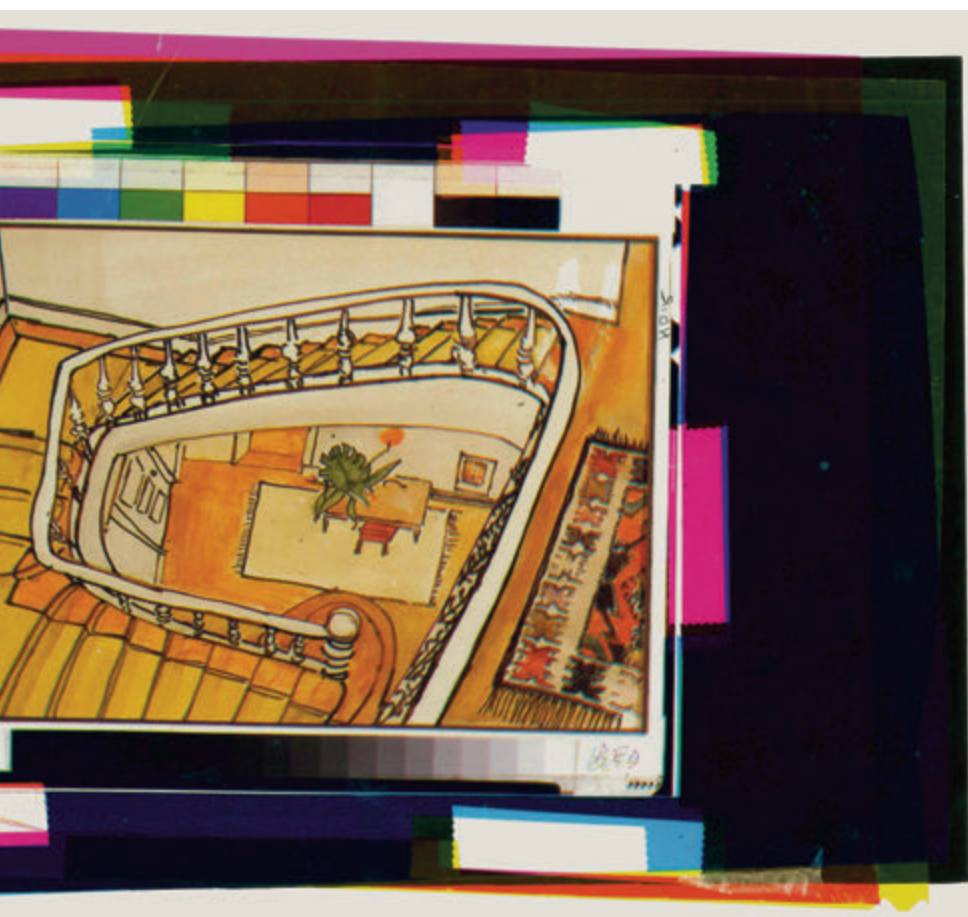
[Image courtesy of Jim Bennett]



(Left to right): Issue 15, 1970 (cover art: Michael Seward Snow); Issue 108, 1994 (cover art: Phyllis Webb, *Tibetan Desire III* [for L. C.], 1994); Issue 177, 2011 (cover art: Noah Becker, *Untitled [Self-Portrait]*, 1991, University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries). These covers showcase the three different cover designs of the past fifty years. Issue 108 is dedicated to the memory of Richard Morriss.

[Images courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]





Colour separations for cover of Issue 79
by P.K. Irwin (P.K. Page), 1987.

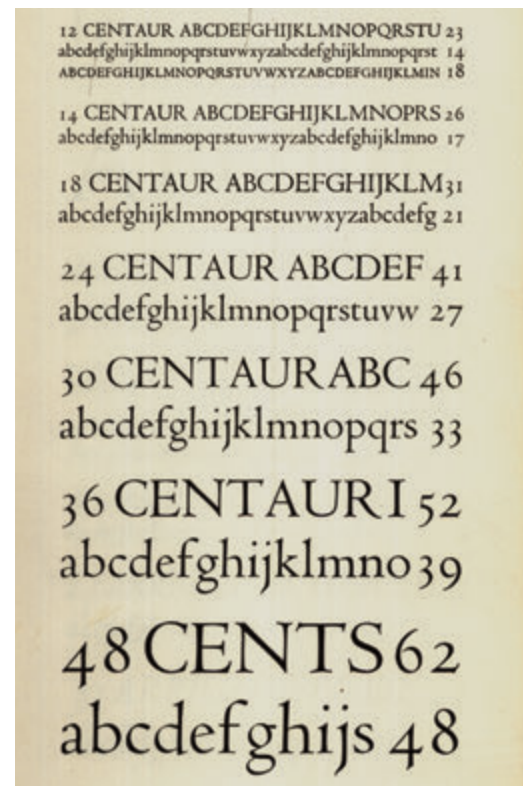
[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

Issue 79, 1987. Cover art: P. K. Irwin (P. K. Page), *The Stairwell*, 1957–58 (Trent University Art Collection).

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and
University Archives, AP5 M27]

Page of Morriss Printing's book of type faces
showcasing the hand-set font Roger's Centaur used
for the original masthead and initial letters for content
in the magazine.

[Image courtesy of Jim Bennett]





proof

Phil Geronzi

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YANN MARTEL

How the Words Came

AFTER UNIVERSITY I MOVED back in with my parents. Not an uncommon occurrence for young people, but what made this instance different was that my parents had just moved to Paris, France, where they were posted to the Canadian embassy. They lived in a splendid apartment on the Avenue Wagram, in the 17th *arrondissement*. Leaning over a little from the wraparound balcony one could see the Arc de Triomphe. The apartment was on the fifth floor, beautifully lit. I had just finished a BA in philosophy. I had loved learning about the likes of Plato and Hobbes and Hume and pondering such questions as *What is reality?* and *What is the good?* But the career prospects opened by such a course of study are not obvious. I didn't know what to do with my life. So, except for stints working as a security guard at the embassy, I did nothing. I lazed about my parents' apartment while they went off to work. I remember getting up one morning and having a nice long hot bath and thinking, *This is the good life*. I was twenty-two years old.

So that was the first step in my writing career: a pool of time. The luxury of leisure. The freedom for my mind to lie still—unhurried and rested—and then move in the way that it chose naturally. I read. I read Boccaccio's *Decameron*. I re-read Dante's *Divine Comedy*. I read the early novels of Knut Hamsun and a good number of those of Yukio Mishima. I read all of Kafka and most of Dino Buzzati and *Three Drops of Blood* by Sadeq Hedayat, the father of the modern Persian short story. I read whatever caught my attention, old, new, obscure. I visited museums and wandered about Paris.

I knew this state of idleness—it's one of my favourite French words: *oisiveté*—wouldn't last forever. Periodically I looked at university calendars, trying to determine what shape my life would take once it truly started. Could I see myself as an anthropologist? A botanist? A chemist? A dentist? An economist? And so on, until I reached the end of the alphabet of potential professions, trying to see myself as a zoologist contemplating a zebra. Nothing won me over. There was nothing I wanted to do. This was a conundrum. Let's give that conundrum a nice long hot bath.



Facing page: Photo proof for cover of Issue 84, 1988.
Photograph: Rafael Goldchain, *Juchitan, Oaxaca, Mexico*, 1986.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

Yann Martel

THE FACTS BEHIND THE HELSINKI ROCCAMATIOS

pour J.G.

I HADN'T known Paul for that long. We'd met at Trent University in Peterborough in the fall of '87. Having worked and traveled around a bit, I was older than him, twenty-four and in fourth year. He had just turned nineteen and was entering first year. They have this system at Trent where at the beginning of the year some upper year students introduce the new students to the university. There are no pranks or anything like that; the upper years are there to be helpful. They're called "amigas" and the first years "amigees," which shows you how much Spanish they speak in Peterborough. I was an amiga and most of my amigees struck me as good-humoured and eager children. But Paul had a laid-back intelligent curiosity and a sceptical turn of mind that I liked. And it happened that because of our parents' jobs we'd both lived in Mexico City for a few years when we were kids. The two of us clicked and we became good friends. We did things together and talked all the time. Because I was older and I'd seen more things, I'd usually fall into the role of the wise old guru and Paul of the young disciple. But then he'd say something that would throw my pomposness right to my face and we'd laugh and break from these roles.

Then, hardly into second term, Paul fell ill. Already at Christmas he'd had a fever. And since then he'd been carrying this cough around. If he moved suddenly, if he sat down or got up too quickly for example, he would erupt into a dry, hacking cough. Initially, he, we, thought nothing of it. The cold, the dryness of the air—it was something to do with that. But slowly things got worse. Now I remember signs that I didn't think twice about at the time. He complained once of diarrhea. He seemed less energetic. One day

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First page of Yann Martel's "The Facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios," which appeared in Issue 92, 1990. The story won the Journey Prize in 1991.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Between the reading and the museum visits and the hot baths, I started to write. I saw what others had done with words and I wondered what *I* could do with them. My parents had an IBM electric typewriter, a hulking machine that made a thundering noise as the little metal ball with the letters embossed on it crashed against the paper like a missile hitting its target. I slipped a blank page in the typewriter. I started with short short stories because a short short story seems easier to write than a long short story. My stories were bad. But I liked the role of being a small god, of creating a planet and putting people on it and giving their lives direction and meaning. I kept at it.

One story I wrote was called "Mister Ali and the Barrelmaker." A man sits down at a restaurant, orders his lunch. It is brought to him: a human head, set in a bed of lettuce. Mr. Ali picks up his knife and fork and tucks in. Nose, cheeks, ears, brains—he eats them all with great gusto. Meanwhile, he and the head chat, because it's nice to have company over a meal—and what else is there to do when you're a head on a bed of lettuce? The head tells Mr. Ali that he used to be a cooper, a barrelmaker, and proceeds to tell him all about barrels. All very interesting, but then Mr. Ali eats the tongue, at which point the head, already having some difficulty speaking when its lips are eaten, falls silent. Mr. Ali finishes up and heads back to work.

The story lay there with other stories I wrote. There was no ambition behind these efforts. I was passing the time until dentistry or teaching or whatever called me back to reality. Then a friend of the family came for a visit, the writer John Ralston Saul. My proud parents showed him a few of my stories. He said good things about them, then left. Nothing else.

