

## EDITORS' NOTES



**C**reativity—the drive to generate something new from the materials about us or from the materials within our own imagination, to discover what we didn't know or couldn't see or simply failed to comprehend—this is a defining characteristic of the human being across time and space. Whether we account for it in Freudian terms of transmuted desires or as an expression of cultural expectations or as an existential defiance in the face of an indifferent cosmos, the creative urge is finally nothing less than an articulation of life.



For one hundred years, the Nobel Prizes have honored men and women for internationally significant achievements—creative achievements—in literature, the sciences, and in the pursuit of peace. In celebrating the centenary of these distinguished prizes, it seems only appropriate, therefore, that this collaborative issue of two literary magazines, *The Kenyon Review* (U.S.A.) and *Stand* (U.K.), in association with the new Nobel Museum in Stockholm, should be shaped by an overarching concern with creativity. What a stunning array is collected here!

Paired with new poems by Seamus Heaney, Czeslaw Milosz, and Wislawa Szymborska, we offer new translations of stunning, deathbed poems of the Bengali laureate Rabindranath Tagore, as well as a discussion of poetic form by Joseph Brodsky and Derek Walcott. A little-known story by Australian Patrick White reminds us of his literary mastery. And a scene from a new play, written by chemistry laureate Roald Hoffmann and Carl Djerassi, muses playfully on just who may have been responsible for identifying—discovering—oxygen.

Tagore, we discover, carried on a correspondence with Albert Einstein, and the two met as well in Germany. They worry, fret, debate the nature



of creativity, both in its immediate practical dimensions and its larger implications for the nature of the divine in relation to the human. The powerful dialogue, as these two men, physicist and poet, attempt to understand each other, is represented here more fully than ever before.

Creativity plays its direct and often surprising role in scientific research as well, as Robert Friedel wonderfully elucidates in a consideration of serendipity and the manifold ways it manifests itself to eyes that are able to see. Herbert Simon, an economist, writes here about intelligence and the myth of genius.

More problematic for the history of the Nobel Prizes has been the limited place of women in the ranks of laureates. Amitav Ghosh presents a personal portrait of Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Peace Prize for her brave defiance of authoritarian rule in Burma. And Wendy Singer reveals the role of American women scholars in collecting essential funds that would allow Marie Curie—who herself won two Nobel Prizes, one in physics, one in chemistry—to buy the radium essential for her research. Curie's remarks about the grant and about her creative mission in pursuing research are offered here as well. Finally, Mary Beard reveals some of the ways that women scientists have been diminished and passed over in the awarding of prizes in earlier decades.

The Nobel Museum's opening exhibition is, appropriately, also focused on the theme of this issue: "Cultures of Creativity: the Centennial Exhibition of the Nobel Prize." Marika Hedin, curator of the museum and guiding light of this collaborative endeavor, writes here about the institution's mission and keen vision. The exhibition actually has two versions, one that will remain in Stockholm, a second that will travel from Norway to Asia and then the Americas over the course of four years. We are delighted that this noble and collaborative issue will travel along, its significance surviving well beyond the normal rhythms of quarterly publication.

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