

PREFACE

This issue foregrounds some new voices becoming audible now, here. Several of these writers have performed or read in Vancouver recently; some are publishing their own chapbooks; a few have been published elsewhere. But most are available in print for the first time in this issue.

In March 1991, students, who were themselves also writers, in my Canadian literature course at Capilano issued a challenge. Even the latest writers in the syllabus were already canonized, they said. In their view, literary magazines, as much as standard anthologies, create canons, and while as students they enjoyed reading very recent work in the local literary magazines on the course list, as writers they felt as excluded from, as marginalized by, the one as the other. So I proposed this project to the editorial board and began searching for local new writers with little or no publishing history but with a voice or inflection which would catch my ear. The search was hard and slow. The channels most natural to me — advertising in other literary magazines and in Creative Writing departments at other institutions — produced mainly submissions from writers with too impressive CVs. Beginning writers apparently don't read the usual magazines, or else they don't think an invitation to submit is meant for them.

In ratification of my students' argument, we eventually found some of the writers I knew must be out there by word of mouth, a process which seems to be coming into its own just as we actually go to press. Omissions will be apparent as soon as tomorrow. We're still eager to hear from them.

Read this issue as part of a spontaneous series happening all over the country, one only yet underway as this project moves through its own process. Three other collections come to mind: *West Coast Line*

(24:One) featured the New Vancouver Writing in 1990, and *Open Letter* (Eighth Series, No. 4) featured the Next Generation of Women Writers in summer of this year; *Beyond Borders: An Anthology from Manitoba, Minnesota, Saskatchewan, and the Dakotas* (Turnstone Press and New Rivers Press, 1992) features new Canadian and American writers. At many sites across the country, editors and readers are turning to face the margins. My thanks to the students who encouraged me to turn, too: Cage (a.k.a. Leah), Peter J., Jess, Merle, and Peter P.

The voices collected here sound, speak for themselves. They're all very much on site: fishing in a salmon stream, performing on stage, standing on the Lion's Gate Bridge, working over the page, holding up the weighty world. (Don Gill's photographic series responds from Renfrew and McGill.) But the voices are in transit, too, moving by trucks, on motorcycles, on foot over bridges, across traditional genres, towards margins and footnotes, sometimes by way of shared authorship. They're here now, but I think these voices will soon re-inflect sites we haven't visited yet.

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