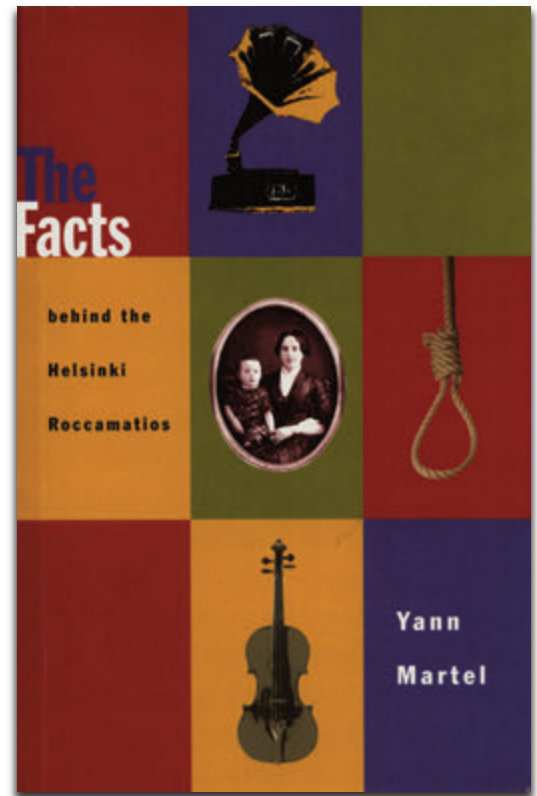
A while later, there was mail for me. A rare occurrence. The letterhead on the envelope said it was from *The Malahat Review*. I had never heard of it. Some sort of magazine. I opened the envelope. It was a one-page note from a Connie Rooke, the editor, informing me that they were pleased to accept my story

“Mister Ali and the Barrelnmaker” for publication. They would pay me 125 dollars.

I was astonished. Pay me? 125 dollars? For something I wrote freely, for nothing, like one whistles while walking down the street? *Really?* A little later I received a printout of the short story with Connie’s editorial suggestions. I threw myself at improving the story with utter delight. Then, in the fall of 1988, I received Issue 84 of *The Malahat Review*, my issue. The cover had a gorgeous photograph by Rafael Goldchain of a Mexican woman dressed in a colourful dress. A thing of beauty. This truly was the good life, I thought.

Connie went on to publish two other stories of mine, “The Facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios” and “The Time I Heard the Private Donald J. Rankin String Concerto with One Discordant Violin, by the American Composer John Morton.” The former won the Journey Prize, I found an agent, a collection of stories was published by Knopf Canada, and so on. I became, to my surprise, a writer. I had done the necessary preparation—those nice long hot baths, that luxuriating in *oisiveté*—but *The Malahat Review* was the key enabler. Connie Rooke was the midwife who birthed the writer I became. Without her, without *The Malahat Review*, I wouldn’t be the writer I am now. You have to start somewhere in whatever you do, and my first step as a real writer was with *The Malahat Review*. If John Saul had not done what he did, if Connie had not seen something in the story, I would be someone else today.

YANN MARTEL is the author of the short story collection *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* (the title story won the Journey Prize) and of the novels *Self*, *Beatrice & Virgil*, *Life of Pi* (winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize) and his latest, *The High Mountains of Portugal*. He also ran a guerilla book club with Stephen Harper, sending him a book every two weeks for four years. The letters that accompanied the books were published as *101 Letters to a Prime Minister*. Martel lives in Saskatoon with writer Alice Kuipers and their four children.



Cover of Yann Martel’s first book, *The Facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* (1993). The book features two stories first published in *The Malahat Review*: “The Facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios” appeared in Issue 92 (1990), and “The Time I Heard the Private Donald J. Rankin String Concerto with One Discordant Violin, by the American Composer John Morton” appeared in Issue 100 (1992).

[Image courtesy of Samantha MacFarlane]

ONE READER'S SNEAK PEEK: ON REVIEWING

In the early years of my life as a “serious” poet, I was invited to review a poetry collection for the *Malahat*. The book in question was a collection of new and selected work by an established Canadian poet. I wasn’t new to writing reviews, so I knew that the assignment would push me to read this poet’s work in a more complex, careful way than when I read for personal enjoyment. I would not simply bask in language and its effects. I would need to attend to my own experience of reading the book; consider that experience in the context of the author’s apparent intentions and prior accomplishments; and then articulate all this in an engaging little essay. Though a review is, in part, one reader’s sneak peek between covers, it’s also a piece of writing to be (hopefully) enjoyed in its own right.

I welcomed this opportunity to review the work of a poet whose writing I admired. But I took on this particular assignment with trepidation. A reviewer is beholden to a trinity of duties. One, enter the world an author has created with a spirit of openness and curiosity. Two, trust the validity of her own experience as she reads her way through that world. Three, report back, as an honest and practical guide, to future travellers there. I believe in this trinity. A review written in this spirit will contribute to the broader discussion of the art of writing and foster a reading culture that is vibrant and whole. Nonetheless, to broach the work of one of my betters, an acclaimed practitioner, in the context of anything like assessment, felt beyond cheeky.

As I read the new and selected, my trepidation turned into dismay. The collection was no doubt the work of a fine poet with a strong voice, bravely tackling relevant and universal subject matter. But some of the writing underwhelmed me. I found myself wondering what this or that piece might have become with a further push, or with judicious trimming. Some of my discomfort lay with the book’s centerpiece, a lengthy elegy that seemed to plod along in a stupor of generic, yet private, grief. It didn’t invite or lure me in.

Before this assignment, I’d been impressed by any book I’d taken up with my reviewer’s pen. My chief challenge had been how to articulate what I liked. That is tricky enough: demystifying the machinations of a well-working poem or body of verse via clear expository prose. But it doesn’t leave you wondering—not too much, anyway—about how your clumsy attempts to describe a

book might affect its author. Now though, I’d come up hard against a reality every reviewer must face sooner or later: my own disappointment. What was I to do with it? Was it even fair?

As the years have passed, I’ve come to see this assignment as seminal, essential to my understanding of the reviewer’s craft and role. Through frank discussions and thoughtful editing suggestions, *Malahat* editor John Barton helped me to acknowledge my disappointment with the book, at heart a reader’s honest response, without relegating its contents to the trash heap, which the author surely didn’t deserve. I learned to inhabit and share my response as a reader, a very personal experience, without making it personal. I learned to write honest criticism without venom or callousness, an approach that is far more respectful of an author and of potential readers than half-truths or disingenuous compliments. By never saying whether he agreed with my misgivings about the work in question, Barton also subtly underlined a significant principle: a reviewer’s opinion is just that. Not the editor’s opinion, and certainly not a universal judgment.

Now I write—and read—reviews with all this in mind, conscious that this large-minded perspective came my way by writing for a highly distinguished literary journal, ground zero for such fundamental development of craft and ethics. I might disagree with a reviewer’s opinion on a book, and a reader might disagree with a review I’ve written. This is healthy. This is *interesting*. It’s even sometimes instructive: counter perspectives can lead us to further clarity or deeper understanding. They might even lead us to change our minds.

Since then I’ve written a lengthy list of reviews. For the *Malahat*, I’ve reviewed poetry and essay collections by emerging and more established authors. In all cases, even when I wasn’t completely won over by a book, I was grateful for the chance to engage so intimately with an author’s words, and for the trust bestowed upon me to provide a window on those words to other readers.

– ANITA LAHEY

ANITA LAHEY is the author of *The Mystery Shopping Cart: Essays on Poetry and Culture* (Palimpsest, 2013) and two Véhicule poetry collections: *Out to Dry in Cape Breton* (2006) and *Spinning Side Kick* (2011). She’s also a magazine journalist and Assistant Series Editor for *Best Canadian Poetry in English*.

JAN ZWICKY

The Ethics of the Negative Review

The critics killed Keats. What writer has ever had a bad review and not felt the truth of Byron's claim? That squelching of self and creativity. It's one of the reasons that, when I was review editor for *The Fiddlehead* in the early nineties, I made a point of requesting that a review be written only if the reviewer was genuinely enthusiastic about the book. I had other motives, too. One was that I hoped, in this way, to get writing that was *engaged* with its subject-matter, and not simply sleepwalking its way to another line in someone's CV. Secondly, as a poet, I was only too aware how many excellent books were published each year to no public notice of any sort: it seemed perverse to kill trees to complain about the bad ones. But, as I say, I also thought why sharpen the hatchets when a deathly critical silence will do all the *public* work that needs doing? It's this motive on which I want to dwell in what follows because I know my views are not universally shared. I have heard writers say—in defence of a negative review they've given another writer—that they 'had a duty to tell it like it is.'—A duty! The philosopher in me sits up at this suggestion, because it implies that those of us who *don't* do 'our duty' in this regard, or even agitate against doing it, are pursuing a morally degenerate course. So I want to spend a while reflecting on whether or not we *do* have a duty of some sort, at least on occasion, to say publicly that someone has written a bad book. Could it be Keats' assassins were being better moral citizens than we think?

To put the question as I just have may, some feel, be to engage in a bit of a cheat: we all know Keats belongs in the canon, so whoever thumped

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First page of Jan Zwicky's essay "The Ethics of the Negative Review" published in Issue 144 (2003).

