

Farewell Editorial

John Clement Ball

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Farewell Editorial

JOHN CLEMENT BALL

EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO, just months after beginning a tenure-track position at the University of New Brunswick, I was told by the inimitable Kathleen Scherf that I would be taking over the editorship of *SCL/ÉLC* from her within the year. She felt she should step down because she had become an associate dean; I, the new arrival, was “fresh meat.” (Viewing myself through that lens, I resolved then and there to perform no butchery on the articles that came under my editorial knife . . .) There would be a transitional year, and then I would take over the reins. For six years Kathleen had done an excellent job reviving a journal that, quite honestly, was flagging a bit when she took it over (shortly after beginning her own tenure-track job), and she had built it into a well-respected venue with a top-tier advisory board. I was excited by the opportunity to captain the good ship *SCL*, and not a little daunted. With the help of Kathleen, of our wonderful managing editor at the time, Sabine Campbell, and of everyone else on the masthead, I learned the ropes and began editing. Seventeen years later (and now in the dean’s office myself), at the end of another transitional year, it’s time for me to step aside and make way for a new editorial team.

My former co-editor, Jennifer Andrews, and I announced this change a year ago in issue 37.1, and for the past twelve months it’s been an enormous pleasure to work with Herb Wyle, who took over Jennifer’s spot, and to help him get his sea legs before I myself make way for Herb’s new editorial partner, Cynthia Sugars. Our current managing editor, Kathryn Taglia, has been infinitely patient and helpful as Herb and I worked out the details of a new editorial arrangement, just as she and the pleasant and efficient assistants in her office — especially Mike Weger and Ian LeTourneau — always were with Jennifer and me. Grateful as I am to Kathryn and her staff for their part in keeping things running smoothly, I also must express my profound thanks to Jennifer and to the many hard-working advisory board members, associate editors, guest co-editors, copy editors, graduate student assistants, and of course the hundreds of contributors with whom I’ve had

the honour of working. If, as they say, it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes a village-sized community of dedicated scholars at all levels — local, national, and international — for a journal like this one to thrive. And speaking of dedication, it amazes me to think that several of our current advisory board members were already on the board when I came to the journal; they, along with the dozens who have responded enthusiastically to our invitation to join at some point over the past seventeen years, have contributed largely invisibly, but immeasurably and brilliantly, to the quality of *SCL/ÉLC*. They did so by lending their expertise to the writing of readers' reports that were always informed, constructive, and helpful — to us and to the scholars with whose work they engaged. So a special hats-off to Thomas Gerry, Terry Goldie, Sherrill Grace, Smaro Kamboureli, Susan Knutson, and Kathy Mezei, who along with both of our associate editors, Anne Brown and Mary Rimmer, were on the masthead when I started and, thirty-five issues later, are still here!

Those thirty-five black books have included several groundbreaking special issues and sections, a redesign of the magazine's cover and interior design (in 1998), the expansion of the advisory board beyond Canada (in 2006), and the publication of numerous interviews and over three hundred articles. They were accompanied by the launch of a fully searchable electronic archive in 2000 with the help of SSHRC, UNB's Electronic Text Centre, and many graduate students, which has evolved into a parallel electronic edition of both current and back issues. I am proud of where the journal has come since 1996 and very confident in its future. Our new co-editors are accomplished, productive, well-respected, and rigorous scholars of Canadian literature, and they have served the journal with distinction as advisory board members for many years. The enthusiasm and care with which Herb and Cynthia are approaching their new tasks (including their first special issue, *Canadian Literary Ecologies*, to be published next year) suggest that the journal is in as good hands as Jennifer and I expected it would be when we asked them to fill our roles.

Finally, to you our readers (some of whom have also been contributors), thank you for reading and for helping *SCL/ÉLC* remain a premier space for the finest in Canadian literary criticism.