

Dear Reader,

How is it where you are? Here, the days are grey and slow and the skies are lowering. But we have turned winter's corner and our hearts are beginning to stir. Soon there will be green shoots knuckling from the soil and the young people will shyly pursue one another with fistfuls of flowers held behind their backs. (At least, this is how we understand it to be done. Times may have changed.)

Our correspondents have surprised us again. When we asked for letters of or about or in protest, we expected a tide of rage to break over us. We expected red ink and bricks through the windows. We expected blood. Instead, the letters we have for you here are thoughtful and enquiring and often puzzled by the state of the world. Our correspondents have written to us about the many ways in which it is possible to say no; about the experience of being around other people who are saying no; about the sense of being on the other end of that rejection. We're very pleased with the way their letters have transcended what could have been a narrow theme, and we hope you enjoy reading them.

For our next issue, we're not announcing a theme in advance. We would like your submissions to be driven by whatever your writing is doing right now. We are primarily a literary magazine, and the letter is only intended as a framing device. We are interested in thinking about correspondence in the widest sense. Some of these thoughts are still in development; some of our developments will be guided by your submissions. Full details can be found on the back page. We'd love to hear from you.

By the way, if you have printed this issue, or indeed received it in the post from a kind friend, you will perhaps now be marvelling at how elegantly it sits in the hand, or how easy it is to read on a crowded bus without intruding upon your fellow commuters. If so, we are glad. We do not pretend to be fully qualified graphic designers here at the offices of *The Letters Page*, but we do like to provide you with a comfortable reading experience. Of course, if you are reading this on a screen device, then we would like to think your reading experience is equally comfortable. Do let us know.

Yours,
The Editor.