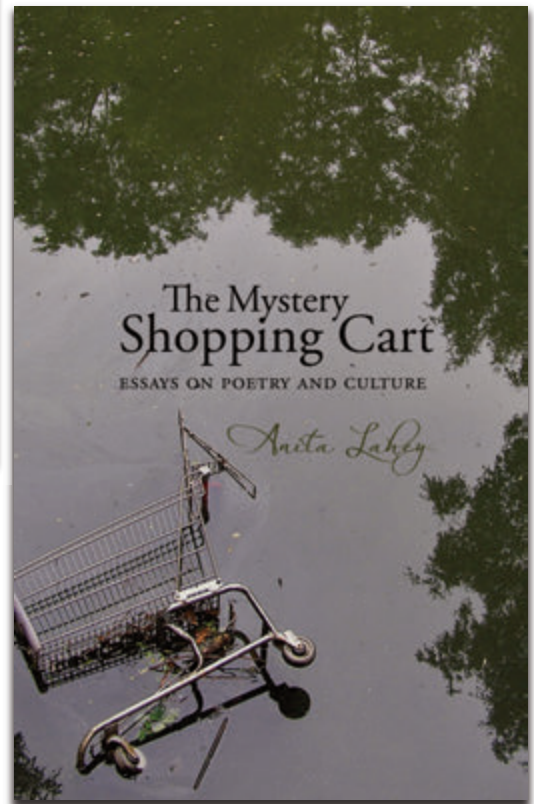
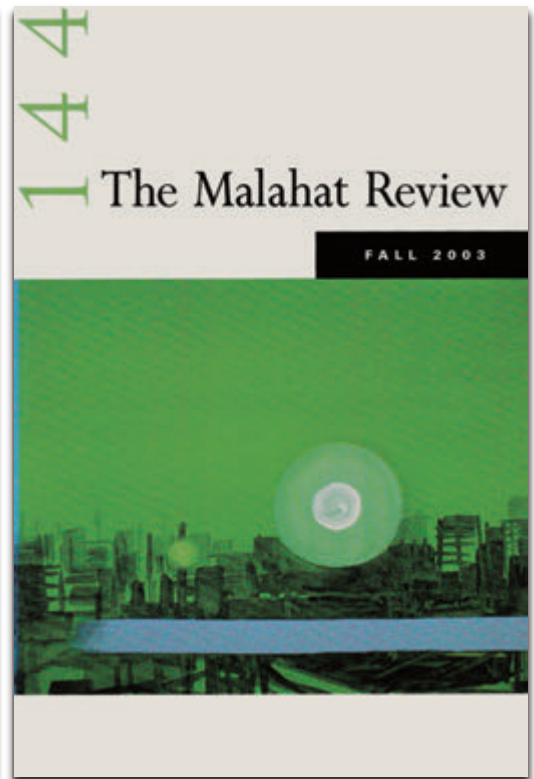
[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Issue 144, 2003: "Reviewing: A Special Issue." Cover art: Wanda Koop, *War*, 2003.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Cover of Anita Lahey's book *The Mystery Shopping Cart: Essays on Poetry and Culture* (2013), which features book reviews that she first published in *The Malahat Review*.

[University of Victoria Libraries, P58623 A393M97]



* I still have some reservations about this, though the only alternative I've come up with so far has been worse.

CAMOSUN QUARTERLY

Having discussed further details of this project, we have come to the following conclusions :-

1. The magazine should be called CAMOSUN QUARTERLY as originally suggested.*
2. In order to enable us to create a "stockpile" of contributions ahead of publication, and also to give us an advantage over competitors, we should pay our contributors "on acceptance". This may mean that a "set wastage" allowance may be needed to cope with material accepted and later discarded for tactical reasons or reasons of space. *Better to leave this out, I think. We don't want to give an immediate impression of inexperience.*
3. The Magazine will require an Editorial Office and a part-time (half-time) Secretary. The Office could, for the first year, be that at present used by Robin Skelton; he could easily share it with the magazine. The Secretary should be selected, after due interviews, by the Editors. She should be a half-time secretary in the complete employ of the Magazine, and should not be shared with any other Dept or Organization.
4. The Business Managership of the magazine will be held for the first twelve months by Robin Skelton, who will do his best to find and train a successor as quickly as possible.
5. The Budget for the Magazine should be passed, in detail, as soon as possible, so that an account may be opened and contributions collected.
6. As it will be necessary for each cheque issued by the Magazine to carry an assignment of copyright notice on its reverse, and as it would ~~shorten out much machinery~~ simplify accountancy problems considerably, we suggest that the Magazine be given a separate banking account, into which its budget should be paid annually. The cheques should be signable by the University Bursar together with *either?* one of the two editors.
7. *7, I trust.* The Budget, as detailed on the attached sheet, is based upon the assumption that the first issue of the magazine will appear on January 1 1967. We feel that if circumstances make it advisable to publish the first issue before this date, there should be nothing to prevent it. Thus the budget details must be regarded as being to some extent fluid, and qualified by the date of first publication.

HEATHER DEAN

Proof Positive: The Malahat Review Archives

THE MALAHAT REVIEW FONDS, or archives, is open. It is open and accessible to researchers, but it is also open in the archival sense, in that as long as a person or organization is living, their archives is similarly expected to flourish. The fonds dates from 1965 to 1992 and provides a window into the business of creating and running a literary journal. Conversations have already begun about further building the archives to include a record of the journal forward from 1992. Within fourteen weighty banker boxes, gifted to Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Victoria Libraries at five points between 1984 and 2008, is the record of *The Malahat Review*, with documents including correspondence, drafts of authors' contributions, and printers' proofs.

The contents of the fonds—the various letters, typescripts, proofs, and other material—tell the story of *The Malahat Review*. But the archives itself, how it is arranged, and when it was donated also tells a story. The first and largest donation to date arrived following the retirement of Robin Skelton as its editor, and for this reason this era of its publication is best represented. The arrangement of the archives reflects the way in which the *Malahat* operated then, with a folder or a few folders containing various documents relating to particular issues, organized chronologically in the order they were published. These issue-by-issue files make the project-based publishing cycle apparent in the very structure of the fonds. Arranged according to the date of each issue's publication, the files reflect the internal integrity of the archives, and the fonds thereby serves as authentic and reliable evidence of the journal and its production.

Generally there are one to two folders for an issue, one folder containing typescripts and correspondence, and another folder containing the galley proofs from the Victoria-based Morriss Printing company, which printed each issue. Occasionally typescripts are accompanied by index cards with details about the work being accepted for publication, its page count, and an honorarium given to

Facing and following pages:
Proposal for the *Camosun Quarterly*.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, Robin Skelton fonds, SC114]

8. *Omit.* The Breakdown of Contribution Costs contains an item for [Wastage and] payment for special material. It is our view that if we can, for one or two items an issue, afford to compete financially with the larger American Quarterly *is - is. Can any hats fall?* we will be able to buy material of international importance from established writers.

9. *search out?* Preliminary Editorial discussions have already resulted in arrangements being made to secure a good deal of important material. Further progress can be made as soon as the financial situation is clarified.

10. We feel that with this budget we can compete satisfactorily with all other magazines in the field. The budget now suggested is somewhat larger than that at first envisaged. *This* ~~The increase is due to :-~~ *because:*

- (a) Discussions of format suggest some additional allowance must be made for cover-designs.
- (b) Discussions of comparative rates of pay by different magazines led us to increase our proposed rates.

11. *probably!* ~~We feel also that,~~ Once this Magazine is under way, we will be obliged (whether we like it or not) to entertain visiting writers from time to time. We feel therefore that the magazine should be granted the same ability to draw upon University Funds for necessary entertainment expenses as that possessed by University Departments. It may also be necessary for one of the editors to attend conferences from time to time (such as the American Little Magazine Association Annual Conference, and Writers Conferences), and ~~that~~ attendance at such conferences should be regarded as having the same claim as attendance at Learned Societies Conferences upon the University Funds.

Articles receive 20, paid @ \$10.00. per page :	\$ 2000.00.
Articles receive 50, paid @ \$2.00. per item :	\$ 100.00.
Fiction receives 40, paid @ \$25.00. per item :	\$ 1000.00.
Reviews receive 14, paid @ \$5.00. per page :	\$ 70.00.
Prelims receive 6, unpaid :	
	\$ 3170.00.
Allowance for wastage and payment for special material, including first publication rights on work by top-ranking authors	\$ 440.00.
	\$ 2000.00.

Of course I don't know whether a reasonable amount of it can be done & whether the money will be available & how likely it is to be used for such purposes. I don't know whether you really mean to say that you have a right to draw on the funds for such purposes & whether you have a right to do so.

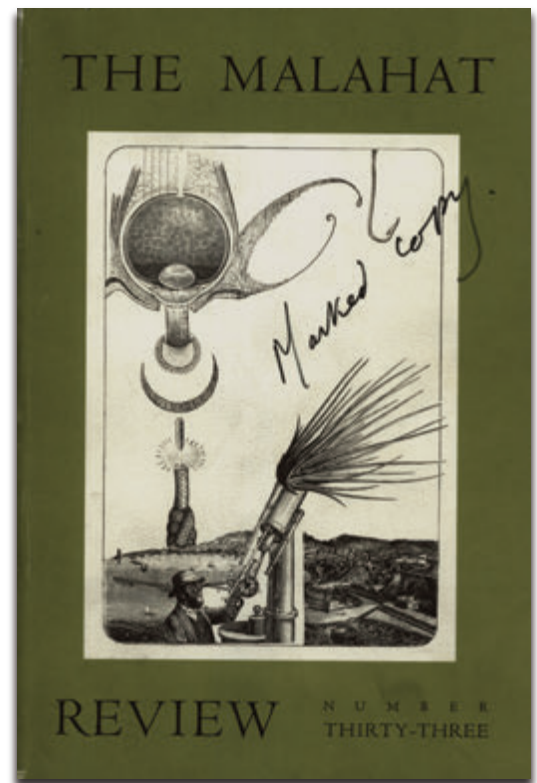
the author. The typescripts and the galleys are usually corrected by hand and sometimes include notes from the editors to the printer. The files reflect the transformation of the words on the page from handwritten and typescript drafts (often quite messy with annotations) to more polished and finalized proofs, although these also often contain corrections and show a work's progress before going to press. The fonds provides insight into the context for the final published version of each *Malahat* issue. This contextual evidence also includes a glimpse into what was *not* published, from early versions of works with editorial alterations rendered visible, to entire pieces rejected for publication. Two ledgers dating from 1972 to 1980, with directions tucked into the front about noting rejections in red, indicate—with more red ink than not—that quite early in its history *The Malahat Review* was a difficult and prestigious journal to publish in. Indeed, as early as the summer of 1967, its first year in print, co-editor John Peter wrote to Skelton: "I've found myself rejecting a good deal. [...] I think we're rapidly approaching (and may have already reached) the point where one can afford to take only the unadulterated cream. Our milk days, in fact, appear to be about over."¹

This business of producing *The Malahat Review* can also be found in its financial records, including author payments, advertisements, and grant applications. The issue-by-issue arrangement is interrupted with file folders labelled "Financial Crisis, 1973-1979," which are full of correspondence in support of sustaining the *Malahat* during a period of rising production costs. Among those correspondents—and subscribers—who wrote letters of support are a number of notable writers, artists, and critics, including John Betjeman, Northrop Frye, Ted Hughes, Henry Moore, Joyce Carol Oates, Graham Greene, and Irving Layton.

Combined, these documents are a window into the *Malahat*, not only its beginnings and notable historical junctures, but the quotidian work of preparing a journal for publication. The archives illustrates the exacting labour in bringing an author's piece from handwritten or typescript draft into print. We see in the archives the many hands at work, from the authors' typescripts to editors' handwritten notes with changes from the minute to the more extensive, inscribed over multiple drafts and proofs. We see the early work of the printers and initial errors. We see the work of the *Malahat*'s secretaries, who typed various documents and likely organized the files.

Fittingly, Robin Skelton and John Peter were intrigued by the archival, in the unpublished and in-progress context out of which finished works materialize. In a brief history published in 1972 as an introduction to the index of the *Malahat*'s first five years, Skelton notes that in addition to poetry, fiction, drama, and artwork, "[w]e also decided to open our pages to original literary documents, editions of previously unpublished letters by important writers, and literary memoirs, and the worksheets of living poets." These worksheets,

1 John Peter, letter to Robin Skelton, 7 July 1967, Robin Skelton fonds, SC114, University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives.



Issue 33, 1975. One can clearly see the evidence of an editorial hand in this "Marked copy."

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR CAMOSUN QUARTERLY

1965- 1966

1. Cost of half-time Secretary :	\$ 1,800.00.
2. Cost of Stationery	\$ 100.00.
3. Maximum cost of Contributions paid on acceptance [including Wastage Allowance for overmatter.]	\$ 8000.00.
	<u>\$9, 900.00.</u>

*Omit. Or say 'including
special rates for celebrities.'*

1966 - 1967

1. As Total Above	
2. Printing Cost of Two Issues	\$ 6800.00.
	<u>\$15, 900.00.</u>

1967 - 1968

1. As Total Above	
2. Printing Cost of Two Issues	\$ 6000.00.
	<u>21, 900.00.</u>

Continue thereafter.

Breakdown of Contribution Costs

Each Issue contains 160 pages of printed matter.

Of these Poetry receives 20, paid @ \$10.00. per page :	\$200.00.
Articles receive 80, paid @ \$25.00. per thou :	\$860.00.
Fiction receives 40, paid @ \$25.00. per thou :	\$430.00.
Reviews receive 14, paid @ \$5.00. per page :	\$ 70.00.
Prelims receive 6, unpaid .	
160 pages	<u>\$ 1560.00.</u>
<i>Omit</i> Allowance for [Wastage and] Payment for special material, including first publication rights on work by top-ranking authors	\$ 440.00.
	<u>\$ 2000.00.</u>

*Otherwise I think this is splendid, + congratulate you on it. I see from the breakdown
that you must have arrived at some kind of working figure for words per page. Perhaps
you should explain, verbally, that this is approximate until we have a final. And I do think
we need to ponder the title further. But otherwise — everything is great.*

John.

essentially a progression of handwritten and typescript manuscripts, show the creative process and craft of writing, which culminate in a final, realized version, an evolution normally unseen by readers. The first issue features drafts of John Betjeman's poem "The Bay in Anglesey," drawn from Betjeman's papers housed in Special Collections at the University of Victoria Libraries. Eventually these worksheets fell away from the journal's pages, though early issues include drafts of works by authors such as Kingsley Amis and Anne Sexton.²

As the dates for the fonds suggest, the life of *The Malahat Review* spills out from the archives, with material relating to its history—both past and present—located in other archives as well as the file cabinets in the journal's office on campus. Documents pertaining to the *Malahat* take root in archives beyond its own fonds, with related material to be found in the archives of its founders as well as the constellation of people who have been involved with the journal, whether as a member of the editorial team or as a contributor. To some degree this is the inevitable way archives work, with one side of a conversation in one archives and the other side in another, so that reading letters from just one or the other is like eavesdropping on one side of a telephone conversation. It is only by tapping into both lines that one gets a fuller sense of the dialogue.

But *The Malahat Review* fonds is unique in that so many of its records are located in Robin Skelton's fonds, illustrating how intertwined the early journal was with the life and work of one of its founding editors. It is fitting that the first boxes of the *Malahat* fonds are shelved above his. The founding documents of the "Camosun Quarterly," as it was initially named, which include a preliminary outline of the journal and its proposed budget, written by Skelton and annotated by Peter, are situated in Skelton's files. Skelton sits at the centre of *The Malahat Review*, from its founding through to his last issue as editor, with the majority of the journal's early correspondence and some proofs located in his fonds. Correspondence between the founding editors, intensely personal and yet frequently written on the *Malahat*'s black and teal letterhead stationery, also provides a glimpse into its early days, when the editors had to write one another because one or the other was out of town. We find Peter writing to Skelton, who was then in England, thanking him for his poem "Snow," which "saved our bacon for the July issue and I am in your debt forever," and later, in another letter, Peter apologizing for a printing error in the published poem. As this fonds grows to include the archives beyond the 1990s, a fuller picture of its history and the impact of its later editors will more fully emerge.³

The Malahat Review fonds will always be open to researchers. For an archivist, the fonds would only be considered closed if the journal itself ceased publication. I hope the fonds will remain open in the archival sense long into the future, with further additions expected as the *Malahat* continues to thrive.

HEATHER DEAN is Associate Director, Special Collections, at the University of Victoria Libraries. She was previously an archivist at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

2 *The Malahat Review Index, 1967–71*, 3.

3 John Peter, letter to Robin Skelton, 28 May 1970, Robin Skelton fonds, SC114, University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives.

WE ARE THE BOARD

We are not badly behaved medical students wagging the chins of corpses to make them talk; we won't joke about unfortunate scars or birthmarks. But we are the board and we are here to pass judgement. We talk openly around the table. Someone sips coffee, someone else laughs. It doesn't matter who you are. We may know your name or your work could be new to us; one way or another we take you seriously. We all write. We all submit to magazines. We're in this together, really. Submissions come in, are read, commented upon in writing, are rejected or passed around to more editors, and then are discussed and make the cut or don't.

Remember typewriters? That's what writers used when I started work at the *Malahat* in 1985. The stories and poems that went into the magazine had to be retyped into our clunky computer. Big as a dog house, it blinked its green cursor at me if I worked late into the night. I heard about the *Malahat* as a student in Connie Rooke's Canadian fiction class. I volunteered at first and then was offered a student job and I stuck around long enough to be invited onto the editorial board. Connie knew everyone in the world of CanLit, and was excited when "Tiff" (Timothy Findley) or "Michael" (Michael Ondaatje), or "Paulette" (Paulette Jiles) came to town. She wafted into the office on a magic carpet of cigarette smoke and Dior Poison. As the outer office lackey bent over my desk like Bob Cratchit, I opened manuscript envelopes and stacked them on a bookshelf in date order. Hundreds! Six feet of fiction at times. If something noteworthy came in, I brought it straight to Connie. As editor, she was in charge. We on the editorial board took a stack of manuscripts home. I read both fiction and poetry for quite some time. If the work was good enough, even if it wasn't to my taste, I would write notes on the envelope, bring it back to the office, and put it in another editor's mailbox. Once it had done the rounds, it would go to Connie and she would decide. Some days, she would come out of the office and hand me something and ask my opinion. Her talent, one of them anyway, was making people feel important, so whether she agreed with me or not, I knew that she thought about my response.

Derk Wynand took over when Connie left. She was forced out really, because she had taken a job at the University of Guelph and there were those who feared she might take the magazine with her. Derk asked opinions of the board more often than Connie had, but he still exercised his editorial veto and his executive right to say yes (or no). When Derk announced his intention to step

down, the wheels of university administration turned so slowly that by the time he left, nothing had been done to replace him. Marlene Cookshaw, assistant editor, became the "acting" editor until, after too long, the powers realized that she wasn't pretending and that the editor didn't necessarily need to be a faculty member. That shift made the *Malahat* more independent. Marlene was also more democratic. We had board meetings around the kitchen table and talked about submissions and about what drew us to certain kinds of writing. That was the beginning of the editorial round tables, and these discussions are the reason I've stayed on for such a long time.

When Marlene decided she didn't want to be the *Malahat's* editor anymore, there was an open hiring process and it produced two candidates: one was John Barton; the other was me. I wish I could say I was graceful when the committee chose John. I wanted to be the Grand Poobah. But the committee made the right choice. In the years since John took over, we have faced challenge after challenge—especially in terms of funding. If not for him, I don't think the *Malahat* would exist. It would have fallen as other good magazines across the country have. But we adapted, and not only is the *Malahat* still going, it is stronger than it has ever been.

These days, submissions come to us electronically and there are editorial boards for poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Sometimes we argue and someone digs their heels in. That's when I learn the most. We get the occasional mad letter from a writer who feels slighted because we haven't properly recognized their particular genius (there is a good one from Irving Layton somewhere in our archives), but I continue to put in these hours of cultural work because I love reading through new writing to see what the rest of the world's poets are up to. It's a gift. Instead of writing on envelopes, we make electronic notes, but we still pass submissions on, and we gather together around a table four or so times a year to talk poetics and to judge the carvings of your heart. We still take you seriously.

– JAY RUZESKY

JAY RUZESKY is a poet, writer and filmmaker. His most recent book is *In Antarctica: An Amundsen Pilgrimage*. He teaches at Vancouver Island University.

Issue 117, 1996: "A Special Issue on P. K. Page," edited by Jay Ruzesky.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

THE

The Malahat Review

WINTER 1996



MOURNING SONG

My great-grandmother
was dying.
They left her
for wolves,
vanished like
worms into the
taut black carcass
of the night.

She wanted it that way.

2 The white hollow bone
speaks through me

She left me her
memory, who wouldn't love
this country now.
She gave me back my name.

My skin is
paler than hers -
I have a feeling
she sees that.
My grandmother married
a city-man -
I get the feeling
she's forgiven that.

~~I drink from the blood
of the white hollow bone~~ delete

My great-grandmother
is alive in me -
she calls me to her own.
The old frog-moon
lays her eggs in my heart

3 the white hollow bone
bleeds through me.

~~Susan Musgrave~~

JAN ZWICKY

Why Do I Keep Reading the Malahat?

THE SHORT ANSWER IS: quality. But it has taken me five minutes to settle on that last word. The concept of quality has become deeply tendentious, freighted with the spectre of cultural bias. I'd like to mean "quality" without any negative spin. It's not clear, though, that this is possible.

What gives me hope that it might be—despite the inseparability of any given language and its cultural freight—is the phenomenon of translation between languages. For translation depends on shared possibilities of understanding—that is, on cross-cultural recognitions. "Oh, I get it. Our word for that is ..." or, sometimes, "Oh, I get it. We don't have a word for that, but I see what you mean." Any polyglot will tell you there are numerous regions of linguistic, and hence cultural, opacity. What I want to focus on, though, is the fact that not all linguistic gestures are cross-culturally opaque. Is there something that we—you as a reader, I as a writer, using contemporary North American English in a public context—could mean by "quality" that reaches across cultural boundaries?

I'd like to propose that we might mean by it something like "well made." This is a notion that I've seen acknowledged in cultures that are predominantly oral and nomadic as well as in cultures that are predominantly literate and urban. Indeed, it appears that the idea of something's being well made looms larger in nomadic or genuinely rural cultures where staying alive depends on the kayak gliding swiftly, the net not breaking, and the roof thatch shedding rain. "But those are necessities," someone might say. "It's not the same with things like art where aesthetic judgement is involved. Don't people approve certain sculptural lines over others, certain patterns in the weave, or certain rhythms and phrasings, even certain subject matters, in the stories? Aren't a lot of these judgements determined by tradition? And isn't all such traditionally conditioned judgement oppressive, especially when it crosses cultural boundaries?"



Signed and numbered silkscreen portrait of Robert Graves by William Featherston from Issue 35, 1975: "A Gathering in Celebration of the Eightieth Birthday of Robert Graves."

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, AP5 M27]

Facing page: Typescript of Susan Musgrave's poem "Mourning Song," published in Issue 31. The worksheets for this poem were later published in Issue 45, first in the "West Coast Renaissance" series.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

A bracet, invisible,
For your ^{own} buoy wrist
To thro' with ~~your~~ pulse beat.

Hammered from moon-silver
In the ^{best} chills of night,
Bespoken ~~and~~ ^{circle} complete
Circled ~~the~~ ^{twinkly eight} ~~twinkly eight~~
of twinkly eight ~~twinkly eight~~
Eight and twenty moons -
I have sent you here, ~~sent in your morning~~
For your delectation, ~~that~~ ^{sent in your delectation}
Sent to you wearing ~~to thro' with your~~ ^{at rising and wearing} pulse beat.
hand at your feet

A ~~thin~~ bracet invisible
In your buoy wrist
Hammered from moon silver

In ^{the} ~~the~~ chills of night
~~twinkly eight~~ ^{twinkly eight} ~~twinkly eight~~ ^{twinkly eight} ~~twinkly eight~~ ^{twinkly eight}
Sent to you wearing
For rising and wearing
Then chain is complete.
To thro' with your pulse beat.

Rec'd
the winter
Against bewitching
By the down thing
Of your slaty pulse beat

Protection
By the down thing
When the demons there

Gv8-183

A Bracelet

A bracelet invisible

For your busy wrist,

Twisted from silver

Fetches from far

From silver of the Moon,

From her sheer halo -

Here the shimmering

Pale in the sudden flight

Of the falling star

4

A BRACELET

A bracelet invisible

For your busy wrist,

Twisted from silver

Fetches from far,

From silver of the Moon,

From her sheer halo,

And the sudden glory

Of ~~the falling~~ star.

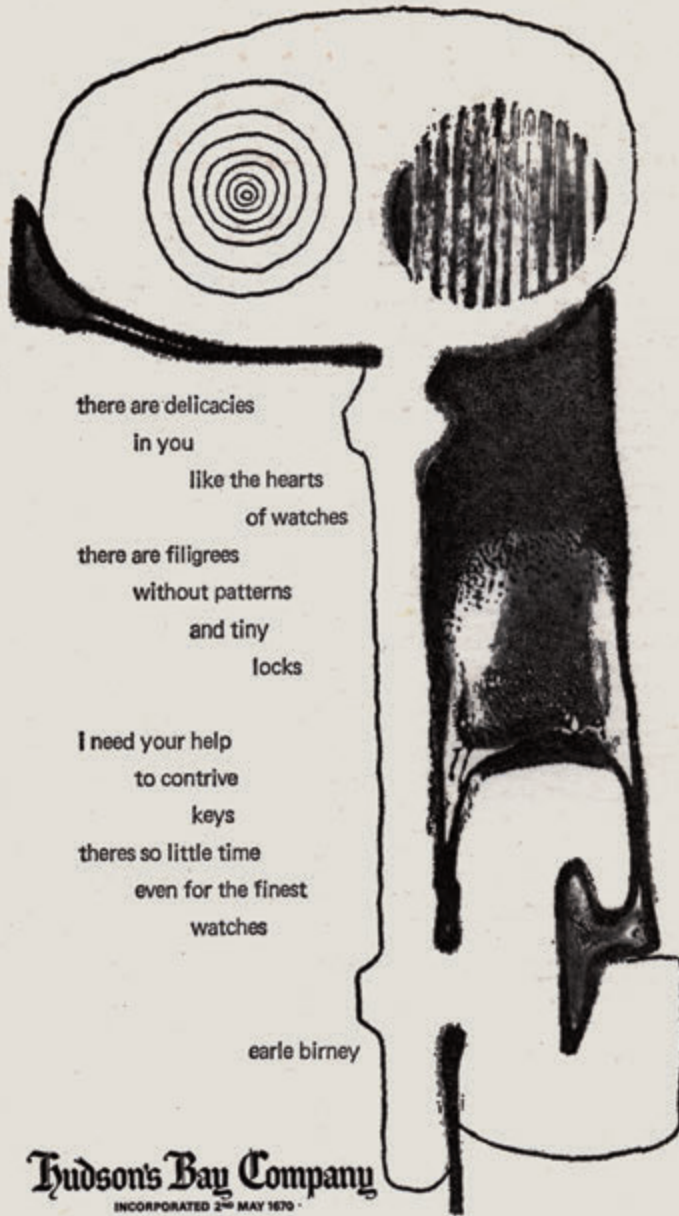
Aesthetic judgement is very much involved; and it's involved in approving the execution of the necessities, too, as anyone who has built a boat or made a non-decorative hat will tell you. And, yes, tradition is very much a part of it. Tradition determines not only snap judgements of acceptability by people who row boats and wear hats; even more crucially, it determines the acquisition of skills and techniques by the makers of boats and hats.

Can judgement rooted in tradition be oppressive? Absolutely. Can traditional techniques, rigidly enforced, cramp a maker's style? Yes, again. Do they always do so? Here, I think the answer is obviously no. Tradition can give access to a wealth of subtle knowledge about materials, about what usually works, about causes of breakage, instability, and about hard-to-articulate relationships between beauty and functionality. To refuse to attend to one's artistic ancestors for fear one's talent will be oppressed is to force oneself to reinvent not only the wheel, but the lever, the inclined plane, and the pulley. Most of us aren't up to it.

"But that's for people who've grown up inside a culture," my interlocutor will object. "You haven't said anything that ameliorates the oppressiveness of aesthetic judgements that use some other culture's measuring stick." This is a crucial observation. Again the answer seems obvious. To reject a painting by Charles Edenshaw simply because it doesn't look like one by Henri Matisse is a moral as well as an aesthetic mistake. And we live now in a period in which the moral dimensions of such mistakes are more obvious than they once were. More specifically, we live in a period in which demands

Worksheets for Robert Graves's "A Bracelet," which were published in Issue 35, 1975: "A Gathering in Celebration of the Eightieth Birthday of Robert Graves."

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, Malahat Review fonds, AR089]



there are delicacies
in you
like the hearts
of watches

there are filigrees
without patterns
and tiny
locks

I need your help
to contrive
keys
theres so little time
even for the finest
watches

earle birney

Hudson's Bay Company
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

presents this work as one of a series written by
Canadian poets and illustrated by Canadian artists

for justice on the part of descendants of Indigenous cultures that were targeted for extermination are beginning to be heard; demands for justice on the part of descendants of human beings brought to this continent as slaves are beginning to be heard; demands for justice on the part of women are beginning to be heard; demands for justice on the part of persons who identify as LGBTQ2 are beginning to be heard. The white colonial, racist, sexist, homophobic culture of North America is, in some quarters, becoming self-conscious. Where it is becoming self-conscious, it is morally horrified by what it sees in the mirror. Members of this self-conscious group—which includes a lot of artists, writers, editors, and educators—want nothing to do with aesthetic judgement that appears to exclude the work of artists and writers from cultural traditions other than the white colonial racist sexist homophobic one that has dominated the North American scene for the last couple of centuries. In our attempts to avoid further cultural insult, should we take the precautionary measure of foregoing aesthetic judgements of any kind, including judgements about well-madeness?

Culture has been defined compellingly by Robert Bringhurst as exogenetic heredity. It is all that communities of humans and non-humans pass on to their progeny through teaching rather than through genes. It is wisdom about “how we do things in these parts”: how songs are sung, how shelters are built, what’s safe, what’s dangerous, how to behave around greyhairs. To see how tightly connected the concept “well made” is to “how we do things,” imagine teaching someone to sew where the object was merely to join two pieces of cloth, or how to make a canoe where the goal was simply water-tightness. What this shows is that culture—exogenetic heredity—is not just a set of rudimentary skills, rudimentary facts, and rudimentary codes of behaviour. What makes culture culture is the complex elaboration of skills, facts, and behaviour patterns. Culture—wherever it is found—involves finesse, nuance, and long hours of practice.

And that—finesse, nuance, complexity, technique—is something that we can generally (not always, but often) detect across cultural lines. I can hear that a singer is doing things with her voice that I haven’t a clue how to do with mine. I can see that details have been positioned very exactly in a print, even though I don’t immediately sense why. What I sense is the effort and concentration that has gone into doing the thing precisely that way. It is such effort and concentration that tradition supports—even if the effort and concentration has gone into resisting almost everything else the tradition stands for. Doing something well, then, involves two things that are independent of any particular cultural tradition: attention to detail and a deep appreciation for how any given detail matters to the whole. These are the hallmarks of fine weaving, fine musicianship, fine homebuilding, fine manners, fine storytelling, and fine poetry everywhere.

This sensitivity to detail and an intuitive grasp of why it matters have nothing to do with content, nor with preferences for certain

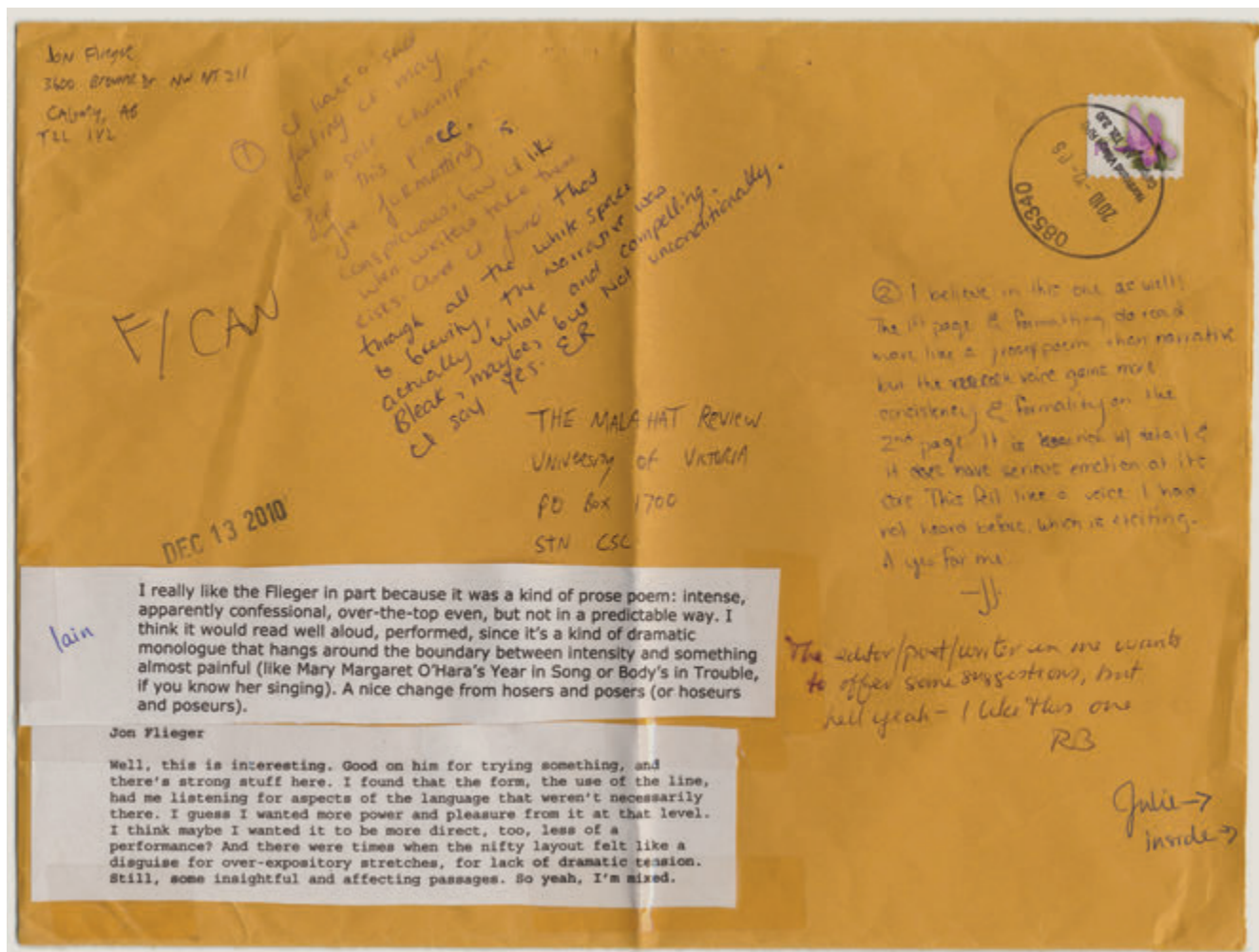
Facing page: Back cover of Issue 12 (1969), which features a Hudson’s Bay Company advertisement with an illustrated poem by Earle Birney.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives, *Malahat Review* fonds, AR089]

styles. They are the essence of style itself. And that is another way to define quality: it is the vehicle of style.

Listening for the way in which attentiveness to detail blossoms into style is a task to which the *Malahat's* editorial board brings not only sensitivity and expertise, but also a remarkable degree of humility and self-awareness. Discernment is rarely easy and in periods of rapid cultural change it can be extremely difficult. But even as it shifts and re-forms, exogenetic heredity remains as fundamental to human existence as the genetic kind. What keeps me reading the *Malahat* is its passionate commitment to widening our ear for well-made work in words.

JAN ZWICKY has published ten collections of poetry, including *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth*, *Forge*, and, most recently, *The Long Walk*. Her books of philosophy include *Lyric Philosophy*, *Wisdom & Metaphor*, and *Alkibiades' Love*. Zwicky grew up on the prairies, was educated at the universities of Calgary and Toronto, and lives on the West Coast of Canada.



WHO RANG THAT BELL?

I became an intern at *The Malahat Review* in 2009, after my story “Ship’s Log” won the Far Horizons Award for Short Fiction. I mention this because it was my first publication, and that time represents, for me, a tipping point. I still had LSAT guides on my bookshelf; I wasn’t sure whether to continue in writing or law. If the contest win gave me the confidence boost, or adrenaline rush, to keep writing stories, the *Malahat* fiction board sucked me in deeper. It was a strange thing to find myself at the gates, when I’d spent all year staring at them from outside. As a second-year student, the notion of publishing a story felt like myth to me—something real writers did, which I was not. And suddenly I was the peevish guardian of Emerald City shouting “Who rang that bell?”

But of course literary journals are not Emerald City, and editorial board members are not so peevish. If anything, my internship demystified the process for me, from the proofreading sessions—in which one person reads the text aloud, (comma) punctuation marks included, (comma) to a colleague who marks the errors—to the selection process. I imagine everything has been digitized now, but back in 2009, we read hard copies from manila envelopes. If we felt the story had potential, we would inscribe our comments on the envelope with our initials, and pass it on to someone else. Should the story make it through several readers, we would discuss it at our board meeting—by which time the envelope would have gathered a slurry of comments, each cluster of words crammed in by a different hand. The ritual sounds antiquated and magical to me now.

The labour of interning—the reading—was also the most beneficial to me as a new writer. It’s a rare

opportunity to read so much raw fiction. Not that all of the stories were raw; they’d been workshopped, perhaps, or polished through other means. But there’s a rustic quality unpublished stories have—a freshness—before they find their way into print. On the most basic level, I observed what mistakes or tropes were common, which forced me to look more carefully at my own writing. But also, I have been wowed by stories from the slush pile. I have been jealous. There’s nothing that pushes me to write better, or try a new style, than a prickly spoonful of writer envy.

Ultimately, interning at *The Malahat Review* invited me into the writing community of Victoria and Canadian literature more broadly. When my stories get accepted or rejected from other magazines, I understand better what that process involves. It’s not as mystical as I thought, but it does involve work and a degree of chance. Of course, the real magic lies inside those manila envelopes. The power of magazines like *The Malahat Review* is their ability to embrace new writers and to provide a platform for fiction, poetry, and essays to be shared.

– ELIZA ROBERTSON

ELIZA ROBERTSON studied creative writing at the universities of Victoria and East Anglia, where she received the Man Booker Scholarship and Curtis Brown Prize. Her debut short-fiction collection, *Wallflowers*, was a finalist for the East Anglia Book Award, Danuta Gleed Short Story Prize, and selected as a *New York Times* editor’s choice. More recently, she is the winner of the *Australian Book Review* Elizabeth Jolley Prize. Her first novel, *Demi-Gods*, was published by Penguin Canada and Bloomsbury in 2017.



Facing page: Submission envelope with comments made by members of the fiction board, including those by Eliza Robertson. Jon Flieger’s story was later published in Issue 175, 2011.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

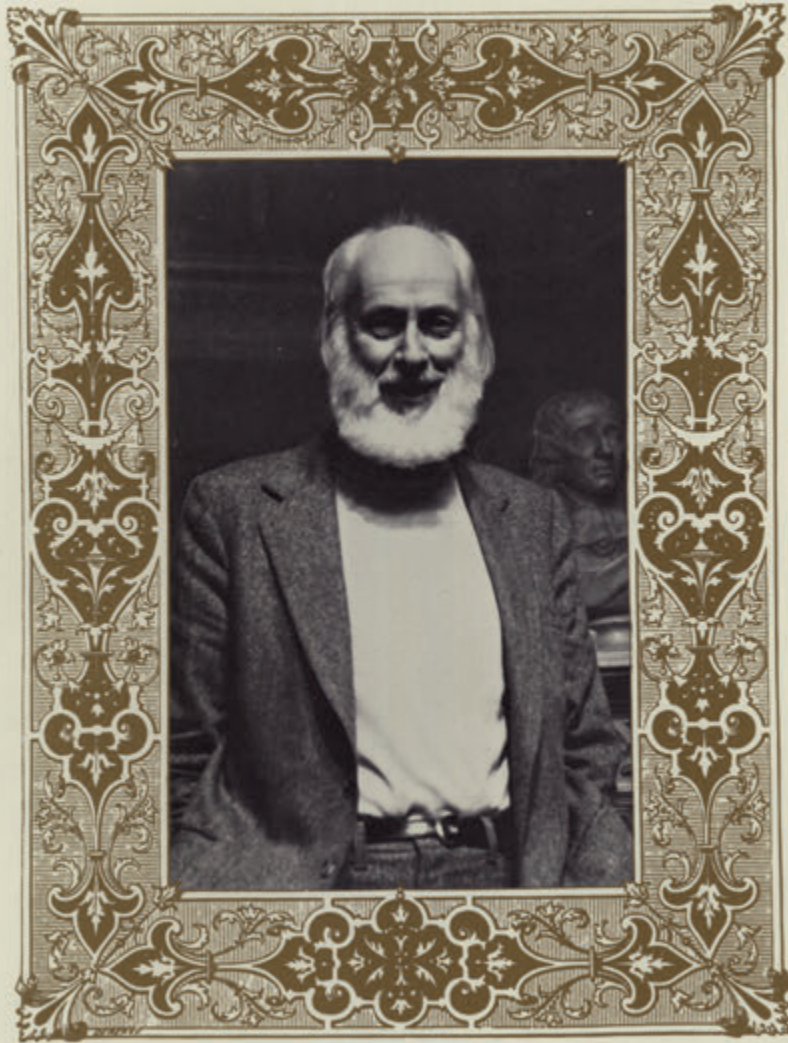
Issue 168, 2009, which features Eliza Robertson’s story “Ship’s Log.”

Cover art: Luis Merino, *Bar Maids (II)*, 1990 (University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries).

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

THE MALAHAT

A Special Issue on George Johnston



REVIEW

N U M B E R
SEVENTY-EIGHT

ROSS LECKIE

At the Centre: A Legacy and Its Significance

WHEN I SPEAK WITH younger writers and ask them what would give them a feeling of validation, they often reply “publication in *The Malahat Review*.” To think about “validation as a writer” might be odd, but, for most people, starting to think about becoming a writer comes with a number of insecurities. Am I a writer? Will I ever be good enough to be taken seriously? For fifty years *The Malahat Review* has been answering these questions for emerging writers, many of whom have gone on to stellar careers. There cannot be a greater legacy than this.

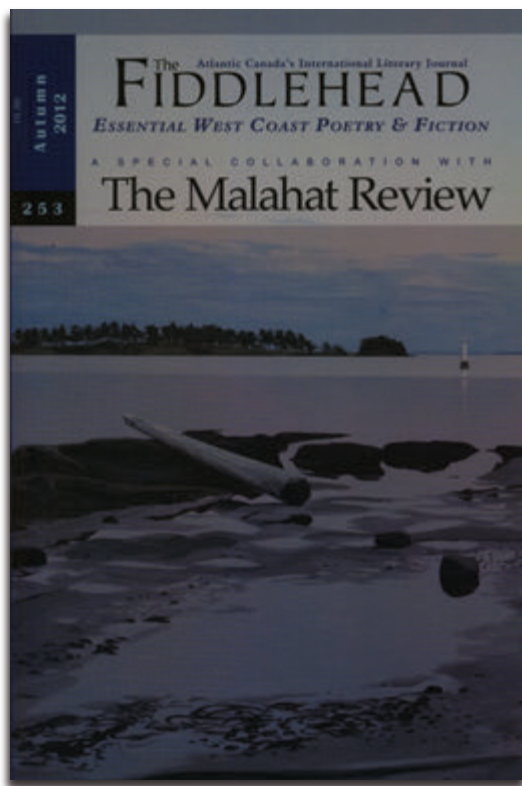
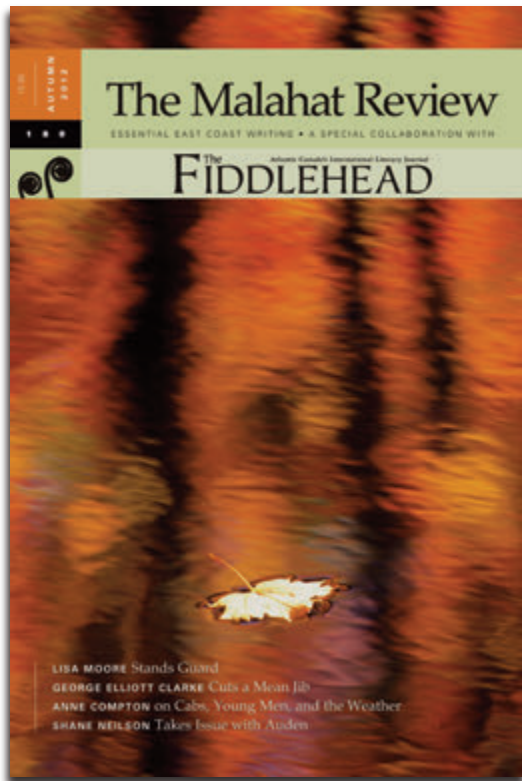
Jenna Albert, who appeared most recently in the Summer 2017 issue, says, “Not only is this my first publication in the *Malahat*, but my first publication in a literary magazine. It is a moment cemented in my memory.” Sue Sinclair published early poems in the *Malahat* in 1998 and notes, “It was my fourth publication, and definitely a moment when I felt recognized and encouraged in my work. I’ve published poems in the *Malahat* seven times since, and it still feels good; I still feel the thrill of being part of a community, though now I count it as an opportunity to be in the company of younger writers, which is no small privilege.”

Kerry-Lee Powell remembers that “I was so thrilled to receive my acceptance that I bounced around the house for days. Having a poem published in the *Malahat* was a real icebreaker for me as a poet, and it gave me the confidence to continue with the hard work of finishing my first collection.” Current Parliamentary Poet Laureate George Elliott Clarke recalls that his first poem “pretends that the great jazz bassist Charles Mingus was an Africadian — African-Nova Scotian-outta Halifax.” For him: “That’s the legacy of *Malahat* — to provide a home for daring, outrageous, experimental, and engaged work.”

Many of us remember our feelings on first appearing in the *Malahat*, and it would be fun to gather a bunch of writers and just trade stories. It didn’t occur to me that the *Malahat* would consider publishing one of my poems until after my second book. I was just start-

Facing page: Issue 78, 1987:
“A Special Issue on George Johnston.”
Cover photograph uncredited: *George Johnston*, 1980.

[University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and
University Archives, AP5 M27]



ing the tentative and nervous steps towards *Gravity's Plumb Line* and in the summer of 2000 a poem that would appear in it was published in the *Malahat*. I was elated, and I felt maybe that I did have the inkling of a book. The poem appeared right after the ethereal and precise prose of Mary Swan's novella "The Deep," which had won the *Malahat's* Novella Prize and would later receive an O'Henry Award in 2001. My friends Eric Miller, Michael Crummey and John Donlan were in the issue. Early poems from Sina Queyras, Anne Simpson, and Aislinn Hunter were there as well, and I knew I would be following their careers. It was my first encounter with novelist and creative nonfiction author Lorna Jackson, who, as a *Malahat* editorial board member, had contributed a review of books of essays by Douglas Glover and Tim Lilburn.

The Malahat Review has always sought out the best new writers and given them encouragement at that crucial turning point in their careers. From the *Malahat* that next step to a first book seems imaginable, achievable. This, in my mind, is the signal achievement of literary journals in Canada, of which the *Malahat* is the epitome. Reading its pages over the years, I've found for the first time many writers who have become favourites.

The *Malahat* wouldn't be able to provide this forum for new writers, of course, if it weren't already one of Canada's finest literary journals. It is the place to go to find new work from many of Canada's most celebrated authors. As a young writer, it is wonderful to see your work first published in your university student journal or in a stapled magazine your friends are putting out, but the idea that your writing matters blossoms when you see your work next to the writers you most admire and respect.

What I like about the *Malahat* is that I can open any issue at random and find writers I love and discover writers I haven't seen before. I could peruse the pages of Issue 76 (1986) to find Rudy Wiebe, Janice Kulyk Keefer, David McFadden, and George Bowering. I could open Issue 78 (1987) to find a special issue dedicated to George Johnston. What a pleasure to discover he was loved by P. K. Page, Earle Birney, Elizabeth Brewster, and Jay MacPherson, given I feared he was fading into obscurity when I saw him read at a Quaker meeting in Edmonton a dozen years earlier. Or, open Issue 137 (1999) and discover Shane Book, Annabel Lyon, Adam Dickinson, and Sonnet L'Abbé. I recommend you try it. Take any issue off the shelf and immerse yourself in the pleasure of it.

The *Malahat* is celebrating its fiftieth year, but it was also born on an anniversary, Canada's Centennial in 1967. Canadian nationalism was transforming how we thought about all of our political and cultural institutions, and there was a robust quality in the way we challenged everything from the lack of Canadian professors in our universities to our "branch-plant economy." The "world was at our door" at Expo 67. It was with this confidence that the *Malahat* could envision its reach as global from the first issue. In its early years there were letters by D. H. Lawrence and an essay by Frank Kermode. There was writing from Paul Theroux, Miguel de Unamuno, Nor-

man Nicholson, Thomas Kinsella, Stanley Kunitz, Vicente Aleixandre, May Sarton, James Dickey, James K. Baxter, and Kingsley Amis, to provide a long shortlist.

It is hard to imagine now how new this was. Only twenty-five years earlier F. R. Scott had written in the first issue of *Preview* that "First, we have lived long enough in Montreal to realize the frustrating and inhibiting effects of isolation." When I was an undergraduate at McGill in 1973, I was told by an advisor that I wouldn't want to take a course in Canadian literature. It wasn't worth studying and it was too young a literature to establish what would last beyond the ephemeral. The literary journals knew better, and in 1977 the *Malahat* could devote an entire issue to Margaret Atwood. Canadian literature was here to stay.

It is an extraordinary achievement that the *Malahat* has charted the increasingly vast territory of emerging trends and developments in Canadian literature. In the 1970s, it was possible to think that as fast as Canadian literature was expanding it was still parochial, still quite narrow in its stylistic and formal adventures when compared to the astonishing explosion of voices that cascaded across the United States. And you would be forgiven if you thought it would always be thus, for the U.S. has ten times the population of Canada and all of the structural support for a powerful literature. By 2000, Canadian literature was as variegated as any literature in the world.

One can find any type of writing in Canada today, from the reinvention of traditional narrative structure or rhyme and metre to the most expansive play of linguistic experiment, and what is truly remarkable is that writers in working in particular forms do not sound like each other. Those working in traditional modes do not all sound the same. Neo-surrealist writing is splayed in all directions. One should certainly praise the inventiveness of Canadian writers, but writing cannot happen without an infrastructure. Writers push forward into the strangeness of their voices because they're emboldened by the printed pages *The Malahat Review* provides them and the intensity of the editorial minds that understand what these writers are accomplishing.

In 2017, Canadian culture is as complex and as difficult as it has ever been. Descendants of European settlers are struggling to come to terms with both the brutal abuse and subtle exclusion of Indigenous peoples, and, of course, Indigenous people are struggling with the suffering that colonization has inflicted upon them. Literary journals have been far too passive in engaging with the literature and storytelling of Indigenous peoples, waiting for it to show up at the doorstep. In 2016, *The Malahat Review* took a crucial lead in changing this attitude by devoting an entire issue to contemporary Indigenous writing and by inviting three prominent Indigenous authors, Philip Kevin Paul (poetry), Richard Van Camp (fiction), and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (creative nonfiction), to act as guest editors. The way the Indigenous writing community took to the issue has been awe-inspiring and humbling. Its massive success suggests that readers, no matter their background or place in Canadian society, are ready to listen.

Facing page: Issue 180, 2012: "Essential East-Coast Writing," a collaboration with *The Fiddlehead* (top) and Issue 253, 2012 of *The Fiddlehead*: "Essential West Coast Poetry & Fiction," a collaboration with *The Malahat Review* (bottom).

[Images courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

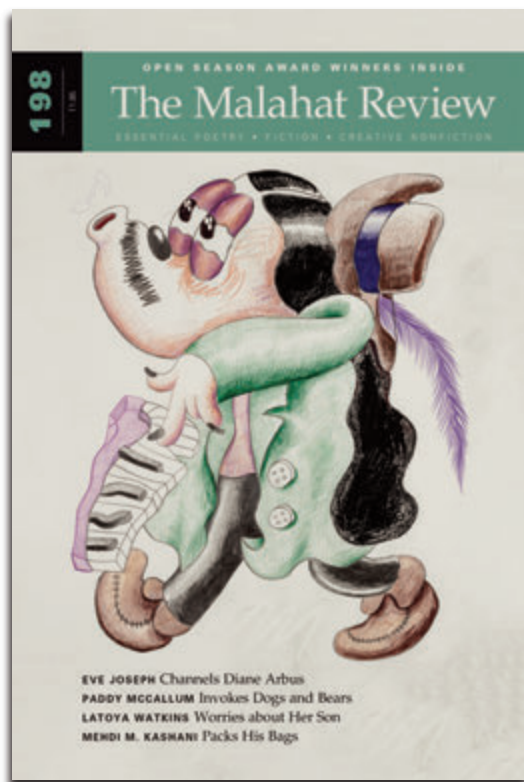
AN INDIGENOUS TRIUMPH

On the eve of both Canada's 150th year since Confederation and its own 50th anniversary, *The Malahat Review* dedicated its Winter 2016 issue to Indigenous writing. Issue 197 is an unprecedented collection of Indigenous poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction—contemporary, cutting edge, and a long time coming. Guest-edited by renowned Indigenous authors Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Richard Van Camp, and Phillip Kevin Paul, “Indigenous Perspectives” is a triumph of unapologetic truths and autonomous self-expression, from the voices of people whose erasure and dispossession from land and from self are the very building blocks that made way for the creation of this country. As Simpson noted in her introduction, in providing space for Indigenous writers to tell our own stories *on our own terms*, and particularly with *Indigenous* editorial mentorship, the *Malahat* created an important opening in place of a barrier. As one of the contributors to this issue, I can say that to weave

intergenerational knowledge with love and devotion to land and ancestral renewal while speaking through the colonial violence that continues to prey upon us, to be able to write through these structures without having to justify our wisdom, urgency, or anguish to an authority unreceptive to marginalized truths, is truly revolutionary, as well as badly needed. The issues brought to light and the calibre of writing featured in “Indigenous Perspectives” are a testament to this radical departure from the norm, as they are also the harbinger of a new era for Indigenous literature.

– SIKU ALLOOLOO

SIKU ALLOOLOO is an Inuit/Haitian Taino writer and community builder from Denendeh (Northwest Territories). Her creative nonfiction, poetry, and other writings have been featured in *The New Quarterly*, *The Malahat Review*, *Briarpatch*, *The Guardian*, *Surrey Art Gallery Presents*, and *Truthout*.

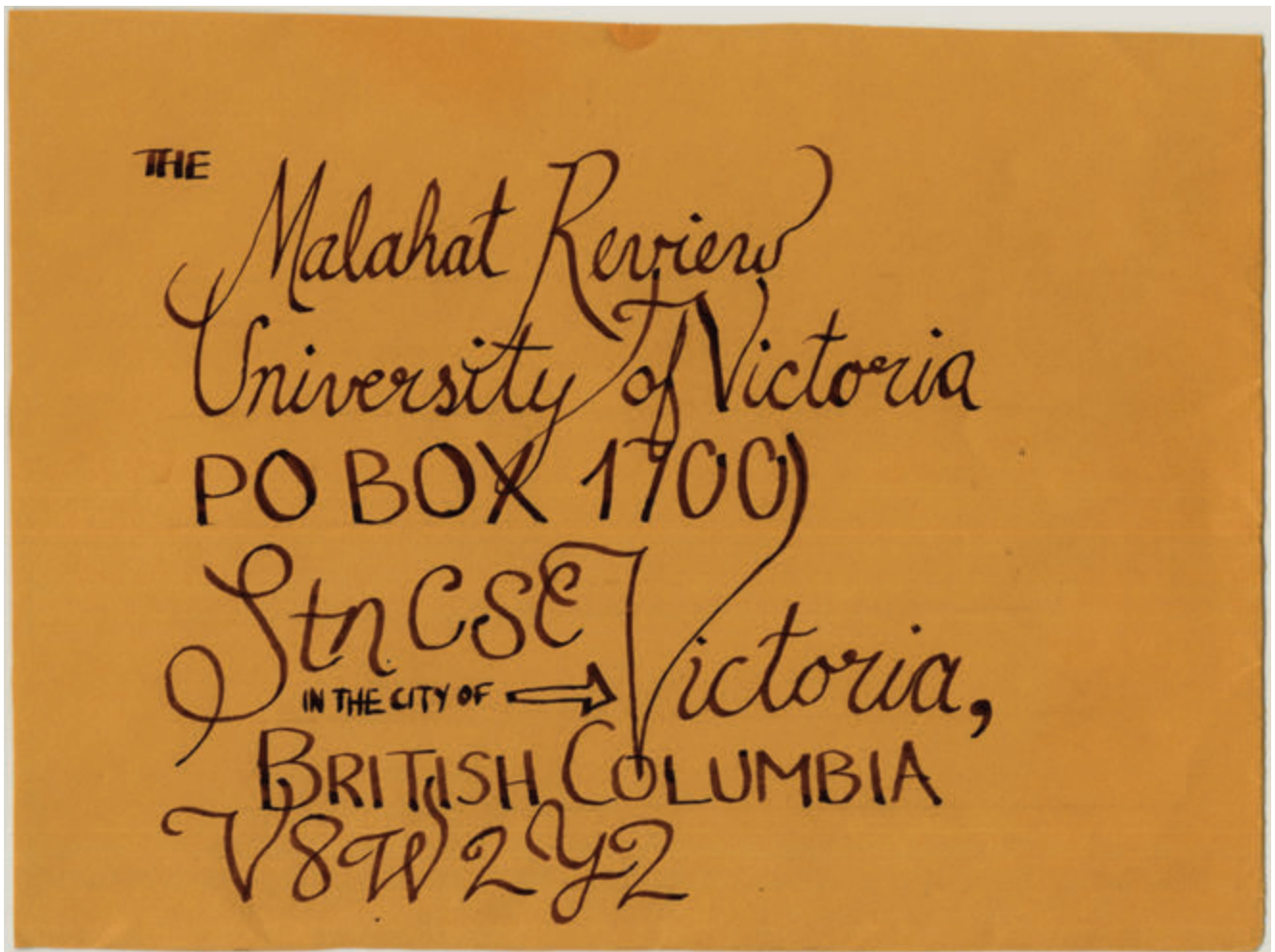


(Left to right): Janet Rogers, John Barton, and Troy Sebastian holding copies of Issue 197: “Indigenous Perspectives.”

[Image courtesy of Troy Sebastian]

Issue 198, 2017. Cover art: Walter Scott, *Private Eyes*, 2017.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]



The outer envelope of a submission received by and currently on display in the office of *The Malahat Review*.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

While Canada struggles with its past, it also struggles with its future. We are becoming ever-more racially diverse. The *Malahat* has always been sensitive to the realities of race and the values of diversity. Having explored the growth of this journal over its first fifty years, I can see the intellectual flexibility that has allowed the *Malahat* right from its inception to be at the centre of Canadian literature. One can barely imagine what the richness of Canada's many cultures, what the voices of Indigenous writers, will bring to our literature. I only wish I could live long enough to see where *The Malahat Review* will be at 100.

ROSS LECKIE has published four books of poetry: *A Slow Light*, *The Authority of Roses*, *Gravity's Plumb Line*, and *The Critique of Pure Reason*. His academic articles have appeared in *Essays in Literature*, *Studies in Short Fiction*, *Weber Studies*, *Verse*, and *University of Toronto Quarterly*. Leckie teaches English and creative writing at the University of New Brunswick, where he has edited *The Fiddlehead* since 1996.

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Lara Wilson, Director of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Victoria Libraries.

Fortieth-anniversary poster, October 2007.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]

Last page: Ledger recording submission acceptances and rejections. The sixth entry on this page shows eight Dorothy Livesay poems being considered for publication.

[Image courtesy of *The Malahat Review*]



About the University of Victoria Libraries Publication Series

Launched in 2013, this continuing series of award-winning publications highlights the extraordinary archives and special collections housed at the University of Victoria Libraries.



Fronts of Modernity: The 20th-Century Collections at the University of Victoria Libraries, 2016

Guest-edited by University of Victoria Libraries' Digital Scholarship Librarian J. Matthew Huculak, and featuring a range of articles by UVic faculty and librarians, *Fronts of Modernity* celebrates the diversity of UVic Libraries' 20th-century holdings, while exploring their collective histories and origins.



UVic Athletics: A Tradition of Excellence, The McKinnon Years, 2015

Written by local sportswriter and former UVic Southam Lecturer Tom Hawthorn, and produced by Vikes Athletics and Recreation in partnership with the University of Victoria Libraries, *UVic Athletics: A Tradition of Excellence, The McKinnon Years* chronicles the history of sport at the University of Victoria.



The Transgender Archives: Foundations for the Future, 2014

The Transgender Archives: Foundations for the Future by Aaron Devor outlines the origins and holdings of the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria Libraries, the largest collection of transgender archival materials in the world.

Nominated for a 2015 LAMBDA Literary Award



The Seghers Collection: Old Books for a New World, 2013

The Seghers Collection: Old Books for a New World by H el ene Cazes explores the bibliographic history of the Seghers Collection, its spiritual and religious significance within the Catholic tradition and its attributed owner, Charles John Seghers, the second Archbishop of Victoria.

Winner of a 2014 Alcuin Award

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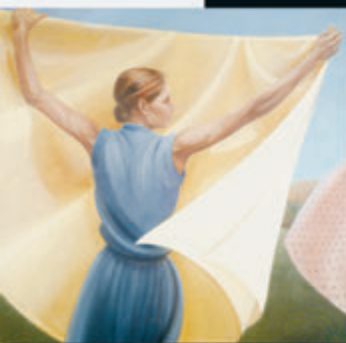
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RHONDA BACHELOR

JONATHAN BENTON

JIM BENNETT

NICHOLAS BRADLEY

HETHER DEAN

JAMIE DOPP

NEIL GRAHAM

EVE JOSEPH

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